TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDING OF CHILD CENTERED APPROACH AND ITS IMPLEMENTATION

Krishan Lal
Assistant Professor
Indus College of Education
Delhi Road Rohtak, Haryana, INDIA.

ABSTRACT: "Much more harm than good is done by your ceaseless preaching and moralizing." Child-centered approach aspires not to dictate, instruct and enforce a child to learn a particular thing. If one thinks deeply about it, all good education should be child-centered and vice-versa. But the reality is totally different. Teachers still give lectures, control and command the students, preach them values and do everything that essentially is not in synchrony of child centered approach. If teachers make the children agree to what we consider right or, without giving any freedom to them, to explore and learn, then not at all in any case, they can perform their role of friend, philosopher and guide. It is observed many times, that we, the adults are not at all sensitive, honest and responsible towards the nature, interests, attitude and aptitude of children. Rather, we force them to do things, the way we feel and think appropriate about them. School is a path on which a child walks to achieve the aim of education. But right from class I the child mugs up all the things without understanding it properly. Whatever is learnt without understanding proves burdensome for the students. The child-centered approach helps the children to increase self-learning which means that teachers do not make or instruct the children in knowledge; rather they help in the process of knowledge formation. Implementation of child-centered approach in teaching learning process is essential, in order to develop the innate potentials of our blooming generation and to build up responsible and honest citizens with scientific attitude, who would be able to contribute positively in nation's development. Every child has its own style and pace of development. The basic characteristic children necessitate a careful planning and selection providing joyful and happier teaching-learning experiences. So the future needs and demands in the field of education should have to focus on child perspective and the teacher will provide guidance to them.

KEYNOTES: child centered approach, preaching, moralizing, ceaseless, adults, sensitive, honest, nature, interests, attitude, aptitude, self-learning.

I. INTRODUCTION

Education in wider sense is a process of development from cradle to grave. Education liberates human being from the shackles of ignorance, privatization and misery. It must also lead to a non violent and non-exploitative system. School curriculum therefore has to aim at enabling learners to acquire knowledge, develop understanding and circulate skills, positive attitude, values and habits conducive to all round development of their personality. (National curriculum framework for school education 2000) Whatever broadens our horizon deepens our insight refines our reactions and simultaneous thought and feeling educates us. (Edward throng, on philosophy and education, 1930) Teachers destroy the love of earning which is so strong when they are small by encouraging and compelling them to work for petty and contemptible rewards-giving stars, or paper marked 100 and tagged to the wall, or as on the report cards, for their satisfaction. The teachers encourage them to feel mat the end and aim of all they do in school is nothing more than to get a good marks on a test, or to impress someone with what they seem to know. In schools the children's curiosity is killed. By the age of 10 most of them do not ask questions, and show a good deal of score for the few who do. Carl Rogers states that "I become very irritated with the notion that students must be "motivated". The young human being is intrinsically motivated to a high degree. Many elements of his environment constitute challenges for him. He is curious, eager to discover, eager to know, eager to solve problems. A sad part of most education is that by the time the children has spent a number of years in school this intrinsic motivation is pretty well dampened." Rogers, 1969 p. 131)

In many ways, the teacher break down the children's convictions that thing may make sense, or their hope that thing may prove to make sense. Thus we turn the vast majority of our students into the kind of people for whom all symbols are meaningless. We encourage the children to act stupidly, not only by scaring and confusing them, but by boring them, by filling their days with dull, repetitive tasks that make little or no claim on their attention.
or demands on their intelligence. Our heart leap for joy at the site of a roomful of children all slogging away at some imposed task, and we are all the more pleased and satisfied if someone tells us that the children don't really like what they are doing. We tell our selves that this drudgery, this endless busy work.

**HISTORIC PAST:** In the middle of 18th century, Rousseau (1772-78) made a direct attack on the conception, and he emphasized on child centered education. He contended that "the child was in no sense a little adult. The child should be educated in natural surroundings in accordance with his own nature". Following Rousseau, all major educational theories and movements took the child into accounted to a great extent than previously. John Dewey, the educational philosopher also talks about child centered education. He said that child can learn the learning material if the things are based on his interest. He also strongly opposed the rote memorization in the learning process and emphasized on learning by doing. Patrick had introduced the project method which can be used to teach the students. Montessori (1952-70) propounded the concept of auto education which implies that the child should be free to learn things according to his own chance. Children learn better thru play way method. She felt that the roll of teachers was that of an observer rather than an instructor. The child centered approach will help the children increase self learning which means that children's do not make children, but they create such guidance.

**II. CHILD CENTERED APPROACH**

The child centered approach promotes the right of the child to choose, make connections and communicate. It allows freedom for children to think, experience, explore, question and search for answers. It presents a creative celebration of children's work. Nursery practitioners take on a new role in seeing how play develops, rather than directing play; children therefore become more creative and enhance communication skills with one another. On the basis of the modes from which it derives, student-centeredness entails these characteristics:

- The focus is on active learning, using an integrated approach to connect new Learning to prior learning, stimulating interest and relevance, providing student choice and control, adapting to individual developmental differences, and providing a caring and supportive learning environment (Bansberg, 2003).
- Knowledge is constructed through authentic learning. It is learnt in real context or the context in which it was first generated. In other words, it links school learning experiences to real world situations.
- Students are motivated more intrinsically (self-motivation) than extrinsically (external motivation). Simply put, students are motivated from within not from without. For example, they type a written assignment because they take pride in their work not because they want people to admire or approve of it.
- Students, Feel included, value the educational process, and take control of their own learning. Implementing a student-centered model is a true Challenge for the 21st century. The process of incorporating it into our education system demands hard work and effort from teachers and students alike. The key to the success of implementation requires, on the teacher's part, a careful study and a thorough comprehension of the model's principles, as well as a genuine recognition of its value. Through the new understanding, teachers then can change their old beliefs and practices; they can set the new goals and standards, and plan their teaching, taking into account what is best for students. In so doing, Teachers can also work on their self and professional Development. On the learner part, likewise, students, guided by teachers, need to adopt a new conception of the learning process. They need to realize that if they are to keep pace with the rapidly changing world, and to compete in the global market place that has a growing demand for educated workers with Skills in critical thinking, problem solving and Decision making, they must change their long-time practice from passive to active learners. They need to empower themselves, gain control over their learning, and become autonomous learners. Finally, it is hoped, Teachers and students working in, can gradually make the learning environment more productive and worthwhile.

**III. SIGNIFICANCE**

All the important documents of education, namely Kothari commission reports (1964–66), national policy of education (1986–92) and national curriculum framework for school education (2000), strongly favors the adoption of child centered approach for quality education. The importance of the concept of child centeredness for quality education has been reiterated of different policies and programmers formulated from time to time since the recommendation of kothari commission. Despite of it schools are lacking in its implementation. Quantitative expansion coupled with deteriorating level of quality is a fact. Best efforts has crucial role in its implementation. Focus would be to know whether teachers really understand the child centered approach.

**IV. OBJECTIVES**

To study the understanding of teacher’s about child centered approach. To study the implementation of child centered approach in teaching learning process. To ascertain the factors that promote or hinder the child centered approach in teaching learning process

**V. HYPOTHESES**

There is the understanding of teacher’s about child centered approach. There is the implementation of child centered approach in teaching learning process. There are the factors that promote or hinder the child centered approach in teaching learning process.
VI. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The design of the study is comparable to the blueprint that the architect prepares before the bricks are let and building commences. Because good research must be carefully planned and systematically carried out, procedures that are improvised from step to step will not suffice. The worthwhile research projects are likely to result only from a properly prepared design.

SAMPLE: A sample is a proportional of population for observation and analysis, by observing the characteristics of the population from which it was drawn. Contrary to some popular option, samples are not selected haphazardly. They are chosen in the systematic way so that chance of the operation of the probability can be utilized. For the present study, the sample was selected from Rohini zone because it was convenient from the investigator to collect data, from the zone. In order to conduct this study, 15 teachers from the 5 MCD Schools of his zone have been selected. The investigator stayed in this zone and was more familiar with the area and schools. Moreover collecting data from this zone saved much of the time of the investigator.

TOOLS: "Like the tools in carpenter box, each research tool is appropriate in the given situation to accomplish a particular purpose” factual materials or data unknown can be obtained from many sources direct or indirect. It is necessary to adopt or evolve systematic producer to collect essential data. For collecting new, unknown data required for the study of any problem, one may use various devices. For each and every type of research we needs certain instruments together, new facts or to explore new fields. The instrument thus employed as means are called tools. The researcher may use one or more tools according to his purpose. The two types of tools observation and interview schedule were used by the researcher to study the understanding of teacher regarding the child centered approach and its implementation in teaching learning process.

DELIMITATIONS

(i) The study was limited to MCD schools of Rohini zone.
(ii) The study was confined to the teachers of the first and second grades of each school.

Table shows the number and percentage of teachers giving a particular response relating to the above mentioned categories of child-centered approach.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr.No</th>
<th>Description of item</th>
<th>Teachers’ responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(A) Setting of objectives</td>
<td>No. of teachers</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Teachers who believe in setting of objectives before starting teaching earning.</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Teachers who set the objectives according to the syllabus.</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Teachers who set the objectives according to the interest, attitude and aptitude of the children</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(B) Teaching aids</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Teachers who use teaching aids</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Teachers who use teaching aids which are easily available</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Teachers who use teaching aids which are colorful and attractive</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(C) Teacher’s who use activities Because they are prescribed in text books</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>73.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(D) TEACHERS’ PERCEPTION ABOUT STUDENTS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Teachers who perceive that</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a)</td>
<td>Good student is one who memorizes every thing and gets good marks.</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b)</td>
<td>Who understands but do not rote memorize.</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Teachers who like their students to be</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a)</td>
<td>Highly mannered, less talkative and listen what the teachers says</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b)</td>
<td>Talking among the groups and attention can be diverted from the teacher</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Teachers who think that</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a)</td>
<td>All the students are their favorite</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b)</td>
<td>Only active students are their favourite</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(E) Evaluation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Teachers who prefer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a)</td>
<td>To set a limit students above that limit should be considered good</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b)</td>
<td>To compare the students with their past performance</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b)</td>
<td>Who understands but do not rote memorize.</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

VII. FINDINGS

Setting of objectives: (i) All the teachers perceived in setting objectives before starting teaching learning process. Among them 80% teachers believed that objectives should be based on syllabus, however only 20% MCD schools teachers preferred to set the Objectives on the basis of students’ interests, attitude and aptitudes.
Use of Teaching Aids: At the time of interview all the teachers responded that concrete teaching-aids' must be used while teaching the primary schools students to make the concept clear. Yet only 25% teachers preferred to use the teaching aids, which are colorful, attractive and useful. However 75% teachers preferred to use teaching aids which are easily available. Contrary to this, at the time of observation it was notice that only one teacher was actually using the teaching aids at the time of actual teaching.

Teaching Learning Strategies: The results indicated that all the teachers believed in demonstrative method, activity method, discover) learning approach and discussion method. However 20% teachers believed in using lecture method in the classroom, in combination of demonstrative and discussion methods. All the teachers were observed not to use discover, learning approach. Moreover 14outof 15 teachers i.e. 93.33% teachers were observed to use lecture method. It revealed a drastic difference between the teachers understanding of child-centered approach and its implementation in the classroom. Exactly 80% teachers believed in using children literature along with text books. More than 70% i.e. 73.3% teachers admitted to use the activities because they are prescribed in the text book, only 26.5% preferred to use activity method because they were in the interest of students.

Planning for lessons and activities: It was found that 60% teachers in MCD schools did not prepare the lesson plans, 20% teachers prepared the plans, but did not apply them. However only 20% teachers prepared the plans and applied them. It was observed that only 6.67% of teachers i.e. only one teacher was conducting activities in a planned and well organized manner. Whereas in case of 60.5% teachers activities were not planned. 5 out of 15 teachers i.e. 33.3% teachers planned the activities but had not executed them properly.

All round development: Interpretation of data indicated that focus of 60% teachers were focus on intellectual development through rote memorization rather than building up process of logical thinking and problem-solving, despite of having a good theoretical knowledge regarding the ideal intellectual development. Only 20% teachers found to preach the value as well as to follow them. 53%o of the teachers was not at all interested in moral development. They preferred to teach the child through instructions, in a harsh and rude manner. Ironically, 26.67% only preached the values to the students without showing any indication of following those value themselves. More than 70% i.e. 73.3%teachers responded mat students should be encouraged to do the work in cooperation of each other. However, in practice only one teacher was found to conduct a group activity during the teaching learning process.

Teachers’ perception about students: It was observed 67% teachers treated the students as passive listeners. Only 13% encouraged them in the process of active construction of knowledge. In the case of 73.3% teacher’s interest of the students was completely ignored. Only one teacher was found trying to cater the interest of the students, by asking the choice of the subjects, they wanted to study. At the time of interview, 86% of the teachers responded that all the students were their favorite. However only 13% teachers were found to pay attention to all. More over 73.3% of the teachers were found not to pay any attention towards the weak students. They were simply ignored by them. During the interview, 60% teachers accepted to like the students, who were well-mannered and less talk active. Indirectly, they enforced the obedience and high standards of discipline on the students.

Role of teachers: After observing the teaching learning process, on the basis of Guide for Observation Schedule 73.33% teachers were found highly dominating. However 20% teachers performed in a way that was dominating yet they provided the freedom to the students in between the teaching learning process. Only one teacher was found to be democratic and acted as a facilitator and guide. She was trying to pay equal attention to all, by encouraging the weak students to actively participate in the game and by continuously interacting with them.

VIII. RECOMMENDATIONS

Teachers in MCD schools are very well known with the concept of child centered approach. They have an understanding, what are various aspects that comes under it. Yet they lack in its implementation. Definitely, they are not provided with the basic facilities required to do their work efficiently and enable them to utilize their competencies at most. Yet, caliber and capacity of a professional is judged, in difficult circumstances. As for as implementation of child centered approach in teaching learning process is concerned in present scenario teachers need to motivate themselves and to work with dedication and devotion.

1. By blaming the system all the time, cannot work. Being a professional it is the duty of teachers to try their best to improve the system, by being highly considerate about the students and society. One thing which makes the teachers frustrated is large number of students in the classroom. They complain that due to large number of students, they are incapable to pay individual attention to all the students. They also complain that it makes the execution of activities a headache to the teachers, in a class of more than 40 or 50 students. But "Where there is a will, there is a way". Certainly, problems arise due to the large number of students but if students are dealt with proper planning, the solution can be found out. For example work cards or assignment cards can be applied to them. More over teachers can choose some students for two or three days, in order to pay attention to them. Next
time, some other student’s can’t be selected. Similarly, problem of execution of activities can essentially be solved, if activities are properly planned and well organized.

2. Due to lack of time and large number of students teachers use lecture method in the classroom. The constraints teachers have to bear upon are noticeable. But every problem in this world has solution. It is really inhuman and criminal, to strangulate the souls of innocent children, by forcing them to bear the loads of learning. To do justice with these tiny children making the teaching learning process joyful by using child centered approach is the demand of the hour. Even with the on-going scarcity of facilities child centered approach can be implemented. For this teachers should be committed and competent. Commitment comes with the right values. Therefore, focus should be on the development of right values during the course of pre-service training. Along with it, in order to lubricate the corroded minds of working teachers, time to time in-service teacher-training programmers should be conducted. Process of capacity-building among teachers is required, that can be possible by appropriate visualization and then execution of right kind of teacher-training programmers, based on current needs.

3. Teachers also complain about non availability of funds, so that proper teaching aids can be used, they nag that neither funds nor teaching aids are provided to them. But if a teacher is really willing low-cost teaching aids can be improvised. More over by using the concrete material found in the immediate surroundings as well as the objects of daily use like eatables, toys etc, and teaching learning process can be turned in to a happier experience.

4. The prevailing system of education is neither teacher centered nor child centered. It can be known as an authority centered structure of education. It is an imposed system of education both upon the organizers of learning (teachers) as well as on the learners (children) themselves. Teachers find him / her. If nowhere to determine what he/ she should do what he/she is told to do. But the teacher is the one who has to transact the whole curriculum in the classroom. The effective teacher is the one who does her duty with foil dedication and commitment- She he can plan his/her lesson according to the child's need and interest and then transact it in to the classroom. Planning of the lesson is needed before teaching in the classroom. A teacher has expected to follow the instruction from his directorate or Head of the Department, but she/he can perform their duty without harming the rule and regulation of the authority. This is not to say that education today is totally not child centered. However, there is need to focus our attention on the issue and direct our energies towards the development of learners. This is a joint responsibility of teachers and administrators specially the principal, who will have to play a major role because it is they who lay down politics and prepare the back ground in which the system of education function.

5. Moreover, teachers should be given freedom. All the time, they are pressurized with extra clerical kind of work. Now today teachers also have to distribute the mid-day meal, with which they do not feel comfortable. Due to extra load of work they feel exhaust and students feel distracted. Teachers should be kept free from extra work, so that they can focus on their major task i.e., planning, organizing, and execution of teaching learning process, oriented towards all round development of children. Employee should be recruited to the extra work like distribution of mid-day meal and other such work.

6. Hence, implementation of child centered approach is very much possible and also essentially significant. But to achieve it, we needs to work at various fronts, change in the system, requirement of new employees, opening of new schools, reducing the numbers of students in the classroom, improving the teacher-student ratio, conduction of appropriate teacher training programs etc. but, if the facilities are lacking, then also by the sincere and honest initiative of teachers can make implementation of child centered approach, a reality telling a story hard work, dedication and commitment.

REFERENCES

Arora, G.L. (1993). Discovery Centre Activities for the Pre-School Children; Professional Publishing. 
Clancy, L. (1993). Discovery Centre Activities for the Pre-School Children; Professional Publishing. 