

A Study on Learner's Psychology in Choosing Curricular Activities for Holistic Development Promoting Quality Education (SDG-4)

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ABSTRACT

Education is the process of nurturing young minds with knowledge, experience, and skills aiming to achieve the holistic development of the child. As the child is active and creative by nature, this research paper is trying to explore how efficiently curricular and cocurricular activities conducted in schools be used as a tool for the holistic development of the learner. The main objective of the study is to analyze choices of curricular and co-curricular activities for holistic development. For that purpose, the researcher conducted a descriptive study. The sample constitutes students in grade 7 (stage of later childhood) at schools in Delhi. The major finding of the study suggests that there is a significant difference in the choices of curricular and co-curricular activities among students. The majority of the students were inclined towards academic activities and very few students regularly participate in civic sense and community service activities. Differences in the level of participation in different activities need to be addressed and resolved for achieving sustainable development goals 4 (quality education) and holistic development of the child.

Keywords: Curricular activities, co-curricular activities, holistic development, quality education

1. INTRODUCTION

“Education is the manifestation of the perfection already in man” Swami Vivekananda (1970:438). This famous quote of Swamiji was part of a letter written by him and later got published as his work. Manifestation literary means something already exists only waiting to be expressed, the manifestation of education means knowledge is inherently present in all of us and nothing to be imparted from outside. Knowledge is there in human minds only it requires externalizing its own potentiality (Mondal & Mete, 2012). The child only needs a mentor who takes them from the darkness of the unknown to the light of the known. During this journey from unknown to known all the aspects of the human personality are touched upon/included with the aim to provide holistic education. Holistic education is an approach that prepares the child to face the challenges of their personal, professional, or social life and equips them with all the necessary skills and competencies to face the challenges logically and rationally. The main theory behind this is to understand oneself and develop social relationships, positive social behavior, and emotional development. From a broader perspective, it also includes the ability to see beauty and experience transcendence and truth (John PJ, 2017).

Holistic education encompasses all the development aspects of human personality thereby aiming to achieve the holistic development of the child. Holistic Development gives equal weightage to all the domains of development i.e., physical, cognitive, emotional, social, moral and spiritual. Holistic development of the child not only prepares the child to enter the world of work with all necessary skills and expertise but also works for the welfare of the individual, family, society, and environment.

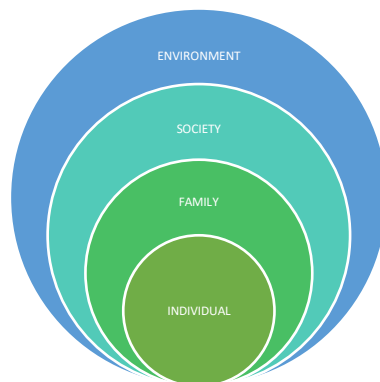


Figure-1: *Benefits of holistic development*

(Lauricella & Macaskill, 2015) in their study on exploring the benefits of holistic education concluded that holistic education helps in making better choices with respect to course of study in university, to understand their career opportunity, and to be more informed about the community, natural world and their social interactions.

Holistic development is not just need of the present but a necessity of future as well. For achieving the goal of holistic development of child the task in hand is to explore answers of few pertinent questions related to holistic education:

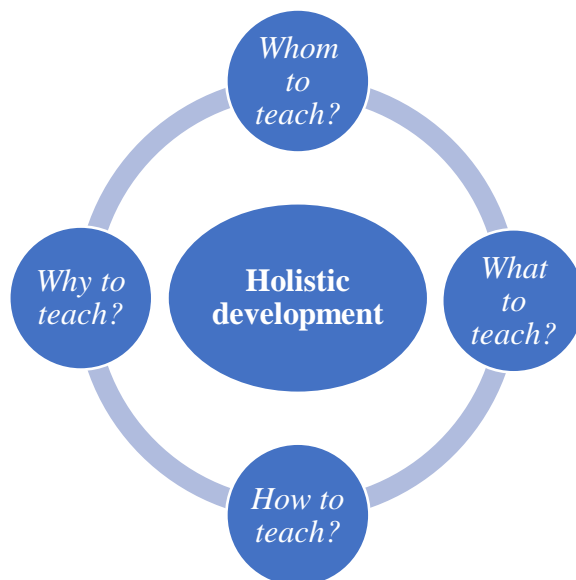


Figure-2: *Holistic development-why, what, whom &how*

➤ Why to teach?

Answer to this question lies in the Sustainable development goals formulated by United Nations, world summit (2015) where they addressed Quality education (SDG-4) as the most important sustainable Development goal, paving the way to achieve other sustainable development goals (UNESCO,2015). To provide quality education (SDG-4) we need to educate the child so that holistic development of child can happen in best possible manner.

➤ Whom to teach?

Aim of education is all-round development of the child and development is holistic; physical, cognitive, social-emotional and language development (known as ‘domains’ of development, e.g. Walker et al., 2007) (UNESCO 2014). Hence for holistic development of the child holistic approach of education consider learner as whole and focusses on whole growth of the child in relation to physical and social environment.

➤ What to teach?

Educational objectives can only be achieved by set of planned activities, experiences and knowledge. These planned activities, experiences and content knowledge collectively makes the curriculum. Holistic education intended for holistic development focusses on relationship of body, mind and soul. The holistic curriculum enables a student to examine these relationships so that they gain both an awareness of them and the skills necessary to transform the relationships where appropriate (Miller, 2019).

➤ How to teach?

Learner is the pivot of teaching-learning process, so the first step is to understand the learner itself and use the teaching methods according to age, developmental stage and need of the learner.

By accepting the learner as whole and transacting holistic curriculum with appropriate teaching methods the ultimate aim of holistic education i.e., holistic development of the learner can be achieved. All the domains of development (Walker et al., 2007) are equally important for holistic development, focusing on any particular domain and neglecting the other act as hinderance for holistic development of the child. In this context NEP 2020 India suggested that school subjects should not be taught in water tight compartment rather integrated approach of teaching must be used for transacting the curriculum. There should not be any distinction between curricular, co-curricular and extracurricular activities everything comes under umbrella term “curricular activities” (NEP,2020). All the activities that are being conducted inside or outside the classroom or school benefits the child in many ways. Participation in physical activities improves the academic performance of the students(Muhammad et al., 2012),extracurricular activities also has positive correlation with academic performance and facilitate personality development of the students(Singh, 2017).Curricular and co-curricular activities plays a significant role in overall development of the child ,but how far we are able to focus on all developmental domains. Within this realm researcher analyzed participation of students in different curricular and co-curricular activities conducted in school for holistic development of the child.

3. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The purpose of the study is to analyze the choices of curricular and co-curricular activities among school students. Based on the need and purpose of the study following research questions and objectives were formulated.

3.1. Research questions:

Q-1) What is the difference in the choices of curricular activities?

Q-2) How frequently do students participate in different types of curricular activities?

Q-3) What is the level of participation in curricular activities among school students?

3.2. Objectives:

1. To study the different choices of curricular activities among school students.
2. To study how frequently students participate in curricular activities.
3. To study the level of participation in curricular activities among school students.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

4.1. Research method:

Research methodology is a kind of blueprint for our research which always guide us to choose the right path throughout our research endeavor and helps us to find answers for our research objectives. The present study is descriptive in nature with a mixed method approach for data collection and analysis.

4.2. Participants:

Participants for the study were class 7th students studying in government and private schools in Delhi. For the purpose of making an in-depth analysis research used only a single standard, which further limits the sampling error. Non -probability sampling was used for data collection. The purposive sampling technique was used to ascertain the availability of human and material resources for conducting curricular and co-curricular activities.

4.3. Variables and instruments:

In the present study, the researcher focused on the level of participation in curricular activities and different types of activities through a descriptive methodology. Based on the objectives of the research questionnaire consisting of 24 items Likert items having six Likert scale was constructed by the researcher, and the same has been validated by the subject experts. These Likert scales were based on different categories of curricular and co-curricular activities being conducted in school for the holistic development of the child. These categories were physical, activities, aesthetic and cultural activities, literary activities, civic sense and social welfare activities, academic activities, and leisure time activities. There are four items under each category. Each item is provided with three options to choose from rarely, occasionally, and regularly.

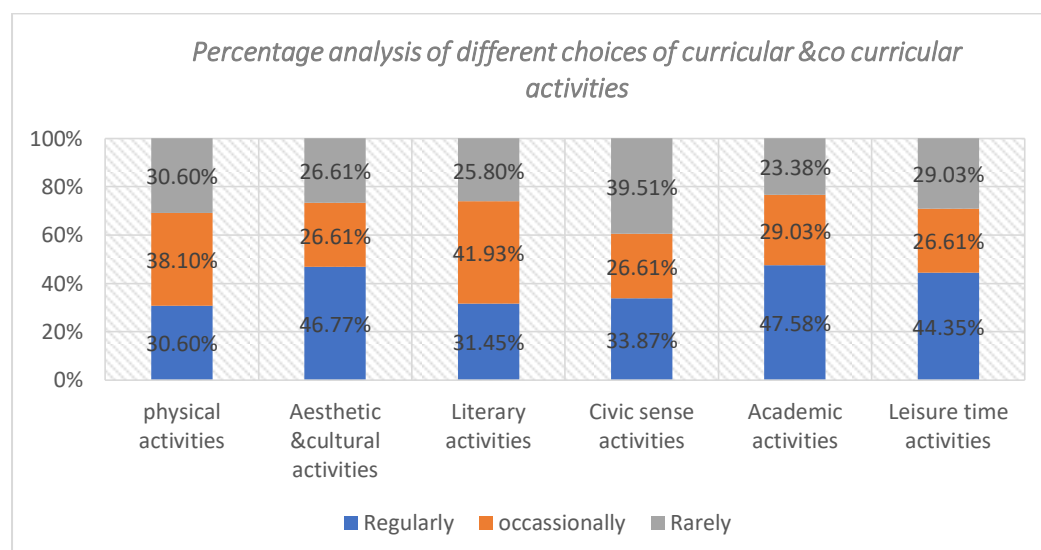
4.4) Procedure and Ethical consideration:

After finalizing the tool for the study researcher approached the participants and informed them about their role in the study. Although there were no compulsions participants were requested to fill out the questionnaire and attempt all the questions. As per ICSSR (*Indian council of social science research*) criterion for ethical consideration in social science research informed consent was taken from the participants as well as data pertaining to the study or individual was kept confidential throughout the research work.

5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION:

5.1. Different choices of curricular activities among school students:

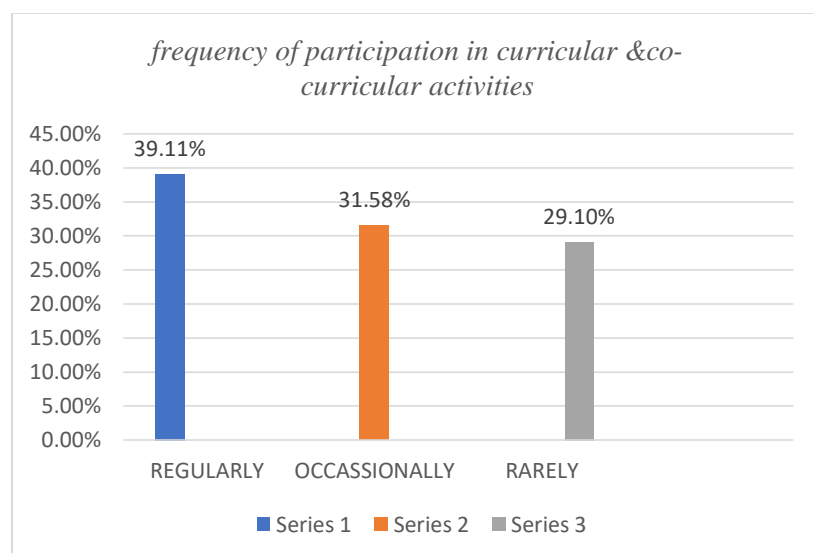
To study the different choices of curricular activities all the six categories of activities i.e., Physical activities, aesthetic and cultural activities, Literary activities, civic sense activities, academic activities, and leisure time activities are compared to how frequently students participated in any activity and the result was tabulated. Percentage analysis was used for making a statistically relevant conclusion.



Statistical analysis reveals a few interesting facts about the choices of activities by the students. As far as physical activities are concerned majority of the student (38.10%) occasionally participates in these activities whereas 30.60% rarely participates in such activities which is certainly a cause for concern in various development aspects, especially physical and motor development. 46.77% of students regularly participate in aesthetic and cultural activities which clearly shows the inclination of students towards cultural activities. 26.61% of students also occasionally participate in aesthetic and cultural activities. In the literary activities, only 31.45% of the students regularly participated which needs to be improved for appropriate language development as well as for better communication skills. 25.80 % of students rarely participate in literary activities. Approximately 40% of the students rarely participate in Civic sense activities possibly it is due to a lack of interest among students in civic duties and responsibility. Mustafa et al., (2020) in their study on university students concluded that the majority of students participating in volunteer activities are intrinsically motivated, and participating in such activities is quite helpful in the mental well-being of the individual. Academic activities like quizzes, science practical, model making, etc. were one of the favorite activities of the students where nearly 48% of students regularly participate. Regular participation in academic activities makes the learner active and creative inside the classroom. Active participation of students is one of the predictive of better academic performance González, C., Varela, J., Sánchez, P.A. *et al.* (2021). Leisure time activities give you the freedom to make your own choices to develop hobbies and interests. As depicted in the graph 44.35% of students regularly participate in leisure time activities and 29.03% are rarely involved in such activities. Leisure time activities have long-term benefits of better mental health and lower level of depression and stress. 29.03% of students who rarely participates in leisure time activities need to be encouraged for engaging in leisure time activities which will help them in leading a stress-free life.

5.2. Frequency of students' participation in curricular activities:

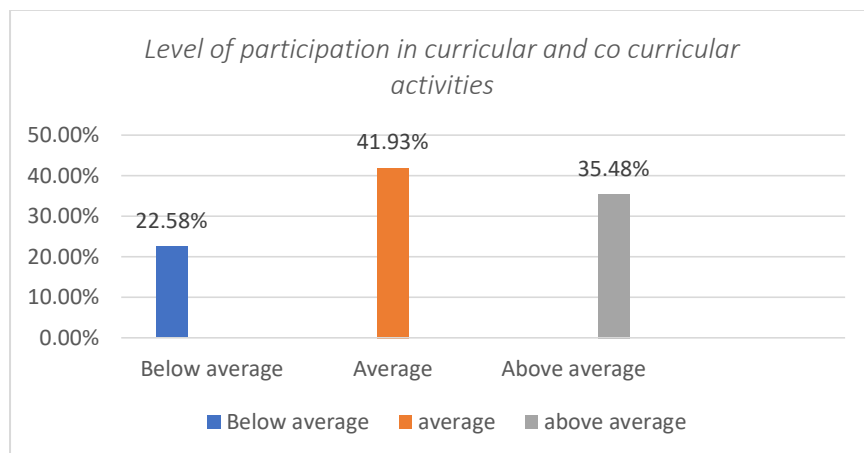
To study how frequently students participate in curricular and co-curricular activities combined scores of all the six categories of activities under the heading regularly, occasionally, and rarely were calculated.



As depicted in the graph that 39.11% of students regularly participate in curricular and co-curricular activities whereas 31.58% occasionally and 29.10% of students rarely participate in such activities. Though students are participating in curricular and co-curricular activities it is quite evident that there is a need to encourage students to regular participation in curricular and co-curricular activities. C Christison (2013) in his study elaborated on the benefits of participation in extracurricular activities he concluded that participating in extracurricular activities benefits students' personal and academic success. Participation in such activities is not only beneficial for the individual but is equally important for the community's needs.

5.3. Level of participation in curricular activities among school students:

To study the level of participation among school students' the total score from all the 24 items was calculated for individual students. Based on the scores students were placed in different categories like below average, average, and above average 41.93% of students are having an average level of participation in curricular activities .22.58% of students are having below-average participation and 35.48% of students have above average level of participation in curricular activities which is a positive sign that as compared to the below-average level of participation more number of students fall under the category of the above average level of participation



Although the majority of students have an average level of participation (41.93%) but there is certainly a need to bring students having below average levels of participation to at least average level of participation. The sample for the study was drawn from class 7th students i.e., in late childhood or early adolescence, the need to increase participation of students in co-curricular activities becomes even more significant as the participation in such activities helps in building better adolescence character. Fredricks & Eccles (2008) also pointed out that participation in extracurricular activities helps the students in understanding their strengths and weakness and also provides an opportunity to develop personal interests.

6. CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATION

6.1. Conclusion

Curricular and co-curricular activities are not just meant for academic excellence only rather focus on the all-round development of personality and their effects go beyond the classroom Josph, N.A (2009). The present study was conducted to analyze the choices of curricular and co-curricular activities among school students thereby understanding areas that need to be focused on for the holistic development of the student. For that purpose, the participation of students in curricular and co-curricular activities was explored from various dimensions and their choices were critically analyzed to make necessary conclusions and inferences. Though students participate in curricular and co-curricular activities they are not consistent in their participation. There is a significant difference in the level of participation among students, 22.58% fall in the category of below-average participation, and 35.48% have above average level of participation. Motivation is what drives us to take action, it may be of any form either intrinsic or extrinsic Deci & Ryan (2000), lack of motivation possibly be one of the reasons for a significant number of students falling in the category of below-average participation in curricular and co-curricular activities. Intrinsic motivation refers to doing something because it is inherently interesting or enjoyable, and extrinsic motivation, refers to doing something because it leads to a separable outcome. Though intrinsic motivation is the one that gives quality outcomes, when it comes to the educational setting extrinsic motivation becomes the inevitable tool in the hand of teachers to get the task done Deci & Ryan (1985,2000), so there is a constant need to motivate the students to participates in all the activities being conducted in the schools. The present finding also confirms that only a smaller number of students (39.11%)

regularly participate in curricular and co-curricular activities rest of the students either occasionally or rarely participate in such curricular activities As the Holistic development of the child can be achieved by 3H (Head, Hand & Heart) more number students, should be encouraged to regularly participate in curricular and co-curricular activities Aytoda Roshni B. (2018). The analysis regarding the choices of curricular and co-curricular activities highlights that 39.51% of students rarely participate in civic sense activities and 47.58% of students regularly participate in academic activities these contrasting findings can be attributed to the difference in the source of motivation intrinsic or extrinsic motivation. Mustafa et al., (2020) in their study elaborated that student participates in volunteer activities because of intrinsic motivation it gives them a feeling of satisfaction contributing to their mental well-being. Lack of intrinsic motivation is possibly the reason behind a significant number of students' rare participation in the category of civic sense activities and extrinsic motivation in the form of grades and academic excellence is the main reason for a good number of students' regular participation in academic activities. In the school setting, extrinsic motivation becomes an essential strategy for successful teaching Deci & Ryan (2000). Overall, the study demonstrates that there is a difference in the level of participation, as well as students, differ in their choice of curricular and co-curricular activities.

6.2. Implications

Curricular and co-curricular activities play an important role in the holistic development of the child. Penjor, U. (2021) in his empirical study on school students found out that student who regularly participates in extracurricular activities have better academic performance. Apart from academic excellence curricular and co-curricular activities significantly contribute to the holistic development of students. Holistic development of the child can be achieved by focusing on the development aspects of human personality, none of the developmental aspects should be left behind. The present study was taken up to identify how effectively curricular and co-curricular activities be used for the holistic development of the child. Analysis of choices of different curricular and co-curricular activities is relevant and useful for stakeholders of education.

a) Implications for practice:

The teachers may identify those areas of curricular activities which need immediate action to achieve the ultimate goal of holistic development. Teachers can thereby recognize the inclination of students toward any particular category of activities that might be useful for selecting a profession accordingly. In case students are not participating in any particular category of curricular activities extrinsic motivation in the form of reward and appreciation can be given, which will help in developing a holistic child.

b) Implication for policy:

The theory is incomplete unless it is implemented as a policy. The policy then will help in bringing theory into practice. The finding of the present study suggests that curriculum developers shall design a balanced curriculum i.e., a Curriculum that includes curricula and co-curricular activities encompassing all the developmental aspects necessary for the holistic development of the child.

c) Implication for future research:

The present study is limited to analyzing the choices of different curricular and co-curricular activities. Elaborated exploratory research can be done to find out the reasons why a student chooses any particular activity, not another. A similar study can be done for primary school or senior secondary school students.

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