

Happiness Curriculum: Transformative Process to Ensure Holistic Child Development

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Abstract – Happiness is the key to achieve self satisfaction in life. Happiness of children can be understood by some indicators like friendship, cooperation and optimism. Positive experiences during childhood can shape better personality and perspective of human being in further life. It is ethical responsibility of teachers and parents to understand the requirements of children related to emotional, psychological and social needs. In psychology the concept of positive education is becoming more popular day by day. According to Seligman (2009) positive education focuses on the gap between what people want for their children and what does school teach. Parents want to see their children to be self aware, confident, happy and satisfied but schools only focus on marks, academic work and discipline. To bring balance in students' life is the noble responsibility of teachers and parents.

Keywords: Happiness, Learning, School, Students, Teachers, Positive Education

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INTRODUCTION

Education is important to nurture strengths and ensures growth and development of students. Positive attitude, behavior and well being of the students are essential key concerns for teachers to perform their role efficiently (Shankland & Rosset, 2017) Joyful learning is vital for overall development of each child. Parents always make efforts to promote the well-being of their children through full financial, emotional and psychological support. Being as a parent it is also important to prepare children for facing every kind of situation with courage in life. Parents play an essential role in determining the learning environment at home. It is an ethical responsibility of the parents to take rational decisions for children's education related choices. Parents are the main stakeholder to decide the type of school in which children will attain the education.

OBJECTIVES OF THE PAPER

This paper tries to understand the role of teachers and parents in ensuring the happiness of children. This paper throws light upon the important aspects of learning and happiness. This paper examines the initiative of Delhi government to initiate 'Happiness Curriculum'.

METHODS

This paper is based on secondary sources. Descriptive research design has been used for this paper.

STUDENTS' SITUATION IN PRESENT SCENARIO

In the fast growing and changing society children are becoming overstressed due to unrealistic expectations of parents, peer pressure and cut throat competition. Students become clueless and vulnerable while facing adverse situations in life for e.g. securing poor marks or failure in the exams. They don't get any kind of training to cope up with such situations in life. Such depressed situation makes students more violent, deviant and sometimes it leads to student's suicide. Such social crisis or lack of proper understanding creates negative environment and stressful emotions among students. In today's technology driven society students face various adjustment related psychological and social problems with friends, teachers, and parents.

In Indian conventional society children get less opportunity or space to express themselves without any fear or openly in front of teachers and parents. The culture of silence does not allow students to talk about their dilemmas and weaknesses without having any hesitation. Secured marks in the exams is the parameter to judge the development and future success of the children by parents. Indian education system is focusing on marks rather than skills and holistic personality development. Parents generally don't give time in the school to understand their children's mental, emotional and social situation and relationship with teachers and peer groups of the students in the school. In government schools there are various challenges

e.g. inadequate teacher-student ratio, lack of proper infrastructure and facilities. Due to extra burden of work teachers find less opportunity due to various expected role in the school to address the problems and needs of each and every child in the classroom. As far as happiness is concerned parents and teachers can play a crucial role to promote positive mental, emotional well-being of the students.

CHALLENGES OF STUDENT'S LIFE

Problems/challenges faced by students can be seen as follows:

- Exam pressure
- Peer pressure
- Stressful competitive situation
- Psychological causes
- Economic factors

HAPPINESS: ULTIMATE GOAL OF LIFE

The programme for international student Assessment (PISA) has introduced indicators of student's happiness in 2012 assessment to measure the happiness of students and their learning outcome. It was an initiative to understand the status of happiness in school. Bhutan has taken initiative and launched Gross National Happiness Index (GNHI) in 2010. This Index tries to measure a variety of aspects of psychological well-being and education. United Nations General Assembly identified 'pursuit of happiness as a fundamental human goal' in 2011 assembly. The Sustainable Development Goal four (SDG 4) has given importance to quality education and focuses on 'happy school', which would promote such healthy learning environment which includes safety, non-violence and leads to culture of peace. According to World Happiness Report, 2017, India ranked 122 out of 155 countries.

School is such a place where students not only learn academically but try to learn moral values and positive habits. Schools do impact upon students' overall personality development. Children spend most of the time of their childhood in the school. Major part of children's childhood would be affected by the environment of the school and behavior of the school functionaries.

DELHI GOVERNMENT'S INITIATIVE

On 2nd July, 2018 Delhi government inaugurated and implemented 'Happiness Curriculum' in Delhi government schools for all students who are studying up to class VIII. The main objective of this Happiness Curriculum is to give assurance to students and parents that education should not focus only on

acquiring good marks but also to promote such environment which would make students more satisfied, confident, happy and self-aware.

This curriculum has included various activities based intervention such as:

- To promote mental health and peace of mind 'Meditation' has been included in the curriculum;
- To enhance the participation level through implementation of activities based joyful learning exercises;
- To inculcate habit of cooperation and enhancing harmonious relationship among students 'indoor games' should be initiated;
- To encourage active and sincere listening skill 'story telling' should be initiated;
- To promote free expression of views and learning acceptance for others 'group discussion' should be promoted;
- To inculcate habit of empathy practice of 'skits' should be initiated;
- To encourage public speaking and minimizing stage fear 'group presentation' has been included in the curriculum
- Other activities related to promote rapport building and team building has been initiated

The main components of this Happiness Curriculum are meditation, mental activities and creating stress free joyful learning. The Delhi government has decided to give 45 minute 'happiness period' everyday for students from class I to VIII, while this class will be held only twice in a week for nursery and kindergarten children. This kind of reform and initiative can lead towards positive direction to attain the prime goal of becoming more decent and progressive citizen. This step will promote transformative process of positive change in the society. This initiative will determine the holistic approach as far as students' development is concerned. This concept will strengthen students from inside so that they can face success and failure both with positive attitude and balanced perspective.

CONCLUSION:

It is crucial to understand the relationship between education and happiness. Students's leaning can be more enriching when they get joyful and supportive environment. Delhi government's initiative to implement happiness curriculum is

giving an opportunity to students to become active participant in the learning process. A happy child can be a successful citizen in future. Practice of mindfulness can enhance the ability of students so that they can be more attentive, rational and cooperative. This initiative is strengthening the conventional education system and trying to blend it with modern education. Teachers, parents and students can be able to work in close relationship and can feel more connectedness to achieve their similar goal of holistic development of the students. Practice of moral values and mental exercise can strong citizen.

<https://positivepsychology.com/positive-education-happy-students/>

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