

“Playground is an Uncovered School” a Study on Co-curricular Activities for Child Development

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Abstract:

Co-curricular activities are considered as an important part of child development. It is a new way of imparting education through scientific blends on the part of education. It is a new invention for the new generation to grow up a child with excellence. Co-curricular activities form a vital link in the total pattern of educational experiences. These experiences comprise inside as well as outside class-room experiences to cover all facts of growth pattern and ensure balanced development of the child and good citizenship for the country. Schools are selected to play its major role. But many schools are found not arranging various types of co-curricular activities due to different problems. Consequently, many students are deprived from participation of these activities. Therefore, the present study mainly aims to aware the students, school authorities and parents/guardians about its importance at school level.

Key words: *co-curricular activities, playground, curriculum, school, formal education and physical, mental and social activities*

Introduction:

The modern meaning of curriculum is very wide and comprehensive. It includes the totality of experiences of the child i.e. acquired inside and outside the school. However, the curriculum meant for them is not sufficient enough to fulfill the over-all development. To see this crisis, the formal education of the school houses many activities as a part of education for the all-round development of the child and their personality. As these activities are significantly joined with the curriculum, it is called co-curricular activities, which can help in the physical, mental, moral, social, emotional, aesthetic and spiritual development of an individual.

The co-curricular activities are now an integral part of the educational system at school. Few years back, it was taken as extra-curricular activities which were not given much emphasis as it is given today. But this situation gradually underwent a change. The school is charged by the society to give various training to youths to make them socially and economically efficient. So,

the present day theory appreciably recognizes these activities as valuable means for realizing the social and economic aims of life. Hence, according to modern educationist, curricular and co-curricular activities are not the different part of education, on the contrary, it is considered complementary to each other.

In the ancient time, school education was based on Gurukul system, where the Gurus were the head of entire educational system. The decisions of the Gurus were the final decision. They imparted knowledge either from their own experiences or from the books written by great scholars. So, mental development or intellectual development was regarded as the main aim of education at that time. Modern education, on the other hand, is to make children ready for harmonious and all round development of personality through the activities like games and sports, excursion, debates, social services, cultural activities, dramatics, social function, dancing, music, etc.

Secondary stage of education is the most significant part of formal education. It covers the period of adolescents. All psychologists and educationists are of the opinion that instincts of adolescents should be properly trained and guided, as this period brings about the maximum bodily development. Therefore, in order to make the body active, various games and sports should be organized for them. In fact, secondary school should play a vital role in organizing co-curricular activities for adolescent students.

The Indian Education Commission of 1964-66 has stressed, “We conceive of the school curriculum as the totality of learning experiences that the school provides for the pupils through all the manifold activities in the school or outside that are carried on under its supervision”.

The New Education Policy (1986) lays special emphasis on the need of co-curricular activities. “Productive and creative activities help in the harmonious development of 4H’s: Head, Heart, Hand and Health. These activities provide for the expression of the child’s manifold talents. In fact, co-curricular activities are the most useful and integral part of curricular programme”.

The remarks of the Secondary Education Commission in respect of the co-curricular activities are worth noting. “This is not merely place of formal learning whose main concern is to communicate a certain prescribed quantum of knowledge but rather as a living and organic community which is primarily interested in training its pupils in what we have called the ‘gracious art of living’. Knowledge and learning are undoubtedly of value but they must be acquired as a by-product of interested activity because it is only then that they can become a vital part of student’s mind and personality and influence his behaviour. But the art of living is much more comprehensive concept than the acquisition of knowledge, however, intelligently planned. It includes training in the habit and graces of social life and the capacity for co-operative group work. It calls for patience, good temper, sincerity, fellow feeling and discipline. These activities

can only be cultivated in the context of the social life and the many co-curricular activities must find a recognized place in any school”.

Types of Co-curricular Activities:

There are numbers of co-curricular activities. We can divide them into certain groups as follows.

1. **Physical activities:** These activities help students to maintain their health, stamina, vitality and growth. Such activities include games and sports, athletics, cycling, swimming, boating, rowing, mass parade, N.C.C., Scout, girls' guide etc.
2. **Social activities:** The social activities include social services like cleanliness week, first-aid, village survey for some purpose, repairing of school buildings, construction of roads, adult education, blood donation etc. Besides, celebration of some special days such as parent's day, school foundation day, birthday of a great man etc can be organized in the school.
3. **Literary activities:** Publication of school magazine, wall papers, pamphlets and bulletins, essay writing competition, writing of summary and reviewers of selected books etc. are included in this type of activities.
4. **Artistic activities:** To develop artistic sense of the pupils the artistic activity includes dance competition, dramatic performances, music soiree, recitations, exhibition of painting, drawing, modeling, sculpture, variety show, flower arrangement, poetical composition and so on.
5. **Productive activities:** This category of activities includes spinning, tailoring, embroidery, knitting, weaving, toy making, basket making, gardening, floriculture etc.
6. **Cultural activities:** The cultural activities include folk dance, celebration of religious and other festivals, visit to places of cultural importance etc.
7. **Academic activities:** Debate, symposium, art clubs, excursions, seminars, mock-parliament, literary clubs, survey clubs etc. help student by developing thinking, reasoning problem solving.
8. **Educational tours and excursions:** These activities include visit to the places of historical, geographical, cultural, educational or national importance.
9. **Activity of leisure:** Photography, stamp collection, album making, decoration, preparation of charts, models etc.
10. **Citizenship training activities:** This training includes mock parliament, students' council, co-operative store, visits to a place of social importance and so on.
11. **Multi-purpose activities:** These activities include beautification of campus, cultural week celebration, community survey for special purpose, project of experimental or developmental nature, improvement of environment and many more.

Objectives of Co-curricular Activities:

The main objectives of co-curricular activities are as follows:

1. To make children ready for harmonious and all round development of personality.
2. To prepare for practical life and to give training in good citizenship.
3. To develop a close relationship between the school, teachers and the community.
4. To raise the standard of whole educational system.
5. To identify the field where a child would like to explore himself.
6. To teach responsibility and make school life vigorous.
7. To make proper use of off time.
8. To develop the feeling of cooperation and co-existence among children.
9. To provide the opportunity for self evaluation.
10. To make children self-reliant, self-discipline, tolerant and sympathetic.

Values of Co-curricular Activities:

Co-curricular activities have great value from the different points of view:

1. The physical activities help the students to maintain their health, stamina, vitality and growth.
2. The social activities help the children to know their responsibility and obligation towards the society in which they live. They like to do these activities to learn a lot about social value and management.
3. The literary activities develop the habit of writing and expression. It also develops thinking and creativity.
4. The artistic activities develop the artistic sense of the pupil. So, school authority should organize these functions annually or occasionally.
5. Productive activities teach a student to understand self discipline, love of labour, dignity of labour and self confidence.
6. By doing cultural activities the children acquire aesthetic sense and love the cultural heritage of our society.
7. The academic activities are very important to grow up a child's mentality. It helps to develop thinking, reasoning and problem solving. Moreover, club work, debates, group discussions etc. help in developing initiatives, power of expression, sociability, co-operation and respect for law.
8. The educational tours and excursions, according to W.M. Georjy are, "for useful learning, pupils require experience with the raw materials of life. A garden, a shop, a live animal collection, a trip to farm, a mill, a store, a park, a museum, all must have a place in the modern school. Excursion to visit museum, archives, forts, temples, ruins, mountains, rivers, canals, field factories, dams, libraries etc. supplement the teaching of relevant subjects by providing first hand information and experience".

9. Modern education aims to make the young children worthy citizens of a democratic society. Citizenship training helps to build a harmonious personality with strong social sense.
10. Leisure activities or multi-purpose activities help to discover special talents and abilities of children.

Review of Literature:

There is some research projects conducted in this field. The present study is specially formulated on the basis of these research works:

Ranjana Pathak, (1977-78), in *a study on the co-curricular activities in the girls' high schools of greater Gauhati and its impact on the students' life, G.U. Assam*, has seen that there is no properly trained teachers and experts for organizing sufficient number of these activities in these high schools. In many schools of Guwahati there is no provision for equipments needed for different co-curricular activities. This is a common problem of every school. The main findings were lack of pupils' participation, lack of adequate staff, lack of encouragement, lack of interest in students, lack of proper play ground etc.

Godhuli Thakuria, (1981-82), in *a study of the existing facilities available for physical welfare of the students in the secondary schools of Gauhati, G.U. Assam*, has seen that secondary schools of Gauhati are lagging behind in respect of physical education. The schools are very poor from this point of view. There is no provision for physical training class in secondary schools. There is also no separate guidance clinic to study students' mental problem.

Mira Goswami, (1987), *a study of the extra-curricular activities carried on a few secondary schools in and around the city of Guwahati, G.U. Assam*, has conducted this study especially on the problems of co-curricular activities in and around the schools of Guwahati city. The study shows that though provision for physical activities is very important for adolescents but only 60% provisions were found in the sample schools. The study also reveals that many of the schools have no playground to conduct co-curricular activities. On the other hand, she found that many schools have not yet been able to introduce some important co-curricular activities. She recommended some suggestions for the improvement of co curricular activities in schools.

Renchumi Kikon, (1997), *a study of recreational facilities and its impact on educational achievement of the students of secondary schools of Wokha district in Nagaland, G.U., Assam*, reveals that the students belonging to privately managed schools, both in rural and urban areas have better academic achievements than the students belonging to Govt. schools. At the same time the privately managed schools have much more recreational facilities than the Govt. managed schools.

Abhijit Saha, (2005), *a study of the facilities of co-curricular activities and extent of participation in the secondary schools with special reference to Silchar Municipal area, G.U., Assam*, studied that the financial crisis of the schools is very crucial and there is a lack of trained teachers. Co-curricular activities still to get scientific place in the school's time table. Most of the schools keep a period for co-curricular activities just to carry out the direction of the departmental authorities. Nevertheless, the schools arrange annual sports, cultural functions and competitions and students take part with full enthusiasm. But if they are given better facilities they would show better performances.

Methodology:

The design of the study is very simple and theoretical. The tools used in this study are mainly books, assumptions, projects or some researches that are conducted before on this topic. It is an analysis of available materials and justification of co-curricular activities on the basis of present needs for the child development. Thus, the study can be a reliable source and valid document to many people, researchers and school authorities.

Suggestions and recommendations:

In the light of the facts and experiences gathered in this study, the following suggestions can be forwarded for the improvement of co-curricular activities in the schools.

1. The Government should take initiative to make co-curricular activities as a compulsory subject for child's overall growth and development.
2. The school administration should make available of all necessary equipments in their school and produce it when needed.
3. The separate trained teachers should be appointed for various co-curricular training.
4. To develop co-curricular activities, the school authorities, students, teachers, parents and the community members should take joint efforts to create awareness and make a congenial environment for student participants.
5. Almost all schools fail to organize co-curricular activities properly and timely due to lack of funds or local resources. The Government should provide at least a lump-sum grant for the development of co-curricular activities for each school in every year. The encouragement of education department is very essential.
6. Rewards or incentives should be given to those students, who show better performance/s in co-curricular activities. But proper judgment should be done.
7. Girl students should be encouraged to participate in co-curricular activities.
8. Parents and guardians should be made aware about the need and importance of co-curricular activities.
9. Inter school competition may be arranged at least half yearly, where students can get a chance to express himself/herself or exchange their ideas with others.

10. Private schools should not left from the participation of co-curricular activities. They should also take it seriously.

Nobody can deny the importance of co-curricular activities. It is an important part of education. So everybody's effort and inspiration is essential. Each and every school should take some initiations to organize the co-curricular activities and let the students grow according to their own choice. Nobody knows which child will show better performance at which field. But it is through co-curricular activities one can get a clue to their future development. Hence, modern educationists have given greater emphasis on co-curricular activities. Without this full development of the child is impossible.

Conclusion:

The education system of our country has been changed to a greater extent during Post-Independence period. Pupils are charged for all round development. Under the new educational ideals, schools are given responsibility to impart physical, mental and social training along with the bookish knowledge. Therefore, it has become very necessary to place various co-curricular activities in educational setup.

The present curriculum becomes over burden both for the teachers and the students. They have to complete their courses within the fixed time allotted by the Board/Council. Due to over burden, both students and teachers have no time to give proper importance on co-curricular activities. A period is not enough for to-days broad based and extensive co-curricular activities. Different commissions and policy makers may say about its importance but practical application still remains absent in the curriculum. Generally, it is seen that almost all schools organize annual sports, cultural functions and some other competitions. But only a limited number of participants get satisfaction and numbers of students remain absent from these activities. Would it be possible to make over all development if we do not think about it?

Therefore, whatever the obstacle it is, if congenial atmosphere for co-curricular activities is created, if we locally manage many things, if materials are supplied timely, if teachers and guardians come forward to cooperate, nobody can keep the students away from participating in various co-curricular activities of their choice. If they get proper environment and social support, it is sure; they will show better performances in their life. Because, it gives refreshment, it teaches pupil to be practical, it motivates them to get a platform in their life and it gives a personal identity. Moreover, it gives mental satisfaction to each volunteer. Thus, it is hoped that this study will help to understand the people about the importance of co-curricular activities, and also it will be benefitted for the students, teachers and school authorities to fulfill their unnoticed backlogs for such an important part of education.

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