

IMPROVING PARTICIPATION AND PERFORMANCE OF STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

The main objective of this research paper is to understand that bringing about improvements in participation and performance of students is regarded indispensable. For educational institutions to enhance their reputation and to achieve educational goals, it is necessary to encourage students to participate and perform well. In order to bring about improvements in the participation and performance of students, it is necessary for the educators and school administrators to provide them opportunities. To make provision of opportunities for students, it is vital for the members of the educational institutions to implement the functions of planning, organizing, directing, controlling and co-ordinating in an efficient manner. They need to take into consideration the fact that provision of opportunities would not only facilitate participation among students, but they are also able to augment their skills and abilities. Co-curricular activities are regarded important, which encourage participation of students and enrich their skills and aptitudes. The main areas that have been taken into account in this research paper include, areas encouraging participation and performance of students, and participation of students in co-curricular activities.

Keywords: Academic Goals, Co-Curricular Activities, Educational Institutions, Participation, Performance, Students

In India, the system of education is the second largest. With the implementation of policies, programs and schemes, there are improvements taking place within the system of education. The individuals, belonging to various communities, categories and backgrounds are recognising the significance of education and get their children enrolled in schools. When the students get enrolled in schools, their primary objective is to acquire educational qualifications and augment their skills and abilities in terms of various aspects. In order to attain educational goals and objectives, it is vital for students to bring about improvements in their participation and performance. Apart from participating and rendering an effective performance in the achievement of academic goals, the students are also participating in bringing about improvements in the quality of educational standards. The main reason being, the primary objective of educational institutions at all levels is to ensure that they promote effective learning among students and help them achieve their professional and personal goals.

The encouragement of student participation is regarded as crucial in promoting enhancement of the overall quality of the system of education. The main reasons being, students are the largest group of individuals, they are well-informed, motivated, dedicated and carry out their tasks and activities with diligence and conscientiousness. The several dimensions of student participation often surpass the boundaries of the educational institutions and there is a comprehensive and positive attitude towards an increase in student influence in the governance of higher education, including the role of social activism in social changes. Students are therefore, referred to as the driving forces, leading to the implementation of reforms within the system of higher education (Student Participation in Quality Enhancement, n.d.). When the participation of students is encouraged, they are provided with rights and opportunities to give ideas and suggestions. Furthermore, they are also vested with the responsibilities to implement the job duties in accordance to their judgment and thinking.

AREAS ENCOURAGING PARTICIPATION AND PERFORMANCE OF STUDENTS

The major areas that encourage the participation and performance of students are stated as follows:

Responsibilities towards Learning – The students from the stage of early childhood are generated awareness in terms of responsibilities towards learning. They are taught that they get enrolled in educational institutions to acquire learning, enhancing their educational qualifications, sustaining their living conditions in an appropriate manner and emerging into creative and productive human beings. The students at all levels of education have the primary responsibility of paying adequate attention towards learning. The major responsibilities of the students towards learning are identified in various aspects. These are, they need to form constructive viewpoints and perspectives regarding the educational institutions, educators, personnel and the overall environmental conditions; they need to possess adequate knowledge and information regarding the programs and policies, in other words, they need to ensure that they are disciplined and follow the rules and procedures satisfactorily; pay adequate attention within the classroom, particularly when the educators are teaching and form good terms and relationships with the other individuals; and one of the responsibilities that is of utmost significance is, students need to be well-aware of the target dates of submission of their assignments or reports or projects and they should prepare themselves well, especially before tests and exams.

Viewpoints on Quality of Teaching – The quality of teaching is regarded as integral towards acquiring educational skills and in the achievement of academic goals. The educators are required to put into practice the teaching-learning methods in accordance to grade-levels of students, subjects and concepts, and skills and abilities possessed by them. In some cases, the teaching methods that are implemented by the educators may not prove to be advantageous to the students. In other words, they are not able to acquire an efficient understanding of the academic concepts. Research has indicated that students, belonging to class five are unable to read

class two textbooks and are not even able to solve division problems up to two digits. Hence, this is due to implementation of inadequate teaching methods. On the other hand, when students perform well, then the primary cause is the implementation of well-organized and adequate teaching methods. In educational institutions at all levels, it is vital for the educators to provide students with the rights and opportunities to express their viewpoints and perspectives, particularly regarding the teaching methods. When they do not find teaching methods suitable in attainment of the desired academic performance, they should express their viewpoints on quality of teaching.

Redressing Grievances – The students are usually provided with opportunities to redress their grievances in case of any problems or challenges, they are experiencing. It has been found that in higher educational institutions, students are provided with number of ways to redress their grievances. These are, either online, or through giving a written application or through verbal communication with educators. The grievances that are experienced by the students are related to various factors. These are, understanding of academic concepts, implementation of projects and assignments, preparing for the tests and exams, participating in other tasks and activities, experiencing discriminatory treatment or any form of violent and criminal acts and so forth. When the students redress their grievances, then normally discussion meetings are organised. These take place between the students and educators. As when they will experience problems in quality of teaching methods used, then they would either directly redress the grievance to the professor or head of the department. Whereas, when students experience any form of discriminatory treatment, they would communicate with their professor, or supervisor and the head of the department. The participation of the students is regarded as significant in redressing grievances, communicating with members of the educational institutions and seeking solutions.

Participation in Seminars – Seminars are regarded as integral in enriching the system of education in schools, colleges and universities. The seminars are usually organized on the basis of a

subject or topic. The primary objective of seminars is to augment knowledge and information among individuals. In some educational institutions, seminars are organized on a frequent basis, i.e. once in three months, whereas, in others, they are organized seldom, i.e. once a year. In the organization of seminars, the members of the educational institutions, the heads, educators, staff members and students have to render an effective participation. They are required to work in integration and collaboration with each other. The participation of students is regarded as indispensable. The students carry out number of job duties. These include, making presentations of research papers, giving speeches, performing the role of the speaker, making announcements, and in some cases, they even participate in creative activities, such as, singing, dancing, or playing of musical instruments. The participation of students in seminars is pleasurable and contented. They are not only able to augment their skills and abilities, but also acquire appreciation. Usually, students get rewarded as well for their effective participation in seminars. The rewards are usually in the form of certificates.

Feedback Mechanisms – To bring about improvements in the system of education and to facilitate student learning, it is necessary to promote understanding among students regarding feedback mechanisms. When students are encouraged to provide feedback, especially regarding the educators and teaching methods, they feel motivated towards learning. Feedback should be obtained from students regarding their needs, objectives, goals and aspirations. When the educators obtain feedback from the students regarding these aspects, they need to accordingly put into practice the teaching-learning methods and instructional strategies. They need to ensure that the teaching-learning methods and instructional strategies should be meaningful and beneficial to the students in every possible manner.

In higher educational institutions, students are provided with opportunities to give feedback regarding the teaching methods and overall conduct on the part of their professors. They are mostly given a survey questionnaire, comprising of multiple

choice questions. The answers to these questions need to be provided in the Likert scale format, such as, strongly agree, agree, not sure, disagree and strongly disagree. The questions are primarily related to the teaching methods, knowledge and skills of the educators, approachability, possession of knowledge, ability to provide solutions to academic problems of students and so forth. At the end of the survey questionnaire, they are provided with space to express their ideas and suggestions. Therefore, this method helps in enabling the educators to identify the limitations, and make improvements. In this manner, the students too will benefit from effective participation.

Quality Enhancement – Quality enhancement is a comprehensive concept and it needs to be acknowledged in all aspects of educational institutions. These include, teaching-learning methods, instructional strategies, infrastructure, library facilities, laboratories, computer centres, tools, equipment, teaching-learning materials, playgrounds, sports, creative and extra-curricular activities, civic amenities, competitions, events and the overall environmental conditions of the educational institutions. In all these areas, the participation of students is indispensable. They get involved in extra-curricular and creative activities, make use of library and laboratory facilities, computer centres, technologies, and so forth. The participation of students in quality enhancement is regarded to be of utmost significance. Quality enhancement in the system of education is a deliberate process of promoting transformations. Research has indicated that within the course of time, changes and developments do take place in these aspects, primarily to bring about improvements in the overall system of education. The quality of learning opportunities that have been made available to the students are regarded as indispensable in the maintenance of standards. These are mainly concerned with the effectiveness of teaching-learning materials, and the academic support available in promoting student learning and the achievement of academic goals (Prasad, & Patil, 2007). Hence, to achieve academic goals, it is vital for the students to render an effective participation.

Designing of Curriculum – Teaching at all levels has to shift from teacher-perspective to student-perspective. This transformation enables the students to acquire empowerment opportunities, develop their skills and abilities and augment interest and motivation towards learning. The participation of students is also encouraged in the designing of the curriculum. When the students participate in the designing of the curriculum, they are able to prepare themselves in a well-organized manner for employment opportunities. Particularly, when they select the field of education, then there are number of jobs that one gets engaged in, apart from teaching. These include, curriculum assistant, co-ordinator of curriculum and instructional methods and so forth. When the students are provided with the opportunities of designing of curriculum, they are able to formulate lesson plans, exercises and render an effectual contribution in the development of the course content. Participation of students in the designing of the curriculum also helps in enabling them to achieve desired academic outcomes. Normally, in the implementation of this task, students are required to collaborate and work in co-ordination with the fellow students. In higher educational institutions, particularly when students are pursuing Bachelors, Masters or doctoral programs, they are provided with participation opportunities in the designing of the curriculum.

Monitoring and Supervision – In schools, in some cases, teachers get engaged in some other tasks and activities, as a result of which they do not show up in classes. In such cases, when teachers are not present, then certain students are vested with the authority to manage the classroom activities. Research has indicated that primarily in the absence of teachers, students usually tend to get engaged into conversation with others, or get engaged in other activities. To eliminate indiscipline and unexpected behavioural traits, teachers usually assign responsibilities to certain students. These responsibilities are of monitoring and supervision. The implementation of monitoring and supervision enables the individuals to hone leadership skills.

The students, who are astute and possess efficient communication skills are usually assigned these responsibilities. In the implementation of these

responsibilities, they are primarily told that when the teachers are not present, they need to control the classroom tasks and activities, maintain discipline and ensure that students are working on their assignments. In most cases, educators appoint monitors and are required to implement all the classroom tasks and activities. The monitors are assigned various job duties. These include, maintaining attendance registers, ensuring discipline is maintained, especially in the absence of teachers, ensuring teaching-learning materials, equipment, tools, technologies are well-maintained and they need to ensure the formation of amiable environmental conditions within the classrooms.

Participation in Social Work – Educational institutions usually get engaged in social work activities. Social work generates pleasure among individuals that they are rendering an effective contribution towards promoting well-being of the community. The various kinds of social work activities include, providing literacy classes to students, belonging to deprived, marginalized and socio-economically backward sections of the society, collecting various materials such as, stationary items, clothing, food items and other things of daily use for poverty stricken individuals, individuals affected by natural calamities and disasters and so forth. To render an effective contribution in social work activities, the educators usually communicate with students. In some cases, students are allowed to make their own decisions, whereas, in other cases, participation in social work activities is mandatory for them. Students get rewarded usually in the form of certificates for participating in social work.

Research has indicated that when students provide free coaching classes to students in terms of academic subjects as well as art and craft, they feel pleasurable and contented. In this manner, they are able to please their teachers and acquire appreciation. Participation in social work is usually encouraged in higher educational institutions. But the students enrolled in secondary and senior secondary schools also participate in social work by donating items and making provision of coaching classes for students, belonging to marginalized communities. In some cases, usually in higher

educational institutions, providing teaching on an honorary basis is also the part of the academic programs.

Empowering Students for Workplace Building – Acquisition of employment opportunities is regarded as one of the major objectives of individuals. They get enrolled in higher educational institutions to acquire degrees and professional educational qualifications in number of fields, such as, education, law, medical, engineering, management, administration, science, technology and so forth. They have the main objective of acquiring employment opportunities. The empowerment of the students for workplace building is referred to their employability (Prasad, & Patil, 2007). With the advent of globalisation and industrialization, there have been changes and progressions taking place within the educational institutions and employment opportunities. The individuals need to be well-prepared for acquiring employment opportunities.

In the present existence, individuals are unable to find good employment opportunities and also get engaged in jobs that are different from their fields. It is one of the major objectives of educational institutions to prepare students to get engaged in employment opportunities. In higher educational institutions, particularly when students are pursuing masters and doctoral programs, they work as teaching assistants and carry out the job duties of research and writing. They provide assistance to their professors and supervisors in the implementation of their job duties. In some cases, they get paid, whereas, in other cases, they carry out these tasks and activities, primarily to gain experience. Apart from acquisition of educational qualifications, the individuals need to develop job experience as well to acquire good employment opportunities.

PARTICIPATION OF STUDENTS IN CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Co-curricular activities are the activities that render an effective contribution in development of life skills and career opportunities for students. These activities are organized in educational institutions that make provision of opportunities for

the students to enhance their creative skills, problem solving skills, decision making skills and rational thinking. When the students participate in co-curricular activities, they are not only able to augment their competencies, but also are able to stimulate their mind-sets towards learning. When improvements take place in the teaching-learning methods, instructional strategies and overall system of education, it is vital to put emphasis upon co-curricular activities. The various co-curricular activities that are initiated are, artworks, handicrafts, singing, music, dancing, role playing, sports, physical activities, debates, speeches, and so forth. When the students develop keen interest and enthusiasm in one or more of these activities, they may even join training centres apart from educational institutions. Development of talents and skills enables the individuals to select one of these activities as a career. The participation of students in co-curricular activities are beneficial to them in number of ways. These have been stated as follows:

Development of Critical Thinking, Decision Making and Problem Solving Skills – Development of critical thinking, decision making and problem solving skills are considered vital among individuals to enhance their overall quality of life. The decision making processes are integral. The individuals are required to make decisions on daily basis. They are in the implementation of household responsibilities as well as pursuance of career goals. When one is making decisions, they need to ensure that they prove to be advantageous to them in every possible manner. The individuals are also required to develop problem solving skills. The participation of individuals in various kinds of co-curricular activities helps in enabling them to augment their critical thinking, decision making and problem solving skills.

Responsibility and the Ability to Apply Ethical Principles – The participation of students in co-curricular activities enables them to recognize their responsibilities and augment the capabilities to apply ethical principles (Dhanmeher, 2014). It is essential for not only students but for all individuals to inculcate the traits of morality and ethics. Inculcation of morality and ethics would prove to be beneficial to the individuals in number of ways.

They are not only able to perform their job duties in a well-organized manner and achieve the desired goals and objectives, but they are also able to form effective terms and relationships with others. Application of ethical principles enables the individuals to develop productivity, resourcefulness, conscientiousness and diligence.

Adaptability and Flexibility – The traits of adaptability and flexibility enables the individuals to adjust to other conditions (Dhanmeher, 2014). The individuals, particularly in higher educational institutions are required to get engaged in other tasks as well, apart from academic studies. In some cases, they are engaged in full-time or part-time employment opportunities. Besides career opportunities, the individuals are also required to take out time for co-curricular activities. Research has indicated that mostly in higher educational institutions, the co-curricular activities that students are engaged in are, physical activities or some kinds of sports. Therefore, the individuals learn to be adaptable and flexible and implement proper time management skills. The traits of adaptability and flexibility enables the individuals to take out time for all tasks and activities.

Interpersonal Skills – When the individuals are learning a skill or acquiring academic knowledge, they are required to develop interpersonal skills (Dhanmeher, 2014). Interpersonal skills are the skills that includes, speaking, listening and responding. When one is acquiring knowledge in terms of academic concepts or creative skills, they need to form effective interpersonal skills with the instructors. The development of effective interpersonal skills not only enables the individuals to augment their skills and abilities, but they are able to form effective terms and relationships with other individuals. Co-curricular skills can be learned from the instructors on an individual basis as well as in the form of groups. When individuals are engaged in group activities or classes, it is vital for them to form effective interpersonal skills with group members as well.

Self-Discipline – The participation of students in co-curricular activities enables them to promote self-discipline. Inculcating self-discipline

enables the individuals to develop willpower and exercise self-control. When one is pursuing academic goals or are engaged in employment opportunities, it is vital for the individuals to promote self-discipline. The implementation of self-discipline enables the individuals to carry out their job duties in a well-organized manner and achieve the desired goals and objectives. It also helps the individuals to exercise self-control and cope up with problems and challenges in a calm and composed manner. Self-discipline enables the individuals to acquire respect for the value of effort and understanding of the need for individual contributions. It enables the individuals to work with others in an appropriate manner.

Ability to Set Future Goals and Objectives – An aimless life is a meaningless life, it is essential for the individuals, irrespective of their educational qualifications, categories and backgrounds to possess the ability to set future goals and objectives. The individuals differ from each other in their goals and objectives. Individuals set up different goals in accordance to their interests, skills, abilities, socio-economic background and so forth. In some cases, they aspire to obtain good employment opportunities, whereas in other cases, they even select a sport or creative activity to enhance their career prospects. Educational institutions at all levels have the primary objective of helping students reach their complete potential. The differences among students are depicted in terms of motivation, knowledge and competencies, learning styles, multiple intelligences, interests and backgrounds (Challenge 2, n.d.). When the individuals have certain goals and objectives, they are able to dedicate their efforts and tasks towards the implementation of those goals and objectives. The participation of students in co-curricular activities enables them to render a wholehearted contribution towards the achievement of goals and objectives.

Ability to Depict Diligence, Resourcefulness and Conscientiousness – When individuals are engaged in the pursuance of any particular task or function or when they are focusing upon sustenance of their living conditions, it is vital for them to depict the traits of diligence, resourcefulness and conscientiousness. These traits

are regarded indispensable to enrich the overall quality of life. The individuals from the stage of early childhood are generated awareness by their parents and teachers to put in their best abilities in what they are doing. As the individuals grow, they themselves realize the fact that it is essential to put in efforts and work towards implementation of various tasks and activities with diligence, resourcefulness and conscientiousness.

Conflict Resolution Skills – In educational institutions, training centres, employment settings and other places, sometimes conflicts and disagreements do take place between individuals. In the case of their occurrence, it is vital for the individuals to implement conflict resolution skills in a peaceful manner. When two or more individuals are involved in a conflicting situation or a disputation, it is vital for them to implement effective communication skills. In putting into operation effective communication skills, they need to adequately listen to each other and respond in a calm and composed manner. In conflicting situations, one needs to ensure that communication takes place in a polite and decent manner. Politeness and decency are integral to implementation of conflict resolution skills in a peaceful manner.

Supporting the Academic Mission of Educational Institutions – Participation in co-curricular activities is one of the crucial ways of supporting the academic mission of educational institutions. It is regarded as one of the valuable parts of the overall school experience (Benefits of Co-Curricular Activities, n.d.). In educational institutions of all levels, measures are formulated by the authorities to implement co-curricular activities. The implementation of co-curricular activities renders a significant contribution in accomplishing the mission of the educational institutions. One of the important examples is, when these activities are focused upon, then individuals participate in various activities and competitions. The organization of competitions regarding sports, physical activities, music, dancing, artworks and so forth are common in educational institutions. Co-curricular activities helps in the achievement of academic goals and objectives and enrichment of the overall system of education.

Ability to Promote Positive Health Behaviour – The participation of students in co-curricular activities assists in promoting positive health behaviour. The individuals, who participate in these activities are less likely to experience psychological and health problems. The mind-sets of the individuals get stimulated and they are able to develop motivation towards learning. The individuals are less likely to experience psychological problems of depression and stress. They are able to augment their communication and intellectual skills. The individuals are also less likely to get engaged in risky behaviours that may impose detrimental effects upon them (Benefits of Co-Curricular Activities, n.d.). Participation of individuals in co-curricular activities enables them to work diligently and make use of skills and aptitudes. In this manner, one is able to augment capabilities to promote positive health behaviour physically and psychologically.

CONCLUSION

In the achievement of desired goals and objectives and to enrich one's overall quality of life, it is essential for the individuals to render an effective participation in various functions and activities. When one is participating in the implementation of tasks and activities, it is vital for them to ensure that they generate efficient awareness in terms of various factors, possess skills and abilities and put into operation the tasks and activities with meticulousness, attentiveness and conscientiousness. To promote effective growth and development of students and enable them to achieve academic goals, it is essential for the educators to encourage participation opportunities. The participation of students in various tasks and activities enables them to develop motivation towards learning. The areas that encourage the participation and performance of students are, responsibilities towards learning, viewpoints on quality of teaching, redressing grievances, participation in seminars, feeding mechanisms, quality enhancement, designing of curriculum, monitoring and supervision, participation in social work and empowering students for workplace building.

The co-curricular activities are regarded as an integral part of education. In order to enhance the overall system of education and enable students to develop motivation and achieve personal and professional goals in an appropriate manner, it is necessary to pay attention towards implementation of co-curricular activities. Participation of students in co-curricular activities is regarded as an important aspect in augmenting one's skills and abilities and enable them to stimulate their mind-sets towards learning. The participation of students in co-curricular activities are beneficial to them in number of ways. These are, development of critical thinking, decision making and problem solving skills, responsibility and the ability to apply ethical principles, adaptability and flexibility, interpersonal skills, self-discipline, ability to set future goals and objectives, ability to depict diligence, resourcefulness and conscientiousness, conflict resolution skills, supporting the academic mission of educational institutions and ability to promote positive health behaviour. Finally, it can be stated that it is the job of the educators to put into operation effective teaching-learning methods, but students are required to inculcate the traits of creativity, ingenuity and inventiveness to achieve the desired goals.

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