



## Activity Based Learning Methodology Can Bring Improvement in Quality of Education in India

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### ABSTRACT

*In recent years many studies and surveys reflected the downfall in quality of education being provided to students in India, especially at Government schools and schools situated in remote and rural areas. Use of traditional teaching learning methods added to the problem many folds. Activity based learning methodologies can be useful in uplifting the level of outcome of students especially at primary and secondary level, because it provides space to child liberty and individuality. Although Government has tried to implement this programme all over the country, but it could not gain the enough popularity due to lack of serious efforts. Beside this there were some other problems such as teachers are not trained appropriately to apply such advance level methodology and scarcity of funds etc. This methodology is not only useful for general students but also effective in teaching mentally and physically challenged students. Role of teacher is very important in applying this method because teacher has to act as facilitator or guide not as lecture or instructor. Teacher should take utmost precaution while using this methodology in classroom because if activity is not properly planned or misdirected then it could be waste of time and money.*

**KEYWORDS :** Freedom, Facilitator, Individuality, Enthusiasm, Involvement, Supervision

### Introduction:

India is a big country with large population and its problems are even larger. In recent years providing quality education to every child of country has been emerged as big challenge to Government and society. 4% of children which is almost eight million never start schooling, 57% almost 74 million don't complete primary education while 90% about 172 million don't complete secondary level education. Only 10% of total young population completes secondary level education become a part of our traditional 10+2+3 education system (Kumar S. 2013). Even those who are able to complete their primary level or secondary level education their quality of learning is a big question mark. A report on quality of primary education in India reflected that a student of class five are not able to read the books of class one or two (ASER -2010).

All over the world educationist are working on new methods of teaching to enhance learning but in India still we can find schools where teachers are teaching in classroom with pin drop silence and stick in their hand. Here children have no liberty to speak, they are in the role of listener only. Different psychologists and educationists have recognised it as inappropriate way of teaching where learning of child is inhibited. New concepts of teaching – learning suggest that student should be given full freedom and opportunity to learn according to their capability and skill in classroom. Teacher should only act as Facilitator or a Guide not as an Instructor or Lecturer. This type of method is known as 'activity based learning' or 'learning by doing'.

### Discussion:

Activity based learning is comparatively new method of teaching – learning, evolved in decade of 90s. In India Rishi Valley School of Andhra Pradesh was first to test it and the results achieved were very hopeful. Later on Government of India and UNICEF implemented this activity based learning programme to other parts of the country. According to observers activity based learning method has created a visible improvement in children learning and Psychology (Thangavelu S. 2006).

The whole concept of activity based learning method is based on a truth that every child is different from other and so he should be allowed to learn and grow differently. These individual differences of child are the collaborative effect of many factor such as their socio-economic background, religious belief, attitude of their parents towards education, their environment of living etc.

### What is activity based learning?

According to UNICEF – 'Activity based learning is a methodology where children of different age group are grouped together in one classroom and each of them learn at his or her own pace through a series of activities in form of learning ladder, with teacher acting as a facilitator of child learning.'

It creates ideal environment for learning because freedom of learner

is top most priority. Activities involved in this method can be different depend upon subject and age group of learner and ability of teacher. Generally games, rhymes, drawing, singing, drama, role playing etc activities are involved to facilitate learning. At higher level student perform public service, field work and community based work along with classroom study. This methodology is more useful at primary and secondary level. Activity based learning brings smartness among students. This type of methodology is not only favourable to student but it is also helpful to teachers because teacher can make their teaching interesting through different type of activities. Educating the child through activities means all round development of child. Due to new inventions in the field of education researchers are inventing latest techniques and methodologies, but it is responsibility of teachers to select best methodology suited to their students.

It is a form of cooperative learning where learner not only learns through their own experiences but also through experiences of other members of their peer group. Even physically and mentally challenged students can easily be made learn through this methodology. Here activities become their language by means of which they try to express themselves. This methodology is useful in teaching all subjects. It brings better understanding of subject matter. Outcomes of activity based learning are something beyond marks and grades. It is the most efficient way of learning.

When teacher engage their students in activity based learning all the senses of students are active. Psychology treats the learners as active investigator of their environment. Students are provided with necessary data and material for focusing their concentration and thinking towards the subject matter. In an activity based teaching learner willingly with enthusiasm internalise and implement the concepts relevant to their needs. (Pine G. 1989)

### Kind of activities involved:

There can be various kinds of activities for implementing activity based learning programme, it depend upon ability of teacher, age group of students, availability of time etc. kind of activities used in this strategy can be generalised under three categories –

- (1) **Exploratory:** gathering knowledge, concepts and skills.
- (2) **Constructive:** getting experience through creative works.
- (3) **Expressive:** presentations.

### Advantages and Disadvantages of activity based learning:

There are certain advantages of activity based learning method but only if this method is applied at right place and at right time. Some of the advantages are –

- Student friendly environment of classroom.
- Fast and permanent learning.

- Better involvement and engagement of child.
- Development of better analytical power.
- Better application of learning.
- Development of thinking ability and problem solving skills.
- Solution to problem of inadequate staffing and multi class teaching.
- Classroom is student centric rather than teacher or curriculum centric.
- Students are self disciplined.
- Encourage cooperation rather than competition.
- Enhances creativity among students.
- Better relationship among students as well as with teachers.
- Helpful in development of leadership qualities and decision making abilities.
- Boost up the confidence level and helps in personality development.
- Creates awareness about environment sanitation, health and nutrition issues.
- Scope for creativity not only for students but for teachers also.

Beside these advantages there are certain disadvantages also –

- Very specialised teacher training is required for applying this methodology.
- It is expensive as require large number of material aids.
- It is time consuming and completing the syllabi with in stipulated time period can be a challenge.
- Much advanced technique of learning, if not implemented properly can inhibit learning.
- Complete waste of time and money if not applied appropriately.

#### **Role of teacher in activity based learning method:**

At the time when activity based learning was gaining importance all over the world , some of the critics suspected that with the introduction of this methodology role of teachers will be reduced but later on it does not proved true. In reality role of teacher changed a little bit. While following activity based teaching learning methodology teacher has to play the role different to traditional roles and they are –

- Planner
- Organiser
- Facilitator
- Decision maker
- Knowledge imparter
- Evaluator

#### **Precautions to be taken while implementing activity based learning methodology:**

Activity based learning methodology is not very common in India, if not implemented with proper care and responsibility it will be waste of time and energy for teacher as well for student so during its application proper precaution must be taken -

- It should be planned in the way that each child present in classroom is engaged in activity.
- Main focus of teacher must be on learning, activity is just a small part of learning not the whole learning.
- Learning must be step by step.
- Teacher should have balance between activity based learning and traditional learning methods.
- Proper evaluation is necessary to check the learning outcomes of activity.
- Pre and post instruction must be given to student to guide the student toward subject.
- Every methodology has certain limitations so, activity based methodology should be applied accordingly.

#### **Suggestions:**

Although private schools in India have already stepped toward activity based learning but their target is not focused towards learning of students. They are more interested in creating a picture by which they can justify their heavy fee structure and able to attract more number of students. Government schools are lagging behind in applying this methodology. Here are few suggestions for promoting activity based learning in country –

- Curriculum and syllabus should be designed in the way that it should have enough time and space for activity based learning. Generally syllabus is very vast and teacher always feel the pressure of completing the syllabus with in specified time period.
- Pre service and in service teacher training programme should provide complete theoretical and practical knowledge for implementing activity based learning programme successfully in classroom.
- A continuous supervision mechanism must be developed to supervise whether activity based programmes are being practically implemented rather than implementing them on papers only.
- In remote and rural areas where pupil teacher ratio is still not accordance with the standards, activity based learning must be implemented on priority basis.
- Government should provide enough funds to schools for arranging material aids and kits to promote activity based learning.

#### **Conclusion:**

From above discussion we can conclude that activity based learning methodology can be useful in Indian context. It will be not only helpful in attracting the child toward school but also useful in uplifting the standard of quality of education in country. Government should put more and more emphasis on activity based learning especially at primary and secondary level. Activity based learning will certainly reduce the weight of school bag. At present it is not very common method of teaching in our Government schools but with gradual and continuous efforts this methodology can be acquired as prime method of teaching.

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