Research Paper Education

# Curiosity Among Children of Urban Elementary School Across Grade Level Gender

**Abdus Salam** | Assistant Professor in Education, West Goalpara College, Balarbhita-783129

**ABSTRACT**

Curiosity is a quality related to inquisitive thinking such as exploration, investigation, and learning, evident by observation in human and many animal species. Curiosity is an emotion related to natural inquisitive behavior. As this emotion represents a thirst for knowledge, curiosity is a major driving force behind scientific research and other disciplines of human study. Human beings are most curious species on the earth and childhood is the stage where curiosity among individual is at its peak. Curiosity is often described as natural and notable characteristic of young children. The present investigation is an attempt to study curiosity among children of urban elementary school across grade level gender. A representative sample of 140 children from Little Flower English School of Goalpara district in Assam has been drawn using purposive random sampling technique. The study revealed that children studying in Little Flower English School had high curiosity level. It was also found that there was no significant gender difference in curiosity of boy and girl of urban elementary school across grade level gender.

**KEYWORDS** Curiosity Level, Elementary School, Exploratory Behavior, Critical Motive, and Primary Instinct.

**Inroduction:**
Curiosity came from the Latin Word "Curiosus" which means careful, diligent, and curious. Curiosity is a quality related to inquisitive thinking such as exploration, investigation, and learning, evident by observation in human and many animal species. The term can also be used to denote the behavior itself being caused by the emotion of curiosity. As this emotion represents a thirst for knowledge, curiosity is a major driving force behind scientific research and other disciplines of human study.

The concept of curiosity was introduced into the psychological literature as early as 1890 by William James who considered curiosity to be one of the primary instincts. William McDougall (1921) proposed a conception of curiosity as antagonistic instinct. McDougall (1923) described the emotional qualities that accompanied the 'curiosity' instinct in terms of 'feelings of mystery, of strangeness, and of wonder'. Dashiell (1925) regarded curiosity as an acquired or secondary drive and hypothesized that exploratory behaviors were learned as a result of the reduction of primary drives such as hunger or thirst. Similarly, Dollard and Miller (1950) regarded curiosity as an acquired drive and described exploratory behaviors as instrumental responses. According to Piaget (1952) children at the age of 4 years to 7 years tends to become very curious and ask many questions; begin the use of primitive reasoning. There is an emergence in the interest of reasoning and wanting to know why things are the way they are. Maw and Maw (1966) also described curiosity as an arousal state in which the individual desire to know more about self or environment.

Curiosity has been consistently recognized as a critical motive that influences human behavior in both positive and negative ways at all stages of the life cycle. It has been identified as a driving force in child development (Stern, 1973). Parker and Engel (1983) defined curiosity as 'the individual's desire to question or investigate'. Litman (2005) described that at curiosity corner primary goal is to provide a healthy psychological and socio-atmosphere where the child can feel secure and free to explore and manipulate his or her environment. Young children love to learn new things and are naturally inquisitive.

A very important part of childhood is the awareness of the senses in the body. Children learn to observe from their surroundings. They begin to both identify and distinguish between sounds, sights, tastes, smells and sensations. They develop a sense of curiosity about themselves and the world around them and this in turn helps them to understand their own selves. Curiosity also fosters a feeling of learning which can prove to be of great help in the future. Curiosity is a process of creating, maintaining and resolving conceptual conflicts. Young children seem to be curious about their world. The highly curious person will have a high regard for the uniqueness of the signal and for the integrity of the cognitive map, and so will be to either assimilate or accommodate. Curiosity is a state commonly experienced by all people, and there are some events which arouse curiosity in almost every one.

**Objective of the present study:**
The present study is designed with the following basic objective.

The main objective of the present study was to study the curiosity level among children of urban elementary school across grade level gender.

**Hypothesis of the Study:**
The present study is framed with the following hypothesis.

The hypothesis for the study was that there exists significant gender difference in curiosity of boy and girl of urban elementary school across grade level gender.

**Material and Methods:**
The methodological framework used for the study is as under.

**Sample**
The sample children were selected through purposive random sampling method. The present study was conducted on 140 children of urban elementary school studying in different standards across grade level gender between the age group of 4 – 11 years. The study was carried out in Little Flower English School of Goalpara district in Assam. A sample size of 140 respondents was selected where 80 boy respondents and 60 girl respondents from the school were selected.

**Design of the Study**
The investigator adopted survey method for the purpose of the study as it is concerned with the present aims of determining the status of the phenomenon under investigation. This method is widely used method in the field of research. It analysis the existing situation and makes generalization on every important aspect of the prevalent phenomenon. In the present study adopted to obtain the necessary data in reference to the objective of the study which is a piece of descriptive research.

**Tools Used**
Children Curiosity Scale by Rajiv Kumar (1992) along with self constructed Interview Schedule which consisted of general information for the sample respondents was used in the study.

**Statistical Techniques Applied**
Both qualitative as well as quantitative technique was used. Data was coded and frequency, percentages were calculated in order to analyze the data.

**Results and Discussion:**
The results and discussion of the research study according to objectives of the present study are revealed as follows:

**Table-1: Background Information of Respondents across Grade Level Gender**

| Background Information / No. of Individuals | Boys | Girls | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| | 80 | 60 | 140 |
| Age Group | | | |
| 4-------5 | 15 (18.75%) | 13 (21.67%) | 28 (20.00%) |
| 6-------7 | 26 (32.50%) | 17 (28.33%) | 43 (30.71%) |
| 8-------9 | 14 (17.50%) | 11 (18.33%) | 25 (17.86%) |
| 10----11 | 25 (31.25%) | 19 (31.67%) | 44 (31.43%) |
| Grade Level | | | |
| Nursery ---------- 1st Standard | 28 (35.00%) | 21 (35.00%) | 49 (35.00%) |
| 2nd ---------- 3rd Standard | 27 (33.75%) | 20 (33.33%) | 47 (33.57%) |
| 4th ---------- 5th Standard | 25 (31.25%) | 19 (31.67%) | 44 (31.43%) |

During the course of investigation it was found that 18.75 percent respondents of boys and 21.67 percent respondents of girls were of age group 4 – 5 years while 32.50 percent boy respondents and 28.33 percent girl respondents were at age group between 6 – 7 years. The data showed that 17.50 percent respondents of boys and 18.33 percent respondents of girls belonged to 8 – 9 year age groups while 31.25 percent boys and 31.67 percent girls belonged to 10 – 11 year age groups.

Data in table: 1 showed that the same percentage (35.00%) of boy and girl respondents belonged to nursery and 1st standard while 33.75 percent boy respondents and 33.33 percent girl respondents studied in 2nd and 3rd standard whereas 31.25 percent respondents of boys and 31.67 percent respondents of girls belonged to 4th and 5th standard.

**Table-2: Frequency Distribution of Respondents across Gender on the Basis of Curiosity**

| SL. No. | Statement | Male (80) | | | | Female (60) | | | | Total (140) | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Never | Sometimes | Often | Always | Never | Sometimes | Often | Always | Never | Sometimes | Often | Always |
| 01. | I like to visit new places. | ---- | 4 05.00% | 5 06.25% | 71 88.75% | ---- | 3 05.00% | 5 08.33% | 52 86.67% | ---- | 7 05.00% | 10 07.14% | 123 87.86% |
| 02. | When I see anything new in my room, my attention goes toward it very soon. | 1 01.25% | 10 12.50% | 8 10.00% | 61 76.25% | 2 03.33% | 6 10.00% | 10 16.67% | 42 70.00% | 3 02.14% | 16 11.43% | 18 12.86% | 103 73.57% |
| 03. | I desire to see by opening the things (like television, transistor, alarm-clock etc.) | ---- | 12 15.00% | 10 12.50% | 58 72.50% | 7 11.67% | 10 16.67% | 11 18.33% | 32 53.33% | 7 05.00% | 22 15.71% | 21 15.00% | 90 64.29% |
| 04. | When someone in my Mohall digs a pit, I try to know the reason of digging. | 8 10.00% | 6 07.50% | 7 08.75% | 59 73.75% | 7 11.67% | 8 13.33% | 6 10.00% | 39 65.00% | 15 10.71% | 14 10.00% | 13 09.29% | 98 70.00% |
| 05. | When my companion brings lunch-box, I desire to see what food he has brought in it. | 4 05.00% | 5 06.25% | 11 13.75% | 60 75.00% | 2 03.33% | 6 10.00% | 9 15.00% | 43 71.67% | 6 04.29% | 11 07.86% | 20 14.29% | 103 73.56% |
| 06. | When I see any companion in my neighbor going on rickshaw, I like to see where is he going? | 3 03.75% | 11 13.75% | 12 15.00% | 54 67.50% | 4 06.67% | 6 10.00% | 10 16.67% | 40 66.66% | 7 05.00% | 17 12.14% | 22 15.71% | 94 67.15% |
| 07. | After seeing anything new I try to collect more information regarding it. | ---- | 10 12.50% | 8 10.00% | 62 77.50% | 4 06.67% | 6 10.00% | 8 13.33% | 42 70.00% | 4 02.86% | 16 11.43% | 16 11.43% | 104 74.28% |
| 08. | I like to explore new-new things. | 2 02.50% | 10 12.50% | 14 17.50% | 54 67.50% | 4 06.67% | 10 16.67% | 14 23.33% | 32 53.33% | 6 04.29% | 20 14.29% | 28 20.00% | 86 61.42% |
| 09. | When I see any old historical building I try to see all-around after entering it. | 10 12.50% | 8 10.00% | 12 15.00% | 50 62.50% | 6 10.00% | 10 16.67% | 6 10.00% | 38 63.33% | 16 11.43% | 18 12.86% | 18 12.86% | 88 62.85% |
| 10. | I keep putting question in the classroom. | 4 05.00% | 8 10.00% | 6 07.50% | 62 77.50% | 2 03.33% | 10 16.67% | 5 08.33% | 43 71.67% | 6 04.28% | 18 12.86% | 11 07.86% | 105 75.00% |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 11. | I like to know how things are made. | ---- | 4 05.00% | 2 02.50% | 74 92.50% | ---- | 3 05.00% | 3 05.00% | 54 90.00% | ---- | 7 05.00% | 5 03.57% | 128 91.43% |
| 12. | I like to know more by going near on seeing any new machine. | 4 05.00% | 5 06.25% | 8 10.00% | 63 78.75% | 3 05.00% | 8 13.33% | 7 11.67% | 42 70.00% | 7 05.00% | 13 09.29% | 15 10.71% | 105 75.00% |
| 13. | I keep on solving puzzles till I do not solve them. | ---- | 3 03.75% | 8 10.00% | 69 86.25% | ---- | 3 05.00% | 10 16.67% | 47 78.33% | ---- | 6 04.29% | 18 12.86% | 116 82.85% |
| 14. | I wonder on seeing so many stars in the sky. | ---- | 3 03.75% | 4 05.00% | 73 91.25% | ---- | 5 08.33% | 4 06.67% | 51 85.00% | ---- | 8 05.71% | 8 05.71% | 124 88.58% |
| 15. | I keep on seeing for a long time when an elephant comes in my Mohall. | ---- | 4 05.00% | 4 05.00% | 72 90.00% | ---- | 3 05.00% | 5 08.33% | 52 86.67% | ---- | 7 05.00% | 9 06.43% | 124 88.57% |
| 16. | When I hear noises anywhere in my Mohalla come out from my house to see it. | 3 03.75% | 5 06.25% | 3 03.75% | 69 86.25% | 3 05.00% | 5 08.33% | 6 10.00% | 46 76.67% | 6 04.29% | 10 07.14% | 9 06.43% | 115 82.14% |
| 17. | I try to know the name when any new student comes in my classroom. | ---- | ---- | ---- | 80 100% | ---- | 1 01.67% | 2 03.33% | 57 95.00% | ---- | 1 00.71% | 2 01.43% | 137 97.86% |

Result in table: 2 showed that majority of respondents (88.75% boys and 86.67% girls) always liked to visit new places. Most of the respondents (76.25% boys and 70.00% girls) reported that their attention always went towards very soon to see anything new in their rooms. Also 72.50 percent boy and 53.33 percent girl respondents said that they always desired to see by opening the things like television, transistor, alarm clock etc.

More than half of the respondents (73.75% boys and 65.00% girls) reported that they always tried to know the reason of digging when someone in their Mohall dug a pit.

Most of the boy and girl respondents (75.00% boys and 71.67% girls) reported that they always desired to see what kind of foods their companions brought in lunch boxes.

Data showed that more than half of the both respondents (67.50% boys and 66.66% girls) reported that when they saw any companion in their neighbor going on rickshaw, they always liked to know where he/she was going.

Most of the respondents (77.50% boys and 70.00% girls) reported that they always tried to collect more information after seeing anything new. Also 67.50 percent boy and 53.33 percent girl respondents said that they always liked to explore new-new things. On another hand, 62.50 percent boy and 63.33 percent girl respondents said that they always tried to see all around after entering in any historical building. Most of the respondents (77.50% boys and 71.67% girls) reported that they always kept putting question in the classroom.

The major respondents (92.50% boys and 90.00% girls) reported that they always liked to know how things were made. Most of the respondents (78.75% boys and 70.00% girls) agreed that they always liked to know more by going near on seeing any new machine. Majority of the respondents (86.25% boys and 78.33% girls) said that they always kept on solving puzzles till they didn't solve them.

The total 88.58 percent respondents recognized that they always wondered on seeing so many stars in the sky. The total 88.57 percent respondents said that they always kept on seeing for a long time when an elephant came in their Mohall. Most of the respondents (86.25% boys and 76.67% girls) said that they always came out from their house when they heard noise anywhere in their Mohall.

The highest percent respondents (100% boys and 95% girls) agreed that they always tried to know the name when any new student came in their classroom.

**Table-3: Gender Difference in Curiosity among Children of Urban Elementary School**

| SL. No. | Gender | N | Mean | S.D | df | t-value | Level of Significance |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Male | 80 | 13.64 | 8.01 | 138 | 0.87 | Not Significant |
| 2. | Female | 60 | 12.53 | 7.02 | | | |

Result in table: 3 showed that the t-value testing the significance of mean difference in curiosity of children of urban elementary school across grade level gender turned out to be 0.87 and this value was not significant even at .05 level. This shows that there exists no significant gender difference in curiosity of boy and girl of urban elementary school across grade level gender. Thus, the hypothesis is rejected. The findings of this study are at par with the study concluded by George Engelhard, J.R. and Monsaas, J.A. (1988).

**Conclusion:**

Curiosity has been consistently recognized as a critical motive that influences human behavior in both positive and negative ways at all stages of the life cycle. It has been identified as a driving force in child development. Curiosity is a process of creating, maintaining and resolving conceptual conflicts. Curiosity is an emotion related to natural inquisitive behavior and this emotion represents a thirst for knowledge. The conclusion of the present study represents that there is not significant gender difference in curiosity of boy and girl of urban elementary school across grade level gender.

## REFERENCES

1. Dashiell, J.F. (1925). A Quantitative Demonstration of an Animal Drive. Journal of Comparative and Physiological Psychology, 5 pp. 205-208 | 2. Dollard, J. and Miller, N.E. (1950). Personality and Psychotherapy. New York: McGraw Hill. | 3. George Engelhard, J.R. and Monsaas, J.A. (1988). Grade Level Genderand School related Curiosity in Urban Elementary School. The Journal of Educational Research, 82(1), pp. 22-26 | 4. James, W. (1890). The Principles of Psychology. New York: Holt | 5. Kumar, R (1992). Children Curiosity Scale. Department of Education, Chris Varshneya College, Aligarh. | 6. Litman, J.A. (2005).Curiosity and the Pleasures of Learning: Wanting and Liking new Information. Cognition and Emotion, 19(6), pp. 793-814 | 7. Maw, W. and Maw, E. (1966). Children's Curiosity and Parental Attitudes. Journal of Marriage and Family, 28, pp. 343-345 | 8. McDougall, W. (1921). An Introduction to Social Psychology. Boston, MA: J.W. Luce Co. | 9. McDougall, W. (1923). Outline of Psychology. New York: Scribner | 10. Parker, M. and Engel, J. (1983). A Unified Motivation and Learning Theory Model. Education, 103(4), pp. 353-360 | 11. Piaget, J. (1952). The Origins of Intelligence in Children. New York: International Universities Press | 12. Stern, D.N. (1973). The Interpersonal World of the Child. New York: Basic Books |