

CHAPTER - VI

DISCUSSION

6.0 Introduction

The aim of the present investigation was to orient a class - its teachers and students - along certain humanistic lines and to study its effects on certain specified student variables. We may recall that by humanistic education we understand that the particular education imparted in our schools must correspond to the new image of man that the humanistic school of psychologists have given us. This image is more inclusive and positive in comparison to the behaviouristic or psychoanalytic view of man. This image holds that man is a unity of mind and body, and therefore, education has to necessarily cater to the development of both. This means to say that cognitive and affective learning must go hand in hand. Exclusive attention to anyone of them in our educational endeavour will, therefore, devalue both the person and the learning process. In our present educational practices there is a one-sided attention on the cognitive learning. Humanistic education also emphasizes that educational practices must correspond to the development of man. The most powerful urge in man is toward self-actualization and all other urges including motivation to learn is subsumed in this master motive. In this perspective, any form of deviant behaviour, including resistance to learn by an otherwise capable person is viewed as the result of thwarting the forces of self-actualization. Therefore, it views that learning is natural to a human being and that it is a satisfying

experience. The task of the educator, then, is to provide certain conditions that facilitate learning. Carl Rogers (1957, 1969) has identified three necessary conditions for the facilitation of learning and learning is facilitated provided the learner perceives that the facilitator possesses these qualities. These facilitative conditions are realness, unconditional positive regard, and empathy. Several researches have shown that learning is enriched if the facilitator provides these conditions to the learners (vide Chapter II).

In the present study the teachers were given training in the facilitative dimensions using Egan's (1975) helping model, which is a full-fledged training model on the facilitation of learning. This training was further strengthened by training them in Transactional Analysis, "I-messages", and the facilitative use of questioning. The training given to teachers attempted to enable them to be facilitators to their students. The procedures adopted for developing cooperative classroom management was an attempt to share teacher power in the classroom with students. A natural sequence to teachers' becoming facilitative is their becoming role-free and democratic in their approach to classroom management. Such an approach gives students a say regarding issues that pertain to them and thus build up their responsibility. The training imparted to students was to develop their awareness of who they are and to develop a group feeling. It also aimed at sensitizing them to the new approach to teaching-learning and managing the class. The study aimed at finding out the impact of the orienting the class along a humanistic approach.

6.1 Discussion on Some of the Findings

The present study avoids making any one-to-one correspondence between the observed student gains on the specified criterion variables and their causes. The investigator considers reality to be a matrix of inter-relationships between several forces that are at work within the individual students, in the teachers and in the class as a group. (He, however, does not deny the existence of other outside forces determining a particular student's behaviour, like the home environment, socio-economic status, etc. Such variables that operate on the individual students outside the classroom were not brought under the purview of the present study). Therefore, the observed impact of the humanistic orientation is a simultaneous interplay of several related forces. Therefore, what is observed, it is assumed, is the combined impact of the facilitative dimensions provided by the teachers and the facilitative learning climate created in the classroom and the students' enhanced awareness of their own abilities.

The findings of the study (vide Chapter V) show that the students gained on all the criterion variables : academic performance, self-esteem, creativity, motivation for schooling, academic self-concept, both performance and reference-based, sense of control over performance, instructional mastery, and cooperation. Except for ceativity and cooperation, the growth on all other variables mentioned above in the post-intervention phase of the study was significant either at 0.05 or 0.01 level. This was corroborated by the analysis of data generated from interviews with students. There was an overall increase of one to three

hours in the amount of time spent on personal study (table 44). Fortythree students out of the total forty-seven had positive liking for the school (table 45), and in the opinion of students there were more student coaching and consultation during free periods (vide section 5.13.7) in the post-intervention phase of the study than in the pre-intervention period.

The humanistic intervention in the classroom did not have a positive effect on creativity. The scores on creativity increased in both the pre- and post- intervention phases of the study, thereby showing, perhaps, the effect of test familiarity. The rationale for the choice of creativity for studying the impact of the humanistic perspective in the classroom was Carl Rogers' (1961) view on creativity. According to him, the conditions of psychological safety and the accompanying spontaneous expression by students is the source of creativity. Maybe the students did not experience the feeling of safety to the extent that it would trigger their creativity. Or, maybe, the psychological safety in the classroom need to be followed up with certain instructional processes. One such instructional process, namely, the open-ended questions, was introduced. Maybe, the students have to experience all this as a new way of being in the class beyond the novelty of an intervention, which will reflect our attitude to teaching and learning.

Regarding the classroom phenomena, the level of cooperation in the class was already high in the pre-intervention phase and the intervention further strengthened it (table 33 & 34). Analysis of student interview

protocol (vide 5.13.7) pointed out that there was greater cooperation in the class after intervention. Similarly, the intervention had a significant impact on enhancing students' interpersonal relationships. The post-intervention observations showed greater classroom cohesiveness and acceptance (Table 35, Sociogram 3 & 4). Therefore, one may conclude to the positive contribution of the intervention of the findings observed, although there is no significant difference in the scores of cooperation between pre- and post- intervention series of observations.

According to the dynamics of the present study, it was assumed that the observed findings may have been the effect of the teachers' enhanced level of facilitative interpersonal dimensions and the positive climate created in the classroom. According to their own rating all the eight participating teachers improved in their facilitative interpersonal functioning after training them on Egan's model (Table 1). All but two teachers, according to the rating done by the group, ~~were either on or above the rating done by the group,~~ were either on or above the minimally facilitative level of 2.5 on the rating scale for facilitative interpersonal skills. Two teachers were below the minimally facilitative level even after the training. (Ideally, they should have been discarded from the study, but could not do it for reasons far beyond the control of the investigator). Analysis of Teacher Relationship Perception Inventory showed that except for teacher-4, the students thought of other teachers positively after the intervention as relating to them, supporting them, taking personal interest in them and so on. For the teachers 5 and 6, the students' impression did not last long. The Classroom Participant Observation Schedules confirmed more or less the above findings. The teacher-3, though had

shown growth in interpersonal facilitative dimensions, could not translate the gain into classroom practice (vide 5.12.3) and though students did not perceive any change in teacher-4 (Tables 23 & 24), she was in fact providing facilitative communication and varied her teaching methods in her actual classroom practices (vide 5.12.4). Again, classroom participant observation of teacher-5 showed that there was no difference in his classroom functioning after the intervention. Analysis of students' interview schedule for perception of teachers showed 26 students expressed that they disliked him (vide 5.13.3(e)) for being partial, rude and sarcastic. Teacher 2 and 8 were already facilitative before intervention and made the maximum growth on facilitative dimensions (Table 1). The students perceived them being very positive, understanding, approachable and caring (tables 19, 20 & 31, 32) and the majority expressed that they liked them (table 45). So it could be said in general that even after the intervention, the teachers were offering different levels of facilitative interpersonal dimensions. Two teachers, teacher-2 and teacher-8, offered these dimensions to a very great extent; teacher-5 offered nothing at all, in fact his influence on the students was negative and students disliked him and his subject. Teachers 4 and 6 were minimally facilitative, that is, their influence was not retarding. The other teachers were offering these dimensions above the minimally facilitative levels.

The findings given in Chapter V, show that organizing the class along a humanistic approach contributed significantly to most of the criterion variables studied. The observed findings, therefore, argue in favour of humanistic education in our schools. In the light of the findings and

based on his experience in orienting the class along a humanistic paradigm, the investigator discusses in the following sections some of the relevant findings and their implications for education.

6.2 Facilitation of Learning

The observed results on teachers' providing interpersonal facilitative dimensions support the findings of Aspy and Roebuck (1977), Carkhuff (1969), Carkhuff and Barenson (1976), Tausch (1976) and many others who have worked on the humanistic, facilitative interpersonal dimensions of teachers and their effect on enhancing learning. They also support the studies on classroom interaction and climate (Withal, 1969; Flanders, 1965; and Thelen, 1974). Here we want to discuss at length why the facilitative interpersonal dimensions of the teacher is so very important in facilitating learning.

In order to see the importance of the facilitative interpersonal dimensions in fostering learning, we have to see what these facilitative dimensions do to another person. They provide unconditional acceptance of another, value him as a person and understand him from his own perspective. The greatest thing we can do for another person is to accept him for what he is. For most of us we are not acceptable to ourselves. We have been habitually told what is wrong with us. Emphasis was on forming students according to what was "right", what they should be and how they should behave. As a result what they have come to conclude about themselves is that they are not right the way they are and come to dislike themselves. Added to it is the myriad evaluations they are

subjected to everyday. As a result, they identify their own worth with what others say about them. Therefore, provision of facilitative conditions gives them the freedom to be what they are and to accept themselves. Only from this space of freedom and acceptance can they venture to discover who they are. This gives them the feeling of inner security. We can understand what this inner security means by an analogy. Like a tortoise that does not come out of its hood in strange surroundings, a child will not take the risk of doing anything on his own if this element of "safe-feeling" is missing in our classrooms. Students come to learn and, therefore, not knowing an answer and volunteering to take a risk at a studied guess is itself a commendable effort. The present study showed that there was hardly any student questions in the pre-intervention phase whereas in the post-intervention phase there were more student questions recorded (tables 36 to 43).

Therefore, teachers' facilitative interpersonal skills "enable" or "empower" students to be themselves. In other words, they bestow selfhood on them. They develop, as a result, a positive self-concept. When they are themselves, they can take the risk of experimenting with new behaviours and can draw on their energies for doing the things they want to do. Hence they will turn out to be more efficient learners.

We can say, in a way that through every encounter that we have with another person, we are being "recreated" or "discounted". If we are recreated, we feel affirmed in our being; if we are discounted, a part of us dies in that encounter. The challenge for the teacher, therefore, is whether he can recreate his students through encounters with

them and stop discounting them. Every discount (negative interaction) chips away a part of the person's self-esteem. In the language of Transactional Analysis, every positive encounter is a positive stroke and every negative encounter is a negative stroke (vide Chapter V) and the concept of stroking patterns provides a teacher with practical ways to build up students.

This description may sound too ideal for many. Yet, facilitative way of being may be natural to being a human being. We have evidence for this. It is the natural way for parents, say, upto the time they begin to form their plans for their children (from when they may start imposing and shaping them according to that plan). Again, in any intensive group experience, as it often happens in an encounter or sensitivity training, the participants begin to provide these qualities to one another spontaneously. This happens again in any deep human experience like falling in love. If we are facilitative spontaneously in any such deep human experience, then, perhaps, it is our natural way of being - a way of being that has been distorted by our cultural upbringing and standards and striving for survival. What the training does, then, is to rehabilitate us to our lost humanness.

Carl Rogers (1957) came to an understanding of these facilitative conditions through a study of persons who made a difference in the lives of other people. What led him and his associates in this line of researches was the threat posed by Eysenck to the entire profession of psychotherapy. He said that both people who got therapeutic help as well as those who did not get it eventually got better. This led

Rogers and his associates to design researches to find out what in therapy made any difference to the patient, if any. After years' of painstaking study, they came to the conclusion that neither the qualification, the expertise, nor the techniques, or the methods of therapy that the therapist employed made any difference. What effected cure or personality change was certain personality variables the person of the therapist possessed, which Rogers (1957) called the facilitative conditions. Patients who had access to these people, whether they were therapists or otherwise, got better. And there are people in the general population who have these qualities in them.

What is true for therapy is also true for teaching or any other, so-called, helping professions. Therefore, Carkhuff (1969, 1976) classifies people as facilitators or as retarders. That is, in any encounter with people, we either enable them to grow and be more of themselves, or we diminish what they are. We are either promoters of life or promoters of death. Aspy and Roebuck (1977) showed that teachers who were low in facilitative dimensions actually retarded student growth.

What do these studies augur for teachers? One does not facilitate learning because he is an expert in his subject, or he has at his command a number of teaching techniques. Added to the possession of these two kinds of expertise, he needs facilitative interpersonal skills. His success or failure in facilitating learning will depend on how he models these conditions in teaching.

This is perhaps the reason why researches on instructional methods have not been able to show conclusively any one method to be associated with superior learning. We have for so long in our researches about classroom instruction attempted to control the teacher's personality as a variable. A more productive course of action may be to control for method and to make the teacher's personality the experimental variable. This will be in line with the findings of this study.

What do the findings tell regarding recruitment of teachers in our schools? We usually go for the best brains. Added to it, if the recruitee also possess better instructional skills, facility in language, and communication and has the ability to control class we consider the case to be excellent. Yet, we have empirical evidence to show that these alone do not enhance learning. We also need to concentrate our attention on identifying facilitators while recruiting teachers. It is too damaging to have retarders on our staff.

The findings have implications for teacher training as well. At least what we impart in our teacher training courses are subject matter mastery and certain instructional skills. The whole area of facilitative skills is yet to find a place in our teacher training institutions.

The study has implications to the person of the teacher. It appears that high levels of functioning on facilitative dimensions are associated with a certain degree of self-actualization. Therefore, the personal

development of the educator is of paramount importance. The human resource development (HRD) of educators is a neglected field today. Our educational system will further or fail our students depending on the quality of the educator. In a human learning system, the educator will always be the "instrument" of learning. Hence, the finer the instrument, the greater the learning.

At this point, a word of clarification is in order regarding studies on classroom interactions and climate and their relationship to the present study which emphasizes the facilitative interpersonal dimensions of the teacher. In so far as the facilitative dimensions are communicated either verbally or non-verbally, there is interaction and both the kinds of studies are closely related. Yet, this close similarity ends there. In the classroom interaction/climate kind of studies, interaction is considered a factor in enhancing learning, something in the nature of an external force to improve instructional process. In the humanistic approach, interaction is more than an enhancing agent. It is central to the learning process itself. Learning is individually constructed from one's relationship with others, and it is not what others attempt to teach. The interaction comprising the student-teacher relationship is the primary instrument for school learning (Simpson and Galbo, 1986).

6.3 Psychological Education

In the present study, the students were also oriented along a humanistic approach, using certain psychological inputs. The training input consisted of a

series of group dynamic exercises aimed at enhancing self- and other-understanding of students. It also used games to enable students to imbibe the value of cooperation. The methodology of orienting students was experiential - the investigator led them through the exercise and enabled them to reflect on their experience during the exercise and to discover its meaning for themselves individually as well as for their life in the classroom. The training package also had some select interpersonal skills and Transactional Analytic concepts. (For details, see Chapter IV).

The students reported that they learned a great deal from this psychological input. Only two students said they got nothing out of it. The student gain was in the areas of self-understanding, self-discovery and appreciation, understanding of others, team spirit and enriched interpersonal relationships in class (vide 5.13.5).

The psychological orientation provided to the students contributed greatly to the humanistic climate of the class. Self-understanding and appreciation will have enabled them to be effective learners. Maslow (1968) pointed out that learning is enriched when undertaken by a person who knows what he wants, and knows who he is. The team spirit that was generated may have helped them to feel at ease in class (psychological safe-feeling) and to use one's classmates as resources. When there is the feeling of acceptance and security, one is free to reach out to others. When it is absent, one will withdraw into one's shell. This is the importance of a warm and nurturant climate in the classroom.

The students reported that there was greater cooperation and class spirit, more student-student coaching and consultation in class after the intervention (vide 5.13.7). This finding is in contravention to the way we have organised our classrooms. We have set them up on competition, hoping that it would enhance the learner's motivation. In fact, it has only contributed to the level of anxiety of students. The top rankers among the students in a class might be anxious to retain their place, and to prevent others from snatching it away. This has led to a whole lot of unhealthy rivalry among students. There are other students in a class who cannot compete, or who are sure not to make it. These might retire from the race and become apathetic or distract the classroom processes. In both the cases the results are negative.

On the other hand, the humanistic paradigm holds the learner as always motivated. The facilitator has to only ensure that the classrooms and the learning tasks do not threaten students' self-esteem and their need to be winners. In other words, students' success experiences should outweigh their experiences of failure.

The humanistic paradigm in the classroom calls for a cooperative learning climate. In cooperation we share each others strengths and both the persons move to a position of winners. It is, in other words, a win-win paradigm and not a win-lose one (Gordon, 1974). Competition is a "you or I" paradigm whereas cooperation is a "you and I" one. There is an avalanche of evidence to suggest that the species have evolved in co-operation (Thomas, 1974), yet we have modelled our lives on Darwin's "survival of the fittest" which has allowed emergence of Hitlers and Idi Amins

and Bothas. Competition has given rise to extreme individualism. But the fact is that there is no individual apart from society. Therefore, I have my being in interdependence with others and only in an interaction of give-and-take with others can I grow and develop myself.

For humanistic psychologists, the aim of education is self actualization, the development of the fullest height that a particular individual can come to (Maslow, 1972). For this, Maslow (1968) suggested that "extrinsic" and "intrinsic" education should go hand in hand. Extrinsic education deals with acquisition of knowledge and skills that come to us from outside. Intrinsic education concerns learning to be-a-person. It concerns a child's basic psychological needs for security, belonging, love, respect and esteem. For Maslow, this is the base from which a child's search for identity begins. He also points out that the extrinsic learning will be more effective if it is based on a sound identity, that is, done by a person who knows what he wants and knows who he is.

So, the roots of psychological education can be traced to Maslow. Today it is emerging as a potent force in the schools. The main purpose of psychological education is to use the classroom as a means of promoting personal growth and development.

Education has always purported to be for the development of the "whole" person. But, while the development of the whole person has been stated as a

goal, development of aspects of the person other than the intellectual and academic ones have been left to chance. For the pursuit of academic learning, teachers are hired, books are made available and a specific number of periods are allotted. But when it comes to the pursuit of personal development, say, self-understanding, relationship with other students and teachers, they are all left to things like extra-curricular activities.

Psychological education is a way of integrating learning about oneself into education systematically. There are psychological education courses designed to increase achievement motivation, awareness, creativity, self-esteem, self-understanding, self-actualization, moral development, identity, value clarity, meditative processes, "helping relationships" and other aspects of eupsychian functioning (Alschuler, 1975).

Today there is no place for learning for self-development in our schools. Therefore, concerted efforts should be made to fill up this void. It is an urgent need of the day. In a world that is changing so fast, our well-being and effectiveness will depend on how well we are able to relate, communicate, understand ourselves and others and to network. Psychological education may be a way to this goal.

6.4 Self-Discipline

The study also involved orienting students in dealing with their class problems cooperatively (vide Chapter IV). The students reported satisfaction with such a procedure. They reported that the level of cooperation

was higher, discipline had improved and there was less disturbance during teaching (vide 5.13.7). Only two students mentioned that they did not see any difference as a result of cooperative classroom management. Four students pointed out that some students did not deliberately cooperate with the procedure and that more concerted effort should have been made by the class teacher by way of reviewing the class functioning and to draw up newer rules as demanded by the new situations.

Cooperative classroom management is a form of putting democracy into practice in the classroom. It is one of the ways schools can teach students self-discipline (Duke & Jones, 1985). The distribution of power in a classroom is unequal (Jackson, 1958). In a traditional classroom teacher has all the power and the students are told what to do. The obedient ones are rewarded. By a clever distribution of "carrot and stick" the teacher manipulates them into subjugation. In rare cases some revolt. But they are then branded as "discipline problems" and are silenced soon. Such a system can only turn out conformists.

In contrast to the authoritarian teachers, the teacher who is functioning high on facilitative dimensions sheds his role of authority and takes students into confidence. He trusts them to contribute to classroom life constructively, so that life in them can be a satisfying experience for all of them. They are given chance to experience that they are free agents, but that their freedom needs to be exercised in such a way that they do not infringe on the rights of others. Looked at this

way, classrooms present us with opportunities to practise democratic way of life. It sensitizes them to their own and others' needs and gives them a way to get their needs met while not infringing on others' rights. This approach entrusts the students with responsibility whereas authoritarian classrooms suppress it.

Given the chance, our students will respond with responsibility to structure their behaviour according to common, agreed upon norms. The challenge for our schools today is how to enable our students to exercise responsibility. The traditional schools do not teach it. The emphasis in them has been on controlling students. A condition for teaching students responsibility is that the teacher should trust them that they are responsible and provide non-directive leadership. The students will, for sure, fail, as a human being is fallible. It is not failure that is damaging, but how we react to it. Therefore, what is required in teaching self-discipline is that the students should be given chance to participate in decision making regarding issues that concern them and that they be a party in the correction of improper behaviour. Researches show that students are likely to cultivate responsibility when adults involve them in decision making (Duke and Jones, 1985). Both the above aspects have been built into the cooperative classroom management strategy. Besides, the training provided to students on interpersonal skills taught them the pre-requisites of taking responsibility effectively, for expressing needs and resolving conflicts cooperatively. Transactional Analysis helped them understand motives behind interpersonal communication.

A couple of things emerge from this finding. Disturbing issues in a classroom can be tackled by the class as a whole under the leadership provided by the teacher. There are, however, certain conditions for the success of this procedure. Much of it will depend upon the non-directive (facilitative) leadership provided by the teacher. This emphasizes one thing, that is, the teacher cannot use it as a technique. It flows out of his facilitative mode of being. A characteristic of a non-directive leader is the absolute and irrevocable trust that he has in the ability of his students to direct their behaviour in constructive ways. Failures do not deter or disempower him. He sees them as stepping stones to success. How many times did we fall and bruise ourselves as children when we were learning to walk? And, yet, our parents trusted us enough to put us right back on the floor every time we failed and we got up and are walking ever since! This is the trust that we should have in our students. This is how the teacher can be a pygmalion to his students (Rosenthal and Jacobson, 1968). Therefore, in our attempts to teach children self-discipline, we need to give them large enough space to make mistakes and even fail. The facilitative leader, as he takes the inner frame of reference (empathy) of the students, can communicate to them where they are, and without branding them as failures. The power in this approach is electrifying. One has to experience it to see it and to believe in it.

This study followed a particular approach to humanizing a classroom. It was conceived and tried out on the belief that students possess untapped potential to be actualized and that teachers too have untapped

potential for encouraging student development. It also perceived the need for certain supportive structures in the classroom for encouraging student growth. Therefore, the study pursued a three-way strategy for orienting the class.

The teachers were given training in developing their facilitative interpersonal skills in order to empower them in encouraging student growth. The students were similarly oriented in order to facilitate their personal development. In order to facilitate teacher-student and student-student relationships to be a satisfying experience for all concerned, a certain facilitative classroom structure was created through mutual agreement.

The study has been effective with regard to student gains, both cognitive and affective. Development of schools and classrooms on similar lines which will serve as catalysts to the total development of students is the challenge of education today.