

## CHAPTER - II

### RELATED PREVIOUS RESEARCHES

#### 2.0 Introduction

The present investigation is an intervention study in the area of humanistic education. The concept and nature of humanistic education has been discussed in the previous chapter. In this chapter, a short report of some research attempts using the humanistic paradigm in education is presented.

It may be mentioned in the beginning that humanistic approach is a very recent development in education and its concept and nature are only getting defined. Researches in this area, therefore, are yet to pick up. But there are some areas in education which are also at the heart of the humanistic perspective, that are very well researched. Some such areas are - self concept, teacher expectation, and classroom interactions and climate. There have been numerous researches in these areas. Not all such studies have relevance to a humanistic perspective. Therefore, the investigator has picked up only certain selected studies for review in this chapter. He hopes that such a procedure of selecting studies from areas that are closely related to humanistic education will allow us to form a broader perspective of humanistic education.

#### 2.1 Self-Concept

It has been pointed out earlier that humanistic psychology takes an inner or perceptual frame of reference when studying human behaviour. A person's belief about himself (self-concept)

is the source of all his behaviour. Here the review of previous researches on self-concept is restricted to only those studies which refer to the relationship between students' self-concept and their school performance. The investigator feels that he needs to exercise this restriction as studies on self-concept are innumerable.

Purkey (1970) points out that there is an overwhelming body of research evidence showing the relationship between self-concept and academic achievement. The basic assumption is that the students who feel good about themselves and their abilities are the ones who are most likely to succeed in school.

By the time, a child is ready for school, his self-concept has already been formed and his reactions to schooling- learning, failure or success, physical, social and emotional climate of the classroom - are all determined by the belief and attitudes he has about himself. Wattenberg and Clifford (1962) studied kindergarten children in an attempt to see if self-concept was predictive of reading success two years later. They found that it was a better predictor than IQ! Children with low self-concepts did not learn to read as well as children with high self-concept.

Brookover, et al. (1962; 1967), Campbell (1965) and Fink (1962) studied the relationship between self concept and school achievement. Their findings reveal that self-concept bears a definite and positive correlation with academic achievement of students at all levels of learning. Perceptions of self by successful students are always positive and they have confidence in themselves.

Studies done by Goldberg (1960), Shaw (1961), Gowan (1960), Combs (1963) and Taylor (1964) reveal that under-achieving or failing students have low self-esteem. They have little self-confidence and have low ambition and may suffer from inferiority.

There have been also a number of studies conducted in India on self-concept and school achievement. Deo and Sharma (1970) and Vasantha (1973) showed that a positive relationship existed between self-concept and achievement and between self-concept and intelligence. Vasantha (1973) pointed out further that high and low achievers could be differentiated on their self-concept score. Chaudhuri (1980) and Sharma (1967) found that self-concept strongly correlated with academic performance.

These studies suggest that self-concept can no longer be ignored by teachers and parents. The task of the teacher and the parent is to help each child gain a positive and realistic image of himself as a learner. There is a number of intervention studies aimed at enhancing self-concept. Most of these studies are in the area of psychotherapy and personality change. The investigator has identified a few intervention studies in enhancing self-concept in the classroom context.

Brookover, et al (1965) conducted an experiment to modify students' self-concept and school performance. The treatment was given to the parents of the experimental group of children. The treatment was based on the assumption that parents can be helpful in the improvement of self-concept and achievement scores of their children. The results showed that the experimental students had significant gain in grade point averages and self-concept of academic ability.

Dye (1981) demonstrated that rational emotive education raised the self-concepts of participants. Lee (1982) studied the effects of desensitization, relaxation and transactional analysis on locus of control, anxiety, self-esteem and achievement. The purpose of the study was to compare the effects of the psychological programmes. The results showed that a high level of anxiety was reduced significantly and a significant change from external to internal locus of control was found irrespective of the treatment. It also showed that a low self-esteem was improved significantly through the treatment of transactional analysis. There was a significant gain in achievement across experimental groups.

Chokshi (1976) reported that her psychological education programme was effective in enhancing students' academic achievement, n-Ach, adjustment, trust, initiative, self-image, attitude toward school, perception of teachers' role, social relationships and some other related variables studied. Olivia (1985) found that the psychological education programme increased self-image and n-Ach of college students.

What emerges from these studies is that self-concept is crucially important and that it can be enhanced by people, programmes and policies (Purkey, 1984). The source of all our behaviour, including learning, is the concept that we have about ourselves, about ourselves as learners. The latter is termed academic self-concept. As our behaviour emerges from our self-concept and tends to maintain it, changing self-concept is the most crucial task to achieve. The humanistic perspective believes that it is possible to reshape self-concept.

## 2.2 Teacher Expectations

Teacher's expectations play a definite role in student performance. This has been referred to as the "principle of belief" (Lobuts and Pennewill, 1984). A teacher's perception of his students will greatly affect, either positively or negatively, the quality of student performance. There is quite a bit of research evidence to substantiate the effect of teacher belief on student performance.

Davidson and Lang (1960) found that students' perception of the teacher's feelings towards them correlated positively with their self-perception. They also found that the more positive the child's perceptions of his teacher's feelings, the better his academic achievement and the more desirable his classroom behaviour as rated by the teacher.

Clarke (1960) reported a positive relationship between a student's academic performance and his perceptions of the academic expectations of his teacher.

Brookover and his associates (1967) found that students' perceptions of the evaluation of their academic ability by teachers, parents and friends are associated with self-concepts of academic ability. That is, teacher's attitudes and opinions regarding his students have a significant influence on their success in school.

Rosenthal and Jacobson (1968) demonstrated that a teacher's expectations of his pupils' intellectual functioning and competence could come to serve as an educational self-fulfilling prophecy.

What do these researches tell the teacher and what implications can he draw from them? How much of our student gains in classrooms is due to content and methods of teaching and how much of it is due to the favourable expectations of teachers? Is it possible for a teacher to play a Pygmalion-like role in his relationship with students? Remember, Pygmalion was a sculptor who fell in love with his own creation, a statue of a beautiful woman, which subsequently came to life. What these researches reveal is that mental attitudes is the key to performance. A positive mental attitude is the foundation that a teacher can employ in working with his students in order to build them upto their very best. If he sees his student to be a winner, he will be a winner. If we were to reflect over it, a teacher is working with such an awesome responsibility. Human potential is infinitely greater than we have been led to believe (Leonard, 1968).

### 2.3 Classroom Interaction and Climate

When we speak of a learning or classroom climate, we refer to the quality of the personal interactions which take place in a class, the psychological well-being of participants, their feelings of acceptance, security and importance within the class. It is the feeling tone of the situation. It is made up of the myriad interpersonal contacts and transactions which take place in classrooms and the feelings generated by them,

The classroom climate has been variously described by different authors. Withal (1969) described it as the emotional tone of the class which is a concomitant of interpersonal interactions. For him it is essentially determined by the teacher-pupil verbal interactions while instruction is carried on. Flanders (1970) refers to classroom climate as a shorthand

reference to those qualities which consistently predominate in most teacher-pupil and pupil-pupil contacts. Thelen (1974) describes classroom climate as the way of life of its members, the 'culture' or 'ethos' of the class. It is again the result of interactions taking place in a class. This characteristic of the classroom is reflected in the way pupils perceive the different classroom phenomena, including instruction. In general, we can describe classroom climate as the overall atmosphere, academic, social and emotional, that prevails in a classroom and it is an outcome of the behaviours of teachers as well as pupils and their interactions.

Several studies have revealed the importance of classroom climate for student growth. Flanders (1965) studied the impact of teacher behaviour on pupil attitudes and learning. He contrasted teachers' 'direct' and 'indirect' influences. Direct influence consisted of statements made by the teachers which restricted freedom, focused on a selected problem, and interjected teacher authority. Indirect influence consisted of statements that expanded freedom and encouraged participation and initiative, questions that clarified students' ideas and feelings, and praise and encouragement of students. He found that pupils achieved more when their teachers used more of indirect methods than when they used direct methods. It was also seen that direct influence decreased learning, except when goals had been initially clarified and made more acceptable by use of indirect methods. The implication of the study for the teachers is that they teach not only by what they say, but also by what they are and how they do what they do. The 'personal' element is inseparable from the teaching act.

Sunderalakshmi's (1981) study showed the opposite of the above results. She compared the effects of two kinds of instructional strategy on certain student gains. The two strategies were two ways of monitoring classroom interactions. In the first strategy, teacher was "initiator" and all communications during instruction were channelled through the teacher. In the second strategy, the teacher was a "facilitator" of interactions wherein he promoted more pupil-pupil interactions while teaching, persuaded them to work on their own and helped them in the tasks assigned. The results showed that strategy one had greater positive influences on students' academic performance and initiative, whereas strategy two had greater positive influence on classroom trust, acceptability and cohesiveness.

Kounin and Gump (1961) reported that punitive teachers, in contrast to non-punitive teachers, had more pupils who manifested aggression, displayed misconduct in school and cared less about learning. Leeper (1967) concluded that pupils learn more easily when teachers are courteous, friendly, and respectful. Pupils have trouble when teachers are impersonal, hurried and autocratic.

Webb (1971) found that students of humanistically oriented teachers had greater morale and improved in interest as well as reported greater academic gains compared to teachers who were not sensitive to individual students.

What do these studies imply for the classroom teacher? The teacher-pupil relationship is a critical element in any teaching-learning milieu. If the teacher is to promote learning, the learning milieu cannot pose threats to the psychological integrity and value of persons. Defensive behaviour should be unnecessary and it should be all right to try new behaviour without the risk of being branded as wrong.

Most educators believe in the need for valuing the learner and his need to feel positively about himself. But too often than not, they do not know how to make this happen. And schools have not begun to consider this an important aspect of what they do. The emphasis in our schools is still on teaching, that too employing the 'telling' (lecture) method. But teaching does not guarantee learning. Therefore, if teaching is not to be wasted, a good climate for learning and a receptive student is necessary.

#### 2.4 Teachers' Facilitative Interpersonal Skills

Carl Rogers (1969) pointed out that learning would be facilitated, if the teacher provided interpersonal dimensions of empathy (E), Congruence (C) and Positive Regard (PR). Aspy (1969; 1972) and Aspy and Rocabuck (1976; 1977) conducted a series of researches spanning over several years and distributed over large geographical areas, using teachers from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds to find evidence which supported or contradicted Rogers' contention. They redefined the terms slightly to make them more appropriate to the school setting. Empathy was redefined as a teacher's attempt to understand the personal meaning of the school experience for each student. Positive regard was defined as the various ways in which the teacher shows respect for the students as persons. Congruence (realness) needed no redefinition: it was the extent to which the teacher was genuine in relationship to the students. They tape-recorded classroom instructions of teachers and unbiased judges rated them for their facilitativeness of the three primary attitudes. These ratings were then correlated with students achievement test scores, problem-solving ability, number of absences from class

and a large number of other variables. The results of these studies suggested that students experiencing high levels of facilitative interpersonal conditions did better in schools than students experiencing low or retarding levels of facilitative interpersonal conditions. A summary of their findings are given below:

- (a) teachers' levels of empathy (e), congruence (c) and positive regard (pr) are positively and significantly related to students' cognitive growth, IQ gain, and self-concept;
- (b) teachers' present levels of interpersonal functioning (E, C & PR) are generally below those required for minimal facilitation of student growth;
- (c) teachers' levels of interpersonal functioning (E, C & PR) can be enhanced and promoted by systematic skills training under trainer who exhibit high levels of these conditions. This means that such attitudes are "caught" experientially from another person. They are not simply intellectual learnings.
- (d) teachers demonstrate approximately the same levels of interpersonal functioning as the general population. The problem, therefore, is cultural rather than career specific;
- (e) teachers' gains in interpersonal dimensions (E, C & PR) are translated into positive gains by their students;
- (f) teachers can improve in their levels of facilitative conditions with as little as 15 hours of carefully planned, intensive training, involving both cognitive and experiential learning;

- (g) teachers exhibiting high levels of facilitative conditions tend to have other characteristics :
- they are more self-disclosing to their students,
  - they respond more to students' feelings,
  - they give more praise,
  - they are more responsive to students' ideas,
  - they lecture less often.
- (h) neither the geographical location of the classes nor the race of the teachers or the social composition of students altered these findings.
- (i) the measures of these facilitative conditions relate positively and significantly to positive student growth than relate negatively and significantly to student deterioration such as discipline problems and negative attitudes about school.

Tausch (1976) carried out a series of researches in West Germany in order to verify the significance of Carl Rogers' interpersonal dimensions in schools. Besides the three facilitative dimensions of realness, unconditional positive regard and empathy, he added another dimension, the facilitative non-directive leading, which included such teacher-behaviours as making offers, suggestions, giving informative hints, creating favourable conditions for self-determination. The methodology adopted for the study was to record lessons of various subject teachers and to rate them on the above four facilitative dimensions. The results showed that a high level of respect in the teachers accompanied by a low level of directive leading correlated significantly with favourable processes of the pupils, that is, they contributed to the lessons, they had independent productive thinking, spontaneous behaviour,

greater initiative and took their own decisions. He also found that on the average teachers showing warm respect were uncommon whereas those with high ratings on directive leading were very common.

These studies point out that the more the psychological climate of the classroom is person-centred, the more are vital and creative learning fostered. The key factor in creating a learning climate is the teachers' levels of facilitative interpersonal functioning.

Researches on the facilitative functioning of helpers and other workers in the helping professions have only begun. In a path-finding research on the differential effects of people and programmes, Vitalo (1970) found that both the helper's level of functioning on the interpersonal dimensions and the systematic programme were significant sources of effect. Examination of interaction effects revealed that the presence of learning was dependent upon the level of the experimenter's functioning. Only the high functioning experimenters elicited learning rates from the experimental group that were different from those produced by the control group.

As an extension of Vitalo's work, Mickelson and Stevic (1971) investigated the effects of verbal reinforcement as a preferred method of increasing high school students' acquisition of information relevant to their educational goals. The investigators found that students of high level functioning helpers had greater amount of information-seeking behaviour than those of low level functioning helpers. They also found that the verbal reinforcement programme was effective at the beginning sessions for the students **of** the low functioning

helpers, but as the sessions went on, these non-facilitative helpers had turned off their students' information seeking behaviour.

These researches point out that only teachers who function at a high level on interpersonal dimensions can enhance student learning. They also reveal that low functioning teachers not only not facilitate learning, but they in fact, retard it.

#### 2.5 The Present Study : Linkage with Previous Researches

The researches that have been reviewed so far have confirmed one thing convincingly, that the teacher's role is the most vital in a school system. He influences children directly and indirectly for both good or bad - for enhancing learning or retarding it. By his being and interaction with students he influences their positive or negative self-concept. By this believing or not believing that the children are capable, valuable and responsible and producing or not producing classroom structures in which they can either experience or not experience that they are valuable, capable and responsible, he can either lead them to discover that they have talents in them that they have not yet discovered, or shut off that personal discovery. Through his warm and nurturing relationship with his students he can establish a climate of acceptance in the classroom which frees them psychologically to explore and experiment new behaviours as expressions of themselves. Or, through their cold, indifferent, authoritarian and punitive approach to students, they can turn off students against themselves and anything that they represent, learning.

Do these sound too ideal or too pessimistic? It sounds too ideal because too much has been expected of a teacher, that the expectations far outweigh what he can deliver. It sounds too pessimistic because his negative influence can be so very damaging. Yet, these are all based on empirical evidences!

Aspy and Rockbuck's pioneering studies on Rogers' facilitative interpersonal skills have convincingly shown us that most teachers can be trained to provide such facilitative dimensions for their students. These studies have opened up new possibilities for our classroom teaching and relating hitherto unknown to most teachers.

These studies are comparatively new and are not widely known in educational circles. This is especially so because they come via researches in psychotherapy. Whatever they are, these research findings promise to expand a teacher's repertoire of behaviours for positive influence on his students.

It is in this line of thinking that the present study is conceived and carried out. By training teachers on facilitative interpersonal skills, it is hoped that they would provide these interpersonal dimensions in their interactions with students who would be 'invited' to learn. In order to enable students to perceive and accept the invitations sent to them, they too were trained in some facilitative variables. An attempt was also made to create classroom structures conducive to the exercise of freedom, initiative and responsibility.