Culture and Human Development: Educational and Psychological Perspectives

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ABSTRACT

Education and culture are interrelated, the best way for a society to understand and develop it's culture is through education. But problems arise in multicultural societies where the various components of culture be it language, behaviour, food, music, dance, activities etc are very rich but also very heterogeneous. In such societies, a standardised urbanised curriculum in education doesn't work and creates stress and anxiety for children. The paper explains this behaviour of children with the help of Kurt Lewin's field theory and suggests how to address the various components of the theory for positive behaviour through CBE or Culture Based Education.

KEYWORDS: *Culture, Socialisation, Education, Field Theory, anxiety, CBE.*

Concept of Culture:

Culture is a broad and complex concept. Culture varies from society to society and also defines them. A Culture offers unique insights into the history, heritage, traditions, values, norms, ethics, beliefs, customs, social behaviour of a specific group. Culture refers to the customs, beliefs, social behaviors, and norms shared by a particular group of people. It encompasses various aspects such as language, traditions, art, music, cuisine, as well as common rituals and practices. Culture plays a important role in shaping the identity and values of a community, guiding social interactions and influencing individual's perceptions and behaviour. By understanding cultural details individuals can gain a deeper recognition for diversity, nurturing cross cultural interaction and build up mutual respect and understanding among different communities. Culture enmeshes the uniqueness of languages, life styles, dressing sense, greetings in entertainment etc. Culture is also not static. It changes according to social need, mutual cooperation, based on some core values and shared ideas. Cultural details can vary widely across different societies and regions, offering unique insights into the history and heritage of a region. The world has many a time mistaken India as a single culture, but it is a true crucible of incredible diversity which is seen as a star studded firmament, common characteristics yet unique.

Culture and society go together, differentiation of one society from the other happens through culture. According to Gillin and Gillin," culture is the cement binding together into a society it's component individuals......... Human society is people interacting, culture is the pattern of their behaviour". Every society is unique because it has its own way of life for culture. According to Linton " Culture is a social heritage of man.". It includes the whole range of human life such as attitudes, judgements, morals, values, beliefs, ideas, ideologies, institutions, politics, economy, science and philosophy of life. Humans use culture as the expression of their nature, their ways of living and thinking, and acting as functional members of a society. In common parlance the word 'culture' indicates social charm and intellectual superiority, as

people believe 'cultured' individuals to be the leaders of society. What they are referring to is that Culture is a medium within which individuals develop and mature. It is also process of purification of habits, language, thought processes. *In ancient India, Sanskrit was believed to be the language of the educated people, and thus, the Hindi synonym of culture is still "Sanskriti".*

Process of Socialisation:

Socialization is a process of Cultural transmission within a society. After birth, a child learns the norms, values, and practices of their society. A child develops according to the environment in which he or or she lives and also tries to win the praise of the group or society in which he or she lives, which enables them to interact within their society. By his or her nature, he or she is a social being because of that he or she tries to adopt the culture of his or her own society. This way a person become a socialized person and this socialization process brings balance to individual's personality. Through this socialization the individual learns to control himself or herself in the interest of society and realises his or her responsibility towards other members of the society which develops community and cooperation feeling within the society and also other societies. Education is the most prominent means to socialization which helps an individual to acquire mini processes in society like praise and blame, cooperation and conflict, obedience and ascendency.

Socialization and culture:

Behaviour of an individual is instinctive. Behaviour cannot be learnt. According to McDougall's theory inborn instincts are the cause of social behaviour. William McDougall's Instinct Theory of Motivation proposed that human behavior is driven by innate, biological, and purposive instincts, which are unlearned, universal patterns of behavior that help in survival, such as curiosity, fear (flight), pugnacity (fighting), self-assertion, and reproduction. He viewed instincts as goal-directed, combining perception, behavior, and emotion, and believed they are fundamental determinants of actions, with humans possessing them to varying degrees.

Tendencies of imitation and suggestion are rooted in human biological nature. A child comes into the world as a biological organism with animal needs and social needs. After birth, gradually the child shapes his or her behaviour in society into a social being and acquire social norms of acting and feeling through innate tendencies and imitation. The existence of society become impossible without the process of Socialisation. Without socialization no person would become a social being and no culture could exist. The process of moulding and shaping the personality of a child is called socialization. Socialisation depends on culture. Behaviour is instinctive and it is also learnt through culture, after birth children start becoming cultural beings.

Thus, culture helps to enhance personalities. Development of personality is not a automatic process. Every society adds social training to its newly born members and this way, they are able to built their own personalty. This social training is known as "socialization". The process of socialization depends on their culture. Every society has different cultural norms and socialisation rules. The members of that society respond best to those rules, the same holding true for schools and other educational institutions. In fact, these are the best centres of social interaction and personality development, if the rules of socialisation of that society match with the activities of these institutions.

Social Cognition

social cognition refers to the knowledge of emotions of others. The realisation that others have feelings, motives intentions and so on(Lefrancoins, G.R.2001 :585). Children's way of thinking about people also changes with the expansion of social world. In 1980 Robert L. Selman describes, the development of children's ability to understand and verbalise another persons' point of view. At the age of 10 a self-reflective stage is seen in children, where they begin to infer other views, understand that there can be different point of views, they can consider those and switch perspectives. **Self-esteem** is also a part of this stage. Self esteem refers to the realisation of self worth. School children can assess their worth in general terms in 5 areas, scholastic, athletic, physical appearance, social acceptance, and morality. High self worth is associated with happiness and enthusiasm, and that is what every child in the education system has to be helped to achieve.

## Nature and concept of social psychology :

Social psychology is the study of how people think about influence and relate to others. While psychology analyses the nature of humans, sociology analyses the nature of society. The sphere of social psychology is the study of individual in social situation. According to Floyd Allport, "social psychology as the scientific study of the experience and behaviour of individuals in relation to other individuals, groups and culture". In 1968, Gordon W. Allport defined as a discipline," that attempts to understand and explain how the thought feeling and behaviour of an individual are influenced by the actual, imagined and implied presents of others." According to Ross," social psychology deals with

uniformities in feelings, beliefs, volition and action. Thus Social Psychology analyses human behaviour in

it's entire context, the environment, the thought processes and the personality.

Field Theory of kurt Lewin

Field Theory describes, in a mathematical three dimensional model, the connection between a person's environment, thoughts and behaviour. It helps to understand cultural and social development of a human being.
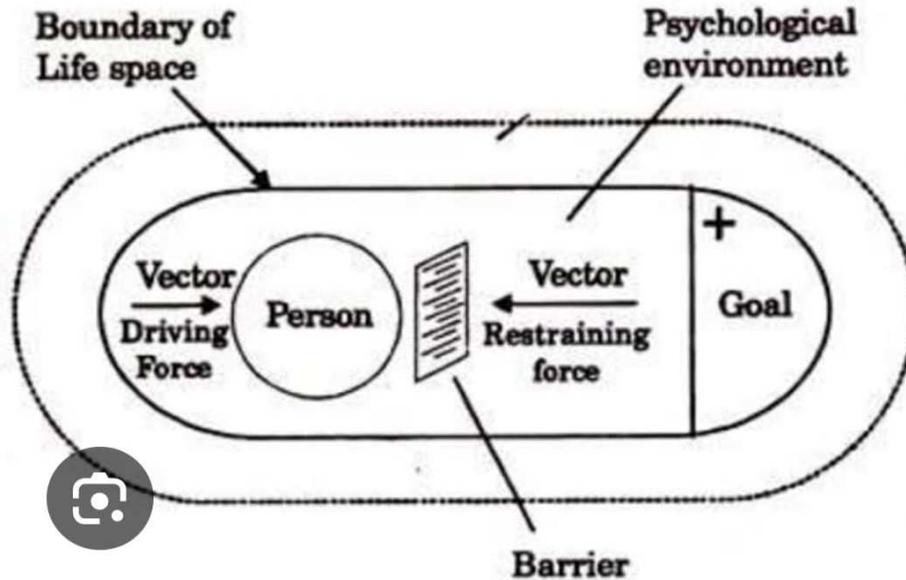
Topological psychology:-

➢ Uses concepts from mathematics, specifically topology, to represent relationships and barriers in a person's "life space".

➢ Topology is a non-metrical geometry concerned with relationships like "inside" and "outside" rather than physical measurements.

➢ It views the environment as a flexible, continuous "rubber sheet" where relationships can be stretched or twisted, but the core connections remain the same.

➢ This approach allows psychologists to map the psychological environment, including boundaries and "paths" between different regions, to understand how a person perceives and navigates their world.

Vector psychology

➢ Uses the concept of vectors from physics to represent psychological forces, such as motivation.

➢ A vector has both magnitude (strength) and direction, showing the force pulling an individual towards a goal or pushing them away from an obstacle.

➢ This helps model the dynamics of a person's "life space," illustrating how different forces interact and influence behavior.

Field theory examines patterns of interaction between individual and environment (total field of a person's

interaction). Lewin's field theory can be expressed by a formula, $B = f (p, e)$. Here B= behaviour, p = person, e = environment, f= dependant functions.

Behaviour (B): An individual's behaviour at anytime is manifested only within the coexisting factors of the current "life space" or "psychological field". So we can say life space is the combination of all the factors(f) that influence an individual's behaviour at any given point of time. An Individual's life space= inner world (belief systems, personality, knowledge) + outer world (surrounding environment), making every person's response unique. Lewin's theory stated that learning is a relativistic process by which a learner develops new insights and transforms existing ideas, learning is not just a process of connecting stimuli and responses, without context.

Person: According to Lewin, person can be envisaged in three different ways, as listed below:

needs, beliefs, values, abilities of an individual

how to representing essentially the factors (need, value, believes, abilities) in his life space how to "behaving self" that means the individual's perception office relations to the environment which he is perceive from his or her inner and outer world (E).

Environment: the environment demonstrated in the life space which refers to the objective situation in which the individual perceives and acts. Individual's life space= inner world (different belief system) + outer world (surrounding environment). To both things are combination of lifespace and it is

individually different. So we can say that a person or individual behave according to his environment.

Description of the diagram:-

1. Life Space and Psychological Environment

➢ Boundary of Life Space: This oval represents the totality of facts that determine an individual's behavior at a given moment. It includes the person and their Psychological Environment.

➢ Psychological Environment: This is the larger area within the Life Space, encompassing everything the person perceives and is aware of, including their goals, barriers, and surrounding social/physical factors as interpreted by the individual.

2. The Person and the Goal

➢ Person (P): This circle represents the individual themselves-their needs, beliefs, values, and abilities.

➢ Goal (G): This is the objective or desirable state the person is motivated to achieve. It typically has a positive valence (the '+' sign), meaning it is attractive and exerts a pull.

3. Forces and Vectors- It may be positive(+) or negative(---).

➢ Vector Driving Force: This is a force that pushes the Person toward the Goal. It represents the motivational factors, needs, or desires that propel behavior.

➢ Vector Restraining Force: This is a force that opposes the movement toward the Goal. It represents internal or external obstacles, fears, or difficulties that hold the person back.

4. The Barrier

➢ Barrier: This is a concrete obstacle or psychological block that stands between the Person and the Goal. It can be a lack of resources, a rule, a difficult task, or an internal Overall Meaning.

The diagram illustrates how an individual's behavior (B) is a function of the Person (P) and their Environment (E), represented by the formula: $\{B\} = \{f\}(\{P\},\{E\})$.

The individual is trying to move toward a positively-valenced Goal, but this movement is being influenced by Driving Forces (forwards), Restraining Forces (backwards), and a Barrier (blocking).

This model is often used to visualize and analyze situations of psychological conflict or to understand the dynamics of change management by analyzing forces that drive or resist change in a system. The most typical conflict that they face is the approach avoidance conflict.

Approach–avoidance conflict is a classic psychology concept describing a situation where the same goal or option has both appealing and unpleasant aspects, so you feel pulled toward it and pushed away at the same time. Essentially, You want something… but you also want to avoid it. For example, the students actually enjoy playing and interacting with their friends in school, so in this case,

Approach: fun, excitement, companionship but these students also feel isolated while studying in the classroom due to unrelated topics, language barriers and traditional lecture method teaching. Thus their **Avoidance: vulnerability, risk of rejection**

This conflict feels like Ambivalence ("I want it, but I don't") to children and their anxiety levels increase.

Application in a Malda classroom:-

The average rural classroom of Malda, is a snapshot of multicultural influences, students speaking different languages, from different communities and families, and mostly from difficult socio economic backgrounds. They have an optimistic outlook, and carry a lot of local knowledge, but a big barrier is a rigid curriculum that does not take into account the abilities and skills that are part of their culture. A curriculum which is essentially meant for metro cities is not useful or interesting to them. This leads to their disinterest and an academic performance that is not an actual reflection of their intellect, skills and talent. Also, they start experiencing anxiety because of a typical approach avoidance conflict, wherein they want to come to school, which is a positively valenced goal but experience fear in the classroom, due to they feeling it to be unknown territory, which becomes a restraining force and a barrier for the young children.

For overcoming this problem, **CBE or Culture Based Education** provides viable answers. A curriculum that is based on themes familiar to them and appreciated by them becomes a very strong positive vector force that balances out the negative vector and complements the positively valenced goal that they originally come to school with. The classroom environment which was a little threatening for them and was inducing the fear in their behaviour, gets transformed for them into a place where they learn effectively and are comfortable. The ambivalence that they were feeling on having to learn difficult an unfamiliar concepts in a language not their own is converted into an eagerness to participate, to show off their knowledge and skills. Their anxiety levels are greatly reduced and their psyche and behaviour reflects confidence and a feeling of self worth. CBE includes themes and motifs from their cultures, which span a variety of

languages and lived experiences such as Rajbanshi, Maldiya Bengali, Maldiya Urdu, Khotta, Bhojpuri, tribal dialects etc. Students do activities in the classroom connected to their cultures, study about their known personalities, connect subjects with events from their daily lives, that improves their concentration, interest, self esteem and confidence.

Conclusion

Thus, applying Field Theory can be a great way to analyse student behaviour and then improve upon that behaviour with the help of creating the right environment, the positive vectors, removing barriers and focusing on positive valenced goals.

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