The Role of Positive Schooling: Promoting Hope and Wellbeing in Fostering Competent and Responsible Citizens

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Abstract

The ultimate purpose of education is to provide pupils with information, improve their coping mechanisms, aid in character development, and ultimately produce competent and responsible citizens for nation-building. As a result, schools are crucial to accomplishing educational goals and assisting in a child's professional development. Schooling is the requirement for education to foster students' intellectual, moral, emotional, and social growth. Schools are regarded as the second-most crucial environment for kids to develop a sense of belonging, safety, self-assurance, excitement, and willpower after their parents. The term "positive schooling" refers to an educational strategy that prioritizes pupils' character development over academic success. Teachers that practice positive education employ strategies that concentrate on the wellbeing of specific pupils. The ultimate purpose of positive education is to promote human development, educate students how to create happiness for themselves, reduce depression, facilitate academic success, provide instructors with an easier method, increase student motivation, and strengthen resilience. Caring, trust, respect for variety, objectives, plans, motivation, hope, and society contributions are the main elements of positive schooling. Plans, motivation, and goals are three interconnected elements that are essential to learning. This article is going to be explaining the goals of positive schooling, components of positive schooling and hope in positive schooling with the challenges faced by students throughout their lives. Positive schooling not only teaches the course contents, but it also produces a sense of hope. A hopeful student believes that they will continue to learn after stepping out of the classroom.

Key Words: *Positive Schooling, Education, Goals, Hope.*

INTRODUCTION

Children are the most beautiful creation of God and are "living arrows" sent forth into the future that we are not going to see or experience. The ultimate goal of education is to provide pupils with information, improve their coping mechanisms, aid in character development, and ultimately produce knowledgeable and responsible citizens for nation-building. As a result, schools are crucial to fulfilling the goal of education and influencing a child's career. In the 21st century, education has been conceptualised in a variety of ways & includes a variety of elements, such as a focus on how technology is altering education, new pedagogies, an interdisciplinary curriculum, open learning environments & revised teacher preparation programmes. Schooling is the requirement for education to foster students' intellectual, moral, emotional, and social growth. Schools are regarded as the second-most crucial environment for kids to develop a sense of belonging, safety, self-assurance, excitement, and willpower after their parents. Schools have a dominant role to play in nurturing right value system by providing depth in their curriculum through integration of intangibles in education like goals, plans and motivation, ultimately aiming towards building positive environment. Teachers give pupils hope and motivation to study and to carry their accomplishments with them. Finally, the students leave the classroom and realise that they are a part of a wider society that they can influence and better. The rising focus on school environment reflects both the desire to improve schools and the requirement to provide students with the skills necessary to handle the wide range of issues they will encounter in the twenty-first century. "Feeling good and doing good" are key components of the thriving positive education movement.

Children today live in a very complex world dominated by media and technology. Their lives and interactions are governed through social media. This has affected their development in all aspects. Digital world is the reality and changing ways of functioning and interacting is also a reality that cannot be avoided. However, we need to equip our children with the core values and strengths that they are resilient enough, can function effectively in the ever changing world, and thrive in their life. They learn the life values to share and care, and contribute to humanity. Positive psychology with its focus on bringing out the best in human beings can transform the school experience of children and enable them to achieve success and well-being. Children and adolescents today are facing lots of stress and anxiety due to the changing nature of the society,

increasing use of media and technology, and decreasing value systems. As reported by research, "at least one in eight adolescents is at risk of mental health problems" (Nair, et al., 2017). Hence it is crucial that we address this need of ensuring positive mental health and promote flourishing within the school community (Norrish et. al., 2013). As Waters (2014) points out, "a school curriculum that incorporates wellbeing will ideally prevent depression, increase life satisfaction, encourage social responsibility, promote creativity, foster learning and even enhance academic achievement".

When everyone at the school feels secure, included, and welcomed and actively promotes positive behaviours & interactions, a healthy school atmosphere is present. Positive education means "the development of educational environments that enable the learner to engage in established curricula in addition to knowledge and skills to develop their own and others' wellbeing" (Oades, et.al., 2011). In this way, Positive schooling means:

   i)   'Teaching children to think positively';
   ii)   'Sharing excitement with the multitude of others';
   iii)   'Creating sense of trust in the classroom';
   iv)   'Fostering the importance of diversity';
   v)   'Turning students into teachers who continue to share what they have learned with others.'

Schools are the second home for children and teachers are like their second parents in the early years of schooling. Schooling needs to provide the best of experience to children so they feel cared for. It should impart such education as to instill confidence, and make them self-reliant. Children should not be overloaded with information in the name of education. The aim of education is not only to impart knowledge, but going beyond it to develop character and wisdomin children. The ultimate objective is the harmonious development of a child in physical, mental, social, emotional, moral, and spiritual aspects. This will help children to achieve happiness, success and well-being for themselves, and also contribute to the welfare and happiness of others.

POSITIVE SCHOOLING

When a child goes to school for the first time, what do they look for? They look forward to being given love, care, affection and support; that they are listened to, feel involved and given

opportunities to explore and learn. What are their parents' apprehensions and expectations? They expect their children are taken care of, are safe, no harm is caused to them, and they learn, acquire knowledge, and gain success and achievement later in life. All this is possible when we create a positive school environment. All children, irrespective of their background and abilities, must feel safe, welcome, and included in the school, and not discriminated, stigmatized, or humiliated and punished. "Principles of equity and inclusive education must be embedded in the learning environment to support a positive schooling climate" (Deb, 2018). How do we achieve this positive schooling experience? There are three dimensions to positive schooling:

- **Physical dimension:** It includes proper infrastructure in the classroom and also in the school, proper facilities such as good laboratories, playground, availability of clean drinking water, sufficient toilets for all, provisions for children with disabilities and so on. School should have clean and green space and an inviting, stimulating ambience.

- **Psychological dimension:** It needs to provide opportunities to promote the cognitive capabilities and psychological well-being of children. Use of innovative teaching methods can sustain the interest of children in learning and lead to creativity in them. Proper disciplinary practices will help children develop self-regulation and promote their mental health.

- **Socio-emotional dimension:** The school climate needs to feel warm and welcoming. Schooling needs to develop self-awareness in terms of their emotions, attitudes, beliefs and values; and interpersonal skills. It provides various support services to take care of the emotional and mental health needs of children.

- Thus, positive schooling aims at creating a positive school climate where children feel safe, included, & accepted, and it actively promotes positive behaviours & interactions (Deb, 2018). It attempts to integrate body, mind, and heart to achieve comprehensive development of children. Schooling aims to not only educate children, provide them training in different subjects and make them ready for future career; schools are also the training ground for inculcating values and disseminating culture, developing compassion and promoting well-being of all.

GOALS OF POSITIVE SCHOOLING

Schooling can be considered as the foundation of a child's life. The type of school, nature of the teachers in the school, interaction with the school staff, experience acquired at school – all influence the development of the child. A positive school experience facilitates learning, achievement, skill acquisition and personality development in children; whereas a negative experience at school hampers proper development of children and leaves them inadequate in their knowledge and skills.

An educational strategy known as "positive schooling" includes student wellness and values as learning objectives in addition to academic success. Teachers that practice positive education employ strategies that concentrate on the wellbeing of specific pupils. Positive schooling's ultimate objectives are:

- **'Promoting Human Development'**
- **'Teaching Students how to make themselves happy'**
- **'Decreasing Depression'**
- **'Facilitating Academic Performance'**
- **'Offering easier system for Teachers'**
- **'Increasing Motivation among Students'**
- **'Boosting Resilience'**
- **'Developing Discipline among Students'**
- **'Avoid Emphasizing Grades to Strictly'**
- **'Building Relationship'**

In addition to teaching students concepts, schools serve as a location where students may lay the groundwork for leading moral lives as adults. All pupils should be treated with respect, candour, and real compassion at every school. The necessity for education to develop the whole-student via social, emotional, moral, and intellectual growth is a central tenet of all conceptualizations of schooling in the twenty-first century (Cain & Carnellor, 2008; McCombs, 2004; Noddings, 1995; Palmer, 2003). Teachers that practise positive education employ strategies that concentrate on the wellbeing of specific pupils. The aim of positive education is to develop all students into educators who will pass on their knowledge and wisdom to others and carry on the traditions of positive education. Caring, trust, respect for variety, objectives, plans, motivation, hope, and

society contributions are the main elements of a constructive education. These are acquired through various life skills.

♣ COMPONENTS OF POSITIVE SCHOOLING

Caring, trust, respect for variety, objectives, plans, motivation, hope, & society contributions are the main elements of a constructive education. Three interconnected elements—goals, plans, and motivation—are crucial for learning. Positive education not only imparts the course material but also fosters optimism. An optimistic student thinks that learning will continue after they leave the classroom. The foundation of the positive schooling is based on care, trust, and inclusivity. Snyder, Lopez, and Pedrotti (2010) have advocated following components of a positive schoolhouse:

- ❖ **Foundation:** Care, trust and respect for diversity are the key to a positive school. A caring attitude by the teachers towards the students and a sense of trust for the teachers by the students are important in contributing to good academic performance as well as psychological benefits (Gilman, Huebner, & Buckman, 2008; Collins, 2001). Care and trust become crucial concerns in case of children from disadvantaged, and difficult background. There also needs to be an acceptance of the diversity of attitudes, beliefs and functioning of the child based on socialization, culture, class, race, ethnicity, age and gender.

- ❖ **Goals:** Another component of positive schooling is showing kids that goals will help them succeed in school. These goals are better for the students if the teacher supports them. As teachers, its important to help students to think of goals and support them while they try to reach those goals. Positive schooling approach talks about deciding the goals for each student, i.e., the contents of learning and the curriculum. It needs to involve practical learning experiences, relevant to the sociocultural context of students. To achieve these learning outcomes or goals, planning is required and the students need to be motivated for it.

- ❖ **Motivation & Plan:** Teachers who are creative, enthusiastic and connect with their class motivate their students. These skills also help in making the material easier to understand and more relevant to the class. This helps motivate the students and teach them to reach

their goals. Through motivation and planning, student goals can be universally met. At the ground level, plans and motivation are necessary, being driven by goals.

- ❖ **Hope:** Hope helps students become lifelong problem solvers and positive schooling encourages the process of learning how to learn. Positive schooling not only teaches the course contents, but it also produces a sense of hope. A hopeful student believes that they will continue to learn even after stepping out of the classroom. Hope is a very important component of positive schooling that underlies the aim of education and schooling, i.e., "learning how to learn" (Snyder, Lopez, & Pedrotti, 2010). Teachers are not there just to pass on the information and facts, but to develop ideas in students, empowering them for lifelong learning, and instilling hope in them that they can achieve in life. It is hope only that sustains life and can do wonders.

- ❖ **Social Contribution:** The final stage in positive schooling is teaching students that they are a part of a bigger picture and help them to spread their knowledge into others. Social contribution then turn the students into teachers to continue the learning process, and spread knowledge into a wide range of people. In positive schooling, students become teachers to others.

Finally positive schooling enables the student to look beyond oneself and contribute to the greater good, do something meaningful for the community and society that can help in the progress of humankind. It is passing the light onto others where you learn or receive things, get enlightened, and then you give back to others. It helps one to create meaning in one's life, leading to authentic happiness.

Figure 1 provides a graphic illustration of the elements of good schooling provided by Snyder, Lopez, and Pedrotti (2010). This illustration illustrates how the parts work together by using the picture of a school. The pillars are comprised of compassion, trust, and variety. Plans & motivation are essential at the grassroots level since they are motivated by goals. Teachers give pupils hope and motivation to study and to carry their accomplishments with them. Finally, the student moves beyond the classroom and acknowledges that they are a part of a wider society that they can influence and better.
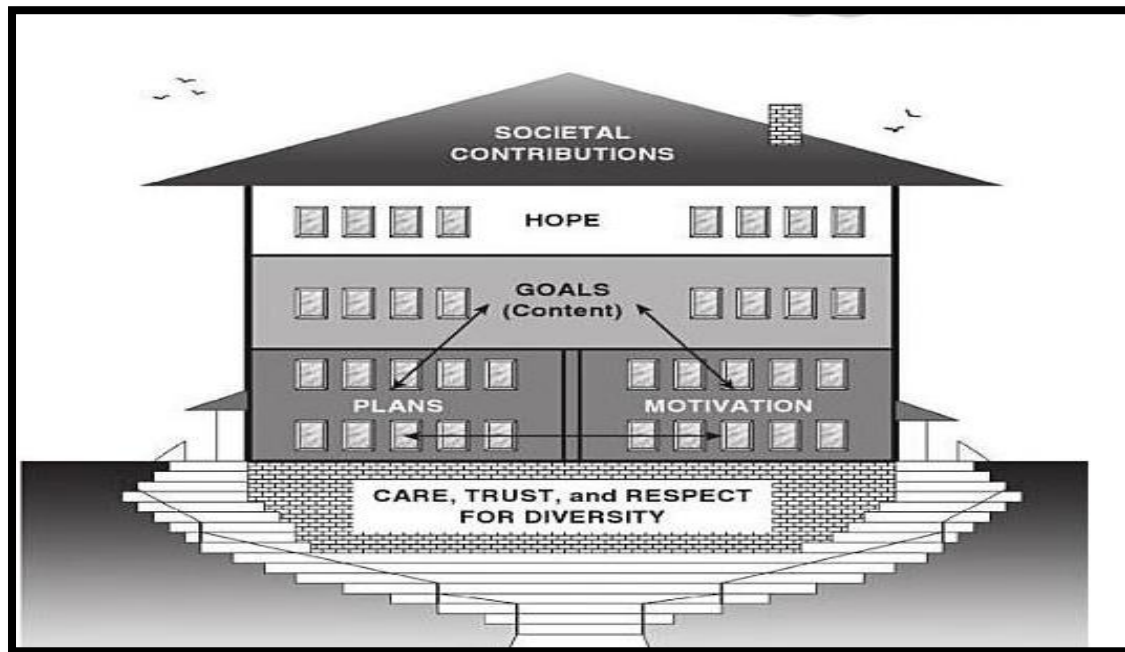
Fig. 1: Components of Positive Schooling

Teachers that genuinely care about their students act as encouraging role models and lay the groundwork for learning. I believe we have all had the experience of a teacher who genuinely cares about us and our education; when you have this experience, it is a fantastic feeling. Another important basis for enabling learning is trust. In a comprehensive statistical analysis of school improvement, Bryk & Schneider (2002) discovered that trust results in advantages for both performance and psychological well-being. Three interconnected elements—goals, plans, and motivation—are crucial for learning. An good summary of goal-setting and task motivation may be found in Locke and Latham (2002). Together, teachers and students must clearly identify and comprehend their goals; if both are involved in outlining objectives, they have a better chance of success. However, placing too much emphasis on grades may undercut these efforts by placing more of a focus on performance than learning. Snyder, Lopez & Pedrotti go on to emphasise the significance of motivation, saying that it takes a motivated teacher to inspire students and that the two parties involved in the partnership should be viewed as lifelong learners.

CONCLUSION

An educational strategy known as positive psychology's emphasis on personal motivation and strengths is known as positive education. In positive education instructors use tactics that are

centred around the well-being of individual students instead of adopting the standard school method of trying to fit their curriculum to the hypothetical "average" student and teaching the entire class using a single teaching and assessment style. To promote positive learning, teachers utilise strategies like creating personalised objectives for each student & functioning with them to create the plans & motivation to attain their goals. This method makes an effort to tailor learning objectives to the levels of individual students rather than pressuring them to perform at a specific grade level, as evidenced via the emphasis on standardised testing. Learning is seen as a cooperative process where teachers learn to appreciate their pupils & each student's opinion is valued rather than as a means of placing pupils in competition with one another. Finally positive schooling enables the student to look beyond oneself and contribute to the greater good, do something meaningful for the community and society that can help in the progress of humankind.

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