

EXPLORING ATTITUDE OF PUPILS AND TEACHERS TOWARDS THE USE OF DRAMA ACTIVITIES IN TEACHING OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AT ELEMENTARY LEVEL

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ABSTRACT

A Social Science class can be transformed into an exciting experience, through the inclusion of dramatic activities for all age groups and all levels of schooling. These activities provide a learning environment, where the students can feel safe inside, release emotions with control, develop decision making and develop problem solving abilities. The present study was conducted to explore the Attitude of Pupils and Teachers towards the use of Drama Activities in teaching of Social Sciences at elementary level. A total of 80 students of class VIIITH and 20 teachers from 2 public schools of Delhi wherein drama as pedagogy was being employed in teaching learning of social science were chosen as a sample. The data was collected by administering a five point attitude scale and structured interviews for both students and teachers. The data was analyzed using the Descriptive Data Analysis Techniques. In both the tools (Attitude Scale and Structured Interview), the frequency of responses for each item was calculated and then it was subjected to percentage analysis. The findings revealed a favorable attitude of both students and teachers for using Drama activities in social science classroom, but the sad ground reality was that not much drama activities were being organized by teachers in the classroom due to a burden of time constraint of completing syllabus on time as these activities according to them are time consuming.

KEYWORDS: Attitude, Drama, Drama in Education, Social Sciences, Elementary Level

INTRODUCTION

Till today, in most of the schools, Social Science is often perceived as a boring subject among students. Students find it difficult to understand, remember and relate to everyday life. The participation of students in classrooms is almost negligible, students are always at the receiving end who acquires all the information from teacher and teachers also carry out old, dry and drab methods of teaching where students remain passive listeners.

Learning about the world is the primary goal of the school and the focus of the social sciences content. The use of drama as a teaching rather than a performance technique can make the world more understandable to the students by recreating significant world events within the safety of knowing that these events are not really happening. As stated by Heathcote (1975), "Dramatization makes it possible to isolate an event or to compare one event to another, to look at events that have happened to other people in other places and times". Drama can be used in social sciences classroom not only to motivate students but also to help them learn content. In many places today, as in ancient times, meaning is given to observable events through storytelling and through real or symbolic acting of events. Teachers can make use of these powerful techniques to deepen students understanding of social sciences content.

Drama activities in form of improvisation, role plays, public speaking, puppetry, pantomime etc. provide a safe environment to students to explore ideas without penalty or grade, develop oral language skills, solve real problems and reflect about the concepts learned. Thus learning through drama maybe included in the social sciences class as a way to introduce, reinforce and extend major concepts.

Therefore, the present study is conducted in the realm of Drama in Education to explore the attitude of pupils and teachers towards the use of Drama Activities in Social Sciences.

Drama in Education

“Education is concerned with individuals; Drama is concerned with the individuality of individuals, with the uniqueness of each human essence.”

Brian Way (1967)

Drama is highly regarded as an effective and valuable teaching strategy because of its unique ability to engage reflective, constructivist and active learning in the classroom (Heathcote cited in Wagner, 1976; Mezirow, 1990; Schon, 1991). Drama is an *experiential*, active learning tool. Children "live through" the Drama exploring and expressing their thoughts, their values, and their feelings in a controlled, play-based learning mode. It allows children to respond intellectually, physically, and emotionally to a variety of imagined situations through movement and role-playing, using action and dialogue appropriate to the content. Learning with Drama enhances learning in all other areas. Through Drama, students are able to make connections between previous and current learning and among various subject areas.

Pemberton-Billing & Clegg (1965) discuss that Drama begins not with somebody's text, but with the child's self-expression through the acting of his own experiences. *Theatre imposes several limitations on self-expression, In Drama theatrical limitations do not exist.* The child is free to develop ideas and conflicts along his own lines, and reach his own conclusions. Through play, child learns to grow up. They explore impending situations and become less afraid of them. The drama teacher's job is to discipline and direct the child's play into channels where he needs to make worthwhile decisions and discoveries. Drama then becomes a positive educational force, not merely a useful haphazard way of learning.

Drama in Education (D.I.E) uses the art form of drama as an educational pedagogy for students of all ages. It is the use of dramatization for the purpose of student's learning. Educational Drama is defined as "Drama in which there is no external audience, no prepared script, and in which the teacher frequently takes on roles with students" (Wilhelm & Edmiston, 1998).

Educational drama utilizes skills across the range of dramatic activity, everything from teacher-in-role to normal theatrical conventions of audience and spectator. D. I. E is the use of drama as a means of teaching across the curriculum. It is used to expand learners' awareness, to enable them to look at reality through fantasy and to look below the surface of actions for meanings. The term "Drama in Education" is an umbrella term that incorporates the various disciplines, forms, and applications of drama, creative dramatics, and theatre arts for educational purposes. Drama in Education encompasses related disciplines and art forms such as Role Play, Mime, Pantomime, Clowning, Drama games, Storytelling, Radio Drama, Melodrama, Monodrama, Puppetry, Improvisation, Mask Theatre, Public Speaking, Playwriting, Directing, and Play productions.

Drama in Education helps in developing the overall personality of the child. It has a positive impact on student's physical, emotional, social, and cognitive Development. It is a multi-sensory mode of learning designed to:

- Increase awareness of self (mind, body, and voice) and others (collaboration and empathy).
- Improve clarity and creativity in communication of verbal and nonverbal ideas.
- Deepen understanding of human behavior, motivation, diversity, culture, and history.

Benefits of Using Drama in a Classroom

- **Self-Confidence:** By taking risks in class and performing for an audience teaches students to trust their ideas and abilities. The confidence gained in drama applies to school, career, and life.
- **Creativity & Imagination:** Students make creative choices, think of new ideas, and interpret familiar materials while performing drama. (Hui, Cheung & Wong, 2011; Lovesy, 2003; McCammon et al., 2010).
- **Tolerance and Empathy:** Students acts roles in different situations, time periods, and cultures which promotes compassion and tolerance for others' feelings and viewpoints in them (Akyol, &Hamamci, 2007).
- **Cooperation and Collaboration:** Students in Drama learn to work together, to cooperate, and to find the best way for each member of a group to contribute, and to listen to and accept the viewpoints and contributions of others. No other art form is more truly collaborative than Drama.
- **Concentration:** Students develop a sustained focus of mind, body and voice by playing and performing Drama Activities which also helps students in other school subjects and life.
- **Communication Skills:** Drama enhances verbal and nonverbal expression of ideas. It improves student's voice projection, articulation of words, fluency with language, and persuasive speech. Listening and observation skills also develop by playing Drama Games. (Arslan, Erbay&Saygin, 2010; Ulas, 2008).
- **Problem Solving:** Drama is an important means of stimulating creativity in problem solving. Students learn how to communicate the who, what, where, and why to the audience. Improvisation fosters quick-thinking solutions, which leads to greater adaptability in life.
- **Critical Thinking:** Bailin (1998) details how critical thinking might be understood in the context of drama and drama education.
- **Attitude & Self-Concept:** Buege (1991); Hendrix, Eick & Shannon (2012) revealed a positive change on attitude and self-concept of students using creative drama, puppetry and social skills training.
- **Emotional Outlet:** Improvisations and drama games allow students to express their emotions. Thus, their aggression and tension are released in a safe and controlled environment which reduces anti-social behavior of students.(Kokoric, 2011)
- **Self-Discipline:** The process of moving from ideas to actions to performances teaches the value of practice and perseverance in students.
- **Social Awareness:** Legends, myths, poems, stories, and plays used in drama teach students about social issues and conflicts from cultures, past and present, all over the world.

Besides being a fun activity, many drama activities reduce stress by releasing mental, physical, and emotional tension, helps in building trust between students and teachers, improves physical fitness of students through kinesthetic involvement and also helps in strengthening memory of the students.

PURPOSE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Contemporary Indian educators view drama as a school play, extracurricular activity, a form of supervised recreation, or a medium of entertainment. Drama has been sentimentalized and trivialized rather than being recognized as contributing to serious pedagogical practice. However, Wagner (1998) proposed that when drama is used in the educational context, it supports the notion of students' ability to create personal meaning and explore concepts that makes them human. There is a widespread recognition that knowledge is not passively poured into students' heads, but instead constructed by each learner (Wagner, 1998). In addition, drama helps students to discover links in chains of meaning; challenges students to think and construct new understandings; and brings inquiry into student's lives (Edmiston, 2003).

Drama needs to be seen as a mode of learning. O' Neill & Lambert (1982) state that 'drama strategies are not intended to transmit historical facts but are attempts to illuminate those facts. Drama may be used to connect us with the past'. Through the creation of "moments" in history (a recreating and isolating of an event in history), students are encouraged to bring to a conscious awareness, and to reflect upon, the universal truth inherent in that moment. Students will not have to leave one country for another or risk their reputations and lives for a set of beliefs. However by taking part in a drama that focuses on event where the characters did have to do these things, they might share feelings of those characters.

Social Sciences teachers may use drama in education to promote their students understanding of:

- The significance of historical events.
- The commonalities of experiences across cultures and time (Heathcote, 1975).
- History as the story of how people through all periods of time have grappled with common problems (Wagner, 1976).
- The repeated patterns found in historical events.
- The similarity of concerns and the needs of people around the world, and
- The impact of major events upon the lives of people and their own lives.

In modern education, Social Science is one of the most natural habitats for nurturing creativity. Both the contents and the methods used to foster learning in Social Sciences are in themselves originative of creativity and Drama being a powerful learning method calls on students to demonstrate knowledge, skills, attitudes and participation in Social Science classrooms. When students use Drama as a tool to learn Social Science in their classroom, it provides them with the opportunity to think, make decisions, empathize, explore depth of content, exchange ideas and establish links across time. The students exhibit abilities in problem solving, decision making, empathizing, linking events, sharing ideas and conceptualizing. Many studies have been conducted from k-12 setting that show that there is a positive correlation between Drama Activity and learning achievement of students. (Chan, 2009; Dorion, 2009; Duatepe et al, 2009; Fleming et al, 2004; Karadag et al, 2007; Rao, 1996; Kulkarni, 1994; Ulas, 2008; Ustundag, 1997). A lot has also been written

theoretically on the benefits of using Drama in teaching of social sciences, but what students and teachers actually think of using drama as a tool in social science classroom and what practical problems are faced in using drama in a classroom had not been explored yet. Thus, Rationale for conducting a research on this topic is to study the interest shown by pupils and teachers towards the use of Drama Activities in teaching of Social Sciences by exploring their attitude towards it.

The significance of this study is that it will allow us to know the present status of Drama Activities in schools and the exploration of attitude of pupils and teachers towards Drama Activities will give a necessary indication for schools to decide for future allocation of teaching learning resources in a better way. In other words, the study is an indicator for schools to decide on incorporating Drama Activities as a tool in classroom teaching.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To find the different types of Drama Activities used in the teaching of Social Sciences.
- To explore the attitude of pupils and teachers towards the use of Drama Activities in Social Sciences.
- To suggest examples of Drama Activities which may be included with respect to different domains of Social Sciences

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- What are the different types of Drama Activities being used in teaching of Social Sciences?
- What is the attitude of pupils towards the use of Drama Activities in Social Science?
- What is the attitude of teachers towards the use of Drama Activities in Social Science?
- What kind of different Drama Activities can be included with respect to different domains of Social Science?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study lies in the realm of Descriptive Research. Survey method was employed to collect data for the present study. The study employs analytic induction and descriptive data analysis to analyze the data.

Sample

The Sample for this study was taken through Purposive Random Sampling. The schools were taken wherein Drama in Education as a part of the pedagogy was being employed in transacting the curriculum of Social Science. The sample included two public schools of Delhi. The sample size for teachers was 20(10 teachers from each public school) and the sample size of students was 80 (40 students of class VIIITH from one section of each school chosen through random sampling).

Tools for Data Collection

A five point Attitude Scale was developed for both the teachers and students. The Attitude Scale was developed to gauge the attitude of students and teachers towards the use of Drama Activities in Social Sciences. The Attitude Scale was prepared using the Method of Summated Ratings (Likert Scale). The researcher comprehensively studied articles in books and journals to understand the different nuances of Drama in Education. While framing the Attitude Scale, broad themes were kept in mind and statements were framed on these particular themes such as Relevance of Drama activities in Social Sciences, Impact of Drama activities on students affective domain and their life skills, Gauging the extent of participation

of teachers in Drama Activities, and Preference of conventional methods or Drama activities in the pedagogy. Attitude Scale comprised of 25 statements. The five point Attitude Scale for the statements gave the option to the respondent to choose any one of the following i.e. Strongly Agree, Agree, Undecided, Disagree and Strongly Disagree. The same Attitude Scale was prepared for both the students and teachers.

A Structured Interview was prepared to gauge the different type of Drama Activities used in Social Science and to supplement the necessary information related to the attitude scale. A Separate set of questions for Structured Interview was prepared for both the students and teachers. The questions were based on the themes like knowing the different drama activities being used in Social Sciences, relevance of Drama activities in Social Sciences, practical problems of conducting Drama activities in Social Science classroom, getting suggestions for improving the use of Drama Activities in classroom. The researcher also underwent a comprehensive Content Analysis of Class VIIITH Social Science textbook to suggest different drama activities that maybe included with respect to different domains of Social Sciences.

Collection of Data

The Data was collected in two phases. In the first phase, the permission was sought from the school authorities for administering the test. In the second phase, the data was collected from Two Public Schools of Delhi, where an attitude scale was administered on 80 students and 20 teachers and interview was conducted on 15 students and 15 teachers respectively.

Evaluation and Scoring of Data

The data was analyzed using the Descriptive Data Analysis Techniques. In both the tools (Attitude Scale and Structured Interview), the frequency of responses for each item was calculated and then it was subjected to percentage analysis.

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

While analyzing the data and interpreting the results efforts were made to fulfill the objectives. Firstly, To know the different Drama Activities used in teaching of Social Sciences, it was found that in majority the Role Plays, Improvisations and Public Speaking are the one's which are being most commonly incorporated in teaching of Social Sciences. Table 1 indicates that out of so many drama activities, the teachers in both the schools are using very limited amount of drama activities to engage learners in social science classroom.

Table 1

Different Kinds of Drama Activities Used in the Schools	ROLE PLAYS
	IMPROVISATIONS
	STORY TELLING
	PUBLIC SPEAKING

In order to fulfill the second objective an attitude scale and interview was prepared for both students and teachers. The findings of the study revealed that both students and teachers have a favorable attitude towards using drama activities in social science classrooms and believe equally in benefits of its use in the learning of the social science topics. Nearly 75% teachers considered Drama as an inseparable part of the teaching learning process but due to the time constraint,

pressure of completing the syllabus on time and preparing students for exams as the priority of social science teachers, they are unable to plan and execute these activities in social science classroom on a regular basis. In the personal visit to schools while collecting data, researcher attended and observed some social science classes, it was noticed that even in these schools which incorporates Drama Activities in Social Sciences do not use these activities very often i.e. just 1-2 activities in 3 months. The major findings after the analysis of data from the attitude scale and interview on students and teachers of both the schools are as follows:

- Almost 80% of the teachers and almost 75% of students agree that Drama Activities is a better way of teaching Social Sciences as compared to conventional methods of teaching.
- 95% of the teachers and nearly 85% of the students agree that Drama Activities helps in better understanding of the concept of Social Sciences.
- The teachers are in 100% agreement and more than 85% students feel that learning Social Sciences with Drama Activities is more fun.
- More than 70% of the teachers and more than 75% students feel that Drama Activities are a better method of teaching Social Sciences.
- 90% of the teachers and nearly 85% of the students agree that learning Social Science topic through Drama Activities helps them to remember the topic for a longer period of time.
- 100% of the teachers and 85% of students agree that students Self Confidence builds and improves after the use of Drama Activities in the Social Science.
- 100% of the teachers and almost 95% of the students feel that Drama Activities helps in enhancing student's creativity.
- 95% of the teachers and 82% of the students agree that Drama Activities improves their Communication Skills.
- 53% of the students want incorporation of more Drama Activities and their active involvement in the classroom for improving the learning in Social Science classroom. Table 2 indicates the teachers and students response when asked about how Drama Activities can be more effectively use in teaching of Social Sciences.

Table 2

	Students Response	Teachers Response
Ways Of Using Drama Activities More Effectively In Teaching Of Social Sciences	Active Participation by Teacher	Getting More Time to Organize Drama Activities
	More Drama Activities Should be Incorporated	Encouraging Full Participation of all Students
	Usage of Props and Costumes Should be Encouraged	Introducing/Summarizing Every Topic Through drama
	More Time for Preparation	Conducting Theatre in Education Classes and National School of Drama Workshops in Schools

- 87% each of teachers and students feel teachers should actively participate in Drama Activities alongside students in the classroom.
- 80% of the teachers and more than 70% students feel that Drama Activities in Social Sciences help in developing

student's critical thinking.

- 100% teachers and nearly 85% students agree that Drama Activities helps students in relating to the character portrayed by them.
- Nearly 50% students have never participated or played any character in the Drama Activities.
- 95% of the teachers agree that Drama activities are extremely time consuming. We have a divided mandate on this statement as 45% students disagree whereas 42% are in agreement with the statement.
- 75% teachers noticed excitement and enthusiasm amongst students when were introduced to a topic of Social Sciences through Drama Activities.
- 40% of teachers feel that Drama Activities does not simplify their job as it increases burden on them due to the time constraint of completing syllabus on time but 34% also feel that certain topics can be better understood only by Drama Activities.

The last objective was fulfilled by the comprehensive content analysis and some of the suggestions were compiled on different Drama Activities regarding different domains of Social Sciences.

Suggestions of Different Drama Activities with Respect to Different Domains of Social Sciences

The content analysis of the Social Science curricula at elementary stage in the NCERT Textbooks was undertaken to make suggestions regarding different Drama Activities which can be used with respect to different domains of Social Sciences. The study had been delimited to class VIII, where content analysis of class VIII Social Science Textbook was divided in three domains i.e. History, Civics and Geography.

The suggestions of different Drama Activities for 1st domain of Social Sciences i.e. **History** are given below:

- Battles are an inseparable part of the history and one of the better ways to dramatize battles is *Puppetry*. In this particular case, The **Battle of Plassey** can be aptly performed by the way of Puppetry in which the whole story of Battle of Plassey can be recreated and students can be engaged in the handling of puppets, making of puppets and their costumes and usage of background sound effects.
- This particular topic can also be performed through *Role Plays*, whichever suits keeping the time constraint in mind by the teacher.
- There can't be a better way to make students empathize and relate with the historical personalities which can be done through Role playing those particular characters. When students perform those characters they can easily relate to those particular personalities and supporting characters to the historical Personalities life. Thus, in this particular topic, the life sketch of **Tipu Sultan** can be easily dramatized through *Role Plays*.
- One of the other ways of expressing one's self is through performing *Monodrama* in Drama Activities. In the topic **How many Delhi's before Delhi** students should be asked to read the topic from text book and then 4-5 students can be asked to prepare a separate Monodrama and these students get the liberty to be Delhi and portray according to his/her understanding of the chapter by discussing it with their classmates.

- The other topic which can be nicely explained through one of the Drama Activity i.e. *Improvising Haveli Family & Colonial Bungalow* in which the teacher can divide the whole class into 5-6 groups of 5-6 members each and then 3-3 groups can be asked to portray or improvise the lifestyle of Haveli members and Colonial Bungalow members.
- **Macaulay's Minutes** is the topic which can be dealt with *Public Speaking* by students. Students can be asked to form 2 groups of for and against motion and then Debate on Macaulay's Minutes and the decision of teaching English as a medium of instruction and the policy of Woods Despatch.
- Another form of Drama Activity which creates an impact on learner's mind is *Storytelling* which can be used by a teacher in a very creative manner by using his/her creative skills of narrating a story and sketching the life of historical and famous personalities. The **Life sketch of Rabindranath Tagore** can be beautifully narrated to the students by weaving it in a Storytelling form which will create a visual image in students mind and thus have an impact on their mind for longer time.
- The same topic of **Women Caste and Reform** can also be dealt by Public Speaking where students be asked for an *Extempore* after studying the chapter on conditions of women from past till present times and the various reforms which have taken place in the process due to the efforts of different reformers like Raja Rammohun Roy, IshwarChanderVidyasagar and Swami DayanandSaraswati.

The suggestions of different Drama Activities for 2nd domain of Social Sciences i.e. **Civics** are given below:

- Students can be taught the topic of **Fundamental Rights** through *Improvisation*. In this activity, students will be taught Fundamental rights in beginning of the chapter and to clear their understanding and perspectives on each fundamental right, an improvisation can be formed where 6 groups of 5 students each will be asked to improvise on one of the fundamental rights allotted to them.
- The topic of **Secularism** can be done through Drama Activity in which 5-6 students can be asked to prepare a *Speech* on the topic 'Secularism in India' and then rest of the class can have a *discussion* on it.
- To teach students **How a Law is Formed** in our parliament, we can take an example of a particular act already passed and there is a proper example given in the book in the pictorial form which can be *Role Played* by the student's so that they get necessary understanding of how the laws are formed in the parliament.
- A very comprehensive *Debate* in the form of Public Speaking can be held on for and against motion on the topic '**Justice Delayed is Justice Denied**'
- One of the topics that can be beautifully *Role played* is, **Why is it important to separate religion from the state.** The class can be divided in four groups of 8-10 students each which will represent four religions and in each group 2-3 members will be of different religion representing the minority group and how their rights are violated and suppressed by majority group and how they are denied of the available resources can be depicted through Role Playing .In the end a social message will come that because of this reason minority don't get their rights and that is why religion based states should not be there.

The suggestions of different Drama Activities for 3rd domain of Social Sciences i.e. **Geography** are given below:

- To teach student the **various forms of energy**, there can be a *Public Speaking* in class by students by preparing a

debate on pros and cons of Conventional and Non-Conventional Energy or students can express themselves in declamation that which forms of energy out of the conventional and non-conventional sources is better.

- A **Declamation** as a part of Public Speaking can be held in class where students speak for *Factors affecting distribution of the population* and the reasons for Population change from ancient to modern times.

CONCLUSIONS AND EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

Drama Activities is an inseparable part of teaching learning process and thus efforts should be made by teachers to teach more and more topics through Drama Activities so as to create a better understanding and retention of concepts in learners. Conventional methods of teaching should be discouraged and students should be given opportunity for active participation in the teaching learning process. In other words, Drama Activities should be used to help learners assimilate concepts rather than rote learning.

Teaching Learning resources should be employed in a better manner which can lead to a favorable environment in the classroom. Learners should be exposed to other methods of teaching and then should be allowed to make up their minds in favor of the method they choose to learn and in the end better method should prevail in pedagogy. Efforts should be made to actively engage all the students and give them the opportunity to participate in one or other forms of Drama Activities which helps in building the individual self confidence level of all the learners. The self-confidence gained in Drama applies to school, career and life. Teachers should design Drama Activities in such a way that they can be a part of the activities alongside students so as while interaction with students they are able to help and solve their individual problems by guiding them and acting as a facilitator to them. Drama in Education helps students develop intellectually by expanding their capacities for creative thought and expression, and by encouraging critical-thinking skills such as curiosity, inventiveness, and flexibility. Attempts should be made to use props and costumes while performing Drama activities which make students more involved and they are able to relate themselves better with the character which in turn helps in retaining the topic for a longer period of time. Teachers also can take this to the higher level by involving learners in the preparation of costumes and props which will enhance the other aspects of student's personality.

Curriculum framers, School Administration and teachers should design Drama Activities in such a way so that time constraint does not becomes a hurdle in providing learners the full benefits and advantages of learning through Drama Activities. There is a minimal use of different types of Drama Activities in social science classroom so there should be an active effort made by teachers to use more and more of different type of Drama Activities in topics so that maximum participation of students can be achieved. Curriculum should be framed in such a manner that teachers get enough time to plan and organize Drama Activities even if some steps need to be taken like curtailing some part of the syllabus. New innovative plans and ways should be used so that maximum participation can be achieved by all the students.

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