
UNIT 15 BEHAVIOURAL PROBLEMS OF STUDENTS

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15.1 INTRODUCTION

Most children have some behaviour problems at some time or the other. Behaviour problems arise from conditions within the child or from external influences, effects of which are often not noticed or understood by others. Behaviour problems range from extreme withdrawal to intense hostile aggression. In a classroom, students exhibit a range of behaviors. Teachers are required to deal with all kinds of behaviour problems in a classroom. In this unit, we shall try to understand more about the difficulties experienced by students which often result in different behavior problems. It is important for teachers and parents to develop an understanding of the factors that result in problem behavior. In this Unit we explain the nature of behavior problems and their causes. We have also discussed remedial measures and strategies for dealing with behavioral problems. The understanding you gain through reading this Unit will enable you to identify behavior problems in your students and help them in dealing with their problems and modify their behavior.

15.2 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you should be able to:

- identify behaviour problems;
- distinguish between different types of behaviour problems in children and adolescents;
- explain the causes of behaviour problems;
- provide suggestions for dealing with behaviour problems of students; and
- describe the role of parents and teachers in the management of behaviour problems in students.

15.3 NATURE OF BEHAVIOUR PROBLEMS

Behaviour problems arise from external influences whose effects are not often noticed or understood by others. Often, emotional and psychological factors in apparently normal children are not readily seen or understood but are often labeled as depression, hostility, withdrawal or day dreaming to combat the stress. They may be battered and abused sexually, emotionally or physically. Most of these children are often in regular classrooms trying to cope with their problems (themselves) without being understood.

Teachers and parents are faced with the difficulty of dealing with the behaviour problems of their children. Behaviour problems of children often interfere with the learning process and are incompatible with their educational program.

It is important for teachers to understand the factors which could be responsible for the observable behavior problems of their students. Lack of understanding of the reasons behind the behaviour of the students may make the teacher react in a way which might aggravate the situation. Students with problem behavior in the classroom pose challenges for teachers.

Behaviour problems may range from extreme withdrawal to intense hostile aggression. These students, if not identified and helped during their school days would continue to have difficulties dealing with society and their problems may become progressively more serious later in life.

Students have many physical, psychological and educational needs which are basic to their growth and development. Some of these needs are listed below.

Physical needs

- proper food, clothing
- protection from pain, sickness
- time for play.

Psychological needs

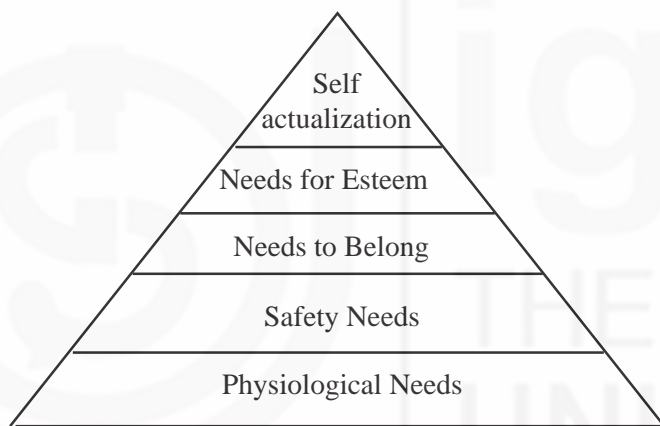
- to be accepted as a unique individual
- emotional satisfaction
- constant reassurance

- affection
- help in regulating emotional responses
- help in accepting his or her gender uniqueness
- help in learning how to behave with other people.

Educational needs

- education that does not arouse fear
- help in studies
- warm and understanding atmosphere at school
- sense of achievement
- education to meet life's challenges
- encouragement for new learning

All these needs are inter-related. They interact with one another and leave their imprint on the growing child.



Abraham Maslow (1970) saw human motivation as a hierarchy of needs, with the most basic being physiological needs and the highest being self-actualization. Only after basic needs are satisfied we can work on achieving higher needs.

15.3.1 Problems of Children

Some behavioral characteristics of children are extreme shyness, fearfulness, aggression, attention seeking, hyperactive, excessively dependent, day dreaming, lying and cheating, stealing etc.

Many of these problems of children are handled by the teachers/parents by using rewards such as adult praise, treats and trinkets. However, their understanding of social situations that lead to such behaviour problems is severely limited, and they may have difficulty in comprehending how their behaviour affects children or why children behave as they do.

15.3.2 Problems of Adolescents

The period of adolescence is often marked by intense striving for independence and by rebellion directed at adult authority. Problems with parental and school

supervision, drugs and alcohol misuse, truancy, theft and sexual experimentation are common at this age. Therefore, it is not surprising that adolescents with such problems are generally reported to be suspicious of adults (including the therapist), rebellious, defiant and resistant to treatment attempts. Such unwilling adolescents may blame others for their own problems and lack motivation to change their own behaviour. Group treatment methods are often used with adolescents in order to create a less threatening and more inviting atmosphere and to attempt to enlist peers support for behaviour change. Teenagers who are primarily fearful, withdrawn, depressed or mentally confused are often given individual therapy.

Check Your Progress

Notes: a) Write your answers in the space given below.

b) Compare your answers with those given at the end of the block.

1) Fill in the blanks

- i) Behaviour problems arise from conditions
the child or from whose effects are not often
understood by others.
- ii) Behaviour problems range from extreme to
intense..... .
- iii) According to Maslow the most basic needs of humans are
..... and the highest needs of humans are

15.4 TYPES OF BEHAVIOUR PROBLEMS

Some of the commonly observed behaviour problems in children are described below :

- 1) **Classroom Disturbance** : The extent to which the child teases and torments classmates, interferes with other's work and is quickly drawn into noise making.
- 2) **Impatience** : The extent to which the child starts work too quickly, is sloppy in work, is unwilling to review work and rush through work. Physically more active and restless.
- 3) **Disrespect-Defiance** : The extent to which the child speaks disrespectfully to teachers, resists doing what is asked of, belittles the work being done, and breaks classroom rules.
- 4) **Achievement Anxiety** : The extent to which the child gets upset about tests and scores and is sensitive to criticism or correction.
- 5) **External Reliance** : The extent to which the child looks to others for direction, requires precise direction and has difficulty making one's own decisions.
- 6) **Inattentive-Withdrawn** : The extent to which the child loses attention, seems to be oblivious to what transpires in the classroom and seems difficult to reach, or is preoccupied.
- 7) **Irrelevant-Responsiveness** : The extent to which the child tells exaggerated stories, gives irrelevant answers, interrupts when the teacher is speaking and makes irrelevant comments during class discussion.

- 8) **Need for closeness to teacher** : The extent to which the child seeks out the teacher before or after class, offers to do things for the teacher, is friendly towards the teacher and likes to be physically close to the teacher.
- 9) **Anxiety-Depression** : The child seems to be tense with face drawn and rigid, cries easily at the smallest pretext, does not talk to anyone, doesn't take interest in things. The child gets upset about test and test scores, sensitive to criticism or correction.
- 10) **Quiet and Withdrawn** : The child is withdrawn and quiet in the class, doesn't have friends and is mostly isolated. Tends to be very self-centred, preoccupied with own thoughts and ,problems and disinterested in or unenthusiastic about anything else.
- 11) **Aggression and Violence** : A hostile or angry behaviour directed to harm or injure a person or property.
- 12) **Attention Deficit** : The child has difficulty in attending to tasks and instructions for any length of time. Easily distracted, fidgets excessively, has difficulty in sitting still.
- 13) **Truancy** : The child who is frequently absent in school for vague reasons or minor ailments.
- 14) **Physical Injury** : Recurrent and multiple injuries are observed for which no adequate reason is given, delay medication, spots like strap marks, bites and burns.

Check Your Progress

Notes: a) Write your answers in the space given below.

b) Compare your answers with those given at the end of the block.

2) Clarify the given statements as True or False.

- i) Behavior problems of children tend to disrupt the functioning of the classroom. (T/F)
- ii) Students academic achievement and intellectual growth is not affected by behavior problems.
- iii) A child with behaviour problems often has no friends. (T/F)
- iv) Children with behavior problems are often rejected by teachers and parents. (T/F)
- v) Children who exhibit behavior problem would have more difficulties in their later adult life. (T/F)

3) When does the behaviour become a behaviour problem?

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15.5 CAUSES OF BEHAVIOUR PROBLEMS

The cause of a child's behaviour problem is, in all probability a peculiar combination of some of the contributing factors which we shall discuss, plus, perhaps some others which we are not as yet aware of which have been overlooked.

15.5.1 Personal and Social Needs

A child's need for attention, recognition, approval and belonging are just as real and compelling as the need for food and drink. A child deprived of attention might resort to any activity which gets him/her attention.

A child or adolescent often does not know how to get social satisfaction properly. For example, the bully, the liar, the show off, the joker, the habitual interrupter - is probably trying to satisfy social needs.

Besides social needs, the need for self-respect, the need to feel that one is free and independent and important as an individual might be expressed by not obeying, not co-operating, playing truant, talking when he/she should be listening, or pushing when he/she should be waiting for his/her turn.

Children who are notably above or below average in mental ability often deviate from norms in order to satisfy their social and personal needs because they are not otherwise being met.

15.5.2 Effects of Maturation

Regardless of what an individual's chronological or even mental age may be, s/he may be no more mature in self-control or human relations than an average individual some years his/her junior. Behaviour problems such as temper tantrums, negativism, boisterousness, and attention seeking are indicative of immaturity.

Other contributing factors are the individual's physical development. A short child for example, may adopt defiant, aggressive mannerism in order to demonstrate to himself/herself as well as to others that s/he is a force to be reckoned with despite his/her shortness of stature. The fat child may try to live up to the reputation he/she has acquired as the class clown. The big child in the group may act as ring leader whenever any mischief is contemplated, for he/she too has a reputation to uphold. His/her peers expect a certain amount of unruly behaviour from him/her and she cannot afford to let them down.

15.5.3 The Teacher and Classroom Conditions

Some behaviour problems may be attributed to the teacher. It is improbable that any teacher consciously invites misconduct, but many do so inadvertently. Teachers who are sarcastic or who humiliate their students and those who are downright unfair to them earn the animosity of the students, and they become intent on seeking means for revenge.

The vacillating teacher with no set policy also contributes to students' misbehaviour, since they try out to see what and how much they can do before the teacher demonstrates displeasure. The teacher who is easy going, who tries to be a 'pal' to the students, is another who practically extends the class an invitation to do as they jolly well please.

The teacher's methodology as well as personality can contribute to the incidence of behaviour problems. If the work of the class is boring, if the interest and attention of the students cannot be held, if there is little for them to do but sit and listen or read, if the lessons are not well planned and if the ordinary matters of class routine are not well organized, if every student is not given some worthwhile task to perform, if the teacher allows discussions to get out of hand and degenerate into a number of private conversations, the teacher is helping to set up the kind of environment in which discipline problems are likely to breed and flourish.

Another aspect to be considered is the physical dimension of the classroom itself, particularly the size of the room, the number of students and the seating arrangements. The greater the number of students in the class, the less opportunity there is for anyone to obtain the attention s/he wants and needs. Second, the more crowded the room, the greater is the opportunity and temptation for a student to misbehave, if for no other reason than that there is less likelihood for his/her being singled out and watched. The crowdedness of a room might also, of course, have a bearing on the student's physical discomfort by necessitating restrictions on bodily movement which are not conducive to normal classroom behaviors.

Sub-groups within a classroom exert a considerable influence on individual behaviour. For example, Mohan and Ram cause disturbance as soon as they are seated together. Their mutual influence seems to bring out the most undesirable qualities in each. However, if seated next to other students behaviour problem doesn't occur.

15.5.4 Social and Cultural Conditions

Among the socio-cultural factors which have been found to contribute to the misbehaviour of children and youth are certain television shows, movies, comics and magazines in which they encounter violence, horror, sadism, disregard for principles of decency and morality. The behavior problem of adolescents is often explained in terms of the unfavourable world conditions in which they live. Discrimination, persecution and inequality of opportunities on the basis of race, cast, religion or nationality, may also contribute to problem behavior in young people.

15.5.5 Home Conditions

Various kinds of unsatisfactory home conditions are also the factors contributing to student's misbehaviour. Children who live in broken homes due to the death of a parent, divorce, or separation or by the prolonged absence of one or both parents for business or social reasons probably lack the firm but loving parental guidance they need for satisfactory adjustment in school life. Feeling rejected they might attempt to compensate by resorting to different forms of unacceptable behaviour.

When parents and other adults in the home environment demonstrate by their words or deeds of having escaped punishment for traffic violation; when they are impudent and rude to one another; when they fail to respect each other's rights and dignity; or when they speak ill of others, children learn to disregard social or moral conventions.

Some students have never had their share of attention and recognition, some have had too much. Those who have had their every wish catered to or never

been denied their own way become accustomed to the belief that the rest of the world exists to serve them. When such students find themselves in a situation where they are expected to perform tasks which are not immediately enjoyable or to conform to regulations for the good of the group, they do not know how to act. Children who exhibit aggression and indulge in problematic behavior often come from homes where parents are inconsistent disciplinarians, use harsh and excessive punishment, and show little love and affection for good behaviour.

15.5.6 Occasional Lapses

In some instances, none of the factors that have been mentioned above might be applicable. The explanation of the misbehaviour might be the simple fact that students were unaware of a certain regulation or that they had forgotten it, or that they did not think it would be enforced, or that they were carried away in the excitement of a moment and did something that they know they shouldn't have done and wouldn't if they had only stopped to deliberate before acting.

Truancy

Truancy from school can mean one of the two things:

- i) the student is escaping from an intolerable situation in which the school programme brings nothing but failure, shame, disgrace and ridicule from peers, or
- ii) the student is suffering from serious emotional conflicts. In either case truancy is a symptom demanding immediate attention from a psychologist or responsible adult.

Example

Sunil was one of two children living in an upper-middle class family. The parents were well educated, serious-minded people with strong religious beliefs. The father was stricter than the mother in religious and moral aspects of life. He constantly held the children to extreme difficult standards which they could not meet. Both children were bright, but they did poor work in school as a result of their feelings of inadequacy. They also became filled with anger and resentful feelings towards the parents. Sunil was made to repeat the class because of his poor academic achievements. This was a terrible blow to the sensitive child and intensified his feelings of inadequacy and resentment. He began to withdraw from school activities. Sunil's truancy began with frequent illnesses of a minor nature that kept him out of school for a day or two at a time. Finally, he refused to go to school. The mother concealed the truancy from the father and school for a short while on the excuse of illness. She gradually realized the seriousness of Sunil's disturbances and sought counselling from a psychologist.

These students require prompt and thoughtful attention to deal with their problems resulting from emotional disturbance and lack of emotional support from the family.

Withdrawn

Rani was in the sixth-grade. The teacher noted that she was unusually quiet, she did not speak to the other students; she did not play with them. The other students ignored her. In order to help Rani, the teacher tried giving her special tasks or making another quiet child or friendly student sit with her. Rani did her work

quietly but her social interaction was still very little. The teacher decided that it was not helping her, so called for her mother. The teacher talked to the mother about Rani's withdrawing silent behavior. They realized that Rani's younger sibling was getting much more attention from the parents and she was burdened with responsibility at a young age.

The teacher and mother planned ways to help Rani to be more carefree and childlike by reducing her responsibility and giving her an opportunity to have more 'fun'. The teacher got Rani to work with other girls in creative and fun activities such as making puppets. By the end of the year Rani was still 'shy' but no longer the silent, /solitary child she had been in the beginning of the academic year.

Stealing

It is a common symptom noted in certain disturbed children. For example, the teacher found Rs. 500/- missing from the students' welfare fund. However, a few days before the teacher had heard some students talking about Romesh spending money on treating his friends to Pepsi and snacks for two evenings in a row.

The teacher was alert and put two and two together. The teacher privately confronted Romesh. After a few attempts to lie out of it, he admitted to the mistake. On inquiring into the details of Romesh's background the teacher realized that he belonged to an average economic background but had friends from higher socio-economic standards. In order to spend like others in the group he stole the money so that he too could show off and treat his friends.

The teacher decided to make Romesh pay back the stolen money on installment plan. In three weeks Romesh paid up the debt. The teacher congratulated Romesh for the way he had stuck by his promise to make things right.

This example illustrates better the 'making it right' aspect of restitution than punitive measures as expulsion from school, staying after school for being bad or being sent to a juvenile detention hour. Restitution, if followed by appropriate rewards, is very effective restraining device and should not to be confused with punishment.

Anxiety and Fear

Anxiety elicits both maladaptive and adaptive behavior patterns. Anxiety becomes maladaptive behavior because of its intensity, duration and inappropriate expression in response to situations. Anxiety is also an adaptive function and necessity for prevention and preparation to meet various challenging situations in life, for example exams.

Anxiety is called maladaptive behaviour when it is exhibited in the form of speech problems like stuttering, stammering, unexplained physical symptoms of headache, stomachache, sleeplessness, over sensitiveness etc.

Example

Sonal began to stutter at the age of 10 years. She was an extremely active child, who prior to her stuttering, expressed tensions by physical signs such as twisting her face repeatedly, restlessness and other small unnecessary movements of an

involuntary nature. Her parents were critical, demanding and harsh with her. After a while, she began to have difficulty getting words out and expressing herself. Words would tumble out from her incoherently and breathlessly.

These conditions are largely correctable, but the earlier the corrective measures are taken the better. If not corrected it easily becomes habitual and remediation would take a longer time. The psychologist can help the student find out the psychological condition causing the problem, and teaching her better habits of breathing and relaxation.

Check Your Progress

Notes: a) Write your answers in the space given below.

b) Compare your answers with those given at the end of the block.

4) Answer the following in brief.

i) Mention other behaviours observed by you in teenagers which could be added to the already classified behaviour.

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ii) Aggressive students are more easily identified than students who are withdrawn in nature. Why?

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5) Match the statements given in column A with column B

A

B

i) Vomits and gets upset before exams

a) Withdrawn

ii) Does not follow what is going on in the class

b) Achievement Anxiety

iii) Prefers solitude and refrains from group activities

c) Truancy

iv) Multiple or recurrent injuries often neglected

d) Physically Abused.

v) Absence from the classroom

e) Poor Comprehension

6) Clarify the given statements as True or False.

i) Children often do not know how to obtain social satisfaction of their needs appropriately. (T/F)

ii) A child may throw his books across Classroom in imitation of an observed behaviour. (T/F)

iii) A bully is aware of his unsocial way of obtaining personal satisfaction. (T/F)

- iv) A show off is often trying to get recognition and attention. (T/F)
- v) A student caught first time eating chewing gum should be punished. (T/F)
- vi) A respectable home environment would attribute to a child being disrespectful to authority figures. (T/F)

7) Answer the following in 4 to 5 lines.

- i) Mention any three teacher behaviour which could attribute to behaviour problems in students.

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- ii) Should a teacher try to understand what is beneath the observable behaviour of the student. Why?

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- iii) Why should the teacher have knowledge of kinds/types of behavioural problems?

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15.6 SUGGESTIONS FOR DEALING WITH BEHAVIOURAL PROBLEMS

15.6.1 Does Punishment Improve Behaviour?

A teacher is punishing a student whenever he consciously inflicts physical or mental pain or discomfort upon other student. An important area of misunderstanding must be clarified before we proceed further. There is a substantial qualitative difference between withholding gratification and inflicting punishment. A student may be denied the privilege of going out during recess because he has disobeyed safety rules and endangered the health of his classmates and himself. Obviously, this will cause him some discomfort. It however, differs

substantially from being whipped, purposely embarrassed in front of his peers, or forced to hold heavy books at arm's length until exhaustion sets in.

The child's fear of re-experiencing unpleasantness becomes the major reason for stopping the undesirable behaviour. This is a positive technique. Research shows that punishment may suppress deviant behaviour for a time, but it does not weaken the bad habit.

The only time when punishment is effective for eliminating a deviant behaviour is when a correct alternative behaviour is performed and reinforced.

Teachers who make generous use of punitive control techniques often defend their actions by saying, "It works". What the teacher usually means is that the deviancy doesn't occur or spread. Research corroborates the principle that the longer the duration of a punishment, the longer the punished response will be suppressed,

15.6.2 Techniques for Behaviour Management

Some Control Techniques that have proved effective in managing behaviour problems in the classroom are:

- 1) Signals such as a finger on the lips, a frown, or shaking of the teacher's head in a disapproving way might be all that is required to get the students quietly back to their work.
- 2) Moving nearer to the noisy pair could remind them of the proper classroom decorum.
- 3) The student's interest might be boosted if the teacher says "That's a pretty important report you are writing. May I see how it's coming along"?
- 4) Ignoring the noise for a moment might be a technique if the teacher believes that the noise will soon subside by itself.
- 5) Verbal clarity of a command produces results. For example, 'John, stop drumming on your desk and get busy on those arithmetic problems'.
- 6) A firm control technique conveying 'I mean it'. A serious, business like tone, walking towards students who are disrupting, or continue to stare at them until they desist: all these contribute firmness to a teacher's efforts at control.
- 7) A task-focused technique dealing with noise in the 'I hear noise in the back of this room. We will never finish learning how to do square root if that continues'.
- 8) Increase your repertory of techniques. Part of misbehaviour control is using the right technique at the right time since students are individuals and react in different ways.
- 9) Know your class leaders well. Knowing every student well decreases the possibility of discipline problem. It is important to know what things reinforce a student before you can reward him for his good behaviour.
- 10) The more interesting a subject can be made, the more effective a teacher's control efforts become.

- 11) Encourage the students by pointing out their positive attributes.
- 12) Comment positively when the attention deficit student is attending appropriately to a task. Let him/her know he/she is working constructively. Praise him/her.
- 13) Stop disruptive behaviour in time. Do not wait until the situation is totally out of hand. Stop the act before you become angry and lose control or before the whole class gets into the act.
- 14) Establish limits and maintain consistent, clear ground rules. He/she knows what is appropriate or inappropriate. He/she needs to know what the consequences of his/her behaviour will be. Be consistent in following through with legitimate consequences. Threats and bribes will not work.

There are certain actions which we should avoid while dealing with students. Some such actions are listed below.

- 1) Using brute force
- 2) Accusing the student of misbehaving.
- 3) Comparing the student's behaviour with that of his/her peers or siblings.
- 4) Arguing - you cannot win a argument with a student. Usually, you both lose.
- 5) Embarrassing the student in front of his/her peers or other elders.
- 6) Removing the student from activities she does well and enjoys doing.
- 7) Ridiculing the student for his/her mistakes
- 8) Labelling the student

Thinking through problems and alternatives in advance, as suggested here, may help to save the day for the parent/ teacher and for the student.

15.6.3 Behaviour Modification Technique

This technique is helpful for parents and teachers who wish to relate more effectively with children and to assist them to grow in the most healthy way, both physically and mentally. Major terms used in this context are :

Reinforcement

Reinforcement is a consequence following a behavior that is designed to increase the occurrence of the behavior in the future. A child will do his work neatly if each time he does so his mother/teacher lets him know how much she appreciates his efforts.

Punishment

Punishment is a consequence following a behaviour that is designed to decrease the occurrence of the behavior in the future.

Example: If a child is told to sit in a chair each time he hits his sister.

Extinction

Extinction is not - responding to a behaviour in order to decrease the occurrence of that behaviour.

Example: A child engaging in tantrums who is not given attention by his mother (ignored) will stop having a tantrum.

Shaping

Shaping is the reinforcement of closer and closer approximations to the desired behaviour. Example: In helping a mother to make her excessively dependent child more independent, the procedure must be started with small initial attempts and each attempt rewarded. Each (attempt) step takes time, depending on the child’s readiness, so patience is important. As the child progresses from step to step, the reinforcement for the previous step should be eliminated.

Consistency

Consistency is following through with a selected approach.

Example: Each time a child gets out of bed after being put to bed, the parents need to immediately return the child to bed.

Observation

Observation is watching a behaviour for a specific period of time in order to determine the frequency of the behaviour’s occurrence.

Example: A child who is hyperactive and distracting to her peers; the teacher records the number of times the child having a temper tantrum.

Recording

Recording is the systematic record keeping of the number of times a behaviour occurs.

Students Name:	
Date :	
1 minute	2 minutes
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3 minutes	4 minutes
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5 minutes	6 minutes
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7 minutes	8 minutes
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Figure 1: Sample of chart by systematic record keeping of number of times a behaviour occurs

Consequence

Consequence is the event that follows the occurrence of a behaviour.

Example: A child finished his homework and is allowed to watch the T.V. programme of his interest as a reward (consequence).

Baseline

Baseline is the frequency of occurrence of a behaviour prior to intervention.

Example: An observer records the frequency of whining (inappropriate) behaviour before attempts are made to change that behaviour.

Manipulation

Manipulation is the intervention technique in order to change a behaviour.

Example: A child throws his books. In order to decrease the occurrence of this behaviour the child is placed in a chair each time he throws the book (timeout).

Check Your Progress

Notes: a) Write your answers in the space given below.

b) Compare your answers with those given at the end of the block.

8) Give Short Answers to the given questions.

i) Why can't there be one best way of dealing with behaviour problems?

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ii) Why should punishment be least used?

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15.7 REMEDIAL MEASURES

Some of the measures that teachers, parents and counselors may take to manage behavior problems are as follows.

15.7.1 Role of Teachers

The teacher should be concerned with the total development of the students and not just the academic achievement. The teacher is in a position to make significant contributions towards the formation of healthy personalities and have opportunities and responsibilities in this regard. The teacher with a training in human behaviour and has opportunity to observe children in a classroom is in a better position to identify students with problem behaviours. Most behaviour problems of students are mild to moderate problems that can be treated effectively in the regular classroom and at home. However, severe behavior problems of students should be handled by a psychologist.

A teacher dealing with these students must be effective and creative, able to adapt curriculum materials and activities to the individual needs of the students. The teacher can help a student who has an inadequate self-image by creating psychologically safe environment in which the student can express her/himself freely without fear of rejection. By showing unconditional positive regard for the students, teachers can encourage individual students to explore her/his own positive and negative feelings freely.

If we create school and home environment in which students receive continuous love and regard, most behaviour problems would be eliminated. People value the good will and positive regard of others and will try to obtain it.

However, the primary task of the teacher dealing with behaviour problems of students is to teach them improve their social skills - helping students replace their maladaptive behaviours with more socially appropriate responses. This is often a difficult and demanding task, particularly when the teacher seldom, if ever, knows all of the factors that affect the students' behaviour. On top of this, there are sometimes a lot of contributing factors over which the teacher can exert little or no control (for instance, the delinquent friends with whom the student associates after school). In spite of these limitations, it does little good to bemoan the student's past (which no one can alter) or to use all of the things in the student's environment that cannot be changed as an excuse for failing to help the student in the classroom.

Rather than threaten, the teacher can establish logical, realistic and natural consequence and make it (hopefully) more comfortable for the student to choose the more responsible activity. Consequences need to fit the situation and be such that can be followed through. For example, "I'll break your arm if caught stealing!" what are your choices if he does steal again?

15.7.2 Role of Parents

Adolescents are dependent primarily on their parents to socialize them, to protect them and meet their needs. Competent parents tend to develop competency in their children, and inadequate or rejecting parents may permanently disable their children. Despite the importance of adequate parenting practices, such skills are taught only informally, mostly by examples within families.

Instructions on parenting and behavioural principles might help to prevent parental mishandling of children and to promote optimal child development. Most parents seek such instructions only after their children have developed troublesome problem behaviours, not as an instructional or a preventive measure.

New directions in the prevention and treatment of children's behaviour problems have included training programs offered for parents and self-regulation training for children. Parent training programs have become popular and proved effective in altering parent-child interactions and have positive effects on the entire family.

Self-regulation programs have been devised for impulsive, aggressive and non-compliant students. For example when the teacher tells the parent that the student is often absent from school without taking leave, indulging in stealing or is violent, parents very often find it difficult to accept this. However, non-acceptance of the undesirable behaviour would only aggravate the problem. Instead, the parents should try to understand the underlying factors that lead to such problem behaviors and sort them out or if needed seek help of a professional.

15.7.3 Role of Counsellors/Psychologist

The counsellor has two primary responsibilities, first to make sure that he or she does no further damage to the child and second, to manipulate the child's present environment in order to cause more appropriate behaviour to develop in spite of past and present circumstances that cannot be changed. The emphasis is on the present and future, not the past and on improving the school and home environment or using community resources for the child's benefit.

When the counsellor receives a request for assistance, would usually talk with the teacher/parent to get a first hand report and assessment of the problem of the child. Following a detailed picture and understanding of the child's problem from the source of referral, he/she would then decide whether the particular problem of the child could be handled by the parent or teacher or herself/ himself.

In case, the counsellor feels that the problem is severe she makes use of a number of diagnostic techniques in making her/his study, such as psychological tests, interviews, observations of the child, etc. The child's physical health in some cases may also be ascertained through consultation with the parents or a physical examination.

Following the completion of the detailed study, findings will be discussed with the child's parents and recommendations will be made to help him. The recommendation may be therapy for the child, together with counselling for one or both parents. Just as the child needs help, so do the parents in knowing how to work with the child at home. The counsellor would also discuss helpful procedures with the child's teacher. He/She maintains a contact with the parent and teacher to check on the child's progress after a plan of assistance has been established, determine whether the planned strategy is working with the child or it needs to be changed and further determine whether assistance is needed.

The counsellor can also address a group of teachers and explain in a general way the pupils' difficulties and discuss methods by which teachers who come in contact with such children can help or plan a program. The counsellor can also assist the school with P.T.A. meetings or parent discussion groups.

Check Your Progress

Notes: a) Write your answers in the space given below.

b) Compare your answers with those given at the end of the block.

9) Tick mark (✓) the given statements as True or False.

- i) A teacher is in a better position to identify behaviour problems of students (T/F)
- ii) Mild and moderate problems can be handled effectively by parents and teachers. (T/F)
- iii) Punitive approach is better than trying to remediate the situation for the child. (T/F)
- iv) Parents and teacher can help children overcome all types of problems (T/F)
- v) A counselor needs to assess the problem of a child before working on the problem. (T/F)
- vi) A counsellor does not need the help of parents and teacher in understanding and dealing with the behavior problems of children. (T/F)

10) Give short answers to the questions given below.

i) Mention some positive approaches teachers/parents can use to improve or correct behaviour problems.

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ii) How can parents help their children cope with their behaviour problems?

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iii) Why does a counsellor need to assess the behaviour of the child before planning strategies for treatment?

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15.8 LET US SUM UP

To deal effectively with behaviour problems a teacher must understand the factors and situations that lead to behaviour problems. Some of these factors are attempts to satisfy personal or social needs, the teacher and classroom conditions, home, social and cultural environment. A number of suggestions have been given for dealing with behaviour problems of children. Teachers and parents should use positive rather than punitive methods for correcting behaviour problems. Under certain conditions punishment can be effective. In deciding which type of corrective measures to employ, the teacher and parent should take into account its effects on the child's mental health and long term effect. Corrective measures should also be suited to the individual student.

Children who have behaviour problems require the help of teachers and parents to understand and deal with them so that they can modify the behavior and are able to cope better with their academics and improve their personal life. Teachers and parents should try to identify if the cause of the behaviour problems is within the child or in the environment. For this they need to value the good and positive aspect within the person and help them modify their behaviour problem with more socially appropriate responses.

15.9 UNIT-END EXERCISES

- 1) Prepare a list of agencies in the community that offer services to the adolescents. Describe the services available and the procedure for making referrals.
- 2) Visit a school in your neighborhood and discuss with the principal and teachers about the behavior problems prevalent among some of their adolescent students. Find out the measures taken by the school to help such students.