

## NATURE AND APPROACHES TO UNDERSTAND CHILD DEVELOPMENT

**Q. What do you mean by child study? What is its importance?**

**R.** Child study can be defined as that branch human knowledge which stands for understanding and unfolding nature of the child, his inherent potentialities and his personality as a whole. It also includes the scientific study of the individual from his pre-natal stage to the stage of adolescence. It deals with:

1. The stages of growth and maturation of child.
2. The effect of environmental influences upon child pattern of development.
3. The psychological and social interactions between a child and other members of the society into which he is born and in which he is reared.

### **Importance of child study.**

1. The study of the child gives the educator an insight into the nature of the child and his behaviour and the motive force of his behaviour. Having this, the teacher can handle the child properly.
2. The child study provides the teacher with the opportunities to understand the physical needs and emotional needs of the child. The teacher can equip himself with the material to provide the child with necessary guidance at the proper moment.
3. The intelligent study of the child tells the teacher how the child is learning, what he is learning and what kind of habits is he forming. The teacher, then, is in the position to modify the child's behaviour and place him in such environment as to make learning easy.
4. The study of child tells the teacher various stages in the growth of the children and their needs of every stage.

**Q. Discuss observation as the method of child study?**

**R. Observation.** By 'observation' we mean observing the behaviour of the individual under the pre-arranged, artificial or controlled conditions. We observe the behaviour of the subject during various states of his emotions. We also observe his mental processes. We notice how a person reacts in a given condition. What changes occur in his bodily behaviour and similar other behaviours.

### **Kinds of observation.**

1. **Participant observation:** In this type of observation, the psychologist participates in the activities of the person. He remains with him and makes an observation.
2. **Non-Participant observation:** In this type of observation, the psychologist does not participate in the activities of the child. He remains at some distance. The individual does not know that he is being observed.

Nowadays many scientific instruments are used in observation. These instruments include tape-records, video-tapes etc. These instruments help us in making observation better.

### **Steps involved in observation.**

1. First of all we make a plan and decide the traits of human behaviour that are to be observed.
2. At the second step, we observe the behaviour accurately in the natural setting.
3. The observed behaviour is recorded simultaneously or immediately after the process of observation is over.
4. The collected data is scientifically analysed.
5. At last we interpret the data and generalization about the observation is made and the conclusion is drawn.

**Precautions to be taken during observation.**

For better results, following things should be kept in mind:

1. Proper planning should be made before making observation.
2. The number of observers should be more than one.
3. The observers should be trained. They should be told what to observe.
4. Observer should adopt scientific attitude. He should first get rid of his own bias.
5. Subjects should not become conscious of the fact that they are being observed, otherwise they may change their usual behaviour.

**Merits:**

- a) It is a natural method. There is no artificiality.
- b) We can gather the information on the spot. We have not to wait for results.
- c) It needs no laboratory. It is economical.
- d) It is simple and easy.
- e) It is applicable for to all individuals and groups.
- f) It is suitable in varied situations.

**Demerits:**

- a) There can be bias on the part of observer.
- b) Every behaviour of a person cannot be observed.
- c) If a person comes to know that he is under observation, he may exhibit artificial behaviour.
- d) It is difficult to get well trained observer.
- e) Some personal problems cannot be observed.

**Q. What is an interview?**

**R.** Interview is a technique used to collect data for study. It is called “conversation with purpose”. It is a face-to-face relation between the interviewer and the interviewee. Following steps are involved in interview:

1. **Warm up.** If you get off to a bad start, it is extremely difficult to turn around the interview. Hence the warm up is the most important stage though it may be of small duration.
2. **The question-and-answer stage.** During this stage interviewer asks questions for which the interviewee is expected to provide the answer.
3. **The close.** In the last few minutes, you need to evaluate how well you have done and correct any misconceptions the interviewer might have.

**Types of Interviews :**

1. **Structured or closed interview:** Here the interviewer comes with a list of questions and he asks those questions systematically.
2. **Unstructural or open interview :** Here the interviewer has no list of questions with him.

**Merits :**

- 1) It involves no reading and writing ability on the part of the interviewee so it can easily be used with illiterates.
- 2) We can get great information through interview because while speaking, the interviewee makes the movement of hands, uses different kinds of tones, expresses 'emotions'.

**Demerits :**

- 1) It is time consuming.
- 2) Sometimes individual do not cooperate with the psychologists.
- 3) Interview cannot be hold with infants, deaf and the mad persons.

**Q. Which precautions should be taken while interviewing a person?**

**R.**

1. Interviewer should be brief and meaningful.
2. He should provide opportunity to the respondent to talk.
3. Questions should be specific and be worded simply.
4. Questions should be put in a non-threatening way.
5. No cues should be given to the respondent in one particular way.
6. Leading questions, that imply which responses is wanted, should be avoided.
7. Interviewer should not give the message that he is bored.

**Q. What is experimental method of studying child psychology?**

**R.** According to H.Garret, experiment is the question asked systematically. In this method the experimenter starts with the problem. He tries to solve the problem through a scientific procedure. The following are the steps of this method:

**Q. Discuss the various techniques in conducting an interview OR Techniques of interviewing.**

There are some techniques that need to be considered while interviewing. These techniques deal with preparation for the interview, conduct of the interview and recording of the data.

**a. Preparation for the interview.** The interviewer must decide exactly what kind of data the interview should yield. Whether the structured or unstructured procedures will be more useful, and how the results of the interview should be recorded. It is advisable to try out the interview on another person before using it for actual investigation.

**b. Conducting the interview.** In the execution of an interview, a positive relationship between the interviewer and the interviewee is most crucial. To elicit adequate responses from the interviewee, Turney and Rohb (1971, pp. 134 – 135) have suggested certain rules that should be followed during the conduct of interview to facilitate data collecting:

1. Ask only one question at a time.
2. Repeat a question if necessary.
3. Try to make sure that the subject understand the question.
4. Listen carefully to the subject's answers.

5. Observe the subject's facial expressions, gestures, and tone of voice.
  6. Allow the subject sufficient time to answer the question, but do not let the interview drag.
  7. Avoid suggesting answers to the question.
  8. Do not show signs of surprise, shock, anger, or other emotions if expected answers are given.
  9. Maintain a neutral attitude with respect to controversial issues during interview.
  10. Take note of answers that seem to be vague, ambiguous or evasive.
  11. In the unstructured interview, ask additional questions to follow up clues or to obtain additional information.
  12. Use tact and skill in getting the subject back to an area of inquiry when he has strayed too far from the original question.
- c. **Recording of the interview.** The interviewer may make use of a schedule, a structured format, rating scale or a tape recorder to record the responses of interviewee. The use of tape-recorder during the conduct of interview not only eliminates the omissions, distortions, elaboration and other modification of data usually found in written interviews, but it also provides a feedback, a source of an objective basis for evaluating the adequacy of the interview data in relation to the performance of the interviewer.

**Merits :**

- 1) This method is exact.
- 2) The procedure can be repeated and the results can be verified.
- 3) This method has helped psychology in becoming a science.
- 4) It finds wide application in almost all the branches of psychology.
- 5) As it is pre-planned, the experimenter is well equipped to make accurate observations and arrive at valid conclusions.
- 6) The experimenter can design conditions himself.

**Demerits :**

- 1) This method deals with artificial situations. It mostly solves those problems which are limited to laboratory setting.
- 2) In psychology we are dealing with the human behavior. It is very difficult to control his behaviour. This make the results of the experiment unreliable.
- 3) It is very difficult to secure the cooperation of the subject.
- 4) All variables cannot be adequately controlled.
- 5) It is lengthy and time consuming.
- 6) There is great gulf between life and laboratory.

**Q. Define field experiment and quasi experiment?**

**R. Field experiment.** A field experiment is carried out in the natural setting. It tries to establish conditions that are as close as possible to those of a true laboratory experiment. Manipulation of independent variables and random assignment of participants to different groups does not take place. Its objective is to allow causal conclusions to be drawn from research conducted in natural settings. In these studies the ecological validity is increased but control over variables is lesser than what we find in the laboratory experiments. It is more time consuming and expensive.

**Quasi experiment.** In this type of experiment the researcher utilizes the qualities of observation and correlation and combine them with experimentation. Usually such studies have a subject variable as an independent variable. Such variables are selected rather than varied by the experimenter. Thus a quasi experiment attempts to manipulate an independent variable in a natural setting using naturally occurring groups to form experimental and control groups.

**Q. Discuss case-study method of child study?**

**R.** This method involves a complete history of the individual from his birth. It includes all the dimensions of the development of the person, i.e; physical, social, emotional, intellectual etc. Information for the case study is collected from the following sources:

- Report of the individual.
- Report of the parents, teachers and friends of the person.
- Observation
- Cumulative Record Card etc.

**Contents or data of case study:**

- Identifying data. ( i.e:- name, class and section, date of birth).
- Family history ( i.e:- father's education, mother's education, occupation, income)
- Personal history ( i.e:- birth, health, emotions).
- Sibling relationships.
- Physical condition of home.
- Social history.
- Educational history
- Problem history.

**Steps involved in case study:**

- 1. identifying the present status of the child.** The first step is to determine the present status of the individual under investigation.
- 2. Formation of the hypothesis.** It means to determine the most probable antecedents of the case.
- 3. Data Collection.** The collection of data from varied sources is done.
- 4. Analysis of data.** The collected data is analysed.
- 5. Testing of hypothesis.** The case is then checked for the presence or absence of the antecedents supposed to apply to the situation under investigation.
- 6. Remedial Programme.** Some remedial measures in the light of the causes found are suggested.
- 7. Follow Up.** The case under study is re-examined to ascertain whether changes have been produced by the treatments introduced. If the change is positive and significant, the diagnosis is taken to be correct.

**Merits :**

- It provides us insight into the nature of the problem.
- It is useful research technique.
- It is useful in providing treatment to maladjusted persons.
- Special disabilities of the child are revealed for which suitable remedial measures can be suggested.

- e. It is applicable in studying various school problems as severe reading disability, severe stuttering or stammering, delinquency, emotional disturbance etc.

**Demerits :**

- a. It is a time consuming method.
- b. People generally do not cooperate in giving true information.
- c. It requires trained persons, such persons are not easily available.
- d. Sometimes it is not easy to get complete data.

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