Chapter 1

Introduction

Adolescence is a unique period characterized by many changes. Adolescents encounter more stressful life events with increased demands and responsibilities. During childhood students problems met and solved to a significant extent by parents and teachers. Now at this stage parents and teachers provide less help and demand more than they did earlier. Excess pressure from parents, teachers and school environment creates negative impact on their psychological wellbeing. The adolescent is passing through a difficult period of adjustment; they begin with puberty ends with the acquisition of full physical growth, capacity of intellectual behavior and mature emotional control or behavior. The three phases of personality, physical, mental and emotional, do not mature simultaneously, nor does an individual necessarily acquire adult stature in all of them at the same time. Adolescents may physically mature, but continue to respond to the life situations to the mental or emotional level as a child or like immature adolescents. This fact is too often ignored by the parents and teachers. Because the boy has a man’s physique or a girl’s physical development is fast approaching that of normal womanhood, it is easy to assume that the adolescents possesses likewise the ability to think in adult terms or to control and direct their inner urges and drives in accepted adult fashion.

So during this period, it is a great responsibility of parents as well as teachers to understand this phenomenon of development because at school, the teacher’s role also involves parenting functions. They should help students develop specific skills, make them aware of their different abilities and talents and motivate them toward development.
1.1 SCHOOL:
The school is a formal institution designed to impart knowledge and skills to children. In adolescent age there is a need to become productive members of society. Children in developing world spend most of the time in the schools- on an average, about 14,000 hours by high school graduation. Schools are playing an important role in children’s development, affecting their motivation to learn and modes of remembering, reasoning, problem solving skill, and social moral understanding. How do schools exert such a powerful impact? Research looking at schools as complex social systems- class, number of students in the class, educational philosophies, transition from one school level to next, teacher-student relationships and grouping practices- provide important insights. The physical plans of all schools tend to be similar: Each has classroom, hallways, a playground, and a lunchroom. But they vary in the number of students they accommodate in each class and in the school as a whole.

1.2 SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT:

A school’s environment is an atmosphere for learning. It includes the perceptions people have about the school and whether it is a place where learning can occur. A positive environment makes a school a place where both staff and students want to spend a substantial portion of their time; it is a good place to be. Howard, Howell, and Brainard (1987).

“School Environment” has been defined in numerous ways. Dave (1963) defines school environment as “the conditions, processes and psychological stimuli which affect the educational achievement of the child”. It refers to forces in the environment of the learner which may be a part of the school or college environment, the home environment or the environment of various other social
organizations. According to Hunt and Sullivan (1974), it consists of school climate as well as the teacher’s approach to teaching. They consider activities as teaching method features, and institutional programmers as well as school climate to be features of the educational environment. However, this division appears to be unnecessary. Hall (1970) included the dimensions of interaction facilities, willingness to change, student’s autonomy, and feedback on students, instructor’s contribution and task concern. Perkin (1951) concludes that quality of teacher-pupil relationship in the class is defined as environments in terms of certain global characteristics. Misra (1986) included six characteristics viz. Creative stimulation, cognitive encouragement, permissiveness, control, acceptance and rejection in the school environment inventory. The school days are considered most crucial as it is a school that finally grooms a child to develop into a complete human being.

1.1 Environmental components of schooling
1. **Creative Stimulation:** It refers to “teacher’s activities to provide conditions and opportunities to stimulate creative thinking”.

2. **Cognitive Encouragement:** It implies “teachers’ behavior to stimulate cognitive development of student by encouraging his actions or behaviours”.

3. **Permissiveness:** It indicates “a school climate in which students are provided opportunities to express their views freely and ac according to their desires with no interruption from teachers.”

4. **Acceptance:** It implies “a measure of teachers’ unconditional love, recognizing that students have the right to express feelings to uniqueness and to be autonomous individual. The teachers accept the feelings of students in a non-threatening manner.”

5. **Rejection:** It implies “a school climate in which teachers do not accord recognition to students rights to deviate, act freely be autonomous persons.

6. **Control:** It indicates “autocratic atmosphere of the school in which several restrictions are imposed on students to discipline them.

1.2.1 Significance of School Climate for Students' Learning and Development:
School environment has been found to be correlated with multiple areas of students' learning and development. The relationship of environment to each of these adjustment aspects are considered in turn, focusing on findings from the studies of young adolescents (Brand et al., 2003). The dimensions of school environment discussed below have also been found to be related with student learning and adjustment in large scale samples of students at the elementary and high school levels. (Brand, Felner, Seitsinger, & Hupkau, 2006)

To assess the influence of school environment on students' learning, it is most important to study the variation in students' academic motivation, as well as in their marks on standardized achievement tests. Academic motivation merits
attention because students' aspirations, expectations, and sense of self-efficacy influence their long-term adaptation to school as well as decisions about the pursuit of advanced training and education. In schools with higher levels of student commitment to achievement, students attain higher scores on standardized tests of reading and mathematics. In addition, multiple dimensions have been found to be associated with students' academic motivation. Higher teacher expectations, academic aspirations, and academic efficacy have been found in schools with higher school mean levels of teacher support, structure, positive peer interactions, and instructional innovation. In schools where students rated as having fewer safety problems, students reported higher self and teacher expectations, academic aspirations, and efficacy. Better grades and teacher expectations were associated with higher mean levels of student participation in decision-making and lower levels of disciplinary harshness and negative peer interactions, while higher student self-expectations and academic aspirations were related consistently with higher mean levels of support for cultural pluralism (T.Kalyani Devi 2007).

There are lots of studies indicating school environment is indeed a tangible quality with implications for student learning and development (Haynes, Emmons, Ben-Avie, & Comer, 1996).

The ingredients of a healthy, supportive school climate include:

- Achievement motivation: Students believe that they can learn and are wants to learn at the school.
- Collaborative decision making: Involvement of the parents, students, and staff in the decision affecting the school.
- Equity and fairness: In the school each student is treated equally regardless of ethnicity, gender, and disability.
- General school environment: In the school community, there is a positive quality of all interactions and believe and respect.
• Order and discipline: Appropriate behavior of the students shown in the school setting.
• Parent involvement: Frequent involvement of the parents in the school activities.
• School community relation: Supportive and involved community.
• Dedication to student learning: Students motivated to learn from the teachers’ activities.
• Staff expectations: Students will succeed in the school and in life is expecting by the school staff.
• Leadership: For creating a positive climate and for achieving long-term and short term goal of the school the principal effectively guides and provides the direction to the school.
• School building: The school building is the physical appearance of the school, which reflects respect for the school and community.
• Sharing of resources: In the school each student has an equal opportunity.
• Caring and sensitivity: The school principal shows consideration for the students, parents, and school staff.
• Student’s interpersonal relations: High level of trust, caring and respect and among students in the school.
• Student-teacher relation: There is a high level of caring, respect and trust between students and teachers in the school.

1.2.2 Other Importance of a Positive School Environment:

A positive school environment is an integral component of an effective school. School environment is consistently identified as a variable that is characteristic of effective schools and one that is positively associated with
academic success. Eight factors characterizing effective schools include: leadership, school environment, teacher/student relationship, curriculum instruction, resource and finance, physical environment, evaluation and parent/community.

The nature of school environment has been shown to have a strong influence on the way student learn and develop and learn. Many studies have documented the association of school climate with improved student’s outcomes. For example, it is more likely that the student will have higher achievement, more positive self-concept, improved behavior, and higher aspirations when the environment of the school is positive. In some cases, school climate may have a more indirect effect such as promoting a positive sense of belonging, participation in school tasks, activities and attendance.

The school environment is an alterable variable that can affect various outcomes; the outcomes of a positive school environment are especially encouraging given the many unalterable factors associated with risk of school failure. Although educators cannot change a student’s socioeconomic standing, predisposition to mental illness, or ability level, change in the learning environment can improve a student’s chance for success and general way to positively accepting failures.

Improving school environment is a preventative approach, rather than reactive or remedial. A positive school environment is a pre requisite condition that facilitates a successful work or learning experience. When high expectations are in place, order and characterize relationships between staff and students, and reciprocal exchanges of communication with parents’ occur. Then there is a high probability that students achievement and behavior will improve. In the schools with positive school climate, suspension rates are lower, attendance rates are higher, and students and parents have higher levels of satisfaction.
1.2 PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL BEING (PWB):

The concept of psychological wellbeing has gained much popularity among behavioral scientist during the past few decades and has extended it applications into various other fields of behavioral science. The term psychological wellbeing is a multidimensional concept that has evolved during the last century. The literature of psychological wellbeing reveals a number of conceptual and methodological issues such as multiple definitions and non theoretical measures.

The term psychological well being (PWB) has been defined differently by various people. Baker and intagliata (1982) stated that there are as many definitions of psychological wellbeing as the number of people studying the phenomenon. According to Okun and Stock (1987), the feelings and happiness and satisfaction subjectively experienced by individual have been termed as psychological well being. It is not just a moderate variable to our performance as reported by Sultana(1996), rather , it makes life meaningful and purposeful. The term “Well-being” has often been used synonymously with the word ‘happiness’ and ‘health’.

A vast literature also shows that happiness and good health are major predictors of psychological well being (Lynn, Klevin and Jeremy, 2000).

Well-being is a concept that encompasses a well-rounded, balanced, and comprehensive experience of life. It includes health in social, physical, mental, emotional, career, and spiritual domains. When things aren’t going right in all of these areas we probably aren’t experiencing as much joy, serenity, as we could have in the other scenario, and may be experiencing greater stress, worry, and anxiety. Actually, PWB has two important facets. The first of these refers to the extent to which people experience positive emotions and feeling of happiness. Sometimes this aspect of PWB is referred to as subjective well-being (Diener, 2000). Subjective well-being is a necessary part of overall PWB but on its own it is not enough. To see why this is so, people can imagine being somewhere that they
really enjoy, perhaps sitting on a yacht in the sunshine, with their favorite food and
drink and some good company – or alone if that’s how they prefer it! For most
people that would be very enjoyable, for a week or two but imagine doing it not
just for a week but forever! There are very few people who would find that
prospect enjoyable. What this example brings home is that to really feel good we
need to experience purpose and meaning, in addition to positive emotions. So, the
two important ingredients in PWB are the subjective happy feelings brought on by
something that they enjoy and the feeling that what they are doing with our lives
has some meaning and purpose. The term “Hedonic” well-being is normally used
to refer to the subjective feelings of happiness and, the less well-known term,
“Eudemonic” well-being is used to refer to the purposeful aspect of PWB.
Psychologist Carol Ryff (2004) had developed a very clear model that breaks down
Eudemonic well-being into six key parts.

1.2 Key Parts of Psychological Well-Being by Carol Ryff (2004)
In the present study researcher used five indicators of Psychological well-Being-

1.3 Indicators of Psychological Well-Being

Mental Health: The concept of mental Health is as old as human beings. In recent years clinical psychologists as well as educationists have started giving proper attention to the study of mental health.

Thus the concept of mental health takes a ‘Gestalt’ view of the individual. It incorporates the concepts of personality characteristics and behavior all in one. It may also be understood as the behavioural characteristics of the person. A mentally healthy person shows a homogeneous organization of desirable attitude, healthy attitudes, healthy values and righteous self-concept and a scientific perception of the world as a whole. Several psychologists like Erickson (1936), Rogers (1969), Hurlock (1972).

The Term ‘Mental’ usually implies something which is purely related to the cerebral functioning of a person, and it also stands for one’s emotional affective states, the relationships they establishes with other, and quite general quality that
might be called their equilibrium in their socio-culture context. The term ‘Health’ refers to more than physical health; it also connotes the individual’s intra-psychic balance, the fit of their psychic structure with the external environment, and their social functioning.

Mental health has been defined variously by scholars and World health Organization (WHO). Health is not merely absence of illness; rather it is physical, social, mental and spiritual well-being, a state which has been identified as an attribute of positive mental health (Berg, 1975; Jahoda, 1958).

WHO (1981) defines mental health as the “capacity of the individual, the group and the environment to interact with one another in ways that promote subjective well-being the optimal development, and use of mental abilities(cognitive, affective, and rational), the achievement of individual and collective goals consistent with justice and attainment and preservation of conditions of fundamental capacity.”

Kaplan and Sadlock (1993) define mental health as: “a condition of well-being and the feeling in person when can come to terms with society and personal situation and social features and satisfying for him/her.”

Verma, Nehra and Puri (1998) proposed a dual theory of mental health. This theory regards mental health as an absence of mental illness and presence of certain factors of positive mental health factors include the following sense of well-being, satisfaction, hope, adjustment, ego-strength, super-ego, creativity, ability to enjoy, happiness, quality of life, self-realization, social support, etc.

1.4 Psychological Issues in Schools

Much of the work described in the WHO document can be successfully adapted in earliest schools in India. The programs which directly intervene at the various levels require higher manpower and financial resources.

**Sociability:**
An adolescents’ attitude toward their elders is strongly linked with their intellectual understanding of and their childhood dependence upon the older members of their family, but the latter are not always conscious of this struggle or the need for it. The relative tendency or disposition to be sociable or associated with one’s fellow. The quality or state of being sociable; also: the act or an instance of being sociable.

**Life Satisfaction:** The act of satisfying, or the state of being satisfied; gratification of desire; contentment in possession and enjoyment; repose of mind resulting from compliance with its desires or demands.

**Efficiency:** The comparison of what is actually produced or performed with what can be achieved with the same consumption of resources (money, time, labour, etc.). The quality of being efficient or producing an effect or effects; efficient power; effectual agency.
Interpersonal Relationship: An interpersonal relationship is an association between two or more people that may range from fleeting to enduring. This association may be based on love and liking, regular business interactions, or some other type of social interaction.

1.3 Justification of the study:
Children and young people spend a large amount of time in schools and the school represents an easy access environment with direct day to day contact with children and young people. The primary purpose of school is the academic development of students, its effects on adolescents is far broader, encompassing their physical and mental health safety, civic engagement, effects on all these outcomes produced through a variety of activities including formal and informal. School is not only established as the component for learning, but is an important setting for mental health promotion, through their role in helping, establishing, identity, interpersonal relationships and other transferable skills, (Greenberg et.al, 2003). Schools have one of the most important settings for promoting the mental health of young people, (WHO, 2001).

The school setting provides an opportunity to reach many young people during their formative years of cognitive, emotional and social development. The school environment is not only the place of learning; it is also an important source of friends, social networks and adult role models. School provide socializing context that has significant influence on the development of young people. The school system offers a very efficient and systematic means for promoting the psychological social, physical health of school-age children or adolescents. In developing countries children seems to suffer a major handicap due to poor facilities at school environment which largely contribute to develop trait those are essential for future success and related with psychological well-being of students.
Psychological well-being is important not only for success in future but also for dealing healthy life. It is a fact that in present scenario of society psychiatric problem and diseases are increasing day by day and are a serious concern and problem for a developing society. For a healthy citizenship it is most essential that roots of the person should be healthy and strong in physical as well as psychological term. In this ground not only family but school also play important role. Psychological traits which can help in success cannot be acquired by only reading text books, or listening to a lecture. Along with the education, schools must provide interactive and challenging activities and opportunity to students that allow them to develop psychological well being.

Secondary and senior secondary students are at an age where development and growth are a part of everyday life. And it is notable that these years in secondary school may tend to be best and most crucial years for developing positive psychology and traits those can be help them in future to become successful. In this study researcher will investigate those environmental factors of schools, which help in developing the integrity and strength of character that prepare for success.

Statement of the problem

“Impact of School Environment on Psychological Well-Being of Students”

1.5  Objectives of the study

- To study the psychological environment of selected schools of Muzaffarnagar (U.P)
- To assess the level of psychological well-being of students studying in selected schools
- To analyze relationship between school environment and psychological well-being of students
To identify the school related environmental factors that can promote or hinder psychological well-being of students

1.6 Operational definitions

1.6.1 School Environment: “The school environment provides measure of the quality and quantity of the creative stimulation, cognitive, emotional, social support and control that has been available for the students.”

1.6.2 Psychological Well-being: “Psychological Well-being is defined by the ratio of the satisfaction in ones’ life, efficient power, an instance of being sociable and a positive emotional and psychological state of individual.”

1.7 Delimitation of the study

1. The study was delimited to the students of 9th, 10th, 11th and 12th classes belonging to the three selected schools of Muzaffarnagar.