ABSTRACT

Although research on institutional environment dates back to 1930s it has recently emerged as an important area of research in Educational Psychology yielding many fruitful results on student development. In the new wave of research in educational psychology in India, the study of institutional environment is limited to two or three stray studies on high schools. Environment of the higher educational institutions has not been studied so far. The present research attempted to study the medical college environments and professional socialization of medical students. A Medical College Environment Inventory was developed to study the medical college environment and a Perceptions of the Profession Inventory to measure the image of the profession, a Professional Aspirations Questionnaire to measure the professional aspirations and apprehensions, a Work-values Inventory to measure work values were developed. Data was collected from a sample of 466 final year M.B.B.S. students of 7 medical colleges. The results indicated to a general tendency in the students to perceive their climate as neither very exciting nor depressing. Students from different colleges were found to differ significantly in their perceptions of their college climate. A few colleges scored consistently high while a few others scored consistently low on different dimensions of college environment. The sample studied was found to have a highly favourable image of their profession. Their professional aspiration level on an average was found to be about 2.3 steps on a 10-step ladder. Their professional concerns centered round social service, specialization, and job opportunities with sound financial conditions etc. Students from different colleges were found to differ significantly on their professional attitudes and aspirations. Although students from different colleges had somewhat differing
value patterns, the general trend was to value social service, independence and creative dimensions of the job. They were found to value least teaching, research and rural work. College-wise differences were also found in their academic achievement. Some background factors like sex, role played by self interest in choosing medicine etc, were found to have associations with environmental and socialization variables. Student perceptions of their environment were found to be significantly related to their professional attitudes, their estimated professional present and expected future. A few of the dimensions were found negatively related to the economic value, and academic achievement and positively to social values. The process of professional socialization and the role played by the college environment were discussed in the context of these results.