CHAPTER I

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Education is a unique investment in the present and future. It is fundamental for all round development (NPE, 1986). Teacher is the most important input in the field of education. The overall quality of education mainly depends on the quality of teachers and a sound programme of professional preparation of teachers is essential for imparting quality education (NCTE, 1998). Teaching is an art, which can be inculcated through a series of well-designed programme and activities in respect of education and training of teachers.

Enlightened, emancipated and empowered teachers lead communities and nation in their march towards better and higher quality of life. They are the torch bearers in creating social cohesion, national integration and a learning society. They are responsible for acculturating role of education. No nation can even marginally slacken its efforts in giving necessary professional inputs to its teachers (Rajput, 1998). The quality of education is the direct consequence and outcome of the quality of teachers and their teaching skill/competency.

Tanner and Lindgren (1971) opine that the teacher is the most powerful person in the classroom. His power is such that even when he does nothing he does something to the class. He even has an effect on the class when he is not present. His teaching skills that makes his teaching effective leaves an imprint on the minds of the pupils. Effective teachers possess unique teaching styles, which have enormous impact on cognitive and non-cognitive behaviours of students.

The NPE (1986), while discussing the various aspects of education, has placed immense trust on the teaching community and has stated that teaching competency, accountability, aptitude and favorable attitude towards the teaching profession are to be ensured before recruitment takes place. This suggests that being educators, much responsibility lies on the shoulders of teachers. It is universally acknowledged that education is an effective means of social reconstruction, since teachers play a major role in the education of children; their
own education becomes a matter of vital concern. Teacher education, therefore, must create necessary awareness about their new roles and responsibility (NCTE, 1998) and should cater to the development of their personality and sharpening of their communication skills.

NPE (1986) stressed upon teacher competence, accountability and innovation and insisted that teachers should possess in themselves the vital personality traits of motivation and concern. Since pupil teachers are the future educators, immense stress is to be laid down on their education and training. Becoming an effective and competent teacher is not a question of acquiring a bagful of tricks of the trade, but of growing into a human being skilled in the art of assertive communication - a major component of teaching skills.

Assertiveness is defined in terms of communication, and its measurement relies on communication behaviours. Interests are seen on the basis of assertiveness. Only when a person has an interest in change occurring in the present situation, he will commit himself to it and try to reach the goal. Further, deficits in self-confidence and self-esteem have a negative impact on people’s commitment to the realization of their own interest (Plattner, 1996). The willingness to be self-assertive also depends on a person’s belief whether a change of certain circumstances is possible and on which possibilities for action the person sees.

Attempts to increase assertiveness have typically focused on shaping both verbal and non-verbal communication (Alberti, & Emmons, 1974; Bower, & Bower, 1976) or altering maladaptive anxiety responses in interpersonal conversations (Palmer, 1973; Wolpe, & Lazarus, 1966).

Research work on assertiveness indicates that people with higher educational attainment are more assertive than persons with lower educational attainment, younger men are reported to be more assertive than younger women whereas older women are reported to be more assertive than older men (Onyeizu, 2003), the community control subjects exhibited higher levels of assertiveness than the offender subjects (Quinsey, Maguire and Varney, 1983) and
tag questions significantly lowered the assertiveness attributed to the speaker (Rebecca, 2002).

Assertiveness skill can help one to have more control over what is happening in one’s life, which can then lead to higher self-esteem. That means one-way to increase self-esteem is to become more assertive.

Self-esteem is the disposition to experience oneself as being competent to cope with the basic challenges of life and of being worthy of happiness. It is confidence in our ability to learn and make appropriate choices and decisions and respond effectively to change.

The research done in the field of self-esteem shows that it is higher in teachers of science stream as compared to teachers of arts stream (Sabesan and Raghavan, 1995). It plays a major role in psychological adjustments among adolescents (Short, Sandler and Roosa, 1996). Further, is unrelated to recidivism (Gendreau, Little and Goggin, 1996) and has a very weak relationship with delinquency (Bynner, O’Malley & Backman, 1981).

Self-esteem and assertiveness are significantly related to stress with assertiveness contributing to self-esteem and self-esteem being directly related to stress (Petrie & Rotheram, 1982). Further assertiveness is negatively related to self-concept, dominance and depression and positively related to self-control (Sahiner, 1994).

Locus of control is a personality construct that refers to expectation, which people have about the controllability of situation. Internal locus of control as an expression of self-confidence and self-esteem Rotter (1966).

Studies carried out in the area of self-esteem and locus of control reveal positive relationship between locus of control and self-esteem (Abdallah, 1989; Kliewer & Sandler, 1992; Martin & Coley, 1984; Pandey, 1993; Rumpel & Harris, 1993). Some studies have reported that offenders are externally oriented in their locus of control and low in self-esteem (Ross & Fabiano, 1985), which further
indicate that internality of locus of control is related to higher self-esteem (Bradshaw & Gilbrech (http://webpages.csus.edu/n sac 65152/self esteem %20 study-htm, Rumper & Harris, 1993).

The studies on locus of control have further shown that internal locus of control is related to abstract cognitive reasoning while external locus of control is related to concrete cognitive reasoning (Shute et al., 1984; Skinner et al., 1998; and Weisz Stipek, 1982). Also internally controlled student teachers and counselors are more competent than externally controlled (Cash, 1983). Some studies have reported cultural differences with reference to locus of control e.g. Americans tend to have high locus of control as compared to Chinese and Japanese (Hamid, 1994) and Asians and other collective cultures tend to value an external locus of control (Ji, Peng & Nisbett, 2000).

Assertive Communication is the ability to express positive and negative ideas and feelings in an open, honest, direct and tactful way. It recognizes one’s rights while respecting the rights of others and allows one to take responsibility of one’s actions without judging or blaming other people and also allows constructive confrontation to find mutually satisfying solution where conflict exists.

The research on assertive communication reveals that assertive communication in relation to sex and social economic status was significant in favour of girls and self-esteem did not effect assertive communication of students significantly (Sudha & Lakkamma, 1994). Further, increased extroversion reported by teachers was associated with increased perceived assertiveness and non-verbal immediacy by the students (Valencic et al., 2005).

Assertive training is a special kind of teaching aiming at equipping the students with necessary skills developing all the qualities and abilities required for successful social adjustments using different techniques.

Assertive training improved interpersonal communication skills, self-esteem, and self-concept, internal locus of control, assertiveness, spontaneity, adaptability,
credibility, entrepreneurial style and moral development (Firth, 2001; Gupta & Kumar, 2002; Mink, 1991; Pillay, 1995; Peerawankul, 1998; and Shimizu et al., 2004). Increase in assertiveness skills even helped sex offenders in curbing their offensive behaviour (Marshall, Turner & Barbaree, 1989).

1.1. RATIONALE

There are several cognitive and non-cognitive correlates of teaching skills that affect it e.g. intelligence, emotional stability, self-confidence, self-esteem, assertiveness, locus of control etc. Therefore, teachers can enrich school education by seeking answers to questions like “how can we promote children in their emotional stability, self-confidence, self-esteem, self-assertiveness and internality”. It can be assumed that best personal development will only develop when this potential is promoted as well. In order to promote this potential among children, teachers must be equipped with effective teaching skills during pre-service training programme. Hence, prospective teachers require self-confidence, self-esteem and self-assertiveness to communicate knowledge and interact with students effectively.

Communication as a Common Essential Learning focuses on the language demands of each school subject. The role of the teacher is understanding through the development of communication abilities in all subjects. Thus, Communication is described largely in terms of instructional strategies necessary to help students with this task. It does not require that all teachers become language arts teachers, nor does it replace teachers’ responsibilities for teaching the content and processes of other school subjects. Hence, effective communication is essential for teachers irrespective of their subjects and disciplines, as effective communicator interacts with others effectively using a variety of mediums e.g. reading, writing and sculpting.

There is a popular belief that ideas, facts, information, beliefs and observations communicated by the teacher emanate from the behaviour of the communicator and it has to be evaluated in terms of learning outcomes as knowledge communicated by the teacher and received by the respondent are
complementary processes. The effectiveness of knowledge communication can be measured in terms of learning outcomes, as teaching is an interactive process. Thus, competent teaching depends on communication skill of teaching.

Teacher’s personality is one of the important variables in the teaching situation. It is the basis of much of the argument that teachers are born and not made and that any one may be a judge of teachers since every one has been at school (Ryan, 1986). Rating scales of best teachers contain list of personality traits other than assertiveness, self-esteem and locus of control. Assertive training results in reduced social anxiety increased social skills (Rathus, 1973). Assertive training has also proven to be effective in enhancing communication skills, self-concept, self-esteem and assertiveness.

Educators may use assertive training to increase the general capability of children to discuss their feelings comfortably and to handle opinions in a socially acceptable way during interactions with other people. It is highly valuable for students who wish to become better able to raise questions in class, to make presentations and reports, to respond to teacher’s questions, to express opinions or to participate in-group discussions. Similarly assertiveness training is pertinent to help students who seem to “come on too strong” in asking questions and expressing opinions (Alberti & Emmons, 1978).

Studies conducted on self-esteem in relation to assertiveness and stress showing that self-esteem and assertiveness are significantly related to stress with assertiveness contributing to self-esteem and self-esteem being directly related to stress. Studies have also reported negative relationship between assertiveness and self-concept, assertiveness and dominance, depression and social potency and positive relationship between assertiveness and self-control.

Plethora of research has already been undertaken in the modification of teaching behaviour through the use of interaction analysis, microteaching, team teaching and simulated teaching. But to the best knowledge of investigator no
research has been carried out to undertake the assertive communication training to modify the teaching behaviour.

Moreover, the personality traits like assertiveness, self-esteem and locus of control too have been a silent area of research for teachers. There is need for undertaking research studies with regard to effectiveness of assertive communication training on the teaching behaviour of pupil teachers. Hence, in the present study attempt has been make to investigate the effectiveness of assertive communication training programme on the teaching skills of pupil teachers with respect to their self-esteem and locus of control.

1.2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

“Effect of Assertive Communication Training Programme on Teaching Skills in relation to Self-Esteem and Locus of Control among Pupil Teachers”.

1.3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To study and compare the teaching skills of pupil teachers belonging to humanities and science stream.

2. To compare self-esteem, locus of control and assertiveness of pupil teachers belonging to humanities and science stream.

3. To study the effectiveness of assertive communication training programme in improving the teaching skills of pupil teachers belonging to humanities and science stream.

4. To study the comparative effectiveness of assertive communication training programme on teaching skills of pupil teachers belonging to humanities and science stream.

5. To study the differential effect of assertive communication training programme in the acquisition of teaching skills of pupil teachers with different levels of assertiveness.
6. To study the differential effect of assertive communication training programme in the acquisition of teaching skills of pupil teachers in relation to their self esteem and locus of control.

1.4. DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The present study was delimited with respect to the following:

1. Only prospective teachers were taken.

2. Only six teaching skills were taken in the study.

3. It was confined only to the pupil teachers of two educational institutions situated in the Union Territory of Chandigarh.