

Challenges of Multigrade Class Teaching

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Abstract— The purpose of this paper is to throw light on the challenges facing by teachers in multigrade classrooms which is running in government primary and junior schools in village area. Multigrade classroom means that there are two or more than two grade in single classroom working together or independently and every student is working for his/ her individual curriculum goals for their own grade level. They are learning simultaneously in same class by single teachers. It is very easy to say but really very tricky and harder to handle. On the one hand, it gives an opportunity for collaborative learning strategy, but the learning outcomes are not satisfactory which we expect, there are so many reasons behind it, we all discussed in this paper multigrade classrooms are contradictory to manage monograde classrooms, there are wide variations in age within the same grade. This type is common in developing countries like India. This paper consists of the pros and cons of multigrade classroom in Indian school culture, challenges of multigraded classrooms, Teaching strategies in multigraded classrooms, classroom management and learning outcomes.

Keywords: Multi graded classroom, Challenges of multigrade teaching, Teaching strategy.

I. INTRODUCTION

Multi graded class is a forbidden reality of all problems in educational structure at basic level it affects the up to high level of education system primary education is the foundation of whole education system it plays please if it is to our education system it is very crucial to understand the multigrade classroom setup in depth of Indian education as most of the classroom at primary and upper primary level in government schools we can see the data also unified district information system for school education data from 2016 to 2017 shows around 10.2 percentage of family schools in India are single teacher schools it is also one of the unaddressed result for not being able to achieve the Millennium Development Goals primary education although multigrade classroom setting are the access to children when the schools do not have sufficient number of teachers multigrade setting encourages children to learn from their peer it supports scaffolding and breaks barriers of Lindsey in the classroom this type of education encourages healthy socialization among children it promotes good interpersonal relations cooperation and collaborative attitude in children and teachers multigrade classroom caters are compatible environment to which helps in engaging the child as per their level with their own pace this setting brings teacher and students more closer in this model teacher knows every child's progress needs their performances in previous grades behavioral changes gradual development etcetera as there are more than one grade in our room learning simultaneously.

In present scenario ,when we talk about the equality in opportunities, education and door to door excess of quality education, it is a big threat to quality education and quality equality especially in rural government schools. Many surveys shows that there is big difference in learning environment of rural and urban schools, in rural schools there is scarcity of teachers and they are bound to multigrade their class, it needs to be more skilled and competent for that type of environment. Question is that, "Are they trained for that?" it is observed in rural areas there are so many schools running by single teacher and more surprising thing is that they all are new recruited teachers or we can see freshers ,then next question raises how a new teacher could handle these types of situations without any experience. Is there anything for this type of situation in pre- service teaching courses? Off course answer will be No, then why they are recruited in that schools? In NPE 1986, there was the scheme of operation blackboard, it was launched in 1987 in pursuance of NPE-POA, to provide minimum essential facilities to all primary schools in the country. In operation blackboard scheme there was a provision of at least one teacher for each class or section, now what is the situation? after completing more than 30 years of implementation still many schools are running by single teacher and teachers are facing the challenges of multigrade classroom and beside their classroom they have to perform their official duties as a incharge head teacher, in this condition teacher will the jobs stress which will result in adjustment problems and unsatisfied conditions, then how the goal of quality education be achieved.

On the next, there is also a surprising revelation, in 2000 after the formulating Sarv Siksha Abhiyan (SSA), a policy for providing quality education for all, bringing landmark for education as fundamental right in 2002 enacted a right to education 2009 and implementing from April 2010, promising free and compulsory education for all children from 6 to 14 years of age, why the learning outcomes coming down? after implementation of these policies and initiatives, why our goal of quality education is not be fulfilling? if we compare the learning outcomes before and after these policies we will see the learning outcomes are gradually coming down, then what we have done through these landmark policies and initiatives this paradox of high on policies and low

on implementation and outcomes became the concern to rethink about the educational loopholes, there is a forbidden reality behind all.

II. Multigrade Classroom

Multigrade classroom refers to heterogeneous class in age, potential and also in grade. It is the situation where more than one grade level learning together in single class by single teacher. Multigrade teaching is a condition where typically a school has one or two teachers. In multi grade classroom teacher is responsible to instruct with two or more curriculum grades in same class. In multigrade classroom students of more than one grade learn simultaneously, it enhances the educational experiences of students and advances the teaching experiences of teachers. It is a better way of learning. In multigraded classroom the topics are interrelated so there is a condition of vertical learning, which Incorporates the valuable benefits all blended classroom, which is more realistic and applicable way to learn. In these types of condition the role of teacher became more important as teacher has to guide and engage each child in its grade level curriculum and also to encourage them to share information and work together. In this environment, creativity, questioning, critical thinking, collaboration and listening are key contributors. Although multigrade classroom framework thinks about various rural conditions and sets up the structure in which educator are offered help to convey classrooms, syllabus, curriculum, syllabus for each individual.

Multigrade classroom is the practical classroom school management formulated to enhance the students mental and physical growth. Teaching in multigrade classes is very challenging. There is lack of sufficient time to handle grades in same class also it is very tiresome for a single teacher, sometimes it seems to be boring to stay all the timetable periods in same class with same level of students for a single teacher. The parents lack of interest to their children's education, insufficient government fund, Insufficient resources are the some barriers in effective education, off course language is also very challenging as sometimes teacher are not proficient in the mother tongue of children. As a result, the performances of students in multigrade classes become low.

In multigraded classroom there are many challenges and despite of these challenges there are many advantages and also disadvantages of multigrading.

Advantages of Multigrading

❖ Reliable environment

Students when remain in multigrade class with the same teacher for multiple years of according to their trade enjoy a stable and reliable environment.

❖ Opportunities for collaboration

Multigrade classroom offers the opportunities for collaboration, each child with the help of teacher communicate informations and more mature child scaffold the young one. This also make interactive classroom which is more healthier and effective and normal one.

❖ Opportunities for vertical learning

Multigraded class provides vertical learning as teacher has to instruct the curriculum of all grades in single class. There is no limit to content that is taught or discussed, younger students learn along with high grade older students.

❖ Family like atmosphere

Students groups like a family, it is most successful model of learning, Students of all grades benefits educationally as well as socially. This type of family group classes are beneficial to all types of learning that is late bloomers gifted and slow learners also.

❖ Opportunities for teachers

It is easy to use, educators can create effective curriculum, syllabus, strategies and plans for students in multigrade classrooms.

❖ Better performance of students

Students can develop positive attitude, leadership skills, healthier social relationships, effective communication skills, sharing, caring and more skill in multigraded classroom along with the help of more mature classmates of upper grade in single class.

❖ Effective learning

High level thinking and learning, problem solving methods develops at earlier stage in multigraded class.

❖ Student teaching Relationship

In multigrade classroom students stays with same teacher in same classroom at every next grade, this gives the opportunity for students to learn with same teacher for several years, this makes in addition she familier and healthier.

Disadvantage of multigrading

- ❖ A multigrade classroom is very difficult to implement in large number of students of each grade, there will be discipline problems.
- ❖ In multigrade classroom teacher have to face many problems, it is difficult to give attention to every child at same time which will affect the teaching effectiveness.
- ❖ Textbooks are also the problems, as they are prepared for monograde, class how can it be possible to teach textbooks in multigate class?
- ❖ The schools that are practicing multigade teaching often suffer from inadequate materials and resources.
- ❖ Generally teachers are engaged in non academic works then how the teaching will be possible in their absence.
- ❖ There are some students especially the higher grade level may not be listening to the teacher while discussing before because they they may already know the topic and vice versa.
- ❖ It is very tricky for a teacher to design and create activities for multi grade class.
- ❖ In multigraded classroom there is a lack of motivation among students in their studies as they enjoy limited teachers attention and limited variety of learning methods and teaching tools.
- ❖ In multigrade classroom lack of time is the main disadvantage. That time passes so quickly and at the same time teachers have to teach all grades in one classroom simultaneously.
- ❖ In multigrade classroom the academic achievements of students are low due to the lack of time teacher could not use new teaching methods and therefore there is lack of teaching facilities which leads to a academic failure.
- ❖ In multigrade classroom there is lack of educational facilities also educational atmosphere classrooms electricity library is too inappropriate.

III. Challenges of Multigrade Teaching

In India multigrade teaching is common usually in elementary schools any rural areas, where less number of students are in school. The teaching in multi grade classroom is very tricky and challenging for teachers, handling multiple grades in one class at the same time is very stressful, It results in maladjustment of teacher in school conditions, not in classroom but teachers also face extrinsic challenges such as how to reach school which is far away from home, off course dangerous ways, roads, inconvenient accessibility, workload, students absenteeism, social isolation, more aspiration and less cooperation of parents, unawareness of guardians, unfamiliar languages and dialects, prolonged traveling. All these are the extrinsic factors which also affects classroom conditions. Multigrade teaching consist full of difficulties in working environment it is divided into topological terms as intrinsic challenges and extrinsic challenges and the paper also discusses the challenges which is present in our education system.

Intrinsic challenges

Intrinsic challenges are teacher related challenges refers to the challenges that are experienced by teacher individually. New teachers face more difficulties in multigrade classroom and more surprising thing is that teachers get their first appointment in rural areas where there is scarcity of teachers and they have to teach in multi grade classroom. One of my student got appointment in primary school which is as usual in rural area, I asked his experience he told that "I have to teach first, second and third grade students in single classroom, I haven't learned this skill in micro teaching class in B.ed course". Really I'm shocked! yes it is true there is not any type of training of multigrade teaching in any teacher education curriculum. So, new teachers face difficulty in classroom management, designing the class and also they have to make their Lesson plan for each grade how it is possible for any teacher to teach in a single class with different Lesson plan for each grade of every subject.

Every grade has different aims and objectives of teaching. It is very challenging for teacher to fulfill all the objectives in multigrade classroom.

The curriculum and textbooks are also prepared for monograde class and it is also very hard for teacher to teach them in multigrade class.

Teachers in multi grade class have excessive workload, at primary level, the teachers have to organize many school activities, Co-curricular activities which they have to report in their registers. Teachers experienced stress and feel unhappy with all that.

The language is also a big variant most of the soldiers used to communicate in their local language as mother tongue sometimes it is difficult to understand why teacher and somehow the language is understandable it is also challenging to communicate in their dialect with same accent this is a big barrier for making record with students which is very necessary at elementary level classroom teaching.

The single teacher school multigrade teaching is more challenging then other school where there are two or three teachers. A single teacher of a school told his experience “actually I'm not teaching in class, I just manage and try to make class disciplined by performing different activities or games which is off course informative but that will not fulfill the objectives of teaching”. He also explained that if I teach 1 or 2 grade where the curriculum is based on reading and listening the other three grades became bored and they start making noise and which makes class indiscipline and if he focuses on 3rd, 4th and 5th grade the other two class classes start crying and make excuses to go outside the classroom. Sometimes I divided the class and arrange them to sit separately it was most challenging, as the school is in their village and there is no boundary wall in school, few students ran away and despite of going to their homes they play in streets of villages and their parents blamed me for all this”.

Extrinsic challenges

Extrinsic challenges are school level challenges, distance of school, lack of resources, inconvenient accessibility to school, workload and student absenteeism are the challenges teacher experienced as extrinsic way. Most of the multigrade schools are located in rural area, they are far away from the residence of teachers which is also a challenge for teacher to reach their at time. Some schools are in remote areas that teachers uses all types of transport. My friend who is a teacher, told me that she has to first travel by road transport then she had to cross the river and then travel by rickshaw or motor bike after that she walk to reach her school. Most of the schools are so far that teacher have to wake up very early around 4:00 o'clock in morning to prepare by 5:30 in the morning. It will the road waiting for a bus or other vehicle to reach the school.

There is a lack of resources, which also creates challenging situation for teachers. It is found that there are one or two rooms in school buildings there is lack of library labs games and music rooms then how a teacher could engage with Class according to their need an interest lack of these resources bounds the teacher to combine all grades in a single classroom.

The riverside schools are also a challenging for any teacher. Along the way there are environmental hazards that may put their at risk. During rainy season there is danger of floods.

The teachers of multigrade the classroom have much workload as compared to monograde teacher. Some schools have only single teacher, at that condition as well as teaching in multi grade class they have to perform office work as incharge head-teacher, this is also very challenging to perform both duties simultaneously.

Student absenteeism is also a challenging in multi grade class as teacher has lack of time, if a student will absent in class, it will be difficult to give extra attention to that student this will lower the performance of learning.

Challenges in education system

Challenges which are pertain to our education system are also experienced by multigrade teachers, they experience lack of stakeholder's support and lack of training on multigrade teaching. It is oftenly observed that parents are not supporting, they don't take any responsibility in learning process. They never look at the homework of their children even they engage their children in household words and looking after their siblings which he's also the cause of students absenteeism. The second and a big problem on multigrade teachers is that, there is a lack of training in teacher training programs for multigrade teaching. Seminars or workshops on multigrade teachings are organized rarely.

IV. Teaching Strategies for Multigrade Class

Some experienced multigrade teachers use very innovative teaching strategy to overcome the challenges of multigrade classroom. There strategies are also supported by some studies, they are: flexibility of teachers, using differentiated instruction, teaching in real life situations, using technology in teaching, collaborative learning style, classroom management.

Flexibility of teachers

In multi grade classroom teachers should be flexible with the strategies which is to be used in classroom. They should be flexible to make best fitted curriculum in multigrade classroom. They should prepare teaching material which is useful in multi grade class.

Differentiated instruction

In multigrade classroom teacher should use differentiated instruction to demonstrate according to the needs, interest in learning styles of their students differentiated instructional refers to those strategies and activities which a teacher is using in class according to the capability and needs of students. In multigrade class some students are intelligent some are average and some are poor, their ages and grades also varies. Teacher can use differentiated instruction according to their learning style or according to their capabilities at which they learn with their pace it will engage students and also help in classroom management.

Teaching in real life situations

teaching in real life situations is also beneficial in multigraded classroom. It use methods of integration, when teacher use integration method ,they co-relate the topic with more than one subject. It is very informative and covers syllabus of more subjects, it also save time and students in returns develop the skill of relating the things in many situations as teacher uses localized instructional material which is applied in real world situations.

Using technology in multigrade classroom

innovative strategy is using technology in teaching multigrade classrooms.It will need digital tools, teacher can use computers mobiles projectors also can use TVs to frame video classes, it is as interesting as efficient to communicate information according to the needs of students. Through digital tools learning becomes faster and easier.

Collaborative learning

Collaborative learning is a form of group learning where students interact to each other to solve a specific problem or completing a task to find solution for certain problems.It is also called as team learning where students work together. It includes peer tutoring teacher can Group a class according to their abilities and capabilities and they learn together. In another way teacher can pair a fast learner student to a slow learner so that fast learner can scaffold the slow learner in learning. It leads to a variety of creativity in doing exercises. Students learn in better way by the peers this strategy is very useful in multigrade teaching.

Classroom management

Classroom management is very essential skill for any type of class to make learning effective. All about strategies are helpful in classroom management. If the teacher can engage their pupils by using any of the teaching strategy then he will be able to manage the class which will results the better learning outcomes of multi graded classroom.

V. CONCLUSION

Multigrade classroom is a big problem in education system of India. Teaching in multigrade classroom is always very challenging. These challenges can be intrinsic ,extrinsic or also found in our system. Intrinsic challenges include problems related to teachers usually according to their experiences. Extensive challenges refers to the school level challenges, lack of resources distance of school students absenteeism etcetera or other challenges are related to system, lack pre- service training lack of support of stakeholders. All these challenges please disadvantages of multigrading as it directly affects the learning outcomes. The teachers does not prefer multigrade in the classroom because of these challenges. Teachers also encounter language problems, schools are in remote areas.Thus pre- service training is needed to develop teachers professional and personal competences.Multigrade teachers also experienced lack of resources such as stationary learning materials, library in school ,one or two room building are also create problem. Teachers face many different types of challenges for that they try to apply different strategies to overcome the problem as using differentiated instruction, being flexible, teaching in real life situations collaborative learning and using technology but all these strategies need competent teachers and resourceful classroom and for that there should be a pre- service and more skilled in service trainings. These should also equal distribution of teachers according to students ratio in rural and urban areas. It is also be the solution of multigrade classroom.

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