



Multi-Grade Teaching in the Context of Universalisation of Primary Education

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KEYWORDS :

INTRODUCTION:- Education is regarded as a potential instrument of individual. It is intimately related with the national development and positively correlated with productivity and quality of life. It enables as individual of his or her rights and responsibilities as to discharge his/her duties properly. Those who have remained backward and under privileged over years can be empowered by education to assert their rights and fulfil their places in the society. Education is a powerful means of removing disparities, discriminations and disabilities in the society. That is why education is eulogised by all civilized societies through centuries. In 1946 the International community charges UNESCO with the responsibility for promoting education throughout the world. In 1948, the United Nations in Paris proclaimed universal declaration of Human Rights including the rights to Education. The Article 26 (i) states "Everyone has the right to education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory." India particularly, regarded education as a means of improving efficiency in all kinds of activities. The constitution of India very well recognised the importance of education in the directives of state policy and Government of India have shown their interest in improving education both qualitatively and quantitatively.

UNIVERSALISATION OF PRIMARY EDUCATION IN INDIA AFTER INDEPENDENCE

The universalization of Elementary Education (U.E.E) has been one of the most important goals of Educational Development in India since independence. Article 45 of the directive principles of state policy, under Part IV of Indian constitution, explicitly states the nation's commitment to universalize elementary education. It declares:- "The state shall endeavour to provide within a period of ten years from the commencement of the constitution for free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of 14 years (constitution of India, 1950)." Broadening the concept of U.E.E. the NPE '92 accord unqualified priority to three mutually reinforcing aspects :

- (1) Universal access and enrolment
- (2) Universal retention of children up to 14 years of age.
- (3) A substantial improvement in the quality of education to enable all the children to achieve essential levels of learning.

THE PRESENT STATUS :-

The educational facilities have got tremendously expanded during the post independence era, especially at the primary education stage. The number of primary schools in the country has increased from 2.2 lakhs in 1950-51 to nearly 6.32 lakhs. In addition, there are at present nearly 3 lakh non-formal education centres providing primary level education to out-of-school children in the age group 9 to 14. This expansion has definitely helped in making primary level education more easily accessible to a large section of the population. In fact according to the according to the all-India Educational Survey conducted by the NCERT in 1986, nearly 95 percent of the population are served by a primary school with a walking distance of 1 km. Even so an acceptably large number of habitations are still without primary schools nearly one third of the school in rural areas have only one teacher. The 1986 survey shows in India there was 152848 (29%) single teacher school and 168423 (32%) double teacher schools.

MULTI GRADE TEACHING :- multi grade teaching consists of a single teacher teaching children of two or more grades simultaneously. It is essentially a problem faced by teachers and students in

peripheral rural areas unsupported and unrecognised by mainstream and centralised education systems. It is an educational system barely addressed in national policies of education, almost non-existent in the content of teacher Education in Courses and mostly ignored by national curriculum developers. In order to make universalisation of primary education a success we have to plan for effective multigrade teaching

PROBLEMS OF MULTI GRADE TEACHING

- A teacher engaged in multi-grade teaching has a heavier workload than a teacher engaged in teaching a single grade.
- Because of diversity of pupil's achievement levels, an average teacher finds it difficult to get good results.
- Individualised instruction and individualised motivation becomes difficult.
- The equipments provided in multi grade teaching is inadequate and the teaching becomes monotonous.
- Multi-grade teacher find it difficult to complete the syllabus prescribed for each of his classes.
- In multi-grade teaching situation it is not easy to follow a fixed time-table.
- There are difficulties in planning Lessons under this system so that every child is engaged in some useful learning activities.
- When a multi grade teacher gets absent from school, learning in all the classes under his control will get neglected.
- Multi-grade schools are seldom supervised.

STRATEGIES FOR EFFECTIVE MULTI-GRADE TEACHING - Research work, experiments and projects were undertaken in various countries. International organisations like the UNICEF assisted those projects. Through experiments done in various countries like Japan, India, Malaysia, Nepal and Indonesia - strategies have been proposed to improve the effectiveness of Multi-Grade Teaching. Special classroom organisation patterns, teaching methods, learning materials to help self-learning are some of those proposals. We will discuss some of these strategies for effective multigrade teaching.

A) ORGANISING SMALL GROUP WORK -

Instead of adopting a centralised teaching role, learning in groups involving face to face interaction between pupils-pupils, pupils-teacher, pupil-outsider is more educative.

Here the role of the teacher is that of a mediator, and he can assist more pupils. In multigrade teaching situations, the size of each grade is small. Planning teaching-learning. They can develop an awareness to compare with each other and improve.

The grouping of pupils should be planned in a flexible way depending upon the nature of the instructional activity. The grouping could be done both in vertical (for peer tutoring, mixed ability grouping) and horizontal (for self-study) combination. The following points should be kept in mind while grouping pupils -

- All group tasks should be kept short while starting.
- The teacher should keep pupils moving from one group to another.
- Group leaders should be changed from time to time to optimise pupils participation.
- Every pupil should get a chance for leading others in

- one activity or the other.
- The teacher should keep a vigil on all the groups while they are at work.
- The teacher must find out the main points of a lesson, paragraph, or the main steps of an experiment and should explain it to the groups before asking them to initiate their group work.

B) ORGANISATION OF TEACHING-LEARNING ACTIVITIES

The following sequence is suggested for the planning and organization of teaching-learning activity in multigrade teaching situation.

(a) Defining the purpose of teaching learning activity -

The planning of an activity includes breaking it up in sub-activities and sequencing, practising, achieving these through instructional content and other materials such as teaching learning aids. The teacher should explain why and how of an activity. An activity occupies time, space, learning material and energy resource of the teacher, pupils and other personnel engaged in the process. These are inputs and its genuine planning can help in increasing output

(b) dispersal of instruction -

To utilize teacher's available time on the pupils engaged time, the following methodologies are suggested.

(1) Direct Teaching - Direct teaching should start with every new topic and lesson. An over-view of the lesson should be presented summarily. Explaining the different subactivities of the lesson, arousing learners curiosity, explaining the role of monitors and peers, assigning self study exercises for reinforcement, all these could be done to support direct teaching.

The teacher should again take to direct teaching for information, evaluation and remedial measures.

(2) Monitorial Assistance - Monitor facilitates the teacher sharing his work. She fills up the gap while the teacher is engaged with other grades. The monitor co-ordinate and organise peer group and individual learning activities, prepare learners for Direct Teaching, demonstrate the material to the learners, leads the learner in out door activities, conduct drills, supervise self-study and seat work sessions to maintain discipline and minimise interruptions.

(3) Peer tutoring - Peer tutoring is spontaneous tutoring in count one or even one to several pupils teaching situations. In peer grouping groups are formed by bringing together bright, average and weak pupils. Anyone who knows better in a particular field becomes the leader of the peer groups for activities in that field. Peer tutoring helps learners to progress at their own pace and seek immediate guidance whenever required.

(4) Self Study - Self study is a potential strategy to keep Pupils engaged. It is best suited in the use of self learning material. Self learning material may be used right from the first Standard. Continuous supervision is needed to keep pupils busy in self-study activities.

(5) Collective teaching - In collective teaching, teacher plans work for all the grade collectively. Activities pertaining to personal and social hygiene, cleanliness programmes, gardening, clay and art work, participation in productive work, social service, athletic, games, story telling, dramatisation, recitation competition etc. may be organised.

(7) Field-trips - In field-trip activities pupils are distributed in small groups and are guided as how to observe, explore, understand and react to the environment. In such activities pupils may be led to observe and record facts and phenomena, compare notes, infer rules, relationship and laws, draw generalisations.

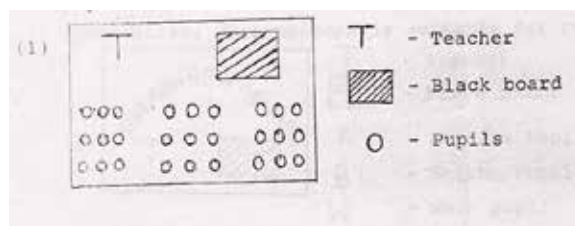
(8) Extended teaching - Childrens who are engaged in some domestic or economic activities may stay back for about an hour after school timing to finish routine home work. During this time pupils of senior classes may help the children of lower classes. The teacher may provide guidance to monitors and peer group teachers for the next days work.

(9) Supplementary reading material - Use of supplementary reading material reinforces pupils learning. The teacher also gets time to attend non-academic work while children are engaged in supplementary readings.

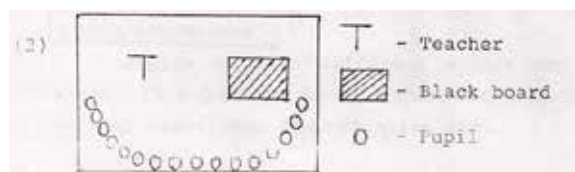
(10) Liaisoning with community members - In a rural environment help of some retired persons, social workers, educated parents can be sought to supplement teacher's efforts. The cooperation of some meritorious old students can also be sought. Other local expertise in craftsmanship should also be utilised. Doctors and other health workers from the Primary health Centre may be invited to conduct health check-ups.

(11) Collective teaching in multigrade school situation - In collective teaching, the teacher plans work for the grades collectively. The same teacher engages different grades with different strategies but for the same subject.

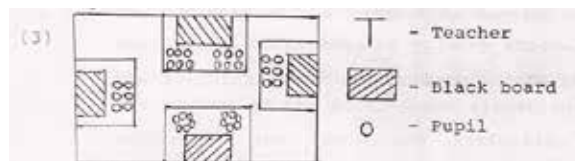
(C) SPACE MANAGEMENT - The following are some different patterns of seating arrangements that can be applied in multigrade teaching.



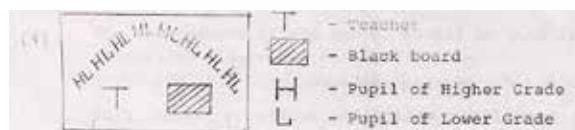
In this seating arrangement the teacher teaches a number of classes, pupils are seated in rows and separated according to their grades. Teacher is present in front of each grade. The black board is placed in front. This arrangement facilitates face to face interaction between teacher and pupils, but no convenient for easy interaction between pupils. This type of seating arrangement is done when the same lesson is taught to all classes. But a differentiation could be done in questioning.



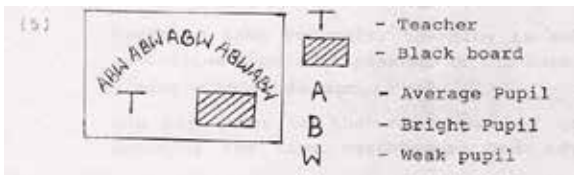
This seating arrangement is convenient for easy interaction between teacher and pupils and also between pupils. When a common lesson is taught to all pupils this method can be adopted.



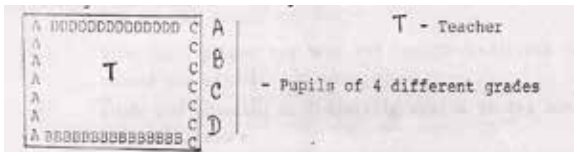
Here pupils of different grades are engaged in different activities. While the teacher is teaching one grade pupils of other grades are engaged in different self learning activities. The teacher should plan self learning activities in advance.



Pupils of a lower grade and those of a higher grade are seated alternately. This form is good for self learning activities. This pattern is suitable for remedial teaching too.



Bright pupils, weak pupils and average pupils of the same grade are seated alternatively. Pupils of two or three grades too can be combined in this manner. Pupils can be assigned self learning activities. This is good for remedial teaching too.



Pupils of four different grades can be seated in this manner. this pattern is suitable for activities like dancing, physical exercises, demonstration etc.

D) TIME MANAGEMENT -

The following points may be kept in view while preparing the time table of multigrade schools

- The entirety of the curriculum content of all the grades and general objectives of primary stage.
- The teaching-learning strategies referred to earlier in the content of the multi-grade situation.
- Nature of the topic and activities regarding time scheduling.
- Weekly plans help more than one time-planning.
- It is not desirable to draw one standard form of daily routine.
- The environment of the school should be such as to create a learning dimate and to avoid distraction.
- Collecting teaching should be planned for the whole years.
- Both indoor & outdoor activities should get a balanced position in the time table.
- Activities before and after the school hours should also be indicated in the time schedule.
- Tests in same subjects, teaching as well as of similar activities should be planned at the same time for all the grades with a teacher.
- One may refer to the curriculum of one's state while deciding the time weightages. The schedule should be drawn in a way that even with a full work load more time should be devoted to grades I and II.

OTHER ASPECTS REQUIRED IN ORGANISING MULTI-GRADE,TEACHING -

The teacher should try for -

- 1) Developing proper hygienic and healthy conditions in and around the school.
- 2) Study and grooming of leadership traits in the monitors and peer-leaders.
- 3) Helping all students to develop self-learning habits.
- 4) practice of less punishment and more incentives.
- 5) Bringing in responsibility and discipline amongst students in day to day behavior.
- 6) Maximum utilization of time, space, resource components available in the local situations.
- 7) Remedial teaching-learning programmers for slow learners and handicapped pupils.
- 8) Developing and using self-learning materials.
- 9) Organizing co-curricular activities by combining grades.
- 10) Seeking, community support in the educational process. Organisation patterns would vary from school situation to school situation.

CONCLUSION -

Multi grade teaching situation is a situation which is faced by peripheral rural area teachers. This situation can not be avoided. Rather it needs constant recognition and support by main stream and centralised education systems. In order to make universalisation of primary education a success we have to plan for effective multigrade teaching.

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