

A Study on the Attitude of Elementary School Teachers Towards Multi-Grade Teaching In Vizianagaram District

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ABSTRACT

Education is the process of facilitating learning. It is the most powerful instrument of social, economic and cultural transformation necessary for the realization of national goals. It cultivates social, moral and spiritual values among people (**Report of the Indian Education Commission, 1964-66**). It helps in the transmission of culture from one generation to the other. It helps in the acquisition of knowledge, skills, values, morals, beliefs and habits necessary for the human living. It helps to increase the productivity, achieve national and emotional integration; and accelerate the process of modernization. Curriculum and Pedagogy play a significant role in the teaching learning process at elementary level. The curriculum should be transacted applying suitable pedagogy in order to make the students understand what the teacher explains in the classroom. Multi-grade teaching is one of the techniques of teaching the children at elementary level, wherein one teacher teaches more than one class at a time either in the same classroom or in a different classroom. The combination is usually of grades close to each other, like one and two, three and four, five and six etc. Multi-grade teaching is in existence in single teacher primary schools; or in schools where there is shortage of teachers. The present study is an attempt to explore the attitude of elementary school teachers towards multi-grade teaching in Vizianagaram district. The researchers used a well prepared and standardized questionnaire as the tool for collection of data from a sample of 80 teachers working in multi-grade schools located in Vizianagaram district of Andhra Pradesh using Stratified Random Sampling technique. Mean score values, standard deviations and independent t-tests were used for analysis of data. The findings of the study revealed that the demographic variables – Gender, Age, Academic qualification, Professional qualification and Teaching experience have no influence on their attitude towards multi-grade teaching in elementary schools.

Key words: Elementary school teachers, Multi-grade teaching, Attitude, Classroom teaching

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I. INTRODUCTION

Education is one of the most powerful instruments of social, economic and cultural transformation necessary for the realization of national goals. It cultivates social, moral and spiritual values among people. It helps in the acquisition of knowledge, skills, values, morals, beliefs and habits necessary for the human living. It helps to increase the productivity, achieve national and emotional integration; and accelerate the process of modernization. Curriculum and Pedagogy play a significant role in the teaching learning process at elementary level. The curriculum should be transacted applying suitable methods and techniques in order to make the students understand what the teacher explains in the classroom. The teachers should adopt innovative practices in the teaching-learning process in order to make learning more effective and pleasant.

ELEMENTARY EDUCATION IN INDIA

Elementary education in India comprises education imparted to children from class I to class VIII as per records of Census 2011 and Ministry of Human Resources Development, Government of India. It includes children in the age of 6-13 years. Elementary education is imparted after early childhood care education and before secondary education. The total number of children receiving elementary education per the census 2011 figures 19.73 crores, which comprises 16.3% of the national population. The number of elementary schools grew by 6.8% annually between 1950-51 to 2004-2005. Children of the elementary school comprised 79.4% of the total school going children. Out of every 100 elementary school students, 52 were boys and 48 girls. Despite accomplishing some quantitative milestones, lack of attention on qualitative improvement; gender and

social inequalities; traditional beliefs and ignorance of parents, however, remains obstacles in providing quality elementary education to the children.

“Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan” (Universalization of Elementary Education), by far the largest educational initiative and a flagship programme of Government of India. The Mid-day Meal Scheme introduced by the Government in 2001 has helped in reducing dropouts, enhancing retention, reducing hunger and malnourishment of students in elementary schools across the nation.

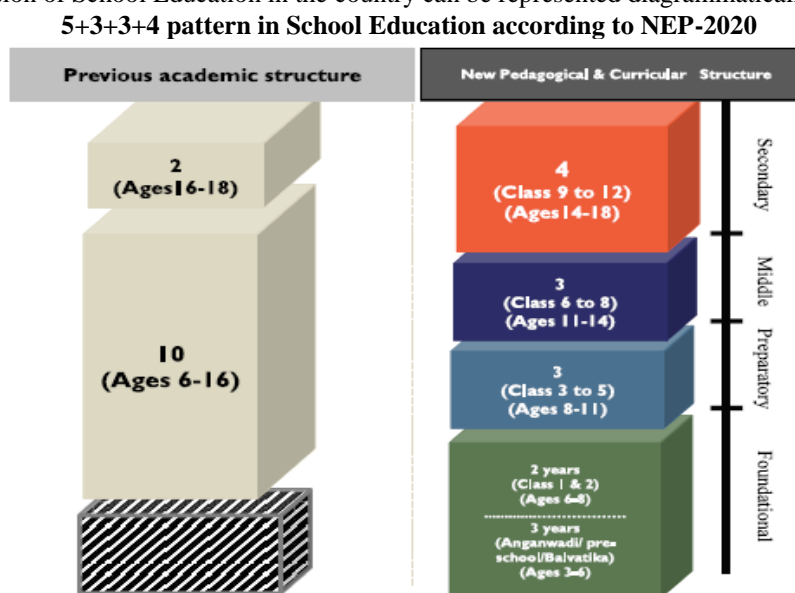
The Government’s holistic approach to the 8-year elementary education in India aimed at:

- reeducating the children not attending school by 9 million in the 6-14 years age group.
- reducing gender and social barriers enabling equalisation of male female enrolment.
- qualitative enhancement of elementary level education enabling improved learning and transition rates from primary education.

NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY-2020

The Government of India has introduced very recently 5+3+3+4 pattern in School Education in our country under National Education Policy, 2020. The policy suggests measures to improve quality in education restructuring the existing system by introducing five years of foundation stage (one year Nursery, one year Lower Kindergarten, one year Upper Kindergarten, and one year each for classes 1 and 2) followed by three years of preparatory stage (one year each for classes 3, 4 and 5), three years of middle stage (one year each for classes 6, 7 and 8) and four years of secondary stage (two years for Lower Secondary comprising of classes 9 and 10; and another two years for Upper Secondary comprising of classes 11 and 12).

The division of School Education in the country can be represented diagrammatically as follows:



‘MULTI-GRADE TEACHING’ IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

Multi-grade teaching is one of the most effective techniques of teaching the children at elementary level, wherein one teacher teaches the students of different grades at a time either in the same classroom or in a different classroom.

Multigrade teaching refers to a situation where typically a school has one or two teachers with classes that are heterogeneous in both age and ability. In multigrade education, teachers within a timetabled period are responsible for instruction across two or more curriculum grades, often seated in the same classroom. Multigrade teaching can operate in several conditions such as in schools serving in areas of low population density and are inaccessible (Benveniste & McEwan, 2000), when school enrollment percentage is very low, in schools where minimal number of teachers are employed, in schools where teacher absenteeism is prevalent and concept of supplementary teacher deployment is non-existent, or when many teachers go on leaves of different kinds and there is no mechanism to bridge the void (Little, 2001).

Multigrade classrooms play a vital role in helping developing nations achieve internationally mandated education for all and the Millennium Development Goals. Multigrade settings are the most cost-effective way of delivering educational access to children as resources are shared among more individuals and in areas that are

geographically isolated. This model allows for a rational allocation of teachers per class when the schools do not have sufficient numbers of teachers.

The multigrade model encourages children to learn from their peers and breaks barriers of differences in the classroom. This kind of education promotes collaboration and a cooperative attitude among students, and develops healthy interpersonal behaviour. It also helps the teacher to plan their work with more efficiency and cater to children who need more time to grasp some concepts that are dealt with in lower classes (UNESCO, 2013). All these reasons make many countries like Europe, North America, and Australia consciously prefer to have multigrade classrooms as their first choice. Ireland and Peru have around 40% and 78% multigrade primary schools respectively, making it a successful reality for them. Multigrade classrooms help sustain a fluid environment, which aids in engaging the child as per their level. It gives immense scope to the child to learn at their own pace and rigour. The learning space becomes grade agnostic but learning level specific.

NEED FOR THE PRESENT INVESTIGATION

The existing methods and techniques of teaching children in elementary schools, wherein the number of teachers is low, provide a lacuna in the teaching learning process. Further, it has been proved difficult to use normal methods of teaching to meet the learning needs of diverse students in schools that are geographically isolated. It is the responsibility of the government to encourage multi-grade schools in such areas with a view to provide quality education to students. It is felt by the researchers to conduct a study on the attitude of elementary school teachers towards the need for multi-grade teaching. The present investigation is an attempt in this direction.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objective of the present study is to find out the attitude of teachers towards implementation of multi-grade teaching at elementary school level.

The study also aims at finding out the influence of certain demographic variables - gender, age, academic qualification, professional qualification and teaching experience on the attitude of teachers towards multi-grade teaching in elementary schools.

HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

The following hypotheses have been formulated for the present investigation:

- (i) There is no significant difference in the attitude of male and female teachers towards multi-grade teaching in elementary schools.
- (ii) There is no significant difference in the attitude of teachers aged below 35 years and those aged 35 years and above towards multi-grade teaching in elementary schools.
- (iii) There is no significant difference in the attitude of Intermediate and Degree qualified teachers towards multi-grade teaching in elementary schools.
- (iv) There is no significant difference in the attitude of D.Ed. and B.Ed. qualified teachers towards multi-grade teaching in elementary schools.
- (v) There is no significant difference in the attitude of teachers with an experience of less than 10 years and those with 10 years and above towards multi-grade teaching in elementary schools.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study is limited to find out the influence of five demographic variables, viz., gender, age, academic qualifications, professional qualifications and teaching experience on the attitude of teachers towards multi-grade teaching in elementary schools. Further, the study is confined to 80 elementary school teachers working in Vizianagaram District of Andhra Pradesh.

II. METHODOLOGY

(a) Method of Research

Since the present study involves collecting data with the help of survey, the investigators used Descriptive survey method for the present investigation.

(b) Sample

The sample of the study consisting of 80 teachers has been selected from the elementary schools located in Vizianagaram district of Andhra Pradesh using Stratified Random Sampling technique.

(c) Research Tool

The researchers used a well prepared questionnaire consisting of 45 items as the tool of research for the present investigation.

(d) Administration of the Tool

The tool was initially administered to 10 teachers working in Vizianagaram town under Pilot study. The measures of reliability, validity and objectivity of the tool have been calculated. Further, the researchers conducted item analysis for the items included in the tool. Out of 45 items selected for the tool, the discriminating power of 40 items has been found positive and is found negative in respect of 5 items. The items whose discriminating power is negative have been removed; and the final tool consists of 40 items which are pool proof in all respects. The final tool has been administered to 80 teachers working in the Elementary Schools located in Vizianagaram District of Andhra Pradesh.

STATISTICAL INTERPRETATION OF DATA

The duly filled-in questionnaires have been collected from 80 respondents for purpose of tabulation of data.

The data collected has been analyzed and interpreted using different statistical techniques such as Mean score values, Standard Deviations and t-ratios; and are presented in the following table.

Table showing t-values of different variables relating to the perceptions of teachers working in Secondary schools towards quality improvement in teaching Physical Science

S. No.	Variable		N	Mean	S.D.	t-ratio	Result
1	Gender	Male	56	114.83	30.79	0.85*	*Not Significant at 0.05 and 0.01 levels
		Female	24	110.17	29.55		
2	Age	Below 35 years	30	65.87	7.54	0.68*	*Not Significant at 0.05 and 0.01 levels
		35 yrs. & above	50	64.72	4.91		
3	Academic Qualifications	Intermediate	11	64.10	2.74	1.07*	*Not Significant at 0.05 and 0.01 levels
		Graduation	69	65.32	6.37		
4	Professional Qualifications	D.Ed.	21	66.20	6.13	0.91*	*Not Significant at 0.05 and 0.01 levels
		B.Ed.	59	64.78	5.97		
5	Teaching Experience	Less than 10 yrs	34	66.15	7.53	1.18*	*Not Significant at 0.05 and 0.01 levels
		10 yrs. & above	46	64.42	4.53		

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

On the basis of the analysis and interpretation of data, the researchers have arrived at the following findings and drawn the conclusions.

- (i) There is no significant difference in the attitude of male and female teachers towards multi-grade teaching in elementary schools.
- (ii) There is no significant difference in the attitude of teachers aged below 35 years and those aged 35 years and above towards multi-grade teaching in elementary schools.
- (iii) There is no significant difference in the attitude of Intermediate and Degree qualified teachers towards multi-grade teaching in elementary schools.
- (iv) There is no significant difference in the attitude of D.Ed. and B.Ed. qualified teachers towards multi-grade teaching in elementary schools.
- (v) There is no significant difference in the attitude of teachers with an experience of less than 10 years and those with 10 years and above towards multi-grade teaching in elementary schools.

III. CONCLUSIONS

From the findings of the study, it is concluded that gender, age, academic qualifications, professional qualifications and length of service of the teachers has no influence on the attitude of teachers towards multi-grade teaching in elementary schools.

EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

- (i) The study would help the teachers identify the difficulties faced by them in teaching children in multi-grade elementary schools; and find out remedial measures to overcome the difficulties.
- (ii) The present study helps the teachers to use different methods and techniques of teaching that suit to the learning needs of the children in multi-grade elementary schools.
- (iii) The study would help the teachers take up innovative practices in teaching children in multi-grade elementary schools.
- (v) The study would help the academic organizations like SCERTs, IASEs and the State Departments of Education to take necessary steps for planning and implementing different in-service training programmes to teachers working in multi-grade elementary schools.

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