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STUDY MATERIAL

ON

**MULTI CULTURAL EDUCATION, MULTIGRADE TEACHING IN
RURAL CONTEXT**

(M.Ed. III Semester, Paper 3- School education of Disadvantaged Group)

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MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION

Objective: The objective of this study material is to make the students understand the meaning of multicultural education, its importance and explain how to go about multicultural education.

Introduction:

To understand, multicultural education, we must understand the meaning of the three words in it.

Multi means many

Culture refers to a way of life of a group people. It refers to a set of beliefs, attitude, values that determines the behaviour of an individual.

Education means a process of teaching learners to gain knowledge, skills, and understanding of certain things.

Thus, multi culture education refers to a process of teaching-learning where the diversity of culture in the class is integrated in the teaching learning process.

Multicultural education refers to any form of education or teaching that incorporates the histories, texts, values, beliefs, and perspectives of people from different cultural backgrounds. At the classroom level, for example, teachers may modify or incorporate lessons to reflect the cultural diversity of the students in a particular class. In many cases, “culture” is defined in the broadest possible sense, encompassing race, ethnicity, nationality, language, religion, class, gender, sexual orientation, and “exceptionality”—a term applied to students with specialized needs or disabilities.

Multicultural education supports the belief that students and their life histories and experiences should be taken into consideration in the teaching and learning process and that pedagogy should occur in a manner that is familiar to students and that addresses multiple ways of thinking.

Five dimensions of Multicultural Education:

Prof. James A Banks, Professor of Education at University of Washington ,Seattle, is one of the pioneers of multicultural education. He has elaborated how multi cultural background of the students can be taken into consideration in making teaching- learning effective. He has also suggested how the teacher should prepare her/himself, when students in a class come from different cultural background. He has suggested five dimensions or characteristics of multicultural education

- **Content Integration-** refers to the extent teachers use examples and content from a variety of cultures and groups to illustrate key concept, generalization and issues within their subject area or disciplines.
- **Knowledge Construction:** student learns how to build knowledge for him or herself in relation to his her cultural background.
- **Prejudice Reduction:** describes lessons and activities used by the teacher to help student to develop positive attitudes towards different racial, ethnic and cultural group.
- **Equity Pedagogy:** exists when teachers modifies their teaching in ways that will facilitate the academic achievement of student from divers racial, culture and social class groups.
- **Empowering School Culture and Society Structure:** created when the culture and organization of the school are transformed in ways that enable student from diverse racial, ethnic and gender groups to experience quality and equal status.

Goals of Multicultural Education: The goals of multicultural education may be specified as follows:

1. To help all students to acquire the knowledge, attitudes and skills needed to to function efficiently in a pluralistic democratic society
2. To help all students to interact, negotiate and communicate with people from diverse groups in order to create a civic and moral community that works for common good.

Factors to consider in Multicultural Education:

1. The Learning Environment
2. The Curriculum
3. The Teacher
4. The Support System

Multicultural Education in India

The concept of multicultural education had its origin in United States of America where Prof. Banks addressed issue of dealing with children coming to school from different social, cultural and ethnic background. The concept came in the late nineties. The concept though relatively new and originated in USA , has significant relevance in

school education in India. India is a nation of diversity. There are different castes, religions and languages with different cultural background. The diversity of Indian culture, tradition and religion finds a reflection in the classroom as well and therefore multicultural education becomes very significant in Indian context. The challenge is how to provide school education to children coming from different cultural, ethnic, religion and language background, so that all the students have the equal opportunity to learn and to develop a mindset amongst the student to appreciate different culture, religion, ethnic groups and languages and promote a multicultural, pluralistic democratic society.

References:

Banks, J. A. (1998). Multiculturalism's Five Dimensions . Retrieved on 10/08/2020 from <https://www.learner.org/workshops/socialstudies/pdf/session3/3.Multiculturalism.pdf>.

Youtube Link: <https://youtu.be/1bBb8Nk8Mvs>



MULTIGRADE TEACHING IN RURAL CONTEXT

OBJECTIVE: Objective of this study material is to provide an understanding of the concept of multigrade teaching and discuss the issues and challenges in making multigrade teaching more effective.

INTRODUCTION

Promoting primary education to the door steps of children has been one of the major objective of education policy in India. Many state Governments have taken steps to provide access to Education to all remote and deprived areas. Access of education is essential to increase rate of enrolment. Keeping this in mind, the Government has opened a large number of Primary Education facilities throughout the country. Rural Primary Schools provide access to sparsely populated, educationally backward areas. Multigrade schools have also been promoted in thinly populated areas.

Definition of Multigrade Schools

Multigrade schools can be defined as schools where groups of students of different grades are taught in a single classroom. In a multigrade classroom, pupils of two or more grades are taught by one teacher. This is because non availability of teachers due to remote location or due to the problem of absenteeism of teachers in rural areas.

Making Multigrade Teaching Effective:

Managing a multigrade classroom is difficult because there is more than one grade level in the classroom. Hence, the teacher must be skilled in managing instruction to reduce the amount of 'dead time' during which children are not productively engaged on task. The following points may taken into consideration to make multigrade teaching effective:

- **Changes in Instructional Strategies**

The instructional strategies in monograde classes are different than in multigrade class. The teacher is expected to make necessary changes in structional methods in multigrade classes to make them effective.

This may include approaches that increase the level of student independence and cooperative group work. It requires a change in the role of the teacher from

'giver of information' to 'facilitator'.

This is to ensure that time spent away from the teacher is spent productively. Three important strategies are peer instruction, in which students act as teachers for each other, cooperative group work, which involves small groups engaging in collaborative tasks, and individualized learning programmes which involve the student in self-study.

- **Planning for Curriculum**

National curricula are typically produced for the monograde classroom. Such curricula might not be effective for multigrade teaching. Separate curricula should be developed for multi grade teaching.

- **Instructional Materials**

Instructional materials are also prepared keeping in mind the monograde classroom. Consequently, they may not be effective in a multigrade class room. Separate instructional materials, keeping in mind, the specific situations in multigrade class should be developed for making them effective. More suitable materials may include a self-study element. This might be in the form of workbooks with a self-correction key, or a small classroom library that can be accessed independently by the children. Teachers need to be shown how to produce such self-study materials in a cost effective way.

- **School and Community**

Multigrade schools are often located in remote and difficult to reach areas. They may be far from the educational center and receive little pedagogical support. The communities in which they are located may not see the value of education, and may speak a different language to the 'official' one of the school. For these reasons, it is essential that the community be involved in the life of the school. Parents can be asked to come in to act as a resource person, the curriculum of the school might extend out into the community, or the community can be asked to support the school in other ways. Multigrade teachers should be trained in approaches that help to develop relations between the school and the community.

Role and Functions of the Multigrade Teacher

It is obvious that a combined class of students differs a lot from the conventional type of a student class of a single grade. That means that the way that the students of the multigrade class should be taught must be different as well. It is true that the function of the teacher in the multigrade classroom is multidimensional or to be more accurate it is much more complicated and demanding than the role of the teacher in the monograde school respectively.

For children to learn effectively in multigrade environments, teachers need to be well-trained, well-resourced and hold positive attitudes to multigrade teaching. Multigrade teaching in many views represents a more demanding teaching situation and special attention should be given to it. However, many teachers in multigrade environments are either untrained or trained in monograde pedagogy; have few, teaching and learning resources; and regard the multigrade classroom as a poor cousin of the better-resourced monograde urban schools that are staffed by trained teachers. In addition, at the majority of the cases, the multigrade teachers are very young without significant experience, "chosen" by the state to teach at the specific rural areas. These teachers are left alone without resources and support to handle the demanding multigrade classes. The former has serious negative impact on teachers' psychology and attitude towards the multigrade class, and affects in a negative way their teaching performance.

The effort should be focused by the educational authorities to reverse the teachers' negative view for multigrade teaching and the rural school and provide them with the resources and support to be able to overcome any difficulties. Teachers should attend special training programmes before introducing themselves at the multigrade classroom and try to adjust to their multidimensional role as multigrade teachers.

The role of multigrade teachers are as follows:

a. As a Teacher

The main function of the multigrade teacher is to teach students by imparting knowledge not just follow a curriculum. Teacher must be able to develop skills and inculcate desirable values and attitudes among pupils.

b. As a Facilitator

The teacher should be able to understand differences between pupils, be able to motivate them to learn and guide them through their learning materials. The teacher should be able to do this for all grade levels in the classroom, no matter what curriculum subject is being studied. The teacher should not only be a provider of knowledge but should also be a facilitator of learning both at group level or one to one basis.

c. As a Planner

Planning is a critical function for the Multigrade Teacher. Appropriate planning by the teacher will result in classes which are more productive for the learners and easier for them to follow. Planning in the multigrade school classroom is much more important than in a monograde one. The teaching hour must be spent

productively for student groups in grades of the class and thus accuracy on time spending is crucial.

d. As an Evaluator

Another role which the multigrade teacher must carry out is to monitor the progress of pupil's learning so as to ensure quality of education. Therefore, assessment should be considering a continuous and integral part of the teaching process.

Challenges of Multigrade Teaching

The challenges of Multigrade Teaching are highlighted below:

1. An average school teacher is ill equipped to handle a multigrade classroom situation.
2. The nature of the curriculum and textbooks, which are prepared almost entirely in a monograde context create further problems.
3. Teacher training programmes have not focused on practical issues and techniques for handling multigrade teaching studies.
4. There is no training package for multigrade teachers. The aspects could be;
 - ✓ Time management
 - ✓ Improving teaching skills
 - ✓ Preparation and organisation of the teaching learning materials.
 - ✓ Organisation of art and cultural activities.
5. Timetables are not flexible enough.

The Principal's Role in a Multigrade School

1. The principal plays a key-role in creating a supportive school culture.
2. The principal must ensure that all teachers feel supported.
3. The principal must provide teachers with opportunities to learn multigrade teaching methods, monitor the progress of implementation and give the teachers praise, feedback and suggestions.
4. The principal should be adept at facilitating positive, cooperative interactions among teaching team members.

Conclusion

“Multigrade classes, in which teachers work with more than one curriculum grade at the same time, are widespread in developing countries. They are also surprisingly common in industrialised countries. Yet the needs of learners and teachers in multigrade classes often remain invisible to those who plan, design and fund education centrally. In most countries, multigrade classes arise through necessity rather than choice. In many areas, parents do not have the opportunity to choose between sending their child to a school with multigrade or monograde classes. If they choose not to place their child in a multigrade class, the child will remain uneducated. Access to multigrade classes, and the quality of teaching and learning in them, are central strategies in the worldwide fulfilment of Education for All and the Millennium Development Goals for education.”- from <http://multigrade.ioe.ac.uk/>

Multigrade teaching becomes essential to ensure education for all. Multigrade teaching is the only approach to provide education to children in rural and inaccessible areas. Hence we must realise the special needs of the teachers of multigrading class and provide them necessary training, teaching materials and incentives to make multigrading education in rural context more effective and efficient.

References:

https://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/10603/169915/6/06_chapter%201.pdf This study material is largely based on the inputs from this document.

<http://multigrade.ioe.ac.uk/>

<http://www.teachersofindia.org/en/tags/multigrade-class>