

# Classroom Management in Medak, Telangana

Challenges and Solutions!

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## List of Acronyms:

ASER	Annual Status of Education Report
AW&B	Annual Work Plan and Budget
BRC	Block Resource Center/Coordinator
BEO	Block Education Officer
CCE	Continuous Comprehensive Evaluation
CGC SA	Columbia Global Centers   South Asia
CRC	Cluster Resource Center/Coordinator
CRP	Cluster Resource Person
DIET	District Institute of Education and Training
DISE	District Information Systems for Education
DPEP	District Primary Education Project
DRP	District Resource Person
GOI	Government of India
EVS	Environmental Science
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FY	Financial Year
HDI	Human Development Index
ICT	Information Communication Technology
MDEP	Model Districts Education Project
MHRD	Ministry of Human Resource Development
NCERT	National Council of Educational Research and Training
NCF	National Curriculum Framework
NCTE	National Council for Teacher Education
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
NPE	National Policy on Education
NUEPA	National University of Educational Planning and Administration
PPS	Probability Proportionate to Size
PTA	Parents Teachers Association
RP	Resource Person

RTE	Right to Education (Act)
SCERT	State Council of Educational Research and Training
SMC	School Management Committee
STD	Standard
SSA	Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan
TET	Teachers Eligibility Test
TLM	Teaching Learning Material
TPR	Teacher Pupil Ratio

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### Executive Summary

All teachers in Medak who undergo pre-service training through D.Ed, B.Ed or M.Ed degrees receive training on the topic of classroom management as a part of their curriculum. The process by which teachers and schools create and maintain appropriate behaviour of students in a classroom and are able to teach all students together in an effective manner is called classroom management. We want to find out how effectively the teachers are able to translate their training on classroom management into the real life classroom situation. We also aim to identify the problems teachers encounter in employing the classroom management techniques in the real life classroom situation and ways this can be addressed. For this we want to understand, what are the various activities that a teacher is engaged in school besides their various teaching responsibilities.

The study used classroom observations and key informant interviews with teachers in Medak, Telangana. The findings highlighted that classroom management is a very integral and important part of pre-service teacher training. Most teachers in Medak have a very good grasp of the concepts and theoretical underpinnings of classroom management. However, teachers are ill-equipped to handle the real classroom setting which is multi grade by default and hence they require additional training and support on how to tackle the challenges of the real classroom. In addition they face challenges of student absenteeism and irregular attendance.

Based on these findings and discussions, here are a few recommendations for to improve the quality of education through effective classroom management.

1. The teachers should continue using an activity based education which they are currently using and should also continue using TLMs extensively. In addition, they should also continue helping educate students in understanding the core concepts and basic and build on their existing knowledge and educate them by providing contextual education.

The teachers should also continue their practice of taking students around the village and places around for field trips.

2. Teachers should be provided training on how to manage classrooms in a multi grade scenario. Almost all teachers mentioned how challenging it is for them to handle the multi-grade classrooms.
3. A few teachers and resource persons in each mandal should be trained on classroom management and handling different classroom situations and they can provide support and training to the teachers in the school itself. It can create a regular monitoring and support framework.
4. In order to tackle the issue of student absenteeism, student enrolment drives should be conducted in the summer. A special meeting must be held for all the parents of students in the age group of 6-14 years in the village and the parents should be sensitized on sending their children regularly to school and the benefits of completing primary education should be elaborated on.
5. In the pre-service training the student teachers should be given some training on the different types of classroom situations that they might encounter when they start teaching in a school and ways to tackle it. It will provide some context and background for the teachers when they start working in the schools and are faced with a multi grade situation or with student absenteeism.
6. As teachers have to be involved in both administrative roles and teaching roles in low enrollment schools hence they should be provided with some additional training on time management in the classroom.
7. In order to tackle the language problem, Telugu speaking teachers should preferably be placed in Telugu medium schools, and teachers in schools which speak majorly Kannada or Urdu should preferably be bi-lingual so that they can guide the students better. When students speak the tribal dialects, if possible a teacher who is familiar with the language should be appointed or a local person's help should be enlisted so that the teacher can be familiarized with the language.

Providing in school support through a group of trained resource person can help teachers achieve quality education and improve learning outcomes in their schools.

### Introduction to Columbia Global Centers | South Asia

**The Columbia Global Centers | South Asia** is the fourth in a network of Columbia Global Centers the University has launched around the world. The Center, headquartered in Mumbai, India, provides a base for scholarly activities throughout South Asia and advances the University's academic partnerships and programs in the region. The Center's activities are organized around four pillars: Research, Education, Applied Scholarship, and Outreach. Activities of the Columbia Global Center | South Asia (CGC|SA) include a wide range of disciplines, from education to health to sustainable development, and represent partnerships with several schools and institutes at Columbia University, and in the region.

*Model District Education Project | Access to Achievement* is a collaborative, five-year demonstration project of the Earth Institute, Columbia University, the Government of India, and key education stakeholders in selected rural districts of India and housed at Columbia University Global Center| South Asia. Building on the experience to date of the Global Center's Model District project to improve maternal and child health outcomes in India, we use current scientific evidence and best professional practices to develop, implement and evaluate a high quality, cost-effective, transferable model of primary education. Selected districts in Medak, Telangana and Morigaon, Assam serve as regional pilots for scaling up improvements.

#### What are our main objectives?

The purpose of the proposed project is to improve the quality of primary education by developing and testing a multi-level, evidence-based model of primary education that is "locally owned and operated" yet readily adaptable for other locales. There are two specific aims, each with discrete, measureable outcomes:

1. to improve the quality of student learning
2. to lower dropout rates

We seek to demonstrate that a relatively modest, targeted program of innovations and resources geared toward *community building, teaching and learning, and educational programming, coordination, monitoring, and evaluation* will significantly improve the two outcomes of interest, will be cost-effective and will be readily scalable.

### Where are we currently working?

Model District Education Project | Access to Achievement will work in the **Morigaon district of Assam** and in **Medak district of Telangana** to develop a high quality, cost-effective, transferable model of primary education, using current scientific evidence and incorporating best practice recommendations for improving the quality of student learning and lowering dropout rates.

Model District Education Project | Access to Achievement is derived from a social ecological model of education that takes into account the essentially nested nature of and reciprocity among pupils and their families, the school and its function within national, state and local educational systems, and the community in which the pupil and school are embedded.

### Medak district, Telangana

Medak district ranks 20th among the state's 23 districts on educational attainment and is considered one of the "educationally backward" districts of Andhra Pradesh (Government of AP, 2007i). Currently Medak is one of the ten districts of the newly formed state of Telangana<sup>1</sup>. According to the 2011 Census report, the district is spread over an area of 9699 km<sup>2</sup> with a total population of 3,033,288. Females make 49.79% of this population and the sex ratio in the district is 952 per 1000 live male births (Census 2011). As per the census report, adult literacy stands at 61.52% with females constituting 51.37% of its share. The district is less than 100 kms from the capital city of Hyderabad with approximately 76% of the population living in rural areas (Census, 2011).

Medak experiences a semi-arid tropical climate with persistent drought, unpredictable weather, limited and erratic rainfall. The temperatures range from 46 degrees Celsius in

summers to 6 degrees in winters. The predominant sections of the population are traditional farmers and agricultural laborers cultivating *jowar*, paddy, groundnut, chillies, tomato, cotton and wheat. For educational administration, Medak is divided into four divisions – Jogipet, Siddipet, Medak, and Sangareddy. These divisions are further broken down to the level of *mandals*; there are 46 mandals in the district. Given that the district is fairly large in its geographic spread, different parts of the district are characterized by their own specific demographic profile, urbanization level and climatic conditions.

### Classroom Time Management – An Introduction

“The development of a child’s potential depends on the ability of the teacher to perceive the child’s possibilities, to stimulate the child to learn and, thereby to make the child’s latent potentiality a reality” (Dreikurs et. al., 1998). In order to help a child develop his or her full potential the teacher has to ensure that he or she uses the resources available to them to their maximum potential.

### Classroom management and its relevance

The process by which teachers and schools create and maintain appropriate behaviour of students in a classroom and are able to teach all students together in an effective manner is called classroom management. Classroom management strategies are implemented in order to increase student engagement and to improve pro-social behaviour (Emmer & Sabornie, 2015; Everston & Weinstein, 2006)

Classroom management is important because it establishes and maintains an orderly environment in the classroom that increases academic learning and facilitates social and emotional growth of the students. This leads to increase in the time spent by students learning in the classroom setting and reduces any kind of detrimental behaviour. When a teacher is equipped with classroom management skills then the teacher is able to manage the classroom teaching learning process effectively and is able to facilitate student engagement which in turn improves the learning outcomes.

Classroom time management is a skill that all primary teachers need to be equipped with as in government primary schools they have to teach all subjects to the students of varying age and learning levels. It is an important skill as implementing classroom time management can optimise the learning opportunities for the students and can also help the teacher to manage their own schedules.

### Background of classroom time management

All teachers in Medak who undergo pre-service training through D.Ed, B.Ed or M.Ed degrees receive training on the topic of classroom management as a part of their curriculum. We want to find out how effectively the teachers are able to translate their training on classroom management into the real life classroom situation. We also aim to identify the problems teachers encounter in employing the classroom management techniques in the real life classroom situation and ways this can be addressed. For this we want to understand, what are the various activities that a teacher is engaged in school along with their various teaching responsibilities.

The curriculum for teacher training by Osmania University in Hyderabad, Telangana list the following as the objective of teaching classroom management in the curriculum:

“This course will enable the student teacher to:

1. To apply the knowledge of Educational Psychology in understanding the Learner.
2. To enable the student teacher to understand the development process of the learner.
3. To equip the student teacher in understanding the concept of individual differences and areas of individual differences, such as Intelligence, Aptitude, Creativity, Memory and Forgetting.
4. To enable the student teacher understand the learning process of the learner.
5. To develop competencies and skills in classroom management of the student teacher.
6. To understand the nature of motivation as relevant to classroom management.

7. To understand the characteristics of children with special needs and help them to provide appropriate education.

A teacher is expected to manage his or her time effectively while conducting his or her duties in the school and in the classroom. The main areas of classroom management include the ability of the teacher to prepare in advance of the start of class regarding the areas they will work on. The teacher should also carry out an assessment of the learning needs of the students of their class and thus ensure that all children receive attention according to their needs as every child is different. Most important is to establish clear techniques to manage the entire class such as advance preparation of a lesson plan, a structured routine, punctuality, and scheduling activities depending on lengths of the tasks, variety of tasks, difficulty of tasks, timing of the tasks and how the tasks are being able to be done by various children in the same class. In classroom management the teacher is also required to pay heed to the classroom and group dynamics at play in a classroom. In order to manage the classroom effectively the teachers should be equipped with the requisite classroom management techniques and hence they should receive regular training on the same.

The present study aims

1. To understand how effectively teachers are able to understand the principles of classroom management and employ them in the real classroom setting.
2. We also aim to identify the problems teachers encounter in employing the classroom management techniques in the real life classroom situation and ways this can be addressed.

### **Study Design and Statistical Procedures**

#### **Study Design:**

We used a non-participant observational design to assess how much time is spent teaching by teachers in the classroom in Medak district. We also supplemented the observational data with key informant interviews consisting of teachers and education officials in the districts specifically from the DIET and SSA. The target population was teachers and

education officials. Owing to the clustered nature of data drawn from groups of people, the unit of randomization was the school.

The research study only collected observational data on how teachers spend the day in a classroom and what activities he or she is involved in the classroom/school. No data about children were collected.

#### **Statistical procedures:**

Descriptive statistics were obtained. All the qualitative data were coded based on a coding scheme developed from the stated objectives of training in classroom management in the district.

#### **Study Procedures:**

The researchers observed the number of hours teachers spend in the classroom teaching and the classroom management techniques that they employed in the classroom. This was followed by key informant interviews with teachers and head masters in both the districts to understand what kind of pre-service training they received and how adequate it is for them in the real life classroom scenario. In addition they were asked regarding their suggestions to make the in service training program better suited to help them in the real classroom setting. The education officials were interviewed to ask regarding their views on the importance of classroom management and how it is beneficial for the teachers.

The researchers from Columbia Global Centers | South Asia were involved in collecting the observational data and in conducting the interviews.

#### **Study Instruments:**

The study instruments included a classroom observation schedule and a key informant interview schedule. The classroom observation schedule included how much time the teacher dedicates to different activities in a typical school day. The interview schedule asked the study participants about the difficulties in establishing effective time management practices in the classroom and what can be done to improve classroom time management.

#### **Study Subjects:**

All the participants were adult, male and female; they were sampled from the study site – Medak, Telangana. All the participants are government employees (permanent or

contractual) working in various positions for the primary education sector of the country. There were two levels of sampling. The study employed non participative observational method and key informant interviews.

### Stage 1:

We gathered observational data on the time management within a classroom in any given school day. We gathered observational data by shadowing a teacher from the beginning to end of the school day and by making observations regarding the number of hours spent in school and specifically in the classroom doing various activities. The qualitative observations will were originally supposed to sample 49 schools in Medak but due to early closure of the schools and other challenges we were able to collect the observational data only from 28 schools.

Sampling was done through probability proportionate to size (PPS) technique.

The detailed sampling plan Medak, Telangana is provided in the table below (after the description of Stage 2).

### Stage 2:

In Medak, the key informant interviews were held with two teachers and two head teachers each in all four mandals who will be randomly selected through a draw of lots. In total there will be 14 key informant interviews in Medak district. In addition we have one key informant interview each with the officials of the district education office and Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, the current government education scheme, who are in charge of teacher training. The participants were selected at random through a draw of lots.

**Table 1: Original Sample Plan**

Block (all)	Clusters (PSU)	PPS	Clusters to sample (SRS)	Schools in cluster (SSU <sub>1</sub> )	PPS	Schools to sample (SRS)	Select 1 teacher each from 10% random sample of schools
Zone (all)	Mandals			<i>Schools in mandal</i>			
Jogipet	10	.22	2	501	.18	90	9.0
Medak	10	.22	2	482	.18	87	8.7 which can be rounded off to 9
Sangareddy	14	.30	4	532	.36	192	19.2 which can

							<i>be rounded off to 19</i>
Siddipet	12	.26	3	459	.27	124	<i>12.4 which can be rounded off to 12</i>
Total	<i>N= 46</i>		<i>N =11 mandals</i>	<i>N =1,974</i>		<i>N=493</i>	<i>N=49</i>

#### Ethics:

This study has the approval of the Columbia University, International Review Board and requisite permission was also taken from the district administration and we have written permission to conduct this research in the Medak district.

#### Informed Consent Process:

Written consent was obtained from all teachers participating in the observational study. The participants were informed in simple terms the broad objectives of the research and the specific objectives of seeking information from them. Wherever possible, the participants were informed about the study and its objectives before meeting them. On meeting, the objectives were explained once again and the participants were given sufficient time to read and sign the consent forms. The Informed Consent Form and the Participant's Rights Form were made available in English language. The participant sample of interest in this study is well versed in English language to read and comprehend the forms.

#### Instruments:

The research study employed the use of an observational report to record how the teacher spent their time in a regular school day during the school hours. We also employed an interview schedule that was prepared based on the research objectives. We piloted both the instruments before finalizing the instruments.

#### Findings and discussion:

The present findings are based on the qualitative interviews only as the quantitative data was found to be incomplete. The quantitative data will be added to the research report.

**Key informant interviews:**

Findings from the data collected through key informant interviews gives us a detailed insight into the classroom management challenges faced by the teachers in the primary school classrooms. The following is a brief summary of our qualitative data that we have organized around the key themes that emerged from this study.

**Pre-service training on classroom:**

All interviewed teachers mentioned that they had received pre-service teacher training on classroom management when they were attending classes for D.Ed, B.Ed and M.Ed. The concept of classroom management was first introduced through theoretical concepts and some teachers were encouraged to apply these classroom management techniques during their practical classes. However, not all teachers who were interviewed received a chance to practically apply the classroom management techniques they were taught. The pre-service training is reported to be thorough and included classroom management as a part of school management and school psychology and is reported to consist of a 30 day module for lower primary and 45 days for upper primary inclusive of practical training.

Most teachers had a very good grasp of what classroom management entails, however there were a few teachers who had a very vague idea about classroom management and did not have a clear picture. One teacher said, "...it is a part of school management. It begins with school and in school class, how to handle the class, preparing schedule for the class. We have to prepare the lesson plan as per the students' standard beforehand. While preparing we have to keep in mind each student's capacity and then prepare a schedule that improves them".

**Meaning and key areas of classroom management as understood by teachers:**

Different teachers reported different understanding of classroom management. However a majority of the teachers had a very good grasp on the basic idea of classroom management. The main areas that the teachers included while talking about classroom management included maintaining discipline in class, ensuring that all students in the class are able to learn, ensuring that the teacher understands the individual differences and how some

students are different than the others in terms of being a slow, average or fast learner, sustain the attention of the students and to use activity based teaching learning material that makes the classroom learning environment more attractive.

As one teacher says, "It deals about how school atmosphere should be and how we have to teach and all those..... How to use black board, repeating once again what was told, asking children to read along with us, making children read individually one after another, dividing them into different groups and conducting activities". Another teacher explained their understanding of classroom management as, "We have to seek the attention of the students, teach in a way they understand and make sure they respond. It has to be useful to them. Students have to be interested in what we are teaching. Rather than fear that we scold them or beat them, they have to listen to us with interest".

Interviewed teachers talk about teaching children with different learning levels as essential to classroom management. The teachers understand that every child is different and the teacher should adapt the teaching learning to the level of understanding of the students. As one teacher said, "Treating and looking after all the children in the class in the same way, providing them with proper education is important. That is what is primary. We have to teach everyone in same way without showing any partiality towards anyone. If there is a difference in learning ability, we have to encourage them, only then they will be active".

While talking about the meaning of classroom management, another teacher stressed on the importance of planning ahead, "As a part of classroom management, preparing lesson plan is the foremost thing and the teacher should have a complete understanding of the subject they are going to teach, without that, preparing lesson plans would not be helpful. The teacher has to use TLMs while teaching and managing time is another important thing. The classrooms should be attractive, for example, while teaching Telugu, only the TLMs related to Telugu should be there in the classroom, if there TLMs related to English or Maths, the students lose their focus. Another important thing is that the classrooms and the school premises should be clean and attractive".

Explaining their understanding of classroom management another teacher said, “Many think classroom management means maintaining the class in a disciplined way, but that is not the only aspect. Making a student feel curious and interested in learning is the main aspect of classroom management. Teacher can only be a guide and students themselves have to learn on their own. In my opinion, this is the main aspect of classroom management. Students should feel that only if we do something we can learn and when they learn with that feel, they will remember it for long time. If we can make sure they can divide among themselves and learn like peer group learning, it will be better”.

#### **Difference in classroom management pre-service training and post training in the classroom situation:**

Almost all teachers interviewed mentioned that the actual classroom situation they were faced with was very different to than when they were taught about classroom management techniques. In many cases, the teachers get training on classroom management geared towards mono grade classrooms and are required to teach in a multi grade classroom and hence they face challenges in implementing the classroom management training they have received.

As reported by one teacher, “There is a difference between what I have learnt during the training and the field reality here. So it is important that we change ourselves according to the situation we are in”.

Some teachers have reported that they had no idea the real classroom situation will be so different from the one they prepared for. One teacher reported, “No sir. We never knew these kinds of situations would be. Before I got job, I felt bad that I did not get but now after I got the job I am regretting for getting.” Another teacher commenting on the multi-grade environment and lack of early childhood education, and language issues said, “If we come to this school, its multi-graded, so a lot disturbance. Secondly there is no attached anganwadi to this school. This is a big problem, because handling kids of 2-3 years is very difficult. Moreover there is a language problem, only few students are able to follow”.

While discussing the difference between training and real classroom environment, a teacher said, “Actually I used to feel a little uncomfortable in the beginning. During my training session, the strength was low and we could divide the students into smaller groups and teach them. We were taught that group methods are important. For example, teaching maths to a group of 60 students in 45 minutes is not possible. It is difficult to divide all these students into groups and observe each student. But we are able to cover the syllabus since we have enough faculty here”.

Another teacher talking regarding the differences between said, “What we have learnt during our training is theoretical, but when we come to the field, we face a lot of problems. There is a lot of difference between both the situations. Here there are two teachers, and in the classroom students are of different standard, which is not seen during our training. Each student is at a different level and they have to be taught in different methods, this takes more time. Sometimes we have to take remedial classes as well. During our training there wasn't much focus on irregularity of the students. It differs from village to village. Here the students are not regular, that is a problem. Because of this, the students get disturbed and even the 'A' grade students have to be taught separately once again”

#### Challenges to classroom management:

The *presence of a multi grade environment is a challenge* for the teachers as during their pre-service training on classroom management they did not receive training on how to manage a class with multi grade environment. This comes up numerous times and the majority of the teachers have mentioned how difficult it has been for them to handle the multi-grade scenario. To quote a teacher, “The problem here is that there are 1-5 classes here and 2 faculty members. Since there are only two of us, we have to club the students of different grades. If one of us is absent, the students of all classes would be clubbed. If the faculty member is on leave for 10-15 days it would be very difficult to take care of all these students throughout the day. Students of lower grades should be taken care of all day. But with the students of higher grades, the teacher could get some break after teaching them a lesson. So every class should have separate classroom and separate teachers. It is very difficult to teach here right now. Teach the same thing again and again is tiring to the

students as well. And also when the work is assigned to all the students at a time, some can do it and others can't. This creates a kind of complex in students who cannot finish the work. Till now, in all the schools I have worked, it is the same situation. So, I think the solution for this problem is to have separate classrooms and teachers for different grades". Another teacher talked of similar issues and mentioned that, "It has been 2 years since any training were held. Last time there was (training) on CCE. Recently there was a training too. I teach all subjects, but training was only for mathematics. If there are 3-4 teachers it is not a problem, everyone takes care of one subject. But here all the subjects are being taught by one person, so how would training on one subject help with respect to other subjects?" Further explaining the issue of multi-grade classrooms, one teacher has said, "Here there are four teachers for five classes. One of these teachers was on deputation till February 13. So, there is some disturbance as every teacher has to teach multi grades. Each one has to teach 2-3 classes, sometimes classes should be clubbed. It is even more problematic when teachers are on leave. Since we don't have any other choice we are doing our best. Our students are doing well in terms of studies. According to Right to Education, student's teacher ratio should be 1:30, but why is that not happening in government schools? Instead of saying 1:30, if they assign one teacher per class, we would be able to do better and compete with private schools to get a better result. Almost all exams are done, only S3 is left. In the previous exams, F4 our school got A grade".

Another teacher talking on the challenges said, "Usually in a classroom there are students of different standards. There are average students, below average students and merit students, so lessons should be taught considering the standards of all the students. Each student has a different level of learning, so teachers should consider the pace of each student. This is problematic when one teacher has to handle multiple grades. There has to be at least one teacher per class. It is very difficult for one teacher to teach".

Teachers face challenges in classroom management as they are entrusted with the responsibility of Mid-Day meal and sometimes even have to visit door to door to increase the enrolments and bring back the students to school and this considerably hampers them in their ability to employ effective classroom management techniques.

As one teacher has said, “If you want us to perform well, we should be provided with good facilities, fresh books, if there are more number of students then teachers should also be there. It would be better if there are two teachers. I have been taking classes for 1st, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> standard...there is a dearth of teachers. Mid-day meals are also to be managed by us. For all of these we should have at least 2 teachers. At times, we should also visit the homes of the children to get the children to school”.

*Language seems to be another issue* in the schools of Medak to effective implementation of classroom management. In some parts of Medak, the teacher speaks Kannada and the students speak Telugu, in other parts the teachers speak Telugu but the students speak a version of the local dialect that the teacher has difficulty understanding and thus this creates further barriers to implementing effective classroom techniques. And this is not just an issue with the classroom scenario but even when the teacher goes for training they face language difficulties. As reported in an interview, “..yes if it is in Kannada I can understand...otherwise no. Who so ever comes, they talk in Telugu and we are unable to understand”. Regarding students speaking different language, this is what another teacher had to say, “There students are different sir. Here these are Kannada speaking students and cannot understand what is being taught fully”.

Another challenge faced by teachers is *student absenteeism*, the students leave for months to work in factories and as such there is a gap in their education and it is difficult for them to pick up from where they left and so they fall behind, for the teacher it is a challenge to bring the student at par with the rest of the class and to cover up for the lost months. As one teacher said, “Students attendance should be increased. Being a primary school and as children are young, parents take them when they go out of station and thereby often children are miss classes. Especially when parents go on seasonal migration for employment, it has been 3 months since those children came to school. By that time they come they won't remember anything”.

Teachers face challenges in single teacher school or two teacher schools teaching all the students when any of the teachers have to go on leave for some reason. One teacher

opined, "If I take leave I have to arrange someone (to take my place), but there are not much staff available. Even if I have to take leave it is being a big problem. If there is an emergency, this is becoming a big problem". Similarly another teacher said, "We usually conduct two classes in the same classroom. And also the faculty is very less in number. It is a little difficult for a single teacher to manage two classes in a single classroom at the same time".

#### **Classroom management techniques and strategies applied by teachers:**

Teachers reported that they adopted classroom management techniques from their peers. They speak with other teachers and try to understand from each other regarding how they tackle similar issues in their own schools.

Many teachers reported on that they use an activity based approach in order to effectively employ classroom management techniques. One teacher said, "Everything that is taught in the classroom should be activity based. 'Learning by doing' should be followed, so that whatever is taught can be retained for a longer period. Be it maths or rhymes, everything should be activity based. Even environmental science is about the surroundings. So the students are asked to observe the plants around them and the different species in their village. Thus, we teach environment science with the help of our physical surroundings. And also the work they are assigned with is on their observational skills. They are asked to observe things and talk to their parents to gather more information. Basically everything should be activity based."

In order to help students in a multi-language scenario, teachers have employed various methods. One teacher speaking on this topic said, "And sometimes there are small children who come. They cannot understand language, if there are any elders along with them; they translate and make kids understand" ...." "I teach in Telugu, then again I ask for what it is called in their language and then repeat the same thing in their language. When I tell in Telugu they repeat but they forget immediately. So for them to understand and remember it, I translate it into their language and teach".

Speaking on the classroom management techniques applied in class, teachers are using grouping strategies to manage the classrooms, “We divide the class of 60 students into two groups – 30 each. The strength used to be 70 and some of the hostel students left because of some issues. So now the class is divided into 30-30. But now since the strength has reduced, I take the first hour and during the second hour another teacher does an evaluation kind of thing to see how much the students understood the topic. Actually a period is for 90 minutes. During the first 45 minutes we teach a lesson and during the second half, evaluation is done”. Another teacher explained their grouping strategy in this manner, “We have divided that students based on their learning speed. We arrange extra classes for those students who are a little backward with the teachers who are good at certain subjects. If some students are weak in maths, a teacher who has done B.Sc or M.Sc in maths would teach them. We divided the students into four groups and each group would be taught by teachers who are really good at respective subjects.”

Another teacher spoke regarding keeping the curiosity in children alive and using it to impart education and importance of field trips, “We must have charts and TLM related to the chapter we are teaching. Therefore looking at that, children will be attracted and will think that teacher has brought something new. They might wonder with curiosity about what we teach. Nothing difficult, but it would be like giving a speech. They will remember better if we teach with those. Moreover if we can take them to local tours and practically show them with field visits, it will be better”. Another teacher said, “Students should feel free to express themselves in the classroom and teachers should act friendly with the students. Only then classroom management would be successful. Students should not be pressurised or stressed. They should have freedom to express their views and also give some suggestions if necessary, just as they do with their parents or friends. Students should not feel as if a lesson is being taught. It should be like a story

Many of the teachers interviewed mentioned that they concentrated on getting the basic concepts clear for all the teachers, One teacher talking about how they manage to teach all the students together in a multi- grade situation said, “I ensure they learn basics properly. If they can learn basics they can at least pick up and learn more next year. If we teach all

those, though they go to higher classes they still not able to read basics properly.” Speaking along the same lines, another teacher said, “Mainly, we should build up on the existing knowledge of the students. Lessons should be taught with a view of the primary needs of the children. For example, if we take maths, we talk about a situation of going to a store and buying something. In that situation, one has to calculate the price of the commodity. We use such examples while teaching. When it comes to language, we ask them to write about the festivals or fares that happen in this village, describing them. Students write these things by themselves. On assigning such works, we relate it to a lesson and teach them. For example, if we have to teach weights, we tell them about buying vegetables in the market or the weights written on oil packets at home or something like that. Then while teaching about distance, we ask them the length of a book and the students answer in everyday language. We convert that into centimetres or meters. That is how maths is taught.” Teaching students using local contexts was emphasized by other teachers too and one teacher provided an example, “The lessons taught here are according to our daily life. For example, while teaching weights we give them an instance where a child is asked to get a kilogram of potatoes from the market by his mother. That is how they relate things and try to understand that weight is measured in kilograms. If they are asked to get eggs, it would not be in kilograms, it is in dozens. Thus, we teach lessons according to what happens around us”.

#### **Importance of classroom management training:**

Classroom management training has been reported to be important by the interviewed teachers. The theoretical understanding of classroom management seems to be well taught during the pre-service training of D.Ed/B.Ed/M.Ed. However, the teachers do not get enough exposure to the real life classroom situations. While the classroom management training is reported to be very important during the pre-service training, teachers have reported in the interviews that they want additional classroom management training after they have joined service as they understand the classroom dynamics better after gaining experience in the classroom.

Speaking on the importance of classroom management, another teacher said, “In a proper way of teaching, we have to teach students, by knowing their weakness and difficulties, strengthening them. Teaching them in a way they understand and time-management. Especially, if this is a school where we have to teach multiple classes, time-management is very important. While teaching one class, we have to assign other 4 classes work. We have to assess the students regularly and give feedback. So we need classroom management training”. Another teacher mentioned, “If we have to achieve our teaching goals, if our teaching has to happen in a planned and disciplined way this is essential. What we think we should teach and what we taught these we can know only through classroom management”.

#### **Suggestions for better classroom management practices:**

Different teachers interviewed have provided a variety of suggestions and a few of them are listed here.

One teacher suggested, “There should be separate classrooms and also more faculty members. There should be one teacher per class. First grade has 2 subjects, third and fourth grades have 4 subjects. In this situation, one teacher cannot teach all the subjects. Some of the teachers might be better at teaching a particular subject. Now, at least if there is one teacher per class, they would be able to teach better. So I think if the teachers were given a choice to teach the subject they are good at, the students would be benefitted.” This was echoed by another teacher who said, “If government can provide material and assign proper teachers to school, it will function better. That’s all”.

A majority of the teachers interviewed were in favour of activity based learning and talked about the use of TLM to make the classroom environment more attractive for the students. As a teacher mentioned, “Subject related attractive pictures can be shown and related game like activities can be conducted”.

In order to tackle the issue of student absenteeism one teacher has suggested, “If schools are set up near the working places of elders, then elders can send children to school as long

as they work". Another teacher suggested making attendance mandatory and to tell parents to send their students to school regularly, "80% monthly attendance should be made compulsory for students. Nothing can be done if the student has no attendance. We have SMC meetings and parent meeting. We tell the performance and attendance of each student in parents meetings. We also tell them that their cooperation is equally important in order to improve the performance of their children." Other teachers interviewed have also spoken about how the parents should be sensitised regarding sending their children regularly to school and the benefits of attending their children to school regularly and letting them complete their primary education.

Speaking on the strategies to improve classroom management a teacher said, "First, the atmosphere should be good. All the schools might not be like that. But students should find it interesting to attend schools. The classroom should be attractive with charts or TLMs. While teaching if we show some charts or TLMs, students will find it interesting and give special attention to it. And according to me, apart from teaching the theoretical stuff, they should also be taught about general things. Instead of teaching the same thing every day, telling them stories would also help".

Suggestions on how to tackle the language issue was addressed by a teacher who said, "Language is the biggest problem here. For that solution is either we have to get a teacher who knows their language or gather all the Telugu speaking students together and teach them separately." Commenting on the language problem, another teacher said, "And the children of 'tandas' face language problem, these schools should also have separate syllabus, and there books should be in their own syllabus; or else ST teachers should be allotted for these students".

Another suggestion for student engagement is promoting education through play according to one teacher, "Organising different co-curricular activities which are related to the lesson, different games could also be conducted"

**Themes emerging out of interviews with education officials:**

Next we move to the findings from the interviews with the education officials in the Medak district. The findings are thematically organised.

### Classroom management training and its importance

Everyone interviewed were in agreement that classroom management is extremely important. As one interviewee elaborated, "Basically it is about managing a class for 45 minutes. There are two important things in it; first, a teacher should have proper understanding of the subject they are going to teach. And the teacher has to be clear on what is to be taught. As it is compulsory to know the attitude and the level of the students, classroom management is very important. In DIET, we train them on how to plan every minute of the 45 minute period, right from entering class. First of all, the teacher has to wish the children; the students wouldn't know how to wish as they are only in first standard. So, in order to teach them, the teacher has to wish them first. After greeting, as the children would be thinking about the previous class, to bring them back, the teachers has to ask some motivational questions and get answers from the students. Then topic has to be declared and also the benefits of learning that particular topic. This will help in gaining their focus. And the class should not be monotonous, it should be interactive. We usually think that the students don't know anything but they have some knowledge before they come to us. If the teacher is able to extract their knowledge while using their own experience to teach the children, it would enrich the students' knowledge. So it is important to keep in mind all the students instead of focusing on one or two students while managing a class. A teacher should have a positive opinion about the students; they should think that all the students are intelligent. They should not take all the credit for the students' performance.

We also tell the teachers to go for activity based teaching. The students have to be active. Also we have to keep asking questions on what is taught. This is called evaluation. There are two kinds of evaluations in CCE, AE and SE. When we teach something to the students, we give them a paragraph and ask a few questions on that in order to see if the students understood that. Some of the students can't follow what is being taught. So, we do a case study on those children and try to understand their problems. Then, we try to teach in such

a way that they can understand the lessons, and that would help the students. If all the students get a proper understanding of the subject, that shows that the teachers succeeded.

We also tell the trainees not to give corporal punishment to the students during classroom transactions. Those 45 minutes should be lively, just like when we play outdoors. Students should enjoy the class. They should feel sad when the class gets over. We get some primary school children as a part of the training and the trainees have to teach these students”.

Another interviewee mentioned that classroom management training helps teachers gauge the individual differences between students and can adapt their teaching style to suit the learning level of the students. Hence it is an important part of the training for teachers.

#### **Challenges to classroom management:**

A multi-grade environment was considered to be a challenge for implementing effective classroom management technique which results in the increased work load that leaves little time to prepare lesson plans in advance or to make TLMs. As one person describing the situation said, “Actually, after receiving the training from, they have to plan the 45 minute period like we teach them. This has to be implemented. If it is not being implemented, the reasons might be the irregularity of the students- absenteeism. If one of the students is absent and comes to the schools after two days, they won’t be able to find the link as they don’t know what was taught the previous day. This creates some gaps. As the student is not able to understand what is going on, they try to be mischievous.....Concept formation is important; for example, there is solar system, teacher should be able to explain this to the students in an understandable way. For that, proper material has to be prepared. A working model has to be made. This is just an example; it could be anything but concept formation should be done properly. This concept formation is challenging to the teachers because they have to be in the school from morning to evening. There are five classes and 3 teachers. It is extremely difficult for 3 teachers to look after 5 classes. This is happening at primary level where foundation has to be laid. There 5 classes and 35 periods; how can 3 teachers teach for 35 periods per day? During the training we tell them to prepare lesson plans and all that. How can they manage these 35 periods and make TLMs and lesson plans for all these

periods? This is very problematic for them. So, if there is one teacher per class, they can be accountable”.

This issue has been reiterated by other interviewees who have said, “First of all, there are only 2-3 teachers in the primary section and they have to deal with 5 classes which is very problematic. If there is only one teacher, they have to take care of the office work as well, submitting reports and attending meetings, all that creates disturbance. It is impossible for 1 or 2 teachers to control 5 classes. It is the same work whether there are 10 students or fifty students. As it is very difficult to manage, it would be better if there is classroom-teacher ratio instead of student-teacher ratio”.

Student absenteeism has also been highlighted as another major challenge towards implementing effective classroom management training by all those interviewed.

#### **Classroom management techniques and strategies to overcome challenges in the real classroom setting:**

According to interviewees, one of the core techniques for classroom management to overcome the challenges of multi-grade classrooms is advance planning on the part of teachers. He said, “Planning is most important. The situation is different when there are 2-3 teachers and 5 teachers. Everything has to be pre-planned when there is less number of teachers. I have visited some good schools where there are just 2-3 teachers”.

Another suggestion provided was to have regular monitoring of the teachers teaching technique by a trained professional and that way the trained professional can provide on the field support to the teachers. This way the teachers also get regular feedback and support and can improve the quality of teaching and learning.

In order to tackle the issue of student absenteeism it is suggested that there should be enrolment drives during the summer and that the parents should be educated on the importance and necessity of sending their wards to school regularly.

**Recommendations:**

Based on these findings and discussions, here are a few recommendations for to improve the quality of education through effective classroom management.

1. The teachers should continue using an activity based education which they are currently using and should also continue using TLMs extensively. In addition, they should also continue helping educate students in understanding the core concepts and basic and build on their existing knowledge and educate them by providing contextual education. The teachers should also continue their practice of taking students around the village and places around for field trips.
2. Teachers should be provided training on how to manage classrooms in a multi grade scenario. Almost all teachers mentioned how challenging it is for them to handle the multi-grade classrooms.
3. A few teachers and resource persons in each mandal should be trained on classroom management and handling different classroom situations and they can provide support and training to the teachers in the school itself. It can create a regular monitoring and support framework.
4. In order to tackle the issue of student absenteeism, student enrolment drives should be conducted in the summer. A special meeting must be held for all the parents of students in the age group of 6-14 years in the village and the parents should be sensitized on sending their children regularly to school and the benefits of completing primary education should be elaborated on.
5. In the pre-service training the student teachers should be given some training on the different types of classroom situations that they might encounter when they start teaching in a school and ways to tackle it. It will provide some context and background for the teachers when they start working in the schools and are faced with a multi grade situation or with student absenteeism.
6. As teachers have to be involved in both administrative roles and teaching roles in low enrollment schools hence they should be provided with some additional training on time management in the classroom.

7. In order to tackle the language problem, Telugu speaking teachers should preferably be placed in Telugu medium schools, and teachers in schools which speak majorly Kannada or Urdu should preferably be bi-lingual so that they can guide the students better. When students speak the tribal dialects, if possible a teacher who is familiar with the language should be appointed or a local person's help should be enlisted so that the teacher can be familiarized with the language.

### Conclusion:

In conclusion, classroom management is a very integral and important part of pre-service teacher training. Most teachers in Medak have a very good grasp of the concepts and theoretical underpinnings of classroom management. However, teachers are ill-equipped to handle the real classroom setting which is multi grade by default and hence they require additional training and support on how to tackle the challenges of the real classroom. Providing in school support through a group of trained resource person can help teachers achieve quality education and improve learning outcomes in their schools.

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