

Classroom Management in Morigaon, Assam

Challenges and Solutions!

SEEMA NATH

Model Districts Education Project

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List of Acronyms:

ASER	Annual Status of Education Report
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
DIET	District Institute of Education and Training
DISE	District Information Systems for Education
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
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MHRD	Ministry of Human Resource Development
NCERT	National Council of Educational Research and Training
NCF	National Curriculum Framework
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
SD	Standard Deviation
SMC	School Management Committee

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 Morigaon who undergo pre-service training through D.Ed, B.Ed or M.Ed degrees nowadays 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 wanted to find out how effectively the teachers are able to translate their training on classroom management into the real life classroom situation. We also aimed 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, how a teacher spent their day in school.

The study used classroom observations and key informant interviews with teachers in Morigaon, Assa. The findings highlighted that classroom management should be a very integral and important part of pre-service teacher training. Most teachers in Morigaon were not familiar with the concepts of classroom management. These teachers were found 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. Even in mono-grade classrooms teachers were unable to manage the classes effectively. In addition they face challenges of student absenteeism and irregular attendance, unhygienic conditions, teacher scarcity, Mid-Day meal arrangements, and a host of other challenges.

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

1. All the teachers should be provided with training on classroom management it can be based on the “**Academic Calendar**” developed by SCERT. This document is very comprehensive and will prove to be very useful for all the teachers. At the beginning of

the school year the cluster resource person should be asked to hold a one day refresher course on how to structure the classrooms and then the headmaster should have monthly discussions with the teachers to discuss how to structure classes according to the “Academic Calendar”.

2. As observed in the findings, one teacher was entrusted with teaching all classes as the other teacher has to be engaged in all the administrative work, so there should be a provision to streamline all the administrative activities of the school in such a way that the teachers can also engage in teaching.
3. 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.
4. The teachers should be encouraged to use an activity based teaching so that they can engage all the students and are able to manage all the students. They should also be encouraged to use TLMs.
5. 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.
6. A few teachers and resource persons in each block 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 on a rotational basis. It can create a regular monitoring and support framework.
7. The teachers from nearby schools should meet after school once a month to discuss the issues they face in class and this way they can learn from the experience of their peers.
8. In order to tackle the issue of student absenteeism, 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.
9. 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.

10. Boundary walls should be provided to all schools at the earliest to improve safety in schools, this way the teacher can concentrate on teaching without having to worry about the students wandering into the streets and injuring themselves.
11. Another area that the teachers need help is in maintaining hygiene within the school premises. The teachers should be provided with a redressal system so that they can bring up serious issues to the attention of the concerned authorities and a quick solution can be initiated. Though we may not think it is directly linked to classroom management, due to poor hygiene conditions, classes are disrupted and therefore it should be addressed.
12. An effective monitoring and evaluation system should be in place so that the teachers can be provided with help and support in dealing with the classroom issues at the earliest.

Providing in school support through a group of trained resource person can help teachers achieve quality education and improve learning outcomes in their schools. Classroom management is an important skill that all the teachers should be equipped with.

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, measurable 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.

Morigaon district, Assam

Assam is one of the seven states in north east India. It comprises of 23 districts. Assam has emerged as a top education destination for students from different north eastern states. The education system in Assam is categorized into school, college and university education. The government of Assam has implemented free and compulsory elementary education to all children in the age group of 6-14 years.

Morigaon district is the second smallest district of Assam (District Education Report, 2013) and is spread over an area of 1551 sq. km (Census, 2011). According the Census (2011), Morigaon has a population of 957,853 of which approximately 49% is female. The sex ratio stands at 967 females per 1000 males (Census, 2011). The average adult literacy rate is 69.37% and 64.99% is the literacy rate of women in the district (Census, 2011). Although less

than 100 kms from the capital city of Dispur, Morigaon is predominantly rural with over 92% of the population living in areas designated as rural (Census, 2011).

Morigaon district experiences sub-tropical weather which is hot and humid in the summer and cold and dry in the winter. It faces heavy rainfall with the average annual rainfall recording between 1500mm and 2600mm (Morigaon portal, 2013). During the monsoon season, most of the district areas get flooded (Morigaon District Government, 2013) and this is a major deterrent to development and livelihood activities in the region. Agriculture is the primary source of livelihood for the people of Morigaon (District Education Report, 2013). For Department of education's administration purposes, Morigaon is divided into four blocks – Laharighat, Kapili, Mayong and Bhurbanda. Even though, these districts are within close proximity of each other, but they are distinct in its demographic and geographical profile. As a result, these factors have an influence on the educational profile of each block. Morigaon ranked among the top five districts within the Assam on HDI indices (Govt. of Assam, 2003). This also indicates the relative performance of the entire states on HDI indicators. According the recent Economic Survey of India, Assam is among the low HDI states of the country with their values estimated at 0.444 and 0.473 respectively (Ministry of Finance, 2011).

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 Morigaon, Assam who undergo pre-service training through D.Ed, B.Ed or M.Ed degrees are taught 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 the Gauhati University list the following as the objectives of including school and classroom management in the curriculum:

“To enable the student teacher to

1. Understand the concept and importance of school organization and management
2. Explain the role of headmaster and teachers in improving school environment
3. Understand the classroom management process and ways of preventing problems in managing a classroom.
4. Understand the concept and procedure of planning of an institution”

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.

In Assam, the SCERT has come up with a handbook on classroom management for all teachers. This handbook lays out in detail how a day in class should be organized, right from

conducting morning assembly, to the break-up of the school hours from k-shreni, lower primary and upper primary.

It is a very well written detailed document that also lays down tips for teachers to enforce good sanitation, healthy food habits, cleanliness and the importance of drinking safe water. It also provides a guideline for moral and value education among the child which is non-denominational. It lays down the role of students in school management, how student parliament can help in the smooth management of the school. The document also lays down the curriculum for ka-shreni, lower and upper primary students. It describes the content of the health and physical education curriculum that should be included in classroom teaching. It clearly lays down the roles and responsibilities of the teachers related to health and hygiene. It also provides a list of individuals who should be consulted for help and support with various things while transacting in class. A brief about art education and work education is also provided in the academic calendar. Along with this a brief about environmental and peace education is provided. It includes an Annual Activity calendar for non-instructional activities such as observation of national holidays, field trip, social work, work education etc. A complete calendar describing the unit wise distribution of lessons and unit evaluation is also provided. The "Academic Calendar" also lays out the details of the Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation (CCE) and what should be assessed by CCE and how it is implemented. It also includes the evaluation schedule that should be followed and how to use grades for evaluation. In the closing it ends a list of holidays and model daily routine to be followed for the students of primary school.

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 Morigaon 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 – Morigaon, Assam. 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 34 schools in Morigaon but due to some unforeseen circumstance we were able to collect the observational data from 33 schools.

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

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

Stage 2:

In Morigaon, the key informant interviews were held with two teachers and two head teachers each in all four blocks who were randomly selected through a draw of lots. In total there will be 8 key informant interviews in Morigaon district. In addition we have one key informant interview each with the officials of the district education office and Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan. The participants were selected at random through a draw of lots.

Table 1: Sample Plan

Block (all)	Clusters (PSU)	PPS	Clusters to sample (SRS)	Schools in cluster (SSU ₁)	PPS	Schools to sample (SRS)	Select 1 teacher each from 10% random sample of schools
Zone (all)	Mandals			<i>Schools in mandal</i>			
Bhurbandra	17	.27	5	212	.25	53	5.3 which can be rounded to 5
Kapila	4	.06	1	50	.05	3	0.3 which is < 1 but we can select 1
Laharighat	22	.35	8	456	.40	182	18.2 which can be rounded off to 18
Mayong	20	.32	6	329	.30	99	9.9 which can be rounded off to 9
Total	N=63		N = 20 clusters	N=1,047		N = 337	N=34

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 Morigaon 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:

Classroom Observations:

Non participant observations were carried out by the researchers in the school classrooms. The researcher shadowed a teacher from the start of the day till the end of the school day and took notes on how the teacher spent his/her day and how they managed the different classes and if they were engaged in any administrative activities or interacted with parents/guardians during the school hours.

Some of the main findings from these observations were:

- ✓ Teachers in all schools conducted the morning assembly
- ✓ The teacher's arrival times in school ranged between 8:05 am at the earliest in a few schools and latest by 9:35 am at one school. The school where the teacher reached at 9:35 am was in a remote location in Laharighat with poor road connectivity.
- ✓ 91 % of the teachers observed arrived in school on time and all of them participated in conducting the morning assembly. (The researcher usually waited for the first teacher to arrive to start the observation)
- ✓ The teachers in all school took the daily attendance of the students the first thing in the morning
- ✓ 97% of the teachers were involved in classroom activities through the school day

- ✓ None of the observed teachers had to engage in any administrative activities during the school hours on the day of the observation. This was because in many schools another teacher completed the administrative functions, the researcher observed only the teacher that was present in school conducting the classes.
- ✓ Only 13 % of the teachers were actively involved in organizing the Mid-Day Meal. Some other teacher or the school cook took care of distributing the meal and the teacher under observation monitored without being an active participant in administering the meal. The students usually were adept at serving themselves and everyone washed their own plates after the meals.
- ✓ 16% of the teachers shopped for the Mid-Day meal on their way to school in the morning
- ✓ No teacher visited the bank during school hours in any of the observed schools. However the other teacher working in the same school has gone to the bank entrusting the responsibility of conducting their classes on the observed teachers as they completed their administrative duty.
- ✓ 19% of the teachers observed had to meet with parents/guardians during the school hours. In one particular school the parents/guardians had come to check why the teacher was arriving late in school and to discuss the late arrival (The teacher was 35 minutes late).
- ✓ Only two of the observed teachers had to attend meetings during the school hours. One meeting was an SMC meeting that lasted around ten minutes, in the other school the teachers had to close the school early to go for a CRC meeting which was called at the cluster and all teachers in the cluster were attending the same.
- ✓ Most teachers had to teach all subjects to all the students in the school or had grouped multiple classes together to teach them as the schools did not have one teacher per class. Most schools were observed to be multi-grade by default.
- ✓ Here are some of the researcher observations from the schools-
 - The teacher after conducting the morning assembly took attendance in all the classes, asked the students to read a particular subject and moves on to

the other class for taking attendance. The other teacher arrived late. The teacher under observation taught in Class IV & V and the other teacher took over in Class I, II & III after she arrives; (2) Students keep coming till 9:45 as some of them had to cross the river to reach school and it took time.

- One teacher teaches all the subjects in Class I, II & III and the other teaches in IV & V
- One of the two teachers went to attend a 5-day block level training so the other teacher was teaching all the five grades
- Though there are three teachers, one went for a training program, another went for Mid-Day Meal and bank work and the third teacher is managing all the classes for the day.
- In one of the schools, there were 4 teachers. One teacher taught the students of Class I, II & K-shreni in a single classroom with a single blackboard. It was observed that when the teacher was teaching something all the students in the class responded together. The teacher mentioned that it is becoming increasingly difficult for him to manage the class even though he tries a lot. The other three teachers taught Class 3, 4 and 5 each and to each of the grades they taught all the subjects.
- In one of the schools, it was observed that the best students were asked to govern the class when the teacher was engaged in teaching in another class
- Of the two teachers in one school, the Head Master was on leave and the other teacher was managing all the classes for the day. The teacher actively engaged the students in group activity, made the students sit outside the class in groups; asked the class monitor to oversee the class while the teacher taught in another class.
- In one of the observed schools the teacher spoke to the shopkeeper and the cook brought the commodities required for the Mid-Day Meal. The SMC members actively helped in the classroom transaction. The Head Master and the SMC members reported that the Assistant teacher is irregular and

whenever she comes to the school is not engaged in teaching actively. The Assistant Teacher was away on the day of the observation to attend a training program at the block level and therefore the Head Master was managing all the classes for the day. He assigned some work in every class and keeps rotating in between the classes to observe the progress.

- One school had a Child With Special Needs (CWSN) and one member of his family always stayed at the school during the school hours. The school work was mostly managed by one teacher as the Head Master was unwell due to a nerve issue that reduced his ability to walk properly and hence he was unable to actively help the other teacher.
- One of the observed teachers taught in class III and IV and the teacher managed by asking the Class III students to read their textbooks while the teacher taught the Class IV students and then moved to teach the Class III students when they had read their lesson.
- In one of the observed school, all the teachers other than the one followed arrived late and so the teacher concerned after completing the morning assembly, took attendance in all the classes, asked all the classes to take up a subject and read/write and while he taught in Class I and II. Class I went home after the lunch break at 12 pm and after that Class II and III were made to sit together and engaged in drawing/learning multiplication tables etc. The teacher engaged the students through play/yoga/singing/dancing amidst classroom transaction to keep the students refreshed and so that they do not lose interest in between the classes. The teacher taught one subject in a particular class before lunch time as the students were engaged and interested in the topic and he could complete the lesson in one go without having to carry forward the same lesson the next day (He could build on this and move to the next lesson).

- In another school it was observed that Class I students were allowed to go home after lunch time. The teachers looked after K-shreni in between teaching the other classes.
- In a school with high enrolment it was observed that there were 7 teachers of which five teachers taught in the classes, one teacher looked after the administrative duties and the other teacher looked after the slow learners. The remedial class consisted of students from all the classes and all of them sat together, in groups with different subjects in the remedial class. The teacher being shadowed took a remedial class from 11:00 to 11:15 (there were 7 students from all different classes and with different subjects they needed help at)
- In another school where the observations were carried out one of the teacher is a CRC and therefore mostly the other three teachers were actively engaged in teaching while the CRC was responsible for other administrative duties throughout the cluster.

Given below is a summary of the findings observed in each of the five Grades- Class I, II, III, IV and V. The number of teachers per school ranged from 2 teachers to 7 teachers. Multi-grade classrooms were observed in 13 of the 33 schools observed where all students were sitting together in groups. 62% of the teachers were observed using TLM in the classroom. The teacher tried to pay attention to all the students and walked around the class while they taught. The teacher grouped the students together in groups for ease of teaching. 5 of the 13 multi-grade schools asked students to complete home assignments, while some of them were assigned homework on one subject; others received home assignments on multi subjects (mostly the home assignment involved reading the lesson to prepare for the next day's class or to revise what was taught during the day).

The observations in the multi-grade classrooms are presented first and then the findings from the non-multi-grade schools are presented after that.

Class I (Multi-Grade)

- ✚ The student attendance ranged between 6 to 25
- ✚ 85 % of the teachers knew the names of all the students
- ✚ In 54% of the schools observed there was no Class I students in attendance (7 of the 13 multi-grade situation schools observed)
- ✚ In 63% of the schools children had a drawing class

Mathematics

- ✚ 100 % of the teachers observed taught mathematics and the mathematics class ranged between 55 minutes to 90 minutes
- ✚ Only one teacher reviewed what was taught in the previous day at the beginning of the class
- ✚ All the teachers gave the students work to complete in the class

English

- ✚ 100% of the teachers taught English during the day in the class and the total time taught ranged between 20 minutes to 90 minutes
- ✚ None of the teachers revised what was taught in the previous class at the beginning of the English lesson
- ✚ All the teachers who were teaching English on that day gave the students work to complete in the class

Assamese

- ✚ 100% of the teachers taught Assamese during the school day and the total time ranged between 30 minutes to 60 minutes
- ✚ None of the teachers revised what was taught in the previous class at the beginning of the English lesson
- ✚ All the teachers who were teaching Assamese on that day gave the students work to complete in the class

Class II (Multi-Grade)

- ✚ The student attendance ranged between 6 to 27
- ✚ 43 % of the teachers knew the names of all the students
- ✚ In 39 % of the schools observed there was no Class II students in attendance (5 of the 13 multi-grade situation schools observed)
- ✚ Only one teacher was observed using TLM for mathematics
- ✚ Drawing was taught in 86% of the schools

Mathematics

- ✚ 100 % of the teachers observed taught mathematics and the mathematics class ranged between 18 minutes to 84 minutes
- ✚ None of the teachers reviewed what was taught in the previous day at the beginning of the class
- ✚ All the teachers gave the students work to complete in the class

English

- ✚ 100% of the teachers taught English during the day in the class and the total time taught ranged between 30 minutes to 90 minutes
- ✚ One of the teachers revised what was taught in the previous class at the beginning of the English lesson
- ✚ All the teachers who were teaching English on that day gave the students work to complete in the class

Assamese

- ✚ 100% of the teachers taught Assamese during the school day and the total time ranged between 30 minutes to 60 minutes
- ✚ None of the teachers revised what was taught in the previous class at the beginning of the Assamese lesson

- ✚ All the teachers who were teaching Assamese on that day gave the students work to complete in the class

Class III (Multi-Grade)

- ✚ The student attendance ranged between 3 to 17
- ✚ The teachers knew the names of all the students
- ✚ In 47 % of the schools observed there was no Class III students in attendance (6 of the 13 multi-grade situation schools observed)
- ✚ Drawing was taught in 72 % of the schools
- ✚ Only one teacher was observed using TLM and he used it to teach Mathematics and Assamese

Mathematics

- ✚ 100 % of the teachers observed taught mathematics and the mathematics class ranged between 23 minutes to 60 minutes
- ✚ One of the teachers reviewed what was taught in the previous day at the beginning of the class
- ✚ In 72% of the school's students were given work to complete in the class

English

- ✚ 72% of the teachers observed taught English during the day in the class and the total time taught ranged between 28 minutes to 75 minutes
- ✚ None of the teachers revised what was taught in the previous class at the beginning of the English lesson
- ✚ All the teachers who were teaching English on that day gave the students work to complete in the class

Assamese

- ✚ 86% of the teachers taught Assamese during the school day and the total time ranged between 30 minutes to 80 minutes
- ✚ None of the teachers revised what was taught in the previous class at the beginning of the Assamese lesson
- ✚ All the teachers who were teaching Assamese on that day gave the students work to complete in the class

Environmental Science

- ✚ 58% of the teachers taught Environmental Science during the school day and the total time ranged between 35 minutes to 45 minutes
- ✚ One of the teachers revised what was taught in the previous class at the beginning of the Environmental Science lesson
- ✚ 58% of the teachers who were teaching Environmental Science on that day gave the students work to complete in the class

Class IV (Multi-Grade)

- ✚ The student attendance ranged between 4 to 25
- ✚ The teachers knew the names of all the students in about 78% of the classes
- ✚ In 30 % of the schools observed there was no Class IV students in attendance (4 of the 13 multi-grade situation schools observed)
- ✚ Drawing was taught in 56 % of the schools
- ✚ Two teachers were observed using TLM and one used it to teach Mathematics and the other teacher used it to teach Environmental Science

Mathematics

- ✚ 78 % of the teachers observed taught mathematics and the mathematics class ranged between 21 minutes to 69 minutes
- ✚ 34% of the teachers reviewed what was taught in the previous day at the beginning of the class
- ✚ In all the schools students were given work to complete in the class

English

- ✚ 67% of the teachers observed taught English during the day in the class and the total time taught ranged between 32 minutes to 80 minutes
- ✚ None of the teachers revised what was taught in the previous class at the beginning of the English lesson
- ✚ All the teachers who were teaching English on that day gave the students work to complete in the class

Assamese

- ✚ 56% of the teachers taught Assamese during the school day and the total time ranged between 35 minutes to 45 minutes
- ✚ None of the teachers revised what was taught in the previous class at the beginning of the Assamese lesson
- ✚ All the teachers who were teaching Assamese on that day gave the students work to complete in the class

Environmental Science

- ✚ 67% of the teachers taught Environmental Science during the school day and the total time ranged between 30 minutes to 50 minutes
- ✚ One of the teachers revised what was taught in the previous class at the beginning of the Environmental Science lesson
- ✚ All the teachers who were teaching Environmental Science on that day gave the students work to complete in the class

Class V (Multi-Grade)

- ✚ The student attendance ranged between 1 to 24
- ✚ The teachers knew the names of all the students
- ✚ In 47 % of the schools observed there was no Class V students in attendance (6 of the 13 multi-grade situation schools observed)

- ✚ Drawing was taught in 43% of the schools
- ✚ One teacher was observed using TLM and to teach the students general knowledge

Mathematics

- ✚ 58% of the teachers observed taught mathematics and the mathematics class ranged between 40 minutes to 50 minutes
- ✚ None of the teachers reviewed what was taught in the previous day at the beginning of the class
- ✚ In all the schools students were given work to complete in the class

English

- ✚ 72% of the teachers observed taught English during the day in the class and the total time taught ranged between 32 minutes to 53 minutes
- ✚ One of the teachers revised what was taught in the previous class at the beginning of the English lesson
- ✚ All the teachers who were teaching English on that day gave the students work to complete in the class

Assamese

- ✚ 43% of the teachers taught Assamese during the school day and the total time ranged between 22 minutes to 25 minutes
- ✚ None of the teachers revised what was taught in the previous class at the beginning of the Assamese lesson
- ✚ All the teachers who were teaching Assamese on that day gave the students work to complete in the class

Environmental Science

- ✚ 58% of the teachers taught Environmental Science during the school day and the total time ranged between 30 minutes to 46 minutes

- ✚ One of the teachers revised what was taught in the previous class at the beginning of the Environmental Science lesson
- ✚ All the teachers who were teaching Environmental Science on that day gave the students work to complete in the class

The observations in the mono grade classrooms are presented below:

Class I (Mono-Grade set up)

- ✚ The student attendance ranged between 1 to 19
- ✚ The teachers knew the names of all the students
- ✚ In 60% of the schools observed there was no Class I students in attendance (12 of the 20 mono grade situation schools observed)
- ✚ In 88% of the schools children had a drawing class

Mathematics

- ✚ 88% of the teachers observed taught mathematics and the mathematics class ranged between 40 minutes to 70 minutes
- ✚ None of the teacher reviewed what was taught in the previous day at the beginning of the class
- ✚ All the teachers gave the students work to complete in the class

English

- ✚ 63% of the teachers taught English during the day in the class and the total time taught ranged between 27 minutes to 46 minutes
- ✚ Only one of the teachers revised what was taught in the previous class at the beginning of the English lesson
- ✚ All the teachers who were teaching English on that day gave the students work to complete in the class

Assamese

- ✚ 75% of the teachers taught Assamese during the school day and the total time ranged between 30 minutes to 80 minutes
- ✚ None of the teachers revised what was taught in the previous class at the beginning of the Assamese lesson
- ✚ All the teachers who were teaching Assamese on that day gave the students work to complete in the class

Class II (Mono-Grade set up)

- ✚ The student attendance ranged between 5 to 19
- ✚ The teachers knew the names of all the students
- ✚ In 60% of the schools observed there was no Class I students in attendance (12 of the 20 mono grade situation schools observed)
- ✚ In 88% of the schools children had a drawing class
- ✚ One teacher was observed using TLM to teach Assamese

Mathematics

- ✚ 63% of the teachers observed taught mathematics and the mathematics class ranged between 44 minutes to 80 minutes
- ✚ None of the teacher reviewed what was taught in the previous day at the beginning of the class
- ✚ All the teachers gave the students work to complete in the class

English

- ✚ 75% of the teachers taught English during the day in the class and the total time taught ranged between 27 minutes to 46 minutes
- ✚ Only one of the teachers revised what was taught in the previous class at the beginning of the English lesson

- ✚ All the teachers who were teaching English on that day gave the students work to complete in the class

Assamese

- ✚ 75% of the teachers taught Assamese during the school day and the total time ranged between 30 minutes to 80 minutes
- ✚ None of the teachers revised what was taught in the previous class at the beginning of the Assamese lesson
- ✚ All the teachers who were teaching Assamese on that day gave the students work to complete in the class

Class III (Mono-Grade set up)

- ✚ The student attendance ranged between 3 to 18
- ✚ The teachers knew the names of all the students
- ✚ In 50% of the schools observed there was no Class III students in attendance (10 of the 20 mono grade situation schools observed)
- ✚ In 30% of the schools children had a drawing class
- ✚ None of the teachers was observed using TLM

Mathematics

- ✚ 50% of the teachers observed taught mathematics and the mathematics class ranged between 32 minutes to 60 minutes
- ✚ Only one of the teacher reviewed what was taught in the previous day at the beginning of the class
- ✚ All the teachers gave the students work to complete in the class

English

- ✚ 80% of the teachers taught English during the day in the class and the total time taught ranged between 40 minutes to 65 minutes

- ✚ 50% of the teachers revised what was taught in the previous class at the beginning of the English lesson
- ✚ All the teachers who were teaching English on that day gave the students work to complete in the class

Assamese

- ✚ 80% of the teachers taught Assamese during the school day and the total time ranged between 25 minutes to 53 minutes
- ✚ None of the teachers revised what was taught in the previous class at the beginning of the Assamese lesson
- ✚ 70% the teachers who were teaching Assamese on that day gave the students work to complete in the class

Environmental Science

- ✚ 70% of the teachers taught Environmental Science during the school day and the total time ranged between 23 minutes to 60 minutes
- ✚ Only one of the teachers revised what was taught in the previous class at the beginning of the Environmental Science lesson
- ✚ All the teachers who were teaching Environmental Science on that day gave the students work to complete in the class

Class IV (Mono-Grade set up)

- ✚ The student attendance ranged between 3 to 25
- ✚ The teachers knew the names of all the students
- ✚ In 25% of the schools observed there was no Class IV students in attendance (5 of the 20 mono grade situation schools observed)
- ✚ In 30% of the schools children had a drawing class
- ✚ None of the teachers was observed using TLM

Mathematics

- ✚ 87% of the teachers observed taught mathematics and the mathematics class ranged between 25 minutes to 65 minutes
- ✚ None of the teacher reviewed what was taught in the previous day at the beginning of the class
- ✚ All the teachers gave the students work to complete in the class

English

- ✚ All of the teachers taught English during the day in the class and the total time taught ranged between 27 minutes to 85 minutes
- ✚ Only one of the teachers revised what was taught in the previous class at the beginning of the English lesson
- ✚ All the teachers who were teaching English on that day gave the students work to complete in the class

Assamese

- ✚ 80% of the teachers taught Assamese during the school day and the total time ranged between 27 minutes to 57 minutes
- ✚ None of the teachers revised what was taught in the previous class at the beginning of the Assamese lesson
- ✚ 70% the teachers who were teaching Assamese on that day gave the students work to complete in the class

Environmental Science

- ✚ 94% of the teachers taught Environmental Science during the school day and the total time ranged between 15 minutes to 60 minutes
- ✚ Only one of the teachers revised what was taught in the previous class at the beginning of the Environmental Science lesson
- ✚ All the teachers who were teaching Environmental Science on that day gave the students work to complete in the class

Class V (Mono-Grade set up)

- ✚ The student attendance ranged between 4 to 24
- ✚ The teachers knew the names of all the students except in one school
- ✚ In 25% of the schools observed there was no Class V students in attendance (5 of the 20 mono grade situation schools observed)
- ✚ In 62 % of the schools children had a drawing class
- ✚ Two teachers were observed using TLM, one teacher used in to teach Mathematics and another teacher used TLM to teach English, Mathematics and Assamese

Mathematics

- ✚ 70 % of the teachers observed taught mathematics and the mathematics class ranged between 30 minutes to 62 minutes
- ✚ Only one of the teacher reviewed what was taught in the previous day at the beginning of the class
- ✚ All the teachers gave the students work to complete in the class

English

- ✚ All the teachers taught English during the day in the class and the total time taught ranged between 29 minutes to 88 minutes
- ✚ 28% of the teachers revised what was taught in the previous class at the beginning of the English lesson
- ✚ All the teachers who were teaching English on that day gave the students work to complete in the class

Assamese

- ✚ 70% of the teachers taught Assamese during the school day and the total time ranged between 30 minutes to 45 minutes
- ✚ One of the teachers revised what was taught in the previous class at the beginning of the Assamese lesson

- ✚ All the teachers who were teaching Assamese on that day gave the students work to complete in the class

Environmental Science

- ✚ 70% of the teachers taught Environmental Science during the school day and the total time ranged between 22 minutes to 54 minutes
- ✚ Only one of the teachers revised what was taught in the previous class at the beginning of the Environmental Science lesson
- ✚ All the teachers who were teaching Environmental Science on that day gave the students work to complete in the class

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 newly appointed interviewed teachers who have been appointed after clearing the Teachers Eligibility Test (TET) 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 they tried to apply these classroom management techniques during their practical classes.

However, some of the older teachers have reported that they do not remember learning about classroom management. This may not necessarily mean that they did not receive pre-service training on classroom management but for some of these teachers they received one training approximately 30 years ago and at that time they may have not received explicit training on classroom management or it is also possible that they do not remember the topic as it was a long time ago. A few of these old teachers mention that over the years

the topic of classroom management has been covered along with other training but there has been no explicit training per se on classroom management.

In this regard one teacher has said, *“I have undergone basic training and within that some aspects of classroom management were told, but specific training related to classroom management was not imparted during the training session”*.

Few of the teachers interviewed mentioned receiving training on classroom management as a part of the Reading Enhancement Program (REP) “Parho Aha” under the “Bohut Shreni Path Daan” which translates to “multi-grade multi-level teaching” and teachers referred to the classroom management training they received through this as the most recent classroom management training.

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

Many interviewed teachers did not have a clear idea of the concept of classroom management or they had some idea but did not see the broader picture.

A teacher describing the components of classroom management said, *“When we say classroom management then boys-girls don’t make noise, what I say they listen. And their seating position, writing position...All this comes to my mind. When I write on the blackboard, whether they can see what’s written there or not. These kinds of things come to my mind.”*

Teachers interviewed mentioned advanced lesson planning by teachers, maintaining cleanliness and hygiene in class, using TLM to teach in class as some of the other components of classroom management.

One teacher has beautifully explained what he does for effective classroom management. He says, *“My concept on classroom management is that, being the head master I have to look after five (5) classes and we have two teachers including me to look after,..... I have studied in this same school and students from my village come here and we had four members out of which one retired in December, the*

headmaster retired in January and I became the headmaster on February and since then I decided that during my tenure I will abide by the direction of the SSA that beside the academic development of the students physical and mental development should be stressed upon and along with that since I belong to the community I have the support of the community and whatever good I do the community will support me.

That's why what I think is that beside the syllabus the students should know other activities like quiz and debates and I pay special emphasis on such extra-curricular activities too, and I manage in such a way that when the other faculty is present she looks after two classes and I look after three classes, just because I am a headmaster I do not sit here simply, and what I do is I go to a particular class take the attendance and assign them to do something, go to the other class take the attendance and assign them a task according to the syllabus and interact with the students, my style of teaching is not teacher trendy I call the toppers from one to five and ask them to teach the other students and then I move on to the third class and stay there for some time and I such way my entire school hours remains busy, I do to admit that I have been successful In doing this but I have been trying to give my best.

And in relation to the management of the class I established SMC under which we get guest teachers who come and teach and they do come at regular interval and today one of them is here, he is in class three , I am looking after class four and five and the other permanent faculty is in class one and two, since the trainee is new I do not assign him class one, two and five, I personally manage class five, my daughter passed her HSSC she also come to teach today she is absent due to some personal problem, that's how I am managing the school".

Another teacher explained her understanding of classroom management as, "One of the thing in classroom management is motivation to bring the student's focus in the class by asking various questions and by following a planned sitting arrangement".

Yet another teacher said, *“Yes I have heard about the classroom management concept and my perception is that classroom management implies how to impart education to the students and how to maintain the classroom and the method of imparting education so that the students can understand easily without being bored. The main topics dealt are the understanding with the students, to deal with them in the conditions or method they comply or understand with, to use the methods which provide maximum participation or output from the students and to deal with kindness towards the students”.*

Importance of classroom management training:

A significant proportion of teachers interviewed mentioned that they find a need for classroom management. They feel that it will help them with managing the classroom and the students in a better way. The teachers were of the opinion that having classroom management made the teaching learning process more meaningful as more work can be accomplished.

One of the teacher said that classroom management training is important because he learned some important techniques.

He elaborated these as, *“During the training we were told that before teaching in the class we the teachers need to go through the lessons a day before teaching, we should know the topics where we need give special stress and teach and we should see if they understood the topic or not. We were told to use TLM and see if they understood or not and if that step is crossed we move ahead to the next step. We should tell them a story in their mother tongue and see if they listened to the story and liked it or not and whether they can say the story or not and if they can write the story or not and above that if they can formulate a story on own their own or not and convert the story into writing or not, these are the process in the classroom where I pay special emphasis on”.*

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

While discussing the difference between pre-service training on classroom management and post training in the real classroom situation, the teachers have said that they find a difference.

Elaborating on this, one of the teachers have said, *“Yes there are difference between the theory and the practical application of the teachings in the trainings, as in schools where in a school with single teacher to conduct classes five classes he is bound to face difficulties and so there exist difference between training and practical, all the students in a school and all the members in the community are not equal, the schools in the towns where the guardians are very conscious but out here in the villages many of the guardians are illiterate and are daily wage earners and so the students do not learn anything at home, so there is a difference between the trainings and practical and they are not same”*.

One teacher commenting on the difference gave an example where he said, *“There is difference between training and practical situations, in the training we are told to make the teaching attractive by luring or tempting them about something but the students do not tend to accept as they adopt end thinking that they cannot, they will not do, they do not know.....Some students are good and they do well but generally “NO” is most used word by the students. We have failed to attract the students. There is a girl who said I will not wrote, I do not know she hardly brought her slate (writing material), I asked he to bring she finally brought the slate(writing material) and even then she did not write, her sister told me that she writes at home I tried to lure her by giving chawks as some students like chawks yet she was not ready to write, I told he I will give u sweets yet she did not write, I told her I will give you ball to play during the leisure time yet she did not write. These are some of the problems where the students are least interested”*.

Challenges to classroom management:

Student attendance is an issue even in Morigaon. Children with migrant labourer parents miss schools in certain months and attend school intermittently and thus this creates issues for the teachers in terms of continuity of the lessons.

One teacher remarked, "...if the students are regular it is not a problem and the irregularity in the class is a problem just because they are not regular and are absent for about a week sometimes they lag behind the syllabus and that a problem for us".

The teachers in Morigaon faced many challenges in implementing effective classroom management. One teacher here talked about how safety is an issue when the children are in school, as the school is located close to the highway, doesn't have enough land to be used as a playground and that due to a lack of Early Childhood Education Centers and anganwaadis, even the younger children (below 6 years of age) are sent to school. Moreover there are issues as the SMC doesn't help the teachers actively.

He said, "The small small boys and girls are main problem as their guardian sends them in between us. We have to take care of them every time from 10.00 or from 9.30 to 2.30. Here we do not have the facility to play; we do not have any playground. In the leisure time after their meal they do not get any facility to play. They play in the classroom or in the veranda, seeing this I feel sad and secondly, the highway is very nearer so from this highway our boys and girl can get hurt... (inaudible) Many problems arise due to this, like, two years ago a girl named Beauty was hit by vehicle twice. Fortunately she not injured severely, she got some little scratches and she is fine. Due to this highway plus lack of playing ground the students are not able to play and do not got the facility to learn. This is the main problem. Place is not available at all. That is bad luck. Now it's time to organise the golden jubilee of the school but still the problem of land is not solved yet. I am solving these problems by going to the block office and circle office with my ill health. There

are 14-15 members in the managing committee but they do not go to solve these problems. TOMORROW DAY AFTER TOMORROW, in the previous year I have to buy land here.....”

Another issue the teachers talked about was the amount of time spent coordinating Mid-Day Meals. The head teacher has to shop for the Mid-Day meals every day and he can go shop for the daily requirements only after taking attendance in the morning and thereby calculates and buys the amount of ration required for the number of students present. The teacher also tries to take care and provide a nutritious and tasty meal but they face a lot of challenges in doing so.

As one interviewed teacher said, “Time is needed. After attendance only I will know that 54 are present. For 54 students how much money will be needed for marketing, what amount of dal will be needed, what amount of mustard oil will be needed, what amount of potato will be needed, after calculating these I can go for marketing. The facility of local market is also not available here; in that case I face some problems. [pause] as much as possible I bring from home like gourd, papaya etc. I bring from home. Why I brought? Why is needed? Because they should be given tasty food. How they will eat rice if we feed them only with dal dal dal? Taste also matters, keeping this in mind every day I used to the items specially dal, vegetables. If today we give gourd then next will be cabbage and then next will be turnip and then next will be tomato. I often change the items so that they get taste and interest and hope they get something from the food. I make such arrangement. In the mean time looking at presence of the students I bought egg for them. I feed them eggs in that way. As we only got Rs. 3 and some paisa, it is not possible for us to feed one individually. Therefore we feed them by splitting one egg into half. That’s all I do, I am not lying they know that, they are my staff. My staff is also good.”

Another teacher said, *"Here as headmaster I am doing marketing for Mid-day meal than few hours of my duty goes away. In that manner sometimes I am late in teaching while arranging for Mid-Day meal, getting firewood and sometimes I have to go visit the bank for school work"*.

One of the teachers interviewed in the Mayong block had a very unique challenge in terms of hygiene and sanitation. He also mentioned the stench arising out of disposing off dead animal carcasses nearby in an improper way and this leading to an unhealthy stench engulfing the entire area. Also the septic tanks in the school toilets were dysfunctional and this led to additional issues. Another challenge here was also the fact that villagers used the school's water supply to take a bath in the open and often exposed children to their private parts. The teacher has tried to prevent the villagers from using the schools facilities but has been unsuccessful.

Here he elaborates on this issue, *"I have to say the truth as you are saying about management, the local people throw the dead body (animal) nearby as a result our environment i.e. the healthy environment became indiscipline. The condition became like this we have to close the doors windows and have to use the incense sticks. In such situation we get problems from the local people and secondly, there are one two families whose duty or responsibility towards institution is very low um, they do not know about their basic rights, they came to bought water while class is going on, in such case I feel sorry and sometimes they used to wash their cloths. Sometimes there are such a people who used bath showing their butt then the concentration of boys and girls breaks from the class. We face such problems and secondly, first thing is that our environment is very close to the road so we have to give importance to the safety every time because our latrine i.e. these small boys and girls go to toilet in anytime. We have latrine but i.e. too old, we have to use those which was made by my ex headmaster. If someone use that then nobody can stay nearby, the smell makes the environment bad. Environment became polluted so till now office has not taken any step. [pause] we ourselves do a lot of cleaning, I reach school at positive*

8.30, I never miss. After reaching school I give more importance to cleaning and is there any indiscipline in classroom or is there any environmental problem, I give importance to those matters. If found no solution I ask the local people why you throw these things nearer [inaudible][coughing]. As it is not possible to go nearer I asked them to use some stick and throw those away or throw in a hole by digging the ground." Another teacher in a different school has also mentioned how the school premises are made dirty by villagers nearby indulging in open defecation inside the school premises as there are no boundary walls. And as this happens out of school hours the teachers have been unable to catch the culprit or do anything about it. In addition to humans, cows also enter the school compound and dirty it.

Teacher scarcity was mentioned as another challenge towards effective classroom management.

Many teachers have brought it up numerous times, *"The main problem is that we do not have adequate number of teachers and if there are adequate numbers of teachers we do not have any problem in managing the class"*. This problem is exacerbated when one teacher is on leave, *"The hurdle arises when we have to manage two classes at a time in the absence of the teacher who was supposed to take the class"*.

Another teacher mentioned that he tried to follow as much advance lesson planning as possible, however due to the school environment and the ever changing nature of challenges, he is not able to do lesson planning regularly.

Bad weather conditions are another point brought forth by some teachers. Due to bad weather conditions (heavy rains) many times the TLMs are destroyed and the teachers neither have the time or the resources to develop the TLM again and it significantly hampers their ability to teach and keep all children occupied.

The presence of multi-grade classrooms has also been a cause of concern for the teachers as they do not know to teach different children of different ages in the same classroom using

one blackboard. As a single teacher has to deal with multiple classes, they are forced to seat the students together so that they can manage the students. However, it is a challenge for them as they were trained for mono-grade training and they are not equipped for multi-grade classrooms.

Most of these students come from very poor families and as such are unable to afford the basic necessities of life. In such a scenario, when a teacher asks the students to get any basic additional stationary to the classroom, the parents are unable to afford it for their children.

As one teacher said, "...some of the parents cannot provide basic educational kits to their children, say like scale and compass, I asked them to get them but not many of them got scale and compass in the class till today, if they cannot afford to bring such educational kits it hampers the learning process and the pace of teachings, how do I teach them measurement without a scale, these are certain difficulties which we face".

Classroom management techniques and strategies applied by teachers:

Different teachers had different strategies for classroom management. One of the interviewed teacher mentioned how he teaches students in turns.

He described his strategy as, "I collected the bright and intelligent students from each of the classes and involved them with in teaching lessons/chapters. I teach in one classroom for some time then I give them some activities then I go to another class to teach. I do it that way".

Some teachers manage the classroom by making different students in charge of different things, this way every child was responsible for one particular task and different classroom tasks were achieved successfully.

A teacher describing this said, "We have committee every year for school we do a student meeting there we have school monitor, cultural monitor, cleanliness monitor.

From there we check the boys and girls who can help in lesson teaching in classroom. We ask them before we engage them.”

On these issues of teacher shortage one of the teachers talking about the strategies he has used said, *“The government officials are informed about the need of teachers in each class, we have discussed this matter in the managing committee and the managing committee has decided that good educated youth of the village should be given the opportunity to teach and so this time I have requested three to four of them and they come and take classes and this is how we have tried to solve the problem and in relation to the educational kits right from the pencil to scale we are doing our best to provide them such, some students do not even get pencils and pens to the school so we buy it from the school itself and give it to them to write in the class and take it back, because if they take it they will lose it, these are the steps taken to address the problem”*. Even though the teacher shortage couldn't be immediately addressed the headmaster along with the community members has managed to come up with an alternate solution for the issue of teacher shortage.

Some teachers mentioned that they refer to their peers or senior teachers and resource person to help them if they are faced with an issue that they feel unable to solve on their own.

Commenting on this one teacher said, *“And sometimes we talk among the teachers and senior teachers to find a path to deal with the problems”*.

In order to tackle the issue of student absenteeism the teachers consulted the community. Some teachers go to the parents, guardians and community leaders to tell them about the importance of sending children to school regularly.

Elaborating on this a teacher said, *“Sometimes the students are absent, in such cases we talk to the parents to send their children to the school regularly as we have to repeat the teachings which the students has missed out and that hinders the pace completing the syllabus assigned to be taught”*.

The use of teaching aids to facilitate classroom learning was one of the suggestions.

As one teacher explained, "That way it will be teaching aid, TLM through which we teach. As because we have less teacher we have to give something in one class then goes to the next class. If we have the teaching aid then we can give the students activity to do."

Teachers have said that they should have flexibility in conducting the meetings lessons, in terms of which subject they want to teach at what time, according to the structure as the structured way of teaching is more suited for the mono-grade classrooms as opposed to the multi-grade classrooms that they are faced with.

Teachers have mentioned that if they are able to teach students in a monograde setting, one teacher per class then they will be able to teach better as they have not had previous experience of teaching in multi grade situations.

Some teachers are of the opinion that a "joyful learning" approach should be adopted so that students are more receptive to the teacher's teachings.

As the teacher put, "At least through joyful learning physical mental development will happen".

Another suggestion is that the parents and guardians and the extended community should be involved and should be made a part of the teaching learning process.

As one teacher said, "From my side I have called SMC meeting and made them aware of the problem. They are your children so come to school and work with us to improve the school environment. I have explain in the meeting that teacher, guardian and students if all are equal then only all can go in one direction. If support comes from all the direction then only can move towards quality education".

Themes emerging out of interviews with education officials:

Here we discuss the themes that emerged from the interviews with the various education stakeholders in Morigaon district, DIET officials, SSA officials and block level education officers.

Classroom management training and its importance

One of the officials interviewed have mentioned that till date there are no dedicated training on classroom management but it forms a part of the regular teacher training program.

However, they are keen to start training exclusively on classroom management training, *“Till date we did not happen to impart any training on CM exclusively. So, in the near future, if we can manage to give such training to our teachers, I am hopeful, our teachers will be able to pick up and manage classroom well”*. Classroom management training is described as, *“CM is about how the students will sit in the classroom, managing time, using TLMs, how will the students learn in groups and again come back to individual learning, how will the students parliament made active – all these come under the ambit of CM. So, if we do not have a holistic approach and keep thinking in a particular way, we cannot successfully manage a classroom. Thus, we need to plan out how a classroom can a holistically managed well, how to use or manage TLMs accordingly, how to manage time, how can the sitting arrangement be converted from groups to individual and again from individual to groups – pair to individual, individual to pair – whole class activity and the like. We need to train our teachers in all these spheres. Though we advocate for group activity, use of TLMs in the classrooms, we do have some problems which obstructs its implementation in the real classroom situation. Therefore, I think, we need a training putting emphasis on CM and whole-school approach should be adopted”*.

Commenting on the importance of the classroom management program, he said, *“Obviously, it will help like I said answered to your previous questions. If not regular,*

at least if we start the process...it's been necessary that we do a training with its basic focus on CM - what can be the possible ways or means, what are the drawbacks, what are the problems that they face, what are their present availability. It has to be school specific, some schools may have something which some may not have. Therefore, proper CM should be the aim and to achieve this aim the materials has to be different for different schools. There will be various problems and analyzing this variety, the teachers will have to develop various innovative strategies like how to use students' parliament, how to associate the parents, how to associate the teachers. Keeping all this into view, we need to develop a school-wise development CM training. It should be mere for training sake, we need to develop innovative skills; we cannot give them a capsule that CM is about this and that. The teachers need to identify the schools specific issues, drawbacks/ limitations/ problems and develop innovative ways for CM. We cannot spoon-feed them but it has to be constructive. They will construct themselves and we will be guiding".

Challenges to classroom management and strategies to overcome challenges in the real classroom setting:

Talking on the challenges the official said, "We have various problems in the schools like high enrolment with less teachers, i.e. high PTR, sitting arrangement problem. These problem no doubt can be solved with an innovative/creative attitude among the teachers but this is hard to find. We do have some such creative teachers like (currently withheld for privacy reasons) in the (currently withheld for privacy reasons) block. Nobody had instructed him but he has used his own experiences and very well managed the school. Now, when we talk about the problems, there are many like high PTR, number of teachers, diversity- it can be many types like that in language, culture, parent's educational level. Many teachers say that they cannot manage the classroom in such a diverse situation. Now, in view of these diversities, the teachers find it difficult to manage their classroom. But I think, if this diversity can be used as an input resource, the teachers with their innovative ability can manage the

classroom well. Some teachers think this to be a problem and therefore, they do not think it innovatively. These problems are contextual and the diversities can be different from school to school”.

Further elaborating on the challenges and the strategies employed by DIET he said, *“Our teachers and trainers from DIET go for school support program. Due to budget constraint we cannot do it throughout the year but try to give our best in our capacity possible. When our team goes for school support, we always discuss that the teaching-learning process should be enriched. We have instructed our district resource group to give class demonstration and the teachers are supposed to observe this demonstration, they are asked to discuss it among themselves, try it out in the classroom transaction and in their next visit the teachers have to give demonstration on whatever was taught to them. Therefore, we think, classroom demonstration will help us improve our teaching learning process.*

Secondly, talking about the whole- school approach, it involves community involvement, parents’ involvement, involvement of students’ parliament etc. Our faculties look into all these aspects and see how to bring the parents close to the school, what strategies to be adopted etc. We have also imparted training and developed modules. We put emphasis on whole-school approach while providing support and I think, doing this will help our teachers, in due course of time. Moreover, I think, if we can provide a structured formal training on this, it can fasten the pace.

The official emphasized on the need for different agencies to work in collaboration with each other to achieve their goals, *“We need to work collaboratively. What all organisations, institutions, and departments we have associated with primary education should work in coherence with each other. We need to have regular sharing. We all share the same aim and objective and i.e. quality development. Therefore, we can exchange our views and works towards its fulfillment. We need a common platform for this”.*

Another block level official discussed the shortage of TLM and teacher shortage as the two primary challenges to classroom management. Another issue brought to notice was student absenteeism which resulted in gaps in the teaching learning process. The official also talked about the existence of a language problem in certain areas of the district where the students and teachers did not speak the same language and hence had a very difficult time and did not manage to achieve much progress in the teaching learning process.

Recommendations:

Based on the findings and discussions above, here are a few recommendations to have better learning environment in the schools.

1. All the teachers should be provided with training on classroom management it can be based on the “Academic Calendar” developed by SCERT. This document is very comprehensive and will prove to be very useful for all the teachers. At the beginning of the school year the cluster resource person should be asked to hold a one day refresher course on how to structure the classrooms and then the headmaster should have monthly discussions with the teachers to discuss how to structure classes according to the “Academic Calendar”.
2. As observed in the findings, one teacher was entrusted with teaching all classes as the other teacher has to be engaged in all the administrative work, so there should be a provision to streamline all the administrative activities of the school in such a way that the teachers can also engage in teaching.
3. 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.
4. The teachers should be encouraged to use an activity based teaching so that they can engage all the students and are able to manage all the students. They should also be encouraged to use TLMs.

5. 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.
6. A few teachers and resource persons in each block 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 on a rotational basis. It can create a regular monitoring and support framework.
7. The teachers from nearby schools should meet after school once a month to discuss the issues they face in class and this way they can learn from the experience of their peers.
8. In order to tackle the issue of student absenteeism, 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.
9. 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.
10. Boundary walls should be provided to all schools at the earliest to improve safety in schools, this way the teacher can concentrate on teaching without having to worry about the students wandering into the streets and injuring themselves.
11. Another area that the teachers need help is in maintaining hygiene within the school premises. The teachers should be provided with a redressal system so that they can bring up serious issues to the attention of the concerned authorities and a quick solution can be initiated.
12. An effective monitoring and evaluation system should be in place so that the teachers can be provided with help and support in dealing with the classroom issues at the earliest.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, classroom management is a very integral and important part of pre-service teacher training. Most teachers in Morigaon do not have a very good grasp of the concepts classroom management and even the teachers who understand the concept 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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