

Teaching Learning: A Study of Strategies Adopted in Government Elementary Schools

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***Abstract-** Sarva Shiksha Abhiyaan (SSA) has been one of the breakthroughs in terms of innovative strategies adopted to ensure free and compulsory education for all after year 2000 to attract children into the school. Many other initiatives merged under the bigger project of SSA. As a result gross enrollment rate in the year 2000-01 was 81.6 per cent which increased to 96.9 per cent in the year 2015-16 (MHRD, 2018) which show that students entered in the school. Now, it becomes pertinent so look at the school related aspects which would play important part in children's successful completion of elementary education where teaching learning becomes critical to focus on.*

Teaching-learning: Need of strategies

Teaching learning has always been the core part of education at any level but elementary education has been the thrust area for adopting new strategies in teaching learning as education at this level lays foundation of their further development in any ways. Different strategies used in teaching during years of elementary education help in improve the leaning of child as according to Ansari, F. and Khurshid, U. (2012), innovative teaching satisfies the individual learning requirements and increases the interest level among the students. It is very necessary to occupy the children with their own learning skill initially as to make them acquainted with the basic concepts on which they can lay the foundation of further knowledge. For this, different learning experiences to children should be provided using different teaching strategies best suited to their interest and need especially during the years of elementary education. It requires special efforts on part of teachers to find out potential strategies according to the need of students. Under the SSA, capacity building to teachers is provided in terms of in service trainings and required infrastructure facilities along with technological advancements through which they can enhance their teaching.

“We face big challenges to help the world’s poorest people and ensure that everyone sees benefits from economic growth. Data and research help us understand these challenges and set priorities, share knowledge of what works, and measure progress.” (World Bank, 2009)

The present paper focuses on the aspects related to teaching in government elementary school in terms of special efforts by schools community to provide conducive environment to students. The students of government elementary schools belong to economically weak section of society and they need special efforts first, to make them come to school regularly and second, to make them stay in the school. Government initiatives

helped to attract students to come to school but it is important to examine what make them stay in the school and complete their elementary education in government schools. This paper seeks the answer of the kind of innovative strategies adopted by government elementary schools.

Method

The research adopted the survey method. A retrospective study in the 22 schools of government elementary school of Surendranagar city, Gujarat was conducted to study the kind of innovative strategies adopted in the schools during elementary education students. Purposively 490 students and 63 teachers and 22 principals of sampled schools were selected as sample. In the academic year of 2017-18, the students of class VIII who have been in the school from class I to class VIII in the same school were taken as part of the study. The teachers, who taught these students having minimum eight years of experience in the same school, were taken as part of the study. The information was collected through unstructured interview with the students, teachers and principal that comprised of information regarding innovative strategies adopted in the school so that they could complete their elementary education. The data was analyzed through content analysis. The objective was to study the school dimension with respect to teaching learning methods used in all the schools of Surendranagar city to make the child complete their elementary education.

Procedure for Data Analysis

The data were descriptive and qualitative in nature. The data were in verbal form which were opinion of the different sources and subjective in nature. Steps followed in data analysis were:

- The data were received from different sources and analyzed through content analysis. Component were identified which are: Use of recess time, peer tutoring, open library, open laboratory, to file record of activities done, election for different departments of school, celebration of different weeks and gestures with hand movements.
- The data were put together and carefully examined and peculiar things in strategies adopted in schools were identified. The identified data from selected schools were collated and analyzed as to prepare comprehensive presentation of innovative strategies adopted in school.

Result

Selectively the data gathered were presented finding peculiarity in strategies adopted in the schools. The findings of some cases are as follows:

Use of recess time: It is a case of a school where teachers realized that the one hour recess time was getting meaningless as even after spending time for mid day meal, the students were getting more than forty minutes of time to play. The focus was on to make each child engage in some or the other activities to convert rest of the recess time in meaningful experiences. Basic science concepts were displayed on different tables set up by the teachers and whoever would come to the table to ask for the explanation or tried to touch the objects, were allowed to operate and also given explanation for that. Some of the

examples of basic concepts were: to convert measurements, measurements of height and weight, display of magnets and its usages etcetera which they changed every day. Different kinds of sports and indoor games equipments were facilitated to any students who wished to play with it. Two teachers would join students everyday in rotation. The purpose was to keep child engaged during recess time in more meaningful activities with learning also.

Peer tutoring: Sitting arrangement of the students was in group as per their grades of last year which were A group, B group and C group. Once in a week the students formally used to have day when each student who had higher grade was paired with the other child who had lower grade. The students with higher grade used to teach or explain the content of any subject which the students with lower grade had difficulty in understanding. This gives students to understand from the one of their level who understood the kind of explanation needed with the feeling of sense of sharing and helping also.

Open library: On realizing the students didn't have any reading material at home other than free textbooks given to them as they belonged to economically weaker background, library in the books were kept open for full school time. Any student could go and access to any book they wanted to read and they were allowed to keep it for a week. Students started accessing the different kinds of books whenever they needed for any purpose and carefully used to return also on due time. The purpose behind the open library to students was to provide reading material to students with variety of books available which the students didn't expose to

Open laboratory: As soon as the students used to enter the laboratory, they were allowed to access anything from the laboratory which used to give a start to their interest in the science subject. Afterwards teachers used to explain the usage of the particular object the students accessed and after knowing the names of the object, teachers would go a step beyond and start different experiment in laboratory. The aim was to arouse curiosity among students by giving them practical knowledge and built the strong foundation of basics of the science on its application level which usually starts with the name of the objects mostly. And as a result each student used to explain and write in exams science concepts no matter how good s/he in studies.

To File record of activities done: The teachers used to file record of the kind of activities done in the classroom or in the school on particular day. A hand written long list of activities for different purposes were prepared on a sheet of colorful papers to file it, which were used to shared with the other teachers who were interested to do different kinds of activities in their class. The aim was to share knowledge and also to keep record of the different activities to reduce the mental exercise for the next year which saved their time.

Election for different departments of school: Different departments of schools according to subjects were formed and one head of each department was selected through elections to cater the activities done under their own department. This exercise provided sense of responsibility among the students and encouragement in their interested areas in studies.

Celebration of different weeks: Different weeks were celebrated offering them different kinds of fruits during fruit week when each child were provided maximum numbers of different fruits, different dry fruits during dry fruit day, different seasonal food items etcetera finding donation and also contributing financially by teachers and principal themselves. Nutritious values of given food items were also explained to students. Science teachers used to associate this information with science and give self projects to make in homework for self learning. The aim was to attract the students to the schools as attendance was very low in the school and as a result admissions increased and attendance of the students also improved.

Gestures with hand movement: It was especially done in primary classes when teachers used to find the students going out of discipline that was leaving their place, talking too much or coming to the teacher all together. The teachers suddenly, to make the students sit in place and focus on instructions, used to give instructions to follow the sign s/he doing by hand movements. It helped the teachers to maintain the habit of basic discipline in the class among the small students.

Overview of findings

The above mentioned findings show that the strategies used by the teachers or school authority was their conscious efforts for specific purposes as each strategies required personal initiative at grass root level.

Discussion

The observation highlights that the students of government schools who belong to economically deprived background, needed the strategies mostly to make them come to school regularly and learn well also being in the school. The result above shows that the teachers had been initiated on personal level to make the students stay in the school and study also well. Main aim of the different strategies adopted such as open library, open laboratory, election for different departments, peer tutoring and celebration of different weeks were to expose students to get access to different experience to make most out of their schooling. It was personal selfless gesture to use gesture for habit formation and to maintain file of the activities to be done as to build knowledge sharing communities among the teachers which is stated by NCF (2005) that the sharing of teaching experiences and diverse classroom practices can provide opportunities for an academic discourse to develop within schools as teachers interact with and learn from each other. Though new technologies coming up in the education to improve its quality, need of different strategies cannot be ignored as to get best out of it which requires thoughtful minds of teachers as according to Maciejowska, I and Frankowics, M. (2010), to implement innovation, a teacher should possess knowledge, abilities and right attitude towards them.

Here, teacher's role is crucial which should be taken as interest of further researches. The direct co relation of strategies with specific learning can be taken up as an experimental research. The present study does not focus on teacher's role in planning for strategies finding a concern area which is limitation of the study. The findings of the study help the other schools to apply such strategies whenever they encounter similar situation with objectives to

achieve as they already now aware for the kind of reasons such strategies are applied. The present research is a kind of knowledge sharing platform of new ideas emerged in elementary education.

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