

**INITIATIVES IN
MULTILEVEL TEACHING AT
PRIMARY STAGE**

Two Case Studies



**DEPARTMENT OF PRE-SCHOOL & ELEMENTARY EDUCATION
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PREFACE

Raising achievement levels of children at the primary stage has emerged as a major concern across the country in the pursuit of the goals of universalization of elementary education. A striking anomaly characterizing the classroom situations in the primary schools is that while the composition of children in any grade is heterogeneous, the instructional material and methodology is geared to a mono level. It thus does not cater to the individual levels, interests and pace of learning and negatively impacts on achievement standards. Particularly in the context of EFA, the heterogeneity in the classroom is likely in the coming years to get more accentuated and the need for a multi-level approach therefore becomes more and more imperative.

A few non-governmental organizations have been experimenting with a multi-level approach at a micro-level in a few schools for the last several years. The department of Preschool and Elementary Education (DPSEE) as part of its activities of the DPEP National Resource Group for curriculum has documented two such programmes viz. Digantar Shiksha Evam Khel-Kud Samiti and Bodh Shiksha Samiti in Jaipur, Rajasthan. This booklet presents these two case studies primarily with the objective of disseminating the innovative ideas experimented with by these organizations and deriving lessons from them for management both mono-grade and multi-grade school situations. It is hoped that this document will be found useful by educational planners and implementers at all levels. We would welcome receiving feedback from them.

We are deeply indebted to the managements of the two organizations, Digantar and Bodh Shiksha Samiti for the cooperation and assistance extended by them in the conduct of this study.

I am grateful to Dr. Manju Jam, Reader in this department, for the intensive work put in by her in carrying out the study and in preparation of this document.

Venita Kay!
Head, OPSEE

INTRODUCTION

Multigrade classes are those in which students from two or more grades are taught by one teacher in one room at the same time. Students in multigrade classes retain their respective grade level assignments and follow their grade specific curricula. These classes are generally formed for administrative and economic reasons. India has the second largest number of multigrade schools at the primary stage after China in the world. According to the Fifth All India Educational Survey 93.75 percent schools have to face a multigrade situation at one time or the other.

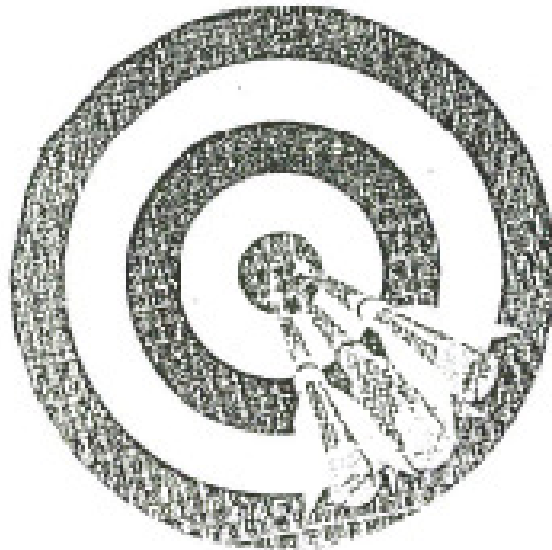
Substantial efforts/exercises have been initiated to improve the quality of multigrade classrooms in the country though some remain largely unsuccessful due to various limitations. In this context it was considered necessary to make a detailed study of some innovative programmes from the point of view of curriculum organization and transaction, classroom planning and management, etc. so that some concrete/lucid lessons could be derived for implementing in multigrade situations/settings. Though some of the agencies/non-governmental organizations do not have multigrade situations, they have evolved an approach to improve the status and quality of primary schools especially for the weaker sections of the society through a multilevel approach. Bodh and Digantar, both are non-governmental organizations which have evolved an approach called “Alternative Primary Education Programme” for slum and rural children respectively. Their programmes have numerous innovative features, but one of the significant feature, which is very much applicable to our multigrade schools is the multi-level approach of teaching and this practice is called multi-age grouping. Both the organizations believe that the multi-level approach is not only a sound pedagogical approach but also has tremendous educational benefits. The details of the features of their programme have been discussed in the report along with their implications for the multigrade classroom.

The report consists of two parts, Part-I gives the detailed features of the Digantar and Bodh organizations, with special reference to the innovative characteristics of their primary education programme. Part-II of the report brings out how these innovative programmes are useful for multigrade teaching and the lessons to be learnt from them.

PURPOSE OF THE PRESENT CASE STUDIES

The present case studies which were carried out in the context of documenting the good practices and the innovative programmes of the Bodh and Digantar organizations, were mainly evolved for improving primary education. The programmes are innovative rather than traditional in nature. The significant and unique characteristic of their programmes is the adoption of the multi-level approach of teaching at the primary stage; Both the organizations believe that “every child is different and unique so a common approach of teaching for all the learners is bound to be unproductive”. These case studies look into the innovative features of their programmes with a focus on some salient questions :

- How has the multi-level approach been adopted and implemented?
- What is the success or failure of the programme ?
- Can these be up-scaled into those schools/areas where the number of teachers is less than the grades?



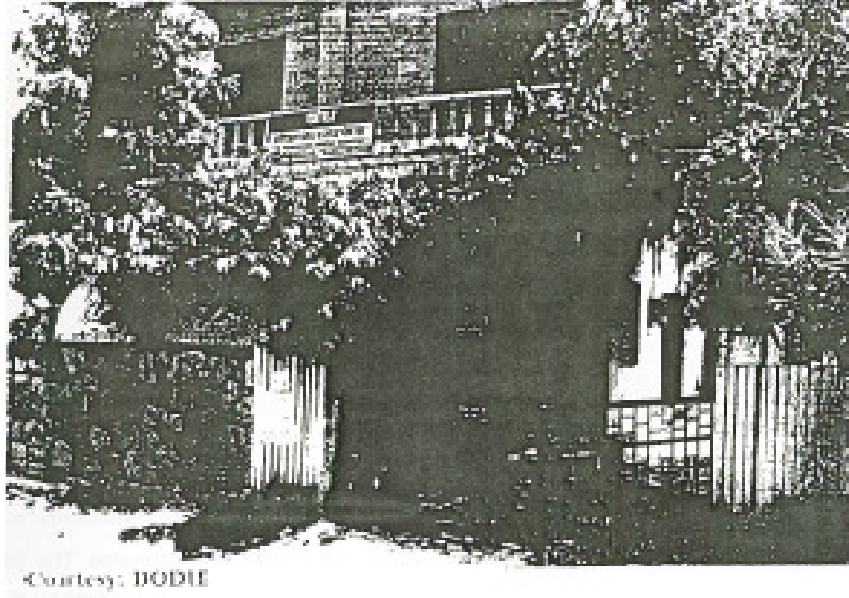
BODH SHIKSHA SAMITI

Can there be a school today which places little emphasis on discipline and where examination is not the only basis for promotion ?. Yes, such a school does exist in the slums of Jaipur city, and it is run by the Bodh Shiksha Samiti, a non-governmental organization.

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The idea of imparting quality education to the downtrodden was the motivating force which made possible the launching of this school in the Kachi Basti of Jaipur by a group of social activists. The slum dwellers have faced in the past, and continue to face a double deprivation. The adults live at a low level of subsistence, while their children are condemned to a life of ignorance and squalor. Schools do exist in the locality but the slum dwellers children are not ready to go to these schools. The reason may be that these schools have failed to meet their needs or take note of their realities and their practical problems. Some slum children work as labourers while others look after their siblings. Hence, these children are left with little time to attend school leading to a high degree of absenteeism among them.

The Bodh Shiksha Samiti strongly felt the need of evolving an alternative educational programme for these slum children. It started with a single school in a slum at Nahri Ka Naka in Jaipur city. It was soon felt that running an isolated school in a slum could not meet the needs of all slum children. In 1988, the Samiti extended their programme further. At present, they have seven schools which are covering the main slum areas of the city. The aim of the Samiti to work towards realizing an alternative system of education that would evolve itself from within and become a force and vitality which would not only transform the lives of the children also the entire slum community”.



Keeping the need of the slum dwellers in mind, the samiti has floated three types of 'roqramnes for children:

- Alternative Primary School Education for children in the age group 6-14 years
- The Pre-School Child Development Prograiiima(ECE pioqiarnnie) to the age group 3-6 years.
- Tho Outreach / Adoption Programme in some Stat school of Jaipur

Alternative Primary Sciooi education

Altorriative Prima ry Schnot Edt cation programme aims at developing a system of education which would suit children who come from the slum areas, and for whom the formal school system is totally inappropriate. The programme has been developed in recordance with the needs of these children. For example, the school timings for the

winter, summer and rainy seasons are decided by the community according to then convenience. This programme is funded by the Ministry of HRD

The various aspects of this programme will be discussed in detail in the report.

The Pre-School Education Programme

The need to start a programme for pre-school learners arose because most of the elder children could not come to school, because they had to look after their younger siblings at home. All the Bodh schools (except one) have a pre-school section, where emphasis is more on health, hygiene, development of the personality of the child, and school readiness activities. This programme has been funded by the Aga Khan Foundation.

The Adoption / Outreach Programme

Another programme of the Bodh Shiksha Samiti, which is running in ten State Government primary schools of Jaipur city, is called the Adoption/Outreach Programme. The State Government has adopted the innovative approach to primary education evolved by Bodh in their sample schools. The programme has been financed by the Aga Khan Foundation. All the academic inputs in the schools, including teachers training, have been imparted by the Bodh Samiti. In July 1995, the experiment was initiated in Class I only, but now it has been extended up to class V.

In addition to these programmes, the Samiti is also organizing the training of pre-school and primary teachers who have been selected for the Samiti schools. Training of teachers in select government schools has also been initiated as part of the Outreach programme.

2.2 THE BODH SAMITI PHILOSOPHY

Bodh is working mainly for the slum dwellers, where existing school facilities could not meet their needs. Bodh workers have found that slum dwellers are mainly casual workers and their children are also engaged as casual labourers. Most of the children are also engaged at home in domestic chores and rearing their siblings. When a social activist asked the parents "why did you

not send your children to school', their answer was very simple: "This education does not help in earning money, but wastes our children's time. With this pertinent point in mind Bodh workers thought. 'Why can't we develop a programme which could meet their requirements?'. For example place for younger siblings in school, giving "b jobs to childrens' mother in schools, providing knowledge for socially useful productive work, for self earning, giving vacation during harvesting/Mela time etc. This thinking has 'b changed the attitude of the community towards education. This idea gave birth to the Alternative Elementary Education Programme. The Bodh Shiksha Samiti has the following basic points in its programmes:

- Evolving an effective and efficient alternative model for pre-school and primary education for the benefit of the under privileged children of the marginalized sections of the society.
- Imparting education according to need of the children. Self pacing, flexibility in time are vital elements of child's education mode.
- Learning without fear is encouraged in all respect
- For little children courtyards and nature are the schools. Culturally, folklore and fol knowledge are incorporated into teaching-learning. Emotionally, teachers are trained to act as affectionate, caring and loving parents.
- Comrriwkty participation is the backbone of education process. Bodh feels that witt-iout involvement of community no education process can be successful".
- Processes are adopted where there is a gradual and natural shift from familiar to unfani4ai, known to unknown, concrete to abstract.
- Eliminarcr- D1 the cap between percept and behaviour, practice and principleJhecy and empiricism.

- Children learn more from natural environment and through environmental material. Use of environmental objects/ material in teaching-learning process keep the child at concrete level for learning.

With these considerations, Bodh has launched its experiments and is gaining success. The present case study of the organization covers only its Alternative Elementary Education Programme. The salient features of the programme are -

2.3 SALIENT FEATURE OF ALTERNATIVE PRIMARY EDUCATION PROGRAMME

- No grade (Dynamic Groupism) - Multilevel Teaching
- Low Pupil Teacher Ratio
- Full Freedom to the Teacher
- Flexible Curriculum
- Teaching Methodology
- Teaching Learning Materials
- Flexible / Dynamic Planning
- Monitoring and Evaluation
- Teacher Training
- Community Participation

23.1 No Grade(Dynamic Groupism) - Multilevel Teaching

Bodh schools have no grades or classes. They group children on the basis of their learning level's. The reasons are :

Grades have their own specific norms. Each child has to cover the same curriculum, in a specific time and in a specific manner. There is no scope for flexibility in the learning processes. Hence, several musts deprive the children's intellectual abilities and creative expression.

In slum areas, grade repetition, absenteeism and admission between the sessions, are a common phenomena among the children. The grade system does not fulfil the requirements of such children. Further, there is no alternative arrangement for coping with absenteeism (seasonal long level) in the traditional classes.

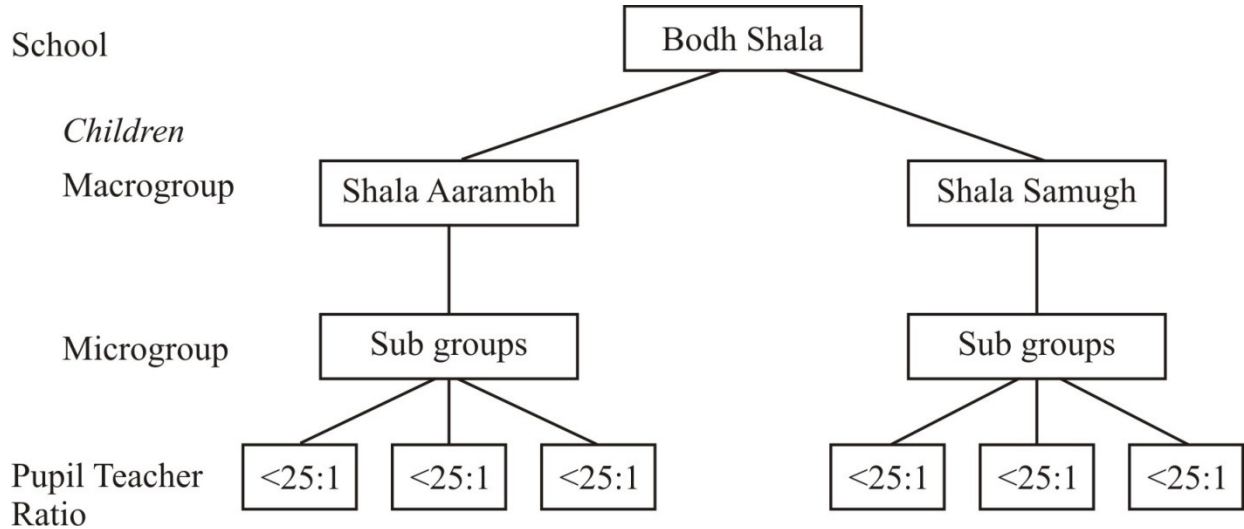


Considering these pitfalls of grade or class, Bodh has evolved its own system of grouping where the boundaries of grade norms have broken up. Chronological age is not the basis of the grouping. Children are grouped in accordance with their level of comprehension of a particular aspect of the curriculum. Another advantage of level over grade is that if the child has finished the course of grade one in 6 months, he/she would not have to wait for another six months for the next grade. A third advantage of group level versus grade is that in a group there is scope for inter-group migration. For example if a child is good at language and weak in mathematics, there is scope to attach the child with the higher and lower level groups respectively. Yet another advantage of this system is that it permits differential treatment at varying levels. If a group has 2-3 levels of children, there is more scope for peer-learning, group activity and monitorial-assistance learning. Bodh feels that this approach would certainly be useful in those schools where there are less teachers than the grades.

Broadly, the Bodh schools have two types of macro groups :

The Shala Aarambh group

The Shala Samugh group

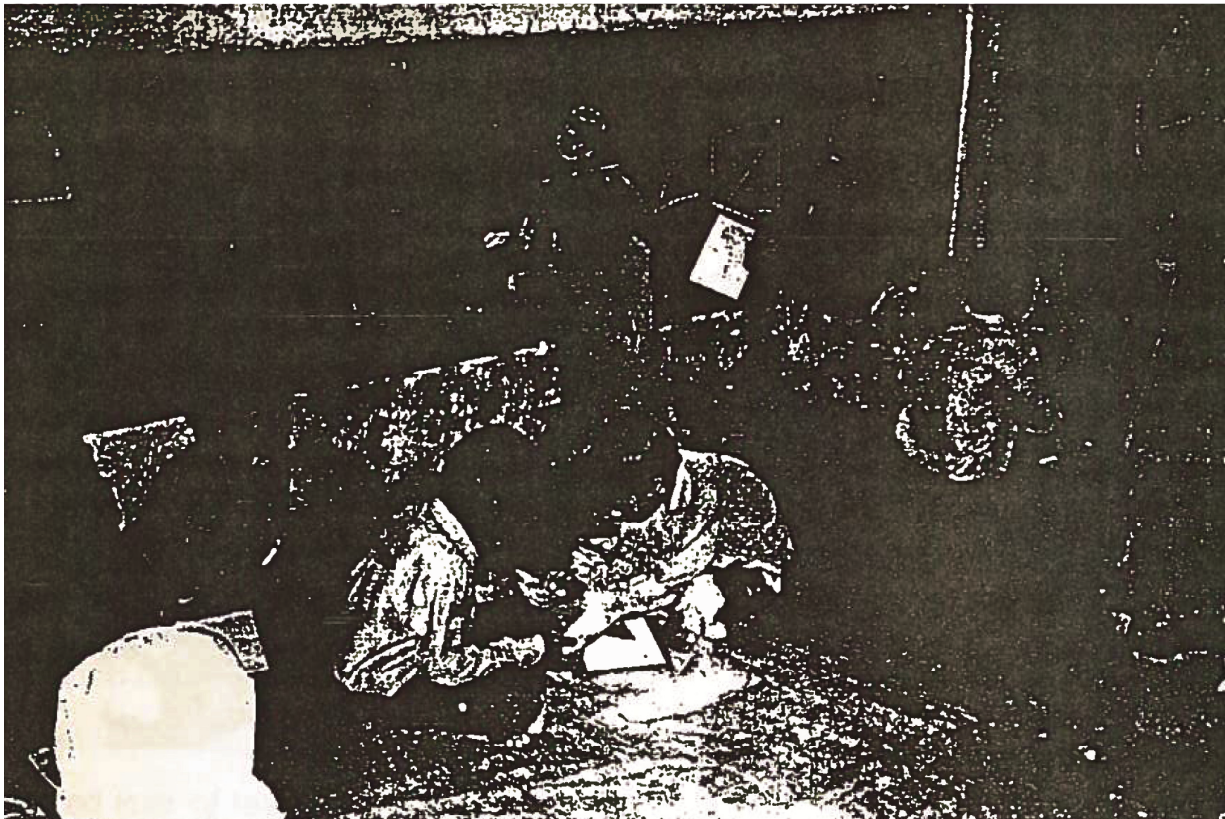


The "Shala Aarambh" group basically includes children of the lower primary level (equivalent to grade I & II), while the "Shala Samugh" group includes children of the upper primary levels (equivalent to grades III, IV, V). Each macro group is further subgrouped into small Microgroups according to children's learning levels affinity. In each school, the number of Shala Aarambh and Shala Samugh groups varies depending on the number of children.

2.3.2 Low Teacher-Pupil Ratil

In the Bodh 'Shala', the teacher-pupil ratio is 1:25 in each group. They believe that if the number of pupils per group is low, it would be easy to manage them both academically and administratively. In addition to this, each child gets personalized attention so that the area of his/her strength and weakness can come to light; and also, her/his behavioural problems, if any can be indentified and tackled. The teacher knows each child by name, which make their relationship close, loving and open. The low ratio also provides more chance of interaction

between the teacher, the learners and the material. These interaction processes make the child active creative and emotionally satisfied.



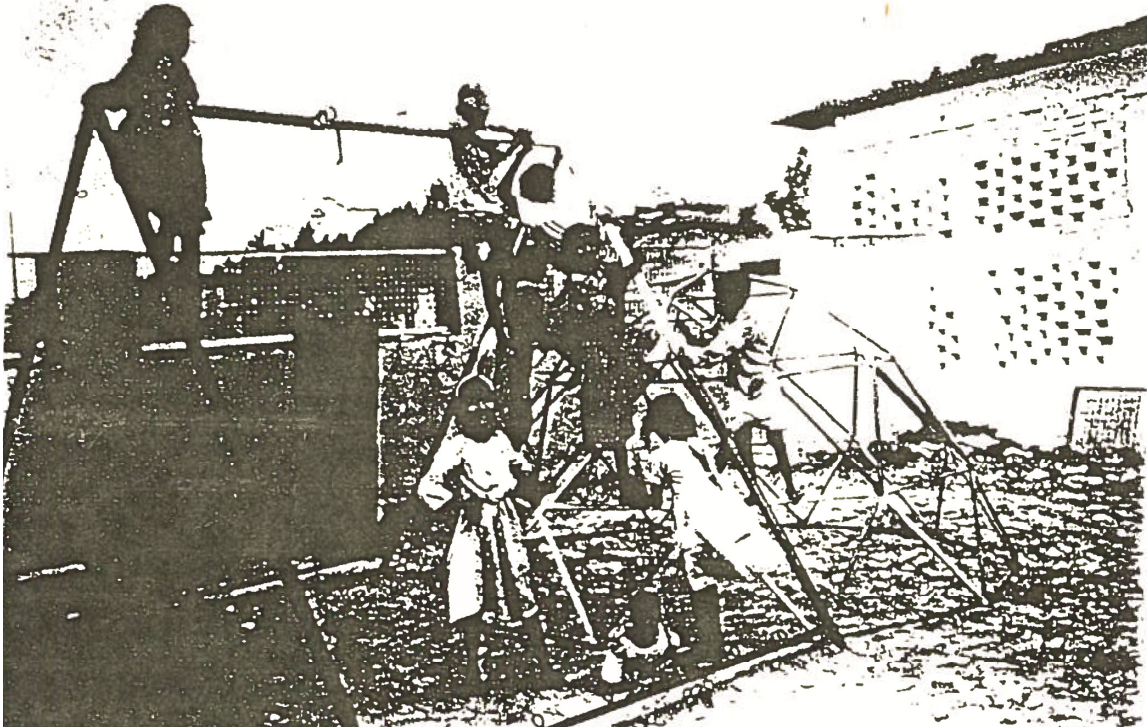
2.3.3 Full Freedom to the Teacher

In Bodh schools the teacher functions as an independent organiser, a researcher, thinker and planner too. The teachers are constantly working with children, and devising and developing need based teaching-learning materials in collaboration with their colleagues. This is different from the normal practice wherein the curriculum planners and designers are mere theoreticians and not practitioners, which makes the curriculum unsuitable for the users. Bodh schools have permitted teachers to become not only the transactors or evaluators but also designers and planners as well. Teachers plan and develop teaching learning materials like puzzles, individual and group activities, games etc., for children, and execute them in their own style.

It is interesting to note that Bodh schools have no 'Head Teachers'. Every teacher has to perform all the roles required for the school's functioning. The schools are being virtually run by the teachers' collective spirit.



Similarly, each teacher has the freedom to take decisions about childrens' academic and non-academic issues and solve problem at his/her own level.



The criteria for the selection of teachers is also very different. Bodh selects teachers who have an interest in teaching, commitment to the work, and patience. They believe that with the course of time, experience and knowledge are automatically improved.

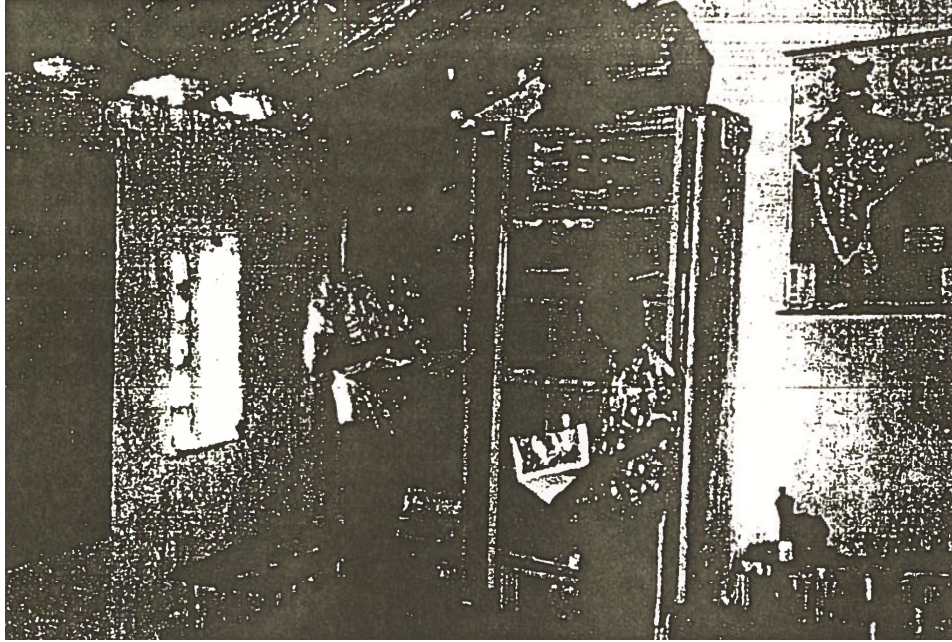
2.3.4 Flexible Curriculum

In Bodh schools, the curriculum for the primary level children is not fixed. They have the notion that a rigid curriculum makes the system dogmatic and unsuited to the learner. The curriculum is evolved by a combination of the universal pedagogic principles and the specific condition of the children in the community. Hence, their curriculum is flexible and need based. This is the reason that Bodh children have no text book in their hands. Each teacher plans/decides teaching-learning activities for his/her own group of children. The work-sheets are planned by teachers for different levels in different areas, regularly.

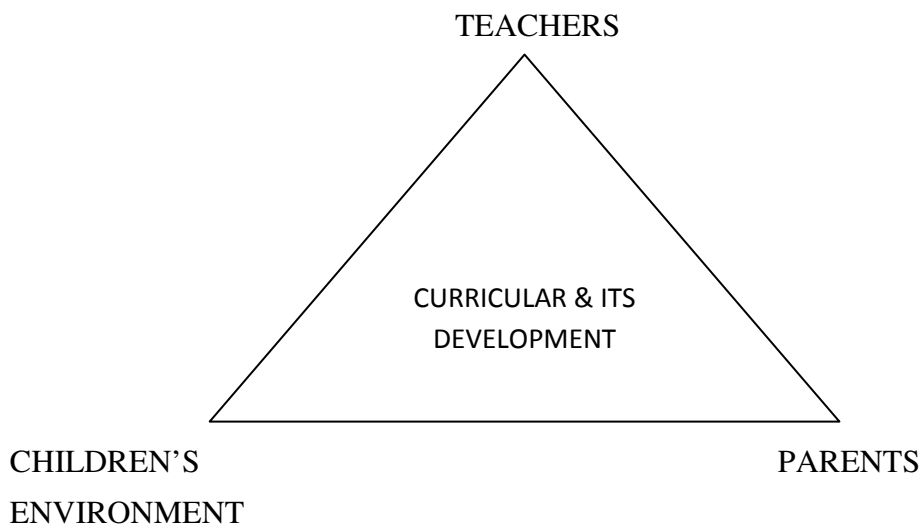
Bodh believes that the “curriculum should be such that it makes the child an independent and motivated learner by developing certain capabilities connected with language, logic and love of learning. It is primarily an interactional process shaped by the nature and quality of interface between understanding of the child and his/her learning ability, understanding of the T-L processes, and understanding of the proposed content or activity. Hence, the curriculum which has been developed for these children is not alien to them. Bodh believes that knowing the child’s inner and outer world is the function of the curriculum”.

Bodh feels that since curriculum development is an ongoing creative process, vitally important in early childhood and primary education, its nature signifies two dimensions: the horizontal and the vertical.

The horizontal dimension is reflected in the interactional process itself, which provides an inexhaustible, fertile ground for the use of original and innovative ideas. whereas the vertical dimension points to a steady and gradual build-up of The growth of knowledge in children.



Another important characteristic of the Bodh's 'curriculum development process' is a trilogue relationship between the teachers, the children and the parents. Before telling the children the right answer of some basic questions(health,general topic,etc.),they are told to seek answers (rom their parents. These answers give the picture of the iarents' attitude,customs and environment. ThUS, a learning child acts as a teacher for his parents who are mostly illiterate.



Another important feature of curriculum development is that every year during the summer r'acation a workshop is eriganized for in-service teachers,where they discuss what ompetencies they have covered,what is left and what is not ochieied.as every teacher aintains a dairy, about each of his/her carrier's progioiss Hence the curriculum development process is both quantitative and qualitative in nature.

Bodh believes in the flexible nature of the curriculum at the primary stage. But they refer to the Sandhan's Minimum Levels of Learning (MLL), for cross-checking the learning levels of these slum children. In the later Shala Samugh stages (grade V), textbooks developed by the SCERT and the state Board are provided to the children. Broadly at primary stage, the major areas in their curriculum are - Language, Mathematics, Environmental Studies, Art and SUPW Work and Moral education.

2.3.5 Teaching Methodology

The classroom practices at Bodh Shalas are different from the traditional classroom practices. The continuous admission throughout the year and long absenteeism among children have made the system flexible in Bodh schools. The organization believes that dynamic groupism widens the scope for child-centered activities and is also conducive to self-pacing. This arrangement makes the teacher a facilitator or intervener who needs to be aware of the metacognitive skills as well as emotional intelligence of the child. Thus the purpose of making non-graded classroom is not just amalgamating a few classes and abolishing exams; it implies a new approach to teaching.



The multilevel approach to teaching is being followed in these schools. Since in multi level approach, basically, learning conditions are to be developed/provided according to the learners' needs. Hence, the maximum scope is to be provided to children for self-pacing. In the different subjects like Language, mathematics and EVS, worksheets/individual activities have been evolved in a graded form and children proceed according to their potential and pace. In language and mathematics, these activities are more in number as compared to Environmental studies.

The methodology of Shala Aarambh and Shala Samugh groups is quite different. In the early stage of Shala Aarambh, children are given activities mainly related to hand movements and eye-hand coordination. In this period, the emphasis is more on group activities like manipulative work, art work, etc. These children are less exposed to individual tasks, except for few exercises in language and mathematics competencies. The second group is exposed to more individual activities are designed for the higher groups as compared to the lower levels. It has also been found that monitorial assistance as a teaching technique is more effective in older children. But peer-group learning has been found to be effective in both the groups.



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Each group has about 25 children. The teacher, for convenience, divides each group into 3-4 sub-groups according to their learning levels. This sub-grouping can easily be done by the teacher on the basis of his/her experience in working with the children. Each sub group gets a different treatment according to its learning level.

These treatments are:

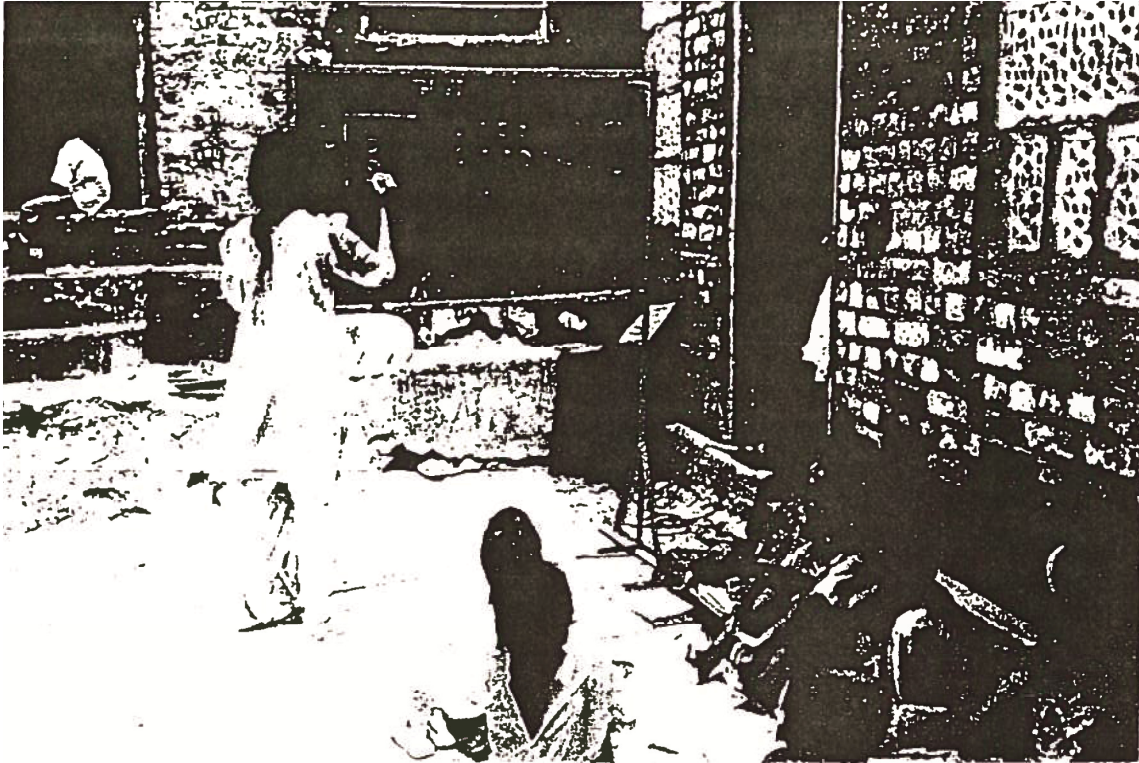
- Interaction between teacher and learner
- Interaction / Activities between/among learners
- Interaction between learner and material
- Self-learning activities.

In Bodh schools, teacher-and-learner interaction/activities are mainly employed for conceptual learning.

The interaction among learners are mainly employed for group learning, e.g, dramatisation, role-playing, story-telling, news-reading and group games are some of such activities.

The third technique, which is employed for interaction between the learner and the material is used when the teacher wants to give first-hand experience to the learner. Children, being at the concrete operational stage in the primary grades learn better when provided concrete experiences.

For example the use of play material like balls, beads, sticks, for counting. Similarly picture cards are used for learning matras, words, names of birds, animals, etc. Learning through the environment has been employed for teaching environmental studies. In the early years, EVS has been a part of the other curricular subjects, which in later stage has been covered through activities and project work.



The fourth type of activities are self-instructional activities. Self-instructional or individual activities are given mainly when the learner needs sonic practice. For example, after the learner has learnt the concepts, the teacher feels that some exercises need to be done independently by the learner. Then she/he prepares worksheets and gets the feedback from the learners. Teachers have experienced that in language and mathematics, these exercises are required more than for Environmental Studies I & II.

2.3.6 Child Friendly Teaching-Learning Materials

The organisation does not prescribe textbooks for child, up to the early Shala Samugh level. In Grade V, children get textbooks, published by SCERT/Rajasthan Bureau, from the school. For the lower levels also, BerTh schools have textbooks in their libraries/resource room, from where the children can get these books as and when required by them. These books are used as reference books mainly at the time of direct teaching.

In Both classrooms, the types of materials being used are prescribed below:

- For the Shala Aamhh group (lower primary) the organisation has developed a 'Khel Path Mela' Khel Mela is a series of activities planned to promote the language and

mathematics (number operations) competencies among children. These activities are mainly group activities, but they can be performed individually also. The important characteristics of this series are:

- The material in the series has been developed mainly for the development of cognitive abilities, especially in language and number comprehension.
- Most of the material can be used as play material (concrete material).
- The material has been designed in such a way that play is the central core of attraction, play and through play the child develops language/mathematics competencies.
- All the materials of the Khel Path Mala have been organised in a graded sequence, i.e., simple to complex, direct to indirect, concrete to abstract and particular to general.
- In this series, each activity has been designed in such a way as to initiate the learner from a very simple level to the complex level.
- The teachers' role is more of a facilitator in this series.
- Learning by doing and Experiencing is encouraged among learners throughout the series.
- It enhances not only cognitive behavior, but affective and psychomotor behaviour is also strengthened. The series includes a lot of manipulative activities, poems and songs.

Bodh believes that this kit covers only some aspects of the early primary grades. In addition to these activities, other performance activities have also been taken care of. These are art work, Hast Kala (SUPW), drama, story-telling, music (song, dance), work on worksheets, etc. The important activities of Khel Path Mala with their major functions are given below :

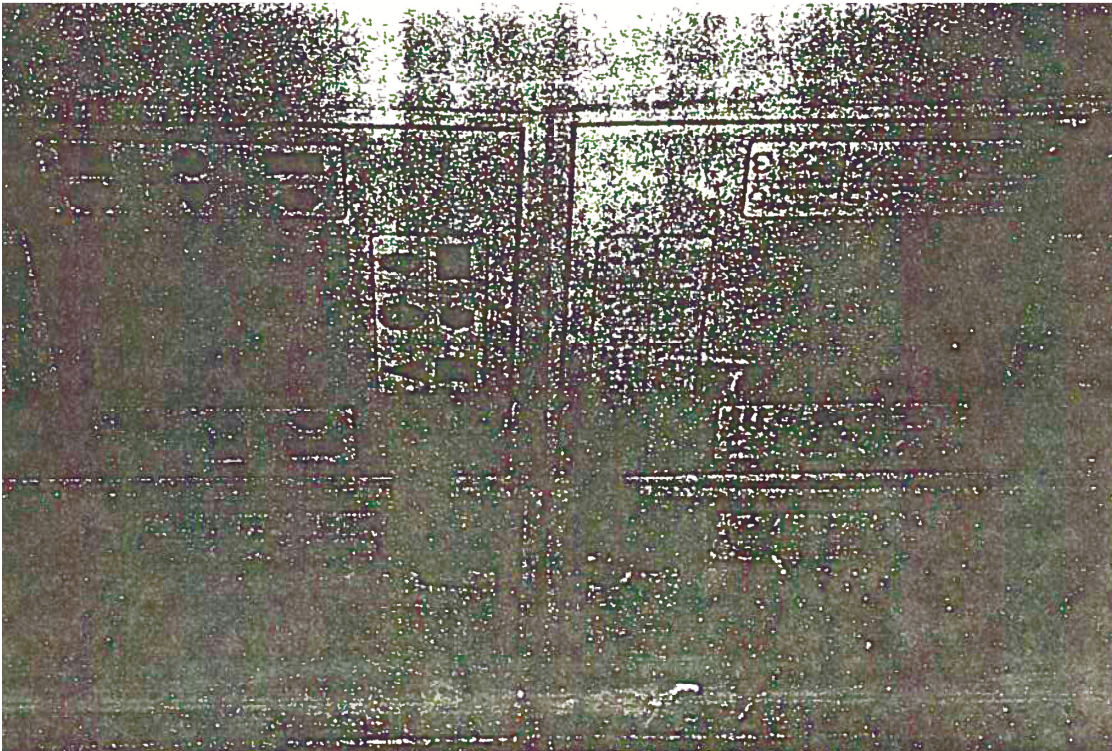
ACTIVITY

I. Game of Ten Sticks

- Hand balancing and concentration
- Understanding the rules of the game
- Concept of more, less, equal
- Recognizing signs like +, -, x, /, =
- Write numbers upto 100 (gradually).

2. Game Bpard and the Game of Dice

- Recognizing different geometrical shapes (round, square, triangle, etc.)
- Recognizing common colours
- Recognizing familiar words & their sounds
- Recognizing familiar letters.



Game of Handkerchief and Tekhti

- Differentiating the geometrical shapes and matching similar shapes
- Developing the ability to understand rules and commands

- | | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| 4. Pegging in Holes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recognizing directions (left, right a below, above) - Recognizing of colour, size and shape of objects. |
| 5. Game of Notes (Currency) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Developing number concept and counting - Developing the concept of tens |
| 6. Composing Stick | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Understanding the unit of tens - Addition, subtraction and multiplication - Counting from 1 to 100 |
| 7. Domino Sets (Adaptation) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hand balancing - Understanding the writing method and construction of simple words - Recognizing shapes of different letters |
| 8. Carrorn Board (Adaptation) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recognizing numbers and letters - Understanding number concept through pictures, signs and numerals |
| 9. Bal Geet Sangrah | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Concept of ones and tens - Addition, subtraction & multiplication |
- In addition to this series, the other teaching learning material is under the process of development. These are the

workbooks, activity books for the early grades in language and mathematics. The workbooks would contain a variety of individual activities, which are organized in a graded level of difficulty. Intact, these experiences, which have been regularly organized and sequenced in the in-service workshops of teachers.

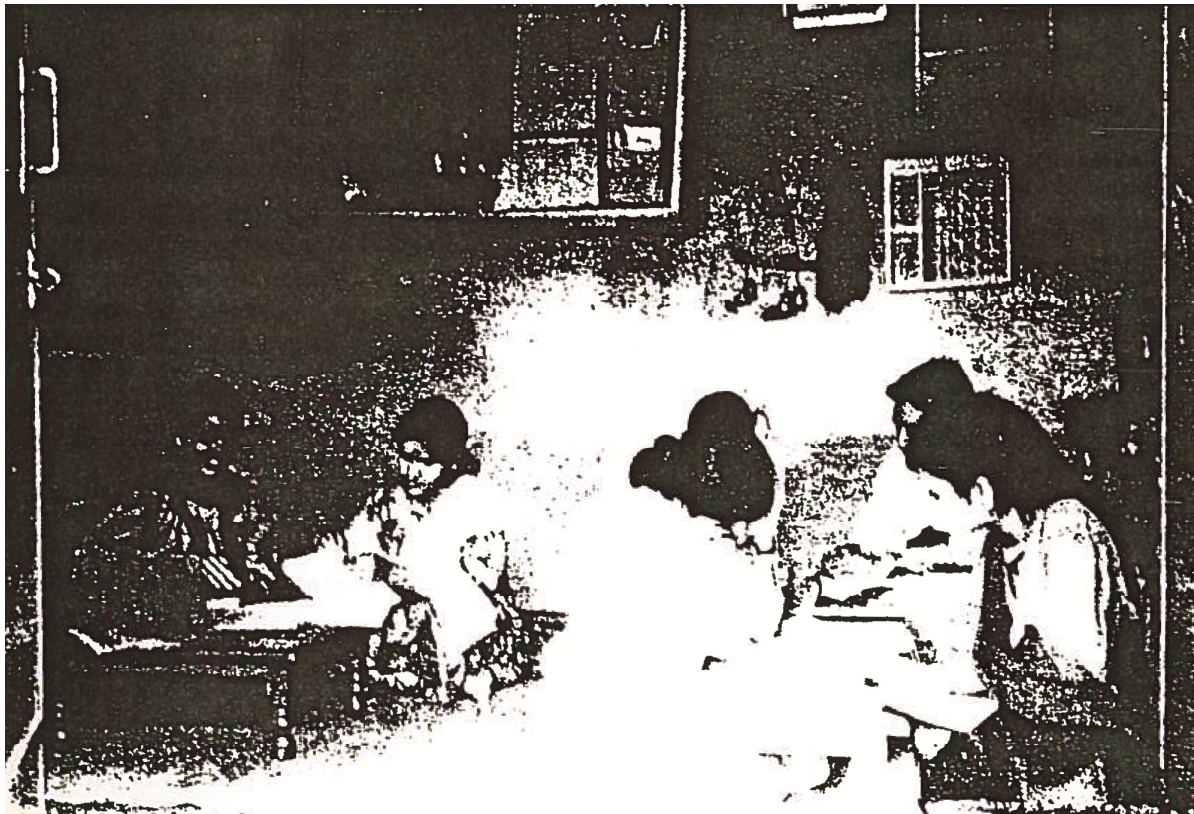
A large number of charts on various topics including the Village maps level also been developed for group demonstration.

2.3.7 Flexible I Dynamic Planning

One of the very significant and unique characteristics of the Bodh Samiti's educational programme is the dynamic planning of their activities (within the classroom and outside as well). Some of the examples of their dynamic planning are

- There is no planned schedule for the activities organized in the morning assembly. Basically, the assembly is not like the usual assembly which is commonly organized in all schools. The purpose of the Bodh school assembly is
- to encourage self-expression, creativity, good-habit formation, environmental awareness, etc., among the children. The children are free to present whatever they want to present. This is the reason Bodh children are quite confident and air their problems openly in front of their teacher (even when the problems are related to the teachers).
- The second example of the dynamic planning is the timings of the school. It is very interesting to observe that school timings are decided by the children and the community members. This is the reason they have different timings during summer, winter and in the rainy season. Similarly, in some areas where children

work at home and also in the farms in the day-time, schools run at night. The vacation timings are also decided by the children and their parents. It was experienced by Bodh that matching school timings with the children's convenience enhances the attendance and retention. Two full days' leave per week is given to the children. Since planning is an essential element of any programme, one full day per week and 2-hours every day (after the teaching work) are utilized by the teachers for planning work. If a teacher is absent, they neither free the children nor engage them in some meaningless task. There is scope for these children to form another group with other learners of their level.



all the Bodh schools there are no head teachers. All teachers are responsible for their own work. Hence, each other has degree of autonomy. Every teacher plans according to needs of his/her children. This decentralized planning approach makes their programme more predictable and effective. Children are also free from home work, etc. ONLY if the children insist, does the teacher give some homework (especially some supplementary reading material) to them.

2.3.8 Monitoring and Evaluation

Since no formal examinations and grades have been awarded in the Bodh schools, there is flexibility in the promotion scheme. Unlike in regular schools, the learner has not to wait for one full year in the same grade after finishing the course. There is also a scheme of subject promotion (which means that if the child is very bright in one subject, “she/he can group with the next children for that one subject). Hence dynamic grouping has been followed mainly for the core subjects, language and mathematics.

Bodh teachers feel difficulty in developing their own the diagnostic text items and also in planning the remedial measures. They have proposed taking up activities in this area under their research programmes.

In addition to daily evaluation, weekly evaluation is also been done by the teachers regarding What concepts have been learnt, what concept have not been achieved and what difficulties the children face in achieving competencies. All these issues are discussed in the weekly meetings. The teachers also share their success, and difficulties. Hence weekly meetings of teachers are not merely for reporting; they are also a self-critical appraisal of their own work. In monthly meetings, all the teachers teaching at different levels meet and present the child wise progress of their groups. Mutual sharing improves their understanding of the teaching-learning process. After three months, a child wise report is prepared by the teacher in different subjects and presented in seminars which all the teachers and parents have the freedom to attend and in which they discuss their childrens progress. Similarly after six months (June-December). Bodh schools also organize a workshop where the half yearly and yearly progress of the children is presented along with remedial treatment.



All the teachers have to monitor their own tasks in cooperation with their colleagues. Thus the weekly meeting of teachers monitors their own activities. Similarly the monthly, quarterly, half-yearly and annual reports of the children, monitor the learners progress. Thus, the proceedings of the workshop monitor the quality of the work performed individual teachers.

2.3.9 Teacher Training

Teacher training in the Bodh programme focuses more ...on technical issues related to teaching learning. Bodh has types of training for teachers newly recruited teacher, they organize a 8 month training. For Bodh teachers who are already working in their schools they organize inservice type of training. The duration of this training is about one and half months, and organized in the summer (teachers have 15 days leave only). The main function of the 3 month training is to acquaint the teacher with the needs of the slum dwellers and their major problems, while the (one and a half) month training focuses on a review of the curriculum, teaching learning strategies and development of material on the basis of the teachers past experience. The significance of this training

- The training is participatory in nature. There are no formal lectures in the training programme. Issues are raised in the group and all the trainees have to participate in the discussion. They are also free to raise issues/queries and give their opinions and suggestions for the training programmes.
- The training content emphasises understanding the child and classroom processes, i.e. child psychology, transactional techniques, child-centered approaches, multilevel teaching. Self-discipline and self-service practices are also encouraged among trainees. There is no rigid, structured course designed for the training. Issues crop up and are handled according to the need of the trainees and the objectives. The training tries to eliminate the gap between theory and practice, concept and behaviour.
- The training is characterised by a kind of a group process in which an individual trainee finds himself in the role of an important actor enjoying freedom of expression. Hence the emphasis has been shifted from other-directedness to self-directedness.

2.3.10 Community Participation

The significant component of the Bodh programmes' success in slum areas is community participation. Bodh believes that without the community's role and its concern over various issues, the experiment would not have succeeded. To understand the child, one must understand his/her environment. With community participation, the gap between the child, teacher, school and community has been reduced to a minimum.

The Bodh organization feels that the community is one of the key factors in the success of this experiment. The majority of parents opined that in most schools whatever education is being imparted is not need-oriented or useful for learners. They said, "We want such an education through which we and our children can earn money. Education should give us roti-roji not just teach us signing and filling up notebooks." Bodh lays particular stress on the triangular relationship where the community is as important as the teacher and the child. Hence, parents give the full liberty to express their opinions/suggestions.

Each day, after school the Bodh teachers have to visit the community and interact with community members including the Pradhan, the community leaders, etc., for about 1 1/2 to 2 hours. The teachers ask about their problems, and give feedback of the children. This visit also motivates the parents to send their other children to school. Another important characteristic of the Bodh experiment is that they allow the children to bring their younger brother and sisters along with them to school, because most of the parents are working during that period in some factory or other place. Hence, in most of the Bodh schools, the younger siblings are sitting with the older children in the same class, and if their age is between 3 to 5 years, they have arrangements for pre-schools classes for them.



Another very interesting characteristic of Bodh is to organize an open assembly where community members, parents, teachers, and children together discuss the various issues related to education (such as vacation period reasons of dropouts). This participation is like a symbiosis where teachers get benefited since they get to know from them about their culture, traditions, beliefs, etc. These parents also train the teachers to sing some folk songs. Similarly, practical knowledge about crops and common insects which they do and suggest

2.4 TEACHERS' PERCEPTION

Anju Soni is a primary school teacher in a Bodh school, she is a graduate with three years experience of teaching in a private school. Two years back she joined a Bodh school and underwent their 3-month training also. She feels it is a very challenging and difficult task to teach children taking into account their individual needs. The approach in Bodh teaching according to her is very different. She says, "I have taught in private schools where the teaching task was taken up quite casually. There was no supervision or discussion on how to teach. The emphasis here is on *How to teach* approach instead of *What to teach*."

She says "In Bodh schools one positive feature is that the number of children is more or less constant (About twenty). The number of children being limited, I know each and every child personally, which makes me quite confident in my work.

One of the very positive things about Bodh's innovative approach to teaching is 'grouping'. Their basis of grouping is not just the chronological age. They believe that if in one group, instead of one level of learner, there are 2-3 levels of learners, it would be more beneficial to teachers and also to learners !

"This grouping enables teachers to focus on individuals need and encourages children to work at their own levels. In Bodh schools we have the two-teacher approach on which language and EVS-I are taught by one teacher, and EVS-II and mathematics by the other. I think this is quite logical, because subject knowledge is as important as the techniques of teaching. Similarly, this grouping also broadens the scope for monitorial assistance, group activities, peer learning, etc.

"We feel difficulties in some areas. The biggest difficulty is to convince the parents. They frequently come and say that in your school there are no books and no meals also. The second difficulty we feel is that most of the parents if have some work at home, they retain the girls, not the boys. They discriminate to the extent that sometimes when doctors come for vaccination in school, the parents totally refuse vaccination for the son. They say, 'you can vaccinate my daughter. If something happens, our son at least will be saved'. The third difficulty we feel is in evaluation. It is in-built in the teaching-learning process; we have to be engaged all the time.

Moreover, we do not have much knowledge about the various techniques of evaluation. We need training in this area. The fourth problem is that our salary, considering our work, is too little. It should be improved to give us motivation for our work.

“The overall approach is satisfactory but it needs a lot of hard work and motivation. The most significant and positive point is dynamic groupism without boundaries of grade.”

2.5 A CHILD'S POINT OF VIEW

Radha is a student of a Bodh school - Nahrika Naka Bodh Shala - which is near Shastri Nagar. She is 11 years of age and studying in Shala Sainugh. She has seven brothers, and she is the only sister. Her father is a Halwai and her mother is a house-wife. Both are literate.



Radha says, “I like to go school very much because at home I have to do a lot of work, as my father is busy at the shop and my mother is making beorios. Previously I was studying in a nearby school where they only gave us charina and niurinula and homework. In that school the

teacher hardly asked us what we wanted to do. But in this school, whatever we want to do, the teacher does it. The teacher also gives us games, story books or even he dictionary and atlas if we need it. We frequently go for vsits and we collect a lot of things like-snals, various kinds of leaves, flowers, feathers and preserved them ir copy. In this school the teacher also asks me to heck the younger children's work. I feel very happy to do this. I feel proud of it. In this school, sometimes, if we go late the teacher does not scold us. Sometimes, when our younger brothers and sisters come with us, the teacher does not say anything. Sometimes, we are interested only in art work hut the teacher does not mind.”



SOURCE

- A. 1. Personal visit to the Bodh organization.
- B. 1. Alternative Elementary Education Programme - Bodh Project Report., 1992- 1993
2. An Affectionate Alliance : A Modest Success Story of a Replicable Child Education Model in Jaipur-slums, Bodh Shiksha Samiti, Jaipur, Rajasthan
3. Bodh Elementary'Education Programme Project Proposals and Reports, 1989- 93
4. Bodh Alternative Elementary Education Programme, Bodh Samiti Pragati Prativaden, MHRD, 1993-1994
5. 7 Classroom culture and Positive Attributes of childrens: Unfolding the proceses of Development, Bodh, Jaipur
6. Navachar, Prarambhjc Shiksha Mai Navachar, Bodh Samiti, Jaipur

ANNEXURE.II

BODH - ORGANISATION AT A GLANCE

1. Name of the organization
 - Bodh Shiksha Samiti
 - A-A-1 Anita Colony,
Bajaj Nagar, Jaipur (Rajasthan)
Ph. 518460
2. Date of Registration
 - 22nd Dec. 1987
3. Contact Person
 - Mr. Yogendra
4. Target Group
 - Slum Dwellers Children
(Boys & Girls)
 - Initial entry into the
school does not require
formal training
 - Age group for pre-school
(3-6) yrs and Primary Education
(6-14 yrs)
5. Number of grades in schools
 - No grade-categorization Imparting
Education from Nursery to primary
education
6. Programmes conducted by
the Samiti
 - Alternative Primary School
Education for children. (6-14 yrs.)
 - Pre-School child Development
Programme (3-6 yrs.)
 - Out reach/adoption programme in
state school of Japur

7. No. of Schools Under Samiti - Seven, all in slum areas.

8. Number of children

S.N	Name of the School	Total Student	Female	Male
1.	Guru Teg Bahadur Basti	213	115	98
2.	Malviya Nagar Basti	192	123	69
3.	Teli Pada Basti	155	80	75
4.	Baba Ramdev Nagar	130	68	62
5.	Amagarh Basti	156	98	58
6.	Nagtalai Basti	114	59	55
7.	Jai Chittor Nagar	41	25	16
		1001	568	433

9. Number of teachers under samiti - A = 20 (Regular)
F = 14, M = 6 (Regular)
B. Adhoc Equal Number of adhoc workers are also associated.

10. Qualification and Teaching Experience of Teachers

S.N.	Name	Sex	Qualification	Experience
1	Mr. Chootu Ram Sharma	Male	M.Com., B.Ed.	5 years
2	Mr. Hanuman	Male	M.A	6 years
3	Mr. Seema Kumawat	Female	B.A	3 years
4	Ms. Laxmi Sharma	Female	M.A	3 years
5	Mr. Taj Mohhammad	Male	M.A.	3 years
6	Ms. Andu Soni	Female	B.A	2 years
7	Ms. Kamlesh Sharma	Female	M.A.	3 years
8	Ms. Aradhana	Female	B.A	2 years
9	Ms. Prili Singh	Female	M.A.	2 years
10	Ms. Indira Sharnia	Female	B.Com	2 years

S.N.	Name	Sex	Qualification	Experience
11	Ms. Kusumlata Sharma	Female	B.A., B.Ed.	1 years
12	Ms. Meenadashi Joshi	Female	M.A. (Eco.)	1 years
13	Ms. Sashi Mehata	Female	B.A.	> 1 years
14	Ms. Babita Gupta	Female	B.A.	> 1 years
15	Mr. Ajay Sharma	Male	B.A.	> 1 years
16	Mr. Yetandra Kumar	Male	B.A.	> 1 years
17	Ms. Geeta Rawat	Female	B.A.	> 1 years
18	Mr. Babu lal	Male	B.A.	> 1 years
19	Ms. Ranjeeta	Female	M.A., B.Ed.	2 years
20	Ms. Nandita	Female	M.A.	2 years

Temporary Teachers name not included in the list.

11. Physical Facilities in Schools
- Adequate space in four schools for teaching-learning
 - Three schools runing in courtyards, road sides and community member houses
 - Toilet facilities only in four schools (separate for boys & girls)
 - Drinking water available in all schools.
 - Storing water facilities only in three schools.
 - Children and teacher sit together on durries which are adequate in number.
 - Material for recreational activities (plays, games music) are available in all schools.
12. Educational Facilitles
- Free Education to all children.
 - Free teaching-learning materials (like

sheets, slates, pencils, pen colours etc.) provided to children.

- Activity - cum - workbook of various levels are under preparation.
- Teacher made worksheets for different levels in the area of Language, Mathematics and EVS, especially for remedial and individual exercises.
- School Library function as a Library cum-Resource Room in each school which contains :
 - Reference books from SCERT, NCERT, State books in different subject areas.
 - Children's literature
 - Story books
 - Biographies
 - Dictionaries, Globe, Atlas
 - Educational games, puzzles, thinking games.
- Each classroom has a learning corner (children's corner) which contains.
- Daily to annual progress report of the group.
- Teachers and children's Diary.
- Children's Collection.
- Art work/craft work of children.
- Concrete material like pebbles, clay, mud balls sticks, blocks of different colours etc.
- MHRD
Aga Khan Foundation

13. Classroom

14. Support Agency

1. Guru Teg Bahadur Basti, Jaipur - Mainly (Sikh) Children of R.C.C. Workers
2. Malviya Nagar Basti - Mainly Dalits and Schedule Caste
3. Tell Pada Basti, Jaipur - (Mainly Daily Wagers)
4. Baba Ram Dev Nagar, Jaipur - Nomadic Tribes (Sashi, Jogi)
5. Amagarh Basti, Jaipur - Muslims
6. Nag talai Basti, Jaipur - Mainly quarry workers
7. Jai Chittor Nagar - Nomadic and mixed caste (low S.E.S.)

PART - II

IMPLICATIONS FOR MULTIGRADE SITUATIONS

Although the Odi and the Digantar schools do not strictly fall into the category of multigrade schools, both their Alternative Primary Education Programmes have several innovative features which have relevance for multigrade teaching-learning situations.

The Multilevel and Dynamic Grouping Approach

While, generally, multigrade situations are not opted for but get created due to unfavourable circumstances resulting from shortage of teachers and of financial resources, these innovative schools follow a multi-level approach by choice for sound pedagogical reasons. Every child according to them is unique and learns at his/her own pace, which must be respected if the child has to be helped to make satisfactory progress. This multi-level and dynamic grouping approach will possibly be very suitable for multigrade situations too wherein, while often the number of children may not be too large, the number of levels will inevitably be more. The employing of both same ability and mixed-ability grouping has been demonstrated by both sets of schools with their respective advantages as discussed, and both have relevance for multigrade situations. The approach would definitely be widening the scope of such classrooms where absenteeism, grade repetition, multi-age situation (due to regular admission throughout the year and age variation at the entry level) in children are very much prevalent especially in the multigrade classrooms.

Multigrade teachers at present do not generally have any training in handling these class situations and the traditional methods only equip them to handle each grade in isolation and that too, as one homogeneous unit level. The multi-level and dynamic grouping approach needs to be incorporated in a very significant way into the training of teachers for multigrade situations, or perhaps for all teachers since it is equally relevant for mono grade situations as well. The emphasis in the training should be on developing skills of class management and organization; planning

multi-level learning situations; and developing sensitivity and understanding for identifying and placing children appropriately at the various levels and monitoring and evaluating their progress. This is only possible through “hands on” training strategies, as demonstrated by both Digantar and Bodh organisations.

Peer Tutoring / Monitoring

The methodology of both these organisations involves enlisting the assistance of a brighter older child to help the not-so-bright or younger children as a facilitator, to ensure that each group gets the required attention. As reported by a child in the case study, this strategy not only helps the younger learners but also does a lot for the self-esteem of the older child, and is, therefore, mutually beneficial. This can be usefully incorporated into the multigrade teaching-learning methodology also. As evident in the case study observations, level III to V require more of direct teaching as compared to the lower levels (grades), and this would ease the pressure on the teachers' time and facilitate class management.

Graded Teaching - Learning Materials

The multi-level small-group class management is only possible if the teacher has available a variety of carefully graded self-learning materials with which to engage the learners meaningfully and cater to their progressive levels. The textbook alone cannot serve this purpose. There is need, therefore, as has been done in these experiments, to provide for learning, particularly in the lower levels i.e. Grades 1, 2 and 3, through concrete materials and a range of activities which will help them learn through ‘doing and experiencing’. These materials which would be syllabus based, should be graded and should promote active learning of the required competencies. The older children would require more of self-learning activities. These would be best developed by the teachers themselves to a large extent during training so that they feel a sense of ownership and also therefore have the motivation and competence to use them and evaluate them as part of a feedback and feed-forward cycle.

Community Participation

A very common problem with respect to many multigrade situations is the phenomenon of the “isolated teacher” who while enjoying full “autonomy” also feels totally marginalized from the system since he/she is placed in a school in the far interior where others from the department rarely visit. While cluster resource centres would solve this problem partially, the active involvement of the community can also be sought by the teacher as in these schools. **Even otherwise, the link between the school and the community must be strengthened in all situations to make education more relevant for the children.**

Training

A very significant lesson that can be derived from these case studies is that the training of teachers has to have an **emphasis on “do-how” rather than “know how” with a major component of “hands on” practice in model situations for acquired skill development.** Also important is the provision for continued or recurrent training and “sharing” workshops which serve to further enrich teachers’ skills and knowledge and sustain their motivation.

The Digantar and Bodh schools are running successfully with the advantage of very dynamic leadership of committed individuals. The number of schools is also limited. The challenge would be to be able to replicate and sustain many of these innovations in the phenomenally large number of multigrade schools across the country for which the major resource support would be the cluster resource centre. Building up the professional base of the cluster resource centre coordinators, therefore, becomes a crucial link.

Wider Implication

The organizations, experiments are basically on limited and selective samples (mainly on rural and slums). The lessons which have been derived/learned from the above case studies should be tried out on larger samples in traditional multigrade schools, through Action-Research - Intervention studies. The field tried strategies along with teacher training package should be disseminated to different multigrade schools for their functioning in the field.

Learning Corners

The class arrangement with ‘learning corners’ set up as observed in both sets of schools, can be made a regular feature of multigrade classrooms as well, wherein children can have easy access to materials\activities and can, after an initial period of habituation, get involved in doing activities on their own independent of the teacher or with the help of older children/monitors. In this way children also develop the habit/sense of responsibility of taking care of, and putting things back in their place on their own.

Planning

To be able to successfully implement this child-centered approach, the teacher needs sufficient time to plan and prepare activities to suit different levels. Both and Digantar schools give two full days off in the week to children so that the teachers can do their week’s planning. This is a very critical requirement and needs to be considered for all schools, particularly the multigrade ones. **While the ‘chalk and talk’ method requires no prior preparation, activity-based teaching particularly through the multi-level, dynamic grouping approach, needs not only careful and thorough preparation but also the time to do it in.**

Cluster Meetings

Both sets of schools have demonstrated that the sharing of ideas, experiences and problems by teachers among themselves helps a great deal in developing their own understanding and skills in this kind of classroom approach. **The provision under DPEP of school cluster resource centres therefore is potentially a very useful resource and these centres need to be systematically planned and monitored to derive the full benefit from them.**