



Adapting Teaching to Challenging Contexts: Punjab Leads the Way

The struggle to smartly maximize teaching and learning gains by utilizing globally tried and tested practices—Multigrade Teaching (MGT) being one—has come to fruition through implementing a flagship initiative supported by the School Education Department, Government of Punjab. Even though many public sector primary schools in rural Punjab had been practicing MGT, its application was yet to deliver the desired results. To deal with the challenge, the FCDO-funded Punjab Education Support Programme (PESP) II supported the School Education Department (SED) and the Quaid-e-Azam Academy for Educational Development (QAED) in designing a high-quality multigrade teaching and learning pilot, which has successfully been implemented in 21 districts of the province.

“This pilot contains all the missing links. We are now all set to not only have more trained teachers but also witness an improvement in learning outcomes at MGT schools,” remarks Anila Hafeez, a teacher at Government Girls Primary School, Central Jail, Faisalabad. Relating some of the deficiencies afflicting MGT in the past, she says, “We were unable to achieve Student Learning Outcomes. There were no structured curricular programs for MGT schools. The professional development of MGT teachers remained a distant cry. We lacked the expertise to plan lessons vis-à-vis multigrade; understaffing was another dilemma.”

The pilot has incorporated five key components—material development (teacher training modules; lesson plans for the core subjects of English, Mathematics, Urdu, and Science; worksheets with answer keys; academic calendars with grade-wise integrated SLOs); resource pack for students; formative assessment strategies; training of Lead Trainers (LTs) and Master Trainers (MTs); and training of teachers. While appreciating PESP-II technical support, Dr Alia Sadiq, Senior Subject Specialist and MGT focal person of QAED’s material development team shared, “We have

developed Block Lesson Plans for MGT teachers, and conducted a review of materials and lesson plans, including trainee modules and formative assessment strategies. The results of our hard work have led to 24 LTs and 300 MTs qualifying to pass on their skill sets to future teachers. Over 9,000 successfully trained teachers will have taught over 900,000 students in multigrade settings over the next five years.”

Data shows that 85% of Punjab’s primary schools have less than six teachers. “Previously, my classmates and I used to sit idle while our teacher taught students of the other grade, and vice versa. But now, we are learning in an environment where our teacher has developed the skillsets to teach students across more than one curriculum grade, without our time and energy being wasted. Learning has become a worthwhile experience,” express Shereen Gull and Muhammad Ali, students of grade 4 at Government Girls Primary School, Chohanwala, and Government Primary School, Peer Muhammad Ghouri, Dera Ghazi Khan, respectively. Notably, SED has put together a draft MGT policy, which is pending Cabinet approval. The policy aims to bring multigrade teaching at par with international best practices.

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