

Teachers Perception towards Problem of Learning Social Studies among Students at Upper Primary Schools nearby Slum area in Maharashtra

Abstract

This paper focuses on teachers' perception towards the problems of learning social studies among students from slums and children of socio-economically backward parents at upper primary level. It analyses the perception through interview of social studies teachers (SST) teaching in schools near a pre-dominantly slum area of Mumbai Urban and Suburban district of Maharashtra State. The paper also highlights problems faced by teachers in pedagogical processes and explores their reflective practices and their attempts to improve the process of teaching and learning in the classroom. The data collected through different sources have been triangulated to understand the problems of learning social studies through thematic analysis of responses on different characteristics of sample schools. It is suggested that all SSTs should be reflective practitioners and improve the quality of education through action research and solve the immediate problems of teaching and learning social studies inside the classroom. Evidence has been derived from the transcription of teacher interview to reflect on the way of teaching and learning and develop the skill of creative thinking and critical thinking among learners through the activity-based learning.

Keywords: Teachers Perception, Problems of Learning Social Studies, Reflective Practice of SST

Introduction

Learning of school subjects in children at the elementary level is a major concern in the context of the present educational system. The issues of learning social studies are also an important aspect of the educational discourse in the present times. Since, children have to be more critical, creative and need higher order thinking skills etc., the teacher must teach in a manner that develops these abilities, but in reality most teachers are unable to facilitate this in their classrooms. The children therefore require not only a suitable platform in the schools but also a conducive socio-cultural environment at home. It is through this that they can develop skills to become a responsible citizen of India. However, the students coming from slums face major challenges in learning social studies. The slum being an overcrowded area the living conditions are often not good. They

may have problems like disease due to living conditions.

Social studies is an important subject at the upper primary level and is concerned with the behaviour of "human beings as members of society". This behaviour of human beings and societies varies frequently. This poses a great challenge to the teachers/social scientist whenever they need to establish some hypotheses based on observation and assumptions. The changing nature makes it difficult to generalise statements that show the existence of cause and effect relationships between observables. Therefore, a teacher cannot teach a child in the modern era, but simply bring out what is inside the children and facilitate in the process of their learning while teaching.

Government of India has initiated many programme and policies to improve the quality of education. In the National Seminar

on 'Research in Social Science Education in Indian Schools', organised by Department of Education in Social Science, NCERT, March 15-17, 2017, some questions associated with classroom practices and processes adopted by different teachers and schools in the teaching of social sciences were raised. These include important questions such as: To what extent these practices promote active participation of students in the process of generating knowledge? How does dialogue with community help in improving the quality of learning experiences? To what extent do the classrooms encourage alternative thinking and questioning by students and allow going out of the classroom to engage with social reality around them?

Social science classrooms are not static or uniform. They change with the topics being taught. Indian classrooms are also seasonal in the sense that their nature change with the time of the year. In the initial months of the academic year, social science teachers spend more time to explain concepts and provide scope for discussions and exploration of knowledge outside the classroom. As the academic year ends, teachers and students grapple with examinations. They spend more time on revision and reinforcement of concepts. Besides in the context of social sciences as well the nature of classroom becomes complex when different teachers teach one course. Every teacher brings in different perspectives of their subject. Other questions that deserve exploration are: How students cope with different teachers teaching one course? How much time teachers and students talk in the social science classes? What is the nature of questioning by students and teachers and why? What kinds of materials are available to students and teachers for use in the social science classroom? How are they different from other subjects? Social sciences are sought after in some school systems and marginalized in a few others. Does this affect the way social science teachers and students get engaged in schools? Social science classrooms are not far removed from political, social and

educational ideologies. Research is required to understand how teachers and students deal with and resolve various political and cultural perspectives inbuilt in social science syllabus and textbooks (NCERT, 2017).

One of the very few exceptions to the lack of qualitative research on faculty satisfaction is the one by Ambrose et al (2005), which set out an agenda for qualitative research approach to assessing faculty satisfaction. By "qualitative" they mean semi-structured interviews that can be coded and compared and then used as the basis of more qualitative analysis. As they pointed out that although survey research has the benefit of statistical power and structural modelling, the interview method allows faculty to identify issues in their own words so that they are not over emphasised. They suggest that qualitative research work is not only enhanced by the use of semi-structured interviews but also other methods of qualitative research like ethnographic field work and participation observation.

With this background, an attempt has been made in this paper to study "Teachers' Perceptions" on the problems of learning social studies at upper primary level in schools of a slum region.

Database and Methodology

Operational Definition: Learning is the acquisition of knowledge or skills through study, experience or being taught. It is the process of acquiring new or modifying existing knowledge, behaviour, skills, values or preferences. The sample schools have been purposively selected and are Mumbai Corporation, State and Central Board schools near L-Ward slum dominated area of Mumbai Urban and Suburban district of Maharashtra.

Objectives of the Study: (1) To identify teachers' perspective on reflective practices in the classroom and highlight the problems faced by them in the pedagogical process; (2) To analyse the perception of teachers through interview of social studies teachers

of schools near slum areas of Maharashtra; and (3) To give an account of teachers perception towards the problems of learning social studies among the students in upper primary schools of this area.

Source: Data has been collected from both primary and secondary sources for the study. The primary data was collected by using the method of Personal Interview of teachers through well-structured open ended interview scheduled and extensive survey of teachers in sample schools. The secondary data was collected from RAA Mumbai, SCERT, Pune and the school records. Other government publications such as Primary Census Abstract, District Census Handbook, books journals, newspapers etc. Were used as well.

Sample: In this study, the sample of L-Ward slum dominated area of Mumbai Suburban districts of Maharashtra State was purposively selected. As per the database of District Census Handbook-2001& 2011 the slum has the population 5.85 lakhs. The location and information about three sample schools under study were obtained from Regional Academic Authority (RAA), Mumbai Office. The respondents were 5 class-VIII social studies teachers from three schools and the principals of the schools. Two teachers from a KV, two teachers from a private school and one from a BMC School participated. The conversations took place as per their availability during the period of data collection.

Variable: In order to achieve the purpose of this study, some aspects are to be taken into account to identify teaching and learning difficulties of students of the sample schools. These include inclinations of teachers to teach social studies, problems faced in communicating content of social studies, conducting activities during teaching-learning process, participation of student of different socio-economic backgrounds in activities, organisation of group work inside the classroom, giving freedom to students to ask questions, clearing students' doubt during the teaching-learning process,

giving opportunity to students to present their views inside the classroom, taking all students to visit the nearby famous historical and geographical place, taking extra classes for students who are weak in social studies, problems faced while teaching social studies to socio-economic backward students; use of ICT/Internet/ppt to explain concepts; their participation in training programmes of social studies. There were question asked like- how do you assist learners to learn social studies; what are the strategies of teaching and learning that you use in social studies; what challenges of teaching and learning you have experienced in social studies; what are the problems that hinder teaching of social studies at upper primary; what can contribute to improved performance of learners etc.. We also asked about their contribution to educational reform to support learners with poor academic performance and also asked if change in curriculum leads to under-performance of learners in social studies; and finally what are their suggestive measures to solve the problems of learning social studies.

Tools: A structured questionnaire for Teacher's Interview Schedule and a Principals' information schedule for school profile were used.

Technique & Method: In order to accomplish these tasks and identify factors responsible for problems of teaching and learning social studies among the socio-economic backward students, the Qualitative Data collected through teacher's interview schedule was transcribed and thematically analysed. Data triangulation was used to analyse qualitative data that included views, opinions, observations, philosophical ideas etc of the teachers and principals.

Profile of Sample Schools

All these three schools are headed by female teachers and are co-educational institutions. They are upto different levels, till senior Secondary in KV, up to Secondary level in the private school and up to elementary level in the BMC School. The KV and BMC School

have a nice campus with availability of classroom and financial and administrative support to initiate different innovative ideas, access learning resource and provide in-service teacher training programmes etc. These are not available to the same extent in the private school.

All three schools have provision of electricity, safe drinking water and separate toilets for boys and girls and availability of playground and sports and game materials. However, in private school, there is no library and also a shortage of classrooms when compared to KV and BMC School. A majority of the teachers in all the schools under study are female.

In the private school (30.19%) and the BMC School (29.25%) there are many children from the slum area but in KV it is only 2.83%. The academic performance of the private and BMC School were low as compared to KV. In general, the infrastructural development

with regard to educational opportunities of private school is very less in comparison to KV and BMC schools.

Teacher's Perceptions About Social Studies Teaching and Learning

Ideally, the teachers of social studies should be reflective practitioners and understand the problems and learning difficulties of the students in the social studies classroom. Since, the main objective of the reflective practice of a teacher is to improve the quality of education and solve the immediate problems of learning social studies inside the classroom, the teachers dealing with social studies must understand the issues in this regard. Theme-wise responses of the questions by the 5 teachers are given in Table 1.

Table 1: Response of the Teachers towards Social Studies Teaching and Learning

Q.N	Question	KV		Pvt. School		BMC School		Total
		Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	
1.	Do you like to teach social studies?	2	0.00	2	0.00	1	0.00	5
2.	Do you face problems in communicating content of social studies while teaching to the socio-economic backward student?	2	0.00	2	0.00	1	0.00	5
3.	(a) Are you conducting any activities during teaching-learning process?	2	0.00	2	0.00	1	0.00	5
4.	(b) whether the socio-economic backward students are participating in the activities?	2	0.00	2	0.00	1	0.00	5
5.	(a) Are you organizing group work inside the classroom?	2	0.00	1	1	1	0.00	5
	(b) whether the socio-economic backward student participating in the group work?	2	0.00	1	1	1	0.00	5
6.	(a) Are you giving freedom to students in asking questions?	2	0.00	2	0.00	1	0.00	5
	(b) Do socio-economic backward student ask questions?	1	1	1	1	1	0.00	5
7.	(a) Are you clearing student's doubt during the teaching-learning process?	2	0.00	2	0.00	1	0.00	5
	(b) Do the socio-economic backward student's get their doubt cleared during the teaching-learning process?	1	1	1	1	0.00	1	5

8.	(a)Are you giving opportunity to present their views inside the classroom?	2	0.00	2	0.00	0.00	1	5
		1	1	1	1	0.00	1	5
9.	Are you taking all the students to visit the nearby famous historical and geographical place?	2	0.00	0.00	2	1	0.00	5
10.	Are you taking any extra classes for the students those who are weak in social studies?	2	0.00	2	0.00	1	0.00	5
11.	Do you face any problems while teaching social studies to the socio-economic backward students?	2	0.00	2	0.00	1	0.00	5
12.	Are you using ICT/Internet/PPTs to explain social studies concepts?	2	0.00	0.00	2	1	0.00	5
13.	What are the training programmes attended by you in teaching social studies?	1	1	0.00	2	1	0.00	5
14.	How do you assist learners to learn social studies?	2	0.00	1	1	1	0.00	5
15.	What teaching and learning strategies do you use in social studies?	2	0.00	1	1	1	0.00	5
16.	What are the challenges of teaching and learning that you have experienced in social studies?	2	0.00	2	0.00	1	0.00	5
17.	How does an educational reform contribute to the poor academic performance of learners?	2	0.00	0.00	2	0.00	1	5
18.	What are the problems that hinder the teaching of social at upper primary school level?	2	0.00	2	0.00	1	0.00	5
19.	Do you have any contribution towards the improvement of learner's poor performance?	2	0.00	0.00	2	0.00	1	5
20.	Do the changes in curriculum contribute to the underperformance of learners in social studies?	2	0.00	2	0.00	1	0.00	5
21.	Can you give some suggestive measure to solve the problems of learning social studies?	2	0.00	2	0.00	1	0.00	5

1. Do you like to teach Social Studies?

All respondents said they were interested in teaching social studies. The reasons for this ranged from- *social studies has appeared interesting from schools days and since I studied it upto a Master degree in some of its areas and for some because the subject contained cultural, social and environmental issues. One*

teacher said her interest in the teaching of social studies was because it provides historical facts and current information. In this regards Aditya (2018) has argued for embedding education for sustainable development(ESD) across subjects and school curricula. It should be given a cross-curricula priority, so that the liking

and interest of the teachers as well as students could be increased in teaching social studies.

2. Do you face any problems in communicating content of social studies while teaching to the socio-economic backward students?

All teachers of the schools under study were facing problems in communicating social studies content to socio-economic backward children from the slum areas. *The social studies teachers view was that 'students of the slum areas lack general knowledge about the surrounding; don't understand English, and also lack of concentration in the class due to lack of awareness of the importance and relevance of education'. The same view was expressed by private school social studies teachers, they opined that sometimes students don't have books in Geography; are not interested to study as most of them belong to low social and economic background.* The BMC School social studies teacher had similar experience. In this context, Bellack et al, (1966) talk about a classroom study and identify two ways in which teaching is similar to playing language games. First, teaching in classroom is a social activity in which teachers and students feel diffident but give each other a complementary role. Second, teaching is generated by certain basic rules that guide actions of the participants. The study explores the different form of verbal action made by teachers and students, and then the rules that govern these actions.

3. Are you conducting any activities during teaching-learning process?:

All teachers said many activities were conducted during teaching-learning process. This is a good practice because when teachers emphasized more on activities than on content and given importance to students, then it would be useful for students both inside and outside the school (NCSS, 2002:12). *KV teachers said they give children map work, newspaper clip collation, group discussion, tasks on importance of natural vegetation, skits on*

discrimination, election activity in the class by acting different ministerial role, role play of famous personnel role etc. Teachers from the private schools mentioned activities like role of different planets while teaching lunar eclipse. The BMC School social science teacher spoke about activities like drama, storytelling, general knowledge competition and game of flash cards etc. They felt that activities during teaching-learning process increased the involvement and interest of the students in the theme and the concerned subject. Singh et al (2016) also reflect on the key challenges of teaching profession in the present context. The social studies teachers also said that they touch upon some less talked about issues of teaching and the opportunity of improvement through self-up gradation and wilful involvement in students learning through participation in activities.

4. Whether the socio-economic backwards students are participating in the activities?

According to the teachers interviewed, all socio-economic backward students participate in the activities organised in the classes of their respective school. The SSTs of KV stated that the socially and economically backward students are participating in activities like preparation of charts, albums, projects, participation in group discussion etc. Similarly, private school teachers pointed out that the students from slum region have also participated in activities. In BMC School, as well the teacher stated that all activities are participated by each of the background of the students in the teaching learning process.

This implies that there is recent improvement of learning among all of children including from slum. However, there is hope to further improve if the teachers and teacher educators feel responsible for shaping heart and mind of the nation and transform the young generation into well-informed citizens. The teacher education programme must not only empowers and provide skills for jobs; it

also teaches how to live together in a conflict world. Similarly, Wankhede(1999) also studied the social and educational problems of deprived section of the society (SCs) in India and the underlying the principle of equality and social justice supported by constitutional provisions. However, various studies shows that the educational progress made by the SCs is marginal,. It however, differs from state to state and caste to caste and is necessarily urban based.

5. Are you organising group work inside classroom?

The teachers of all schools under study stated that the group works are organised by them inside the classroom, with participation of socio-economically backwards students in learning. *However, one of the teachers in private school stated that the socio-economically backward students have some constraints and rarely participate in the group work. The teachers of KVK and BMC School said that socio-economically backward students actively participate in all group work. For this simply organising group work in the classroom is not enough. Desai(1989) pointed out the need for a holistic approach to education of disadvantaged children based on their contextual realities and their family backgrounds. Similarly, Rath & Kar (2017) point out that activity based approach (child-centred approach) is very effective in social studies and has a better impact than a teacher-centred approach. The activity based approach increases interest among students, they are thereby able to gain basic ideas, know the management of teaching learning materials and how to learn from peers during group work etc. In the same vein Dubey (2019) focussed on using peer learning as a classroom process.*

6. Are you giving freedom to students in asking questions?

All the teachers from different schools under study said there is freedom and opportunity for students to ask questions in the class. However, one of the SSTs of KV said socio-econom-

ically backward students do not ask any questions, because they do not have interest in learning. The problem here is from both sides, the *teachers blame socio-economically backward students but do not take proper initiative to motivate students. The teacher must try to find out why socio-economically backward students do not ask questions.* Vijaysimha (2019) in her study suggested that teachers can promote inquiry by asking open ended questions that provoke student's thinking and conceptual development. This implies a change in the regulative discourse to facilitate appropriate instructional process. In this regards, Surehatia (2017) has also highlighted that there are various approaches which help understand the cultural diversity of children in schools. Addressing the cultural diversity of children remains a challenging task. ol participation and learning of children from different cultural diverse groups.

7. Are you clearing students' doubts during the teaching-learning process?

Social Studies Teachers of all sample schools stated that they clear doubts of students during the teaching learning process. *One private school teacher said doubts of all students were cleared ' by simplifying the language. Likewise, the BMC school teacher said they clear doubts of students by showing video clips and pictures in the classroom. One KV teacher said that some time the teacher fails to clear the doubt of socio-economically backward students as they do not have interest. We feel teachers must attempt to find the cause of the disinterest of socio-economically backward students.*

8. Are you giving opportunity to students to present their views inside the classroom?

Teachers of all schools under study stated that the opportunities to all the students are provided by them to present their views in the classroom. *One private school teacher opined that even though they encourage socio-econ-*

nomically backward students to present their self-expression in the classroom, students give less views and many times do not express. In this respect, the students require the skill of debate and sharing of their views and opinions in discussion. To participate in the class debate and discussion, the students have to develop their life skills as identified by World Health Organisation(WHO). According to WHO, the life skills are the abilities for adoptive and positive behaviour of human being that enable the individual to deal with effective demands and challenges in everyday life of any situation. As Pahuja (2018) pointed out life skills are essentially those skills that help promote overall well-being and competence. Children learn their life skills from parents, teachers and others significant person, who act as their role model. That is why, the Life Skills Programme as school-based programme should be imparted in schools.

9. Are you taking all students to visit nearby famous historical and geographical place? All the Social Studies Teachers of sample schools under study stated that students were taken by them to visit nearby famous historical and geographical place. The social studies teachers of KV said they took students to visit different places like the Nehru Science Museum and Kolhapur. The BMC school teacher stated that students were taken to visit Tajmahal, Kutab Minar and Red fort, etc. However, the private school SSTs said it was difficult to take children to visit different places for long duration because of the large number of girl students in the schools and as there is shortage of fund and resources etc.

10. Are you taking any extra classes for weak students in social studies? Teachers of KV stated that the extra classes taken by them for weak students in social studies. The Private school teachers said that they take extra classes sometimes for extremely weak students (those who do not know reading and writing). The BMC

School, teacher provides time for extra class from 12 noon to 1.00 p.m every day to clear the doubts in all subjects. So far as the improvement of learning among the weak students are concerned, the activity and project-based approach could be used to motivate students to adopt a sustainable lifestyle while teaching. In this context, Selamat, Esa, Salleh & Baba (2012) who studied the Smart Secondary School, of Johore, Malaysia found that majority of students felt that attending extra classes can improve their academic performance. They also discovered that students' perception towards the effectiveness of extra classes is highly positive.

11. Do you face any problems while teaching social studies to socio-economic backward students? Social studies teachers may have come across several personal difficulties while teaching the subject. For example, a teacher may realise that some of students are not keeping pace with her/his method of teaching social studies. In such a situation, social studies teachers require to introspect and come out with meaningful solutions through action research. The teacher should also explore the way in which teaching-learning process can be organised in social science classrooms. In the changing scenario, why is there a need to bring changes to pedagogical practices of social sciences? The teachers must seek answers to the questions related to several pedagogical issues encountered by them. *The KV teachers were faced problems because students do not complete their homework; do not understand the concept, and have careless attitude towards class work and homework They keep losing books and notebooks. Such students never participate on their own in any discussion and teachers have to force them to take part. They have also stated that a very poor performance of such students and felt their performance would improve if they make more effort. The private school teachers said that many stu-*

dents have family problem and also don't have proper homes to stay. The BMC school teacher were said that the test performance of the slum students was low because many parents send their children for outside work to earn some money.

In this respect, the life skill of human being is indispensable to promote the overall well being and competence in young people as they face the realities of life. A study conducted by KEÇE (2014) detected that social sciences' teachers suggest that problems arise from lack of physical conditions and weekly course hours. In the study done by Acar (2003), it has been said that ignoring the students' levels while developing the content is seen as a problem by the teachers.

12. Are you using ICT/Internet/PPT to explain social studies concepts? In all sample schools under study, the ICT, internet and power point presentation is used by social studies teachers to help the students in explaining different concepts of social studies. However, in the private school ICT has been used by teachers once in a month. Sridevi (2019) has argued that simply using ICT tools in classroom is not useful, the teacher need to integrate learning of how to use technology in the classroom with content and pedagogy orientation. It is observed that during the process of pre-service and in-service teacher training technological knowledge remains separate from the main content and other parts of the course. These teacher training programme fail to develop a nuanced and meaningful understanding of the applications of technology and how to link content with pedagogy through it. The author also argued that pre-service teachers are not confident of using technology in the classrooms. Any effort towards integration should be strongly connected with other basic knowledge domains of teachers' i.e. content knowledge and pedagogy knowledge. Further, it is suggested that the exposure, updating and practice would help

in strengthening the knowledge base of teachers. By providing opportunity to share, explore and contemplate on practices would improve their teaching learning process.

13. What training programmes are you attended in teaching social studies? The need for in-service education of teachers cannot be underestimated. If teachers are to perform their functions effectively and efficiently, it is imperative for them to have training in new skills and modern methodology. It is argued that higher the level of educational attainment by teachers, the higher would be the level of educational standard in the country (Osamwonyi, 2016). However, for the KVS teacher who *was working on contractual basis, no in-service training programme was possible.* The permanent Social Studies Teacher had attended two in-service courses provided by KV at Rajkot in 2007-18 and Nagpur (Kampte) in 2011-12 and one social science workshop for preparing question bank at KV in 2017. The private school teachers were untrained and were pursuing B.Ed, B.A (Special) Geography, B.A History (Special), B.Ed (History). The BMC School had attended drama training programme and history subject training programme. This is not sufficient in the light of the discourse on Continuous Professional Development (CPD). Awasthi (2018) highlights the importance of CPD, to make teachers responsible and aware about their own professional development. Teachers can become reflective practitioners through the formation of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs). Developing teacher capacity is critical and requires a fine blend of pedagogical skills and competencies, knowledge, attitude, positive learning, organisational conditions and culture etc. More than all this it also needs a reflective dialogue of teachers that can lead to lifelong learning and passion for the teaching profession. Similarly, Aditya (2018) stated that as a teacher plays a crucial role in

the classroom process, where there is a need to ensure that teachers have proper knowledge of the subject and are aware of the different pedagogies to transact and equip with required competencies. Contextualisation of social studies concept in education can help students relate to sustainable practices. Activity and project-based approach could be used to motivate students to adopt a sustainable lifestyle. Bose (2018) also suggested that practice of reflection is pivotal for teacher development, therefore, its importance in a Teacher Education programme cannot be undermined.

14. How do you assist learners to learn social studies? *The KV teachers said that learners of social studies are assisted through ICT and group discussions. Remedial classes and mixed groups of slow learners and bright learners are formed and the learners encouraged and motivated to learn. One teacher from the private school assists students by making groups and providing suitable examples. The BMC school teacher assist students by providing a time slot from 12 noon to 1.00 p.m to solve problems of all subjects. Raj & Fatima (2018) have pointed out that the teacher-taught relationship at elementary level is important for children to achieve better academic results. This is from their study in three districts of Himachal Pradesh. They found statistically significant positive relationship between the teacher-taught relationship and academic achievement.*

15. What teaching and learning strategies do you use in social studies? A strategy is an over-all plan to attack. Among other things it includes a selection of goals and objectives, a determination of priorities, a selection of tactics and procedures and a determination of resources to be employed. (Schlechty, 1969). The KV teachers stated that, *first of all the objective of the lesson is decided by teachers, and then they try to teach topics through different activities with active participation*

of majority of students, group discussions and also given chance to students by teachers to speak more etc. One private school teacher uses example of real life situation. The BMC School teacher uses teaching aids, chart, project and lectures as strategies. Ojha (2018) has proposed a shift in teaching social studies, especially history from a mere collection of facts and rote memorisation to an effective student-centred effort, integrated at the elementary stage to enhance critical thinking skills and student engagement. The author has also pointed out that history is a written record of human experiences across time and space. The learners of history need to relate various kinds of available sources to understand historical events and concepts. She however observes that history teaching is repetition of a collection of facts, rote memorisation leading to boredom and leaves very little space for critical thinking among students. She suggests that the student-centred teaching methods provided a better understanding of history, resulting in improved critical thinking skills. The inquiry approach is more effective than memorising facts.

16. What are the challenges of teaching and learning that you have experienced in Social Studies? Just as the teaching of mathematics methods has its own set of challenges, so too does social studies; teachers need to understand and respect those challenges (OWENS, 1997). *The Social Studies Teachers of KV face challenges of availability of modern infrastructures like social studies lab need to modernized, requirement of encyclopaedia, high speed network facility, E-books, AC room/chairs, irregularity of student, controlling students' lack of learning attitude in students etc. The teachers in private school face challenge as they lost their interest to teach because of lack of interest in studying geography and small number of demonstration lessons. Similarly, the challenges of the BMC school teacher*

is to motivate students to come to school daily and in providing the awareness of the value of education besides the lack of parents support etc. Goswami (2019) while conducting interviews of parents, felt many time that interview probing pushed the parents to think about concerns, but they may not have thought earlier and felt obligated to justify their choice when they became aware that this was not quality education according to them. However, OWENS(1997) found other challenges confront by social studies teachers are lack of interest in students for social studies and in discussing various sociological issues,.

17. How does educational reform contribute to the poor academic performance of learners? According to the KV teachers, educational reform should help students to be disciplined, become good citizens and have better life ahead in the society.

18. What are the problems that hinder teaching of social studies at upper primary school level? The KV teachers said that the implementation of “No Detention Policy” up to Class-VIII, hinders teaching of social studies at upper primary level, because all weak students get stuck in Class-IX standard. The private school teachers also stated that lack of students’ interest in study and the high level and vastness of the course in the social studies books is a hindrance at upper primary level. The BMC teacher pointed out student’s absence and family problems as the challenges. Keeping aside of all such problems identified by the teachers of all sample schools, instead of blaming the students backgrounds, Bose,(2018) argued that practice of reflection is pivotal for teacher development. Unless teachers foster the practice of critical reflection, they remain in narrow values, unexamined assumptions and biases, and prejudices emanating due to unquestioned judgments and interpretations.

19. Do you have any contribution towards

the improvement of learner’s poor performance?

The Teachers of KV said that improvement of learner’s performance is through motivating students in learning, forcing them to study, providing freedom to ask doubts, question, difficulties etc.

20. Do the changes in curriculum contribute to the under-performance of learners in social studies? *The KV teachers felt that a change in curriculum has contributes a lot to under-performance of learners in social studies. They felt that the questions in the new curriculum are not clear and understandable. The private school teachers also said that change in curriculum has contributed to the under-performance of learners because the syllabus is very difficult and large. There should be less syllabus and more pictures. The BMC school teacher also said that the use of picture, visit of historical places can contribute to improve the learning achievement and academic performance of learners in social studies. This suggests that the course in social studies syllabus at state level needs to be reduced. The teachers also said that there should be only one book taking in to consideration of all relevant areas of the subjects like history, geography, civics and economics.*

21. Can you give some suggestive measures to solve the problems of learning social studies? The teachers of KV suggested that textbook should be simplified and only one book should be there and more importance should be given to history, geography and basics of civics and economics. There should be no irrelevant lesson unrelated to real life. The Regional office of KVS should prepare question bank and circulate to students. They also said that, more importance should be given to academic work rather than other extracurricular activities otherwise teachers get less time for teaching. The BMC school teachers suggested that there should be Social Studies Lab and Geography Lab like Science

Lab. Funds should be provided to school to organise field visit for many historical and geographical places. Syllabus should be arranged in a sequence and reduced. Audio-video programme should be promoted in the teaching learning process.

Discussion, Suggestion and Policy Implication

From the study we learnt that social studies is liked by one teacher from the school and by another due to having studied for a Master degree in history and geography. Some research studies have also suggested that a cross-curricula studies may increase the interest of the teachers as well as students in social studies. This is not possible with an overloaded syllabus. It is suggested that the areas of social studies be divided in to two groups one Language, Geography and Economics (LGE) and the other Language, History and Political Science (LHP). Such groups should also be available at undergraduate level, especially for the Four Year Integrated B.A.B.Ed programmes. Two Social Studies Teachers (SSTs) one from each group (LGE and LHP) could be appointed at different level of school education. This would interest of the teachers in the social studies and improve the effectiveness of the teaching learning process.

Sometime teachers also face the problem in communicating the content of social studies to the students belongs to slum areas. This is not due to the culture and background of the family but many other things including the rules and regulation which guide the classroom processes. It is important for the teacher to be involved in students learning through participation in activities. Clearly, the organisation of activities in the classroom is an improved teaching learning process.

While, the teachers of the schools studied organise group work, yet the socio-economically backward children rarely participate. It is suggested that peer group learning and cooperative learning would improve the pedagogical process. Similarly,

teachers are giving opportunity and freedom to ask questions and in the classroom, but some children are too reticent. So, addressing the cultural diversity of children remains a challenging task for the teacher at present. Teachers could motivate and promote inquiry by asking open ended questions that provoke student thinking and conceptual development. This implies a change in the regulative process in order to facilitate the possibility of an appropriate instructional discourse. Towards this, Hegde (2006) urges need for critical engagement with positions of constructivism, not to argue for one or other constructivist positions, but to understand how question of scientific knowledge and truth in social science methodology and learning may be addressed.

When faced with a difficult situations, teachers should tend to think critically, analyse all the pros and cons of the situation and think of out of the box solutions for the seemingly difficult problems. In the study it has also been observed that there is shortage of qualified teachers, especially in the Mahila Mandal Sanchalit Madhyamik Vidyalaya, to deal and deliver the vast syllabus through modern pedagogical approaches of teaching to the socio-economic backward students. In this context, Govinda and Verghese, (1993) suggested that a trained teacher makes a considerable difference in terms of teaching style and classroom management. They also opined that the improvement in learning level of children depend not only on expansion of schooling provision but also on availability of ample instructional time and its effective use. It is the teacher who plays an important role in effective use of instructional time. Similarly, challenges to education quality arise from a variety of factors including: (i) inability to staff and finance a rapidly expanding education system; (ii) research-based evidence of low levels of learning in basic skills; (iii) new demands for advanced language and computer skills; and (iv) financial crises that have had an adverse effect on education budgets – in some cases reducing internal efficiencies and eliminating

plans for qualitative improvement (Chapman & Adams, 2002).

We have also learnt that in order to generate interest among students, social studies teachers must relate their teaching with the real life of the children. It is necessary that teachers must understand the child properly like their interest, abilities and background etc. Hence, it is essential to orient teachers so as to change their perception towards children of slum areas and make them realise that they can learn if proper opportunity will be provided. We also learnt that students from slum area have multiple problems in learning social studies and these directly or indirectly hamper learning. These include factors of home, surroundings or the school location and the resources there.

Teachers suggest that teaching and learning of social studies at upper primary level can be improved if there is a Social Science Lab and if the syllabus and materials are reduced. They suggest that curriculum and syllabus should not change frequently and the total content should be less and simpler with less content according to age and level of students. Text books should have relevant pictures and diagram to make social studies learning interesting. Only one book instead of many books and more importance should be given to history, geography, basic of civics and economics only. They also suggest activities outside the classes like trips to historical places, legislative assembly, municipal office, gram panchayats, primary health centres, anganwadis, consumer courts, banks, farm lands etc. Research suggests that in the classrooms teachers must highlight the connection between text and context of the children. The teacher should provide space for articulation of thoughts of the students in the classroom. The age old practice of dictating answers or marking them in the text book should be gone away. Learners must be encouraged to express their views and write answers on their own. Trained

teachers should be appointed and in-service training and orientation of latest curriculum and pedagogical approach should be provided to all teachers in a regular interval. The PPT, e-learning device, play and drama on different topics should be integrated in the teaching learning process.

Conclusion

From the above analysis and discussion we can argue that the identification of problems in social studies through the investigation of the perception of the teachers is necessary for the development of skill and pedagogical practices. They need to become aware of the changing pedagogies. This awareness can help them make classroom process more effective and vibrant. In order to make teachers reflective practitioners and independent learners, different pedagogical practice can be adopted. The improvement of learning for children from socio-economic backward and slum dominated areas is a great challenge. This needs to be addressed for the development of nation with a good citizen. Learners need to develop the skills of learning in terms of creative thinking and critical thinking by themselves through the facilitation of teachers to become considered as independent learners. Such children would be able to build their capacity in a way that could improve the quality of education at upper primary level.

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