

Initiative 24

Conducting Classes in Open spaces to ensure Continuity in Learning

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The School Context

Government Middle School Ladu Ladoora is located in a remote area of Rohama block in Baramulla district of Jammu and Kashmir. The village is very small with a population of not more than 1000 people and also it is far away from the nearby towns (more than 15 km from the nearby Tehsil headquarters) and there is no or least movement of people in or outside the village as there is no traffic movement due to strict lockdown in the whole district. The school is managed by the Department of Education. It is a co-educational school with classes up to X.

Challenges Faced due to School Closure

Due to the community spread of Coronavirus, an order was issued for the closure of schools. The school had faced difficulty in following the strict orders to reach the maximum number of students through an electronic medium, but it was impossible on the ground as less than 1% of students had smartphones not their own but of their parents. It was observed that merely 2-3 students on average attended these classes. Thus, school management was left with no option other than showing false entries of 50% attendance of students in the classes. Schools also faced problems with student motivation for learning. The school management also was discouraged to see very less



outcomes for their efforts.

Innovative Leadership Practices for Mitigating Learning Gaps

Due to the disruption over the ongoing class work, the teachers and school head decided to prepare short notes of all the lessons and deliver them to the students at their homes to make all the students in touch with their studies. The teachers prepared assignments /notes of lessons and subsequently, they were delivered to the students first weekly and then twice a week for three weeks. Then during the monitoring of learning, it was shocking to see that most of the students had not even read these notes. After assessing the situation, the school head called a meeting with the village heads rather than the VEC members and decided to have a few physical classes. The Headteacher and some staff members went to the school and also called a few of the class VIII and VII students to school; interacted with them and enquired about various things from them in a very usual way such as knowledge about the virus etc. On the next day, VIII class students were called and gathered in a playground strictly following the SOP along with the books. It was on this day that their progress during online learning was asked of them. Do's and don'ts during this time and the need and importance of following COVID-19 appropriate behaviour motivated them to come to class in the open space following appropriate COVID-19 SOP's. This practice proved to be very fruitful and finally, an



alternative setup was made possible to go for teaching and learning during the pandemic.

Collaboration with community and parents to ensure student learning

All the above-mentioned efforts towards ensuring learning for students were done in consultation with the Village Education Committee. With the cooperation of the community and parents only, school teachers and the head were able to collect the mobile numbers of students within one week.

Way Forward

The management called students from III up to VIII class to attend the classes in the open space on an alternate basis in two shifts a day from June 2020. Many children from the village attended the classes in open spaces which were later called Community Classes. Not only the children that were enrolled in the institution attended these classes but also the students of the village who were studying in private schools outside the village also came to read and learn in these open-air classes. Therefore, it was a great achievement. Moving forward with the plan of hassle-free conduct of classes in the open air, we arranged a few tarpaulins to be used as matting and rooftops to make classes go in the rain and on hot sunny days under their shade. Students sat on jute mats made by the school. Also, it ensured that social distance was always in place among the students as each student sat on an individual mat. Whiteboards of small dimensions for easy movement from one place to another were arranged for their erection in the open space and many other necessary things.

This was done at risk and responsibility and was not known to higher-ups, for there was no scope of this as per official orders, but the people of the village always requested for teaching their children anyhow and the only option was open-air classes. As the classes were conducted in the open air in broad daylight, this did not remain hidden from authorities, but fortunately, they liked it, not only liked but also appreciated the effort work, more than expected. It encourages us to move forward and from that date till this date continue to hold the classes in the open air. The work was recognized and the school head was awarded a certificate of appreciation on the eve of teacher's day.

Conference Presentation

<https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1Yzw3cefxvRo33oyEDyCc2Sh217H484Mk/edit?usp=sharing&oid=103705547766060522301&rtpof=true&sd=true>