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### “Over crowded classroom: a serious problem for teachers”

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#### ABSTRACT

The study was carried out to find out the most serious problems faced by the teachers in overcrowded classes. The population of the study included 20, all the government girls' schools at the secondary level in district Peshawar, Province of Khyber Pukhtunkhwa, Pakistan. Close-ended questionnaires were the tool of the study, which was administered to teachers in order to get clear picture of the problems faced by them. The data were given both quantitative and qualitative treatment. The outcome of the study indicated that effective teaching was not possible in overcrowded classes and majority of the teachers were facing instructional, discipline, physical and evaluation problems. In order to solve these problems some implementable measures were made which suggested that government should make strict rules and policies regarding optimum students in classrooms and provide sufficient budget to education department for providing better facilities in schools.

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#### Introduction

The condition of Government schools all over the country and quality of education being imparted, are going from bad to worse, day by day. Government and the concerned Education Department have no check and balance over quality of education. Government schools are overcrowded because of increased population, due to limitation of the economic resources and budget constraints. Due to these reasons, it raises the problem of overcrowding in classrooms. With the passage of time it becomes one of the major problems of our education system.

The average number of students in most of classrooms ranges from 70 to 120. It creates many problems for both, teachers and students in teaching-learning process. A number of researches have been done in order to know the effects of overcrowded classes on students' achievement but less attention has been given to identify the problems faced by teachers in over-crowded classes. So the researcher decided to deal this problem in a different way and try to find out the problems faced by teachers.

#### Class

Class is a group of pupil put together for the purpose of collective instructions. All the members of the class have common goals, interests, aptitudes and attainments. In a short way, we can say that class consists of homogeneous group of pupils, who will work and progress together.

According to educational dictionary; “class is a group of pupils put together for the purpose of collective instruction”.

#### Over crowded Classroom

A classroom is said to be overcrowded in which the number of students exceed the optimum level such that it causes hindrance in the teaching- learning process.

The classroom is the most important area within a school. The students spend most of their time, hopefully in an environment conducive to learning. The entire design of classroom reflects the priorities, goals, philosophy, personality

and teaching style of the student. Student learning behavior can be enhanced when teachers take time to create a classroom climate in which adolescents feel comfortable with their teachers and peers. But unfortunately, in our country the classrooms are overcrowded.

Focusing on the effect of this very serious problem prevailing in our country, one thing is very clear that teaching in such an environment, where the number of students is exceeding the acceptable limit, effective teaching is not possible.

#### Related Literature

Shah and Inamullah (2012) found from their studies that over-crowded classes could have a direct impact on students' learning. They not only affected students' performance but the teachers had to face different problems such as discipline, behavioral problems, poor health and poor performance of students, put stress on teachers and increased in drop-out rate of students.

Carlson (2000) reported that quality learning was not possible when large number of students were packed into small classrooms. He visited different schools but it was evident as a serious problem particularly in unidiv Divina school located in Florida, Santiago and in Taltas' Escuela Hogar. He further reported that 40 plus children were stuffed into classrooms designed for no more than 35 kids. They were seated so closely together that they were not able to work or move.

Ijaiya (1999) found a weak positive correlation between the opinion of teachers and students. Findings showed that over crowdedness diminished the quality and quality of teaching and learning with serious implications for attainment of educational goals. It was felt that additional buildings and furniture should give priority in educational planning at all levels.

Overcrowded classroom is not only the problem of Pakistan but it has now become universal problem. Phillips (2011) submitted a report conducted by the teachers union which showed that the number of overcrowded classes in New York was the largest, in the last ten years. As a result of attrition,

budget cuts and increased enrollment in some areas of the city, nearly 7,000 classes were over their contractual limits. The union found that about 256,000 students, roughly a quarter of total enrollment spent at least part of the school day in overcrowded classes. It was also concluded from the study that the smaller classes could be particularly beneficial for elementary school students, although other studies had concluded that the benefits of smaller cases had been overstated. Even the best teachers could not do their best in class sizes so large.

Salem-al-amarat (2011) conducted a study which aimed to identify the classroom problems faced by the teachers in public schools. He concluded from his study that the problems in the classroom, and schools in general, were considered one of the most serious factors facing the component of the educational process. Such as parents, teachers, educational administrators, and supervisors, vandalism, theft, destruction of property, failure of educational facilities such as equipment and the physical environment. The study further showed that there was no statistically significant difference, in the academic problems domain, while there was a statistically significant difference in the behavioural problems, due to the interaction among different variables such as, gender, school level and experience. All these issues could threaten the whole educational process.

Nemrah (2006) cited that teachers had to deal with different group of students in the classroom, some of them suffered from the showdown, faltering and failure in learning and they need more time than their colleagues to accomplish any learning task. Such students are characterized by a number of characteristics, including problems of language, oral expression and unable to pay attention, memory problems and the dispersal of attention. But because of large number of students in class, the teachers would not able to give extra attention to the weak students.

#### Objectives of the Study

- 1.To inquire the physical problems faced by a teacher in overcrowded classrooms.
- 2.To identify the instructional and evaluation problems of the teachers.
- 3.To enlighten the problems regarding maintenance of discipline.

#### The purpose of the study

The purpose of this study was aimed to investigate the classroom problems faced by school teachers in district Peshawar, Province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the proposed solutions were suggested.

#### Importance of the Study

The researcher hopes that this study will serve school principals to identify the problems faced by the teachers in overcrowded classes, in order to find solutions and to decrease the effect of these problems on the level of teachers participation and students achievement. This study will provide base for further research in this field and will very fruitful in the best interest of the students, teachers, administrators and government to think over the problems and do something for their solutions.

#### Research Methodology

The study was descriptive in nature. It was an attempt to investigate the problems faced by the teachers in overcrowded classes and suggested some measures to settle these problems.

#### Population

The population of the study included all 20 government girl's schools at secondary level. The sample included 40 teachers' two teachers from each school were randomly selected

in district Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Province of Pakistan.

#### Sources of Data

The primary data were collected through questionnaires from the teachers. The secondary data were collected from review of literature, a study of documents and books.

#### Research Tool

The study developed appropriate tools for the collection and analysis of necessary data. Closed ended questionnaire was framed for teachers.

#### Research Techniques

Both quantitative and qualitative techniques of research were used in the study. The data was tabulated, analyzed and interpreted by using simple % method due to the nature of the data.

#### Analysis and Discussion

The above table showed that all the 40(100%) respondents complained that they were facing problems due to overcrowded classes. The graphic presentation of data in Figure-1 further highlighted the responses.

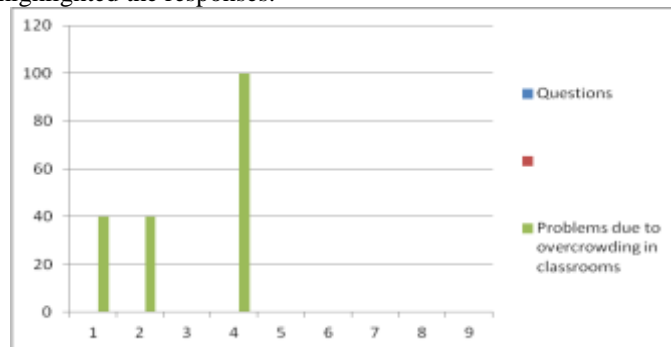


Figure 1

The data reflected in Table No.2 revealed that 40(100%) respondents opined that there was no enough space between the rows and no ample seating arrangements were made for the students. While 10(25%) respondents were of the view that adequate light, ventilation system, accommodative classes and importance was given to class hygiene where as 30(75%) respondents agreed that such facilities had not been provided to students. Similarly 05(12%) subjects were of the view that classes were airy and spacious while 35(87%) were not agreed. The tabulated data were further clarified with the help of Figure-2

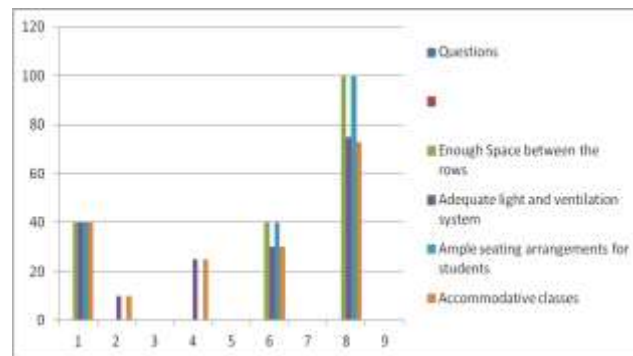


Figure 2

The analysis of data in Table No.03 revealed that all 40(100%) respondents identified that they were facing discipline problem and were not able to control overcrowded classes and the students did not follow any rules and regulation made by the teachers in the classes. The data was further explained with the help of Figure-3.

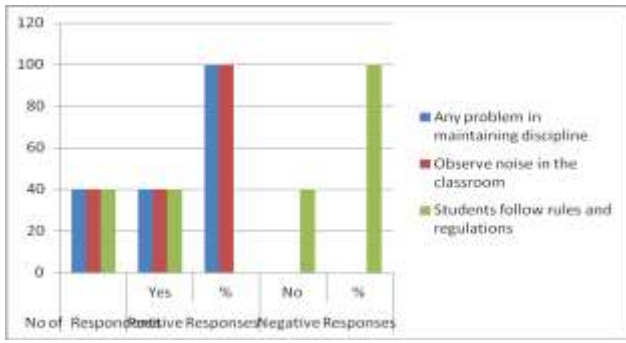


Figure 3

The data reflected in Table No.4 indicated that 40(100%) respondents were of the view that they were not able to give individual attention to weak students, not easily listen to students, and not receive any feedback from students and were not able to identify students weaknesses. Where as 10(25%) subjects agreed that they encouraged students to participate in class activities and got students could easily read from blackboard. While 30(75%) respondents were not agreed. 20(50%) respondents were of opinion that AV AIDS fulfilled the needs of students where as 20(50%) were not agreed. The graphical presentation further clarified the data in Figure-4.

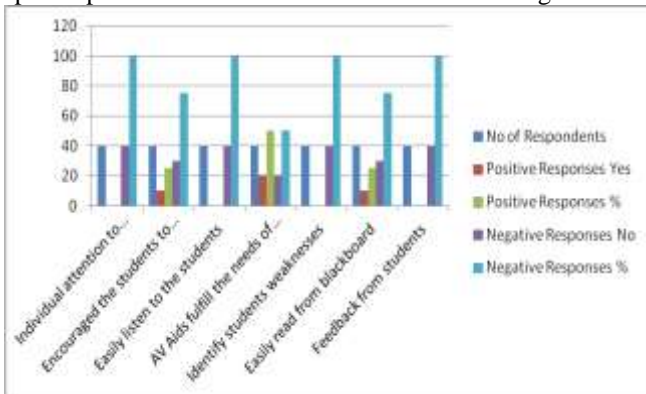


Figure 4

The data in Table No.5 revealed that all 40(100%) respondents of the view that they were facing problems in checking the assignments, test and papers of the students and they all also agreed that overcrowded classes affected their efficiency. Where as 40(100%) subjects agreed that because of a large number of students it was not possible for them to conduct test on monthly basis and they were not able to provide feed back to weak students. Only 10(25%) respondents were of the opinion that they informed the parents about their child performance where as 30(75%) respondents disagreed. The data was further elaborated with the help of Figure-5.

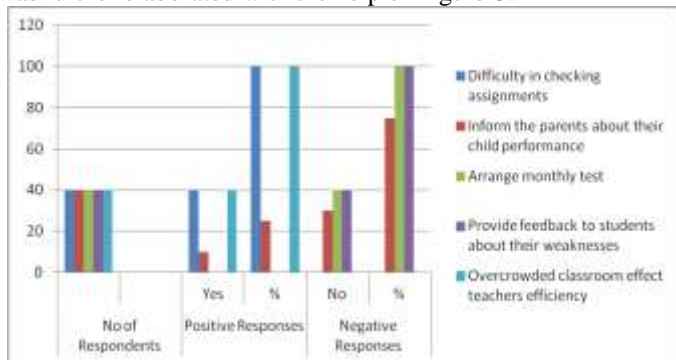


Figure 5

**Findings of the Study**

- All of the teachers 40(100%) responded that effective teaching was not possible in overcrowded classrooms as it caused physical, discipline, instructional and evaluation problems.
- Data regarding physical facilities in overcrowded classrooms showed that 75% to100% respondents were facing physical problems in overcrowded classrooms while 25% did not consider it a major problem.
- Similarly, data regarding disciplinary problems in overcrowded classrooms, all the 40 (100%) teachers were complaining of poor discipline and unhygienic condition of the class.
- The other major problem revealed from the data was that 40(100%) of the respondents were weak in their instructional perspective of teaching because of overcrowding.
- The most evident weakness reported by all the 40(100%) of the teachers were facing evaluation problems because of large number of students in one class.

- The following conclusions were drawn from the study.
- All the schools were overcrowded with a population ranging from 70-120 students per class.
- Most of the teachers were facing problems due to insufficient space between the rows and not access to materials and services. Teachers felt discouraged, overwhelmed and stressed with the space shortage.
- Problem in proper seating arrangement of the students was observed by almost all of the teachers.
- Discipline maintenance was a problem for all of the respondents.
- It was found that majority of the teachers were observing disturbance due to overcrowded students in a class and were not able to control them.
- Most of the teachers were facing problem in paying attention to each and every student in overcrowded classroom. They could' spare a single minute to provide to provide extra help to weak students
- It has been observed that all the teachers were of the opinion that AVAIDS provided in overcrowded classroom were insufficient to fulfill the needs and requirements of the students.
- Majority of the respondent teachers were facing difficulty to perform various curricular and co-curricular activities in the classroom with a huge population. And were facing problems in checking copies, tests and papers etc due to overcrowding in classrooms.
- Upon asking about the effect of overcrowding in classroom on teachers' efficiency, almost all the respondents confirmed this difficulty.

**Implementable Suggestions**

The following recommendations were made on the basis of findings:

- Number of students in each class should be limited to 35-40 students.
- Government should plan strict rules and policies regarding optimum population in classrooms and provide sufficient budget to education department for providing better facilities in schools.
- Proper planning is needed in order to control population because over population in our country is also a main factor leading to overcrowding in classroom.
- There were shortage of government schools in different areas and most of our population possesses poor socio-economic conditions. They could not afford private schools, so

government should establish maximum number of schools as per population requirements.

- Proper training programmes should be arranged for the teachers in order to educate them how to handle the overcrowded classroom.
- Education department and government officials should visit schools to observe the population and number of classrooms.
- Second shifts should be introduced and one helper should be provided to teachers so that workload on teachers is decreased.

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**Table No.1 Responses of Teachers Regarding Problems due to Overcrowding in Classrooms**

Questions	No of Respondents	Positive Responses		Negative Responses	
		Yes	%	No	%
Problems due to overcrowding in classrooms	40	40	100	Nil	Nil

**Table No.2 Responses of Teachers Regarding Physical Problems**

Questions	No of Respondents	Positive Responses		Negative Responses	
		Yes	%	No	%
Enough Space between the rows	40	Nil	Nil	40	100%
Adequate light and ventilation system	40	10	25%	30	75%
Ample seating arrangements for students	40	Nil	Nil	40	100%
Accommodative classes	40	10	25%	30	73%

**Table No.3 Responses of Teachers Regarding Discipline Problems**

Questions	No of Respondents	Positive Responses		Negative Responses	
		Yes	%	No	%
Any problem in maintaining discipline	40	40	100%	Nil	Nil
Observe noise in the classroom	40	40	100%	Nil	Nil
Students follow rules and regulations	40	Nil	Nil	40	100%

**Table No-4 Responses of Teacher Regarding Instructional Problems**

Questions	No of Respondents	Positive Responses		Negative Responses	
		Yes	%	No	%
Individual attention to students	40	Nil	Nil	40	100
Encouraged the students to participate in class activities	40	10	25%	30	75%
Easily listen to the students	40	Nil	Nil	40	100%
AV Aids fulfill the needs of each student	40	20	50%	20	50%
Identify students weaknesses	40	Nil	Nil	40	100%
Easily read from blackboard	40	10	25%	30	75%
Feedback from students	40	Nil	Nil	40	100%

**Table No-5 Responses of Teachers Regarding Evaluational Problems**

Questions	No of Respondents	Positive Responses		Negative Responses	
		Yes	%	No	%
Difficulty in checking assignments	40	40	100%	Nil	Nil
Inform the parents about their child performance	40	10	25%	30	75%
Arrange monthly test	40	Nil	Nil	40	100%
Provide feedback to students about their weaknesses	40	Nil	Nil	40	100%
Overcrowded classroom effect teachers efficiency	40	40	100%	Nil	Nil