

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF MULTI GRADE TEACHING BY SCHOOL MANAGERS'  
AND TEACHERS'IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS: A CASE OF KAPUTA DISTRICT, ZAMBIA

BY

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A dissertation submitted to the University of Zambia in collaboration with Zimbabwe Open University in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Master of Education in Educational Management.

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I Elvis Mutambala, do here by declare that this is my own work and that it has not been previously submitted at the University of Zambia or any other University.

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Date.....

**CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL**

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## ABSTRACT

Education is the key to develop sustainable development in Zambia. There is one problem that our education is facing which is shortage of teachers mostly in remote areas of Zambia. To curb the dismal, multi grade teaching is an alternative measure to equalise the trend. Since multi grade promotes social outcomes, which are necessary for sustainable human development, there is need to ensure that implementation and context in which multi grade teaching is conducted is taken care of at school. The findings suggest that policies should be prepared and given to teachers and school managers in multi grade teaching. Although some may be in support, what is required is to have both school managers and teachers trained in multi grade teaching. Descriptive research design helped to describe the information related to the implementation multi grade teaching by school managers and teachers in primary schools and the performance of pupils in this context. The population was school managers and teachers in primary school with multi grade teaching setting in Kaputa district of Northern Province. The sample size consisted of three (3) school managers and three (3) class teachers making six (6) respondents. The study used semi structured questionnaire and interview to get the real information. Data obtained was analysed using content analysis in order to establish the themes. The finding among other findings was that out of the three (3) school managers only one (1) school manager was for multi grade teaching and this is showing us 33% on the other hand out of the three (3) class teachers only one (1) again this is 33% was in support of multi grade teaching. The study further recommends Ministry of General Education to revise the curriculum on multi grade to include in the syllabus. The study recommends for training standards officers in districts to have skills and knowledge to equip teachers. From the findings of the nature of implementation of multi grade teaching by school managers and teachers, it was discovered that this method is prevailing in primary schools. The findings showered that teachers who handle multi grade classes are teaching using mono grade methods. Further review indicated that multi grade teaching has opportunities as well in that it helps pupils learn something instead of going home without anything. Lastly, but not the least school managers and teachers need to be trained through re-fresher courses.

**Key words** Multi grade teaching; Mono grade and Implementation.

## **DEDICATION**

Dedication to my wife Annie, my children, parents, brothers, sisters and friends for their cordial support and cooperation with me to enable me reach this far end. Let your love and endurance go beyond my support. To be at this stage, it was due to your positive support and contributions.

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## **ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS**

CPD:	Continuous Professional Development
DEBS:	District Education Board Secretary
UNESCO:	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation

## **CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION**

### **1.0 Overview**

This chapter provides the background of the study. It has given the statement of the problem, purpose of the study, significance of the study, research objectives and research questions. In addition, the study has given the limitations of the study, delimitation of the study and the definition of the key terms respectively.

### **1.1 Background**

Enrolment in primary schools in the sub-Saharan Africa has grown rapidly, increasing by forty percent between 1999 and 2005. However, there are still 33 million children out of school in sub-Saharan Africa (UNESCO2007). This increase in population is making it difficult to reach children in remote schools. One solution to this problem is to provide multi grade system where teachers work with more than one grade at the same time (Birch and Lally 1995).

Multi grade teaching was introduced to a number of Zambia Primary schools in rural areas in the mid- 1980s as part of a consciously formulated “projects” supported by the Ministry of General Education and culture and the Swedish International Development Authority (SIDA). Multi grade teaching would enable small schools with low enrolment in each grade to upgrade themselves to grade seven (7) levels without putting up additional classroom and teachers. In service training course in multi grade teaching was developed by Malcom Moffat Teachers Training College (MMTTC). Others ‘inputs’ to the project consisted of language, and Mathematics text and exercise books, follow- up seminars, inspection, evaluation and incorporation of multi grade teaching as part of the regular pre – service teacher training programme. This time all these programmes which initially started has come to a stop making it difficult for teachers in multi grade setting to effectively deliver up to their expectation and this as a negative impact on learner performance.

An evaluation by Lungwangwa (1989) indicates that, despite the problems encountered in the implementation of the training programme, MMTTC staff believed that multi grade teaching have some positive outcomes. It can enhance independent learning, encourage teacher revision of

material covered in the earlier grades, increases pupil interaction, and contribute to the country's universalizing of basic education. When we talk about independent learning this means learners can be as the can assign an activity to one group and begin to attend to the other group or grade. This can as well trigger innovative and discovery as pupils are alone trying to find answers on their own. When we look at teacher be able to revise material covered in the previous grade it means the teacher is able to check on the methods that he or she used and improve on approach to ensure pupils grasp the concepts clearly. It can help the teacher to prepare materials well in advance that challenged him or her in the last grade presentation. Multi grade teaching increases pupil's interaction by learning with the older age they are able to get ideals that they can apply in solving problems in their daily lives through interaction with the elder ones.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

There is general agreement in the literature that multi grade teaching is prevalent globally and places great demands on school managers and teachers than a single grade teaching (Brown 2008). The Zambian education system endeavours to produce a learner who is holistically equipped with relevant knowledge and survival skills to help the country develop economically. Further, Zambian education wishes to provide is that which must transform a learner and change the minds of societies in which learners will find themselves. When a multi grade teacher, engage with a specific grade group, the remaining pupils need resources to facilitate independent and productive work (Good and Brophy 2003). To achieve this, teaching need to be conducted using mono grade mode that is one teacher with one grade in a classroom. Smaller class sizes in a multi grade setting give an opportunity for each individual pupil to receive more teacher attention (Blatchford 2003).

However, in Zambia especially in the remote schools, teachers are teaching two grades in the same class called multi grade teaching. There are no materials for this method and teachers are teaching with method. For this reason, pupils in this mode are not well equipped with skills and knowledge. Additionally pupils of today are leaders of tomorrow this places a great concern in that learners will have no skills and knowledge needed to challenge and solve problems to come. It is against this background that I considered it necessary to conduct an investigation on the implementation of multi grade teaching by school managers and teachers in primary schools so

that see what modalities can be considered to produce good Zambian learner ready to challenge and solve whatever problem they can meet without waiting for someone to help them.

### **1.3 Purpose**

The purpose of the study was to explore how school managers and teachers implement multi grade teaching in primary schools.

### **1.4 Objectives**

- i. To investigate the nature of implementation in multi grade teaching at primary schools.
- ii. To establish opportunities in the way school managers and teachers implement multi grade teaching in primary schools.
- iii. To explore the challenges school managers and class teachers face in the implementation of multi grade teaching in primary schools.
- iv. To determine ways of improving the implementation of multi grade teaching in primary schools.

### **1.5 Research Questions**

- i. How is the nature of implementation of multi grade teaching in primary school?
- ii. What opportunities are in the way school managers and teachers implement multi grade teaching in primary schools?
- iii. What challenges do school managers and teachers face in the implementation of multi grade teaching in primary schools?
- iv. What strategies can we use to improve the implementation of multi grade teaching in primary schools?

### **1.6 Theoretical Framework**

In Creswell (2008: 515) a theoretical frame work is referred to as a theoretical lens which pertains to “a guiding perspective or ideology that provide a structure for advocating groups or individuals and writing the report.” The aim of this study was to explore the implementation of

multi grade teaching in primary schools by School managers and teachers. The theory used in this study was the systems theory. The theory fits this study because it has emphasized the need for dependability in producing positive outcomes basing on the strategized objectives. For any organization to achieve its aim there is need to work together by responding to the needs of each member but this is not the case with education in Zambia when it comes to the primary education which uses multi grade teaching method. Let us see how systems theory advocates for the need of one another to produce quality work in this study sound and productive learners.

### **Systems theory**

The theoretical framework is basing on Bronfenbrenner's Eco-systemic model of child development (Donald Lazarus and Lolwana, 2006) which is an integration of Ecological theory and systems theory. According to the systems theory various levels and groups of people are viewed as interactive systems wherein the functioning of the whole depends on the interactions of the all the parts. In the context of this study, multi grade schools are sub systems of the Department of Basic Education where different parts interact together. Other parts include the curriculum, school managers, teachers, pupils, parents as well as policies and legislations. Systems theory is comprised of eight basic elements (Donald et al, 2006) namely:

**Systems and sub systems interaction:** this occurs when all systems interact with other systems around them, e. g the National Development of Basic Education may interact with the provincial departments of Education through policies, curriculum and resource allocation.

**Patterns of functioning:** in this case, all parts of a system influence the whole system in such a way that when something occurs to one part, it affects all the other parts. The ways these parts react form a pattern.

**Cycles of cause and effect:** an action in one part of a system causes an effect on another part of the system in a cyclical way, e. g lack of training for multi grade educators will affect the way they organize, plan and manage their teaching and learning process.

**Goals and values:** stated and underlying goals and values affect the system and are affected by the whole system and interaction other systems, e.g. if multi grade schools have been introduced to achieve the goal of providing quality increase negative attitude towards these schools.

**Communication patterns:** communication patterns occur between the system as a whole and outside system, e. g school managers and teachers in multi grade schools communicate with learners, parents and managers of other schools and curriculum advisors as well as educational managers at all levels.

**Roles within the system:** the way people's role are defined in a system is vital for the functioning of the whole system, e. g if government does not provide training to multi grade school managers, teachers and government officials fail to visit multi grade schools for quality assurance then the challenges encountered by managers and teachers will never be known.

**Boundaries:** there are clearly defined boundaries between the sub systems and the whole system. The rigidity and flexibility of the boundaries affect the functioning of the whole system, e. g each multi grade school belongs in a particular community, circuit, district and province. The increase or decrease in learner enrolment; therefore, differ from school to school.

**Time and development:** human system change over time and occurrence of developmental changes influence the system as a whole, e. g the change in the education system brought about changes in policies, curriculum and allocation of resources into different schools in various communities.

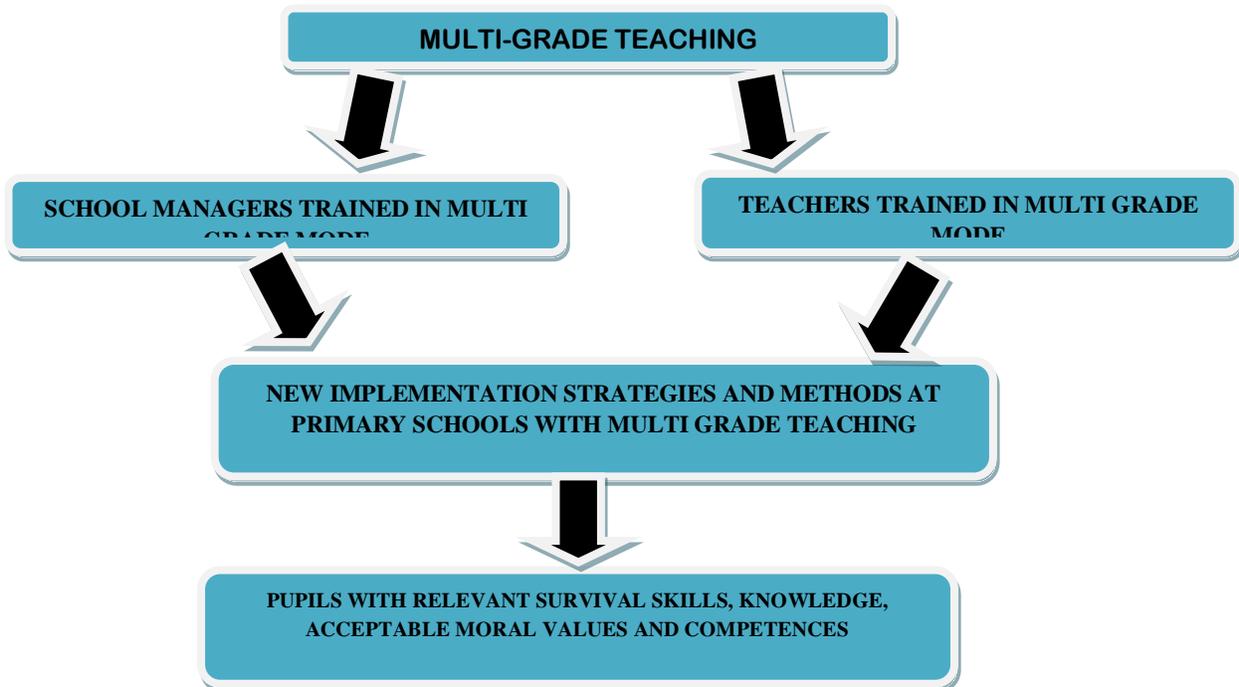
For me to conceptualize the study, I came up with a framework that helped me understand the study properly.

## 1.7 Conceptual framework

The study conceptualized multi grade teaching in relation to school managers, teachers, implementation and pupils. From this conceptual framework, we can see that school managers are custodian of the schools. They ensure what is in the curriculum is prudently implemented by monitoring and supervising teachers. They ensure that concepts, values, attitudes, knowledge, skills and competencies embedded in the curriculum. Teachers are the ones who deliver the concepts by close checking the curriculum when they are preparing using a syllabus. They also ensure each grade with its content are delivered in a way that will help pupils become responsible citizens by acquiring survival and life skills.

The curriculum follows the national policy that is the 1996 educating our future all school managers and teachers because they shape the mind of pupils to become self-reliance, good decision makers and productive citizens. Pupils are what we can call the output of the inputs in the curriculum. School managers and teachers would like to utilize and strike a balance between curriculum content to what type of a Zambian child it wants to produce.

**Figure 1.1 Conceptual Frameworks.**



**Figure 1.1: Model for School managers and teachers in the implementation of multi grade teaching.**

## **1.8 Significance**

The study findings can help school managers and teachers change in the ways they implement multi grade teaching in order to help pupils acquire relevant skills and competences. It can add value to the number of study, on multi grade teaching in primary schools. When pertinent issues are given attention, to there is improvement in the way multi grade teaching and learning is implemented can be enhanced. Further, the study would generate awareness and interest among other stakeholders and researchers by opening up areas of further concern.

In addition, the study findings can be used to motivate policy makers and curriculum developers to implement a special policy catering for both school managers and teachers in multi grade setting so that pupils can receive quality education that is relevant meaning and helpful to both school leavers and the society.

## **1.9 Limitation**

The findings in the study could not be used everywhere because not all the schools are multi grade schools in Zambia. Kaputa unlike other remote schools in Zambia, do practise multi grade teaching and learning because there are few teachers and inadequate classrooms that hinders the school managers and teachers to start using this mode of learning in order to facilitate teaching and learning.

## **1.10 Delimitation**

This study was within Kaputa district to the east part of Kaputa district in Northern Province. Kaputa district has about 40 schools and out of these, to the east, there are three schools using multi grade teaching and the study had to focus on these three. The study has been conceptualised by taking into account school managers and teachers in multi grade mode and later be given new methods specifically for multi grade so that implementation becomes easy. It is of no guess that pupils through this arrangement of multi grade can produce learners with relevant skills knowledge. This is the reason why system theory is in support because once the school manager and a teacher together with a learner are working towards the achievement of the common goal and syllabus in support, a learner will benefit.

### 1.11 Operational Definition of terms

- Multi grade:** Is when a teacher has two or more primary school student grades in the same class.
- Mono grade:** Is when a teacher is handling only one grade.
- Rural:** Rural areas (referred to as "the countryside") are large and isolated areas of an open country (in reference to open fields and not forests, etc.), often with low population density.
- Multi-grade teaching:** Multi-grade teaching is a term used to describe the teaching in primary education of children from a number of grades usually in one class.
- Curriculum:** A curriculum may also refer to a defined and prescribed course of studies, which students must fulfill in order to pass a certain level of education.
- Implementation:** This is the act of accomplishing some aim or execution of some order.

### 1.12 Summary

This chapter presented the background of the study on multi grade teaching in Zambia. The background of the study has explained the introduction of multi grade teaching in Zambia by the Ministry of Education. It has further explained that its introduction was to enable small schools with low enrolment in each grade to upgrade to grade seven (7) without putting up additional classroom and teachers. Multi grade teaching started in Zambia in 1980s at Malcolm Moffat Teachers Training College. The chapter has stated theoretical framework of systems theory and the conceptual framework. Furthermore, it has given the statement of the problem by reviewing the current situation, ideal situation, current situation and the consequences. The study has also talked about the significant and purpose of the study in order to bring to the education attention and policy makers so that education provide the needed content to the learner.

## **CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.0 Overview**

The term 'multi grade teaching' generally refers to a teaching situation where a single teacher has to take responsibility for teaching pupils across more than one curriculum grade within a timetabled period, in contrast to 'mono grade teaching' where one teacher is responsible for a single curriculum grade within a timetabled period (Little, 2001: 477). Schools with multi grade classes are multi-grade schools.

### **2.1 Definition of Multi-Grade Teaching**

Little (1995:1) presents a collection of terms such as 'multiple class', 'composite class', 'vertical grouping/class', 'family grouping/class' and 'combination classes', which are used synonymously with multi grade teaching in international literature. Mason and Burns (1997:5) use the term 'combination classes' instead of 'multi grade classes' in their review. They also mention terms such as 'double-grade', 'dual-age', 'multiple-grade' or 'split-grade' classes. In certain countries, schools with multi grade classes are a result of having shortage of teachers in a school. In California, a school is a multi-grade school if there are four or less teachers, five being the number of grades in the primary tier (Finley and Thompson, 1963:471). In Zambia there are no schools known as multi grade schools, though conditions such as 'one-teacher schools', 'two-teacher schools' or 'three teacher schools' are recognized (Little, 1995:2).

Little (1995) indicated that Multi-grade teaching is not unique to South Africa and is prevalent in developed and developing countries. In many African countries, multi-grade teaching is a key pedagogic tool that can assist teachers in the context of teacher shortages, budget constraints and other difficult situations.

### **2.2 Factors Leading to Introduction of Multi-Grade Teaching**

Factors that contribute in making multi grade teaching a necessity in Asia and the Pacific are demographic, geographic and economic. Demographic factors comprise low population densities, migration and displacement. Geographic factors are the difficult terrain and

geographical barrier, which limit transport facilities. The factors such as economic are the disadvantaged populations and shortage of classrooms. In these circumstances teacher shortages due to inadequate supply and unwillingness to serve in remote conditions and teacher absenteeism to make multi grade teaching a necessity (UNESCO 1988; UNESCO 1995; Birch and Lally, 1995; Norway, 1996).

Centre for Multi grade Education (CMGE) (2009) conducted a study, which states that multi-grade teaching is used in approximately 7,000 South African schools, with most of these schools located in rural areas. This is the sad reality for 30 per cent of all primary schools in South Africa, affecting nearly 3 million of our country's children. They will never be able to compete with their peers in the towns and cities, they will never get even close to a tertiary institution, and they will never become part of the economy. Eighty per cent will drop out before they reach Grade 12. They are being educated to perpetuate the same illiteracy and lack of skills that bind their parents to a lifetime of poverty.

Effective multi grade teaching involves much more than assigning one teacher for several grades. The effectiveness of multi grade instruction would be determined on the quality of the teacher and the nature of suitable teaching methods. It is more challenging task than mono grade teaching as it involves giving the children of several different age groups their appropriate grade level knowledge, attitudes and skills in a range of subjects by a single teacher. In a well-organized multi grade class, groups of students need to be engaged in various learning activities throughout the day (Thomas and Shaw, 1992).

Multi-grade teaching has become one of the priority topics of the Working Group on the Teaching Profession (WGTP) agenda in Africa. The reason for bringing this issue on board is the recognition that multi-grade teaching has a potential to improve the quality of teaching, thus contributing to the global effort of achieving the Education for All (EFA) goals and the millennium development goal (MDG).

Multi-grade teaching is a pedagogic method that can ease the problems of education in these cases and should be viewed a pedagogic approach to increase access and retention, while improving quality education; and a strategy to address teacher shortages, particularly in small and remote schools. (World Declaration on Multi-Grade Education, March 2010).

Draisey (1985) points out that multi grade teaching should not be a problem or as a response to a problem but as an opportunity with its own advantages. Thomas and Shaw (1992: 4-5) have put forward arguments in support and against multi grade teaching. The following arguments are supporting.

- ✓ Efficient means of providing basic education in thinly populated areas, utilizing scarce educational inputs, such as trained teachers, classrooms, and materials
- ✓ Multi grade students can attain higher achievement levels especially in math, language and sciences
- ✓ Maintaining a rural school is important in building village identity and cultural life
- ✓ Benefit girls by expanding available opportunities for learning
- ✓ Schools in which teacher absenteeism is high and 'supplementary teacher' arrangements are 'non-effectual' or 'non-existent'. Little (2001:482).

### **2.3 Opportunities in Multi-Grade Teaching**

There are studies that indicate some teacher preference for multi grade teaching. Muthayan's (1999) comparison of the perceptions of teachers in Canada and India on the effects of multi grade teaching on students revealed that teachers in both countries believed that multi grade teaching was more beneficial to children because it caters to a diversity of needs amongst children. Rojas and Castillo (1988) reported that 89.3% of teachers who were engaged in multi grade teaching in Colombia preferred 'Tscuela Nueva' over traditional rural schools. Findings from a set of case studies in the Philippines reveals that better management of multi grade classes depends more on the personal attributes of the teacher, rather than whether the teacher has received appropriate training or not. The conclusion is that even without special training, a teacher with a more positive attitude towards multi grade teaching can produce better outcomes, (Barsaga and Lacuesta, 1997). It is important to note that a survey of the literature does not necessarily indicate that multi grade teaching is a negative method. According to Little (2004:18), multi grade setting leads itself to assessment systems that promote learning.

## 2.4 Challenges

It is true that multi grade teaching is more challenging than mono grade teaching. First, is the responsibility of "delivering curricula of two or more grades and maintaining grade-level expectations" (Mason and Burns, 1997:7). Within this aspect of curriculum adaptation, ensuring its relevance to local conditions is another challenge (Birch and Lally, 1995). The challenges of effective lesson planning to ensure each grade covers its required syllabus, maximization of actual time on task, presentation of material in a logical sequence, effective distribution of teacher time between groups and adopting suitable teaching methods are also identified (Thomas and Shaw, 1992:12). These researchers emphasize careful lesson planning to minimize 'down time' which is also known as 'dead time', thereby ensuring that students will be engaged in various learning activities throughout the day (Steward and Thomas, 1996:130).

Secondly, there are challenges identified with respect to the student composition of multi grade classes. One is the uneven proportions of students in each grade level of multi grade classes, which makes the situation more complex (Mason and Burns, 1997: 23). Bennett et al (1987) attempted to ascertain to what extent teachers were able to cater to the children at the extreme ends of the spread of ability within multi grade classes. They observed that teachers showed a tendency to underestimate the abilities of high achievers and overestimate those of the low achievers. According to Brown (2010:194), said although learners of different grade comprise one class, learners have to pursue grade-appropriate curricula.

Thirdly, the differences between home and school languages of students pose difficulties in instruction. There is a wide prevalence of use of different dialects and indigenous languages in many contexts where multi grade teaching is a necessity (Allman and Pridmore, 2001).

Lack of resources constitutes a fourth challenge, especially in the Asia-Pacific region. The lack of syllabi and other curricular materials suitable for multi grade teaching make it less supported in given multi grade classes (Birch and Lally, 1995).

A fifth set of factors is associated with the widening responsibilities due to the scarcity of human resources. In small multi grade schools, only a few teachers are available to share most of the experiences and responsibilities of their working life (Bell and Sigsworth, 1987). Although imparting multiple curricula is the main task of the multi grade teacher, other role dimensions

exist, especially in deprived contexts (UNESCO, 1988 and Birch and Lally, 1995). The role dimensions are as follows.

- A social worker or counsellor for both the school and the community
- A materials designer to implement the curriculum
- A financial manager
- A mediator for reconciling conflicts

A sixth challenge is the overcoming of professional faced by teachers. The following citation depicts the implications of teacher isolation.

Teacher isolation is a serious problem because children may be receiving an education that is less than it should be. Preference to work in privacy, keeping his/her thoughts about one's own practice to oneself, discouraging other adults from entering his/her classroom as she would feel uncomfortable are some of the characteristics identified in an isolated teacher. (Bell and Sigsworth, 1987:117-118)

The challenges faced by multi grade teachers indicate that they need to be more versatile than mono grade. The lack, or meagre nature of, financial incentives, minimum housing provision and problems related to dependents are also factors that adversely affect the output of multi grade teachers (Birch and Lally, 1995).

The following arguments are against multi grade teaching:

- ✓ Student achievement may show a decline if programme is not supported by the required resources and teachers not properly trained
- ✓ Demands on teachers' time and organizational capabilities are high and
- ✓ Students may receive less individual attention and must often work independently

The five areas that focus on training packages for multi grade teaching. These encompass the following features:

## **2.5 Classroom Management Techniques**

Managing a multi grade classroom is difficult because there is more than one grade level in the classroom. Hence, the teacher must be skilled in managing instruction to reduce the amount of

'dead time' during which children are not productively engaged on task. This means that teachers must be aware of different ways of grouping children, the importance of independent study areas where students can go when they have finished their work, and approaches to record keeping which are more flexible than in the mono grade classroom.

## **2.6 Instructional Strategies**

Instructional strategies are a key to improving the quality of teaching and learning in the multi grade classroom. These involve a change in the role of the teacher from 'giver of information' to 'facilitator'. This is to ensure that time spent away from the teacher is spent productively. Three important strategies are peer instruction, in which students act as teachers for each other. Berry (2001:549) describes peer tutoring, cooperative group work and differentiated whole-class teaching as the main teaching strategies that can be used in multi-grade teaching.

## **2.7 Planning from Curriculum**

Each set of grade level material is in a separate booklet, which may include specific content with guidelines on how to teach it. Such curricula are difficult for the multi grade teacher to use because they tend to require plans. This is not only time consuming, but may also result in ineffective instruction. Teachers need to plan across grade level objectives, or how to amend the curriculum to make it more suitable for their setting. Similar observations may also apply to the school timetable.

## **2.8 Instructional Materials**

Instructional materials should be prepared for the mono grade classroom. Consequently, produced as grade level textbooks and designed for the children. Materials include a self-study element. This might be in the form of workbooks with a self-correction key, or a small classroom library for the children. Teachers need should how to produce such self-study materials in a cost effective way. Materials relevant for one country situation may not be appropriate in another. Birch and Lally (1995) include several examples of materials developed in Asia and the Pacific.

## 2.9 School and Community

Multi grade schools are often located in remote and difficult to reach areas. They may be far from the educational centre and receive little pedagogical support. The communities in which they are located may not see the value of education, and may speak a different language to the 'official' one of the school. For these reasons, it is essential that the community be involved in the life of the school. Parents should come in to act as a resource; the curriculum of the school might extend out into the community, or the community to support the school in other ways. Multi grade teachers should train in approaches that help to develop relations between the school and the community.

Thomas and Shaw (1992) indicate the critical elements in supporting multi grade schools.

- ✓ Teachers need to adopt more effective teaching practices to make Multi grade schools function properly
- ✓ To do so, teachers require adequate material and physical inputs
- ✓ Local and regional support networks need to be developed among teachers and
- ✓ There must be national level support for pilot programs, including both financial support and active involvement of a few key multi grade advocates.

Multi grade class situations present a range of problems The following is a summary of problems in India, Sri Lanka, Philippines and Korea, reviewed by UNESCO (1982:2-4), and categorized according to school and community based problems.

1. School-based problems are as follows:

- Physical inaccessibility is the cause of two types of problems in multi grade settings. One is the difficulty of access of multi grade schools from urban centre in which education offices and other services are located. The other is the difficulty of access within the community where there are instances of students walking to school for about 1to3 km.
- Financial problems faced by multi grade settings result in sub-standard facilities and a lack of suitable teaching-learning materials.
- Curriculum-related problems include lack of relevance of urban-based curriculum material, problems of using material oriented for mono grade teaching, inability to cover the curricular content and lack of any self-instructional and self-evaluation materials.

- The preparation of teachers is a problem in all the countries mentioned previously. Both pre-and in-service training is on the assumption that the teachers are responsible for one grade at a time only. Both instructional skills and the need to develop positive attitudes are essential components of training.

2. Community-based problems are as follows:

- Multi grade teaching occurs abundantly in disadvantaged areas, where poor quality living conditions lead to malnutrition and resulting in absence from schools.
- In the home environments may be educationally impoverished because of the inability to supply the essential resources for students.

### **2.10 Research Gap**

From these reviews, I have noted that there is gap that needs a further research. It is true that class teachers are implementers of teaching approaches but school managers are not considered are supposed to understand the curriculum first so that they effectively help class teachers to implement multi grade teaching effectively. Kaputa district has few teachers. You could find that at school, there is only the head teacher alone and there come a new deployed class teacher trained in mono grade teaching and expect to learn from the head teacher who has no knowledge on how to implement multi grade teaching, this can create a problem at such a school. All the studies are silent about school managers who are a key at School to run the school diligently in teaching and learning process. It is important to research on both school managers and class teachers respectively because they move side by side in the implementation of both multi grade and mono grade teaching.

### **2.11 Summary**

Related literatures reviewed and the findings showed that multi grade teaching in Zambian context is like in any other country. Most of the countries have tried to put positive measures in order to help teachers in multi grade settings deliver effectively. In other education set up they have revised their curriculum to meet the need of multi grade teaching. Materials provided to schools are those that match with multi grade teaching and this make it easy for teachers and school managers to deliver effectively.

Despite these positive interventions from other countries, the Zambian education system has not yet addressed this issue in all its spheres. There is need to revise the Zambian curriculum so that multi grade teaching is paid attention to and children will benefit and teachers.

## **CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY**

### **3.0 Overview**

This chapter describes the research design and the methods used to collect data to achieve the objectives of the study.

The study has used the qualitative research methodology. The methodology had the advantages of collecting the views and opinions of school Managers and class teachers in the implementation of multi grade teaching in Primary Schools. Although the sample was small, qualitative research had provided for in-depth study of cases identified and studied.

### **3.1 Research Design**

This study was qualitative for it has adopted a descriptive case study design to describe, analyze and interpret the experiences of school managers and teachers in the implementation of multi grade teaching. A case study is a particular instance or problem that requires investigation (Merrriam, 1998). In Yin, (2009) a case study is defined as “an empirical inquiry about a contemporary phenomenon”.

### **3.2 Site of the Study**

The study was in Kaputa district of Northern Province. To be specific, the study was in three schools and these are Chisobo, Kakomo and Ilembwe primary schools .The schools teach using multi grade method.

### **3.3 Study Population and Sample Size**

Kaputa district has a population of forty schools and these are primary and secondary schools. In these schools, there are a total of 40 school managers and 257 classroom teachers. The study used three school managers and three class teachers making six participants in my study.

### **3.4 Sampling Techniques**

The study used a non-probability sampling design. The sampled schools fit than other schools because of practicing multi grade teaching. The advantage of this method was that the researcher used the respondents who had the required knowledge and information in regards to the objectives of the study. In this case, the researcher had the respondents who were competent and with experience in the subject of study. In addition, the researcher used the typical sampling method to select the study sample. The researcher was asking one name of the class teacher who teaches in multi grade class and the school manager per school. Therefore, the sample size of the study was six (6) respondents. According to Jagero and Odongo (2012) states that big samples in linguistic studies are not necessary. Besides, Guest, Bunce, and Johnson (2006) have observed that the saturation point occur at the sixth interview. In line with the above argument, the sample of six (6) respondents was good.

### **3.5 Research Instruments**

The study used an interview schedule (appendix 1) and open-ended questionnaire (appendix 2) as research instruments to collect data. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), an interview is a face-to-face encounter with the respondents. Although Kombo and Tromp (2006) see a questionnaire as a research instrument that gathers data over a large sample, in this study, the questionnaires administered to class teachers and interviews administered to school managers made the study okay.

**TABLE 1: INSTRUMENTS FOR DATA COLLECTION**

OBJECTIVES	TO	TARGET	REASONFOR USE OF THE TOOL	HOW
1	Semi-structured interview	The participants are key informants	To collect reliable data that you can compare with other respondents.	Semi-structured interview are being administered by the researcher to the respondent
2	Structured questionnaire and semi-structured interview	Participant and key informant	To get data that is of value in the study	Questionnaires administered amongst the participants who answered on their time. Interviews conducted face to face with the respondent.
3	Semi-structured interview guide and structured questionnaire	Participants and the key informant	To come up with the information in order to have an holistic understanding of the problem.	Questionnaires self-administered amongst participants who answered the

				questionnaire in their time. Questionnaires were distributed to respondents who gave answers on their time	
4	Structured questionnaire and semi-structured interview	Participants and key informant	To have in- depth of the study	Semi-structured interview conducted face to face with the respondent.	

### 3.6 Trustworthiness

According to Creswell (2009), validity is one of the strengths of qualitative research, and it is based on determining whether the findings are accurate from the standpoint of the researcher, the participants or the readers of an account.

Issues of ensuring data trustworthiness in research have become very significant and a source of concern of many researchers. The trustworthiness of the research findings depends on the strategies a researcher employs as ways of ensuring accuracy and credibility. According to Joppe (2000) the extent to which results are consistent over time and an accurate representation of the total population under study is referred to as reliability or trustworthiness and if the results of a study can be reproduced under a similar methodology, then the research instrument is considered to be reliable.

### **3.7 Data Collection Procedure**

The researcher carried out the interviews with all the sampled respondents. Their responses recorded using a tape recorder and notebook. The interviews and questionnaires helped to collect data for all the objectives. The respondents had enough time to fill in the questionnaires and return them to the researcher or the researcher go and collect them.

### **3.8 Data Analysis Procedure**

Data was collection was by questionnaires and interview schedule. The data collected using both interviews and open-ended questionnaires were analysed using content analysis to establish the themes. According to Cohen et al. (2007) content analysis is a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from the meaningful matter to the context of their use. The researcher carefully went through the responses given by the respondents in order to understand the meaning of what they were communicating. The responses the researcher developed broad themes that reflected their meanings. The researcher went through the transcripts of all interviews and questionnaires to classify the responses under the different themes.

### **3.9 Ethical Considerations**

Before going into the field for data collection, the researcher obtained permission from the University of Zambia, Directorate of Research and Graduate Studies. In addition, the researcher got permission from the District Education Board Secretary (DEBS) in Kaputa district to visit schools with multi grade settings. Furthermore, the researcher assured the respondents confidentiality before collecting data. In the study, school managers and teachers were aware about the study on the implementation of multi grade teaching in primary schools. Further, respondents were aware of what to expect of them and the reason why they were to take part in the study. All the participants had to fill in the consent form and told to free to take part in the study. In the study, schools had names and teachers but for ethical reasons they are not mentioned but rather used anonymously.

### **3.10 Summary**

This chapter has described the research design and method used to collect data. Case study design suited to conduct the study. The study has used purposive sampling and three schools, three school managers and three teachers as population. Questionnaires and interview schedules suited in data collection. Lastly, the chapter has ended with the ethical consideration in conducting the study by seeking permission.

## **CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS**

### **4.0 Overview**

This chapter presents an analysis and interpretation of interviews conducted with teachers and school managers of multi-grade school using the study objectives. The study was to investigate the implementation of multi-grade teaching by school managers and teachers in primary schools. The first section presents participants' biographical information, followed by analysis and interpretation of the interview responses and an analysis and interpretation of lesson observations. Pseudonym assured participants' anonymity.

- To investigate the implementation nature of multi grade teaching in primary schools.
- To establish opportunities in the way school managers and teachers implement multi grade teaching in primary schools.
- To explore the challenges school managers and class teachers face in the implementation of multi grade teaching in primary schools.
- To determine ways of improving the implementation of multi grade teaching in primary schools.

### **4.1 Biographical Information of Participants**

The number of participants was six (6). Three were class teachers and three were school managers. Three (3) of the school managers were interviewed individually. Three (3) teachers had questionnaire individually. Of the three (3) school managers interviewed, all of them were male. This confirms that teaching is a male dominated profession in Kaputa district. Two school managers are forty years and one (1) is between 30 and 39 years. Teachers experiences ranges from 3 years to 9 years, while their experience as multi-grade teachers range from 2 years to 20 years. This shows that the school managers have been in the teaching profession for a long-time and have therefore, gained a lot of experience in the teaching and learning process. While class teachers only one seem to have been in the service for 9 years and the two are only three years in the service respectively. Two school managers have primary diplomas while one school manager has a primary certificate. Two class teachers have primary diplomas and one class teacher has a

primary certificate. This attributed to the fact that these schools do not qualify to have teachers to handle multi-grade classes.

#### **4.2 Analysis and Interpretation of School Managers and Teachers**

This was the first objective of this study that sought to investigate the nature of implementation of multi grade teaching in primary schools.

#### **4.3. Teacher Qualification**

The study finding from six (6) participants which is 100% of the respondents were that multi grade teaching was not good. The researcher wanted to investigate the nature of implementation of multi grade teaching in primary schools specifically by school managers and teachers. Four out of six respondents which (67%) were against multi grade teaching. *Respondent 4* had this to say; my feeling is that multi-grade teaching must be phased out. Every class must have its own teacher. If it is Grade 2, it must have a teacher, and if it is Grade one class, it must also have a teacher I have no qualification to handle multi grade classes. They must look at the grades and not the number of learners. Multi-grade is reducing the learners' knowledge. They have very little knowledge. Responded 6: continued saying: it is boring, everyday day of your life, when you arrive home; you will feel like you are dying. You can imagine standing from 07:00. Sometimes we do not even get a break. It is stressful and i do not have the right qualification in multi grade.

#### **4.4 Training in Multi Grade Teaching**

Out of the six respondents, five (83%) said they are not trained in multi grade teaching and only one respondent (17%) said he was just briefed. For example, (R2) included the following as indicated in transcribed verbatim:

*Iam not trained in multi-grade teaching. We did not go in detail. They said that there will be other workshops in multi-grade teaching but that is not happening. The only workshops we attend are those intended for single grade classes.*

Another participant (R3) echoed similar sentiments and stated that no training is undertaken:

*No training on how multi-grade teaching works but to implement it due to shortage of teachers in school and he cited his school that they are only four at the station running a school from grade one to seven.*

Two 33% of the six respondents were in support of multi grade teaching. Responded 5: Multi grade teaching can have a positive result only if the ministry begins training teachers in its mode other than mono grade and revise the curriculum to address issues in multi grade. We just make sure that at least learners are doing something. Responded 3: It could be good if we receive the re-fresher courses so that we are equipped with knowledge in multi grade teaching.

Participants were against because they are not qualified and not trained in multi grade teaching two (33%) of the participants responded that teacher development they attended had nothing to do with multi grade teaching. One (17%) of the participant responded that he it is force from school manager to teach in this setting and that he is not comfortable because pupils do not get the concepts as expected. Two (33%) of participants responded that multi grade is a share waste of time because they do not have qualification to help them deliver effectively. One (17%) of the participant said there is no training at their school to learn how to teach multi grade teaching.

#### **4.5 Teacher Development**

On teacher development, the finding from the responded showed that five (83%) responded went for teacher development program but their developments were silent on multi grade teaching. On the other hand, one participant (R6) that is (17%) said he had attended a workshop as indicated in transcribed verbatim:

*We have furthered our studies on part-time basis, but it has nothing to do with multi grade teaching.*

The second objective sought to establish opportunities in the way school managers and teachers implement multi grade teaching in primary schools.

The study finding from six participants indicated that there are opportunities in multi grade teaching. Two (33%) participants responded that multi grade teaching was good in that it allows pupils to learn other than letting them go home with nothing but learn something. Three (50%) of

the participants responded that we plan lesson plans basing on each level of learners and they further said they search on net on how to prepare lesson plans in multi grade settings. Two (33%) of participants responded that when conducting assessment multi grade teaching actually helps in that you are able to close check the level of performance of pupils so that by the time they come in the next grade which in this case under the same teacher will be a walk over thing. This means multi grade offers an opportunity of revision if the teachers handling grade three and four in 2020 it means come 2021 the grade three will be with the same teacher. One school manager (R2) said that:

*I can say that multi-grade teaching is stressful but to my school as school manager it is helpful because learners do not go back home empty handed due to this method.*

#### **4.6 Teachers' Attitude towards Multi-Grade Teaching**

Participants had their general feelings towards multi-grade teaching. Two (33%) of the participants argued that multi-grade teaching is stressful because it involves too much work while one (17%) said it is good especially at our school were teacher pupil ratio is bad that is three teachers against grades one to seven. Three (50%) stated that it might be better for each grade to have its own teacher and further said that multi-grade teaching must be phased out.

From the above responses, one can deduce that very few teachers have a positive attitude towards multi-grade teaching. Teachers feel that there is too much work in multi-grade classrooms. They complained that they do not get time to rest and, sometimes, even to eat. They asserted that sometimes when two grades are together they end up with many learners in one classroom, which makes it difficult to manage the class. The fact that they want each class to have its own teacher is an indication that they prefer teaching single grade classes. They argued that it is better to have a single-grade classroom with many learners than having a multi-grade classroom with a few learners. Some participants were unhappy about the performance of learners in multi grade classes. They argued that lack of time for remedial work means that learners who are struggling to understand concepts do not get individual assistance from teachers.

The third objective sought to explore challenges school managers and teachers face in the implementation of multi grade teaching in primary schools.

#### **4.7 Challenges Experienced by Teachers of Multi-Grade Classes**

Participants in this study argue that they experience various challenges in multi-grade classes. They pointed out that curriculum organisation, work overload, classroom management; learner performance and lack of support are their challenges.

#### **4.8 Curriculum Organisation**

From the study finding, participants also argued that curriculum organisation is one of their challenges. They indicated that it is difficult to work in these classes because they have two different grades in the same classroom each with its own curricula. They mentioned that, although they are in multi-grade classes, each grade has pace setters which they are expected to follow and this include text books, time table and a different assessment mode.

Out of six respondents four (67%) said the curriculum does not address multi grade teaching at primary level. Two (33%) of the participants said regardless of not being in the curriculum we need to find ways of helping the learner. Responded 5: The first problem is the curriculum. You cannot teach according to the way the syllabus is organised. For instance, if you are teaching Grade 4 and 5 classes and you are teaching mathematics Grade 4, you have to teach them separately because the content is not the same as the content for Grade 5 in the Zambian curriculum content in the syllabus always matches with the age of the learners.

These statements suggest that curriculum organisation is a challenge for teachers in multi-grade classroom. The fact that each grade has its prescribed curriculum is problematic for these teachers. Failing to complete the syllabus for each grade implies that effective learning in these classrooms is compromised that is the reason why system theory tries to organise all parties together so that each party helps the other in order to have improved learner performance in school. The Zambian curriculum does not put multi grade teaching as another mode of teaching.

#### 4.9 Work Overload

Out of the six (6) respondents (100%), said multi grade teaching is involving and tiresome. Participants reviewed that there is so much work to do to teachers in multi grade settings. They asserted that there is too much planning in multi-grade classes and that they also have to prepare two assessment tasks per grade and this is a lot of work. They argued that, although they have few learners in their classrooms, the number of subjects they teach is too much. They complained of not getting time for themselves. In an attempt to finish the prescribed syllabus, they have to teach after normal school hours and yet no double class allowance. One respondent (R3) said that:

*I have a lot of work to do. There is lot of preparation involved in multi grade teaching. I cannot finish the work scheduled and afternoon studies with these learners and yet am going for further education using the distance mode*

Another respondent (R4) said that:

*The challenge that affects me the most is that, whenever i prepare for a lesson, I have to prepare two different lessons. I also have to prepare tasks for both grades. This leaves you with no time for yourself because you also have to come to school very early or remain after school in order to teach the other grade on its own. There are many challenges. Even the work is very tiring because it is too much you cannot concentrate on learners individually.*

Yet another respondent (R5) echoed that:

*There is too much work in these classrooms, because you teach subjects as in a normal class, even though we have few learners, the subjects are too many for us to teach. Like now, there are only three teachers for Grades 1 to 7 at our school and this includes the school manager.*

Further, respondent (R6) mentioned that:

*Because we are a small staff, we also have to do office work, which also interferes with the teacher's work in the classroom. Being the school manager, in the Zambian education, i have to attend to parents and needs*

*from the DEBS office. You will find that you are busy with the learners, and receive a call to do an extra. You have to leave the class and go to the office to work.*

These responses suggest that teachers are dissatisfied about teaching in multi-grade classes because there is too much work to do, and this compels them to work extra hours. Despite the overload with classroom responsibilities, teachers also have to perform school administrative duties. This is due to this because of the small learner enrolment in schools there are no deputy head to help with the administration of the school. The dissatisfaction shown by these teachers is a matter of concern because it is a source of negative attitudes towards multi-grade teaching.

#### **4.10 Classroom Management**

Out of the six respondents two (33%) stated that there is too much noise in their classrooms. They mentioned that while they are busy with one group, the other group need attention. This happens despite the fact that they are given a task to complete and to some extent, it is due to some grade has learners who are grown up that means they even begin bullying them immediately the teacher leaves the classroom. Three (50%) argued it is stressful to balance the needs of different grade with their syllabus coverage. This results in leaving certain topics without being covered. One respondent (R1) that is (17%) stated that multi grade teaching should receive much attention as this makes it difficult to manage pupils of different timetable and syllabus as indicated in transcribed verbatim:

*Another problem is that when you are teaching Grade 3 learners and they are failing to answer questions, those in Grade 4 are tempted to interfere. They start assisting those in Grade 3 with answers because they know the content.*

Another respondent (R2) said that:

*My challenge is the noise. They do not keep quiet when you are busy with the other grade. Even when you have given them work to do.*

The above responses suggest that these teachers struggle with managing their classrooms. While the teacher is busy with one group, the other group need a task to complete. The expected to complete the task without the teacher's supervision and this is difficult for these learners. They often make noise and interfere with the other lesson.

#### 4.11 Learner Performance

Out of the six respondents two (33%) argued learner performance is always at risk because of having a break while the teacher attends to other grade. Three (50%) indicated that learners do not perform to their best ability because there is no time for learners' individual needs to be addressed. One respondent (R3) that is (17%) indicated that learners' progress to the next grade without acquiring all the necessary skills as indicated in transcribed verbatim:

*These learners progress to the next grade without acquiring all the required skills. They progress without acquiring all the necessary skills because there is little time for teaching. When you are teaching one grade, the other grade will just be sitting and waiting for their turn.*

Another respondent (R4) mentioned that:

*There are many challenges because, with regard to learners, when we are teaching in these combined classes, learners do not perform to their best ability because I do not have time for individual learners. That is the first challenge I see.*

Yet another respondent (R5) echoed that:

*The first thing is that learners to take time to understand because there are two (2) grades in one classroom. A slow learner becomes worse because I do not have time to help him individually. I am not able to do that because I have two grades to teach. There will be grade two learners behind and grade three learners who are behind, and I cannot help them at the same time because what they do is different. So a slow learner gets worse.*

It is clear that these teachers believe that multi-grade teaching does not yield positive results on learners' performance. They argue that having to teach two grades with different syllabus does not afford them adequate time to complete the syllabus. According to some of the participants, learners who are less competent get worse because there is no time for remedial work.

#### 4.12 Lack of support

The study finding reviewed lack of support as one of the challenges experienced by multi-grade teachers. Three (50%) of the participants argued that they do not receive any support from standards officers to teach in multi-grade classes. Three (50%) are further advanced that whenever standards officers visit their schools, they expected to see everything for each grade and that they expect them to work like normal schools yet motivation of an allowance is not given to them as indicated in transcribed verbatim:

*Since I started working here for twenty-six years now in Kaputa district, I have never received any support with regard to multi-grade teaching. I have never received such support. There was a time when one of the standards officers came and we told him that we are experiencing difficulties with multi-grade classes at our school. What he said is that we, as the people in the situation, we are the people who can help them because we are in the situation every day, whereas we were expecting them to help us in order for us to get some relief. They are unable to help us. Curriculum advisors do come here, but they only want what they need.*

Another respondent (R5) said that:

*There is no support. There is no single day when standards officers have shown some understanding that we are a multi-grade school. You will find that they want lesson plans for Maths Grade 4, Maths Grade 5, Maths Grade 6 and Maths Grade 7. All these lesson plans have to be there. When we indicate that we are a multi-grade school, they acknowledge that they are aware but expect us to have all the lesson plans separated according to grades this is injustice.*

Similarly, respondent (R6) commented that:

*Curriculum advisors do not help us with anything. In fact, they give us pressure. When they come, they do not care that we are a multi-grade school. They want to see everything per grade as if we are mono grade school.*

These responses implied that multi-grade teachers do not receive any support from curriculum advisors and that curriculum advisors do not consider the fact that they teach in multi-grade

classrooms. Visits by standards officers to these schools only put pressure on the already burdened teachers. The responses also reveal that teachers in multi-grade classrooms are frustrated. The fact that standards officers are unable to help these teachers shows that there is lack of awareness and knowledge about multi-grade teaching by standards officers. It also emerged that school managers are also not able to offer any support to teachers as they also have their classes to teach. One of the school managers said:

It is very much difficult to find yourself working in a school with multi-grade classes. You cannot provide them with your full support because you also do not have time and knowledge to facilitate multi grade teaching and this is because at training we were not equipped with the relevant skills. It is just a matter of sitting down with them and asks them how best thing to do. They will tell you that things are hard and you will just tell them to do this and that. You do not even have time for class visit, it is difficult, and there is no time, because when you will be sitting down in another teacher's class your learners will be alone. Primary school learners cannot work by themselves; they need a teacher to be with them.

They have to find a way of working in these classes by themselves. One of the teachers also mentioned that she relies on another teacher from another district for assistance. This implies that there is also no coordination between multi-grade teachers within the district and, thus, they are professionally isolated

#### **4.13 Curriculum Implementation and Management**

Three themes emerged in response to challenges that is lesson planning, assessment and curriculum management.

#### **4.14 Lesson planning**

Out of the three (3) class teachers' one (17%) stated that he only prepares one lesson plan and consider the higher grade. Four (66%) said they prepare a lesson with different outcomes for each grade. One respondent (R2) that is (17%) reviewed that he only prepared the grade he saw to be so behind so that he could catch up with the syllabus as indicated in transcribed verbatim:

*I plan different lessons because the Grade ones are still starting with the sound “a”, and the Grade 3’s are now reading the sentences. I plan lessons for each grade.*

Another respondent (R3) said that:

*I only prepare one lesson, for Grade 3. When I prepare my lesson, I include Grade 2 things. Things in Grade 2 and 3 have to move from Grade 2 to Grade 3.*

Yet another respondent (R4) mentioned that:

*In the higher grades, we have one lesson plan. If it is a Grade 4 and 5 class, (I mostly use these grades as an example), we prepare a lesson for Grade 5, and teach all these learners these things which are mostly Grade 5 content and only touch a little bit of Grade 4 work to make them understand. Those who are in Grade 4 will progress to Grade 5 having done at least things they are supposed to do in Grade 5.*

#### **4.15 Assessment**

Out of six, four (66.7%) of the participants advanced that they assess learners separately according to their grades. Two respondents (33.3%) reported that each grade gets its tasks based on the syllabus as (R3) indicated in transcribed verbatim:

*We assess learners according to the revised curriculum document of 2013. You look at the particular grade and see what to assess. We assess them according to their grades that are grade 1 have their own way of assessment.*

Respondent (R4) had this to say:

*In the lower grade, we assess them based on the policy. It means that when I am giving them activities or assessing them, I prepare an activity for Grade 2, which is suitable to their level and another one for Grade 3s.*

Similarly, respondent (R5) had this to say as well:

*When we assess learners informally, we give them the same tasks, especially in subjects like languages because the content is almost the same. When it comes to formal tasks, we receive common exam papers. We are therefore,*

*compelled to separate these learners. Each grade will then write exams for their grade for instance grades 6 and seven in term two grades seven writes mock examinations which the grade six will not write so here they are separated.*

Participants mentioned that, whenever they want to assess learners, they prepare two different tasks. However, some participants reported that, in subjects like languages, they only assess them separately in formal assessment tasks. It also surfaced that the common assessment tasks that they receive from the district office are set per grade. However, some participants contend that assessing learners separately does not only entails much work for the teacher but it is also time consuming as teachers sometimes have to spend the whole day administering a test for one grade, especially in the lower grades. One participant said this: Responded 5: Yes, if it is Zambian language, I prepare two tasks and also two tasks for English for grade three and four, but it is painful on the teacher and also makes my work to be slow. I also delay other teachers because it takes time to administer tests for two grades. It takes time, and I delay other teachers. Sometimes I spend the whole day busy with one task. Sometimes the school closes without issuing the reports because I will still be behind.

#### **4.16 Curriculum Management**

Out of the six, three (50%) of the participants also advanced that curriculum management is one of their challenges. Three (50%) indicated that it is difficult to complete the prescribed syllabus because they have two different grades each in the same class with different curricula as (R2) indicated in transcribed verbatim:

*It is difficult to complete the syllabus because each grade has its own syllabus to follow and you have to divide your time between the two grades. It is very difficult.*

Respondent (R3) explained that:

*Maybe if we are looking at the first challenge being that, sometimes when you want to teach content which is for a specific grade, we just teach here and there because the grades are together. Most of the work is for a higher grade. It means that learners of the lower grade are not getting their*

*complete syllabus and that we are teaching what is difficult for them. It means that I have to go back and begin from a lower grade so that those in the lower grades may understand. It is a challenge.*

Respondent (R4) indicated that:

*I mostly teach Grade 6 and 7, and do not follow the programme prescribed for us. I look for content that is similar in both grades; you will find that what you prepare in Grade 7 is a continuation of what is in Grade 6, so I teach that part beginning from Grade 6 work to Grade 7 grades.*

The above responses suggest that curriculum management is problematic in multi-grade classes. Participants argue that because they have more than one different syllabus to pursue, they are unable to complete content prescribed for each grade. Some participants said that when they teach they look for topics that are similar in both grades and teach that content starting from the lower grade content to the other content. However they argue that, despite doing that, they are unable to complete the prescribed syllabus because of time. Some participants argue that, in an effort to complete the syllabus, they do not teach in detail; they just touch here and there and mainly concentrate on the higher grades. This suggests that learners' progress to the next grade without acquiring requisite skills.

The fourth objective sought to determine ways of improving the implementation of multi grade teaching in primary schools.

#### **4.17 Measures to take to ensure that there is Effective Teaching.**

Out of the six respondents, two (33%) showed that there is need for the ministry of general education to deploy teachers trained in multi grade teaching. One (17%) reacted that colleges are to be sensitised that schools are teaching in this mode so that they address this issue in their training. Three (50%) supported that effective teaching and learning will only be achieved if the number of teachers in the school equals the number of grades.

#### 4.18 Teaching Strategies used by Multi-Grade Teachers

Out of the six participants two (33%) said they used different methods in multi grade teaching so that pupils get their very best knowledge. One (17%) stated that he used question and answer mostly and discussion which normally help him to deliver effectively. Two (33%) in reaction to the same said they used peer teaching because there are older pupils in the same classroom who can teach young ones. One school manager said they are two at school meaning that he had classes and what he does is to give role- play to certain lessons and that stimulate pupils as (R3) indicated in transcribed verbatim:

*I usually use the peer method, especially in Mathematics and Zambian language. Learners who are able to help those with difficulties while am busy with the other group.*

Moreover, on the some issue, respondent (R4) expressed that:

*We use different methods, especially group methods and others, depending on the lesson. There is no single method that we can say we use. We use different methods.*

In addition, respondent (R5) emphasised that:

*We do not have any methods that we use. We use the same methods as single classes.*

Additionally, respondent (R6) revealed that:

*The method, which I mostly use in Grade 3, is to give them work to complete on their own. They read from their books. In Grade 2, I work with the learners. I read for them and then teach them because they still need the teacher's help.*

Although the participants seem not to be sure of the teaching methods they are talking about, they mentioned that they use different methods such as the peer method and the group method. Some participants mentioned that they used the same methods as those used in single grade classes.

#### **4.19 Summary**

This chapter has analysed and interpreted the participants' responses according to the themes developed from the interview questions and questionnaire on the implementation of multi grade teaching in primary schools in Kaputa district of Northern Province in Zambia basing on the objectives that guided the study. The analysis revealed that, there are challenges facing multi-grade teachers and school managers that these teachers are disillusioned about multi-grade teaching. Opportunities are there but very few concerning schools that have few teachers.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

### **5.0 Overview**

In this chapter, data obtained during interviews and questionnaires were analysed and interpreted. The purpose of this study was to explore how school managers and teachers implement multi grade teaching in primary schools. This chapter presents a summary of the literature review and summary of the findings.

### **5.1 Nature of Implementation of Multi-Grade Teaching in Primary Schools.**

Most of the respondents felt that multi grade teaching in primary schools should come to a stop. The study revealed that participants are not ready to teach in this method because they do not train in this mode but rather in mono grade teaching. The findings are inconsistent with the findings by (Barsaga and Lacuesta, 1997) that even without special training, a teacher with a more positive attitude towards multi grade teaching can produce better outcomes. From the theoretical point of view of systems theory, it supports in the line of cause and effect that an action in one part of a system causes an effect on another part of the system by stating that lack of training for multi grade educators will affect the way they organise, plan, manage their teaching and learning process. This is in agreement with school managers and teachers need to undergo training to strengthen their abilities in the way they deliver teaching. Further, the study reviewed that teachers are teaching in multi grade setting because there is shortage of teachers in remote primary schools. This finding is similar with (Little, 1995) that in many African countries, multi grade teaching is a key pedagogic tool that can assist teachers in the context of teacher shortage, budget constraints and other difficult situations. Respondent's perception on multi grade teaching is by training and not by the ability to work using other methods to ensure that the method produces quality learners with skills worth to admire.

### **5.2 Opportunities in the way School Managers and Teachers Implement Multi-Grade.**

The study revealed that school managers are not comfortable with multi grade teaching and that they do not facilitate measures that can help their teachers in multi grade teaching. The study

findings are inconsistent with (Draisey, 1985) who pointed out that multi grade teaching should not be visualised as a problem or as a response to a problem but as an opportunity with its own advantage. The systems theory indicates that systems and sub systems interact. This implies that national educators and provincial departments interact through policies, curriculum and resource allocation where school managers and teachers are involved because they are responsible at the implementation stage. The other finding indicated that multi grade teaching provides an opportunity to the school by not sending children away empty handed but rather give them something at the end of the day and thus keeping the school in the community. The findings are similar with the findings by (Thomas and Shaw, 1992) that maintaining a rural school is important in building the village identity and cultural life. This is important because a school to survive, there must be a continuous enrolment and what motivates parents to send their children to school is seeing their children acquiring relevant knowledge and skills that will help the society in which the children live. The study further revealed that lesson planning give an overload to teachers in turn affect effective delivery. This is different from the finding by (Thomas and Shaw, 1992) that careful lesson planning minimize ‘down time’ which is also known as ‘dead time’ there by ensuring that students will be engaged in various learning activities throughout the day. This means that teachers are to plan with the view that they will present their lesson in a multi grade context and not in mono grade, settings there by producing desired results. Multi grade teaching is a pedagogic approach that offers real opportunities to improve teaching and learning indifferent learning settings, particularly in the small, scattered and remote rural schools, where the geographic and socio-economic conditions limit government’s ability to provide sufficient education services.

### **5.3 Challenges School Managers and Teachers Face in the Implementation of Multi Grade Teaching.**

The majority of the respondents revealed that multi grade teaching does not provide the quality education that the ministry intends give the Zambian child and that there is no material to support multi grade in these schools which make the implementation more complex and challenging. The respondents further revealed that they only teach in order to please administrators and that when standards officers come for monitoring they will not be caught an aware. The study was

consistent with the findings by (Little, 1995) that in Zambia there are no schools known as multi grade schools, though conditions such as ‘one- teacher school’, ‘two- teacher schools’ or three- teachers’ are recognised. This situation was worry- some to find that schools gave the impression that multi grade in the Zambian context, existed in an unplanned situations and this means that there is no policy to support it. Systems theory on time and development says human system change over time and occurrence of developmental changes influence the system as a whole. This means change in education system brings change in policies, curriculum and resource allocation. If the curriculum and the policy in Zambia do not talk about multi grade teaching, then no material is available to both school managers and teachers in schools making school managers and teachers face problems in the implementation of multi grade teaching to children and finally producing poorly equipped learners in the society. Systems theory goes on to say on patterns of functioning, all parts influence the whole system. School managers and teachers need to be equipped with knowledge so that they can help the education system to produce learners who can compete favourably with other children worldwide. Furthermore, the study findings also indicated that standards officers do not have knowledge on multi grade teaching and this make it difficult for them to advice teachers whom they find in multi grade schools. This is similar to the findings of (Birch and Lally, 1995) in countries where single grade teaching is in the curriculum, there is less support to teaching in multi grade classes.

#### **5.4 Strategies to Improve the Implementation of Multi Grade Teaching in Primary Schools.**

The study findings indicated that teachers have a negative attitude to teach in the multi grade mode. The study was inconsistent with the study findings by (UNESCO, 1988 and Birch and Lally, 1995) although imparting multiple curricula is the main task of the multi grade teacher, other roles dimensions exist, especially in deprived contexts; that puts a teacher to be, a materials designer to implement the curriculum and an action researcher to improve one’s own practice. Teachers need to find ways and means to help children regardless of the mode in which the child finds himself or herself. This was telling the teacher and school managers that they needed to work and think outside the box to ensure that they changed their attitudes.

The participants further revealed that there was need to have re-fresher trainings regardless of not trained in multi grade to facilitate the teaching method of multi grade teaching so that pupils are

given the rightful content especially to newly deployed teachers who relied heavily on old teachers in this context the school manager at school level. This is similar to the study findings by (Little, 2001) that schools in which teacher absenteeism is high and ‘supplementary teacher’ arrangements are ‘non- effectual’ or ‘non-existent’. The finding, it could be concluded that multi grade teaching exists in Zambia and that the Ministry of General Education need to address it with the merits it deserves so that school managers and teachers can effectively deliver with confidence due to having knowledge and skills needed in multi grade mode. This is in line with Taole and Mncube (2012:160), calls for training in time management for teachers who teach in multi grade classes.

## **5.5 Summary**

The study was with the view to explore how school managers and teachers implement multi grade teaching in primary schools. Multi-grade teaching has a potential to improve the quality of teaching and it is essential in ensuring basic education for all. However, multi-grade teachers experience a number of challenges. Some of the challenges identified through this study are curriculum organisation, work overload, classroom management, learner performance and lack of support. These challenges have a negative effect on the implementation of the curriculum. Teachers challenges in lesson planning, teaching strategies, assessment and curriculum management. The study also concludes that these challenges have led to the development of a negative attitude towards education. These teachers believe that effective learning and teaching can never be attained in multi-grade classes should the trend be kept this way. The findings also suggest that there is need to train teachers and school managers in multi grade teaching in colleges where teachers are coming. Developing materials based on the mode of teaching of multi grade. Based on the reviewed literature, the study concludes that, effective learning and teaching in a multi-grade context can be a success.

## **CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

### **6.0 Overview**

The chapter concludes the study and makes some recommendations based on the findings of the study.

### **6.1 Conclusion**

The study explored the implementation of multi grade teaching by school managers and teachers in primary schools in Kaputa district in Northern Province. Regarding the type of implementation of multi grade teaching in primary schools, the study revealed that both school managers and teachers are mono grade teachers.

Regarding how multi grade is implemented; the study further revealed that multi, grade teaching is used in primary schools. However, teachers and school managers have no materials for multi grade teaching but they use mono graded materials in multi grade settings. The study has also revealed that teachers do not receive any support from standards officers and curriculum developers. The Zambian curriculum is silent about multi grade teaching and that is the reason why the syllabus has nothing to do with multi grade teaching. The study revealed that no refresher courses and meetings are organised at district level to help schools implement multi grade teaching effectively. The study has brought to light the point that organisation of such meetings are not possible because standards officers have no knowledge and skills that they can transfer to both school managers and teachers on the implementation of multi grade teaching primary schools.

There is need by the Ministry of General Education to address these important issues urgently as it negatively affects the general performance of learners in both rural and remote schools.

### **6.2 Recommendations**

These recommendations will address the challenges faced by school managers and teachers of multi-grade classes in order to implement effectively multi grade teaching in primary schools. One of the recommendations is that the schools themselves should strengthen continuous

professional development (CPDs) in multi-grade context. This will assist teachers with the skills and knowledge required to teach in multi-grade classes. Another recommendation is that multi-grade teaching should also form the part of training programme. These will help newly appointed teachers when they are in schools with multi-grade classes. The Ministry of Education should also provide training in multi-grade teaching for professional staff such as curriculum advisors and standards officers. This can empower them with the necessary skills and knowledge needed to support teachers in multi-grade classes.

The study revealed that there are multi-grade classes in which three grades are in one classroom. The number of learners in such classes exceeds the stipulated learner-teacher ratio by far. The Ministry of Education should ensure that the number of grades in multi-grade classes does not exceed two. This will make these classes manageable, thus making curriculum implementation easier. Materials in the multi grade teaching are to be prepared in teaching of multi grade schools.

### **6.3 Recommendations for further study**

The study on multi-grade teaching in primary schools is to be further be explored. I recommend the following further studies on the implementation of multi-grade teaching in primary schools:

- i. Quality education for learners in Zambian schools means having learners with relevant skills and knowledge that will help them survive in future regardless of the level of education they may drop out of school be it at grade seven, nine or twelve respectively. I, therefore recommend that future research should focus on the learner performance, relevant skills and knowledge, critical thinking learner with value attitude and problem solver in multi-grade classes
- ii. School managers and teachers have a crucial role in ensuring effective curriculum implementation in their schools. Further study should focus on how schools with multi-grade classes are implementation of multi grade by having skills and desirable knowledge that will help a learner in the society.
- iii. Since multi grade teaching has come to stay in the Zambian education system, further research must ensure that materials in multi grade schools together with instructional guide are in curriculum and syllabus.

- iv. Training in every aspect of a system is cardinal; I therefore recommend that further research focus on training both school managers and teachers so that these implement effectively teaching and learning in primary schools.

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## **APPENDICES**

### **APPENDIX A**

#### **THE IMPLEMENTATION OF MULTI GRADE TEACHING BY SCHOOL MANAGERS' AND TEACHERS' IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS**

Appendix A: Letter of Consent

#### **THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA IN COLLABORATION WITH ZIMBABWEN OPEN UNIVERSITY (UNZA-ZOU)**

Date:

Dear School Managers 'and teachers'

My name is Elvis Mutambala and I am a student in the Masters of Education in Educational Management and Administration with the University of Zambia in collaboration with the Zimbabwe Open University (UNZA-ZOU). A component of this degree program involves conducting a small-scale qualitative research study. My research will focus on the implementation of multi grade teaching by School Managers and teachers' in primary schools. I am interested in interviewing School managers who have experience with multi grade teaching in primary schools. I think that your knowledge and experience will provide insights into this study.

Your participation in this research will take ten (10) minute interview, which will be transcribed and audio-recorded. I would be grateful if you would allow me to interview you at a place and time convenient for you, outside of school time. The content of this interview is for my research study, which will include a final paper. I may also present my research findings via conference presentations and/or through publication. You will be a pseudonym to maintain your anonymity and I will not use your name or any other content that might identify you in my written work, oral presentations, or publications. This information will remain confidential. Any information that identifies your school or students will be safe. The interview data will be stored on my password-protected computer and the only person who will have access to the research data will be my course supervisors. You are free to change your mind about your participation at any time, and to withdraw even after you have consented to participate. You may also choose to decline to

answer any specific question during the interview. I will destroy the audio recording after the paper has been presented and/or published, which may take up to a maximum of five years after the data has been collected. There are no known risks to participation, and I will share a copy of the transcript with you shortly after the interview to ensure accuracy.

Please sign this consent form, if you agree to take part in the interview. The second copy is for your records. I am very grateful for your participation.

Sincerely,

Mutambala Elvis

Cell: 0978045680

E-mail: [mutambalaelvis1@gmail.com](mailto:mutambalaelvis1@gmail.com)

Physical Address: Kaputa District (Kaputa BOMA)

Supervisor' name:

MWEEMBA LIBERTY (PhD)

E-mail: [lmweemba69@yahoo.com](mailto:lmweemba69@yahoo.com)

## THE IMPLEMENTATION OF MULTI GRADE TEACHING BY SCHOOL MANAGERS' AND TEACHERS' IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS

### Consent Form

I am acknowledging that the topic of this interview was not new to me. I understand that I can withdraw from this research study at any time without penalty.

I have read the letter provided to me by Mutambala Elvis and agree to participate in an interview for the purposes described. I agree to have the interview audio-recorded.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: (printed) \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**APPENDIX B**

**STRUCTURED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR SCHOOLMANAGERS**

This schedule is a guideline for interview process in the data collection for the study. Open questions are used. The study is voluntary participation. You are free to take part or not. Once you decide to take part, you have the right to withdraw or seek clarification about this study.

My contact details are:

Call: 0978045680/ 0963280029/0953396622.

Whatsapp line 0978045680

Email address: mutambaelvis1@gmail.com

If you are willing to take part in the study, kindly sign the declaration below.

**DECLARATION**

I have read/ understood the information provided above and hereby agree to participate in the study.

Sign ----- Date -----

It is my pleasure to meet you Mr.....am Mutambala Elvis is my name from the University of Zambia conducting a study on the Implementation of multi- grade teaching by school managers' and teachers' in primary schools of which Kaputa and your school are not exception. The information that you shall give me will help our schools in our district and the nation.

There is secrecy of whatever information you will share with me. If you could allow me to tape record your responses and take note certain points you give me in my notebook will help me not to leave any vital information. The interview duration is 15 minutes. If you are ready let me begin asking you these questions.

What is the name of your school? \_\_\_\_\_

What is the school enrolment? \_\_\_\_\_

How many teachers are at your school? \_\_\_\_\_

What grades do you offered? \_\_\_\_\_

1. For how long have you been in service? \_\_\_\_\_
2. What is your highest profession qualification? \_\_\_\_\_
3. What is your understanding of the concept multi- grade teaching? \_\_\_\_\_
4. How do you monitor multi- grade classes? \_\_\_\_\_
5. What motivated your school to introduce multi- grade teaching? \_\_\_\_\_
6. Are there mechanisms in place to support the pedagogy of multi- grade teaching? \_\_\_\_\_
7. What benefits are there in multi- grade teaching? \_\_\_\_\_
8. Are there stimulating linkages with the local community members to support multi- grade teaching? \_\_\_\_\_
9. Is regional level aware of the use of multi- grade teaching? \_\_\_\_\_
10. What support do they give in recruitment? \_\_\_\_\_
11. What strategies to use in the proper implementation of multi- grade teaching in primary schools? \_\_\_\_\_
12. How do you analyse the implementation of multi- grade teaching at your school? \_\_\_\_\_

It is a precious moment for me to have this interview with you. I appreciate your welcome to your school and hospitality given to me. Could there be any vital information on my topic that you have just remembered before I go on the implementation of multi- grade teaching in primary school? Thank you dearly and I promise if you could allow me to link up with you should need arises for more clarification in my study.

Thank you for your warmly attention.

**APPENDIX C:**

**QUESTIONNAIRE FOR CLASS TEACHERS**

Dear respondents,

I am a student from the University of Zambia doing a study on the Implementation of multi-grade teaching by school managers and teachers' in primary schools. The school is teaching in multi- grade system. Here is a copy of a questionnaire that you will fill in by ticking your appropriate answers in the boxes provided.

Be assured of your information secrecy and confidentiality. Please return the questionnaire after you have completed.

I thank you in advance for your positive response.

**DECLARATION**

I have understood the above information and do here agree to take part in the study.

Sign----- Date -----

**SECTION A: BACKGROUND**

**1. GENDER**

Male  Female

age group  
20-30.  31-40.  40 - 50  Above 51

3. How many years have you been in the service?

0-5.  6-10.  11-15.  16-20.  Above - 21

4. What is your highest professional qualification?

Primary Certificate  Primary Diploma  Bachelors

**SECTION B: NATURE OF IMPLEMENTATION OF MULTI GRADE TEACHING.**

5. Do you agree for the use of multi- grade teaching in schools?

Agree.  Disagree.  Strongly agree.  Strongly disagree.

6. What is the performance of learners that pass through grades of multi- grade?

High  Low  Moderate  Below average

**SECTION C: OPPORTUNITIES IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF MULTI- GRADE TEACHING**

7. Do you accept that multi- grade teaching has benefits to both teachers and learners?

Agree.  Disagree.  I do not know.  Strongly agree.

Strongly disagree.

8. Do you still believe that multi grade teaching method give access to leaning in few staffed schools?

Agree.  Disagree.  Strongly agrees.  Strongly disagree.

9. Can multi- grade teaching give support in peer teaching?

Agree.  Disagree.  do not know.  Strongly disagree.

**SECTION D: CHALLENGES IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF MULTI- GRADE TEACHING**

10. Do you still believe that teacher training in multi grade can affect performance?

True.  False  I do not know.

11. Are teachers able to request support from higher levels of authority for problem- solving in relation to multi- grade teaching?

Yes.  No.  I do not know.

12. Do you agree that time table and curriculum can effectively facilitate multi grade.

Agree.  Disagree.  Strongly agree.  Strongly disagree.

**SECTION E: STRATEGIES IN MULTI- GRADE TEACHING**

13. Do teachers have guidelines on the syllabus coverage across the year in multi- grade teaching?

Yes.  No.  I do not know,  not at all

14. Would it be helpful if re fresher courses to the teachers on multi grade given?

Agree.  Disagree.  Strongly agree.  Strongly disagree.

15. Do you believe that multi- grade based materials can have a positive impact on learners and teachers?

True.  False  May be