

Full Length Research Paper

Are extra classes the success behind high performance and marks?

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Extra classes have been a fixture in the educational system in India. They pre-date all existing educational programmes and examinations. Yet more recently the justification and reasons for the maintenance of these classes have been called into question. There have been unsubstantiated claims that in some cases the classes have been "organized" in some schools as a means to supplement some teachers' emoluments. The charge has been made too that some teachers "hold back" in their teaching duties during regular school hours because they have extra classes or time to complete their syllabus. But some of these "after-school" classes focus on recall of facts instead of understanding important concepts and improving. The fact is that the issue of extra classes is a long-standing and complex one. The main objective of the study is to identify the need for extra classes and to check out the plan of lesson and implementation. To give suggestion to the management for rescheduling the working hours. The issue of extra classes is an educational, economic and social one. Extra classes are creating a lot of stress and tension to the students and teachers who have to come early in the morning and late in the evening. This issue has led to lot of problems like resignation of teachers and students being overburdened. This research has been conducted among the teachers and students studying in grade 10, 11 and 12 in one of the reputed schools in Chennai. To find out the exact requirement of extra classes (whom, when (time) and which subjects). Is it the real reason behind their success? Descriptive research was adopted using non probability convenience method from a reputed school in Chennai with a sample of 120 teachers and 326 students. The main conclusion was that for most class 10 and above learners, it is probably too late for meaningful interventions and that mastering basic content of these subjects should be accomplished at the foundation phase of schooling. The provision of extra classes as a norm should be restricted, as it places great pressure on the students and also on the teachers. A good quality of classroom teaching during the regular working hours can tackle the growth of extra classes.

Key words: Extra classes, performance, lesson plan, coaching classes, special class, practical, course material, seminar.

INTRODUCTION

One of the education system's biggest challenges is to improve the performance of learners who are far below par, specifically in mathematics. The more time that students spend in the classroom, the more they will learn and achieve is the mindset of the parents and teachers at school. Around the world, extra classes are a phenomenon. That is the premise of a proposal to provide extra instruction for students who lag behind

academically or are at risk of failing to meet state and federal education achievement standards. Individuals request them and many governments and educational jurisdictions embrace them. Extra classes have been a fixture in the education system of our country for as long as we care to recall. They pre-date all existing educational programmes and examinations. Yet more recently the justification and reasons for the maintenance

of these classes have been called into question. There have been unsubstantiated claims that in some cases the classes have been "organized" in some schools as a means to supplement some teachers' emoluments. The charge has been made too that some teachers "hold back" in their teaching duties during regular school hours because they have extra classes or time to complete their syllabus. But some of these "after-school" classes focus on recall of facts instead of understanding important concepts and improving. The fact is that the issue of extra classes is a long-standing and complex.

The issue of extra classes is an educational, economic and social one. Because all children do not learn at the same rate and have different level of understanding, some, particularly slow ones, need extra time to master the content compared to the fast learners in order to achieve their goal or target. Extra classes provide a means towards this end. Extra classes are creating a lot of stress and tension to the students and teachers who have to come early in the morning and late in the evening. This issue has led to lot of problems like resignation of teachers and students being overburdened.

This research has been conducted among the teachers and students studying in grade 10, 11 and 12 in one of the reputed schools in Chennai to find out the exact requirement of extra classes (whom, when (time) and which subjects) and also to check whether "it the real reason behind their success"?

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

According to the Education Ministry of India, more than 80% of public elementary schools and 50% of junior high schools held extra classes in the 2002 academic year despite the government's new policy to lighten curriculums and provide a less stressful education. The move reflected teachers' fears about a decline in their students' academic standards under the policy of "education with latitude," and resulted in cuts in hours spared for sport and other school events. education, culture, sports, science and technology ministry found in a nationwide survey that 2.3% of elementary schools and 3.0% of junior highs even tried to secure time for additional classes by changing their school terms from trimesters to bi-semesters. The survey was conducted on public schools via nationwide education boards. It came with a finding that schools which had extra classes reported annual school hours longer than 782 to 945 h for elementary schools and 980 for junior high schools. In countries like Japan and South Korea, extra classes proliferate. Saturday classes are a routine and parents insist on their children attending them. In several states of the USA, the classes are organized on Saturdays and during school holidays and are paid for by the local authorities. It cannot be denied, education is a stressful

business. In a survey done by the council for exceptional children, 60% of the respondents rated work-related stress between 7 and 9 on a 10 point scale. Major causes of stress include too much paperwork, lack of time, attitudes of others, and student behavior.

Howie (2002) decisively argued and demonstrated that learners' proficiency in English explained a large part of the variance in their Mathematics performance scores.

Amongst a range of other factors, the issue of "time on task" has been raised repeatedly both as problem and solution to learner performance (Taylor and Vinjevod, 1999; Taylor et al., 2003). Reeves and Muller (2005) also recently extended the contributions and debate in South Africa to the notion of "opportunity to learn" (OTL), for a while now receiving great attention internationally. They emphasised the dimensions of coverage of curriculum content, and the appropriateness of cognitive level (or progress across the curriculum across grade levels) in particular.

A final reference to the inputs made by Professor Mary Metcalfe, Prega Govender and the other editorial contributions in the Sunday Times (13 January, 2008) is considered appropriate. Ten key areas were identified in terms of how they contribute, with suggestions about how they could be addressed, with regard to school functioning. The following matters are emphasised:

- 1) Change and consensus building takes time, and all relevant relationships should be fostered deliberately.
- 2) Teacher needs differ, and each should receive relevant opportunity to improve their mastery and confidence.
- 3) Literacy and numeracy is the core(s) of learning, and practice and materials should be adjusted accordingly.
- 4) Mistakes have been made about the languages of learning and teaching, and teacher training and materials should be addressed appropriately.
- 5) Not enough resources have been invested, and school facilities should be upgraded in all earnest.
- 6) Schools differ in their capacity and needs, and each should be engaged and supported appropriately.
- 7) School and district leadership have been neglected and should be developed appropriately.
- 8) Social and support mechanisms for teachers and schools have been neglected, and budgets, training and facilities should be improved (including libraries, psychologists, counseling, sports, etc.).
- 9) The community base of education has been ruptured (in cities), and new ways of inclusive public schooling have to be developed.
- 10) Planning has been poor, and consensus has to be reached about coordinated and long-term strategies and plans in an extremely complex environment.

From the few references mentioned the need for and sense behind investigating how to find extra time and effort to try and improve learner performance as much

Table 1. Experience with sex – cross tabulation.

Experience (in years)	Male	Female
0-5	2	16
6-10	19	17
11-15	14	27
16-20	4	15
21-30		6
Total	39	81

and as quickly as possible, is clear. If such a study could also establish more about the conditions under which expanding time for learning could or should take place, even better. As a result, there was considered to be much justification not only for undertaking the study as reported on hence, but also for many of the aspects of its conceptualisation. Above all, especially from the final ten points listed, it is clear that no quick-fixes should be expected but at the same time we need to see to that the extra classes would be beneficial or burdensome.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The best approach to the study was considered to be a very tight matched or paired control-group design. The scale of the study was also limited to a single school in Chennai to be able to control external variance better, and to empirically pilot procedures under tight and limited control conditions before deciding on the implications of scaling up any possible interventions to more districts, provinces, or otherwise. The sample consists of individuals from a reputed school in Chennai consisting of teachers (120) and students (326). The school has been selected using purposive sampling procedure and sample has been taken by non probability convenience sampling method. The data for the study consists of both primary data and secondary data. The primary data was collected by designing two sets questionnaire that is one for students and the other for teachers. The questionnaire was administered to the teachers and students separately. The secondary data was collected from school policy manual, journals and books. Responses to different questions are analysed using statistical tools like percentage methods and cross tabulation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Teachers

Gender and experience

The researcher has drawn the following major findings on the basis of the data collected. It indicates that majority (67.50%) of the respondents (teachers) in the school are female and most of the respondents (64%) have the experience between 6 to 15 years (87 out of 120). We can also infer that majority of the male teachers (48.72%) have an experience of 6 to 10 years whereas, majority of the female teachers (33.33%) are with 11 to 15 years of

experience (Table 1).

Preparation of lesson plan and course material

Table 2 exhibits that the respondents prepare the lesson plan and course material at the beginning of the academic year. Irrespective of the experience, majority of the teachers prepare lesson plan (70%) and course material (62.50%) at the start of the academic year. It also shows that incase of adhering to the schedule given in the lesson plan, the respondents with 11 to 15 years and 21 to 30 years of experience strongly agree that they go in par with the schedule.

Completion of syllabus without extra class

Irrespective of the experience 50% of the teachers strongly agree that they can complete the syllabus within the school time without extra classes (Table 3).

Teaching theory and practical

Majority (43.33%) of the teachers prefer taking the students to laboratory during their practical session and feel that it would be a waste of time to teach the same topic in the class once again. The duplication can be avoided so that more concentration can be given to other topics (Table 4).

Assignments

Irrespective of the experience Majority of the teachers strongly agree that giving assignments to students will make them to think, use library and browse Internet. This would help the students go beyond the syllabus and not bookworm.

Class seminar

Majority of the teachers (44.17%) have not answered and 9% are in neutral category, and are not encouraging the students to participate in the class seminar. They feel that it takes away their time and becomes difficult to complete the syllabus.

Interaction with the students

Majority of the teachers (51.67%) have not answered, neutral (9.16%) and disagree (10%) which constitute in total approximately to 70%, do not interact with the students. Interaction with the student is reducing with

Table 2. Lesson plan preparation at the beginning of the academic year with experience.

Lesson plan	Experience (years)				
	0-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21-30
Unanswered		1	3		
Strongly agree	8	1	9	3	
Agree	9	31	27	12	5
Neither disagree nor agree		1	2	4	1
Disagree	1	2			
Total	18	36	41	19	6

Table 3. Completion of the syllabus within the school time with experience.

Syllabus completion	Experience (in years)				
	0-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21-30
Unanswered			2		
Strongly agree	8	13	24	9	6
Agree	6	13	8	5	
Neither disagree nor agree	1	2	1		
Disagree	1	7	4	3	
Strongly disagree	1	1	2	2	
Total	18	36	41	19	6

Table 4. Preference in going to lab during their subject practical lab session with experience.

Practical lab	Experience (years)				
	0-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21-30
Unanswered			3	1	
Strongly agree	8	11	16	7	1
Agree	5	18	14	10	5
Neither disagree nor agree	1	5	3	1	
Disagree	2	1	4		
Strongly disagree	2	1	1		
Total	18	36	41	19	6

increase in experience. Outside the class interaction is less between teachers and students. Interaction with students would help in increasing the morale of the students.

Interactive teaching

Majority of the teachers (45%) feel that interactive teaching is the best method of teaching. Teachers with less experience strongly agree with the statement whereas the teachers above 11 years of experience just agree to it. So, it can be inferred that interaction with the students as well as interactive method of teaching reduces with experience.

Prior preparation by students

Majority of the teachers (43.33%) strongly agree that they encourage students to come prepared for the class with topic to be taught next day to have an interactive teaching.

Producing result

Teachers (54.17%) are confident of producing the expected results even if extra classes are cancelled. It can also be inferred there is a difference of opinion with increase in experience. The teachers with an experience above 16 years feel that they cannot produce the results

Table 5. Extra classes (before and after school) the success behind the current results with experience.

Extra class- current results	Experience (years)				
	0-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21-30
Unanswered	1	1	3	1	
Yes	10	24	24	15	6
No	4	7	11	3	
Both	3	4	3		
Total	18	36	41	19	6

Table 6. Extra classes (before and after school) the success behind the current results with sex.

Extra class- current results	Male	Female
Unanswered	1	5
Yes	28	50
No	7	18
Both	3	7
Total	39	81

expected if extra classes are cancelled whereas less experienced teachers are confident. It can also be inferred from male teachers (71.79) who feel that extra classes are the real success behind the results compared to female teachers (61.73%). This statement is contradictory because the male teachers in the above case feel that they can produce the results without the extra classes. So there is a dilemma which is created among themselves whether extra classes is required or not (Table 5).

Suitability of extra class

Majority of the teachers (41.67%) feel that the extra classes can be arranged for below average students, followed by 35.83% who feel that concentration can be given to average students. Irrespective of the experience and gender the response is the same (Table 7). So, it is better to have special classes to those who need rather than all the students (Table 6).

Handling classes

Majority of the teachers (52.50%) handles one class but multiple sections and per week they take around 31 to 35 periods.

Sufficiency of class

Majority of the teachers (72.50%) feel that the number of

periods given to them per week for each section is more than sufficient (Table 8).

Usage of teaching aids

Majority of the teachers (79.17%) irrespective of the experience use teaching aids for handling classes.

Student's analysis

Gender and class

Majority of the student respondents (65.34%) are male. Majority of the respondents (63.19%) are from grade 11 followed by grade 10 students (24.54%).

Revise the daily portion

Majority of the students (27%) feel that they do not get time to revise the daily portion, followed by 25.15% who feel that they get time to revise the daily portion and 19.94% stay neutral. So from the study, we can infer that 44% of the respondents feel that they do not have time to revise the daily portion whereas 35% have a feeling that they get time (Table 9).

Time to do personal work

Majority of the students (52%) feels that they are not getting sufficient time to do their personal work. Only 24% of the respondents feel that they get time to do personal work and 20.25% are neutral.

Time for entertainment

Majority of the students (63%) feel that they do not get time for entertainment. Only 10% of them agree that they do have time for entertainment. 23.31% stay neutral.

Time for assignment

Majority of the students (70%) feels that when an

Table 7. Suitability of extra classes with experience.

Suitability of extra classes	Experience (in years)				
	0-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21-30
Unanswered	3	1	4	1	
Below average	9	14	17	7	3
Average	3	15	16	7	2
Above Average	3	4	2	1	
Extra ordinary		2	2	3	1
Total	18	36	41	19	6

Table 8. Sufficiency of periods for each section per week with experience.

Sufficiency of periods	Experience (in years)				
	0-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21-30
Unanswered	2	7	4	3	1
Extra	11	24	31	16	5
Sufficient	5	4	5		
Not sufficient		1	1		
Total	18	36	41	19	6

Table 9. Time at home to revise the daily portions taken in the class with sex and class.

Revise the daily portions	Male	Female	X	XI	XII
Unanswered	4	3	5	2	
Strongly agree	25	5	6	15	9
Agree	55	27	20	50	12
Neither disagree or agree	36	29	15	42	8
Disagree	53	35	19	64	5
Strongly disagree	40	14	15	33	6
Total	212	113	80	205	40

assignment is given, they find it very difficult to concentrate on other assignments or other subject to study. They are not getting sufficient time for other.

Bunk the class

Majority of the students (77%) do not bunk the classes even if they have not done the assignment.

Arguing in the class

Majority of the students (41%) do not hesitate in arguing their point of view in the class. But from the remaining 59%, around 30% hesitate in arguing their point of view in the class. And the balance 29% is in the neutral category.

Time for certain topics

Most of the students (63%) feel that they have to spend lot of time in understanding some topics, as a result of which they do not find time to study other topics.

Producing results

Majority of the students (55%) are confident that they can produce good results even if extra classes are removed. Irrespective of the gender this response is the same. But when analyzed in terms of class XI and XII students are more confident of producing the good results even if extra classes are removed than class X students. This shows that the students do not prefer to attend the special class (Table 10).

Table 10. In case the extra classes are removed, will you be in a position to produce the good results.

Extra class removal – effect on result	Male	Female	X	XI	XII
Unanswered	3	1		4	
Yes	118	60	35	118	25
No	92	52	45	84	15
Total	213	113	80	205	40

Table 11. Is extra classes (before and after school) the success behind the main reason for you to produce good marks.

Extra classes – result success	Male	Female	X	XI	XII
Unanswered	1	2		3	
Yes	71	32	43	46	14
No	76	30	13	80	13
Both	65	49	24	77	13
Total	213	113	80	206	40

Table 12. Requirement for special classes.

Special classes	Male	Female	X	XI	XII
Yes	166	89	64	156	35
No	47	24	16	50	5
Total	213	113	80	206	40

Extra classes success for result

Majority (34.97%) of the students are not clear whether extra classes are the main reason for them to produce the good results. Whereas 32.51% of the students do not agree that extra classes are the main reason for their success. Students are confident of producing good results even if extra classes are removed but they are not able to come to a conclusion “if the extra class is the real reason for their success” (Table 11).

Special classes

Majority (78.22%) of the students wants special class but feel over burdened (Table 12).

Time for special classes

Majority of the students (46.01%) prefer to have classes in the morning hours. From the cross tabulation, most of the girls like to have classes in the morning than boys.

Present schedule satisfaction

Majority (54.60%) of the students is happy with the

present schedule. But the students in the other category are not happy with the schedule is also high.

SUGGESTIONS

Preparation of lesson plan

Teachers can prepare lesson plan at the beginning of the academic year without taking extra classes in the mind. They should be in a position to complete their syllabus within school timing.

Organize your classroom

Improved classroom organization can save time and increase professional productivity. Setting up a catalog system for materials, tests, and instructional techniques. Organizing the classroom so that students can function independently by preparing work folder learning centers or student contacts may free you to attend more directly to individual student needs. Giving students access to classroom materials such as books, paper, pencils, audiovisual equipment, and self-correcting materials, and training them, can likewise improve the learning environment.

Extra classes

- 1) Extra classes can be conducted for the below average students (in other words slow learners) in the morning hours. In case, if the teachers are not able to complete the portions then extra classes can be taken according to the convenience of the teachers and students. Extra classes can be conducted in the morning hour when the students' mind will be fresh to grasp things.
- 2) Extra classes should be internal ('home-grown') to the school in a convenient, neutral and fun venue with facilities, thus avoiding extra costs and practical difficulties.
- 3) The classes should make use of a senior school coordinator and be run by the school's best teachers/tutors, who are proficient in all aspects of their subject and are highly motivated.
- 4) Learners should volunteer for putting in the extra effort of about 20 one-hour extra lessons after school, focusing on catching up work that they struggle with, literacy/language first, mathematics next, but not simultaneously to avoid overload and to ensure high attendance.

Compulsory practical classes

Prepare timetable in such a way that, the teachers handling the subject can accompany the students, instead of the lab assistant. This saves time and the teachers need not handle the topics taught in the laboratory again in the classroom.

Keep yourself motivated

It is important to keep motivated. Seeking out new experiences can be one way to maintain professional interest and prevent stagnation. Teachers can try new instructional techniques, implement alternative programs, or develop new materials according to the needs and understanding level of the students.

Extra curricular activities

Involve the student in regular and extra-class activities whenever possible, which will help the students to relax instead making them, sit from morning to evening in the classroom.

Prepare timetable for assignments

Avoid giving assignments in all subjects at the same time. Timetable can be prepared, so that assignments are given in rotation for different subjects. Students will feel

comfortable and get time to do their work and revise the daily portions.

Conclusion

The main conclusion was that for mostly class 10 and above learners, it is probably too late for meaningful interventions and that mastering basic content of these subjects should be accomplished at the foundation phase of schooling. The provision of extra classes as a norm should be restricted, as it places great pressure on the students and also on the teachers. Extra classes could have a positive impact on children if they facilitated the learning process, engaged and motivated children and maximized their learning potential. Too many extra classes can lead to stress in children and thus have a negative impact on their physical and mental development. The perception changes from person to person with respect to extra classes, but a good quality of classroom teaching during the regular working hours can tackle the growth of extra classes.

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