



Multilevel Approach of Stakeholder Engagement in Frivolous Communities

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Abstract

The main purpose of the study is to investigate the influence of community involvement on academic performance and the holistic development of students in schools of developing nations with low-income economies. The objectives of this study are to investigate the influence and responsibility of community involvement in school management, motivating teachers, maintenance of school infrastructure and the academic performance of the students. The perennial challenge facing school systems worldwide is how to improve student learning outcomes. As education is a complex and diverse process, quality education for all children requires multi-sectorial strategies that are integral to overall development and success.

In the pursuit of improvements, educators introduce various innovations and thus partners must join in with education institutions, teachers, and faculty in developing practices and policies that make access to quality education, the responsibility of the entire society.

Keywords:

**Community -Engagement;
Stakeholders;
Reading comprehension level;
Mathematics mastery.**

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1. Introduction:

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Global ed-crisis is a problem that we are facing since the advent of the industrial revolution as it demarcated the difference between the rich and not so privileged with respect to education and laid the stone of division of work based on the economic status of the people.

Education is the basic right of a child and must not be made available with respect to certain economic strata. There are many children in the world who are deprived of the opportunity to learn. Children living in disadvantaged communities face many barriers in accessing education, as is estimated that over 250 million children under the age of five in the developing world are failing to reach their full development potential. Faced with this challenge, governments and donors across the globe have turned to early childhood education and development (ECED) services. These are a cost-effective way to overcome the developmental losses associated with growing up in disadvantaged communities. A variety of benefits can be derived from organizations that can foster an atmosphere of trust (Tschannen-Moran, 2001). To stress the value of trust in schools, Blasé and Blasé (2001) wrote: “the reward of a trusting environment is immeasurable, yet the price of lack of trust is dear” (p. 23) [Moran M, 2001]. Many children don't have a school close by, some don't have a teacher with the proper training needed to learn effectively. An increase in access to education can improve overall health and longevity of a society, grow economics, and even combat climate change. In many developing countries, access to learning, and education face barriers in terms of language, gender, reliance on child labour stall progress to provide quality education. Quality education by 2030 to most children is a global goal and this notion in mind the community has an important role to play is long-standing children education and is a central theme of education reform in our country. Community members partnering on the ground can ensure safety and provide support and community agencies partnering between systems (e.g., child welfare, law enforcement, libraries) offer protective factors that can contribute to student resilience as well as help efficiently and effectively address issues when they arise.

2. Statement of the Problem:

Research or service projects conducted in the context of real-world constraints may indeed surface unforeseen issues that can be the subject of intensive reflection and critical analysis. In these cases, it is important to see these as teaching moments, both for students and for the community stakeholders. When students and community stakeholders have the opportunity to problem-solve collaboratively to address these issues, they may learn even more about the complexities of real-world contexts beyond abstract course content as well as valuable leadership skills of adaptation. However, for these moments to have the greatest educational and community impact, teacher-leaders need to have the courage to accept the context of real-world complexities and face the challenges.

Therefore in spite of being trained with months of theoretical knowledge and allowed to practice in mock-up classrooms in a low-income community with coordinated help from specialists of different areas, eventually we both faced a wave of constraints and difficulties when placed in the cluster of our placement city with similar low-income communities. This is due to the difference in the context of the community with respect to religious beliefs, the standard of living, gender-biased priority thinking, demography, etc.

The major problems that we witnessed which were directly affecting our expected daily outcomes are:

- Low Attendance.
- Low literacy in parents i.e especially mothers.
- Gender-biased mindset.
- Zero stakeholder investment (school management and community).



For many teachers- leaders this is a significant concern since we would like to have our community partnerships be mutually beneficial because we want our students to feel effective in their work. The research shows parent involvement affects minority students' academic achievement across all races [W.H.,2003].

3. Barriers in Child Education:

3.1 Primary Factors:

3.1.1 Low Literacy in Parents:

Emergent literacy in parents is often missed in disadvantaged communities and parents' level of education and levels of literacy, their attitude towards written language, their past experience of schooling matters for a child's education [Hannon,Nutbrown,Morgan,2019]. Parental influence imparts differential learning in children and parents are the primary stakeholders in a child's education.

3.1.2 Exposure to Violence:

Children exposed to violence are at risk of underachieving and dropping out of school. The impact of exposure leads to harm in a child's emotional, psychological, and even physical development. They may have trouble sleeping and concentrating in school. Families in disadvantaged communities often have conflict incomes which may lead to students often flee from homes and discontinuity in learning. Without support, children lose out on the chance to reach their full potential.

3.1.3 Gender inequality:

Gender is one of the biggest reasons children are denied an education. Though recent advances in girl education indicate the empowerment of girls, a generation of a young woman is left behind due to numerous reasons. One of the reasons faced in disadvantaged communities is that students are deprived of co-education. Co-education is education for both boys and girls together. Gender equality plays a major role in behaviour management and student learning outcomes.

3.1.4 Hunger and poor nutrition:

The impact of hunger on the education system is gravely underreported. In the context of Private schools in disadvantaged communities, students reach school without proper food which affects their concentration levels, in turn, leads to disruptive behaviour. Malnourished students have an impact on the brain development of students is the same as losing four grades of schooling. Conversely, good nutrition leads to crucial preparation for good learning.

3.1.5 Access and Exposure:

Outdated and worn-out textbooks have become a cause of concern. Worksheets, readers, and other core materials to help students learn their lessons are in short supply. Topics that are meant to be taught practically are taught theoretically as part of adaptive mechanisms by teachers due to inadequate resources to enable effective teaching of the same. This ends up negatively affecting students' performance reducing their competitiveness for opportunities whose placement is pegged on performance in such subjects [R.O.,2016].

Teacher- leaders also need access to the Internet for proper planning of lessons and related activities to enhance learning strategies.



3.1.6 Lack of attendance:

Students from varied and diversified backgrounds tend to move their locations often creating a huge gap in their age group. This creates a ripple in the classroom and behaviour from various communities is reflected in students which leads to disruptive behaviour. These students often avoid school and get into community-related activities like street vendors and automation related work.

3.2 Secondary Factors:

3.2.1 Lack of funds:

According to Global Partnership Education (GPE), 20% of aid for education goes to low-income countries. It costs more than what has been provided per child to provide basic education for 13 years. Students often tend to drop out of school at the secondary level due to a lack of funds. Crisis in the education sector at the community level is far below national standards and looks for different organizations' support to impact community development as well as student learning outcomes.

3.2.2 Lack of trained teachers:

Teacher effectiveness found to be the most predictor for effective student outcomes. To fight the global teacher crisis, the world needs trained teachers to achieve universal primary and secondary education with basic skills like reading, writing, and maths. In 1 out of 3 countries, less than three-quarters are trained to national standards. Scenarios in communities vary broadly and trained teachers are below par the national standards. There is a dire need to bridge the gap in students and teacher - leaders ratio. Disadvantaged communities lack trained teachers and support provided to them in terms of income and perks are far below standards which in turn affects student learning outcomes.

3.2.3 The expense of education:

Universal Declaration of Human rights indicates poverty and lack of money should not be a barrier in depriving their right to education. Most parents risk their destitute efforts to get their children better lives through education. The Right to Education (RTE) act of India supports children to continue education. The Act makes education a fundamental right of every child between the ages of 6 and 14 and specifies minimum norms in elementary schools. It requires all private schools to reserve 25% of seats to children to be reimbursed by the state as part of the public-private partnership plan. Due to this, there is a lot of impact on student's dropout rate since children are not forced to work at an early age for adding to the income of the family for the basic needs.

4. Plan of Action:

Hence after understanding the major problems that we were facing while performing our teaching and leadership concept much learned and well-practised in mock classrooms before and unable to achieve similar goals at the placement city, gave us a jolt in the first couple of months.

After scrupulously scrutinizing the constraints we started to self-reflect on the practices, trends, stakeholders, and factors affecting them. During this process, we realized that we are missing out on a major contributing key mostly affecting the students and hence showing a dip in the performance scale. This important factor was "invested community involvement" apart from parents, school, and family. Researchers cite parent-family community involvement as a key to addressing the school dropout crisis [H.M,2007] and note that strong school-family-community partnerships foster higher educational aspirations and more motivated students [Barton,Paul,2003]. With consistent research, we understood that parent, family, and community involvement in education correlates with

higher academic performance and school improvement and thereby preparing a checklist to be targeted to achieve our performance linearly within the specified time period of six months.

5. Designing of the Strategy Prototypes:

When schools, parents, families, and communities work together to support learning, students tend to earn higher grades, attend school more regularly, stay in school longer, and enroll in higher-level programs. The evidence holds true for students at both the elementary and secondary levels, regardless of the parent's education, family income, or background—and the research shows parent involvement affects minority students' academic achievement across all races. Being a part of this fellowship develops the ability of a teacher-leader to understand the importance of supporting teaching and learning demands for addressing students' social service needs which exist in the community they live-in, as well as their academic ones, and this broad-based support is essential to closing our achievement gaps. In fact, community support of the educational process is considered one of the characteristics common to high-performing schools mostly in low-income communities in developing nations.

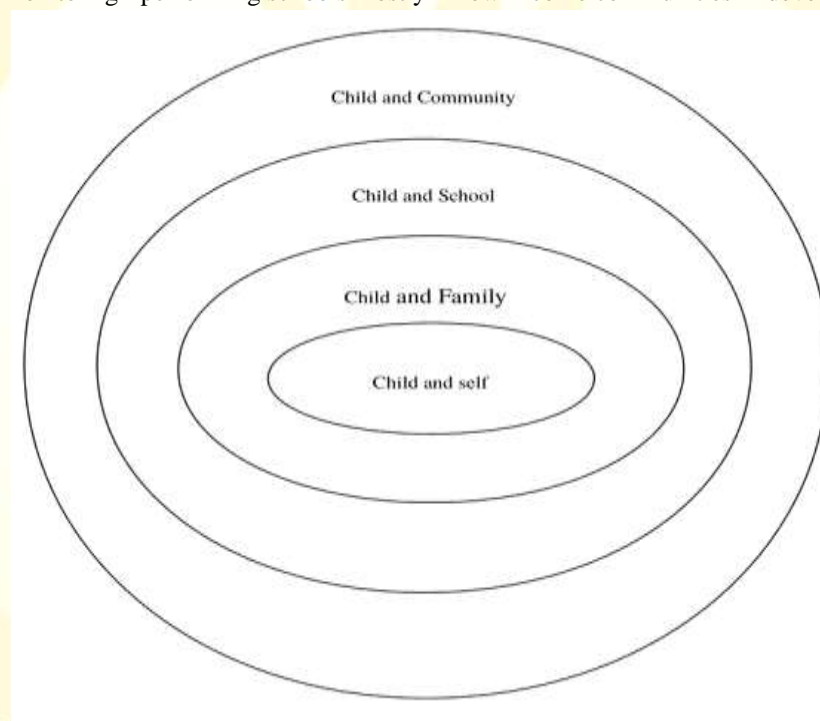


Fig 1: Child Involvement with and within the community.

The above set diagram well describes the relationship evolution among a child and the community where he/she is a part of. This layered evolution within a child develops at a very young age and trying to build the proper relationship among the child and each element of the community can only happen if the child is enjoying a happy relationship with him/herself. Only with the contentment in the inner layer, the child can approach to develop a proper bonding with the family. For every child apart from home the first outside place where he/she spends one-third of the time is the school, therefore, enjoying the school environment will partially depend on the relationship that he/she shares with the stakeholders in the school and inner sets. Community plays an important role in child psychology as he/she imbibes the beliefs, actions, faith, and culture of the community and hence the child believes to be an element of the community. Here all the layers of this set diagram become interrelated within a duration of a decade and when one layer crumbles it affects the other layers adversely.



With the aforementioned problems in mind, the prepared checklist includes the following planned prototypes to be executed, which are:

- Maximize community involvement.
- Periodic home visits.
- Family participation in their children's education.

6. Execution:

Stakeholder engagement is a well-administered topic in education for effective student outcomes. It involves parental engagement by providing emphasis on collaborative decision making and communication. Involving key stakeholders in the creation and evaluation of education policies is a sound administrative practice. This perspective stemmed from the bygone era of small and localized professional administration that didn't exist, the influence of parents was direct what appeared in the curriculum. Today, schools in disadvantaged communities rely more on a politicized and accountable environment regardless of where it came from. Stakeholder engagement plays/draws a pivotal role in effective leadership in education [UIL, 2017]

Education professionals and experts state stakeholder engagement as an ongoing system wherein teacher-leaders strategically connect with leaders, learn meaningfully, and communicate with individuals and groups with vested interests in education [ThoughtExchange, 2018]. This includes parents, students-leaders, staff, community leaders and support organizations to bring an impact in student learning outcomes as well as community development. It also emphasizes that engagement be deliberate and systematic for stakeholders to influence through the decision making process not just towards the end. It may also undermine the role, expertise, and wisdom of teacher-leaders, education professionals result in crippling the entire process

Stakeholder engagement ensures that ideas and concerns of all relevant stakeholders with emphasis on their participation are well represented through a more collaborative and transparent decision-making process [Epstein, Sanders, et.al, 2002].

To explore more about stakeholder engagement, challenges in our education system are best dealt at local- School - community level. Issues may be national or even on a global scale, their relevance and impact vary widely from community to community. Local stakeholders are in the best position to set priorities and develop solutions that best meet their unique needs.

Stakeholder engagement at the community level with community leaders, parents, student leaders, and school management yields better benefits. Community when in need of materialistic things for their survival during dire conditions, engages with stakeholders to find a possible solution. Engagement at the community level with different stakeholders buys in a larger role for possible solutions.

As part of the fellowship in Teach for India, we actively engaged different stakeholders and organizations to support the community which in return enhanced the feeling of belongingness among the community stakeholders and us as teacher-leaders.

- Class library to enhance reading levels
- Shoe distribution as part of the school readiness program to support students
- Introduction of art into the curriculum to amalgamate various subjects for inquisitiveness.
- Field trip to empower students and create awareness about science and astronomy by communicating beauty, knowledge, and wonders of the universe through visual stimulation of sky phenomena.
- Regular community visits to create accountability for student learning outcomes.

- Empower adults in the community to create awareness about education and its importance.
- Various Non- Governmental health-related organizations have been mobilized to monitor health conditions including mental health.
- The quality and quantity of food intake of students have been monitored by conducting seminars to encourage parents to choose food according to the likes of children.

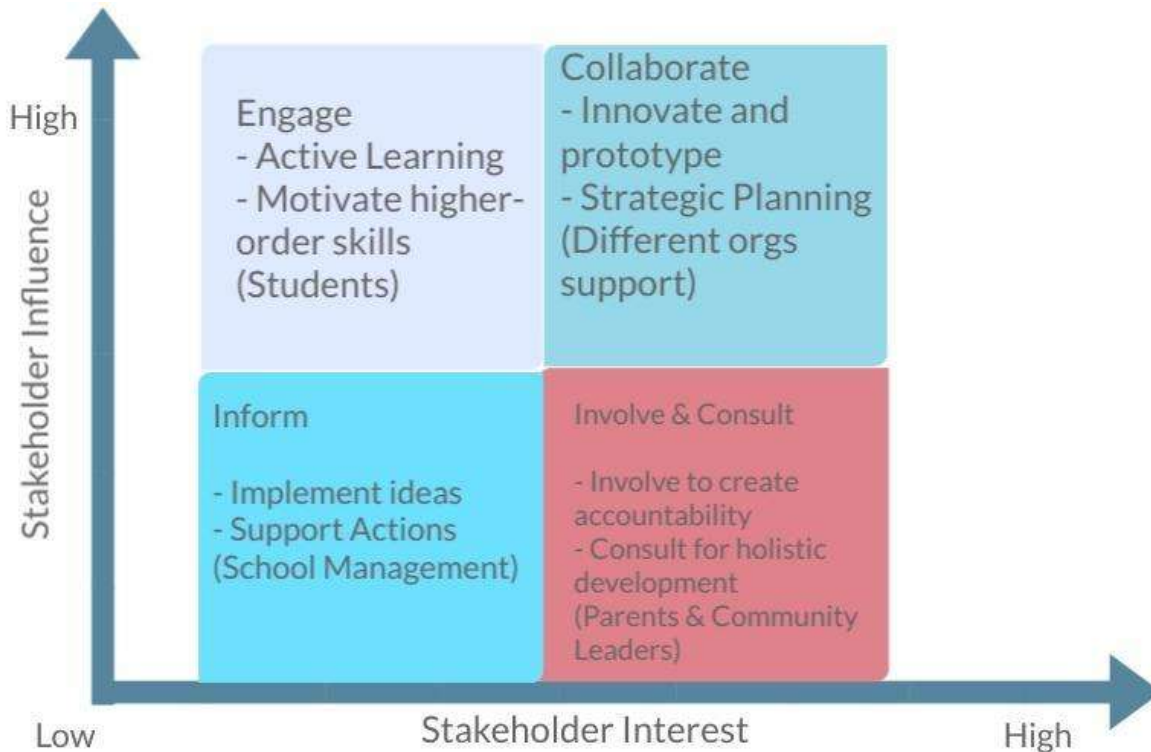


Fig. 2: Engagement Matrix of different stakeholders in the community.

7. Results:

As a result of the above measures, the extensive nature of stakeholder identification within the community proved to be vital that an engagement strategy is central to student learning outcomes. The positive impact of parents, community leaders, and different organizations imparted values and attitudes in students learning. Effective strategies help in building positive relationships with families and work with them for effective outcomes in children. School partnerships with various community-based organizations helped mitigate potential barriers to learning and promoted protective practices.

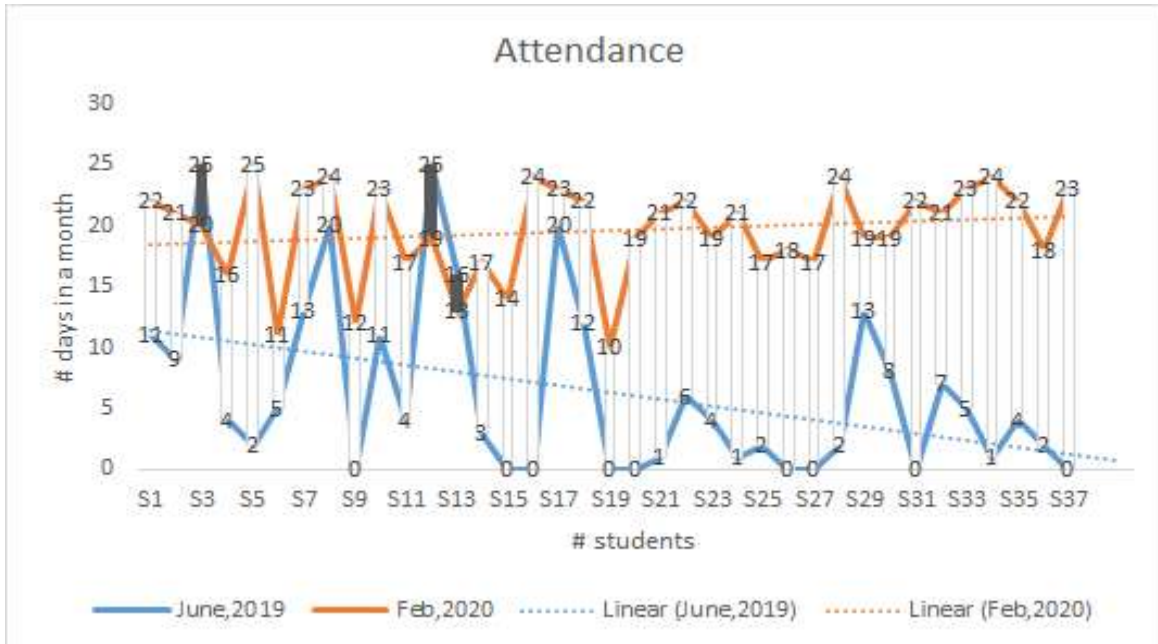


Fig 3: Graph indicates student attendance ratio from start to end of the academic year 2019-20.

The graph represents student attendance from start to end of the academic year(2019-20). As these students from diverse backgrounds and migrant families, the focus was given to student attendance and dropout ratio in communities. Community visits proved to be fruitful and empowering families about early education augmented attendance and school readiness of students. Advancement in students for excellence in their growth towards acquiring 21st-century skills.

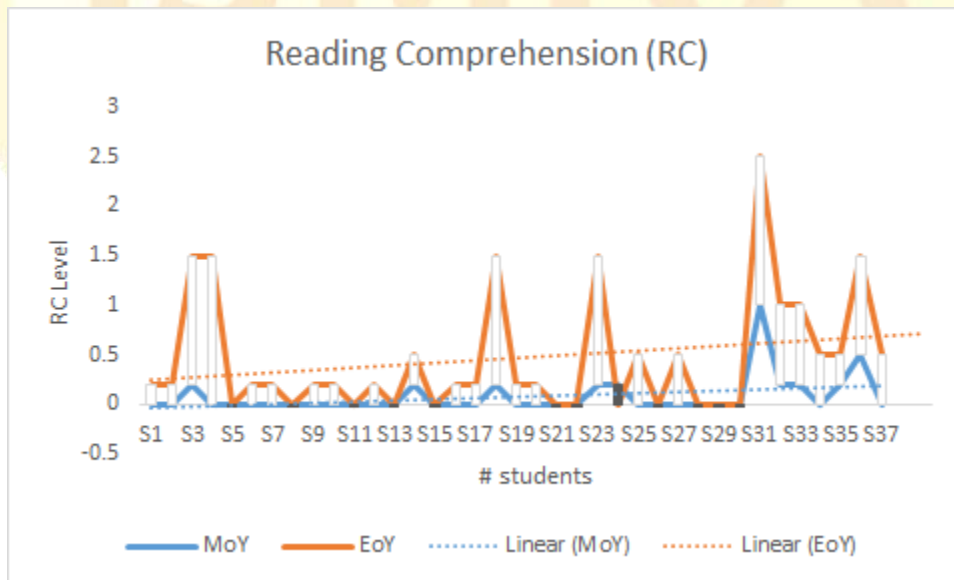


Fig 4: Graph indicating student outcomes at the RC level for 2019-20.

RC levels in students have increased from Middle of Year (MoY) to End of Year (EoY) with respect to the increase from Beginning of Year (BoY) to Middle of Year (MoY) in the academic year 2019-20. The overall change that we witnessed in the classroom was exceptional and students were able to comprehend as well as ideate, describe and present their own thoughts through story writing. This has shown the enhancement in student outcomes in multiple instances through various stakeholder engagement strategies. RC levels improved from literal meaning to inferential and to evaluate meaning in assessments conducted throughout the year.

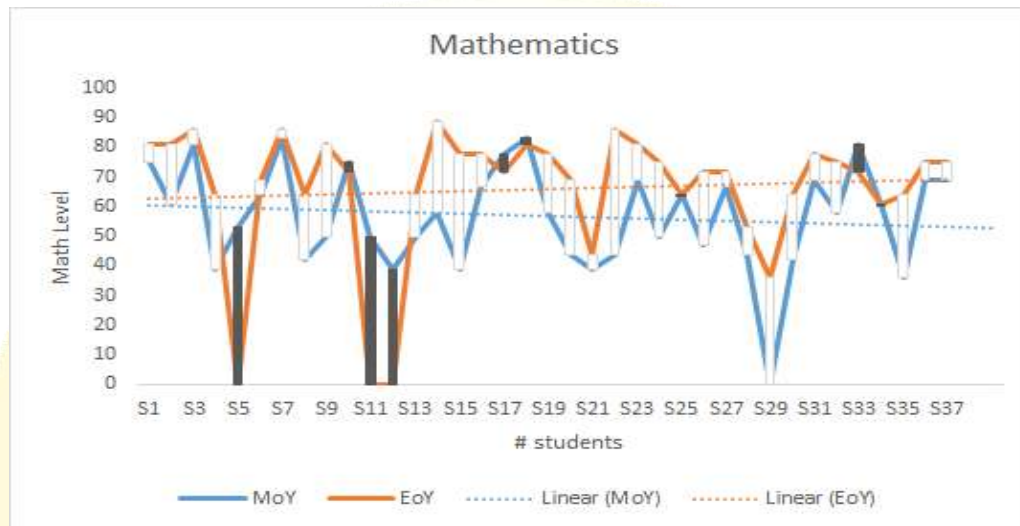


Fig 5: Graph indicating student outcomes in Mathematics for 2019-20.

Assessments in mathematics helped teacher-leaders to realize the practical or utilitarian, disciplinary and cultural value in learners. It also reflected the value of group interaction for learning mathematics. Year-end results showed us how students developed the power of reasoning, problem-solving, critical thinking and connecting mathematics to situations in which it can be used in and around them. Through various stakeholder engagement strategies, we achieved these tandem results which has/will impact students in later stages.

8. Conclusion:

During this transformational leadership journey as being a part of the fellowship program at TEACH FOR INDIA, during the academic year 2019- 20, we were able to understand the importance of the chronic effect of a community on its future generations mindset development which indirectly paves the demographic path of that community. Though our main objective was to bridge the gap to grade levels in RC as well as in Mathematics with new methodologies and strategies acquired during our training phase which proved to us as a futile practice without the other stakeholders of the community whose role is active or dormant in influencing these students. Therefore only by increasing positive community stakeholder involvement we were able to achieve the EoY RC assessment class average as 0.42 from emergent level and we are ahead of National(India) average standards by 11.8% in Mathematics. The major breakthrough happened when we were able to motivate the stakeholders to understand the importance of their contribution to the students attending school regularly which linearly affected us in achieving our year goals.



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