

# Impact of Foundation Phase Multi-Grade School Teaching on Society: A Case-Study of Vhembe District

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**Abstract**— An indispensable weapon to fight poverty and unemployment with which a country could equip its citizens is education. A nation which comprises of high number of educated community members has greater prospects of keeping up with rapid economic and technological changes. Standard of living within Vhembe District is most likely to be affected by level of its people's educational status. Although this District is known to produce remarkable percentages of students that pass Grade twelve yearly, a worrying question is whether foundation phase learners are currently getting educational attention which they deserve. It is crucial that great attention should be paid when educating the Reception up to and including Grade three learners because of the fact that a house's structure is as weak as its foundation. The aforementioned phase comprises of learners that constantly require individual attention. It is therefore critical and essential that learner-teacher ratio is kept to a manageable level to ensure effectiveness of interaction. Hindrance to effective teaching and learning is aggravated by a situation where one educator is expected to accommodate learners of different grades in one classroom at any given time. Consequently, learner destruction is inevitable when two different subjects are to be taught invariably by the same teacher whilst trying to ensure that children of different grades selectively pay attention to their scopes. With the aforementioned occurrences and challenges, it is important that a study of this type is conducted so that recommendations may be made and possibly implemented to the benefit of learners, educators, society and government of the day.

**Index Terms**— Training, education, educator, learner-teacher ratio, and performance.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Statistically, Vhembe District has always been known to consistently produce outstanding matric results for a number of years. It is of public knowledge that matric results take center stage on a yearly basis in South Africa especially during December of every year prior; during and after the announcement of such outcomes. While everybody yearns for good quality matric results, it is essential to note that quality teaching and learning can only produce the desired outcomes when all levels that lead to matric are quality driven. Ironically, little attention if any is being paid on foundation phase school education in Vhembe District and South Africa as a whole. Unarguably, it would be essential to pay similar if not more attention towards the improvement of education for Reception or foundation phase (Grades "R" to

grade 3) to ensure that, learning and teaching is made easy for both learners and educators respectively. The rationale for aforementioned statement is to suggest that, production of quality matric results is dependent on Total Quality Management (TQM) with regard to teaching and learning from foundation phase stage throughout to the matric level and beyond.

Although there are numerous studies that deal or have dealt with foundation teaching matters, there seems to be a gap regarding impact of foundation phase multi-grade school teaching on the community role players. This study seeks to suggest ways of closing the aforesaid gap. As a result of the practice, a large number of foundation phase learners do not have dedicated educators which result in them being allocated to teachers who are already overloaded. As a result, an individual educator is bound to juggle his/her teaching activities between two groups of unequal learning capabilities. Consistent academic outcome requires concerted efforts from department of education; educators; learners and parents as well as institutions that are charged with the duties of assisting school principals. Condy & Bleas (2014) highlight that because majority of schools in South Africa are not producing desired outcomes, schooling is regarded as a national disaster. It goes without saying that a strong educational foundation have propensity to result in consistent quality learners that any country can produce. It is therefore essential that all stakeholders should diligently play their roles of ensuring success in education to the benefit of South Africa as a country.

To augment the aforesaid effort, foundation phase school teachers require purposeful support due to the nature of work related challenges which they are faced with on a daily basis. Marais & Meier (2010) point out that, children in Foundation Phase are still at a stage where they learn about their world through touching things which results in them being unable to sit still thereby irritating teachers. Evidently, an educator's effectiveness is also dependent on the quality of time spent with individual learner. Vhembe educational District which covers areas such as Makhado (Louis Trichardt), Musina and Thulamela municipalities falls under Limpopo province of South Africa. The major part on the Far Northern side area of Limpopo up to and including Beitbridge border post is occupied by Vhembe District. This District has areas of interest such as:

### a. Thohoyandou

Although it is predominantly occupied by people who speak Tshivenda, the area has a high number of other ethnical groups such as Northern Sotho; Zulus; Shangaans and a many Zimbabweans who have found home in Venda due to a need

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of better life. The central part of Thohoyandou has a developing suburban area in which a high number of Indian people found residence as well as places for conducting their various businesses.

## b. Musina

On the Far Northern part of the District one finds a busiest port of entry (Beitbridge) into Zimbabwe. Musina is currently earmarked for lucrative economic development as a result of trade potential between South Africa and the rest of Africa. Although it is developing in a snail pace, Musina is known for its copper mine that has operated for a number of decades and as such has attracted laborers mainly from Zimbabwe and Botswana. On the Western side of Musina there is another border gate that links South Africa and Botswana. In the close proximity to the town (Musina) lies an area of national interest known as Maphungubwe.

## Makhado

Makhado which has significantly been known for decades as Louis Trichardt is situated on the Southern part of the District. Louis Trichardt which is affectionately known as Tshitandani allegedly due to incorrect pronunciation of the Afrikaans command: “*Staan daar*” which meant “Stand just there”. This command was used by white Afrikaans speaking police when restraining or preventing blacks from lingering as well as rooming the streets of Louis Trichardt which was meant for whites only. Most of the schools within this District (Vhembe) are found in deep rural villages which are in desperate need of social services by virtue of them being located away from developed towns such as Thohoyandou and Makhado. Although all villages fall within specific local government municipalities as demarcated politically, traditional leaders (Headmen/women) still play a vital role of leading their communities with dignity.

## II. PROBLEM STATEMENT

As a result of double leadership, most of the areas or villages are currently being led on a double barreled basis (Traditionally and politically) which situation calls for extreme proficient leadership styles. Although at times some villages do experience some form of minor clashes in terms of authority and power disputes between the two separate powers, most of traditional leaders are still enjoying the respect that is due to them from communities that fall under their authority because of the extent of loyalty and trust in the part community members. Due to the fact that most villages are situated in somewhat isolated parts of Vhembe District, modern development in the said areas is happening on a snail pace. However, it is disheartening to note that after twenty-three years of voting and attaining democracy in South Africa there are numerous children that are still schooling at distances ranging from three to seven kilometer on foot, barefoot for that matter. A number of roads to and from the schools are either not accessible by the use of normal vehicle especially during rainy days. Vhembe District is blessed to be one of few in which academic institutions such as the University of Venda is found. This university is known to be accommodating students from the rest of South Africa and producing high number well-known academics. However, a situation of foundation phase multi-grade teaching is adversely impacting on quality teaching and

learning in the District as well as on the society at large. When an individual teacher is required to handle learners of different learning capability levels within any one class, learning and teaching become negatively impacted to a point that educators find it hard to render quality services. It can be said that South African teacher have only been largely trained to impart knowledge unto learners of the same level at any given classroom setting. This is evident from the fact that, the country’s schools have different class rooms and teachers for specific grades. Consequently, current teachers are often stretched past their tolerance limit thereby negatively affecting effective teaching and learning. Mayhard, Morgan & Waters (2010) argue that although practitioners may at times require some sort of support in order to see diversity as an opportunity rather than a problem, it is the responsibility of practitioners to actively encourage involvement of the wider “family” in learners’ education.

Cassim (2016) argues out that there is a need for teaching assistance because at times, teaching assistants become handy in working with individual learners while others may be required to work with learners on a group learning basis. Some learners get derailed due to the state of multi-grade teaching thereby leading to a learner overgrowing the stay in a class. As a result, an overgrown learner inevitably becomes a bully which act threatens educators whose hands are bound by laws of the country. Ironically, the same adults that will have set such children to fail tend to blame the novice children of misbehaving. Wium (2011) asserts that when learners are inadequately equipped with listening and language skills, they become prone to encounter problems such as low self-esteem; social maladjustment and inability to financially support themselves in the future. The aforesaid challenges and needs are a call for foundation phase to be regarded as an essential entry level that require special attention and assistance.

## Objectives of the Research

- To investigate whether foundation phase multi-grade teaching is being practised in Vhembe District of Limpopo Province,
- To ascertain impact of foundation phase multi-grade teaching on the society of Vhembe District of Limpopo Province and
- To recommend measures that can be applied by different role players to reduce foundation phase multi-grade school teaching in Vhembe District of Limpopo Province.

## Research Questions

- Is foundation phase multi-grade teaching being practised in Vhembe District of Limpopo Province?
- What impact does foundation phase multi-grade teaching has on the society of Vhembe District of Limpopo Province?
- What measures can be applied by different role players to reduce foundation phase multi-grade school teaching in Vhembe District of Limpopo Province?

### III. METHODOLOGY

Due to the narrative nature of the study, participants were interviewed using semi-structured interview in a form of a focused study group in order to collect relevant data regarding multi-grade school teaching in Vhembe District. The purpose and rationale for utilizing focus group was to ensure that experiences and plights of the entire society within Vhembe district could be adequately ascertained representatively. It is essential to select the suitable class of participants for the focus group (Dilshad & Latif 2013).

The process of data collection entailed a sample of eight participants that were selected from representative categories of community as follows:

- One practising/active school principal,
- One retired school principal,
- Two practicing/active educators,
- One member of School Governing Body (SGB),
- One parent of a learner who is still in foundation phase,
- One parent of a learner who has already gone through foundation phase and
- One learner who is attending foundation phase in a school within Vhembe District

Four participants were females while the other four were males. The rationale for involving the aforesaid members of society was to ensure that a wide spectrum of society is covered so that adequate generalization could be made. According to Tong, Sainsbury & Craig (2007), focus groups are semi-structure discussions with four to twelve people with the intention to explore specific issue or set of issues. On the other hand, involvement of equal number of males and females was done with the aim of biasness.

### IV. DEFINITION OF TERMS

Foundation phase multi-grade teaching happens when an individual educator is compelled to teach more than one grade (Grade “R” to 3) in any single class despite the fact that, each grade has its own scope of work. Although a number of scholars have defined foundation phase multi-grade teaching in a number of ways, it is apparent that almost all definitions are indicative of the fact that an individual teacher is charged with multi-scope for different levels of learners at the same time.

Although defined differently by a number of authors, education refers to a process of ensuring that knowledge is passed from the more knowledgeable individual to individual(s) with little or no prior knowledge of the subject matter being dealt with. Furthermore, it should be highlighted that the issue pertaining to education was in existence many years prior to the dawn of South African democracy. Prinsloo & Beckman (1998) indicate that, section 1 of National Education Policy Act 39 (Act 39 of 1967) define education as instruction; teaching as well as training offered to white people only.

While the aforesaid Act was regarded as relevant despite its oppressive nature, majority of South Africans were deprived of an essential weapon to fight poverty and unemployment which could have been acquired through

adequate education. However Pretorius & Lemmer (1998) point out that, as per section 29 of the new South African Constitution Act 108 (Act 108 of 1996), every citizen of this beautiful country has the right to basic education which also includes adult basic education. It is evident from the preceding definitions that since the dawn of democracy, South African children of all races; gender; creed and state of ability, deserve equal treatment with regard to teaching and learning. On the same note, educators of the aforesaid learners need to be treated and rewarded accordingly as well as be afforded opportunities to perform their work within the environment that is conducive for quality teaching and learning if quality results are to be attained and maintained.

However, the practice of foundation phase multi-grade teaching seems to hinder the possibility of effecting effective teaching and learning in South African schools. Teachers are forced to deal with complex dilemma both in and out of classroom whilst trying to deliver the curriculum in a way which is relevant to the diverse needs and expectations of their learners (Engelbrecht, Green & Naicker 1999).

Furthermore, Lemmer, Meier & Van Wyk (2012) indicate that, it is impossible to ignore the fact that diverse cultural factors exist in classrooms and that they tend to influence present teaching and learning. On the other hand, Duminy, Steyn, Dreyer, Vos & Peters (1992) point out that, in order to ensure effective learner’s performance, daily observation by teachers is an essential aspect of evaluation because pupils have different characteristics; cultural background; environment and social relation.

Consequently, teachers who are affected by multi-grade teaching seemingly feel that they are being unfairly treated. Little (1994) argues that multi-grade teaching entails teaching of learners of different age, grades and abilities in the same learning group or classroom. Joubert (2010) argues that perceptions of a number of educators regarding multi-grade teaching in South Africa are that it is highly demanding and more complex than mono-grade teaching and learning. It is disheartening to learn that mono-grade educators are remunerated equally to multi-grade teachers.

On the other hand Mulryan-Kyne (2006) points out that a multi-grade educator is usually required to teach a number of grade-specific programs in a range of subject area at the same time that is available to a single-grade teacher to teach one set of programs to any one grade level. Additionally, it is inevitable that when learners perform below expected standards and as such, the parents; School Governing Bodies (SGB’s) and thus the whole community or communities get adversely impacted.

Finding solutions to the aforesaid challenges requires integrative efforts and thorough research hence this study. Mclea (2012) comments by indicating that, in a multi-grade teaching, the job done by an educator cannot be conducted as though it is business as usual. The preceding statement seeks to suggest that where it is unavoidable to practice multi-grade teaching, educators should be immensely supported.

It is evident from the above definitions of terms that, learners’ performance is proportionally impacted by the methods of teaching as well as environment in which teaching and learning take place. Consequently, learners’ performance keeps declining while the educator becomes an individual that carries the blame for failure. Based on the

literature mentioned above, curriculum content; strategies and methods that teachers use to impart knowledge to learners as well as classroom management should be designed to suit the needs and to the benefit of potential learners (Landsberg, Krüger & Nel 2005).

## V. OBSERVATIONS AND DISCUSSION

Results of the study revealed that although not all schools that have foundation phase classes are currently practising multi-grade teaching in Vhembe District, there exist a number of them in which the practise is still being experienced. Furthermore, the study revealed that various members of society are differently and negatively impacted by the practise of foundation phase multi-grade school teaching. Additionally, it was apparent from the participants that community members would like to see the elimination or reduction of the aforesaid practise in the District for various perceived positive reasons.

It was apparent during the process of collecting data that, due to the prevalence of foundation phase multi-grade school teaching in some schools of Vhembe District, a number of community members are negatively and differently impacted by the practice. According to Patricios (2016), twenty-two years into democracy, South Africa's education divide is as profound as it was during apartheid due to the fact that it still replicates white privilege. It can therefore be deduced from the findings of the study by generalization that, as long as foundation phase multi-grade school teaching is still in existence, Vhembe District; Limpopo Province and as such the country (South Africa) will continue to experience numerous plights from members of society as categorically highlighted below:

### Participants' plights and perspectives

It was evident from the study group that the identified challenges of multi-grade teaching affect different categories of community members in Vhembe District differently. Furthermore, it should be noted that although the study focused on Vhembe District only, the problem might be in existence in other parts of the country as well. As a result, despite the fact that generalization of the findings is centred in one District of Limpopo does not make a problem any less critical to trigger an outcry of reducing and or eliminating the practice. Different categories of community members have highlighted their plights regarding Foundation Phase multi-grade school teaching as follows:

#### i. School Principals

School Principals are indeed managers of their schools. As a result, the task of performing management principles of Planning; Organizing; Leading and controlling (POLC) are all assigned to the respective school Principals. It stands to reason therefore that each individual Principal has more than enough work to do on a daily basis. It was revealed from the study that most of the schools in Vhembe District and as such Limpopo Province are experiencing the situation where school Principals are overloaded because of multi-grade school teaching. As the head and a manager, when his/her school fails to produce expected results, the dedicated Principal's pride gets eroded thereby leading to loss of

morale and gusto to perform. Consequently, when the Principal's morale declines to a point of irreparability, it is inevitable that a drive for educators' to effectively perform gets retarded due to failure by the head (Principal) to play an exemplary role. It was also evident from the study that as a result of the teaching team's failure to perform, learners inevitably bear the brunt. The initially dedicated school Principals indicatively feel hard-done when they helplessly watch their learners getting disadvantaged by the practice of multi-grade teaching.

As an institutional heads, school Principals play a pivotal role towards learners' education and progress. Although little is

Often mentioned when schools' performance is satisfactory, poor results get remembers for a long period of time whilst Principals carry the blame for poor performance. Participants to the study highlighted that it is disconcerting for a school Principal to carry the blame for failure despite known serious burden that comes with multi-grade school teaching.

#### a. Parents taking their children to other schools:

The study also revealed that while school Principals would like to maintain their schools' reputations, it is unavoidable that parents tend to transfer their children out of poor performing schools in search for potentially better education. Whilst it is comprehensible that every parent would like his/her child to deservedly progress in life, the aforesaid parents may not be blamed for depicting a caring attitude. As indicated by participants to the study, when more parents take away their children from non-performing schools, less number of learners results in the closure of such schools.

#### b. Department of education not assisting:

It was evident from the study that school Principals are intensely frustrated by the fact that they their plights are either taken less seriously or ignored by officials from the local circuit offices and therefore from the District offices. Empirically, one participant (Retired principal) pointed out that after a number of counseling sessions that she undergone due to stressful condition, the participant finally parted ways with the job that she so dearly loved to an extent that she was prepared to make more enemies than friends in a fight for the better of the new generation's future. Since her departure, the school is currently being managed by one of the senior educators on an acting basis for thirteen months as at the time of the study. Similar to what she was doing prior to her retirement, her successor also carries the responsibilities of two workers.

#### ii. Educators

The task of teaching is almost similar to that of managing business operations. As a result, educators are expected to apply their management skills and principles of Planning; Organizing; Leading and Controlling (POLC). A manager performs his/her tasks effectively when span of control for his/her team is manageable. It is for this reason that the department of education has set an effective teacher-learner ratio of 1:35.

However, when an individual teacher is expected to look after more than 50 learners in Foundation Phase, ineffectiveness is inevitable. Learners in this phase have not yet developed sense of responsibility due to their age. An

educator who is faced with a situation of teaching multi-grade learners has numerous distressful forces acting upon him/her. What follows is a list that illustrates some of the aforesaid forces as deduced by the participants of the study.

**b. Stress level:**

Teachers are human beings prior to them becoming educators in the schools at which they perform their daily duties. As a result of the fact that an individual can only withstand certain amount of pressure, when more than 50 voices of young children who are below the age of seven whistle through an individual educator's ears, one is indeed bound to reach a state of breakdown. Educators of the Reception class are subjected into stressful condition and environment due to the level and lack of comprehension and playfulness of their audiences (Learners).

**c. A feeling on not performing:**

Every committed teacher would like to be intrinsically rewarded by the outcomes of his/her efforts. Learners' failure to perform is often associated with the educator's poor performance as well as incompetence. Ironically, almost all of us are concerned with what may be referred to as "*Sense of recentness*" which entails what we identify ourselves with on a "*Now*" basis without conducting root cause analysis. It is relatively arguable that educators of Foundation Phase learners would like to ensure quality input into the teaching and learning process so that the end product (Grade 12) is similarly of good quality.

**d. Relocation of learners:**

It is public knowledge that constant poor performing schools have potential to lose learners to better performing ones. Relocation of learners by parents who are dissatisfied leads into corresponding relocation of teachers. Educators that get relocated to schools other than their preferred places of work has propensity to cause more harm to the affected teachers than the stress caused by the actual teaching tasks. A teacher that gets relocated is most likely to incur unplanned expenditure and further separation from his/her family. As a result of distanced family ties, a number of families get negatively impacted and ultimately break down.

**e. Health related impact:**

A human body can withstand stressful situation only for a certain period of time at a considerable amount of pounding. Similar to a phenomenon of elasticity, there is a line that the strength of tolerance may not cross and as a result, illnesses such as sugar diabetics and high blood pressure are inevitable. In addition to the aforesaid possible health conditions, an individual may embark on excessive alcohol and illicit drugs intake which has a whiplash of aggravating family feuds.

**iii. School Governing Bodies**

**a. Diminishing trust level:**

Members of School Governing Bodies are elected based on trust by the parents of learners within specific communities. As a rule, SGB members in Vhembe District are further elected provided they have their children and or learners under their guardianship in the same school(s) for which they are members. It is for the aforesaid reasons that a member would like to be committed in order to depict an act of practising what he/she preaches. As a result of high failure rate and or poor performance by Foundation Phase learners,

an SGB member loses credibility on the part of the community that he/she serves. Similarly, it becomes challenging for him/her (SGB member) to face his/her own child with pride knowing that he/she is not doing enough to help the situation. The worst case is the task of deciding whether to relocate his/her own child/children to better performing schools or to leave them in the same poor performing one. Finally, being labelled as an indecisive member of a body that is tasked with management of an essential institution is tormenting than the act of facing officials of department of education who are alleged to practise positional arrogance when issues of multi-grade teaching are raised.

**iv. Learners**

Although Grade "R" to 3 learners are at their tender age, they already have a blurred ambition of becoming prominent members of society when they grow. Indeed, their wish lists change every moment one asks them. The aforesaid is allegedly because of lack of retention and inability to remember what was said prior to the next question being asked. Additionally, lack of understanding and comprehension of different terms and terminologies confuse their little and naïve minds.

A learner that formed part of focus group seemingly wanted to indicate that he would like to be a police dog handler when he grows. Instead, he said: "*I want to be a police dog*".

**a. Fear of repeating a class:**

It was clear during data collection that learners have fear of repeating individual classes and as such would like to progress quicker than they anticipate.

**a. Teachers paying less attention to individual learners:**

Furthermore, there had been a sense and feeling that teachers do not pay adequate attention to the individual learners in need. Allegedly, the aforesaid is because of genuine plight of large span of control that teachers have to handle at any given moment. As a result, educators tend to develop anger that might be misplaced.

**b. Frustrated teachers get angry easily:**

What seemed to be disheartening though was the fact that, young as they are, foundation phase children are able to read level of anger and frustration on the part of their educators. According to the learners, the behaviour depicted by frustrated teachers unfortunately gets transferred to the innocent children who tend to become copycats thereby developing bullying tendencies from early age of their schooling.

**c. Misdirected anger**

Unconsciously and regrettably, angry educators are prone to unleash their frustration unto the wrong recipients which act has potential to land a teacher in jail and loss of employment.

**d. Overstaying a class**

Finally, Foundation Phase learners would not like to stay in their current classes for longer than it is necessary because such stay has potential for them to overgrow the class. It was indicated by a learner that, it is embarrassing for a learner to be in a class where his/her teacher is almost of the same age.

Above all the aforesaid plights from the learner that formed part of a focus group there seemed to be a general fear of forming part in a blurred future in South Africa which is likely to be aggravated by foundation phase multi-grade teaching in Vhembe District and in the Province in particular. It would seem that learners of the 21<sup>st</sup> century are highly observant and as such are able to identify leaders that lack adequate education as compared to the learned ones.

## v. Parents

Most of the parents in the rural areas of Vhembe District have been living in abject poverty for many decades. Indeed the state of poverty in which these parents found themselves in was not by choice but there had been a number of factors that lead into the circumstances. Amongst the factors that hindered prosperity are the following just to mention a few:

- a. Lack of purposeful and adequate education which black South Africans were distanced from because of the then apartheid regime. Indeed one might ask a question that goes: *“How come did blacks failed to educate themselves when schools have been in existent from time immemorial?”*

For those that lived during the apartheid era, there are many answers to this question including the fact that a black person was only taught such which was indicative of how inferior blacks were when compared to the privileged white few people. As a result, parents of prospective future leaders of South Africa are worried and scared of the fact that, if the situation is to be allowed to persist unabated, it will be impossible for South Africa’s dreams of transformation to be realized.

- b. While it is difficult to ensure that there is food on the table and that the same children go to bed after having something to eat, being forced to relocate one’s child from a school which is at a walking distance would be costly and as such, the parents are caught between the rock and a hard place because children’s education is important while, affordability of transportation for the children will be even more costly if children were to be relocated.
- c. Finally, due to the culture of black-tax and extended family, one believes that when a child succeeds, his/her parents will most likely be well-off. As a result, parents do not only send their children to school for academic sake only but in order to benefit from such education as a parent who raised the child.

Driscoll & Nagel (2010) assert that when families are involved in childhood education, the major benefit is the fact that they experience an enhanced self-confidence and in their child’s educational program. Ultimately, if Foundation Phase multi-grade teaching is to be blessed, the chain of poverty will not be broken for many more years to come. As a result, the philosophy which the minority will remain superior over the majority cannot be abandoned or discarded as long as children of the rural communities are still subjected to oppressive education that includes multi-grade foundation school teaching.

## General impact of multi-grade teaching on society

Vhembe District is in competition with all other Districts in the Province. It is because of this reason that each District

should operate as a Business Unit. If the preceding statement is anything to go by, competitive environment is fierce and requires a society that is committed to adapt effectively and efficiently to the ever changing and increasing demands. No member of society would like to be associated with a failing team and as such, community members of Vhembe District get negatively impacted by poor performance of Grade 12 students. Amongst the members of society, there are people who are cognizance of the fact that quality results do not automatically show off their ugly heads during December when matric outcomes are announced, but they are the products of early child learning that include Foundation Phase which is an entry level into the laborious years of teaching and learning.

## Impact of multi-grade teaching on the country

As a country, South Africa would like to be amongst the best performing in terms of economy and effective leadership. However, a country’s foundation is built on its current and unborn generation of girls and boys that will take a lead in no time. Failure by the government to introduce and enforce implementation of policies that seek to promote adequate teaching and learning from the Foundation Phase can result in the following unwanted situations amongst others:

- a. Most of the high positions in the country (In private and Public sectors) will be occupied by foreigners,
- b. Investors’ confidence is most likely to diminish because such foreign investors will be fearful of their businesses being led by ineffective leaders,
- c. The rate of unemployment in South Africa will most likely be on the rise because, production companies will most likely bring their own skilled workforce to perform specialized jobs,
- d. The current generation of South African will most likely elect to be notorious drug addicts and alcoholics. The occurrence of aforesaid phenomenon may result in the country being occupied by people who are predominantly intoxicated and drunk,
- e. The decline in economy has potential of leading a number of people to become bored and as such, embark on sexual activities as avoidance strategies of boredom and
- f. As a result of the whiplash, more children will be born out of wedlock with the additional impact of government having to fork more on hunger relieve grant.
- g. Finally, escalation of crime level is inevitable because, the poor will try by all means to grab as much as they can from the working class or those who have means to survive. As a result, South Africa’s dream of peace and prosperity will remain as such, *“A Dream”*.

## VI. CONCLUSION

The study confirmed that although not all Primary schools within Vhembe district practise multi-grade teaching, there is however a number of them that do not have other option but to accommodate multi-grade learners in classes that are normally meant for mono-grade teaching and learning. Furthermore, it was established that the practise of multi-grade teaching and learning impact members of society in many ways as well as differently.

## VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

As a result of the aforesaid confirmation; conclusion and findings, the study recommends the following on the part of identified critical role players:

- a. The provincial department of education should support local District (Vhembe) by formulating and enforcing implementation of policy regarding elimination of Foundation Phase multi-grade school teaching. While it is the responsibility of the local District leadership to develop strategies that are relevant to the local area, integration and alignment of policies and strategies are essential in order to avoid strategic drift. As a result, there is a need to ensure that all role players are afforded opportunity to showcase their ability and willingness to uplift standard of education in Vhembe District.
- b. While there is no doubt that school managers (Principals) are trying their best to convince officials in the offices of local educational circuits, it is critical that the former should have their motivations submitted in writing and filled for future references should disputes arise. The aforesaid is recommended despite the fact that local circuit officials such as inspectors are aware of the said challenges facing schools in the District. It is a known fact that most if not all school inspectors have been educators prior to their appointment in current positions.
- c. As the main customers of Vhembe District schools by virtue of them having their children enrolled, parents of Foundation Phase learners should ensure that their voices are unapologetically heard through the elected School Governing Bodies. It makes educational and business sense that Vhembe District's schools and the department of education may be dysfunctional if parents were to withdraw their children from local schools.  
  
The preceding statement is suggestive of the fact that, officials of the District and local circuit offices should regard parents of learners as not only being the major role players, but the sole reasons for the existence of District offices and officials who are employed by such institutions of the government.
- d. Finally, Vhembe District should adequately budget for sufficient classrooms as well as Foundation Phase educators in order to cater for the essential needs to impart quality education for South Africa's future generations. It cannot be acceptable that District management should expect school Principals to be effective and efficient if the same school managers are required to carry on with their normal duties as well as they are required to perform the work of the current multi-tasking at the rate of Foundation Phase magnitude.

According to Farah (2013), for a school principal, good health management is expected to produce planned work

done with the assistance of people that are assigned whilst conducted within allocated budget and given deadlines. Consequently, District inspectors and all relevant officials should perform their duties in a manner that depicts similar commitment as expected from the school Principals and educators. After all, a child that keeps his mother awake during the night will himself stay awake.

While we acknowledge that it could be challenging to change the current entrenched culture of multi-grade teaching, we do take cognizance of the fact that all the above recommendations are justifiable because, Vhembe District has managers; educators; parents and learners that are committed as well as willing to ensure that education standards are not only maintained but constantly improved.

When quality of education is managed from Foundation Phase stages through to the institutions of high learning, reduction of unemployment rate; inequality and poverty is inevitable. Finally, it stands to reason therefor that the country's economy can be directly impacted by type and quality of education. As a result, poor quality Foundation Phase teaching and learning may negatively impact on the country's prospects to enhance economic growth in South Africa. Similarly, Patricios (2016) argues that due to lack of high skill level that is required, South Africa is still an import economy. Finally, in the past South Africans used to hold the belief that any child belongs to the entire community because it takes a village to raise him/her. Tomlin (2008) argues that communities that encourage involvement by different vocations offer learning opportunities for all children. The aforesaid cannot be achieved if hindrance such as Foundation Phase multi-grade teaching and learning practise is allowed to continue unabated in Vhembe District and South Africa as a whole.

## VIII. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to acknowledge all participants that heeded my request to have them interviewed during the entire study. Although no names are mentioned for ethical and confidentiality purposed as agreed with them, such participants entailed one retired school principal, practising (Active) principals, active educators, a member of School Governing Body (SGB, a parent whose child has once been a subject of a multi-grade teaching and a learner who is currently experiencing the impact of aforementioned phenomenon. It is essential to note that there had been no competing interest between the two mentioned authors. As a result, we (Authors) declare that we have no financial or personal relationship(s) that may have inappropriately influenced us in writing this article.

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