Chapter 4
Research Demographics and Context

The introduction and review of literature chapters have explored issues and research related to teaching, teacher perspectives, ADHD type behaviours and school mental health programmes. The research philosophy underpinning the present study and the methodology adopted for the study were detailed in the third chapter. This chapter aims to set the stage for discussing the results of the study by highlighting the contextual factors of the research. It will provide demographic- school, teacher and student related details that constitute the major strands of the study. These will be strung together in the following chapter to understand the larger themes that constitute the basic patterns of the study.

The study was located in Bangalore Urban District, Karnataka. Bangalore’s historical origins can be traced to a sleepy South Indian village in the 12th century. Today with an estimated population of 8.5 million (Source: District census data, 2011); it is the third most populous city in India. The presence and subsequent phenomenal growth of the IT industry over the past 2 decades has had a significant impact on the city’s developmental, technological and economic landscape. The shift from the title of ‘Garden City’ that was earlier bestowed upon it to ‘India’s IT capital’ can be attributed to the fact that over 30 percent of the country’s IT work force is located in Bangalore. The economic growth rate of the city is pegged at 10.3 percent; making Bangalore the second fastest growing major metropolis in India comprising a largely cosmopolitan crowd that has personal disposable incomes greater than the Indian city average (Source: Rediff.com news 2008).

Bangalore covers an area of 741 square kilometres and was divided into Bangalore Urban and Bangalore Rural Districts in the year 1986. Bangalore Urban District has 4 taluks; Bangalore North Taluk, Bangalore South Taluk, Bangalore East Taluk and Anekal. The education sector in Karnataka comprises 34 educational districts and is administratively overseen by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (which deals with elementary, secondary, pre-university and adult education) and the Department of Higher and Technical Education (collegiate education and technical education). Currently Karnataka is ranked 23rd among Indian states on the basis of its literacy rate-75.5 (2011 Census). Schools in Karnataka are broadly classified as falling under 3 categories- Government, Private Aided and Private Unaided schools.
In the case of private aided institutions, the role of the government includes granting sanction for teachers’ posts and payment of teachers’ salaries. The Government stopped giving grants-in-aid to institutions established after 1987. However private unaided schools have increased fairly rapidly in the 1990s. In lower primary, upper primary and secondary stages, about 21 percent, 28 percent and 68 percent, respectively, of students are in private institutions. Of this, nearly two-thirds of the private school enrolments at the lower stage are in unaided schools (Govinda 2002).

In the case of unaided institutions that follow the State syllabus, the main role of the government is to ensure that these institutions satisfy the minimum eligibility criteria required for granting recognition; this status allows students belonging to these institutions to appear for public examination. Private schools that follow the ICSE or CBSE curriculum are required to comply with the respective Board’s requirements to obtain and maintain recognition. The department of education has no jurisdiction in these schools with regard to teacher training, fee structures, curriculum and compliance with rules. The public perception of these schools are that the absence of government interference translates into greater teacher accountability, better student discipline and a curriculum that is more attuned with helping students face national entrance tests for professional courses such as engineering and medicine. Often students who appear to have academic difficulties in coping with the educational demands of these Boards are recommended to pursue the State Board programme as that is viewed as an academically easier curriculum to navigate.

Elementary school education in Karnataka comprises a total cycle of 7 years; grades 1-4 are considered to be lower primary and grades 5-7 are referred to as upper primary. Nine-tenths of those who enroll in grade 1 reach grade 4. Transition between the lower primary and upper primary stage is also quite high with approximately 85 percent of children who had enrolled in grade 1 continuing through to grade 5 (GOK, Analytical Report 2011-12). Since schools in the study fell under Bangalore North and South Taluks; figures specific to these Taluks will be discussed. The following table (4.1) indicates the total number of schools present in the state, the numbers operating in Bangalore Urban North and South districts and the student enrolments in these schools. Karnataka has a total of 59,428 elementary schools of which 10,252 are unaided schools. Private schools in the elementary section are largely an urban phenomena in Karnataka. An overwhelming majority of these schools (96.9 percent) are co-educational; this feature is common to both urban and rural areas.
Table 4.1

Number of schools and school enrolment-Bangalore

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>State schools Primary+ High</th>
<th>State primary schools</th>
<th>Bangalore North Primary Schools</th>
<th>Bangalore South Primary Schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total number</td>
<td>72,875</td>
<td>59,428</td>
<td>1649</td>
<td>2480</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student enrolment</td>
<td>100.29 lakh</td>
<td>54.15 lakh</td>
<td>292,695</td>
<td>419,119</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: DISE 2010-2011

Students seeking admission into private schools are usually selected through a process of entry tests and parent interviews. The lack of transparency associated with the process and consequently the stress experienced by a parent in trying to secure a seat for their ward stems from the absence of common admission procedures used across schools or ethics that are adhered to in the selection process. Karnataka is also one of the two states in India that has yet to notify the Right to Education Act. Private schools including those aligned with the CBSE and ICSE Boards are apprehensive that the presence of the RTE Act in schools would justify government interference in issues of admission, fee structure, teacher hiring and school governance. The general consensus on this issue is that while the social spirit of Universalising education is appreciated, discourse regarding its translation and impact on private schools lacks clarity and direction.

The total number of primary schools and specifically primary unaided schools in Bangalore Urban North and South Districts indicate that the presence of private schools accounts for approximately half of all primary schools present in the district demonstrating their strong presence. Approximately three fourth of the working teacher population in primary schools are likely to be located in unaided schools in Bangalore Urban- North and South Districts. (See Table 4.2)
### Table 4.2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Total primary schools</th>
<th>Total unaided primary schools</th>
<th>Total primary teachers</th>
<th>Total unaided primary teachers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bangalore North</td>
<td>1649</td>
<td>902</td>
<td>15,165</td>
<td>10,835</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangalore South</td>
<td>2480</td>
<td>1328</td>
<td>21,028</td>
<td>15,143</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: DISE 2010-2011

Eligibility criteria for teachers in primary schools differ depending on the curriculum board the school subscribes to. Teachers applying to state primary schools are required to have a D.Ed. or Diploma in Education. Earlier referred to as the TCH or Teacher Certificate Higher, this course was of 1 year duration. The minimum qualification to apply for TCH was a 10th grade pass. In 1966 the duration was increased to 2 years and the curriculum was revised. Subsequently in 1987-88, 12th grade pass was made the minimum qualification. The TCH programme was renamed Diploma in Education (D.Ed.) in 2002-03 and a 3 month internship programme was included in the curriculum.

Teachers working in primary sections of schools following the ICSE or CBSE curriculum may have a D.Ed. a B.Ed. (Bachelor’s in Education) or may not have received any formal training. The B.Ed. - a 1 year post graduate teaching programme which allows teachers to teach at secondary school levels can be done as a fulltime regular course or can be completed through distance mode. A four year integrated teaching degree programme is also offered by some select Universities, however none of the teacher respondents in the present study had appeared for it or expressed the need to have done it when specifically asked.
4.1 Study Demographics

Lunenburg (2010), describes schools as social and open systems consisting of five basic elements: inputs, a transformation process, outputs, feedback, and the environment. The environment forms the pool of human, financial, physical and information resources. Inputs drawn from these resources are mediated and transformed by administrative structures and functions specific to the school and teaching processes. The interaction between students and teachers also forms part of the transformation or learning process. In a school, the output in such a process may be students’ knowledge, skills, abilities, and attitudes. Feedback that the school receives either positive or negative serves as a control mechanism and influences the inputs and or the transformation process. Using a systems approach to understand school contexts is core to the eco-systemic model that this study philosophically aligns with.

Data for the present study was collected across 5 schools spanning a period of 7 months (September 2011-March 2012). The following data tables presented will elucidate basic features of these 5 schools in terms of overall school, teacher respondent and identified student characteristics. In order to protect the identities of schools, teachers and students- their actual names or initials have not been used while detailing information in table formats or in textual descriptions. The schools chosen for the study as evident in the table data- 4.3 provided a mix in terms of type of private ownership, curriculum followed and the annual fee structures.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Schools</th>
<th>Total no: of students</th>
<th>Total No: in grades 1-5</th>
<th>Average class size</th>
<th>Curriculum</th>
<th>Annual Fee</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PI</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>318</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>SSLC</td>
<td>10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DS</td>
<td>3500</td>
<td>1200</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>CBSE</td>
<td>40,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SV</td>
<td>800</td>
<td>351</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>ICSE/SSLC</td>
<td>22,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SM</td>
<td>900</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>ICSE</td>
<td>12,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PR</td>
<td>810</td>
<td>352</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>ICSE</td>
<td>25,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Two schools PI and SM had lower annual fees in comparison to the other schools and hence formed the lower middle income set. SV and PR schools had fee structures in the mid-range while DS school had the highest fee structure and was the only school in the Upper middle income bracket. Class sizes across schools ranged from 35 to 47 averaging to 38 students.
This number is well above the recommended class size of 28 as specified by the ICSE Board. The school size in terms of number of students ranged from 600 to 3500 at the upper end. Descriptive narrative snapshots for each of the five schools have been written up on the basis of information that I gathered from heads of school, field records and observations that I made when I visited these schools. The descriptions attempt to provide a bird’s eye view of the schools in terms of their educational philosophies, geographical layouts, classroom and building design, broad identifying characteristics of the communities from which the students are drawn, school responses to disciplinary issues, ways of addressing student difficult behaviours, interactions that the school management has with its teachers and parents and leadership styles. In some sense the wide angle descriptive perspective of schools provides the environmental framework within which teachers and students interactions will be located.

4.2 School Snapshots

PI School

Flanked by a row of petty shops, a temple on one side and a maternity hospital on the other, a small non-descript board at the entrance of a by-road announces the presence of PI school. Situated in a congested commercial area of Bangalore Urban District- PI school is tucked away in a narrow residential by-lane. The school spreads over 3 modest buildings; the Montessori section, a few primary classes and the principal’s office are located in a 2 storey structure. Opposite this are 2 other similar structures that house the remaining classes for the middle and high school. Bridging these 2 adjacent buildings is a common space that is used to have assemblies for the middle school and high school students and also has toilets in a far corner. This space is the only open space where the children can play during their breaks. The entrance to the school has a few pots lined up against the wall and a notice board that displays the ‘thought of the day’ and important information related to timings, holidays and test schedules. Parents are not allowed access into the classes. Messages or forgotten lunch boxes are handed over to an office administrative staff who has a window opened out from her tiny room overlooking the road for such purposes. This also doubles up as the fee counter as the situation demands.

The elementary section building opens into an open space and the Principal’s office. This space has a solitary see-saw and a few faded paintings of popular cartoon characters on the inside of the boundary wall. Above this space reached through a very narrow stair case is the landing which opens up into a toilet followed by a small wooden gate at the head of the stairs. The passage opens up into classrooms on either
side. The classrooms have an average strength of 47 students and appear cramped. The layout for most elementary classes is identical with long benches and desks lined up in tight rows offering only the narrow passage in between these rows as a traffic area for students and teacher to walk. Students are required to stay seated while the class is in progress. Bench monitors seated in the aisles have the sole privilege of walking in class to collect books from their respective benches and proceed to deposit it either on the floor near the teacher’s table. Their roles are coveted and students appear eager to be appointed ‘bench leader’. On one side of the classroom are 2 or 3 windows that were partially shut, allowing a limited amount of light and air. The space next to the black board is usually also where the teacher’s desk and a small cupboard were located.

The teacher staffroom in the elementary school building is a small space that has 3 or 4 desks and old wooden cupboards lined against the wall. This space would also be used as a substitute classroom by getting students to sit on the floor. The school has a playground approximately 3kms away from the school buildings. A school van transports students from the school to the ground accompanied by the respective class teacher. Each class has access to this ground once a week. A majority of students come from the neighbourhood in which the school is situated and either walk to school, cycle or are dropped by their parents on their 2-wheelers. Students come from homes where the spoken language is Kannada or Tamil and parents typically have a high school or middle school pass. The fathers of most students also have their small business establishments close to the school.

According to the teachers most mothers in their interactions at parent teacher meetings appeared not to have any formal education and would typically arrange for tutorial classes for their children citing their inability to supervise or help with the daily homework routine.

The school started 27 years ago in 1983 with 9 students, 1 teacher and a single grade. A grade was added on every year and over the years the school has grown in number of classrooms and faculty and now caters to 600 students from Upper Kindergarten to Grade 10. The medium of instruction is English and the curriculum followed is the State syllabus. Ideally the school wished to be recognized as an ICSE school but the lack of a playground at its inception meant that they would not be granted recognition; hence the decision to pursue the SSLC syllabus was adopted. The school, according to Mrs. Girija- the Principal was started by her husband- a building contractor by profession in response to a need to give something back to society. The underlying philosophy of the school has been to provide affordable education to children from lower middle income groups. While the philosophy is fundamentally noble explains Mrs. Girija the financial implications involved in running the school were proving to be challenging: ‘The fees are so low that we might as well not charge the parents anything- we don’t charge
donations or caution deposits, sometimes a building maintenance is charged. I tell my husband that we need to increase fees but he won’t listen’.

Describing her entry into education as entirely accidental, Mrs. Girija said she wasn’t able to complete her graduation because of marriage and subsequent family responsibilities. After the school came into being she opted to do her Montessori training and began teaching the Upper Kindergarten classes. Elaborating on their style of working:-’Being a small school and a family owned one has meant that various family members chip in from time to time to teach classes- like my second daughter is a lawyer but now she’s taken a break because she’s has a year old child, she brings him to school, the school ayah looks after him or I spend time with him while she teaches social studies for grade 10 students. My older daughter has done microbiology so she helps sometimes with the science teacher substitutions. If some teacher is absent then we have to help out- now for the past 1 year we don’t have a Head Mistress so even though I’m management, I have to be here sorting out the administrative work, teaching and supervising what goes on. The teachers also work like an extended family- it is a family atmosphere here’. She attributed experiencing low teacher turn over to the fact that the leadership style in school is open, teachers feel comfortable, are encouraged to directly talk to her if they are experiencing problems and in turn she calls them to her office and provides immediate feedback if a problem surfaces. Acknowledging the lack of a formal teaching degree says:-’I may not have that much formal learning but I’m practical and whenever there’s a problem I try and sort it out quickly because at the end of the day the work must not suffer- that’s very important’. She also tries to involve an experienced teacher while providing feedback to newer members of staff.

Teachers are usually hired after a demonstration lesson. The 3 teacher respondents from this school had not received any formal pre-service teacher training. Mrs. Girija mentioned that she personally checks on how classes are conducted and oversees the notes of lessons that teachers are asked to submit once a month. She added that this year however her responsibilities at home had increased impacting on the frequency with which she was checking these and her teaching schedule with the Montessori section:-’I have not been able to check teachers’ notes for the past 4-5 months because of looking after my grandson and the administrative duties which I’ve had to take on. I’m also the only trained Montessori teacher so I’ve told the Kindergarten teacher to focus on the reading and writing for now and perhaps next term I can work with the students on the Montessori material’.

The teachers do not have access to any formal in-service teacher training inputs, instead older teachers are assigned the role of helping their newer colleagues understand the requirements of the school and the
processes followed. On a few occasions subject teachers in the high school section have been sent for workshops organised by publishers of textbooks in connection with the release of a new text book.

Teachers, opines Mrs. Girija, should make it their duty to help the student understand and perform well in class. She has noticed that after she introduced the three term system in the school 6 years back, the numbers of failures have reduced. The system envisages students taking regular unit tests upon completion of a unit and exams thrice a year. Students are better able to cope with learning 6-8 lessons for a term exam rather than the usual 15-20 that an annual exam would entail. The repetition the students get while going over their lessons for homework, unit tests and exams helps in getting better grades. Nagging a student over performance remarks Mrs. Girija, instills a sense of dislike of studying. She frequently advises parents about the benefits of repeating a grade if a child is not faring well academically. Repeating a grade according to her: ‘Yes, it is difficult for the child and for the parent to accept but it does help the child improve later on. If we simply promote a child, he will not be able to cope, he will not be interested and his mind will just wander in class - so it’s better to repeat in the lower grades. But there are some parents who don’t want to listen to our suggestions - then we give the Transfer Certificate and the child is taken out of school’. Parents are required to meet with the teachers after every term exam to discuss the progress of the child.

The school does try and sort out behavioural issues they notice in the student by speaking to them and advising them to ‘set it right’. Behavioural problems such as students stealing from other students or the teacher’s purse, being aggressive and physically hurting others are viewed seriously. These are the students referred to her for further action by the concerned class teacher. Sometimes a verbal warning is issued, or the child is told he will have to meet with the Director (Mrs. Girija’s husband) an interaction which apparently all of the students dread owing to a sense of fear. If the student does not respond to these measures: ‘Sometimes I give them punishments, just one or two canings on their hands, that’s all. I also call in their parents and take a requisition letter from them that should they repeat their actions they will face more severe consequences, so by that time they are scared and they don’t want to repeat it. We should correct them early otherwise in a few years all that love-letter writing business will start next. Parents are told that the management has the authority to suspend the student at any time. We try and not use this step; we do our level best and speak to them about improving. We do keep a watch though and at the end of the year we make a decision of whether or not that student should continue in school’.

The students put up shows for parents on the annual day and sports day. On children’s day the teachers organise an entertainment show and take part in events such as a fashion show, a dance or a skit. Music, art and craft, drama and dance are not offered as part of the curriculum or otherwise.
There are no special educators or counsellors on campus or identified professionals outside school whom students are referred to.

**DS School**

The construction and completion of the new International airport over the past 5 years has seen a spurt of real estate development in the north of Bangalore’s Urban District. The presence of flyovers and improved roads has ensured better connectivity with the city creating residential complexes, schools and shopping malls. DS school is located in a semi rural area that is now witnessing rapid construction activity by commercial establishments and high rise buildings. A poorly paved winding road with a perpetual cloud of red dust hovering over it with farm houses on either side of the road leads to the wide school entrance gates. Much of the traffic on this road situated off the new highway is generated by cars dropping off students’ and the school’s vast fleet of buses and vans transporting students who reside within a 10-12km radius. Separate areas manned by a security guard are demarcated for buses and cars. Visitors are required to walk a short distance across a well maintained garden and enter their names and other relevant details in a register before being directed to the reception area. Spread over 8 acres, the stone facade buildings are built in a modern functional style and incorporate structures at multiple levels, ramps, open spaces, common halls and wide stairways.

The administration block at one level houses the Principal’s office, waiting areas with bulletin boards listing the achievements of students and honours that the school has received and the receptionists office. Below this are the finance and administration sections, a common waiting area and the elementary school Head Mistress’s corner office. Classrooms are allocated across building blocks and a large map at the entrance of the building offers some help in terms of orienting the visitor. The school counsellor wore walking shoes with her elegant salwar and mentioned that most staff switches to sturdy shoes after joining DS, given the distance to be covered and a general sense of confusion of where classes were. While waiting for my teacher respondents to arrive I would inevitably be mistaken for faculty and asked directions to a particular room by younger students.

Classrooms were sufficiently ventilated with large windows on one side of the wall and spacious enough to allow students to walk around their desks. Seating arrangements in classes followed the traditional pattern of arranging desks in rows; these were placed in 3 columns of 2 desks each, allowing the teacher and students to walk between the rows. Most classes and a few common halls are equipped with ‘Smart Boards’- an interactive audio-visual aid. Teachers have the option of designing their PowerPoint presentations or using pre-designed units; most teachers follow a pattern of introducing the topic in class
and supplementing it with a Smart Board unit session. Each class has a large chart with the students’ names written on it placed near the blackboard. Against student names, teachers are required to assign colour coded stars in response to student classroom behaviour. At the entrance of the classes are bulletin boards that display information related to a particular festival or a subject specific unit.

The Principal Mrs. Manjula in an initial session was welcoming and open to the idea of the school being included in a research study but mentioned that since she has taken over charge only over the past 1 year she would not be in a position or have the time to participate in the interview. She introduced me to the school counsellor who was given the responsibility of locating suitable teacher respondents. During the course of teacher interviews I made my acquaintance with Mrs. Shubha the Head Mistress of the elementary section who was apparently unaware that a research study was being conducted in her section—

“This is such a large school and there are always so many events going on that it is hard to keep track, we are open as a school though to such activities.”

DS School was set up in Bangalore in 2001 as part of a national chain of schools run by an educational and charitable trust. The school follows the CBSE curriculum and has classes progressing from the Upper Kindergarten to 12th grade. Each grade has 8 to 9 sections with an average of 35 students in each class. Further details about the organizational set-up and decision making roles vested in the trust were not forthcoming. Mrs. Shubha maintained that the Board of Directors placed great trust in the school faculty and senior management team, viewing them as honest, dedicated and committed individuals and were very supportive of their efforts. The school’s core philosophy is to provide meaningful education to large numbers of children emphasising holistic development, passion for the environment, instilling patriotic values and using technology to enhance learning experiences and helping prepare children to participate as global citizens. Highlighting what is unique about the school, she explains—

“The way the teachers in authority are able to connect to the other person—whether it’s a child, parent or any person, you are worthy, we believe in you, that’s what we convey. The way we conduct ourselves, our hospitality, our warmth is so good and all that shows in how we bond with the children.”

Students come from upper middle class families where most fathers run their own or family businesses or are professionals employed in IT firms. Mothers who also work are not in a majority. The predominant language spoken and heard in school is Hindi suggesting the presence of a migrant business/professional population. Parent teacher meetings are held twice a year at the end of the term exam. Through the year parents can access their child’s data online—information such as attendance, test scores, fee reminders are displayed via a child specific password. Students are also required to bring in their school almanac daily. Mrs. Shubha attributes her good relations with parents to her being a familiar face on the campus because
of her association with the school since its inception. Parents are not called in immediately if the teacher reports a concern. Teachers are encouraged to make observations of the child and speak to the counsellor if required. Stressing on how information is communicated to parents- ‘Sometimes all we focus on is what the child can’t do and how he will not be ready for the next class—we get so tied down by the quantity—the syllabus that we’re not willing to give them a second chance. So its the way things are presented— if a parent comes in upset about how a teacher has dealt with their child then I tell them we are here to sort out the problem— your child is also my child in school, that immediately reassures them. This is a big school—there are so many things that are not heard correctly, wrong dates are given, some miscommunication happens— but when I take the phone the same person who was yelling a little while back is thanking me.’

Describing her leadership style as nurturing in contrast to the experiences she had as a teacher— ‘I don’t throw authority in teachers’ faces. Out of 10 interactions only 2 will be those in which I actually use my authority or pull rank to get work done, the remaining will be a give and take— you don’t lose anything by talking nicely. When I was younger I don’t remember any senior or supervisor being nurturing, self motivation was there and I took good things from those interactions, but times have changed, I have listened to someone’s harsh words and I’ve come up in a positive way but I can’t be the same way—you know adopt my principal’s authoritarian style of functioning— of course sometimes I use my authority and I need to.’ Teachers are required to undergo regular and frequent in-service training programmes. These are either at departmental or whole school levels. New teachers are taken through a detailed orientation programme spread across a week where the principal, teachers from the senior management team guide teachers through the processes the school follows. All teachers are required to sign a CBSE undertaking that they will not resort to corporal punishment.

Classroom observations and teacher appraisals occur annually. Teachers complete self-appraisal forms and also have their section coordinators appraise their performance; these are then filed in the respective teacher’s dossier. The ideal teacher in Mrs. Shubha’s perspective was someone who has subject competence and was able to demonstrate this through an organised and systematic way of teaching. Innovative teaching methods, a sense of humour and the ability to convey feedback in a positive manner are additional desirable characteristics. Students are required to adhere to the school rules as outlined in their almanacs. School uniform regulations are also mentioned in this. With students in the high school, consequences for not following rules are more ‘immediate’ while in the elementary sections teachers follow a pattern of continuously repeating and reinforcing rules. There is greater emphasis on patience and involving the parent in these sections. Students are referred to the Head Mistress for repeated misdemeanours such as using foul language, not complying with teacher instructions, destroying school
property and/or being aggressive with peers. Mrs. Shubha stresses that in her interactions with students sent to her office, her first priority is to make the student feel comfortable- ‘If the child has been referred to me it means that the teacher has already dealt with this in her own way- mostly by threats- but I’ve found that using positive reinforcement helps the child open up nicely and understand what is expected behaviour. We should make the child feel a sense of self-worth, speak to them using a conversational method. The teacher may have also tried this method but out of hundred probably two would have used it consistently- but you know in the routine work, catching up with the syllabus, it doesn’t happen, so my responsibility is from where the teacher leaves off- I take and complete it’. She reminds students of their privileged backgrounds, of how fortunate they are to receive a good education and gets them to take responsibility for their actions. Students who don’t appear to respond to these interactions are also referred to the school counsellor.

The school emphasises the ‘all round development’ of the child and consequently has a spate of ongoing co-curricular activities. Besides preparations for regular events such as morning special assemblies, annual day, sports day and inter school competitions, all students are required to sign up at the beginning of each term for clubs of their choice. These range from debating and performing arts to drawing and martial arts. Parents are charged separately for these activities. Club activities happen once or twice a week depending on the academic schedule of the section. Teacher respondents appreciated the fact that students in the school had such a wide exposure but were also concerned by the fact that these activities consumed time in terms of logistics and managing students as they shuttled between different activities which in turn impacted on available teaching time.

They also reported that the number of counsellors in school were inadequate (3 counsellors- each with less than 2 years of experience) and that though parents are encouraged to meet with the counsellor in relation to a child’s behavioural issues, most would get defensive, insisting that their child was not ‘abnormal’ and not be receptive to the idea. The teachers were of the opinion that since the school charged higher fees there was a tendency from the management’s perspective to be more sympathetic to parent concerns- a teacher was more likely to be penalised for her response towards a troublesome student rather than child or parent being called and spoken to; this they regarded as a key factor in the lower levels of discipline in this school as compared to mainstream schools they had personally studied or taught in. Interaction among teachers was also section or subject specific rather than whole school given the vast number of students.
SV School

Located in a predominantly residential area, the school lies in close proximity to local small scale industrial units. The neighbourhood in which the school is situated is an older one obvious from the architectural styles of the houses surrounding the school in contrast to the new coffee outlets, supermarkets and an upcoming high rise apartment complex. Construction work on the metro project on the parallel main road creates road blocks impacting on the flow of vehicles especially at the commencement and ending of the school day. The school is housed across 3 buildings. The ICSE and the primary section are located in adjacent buildings while the SSLC section is located opposite them. High walls encircle the school buildings and a table and chair placed outside the school building gate on the pavement functions as the security desk. The gates open into a paved open space area that has a stage on side and administration buildings on the other. The open area functions as a play area and a space for school assemblies and functions.

An imposing statue of Saraswathy in a glass case overlooks the open area, in the morning students would usually bow their heads in silence before this and then dash off to their respective classes. The principal’s, vice- principal’s and administrator’s office are on the lower floor and adjacent to one another. An electronic swiping card for faculty is placed in the Vice- principal’s room and an enlarged timetable of all the classes and their teachers covers her entire desk topped by a glass cover. This is frequently referred to in organising substitutions or locating teachers. The walls around the office areas have showcases with trophies the school has won in various interschool competitions jostling for space with Indian sculpture pieces. A few chairs alongside the office wall are used by visitors and parents as a waiting area, sometimes impromptu, brief, parent- teacher meetings also occur in this space.

Classrooms are located above the office buildings across 3 large floors accessed by wide staircases. The rooms themselves are modest in size, some of them in the lower classes appear cramped while those in middle school appear to be more spacious, better ventilated and have newer looking furniture. The arrangement of furniture in classrooms was mostly identical with benches and tables that could seat 3 students lined up in neat rows against each side of the classroom. Most rooms don’t allow for space around the benches- teachers and students have to use the aisle to move around class. Students who felt that they couldn’t see the board from where they were sitting or those that the teacher wished to keep an eye on were asked to sit on the floor in the front of the classroom. A medium sized steel cupboard near the blackboard provided storage space for note books. Smaller open shelves at the back of the class were used for student lunch baskets. Few designated classrooms had installed Smart Boards- the interactive boards. Each section in a grade would use the Smart Board class once a week.
Most students come from within a 5-8 km radius from school and the predominant language spoken among the students is Kannada. Parents typically represent a traditional salaried middle class population who dropped off their children on their 2-wheelers. Most mothers of the students are homemakers, have a minimum high school education and a fair number were graduates. Formal parent meetings are organized twice a year where teachers discuss student performance in the mid-term and annual exams and bring up behaviour concerns if any. In addition to these formal meetings parents also came in to school in response to a teacher note or came in little before school ended for the day to bring up a concern.

Regular notices are sent out to parents informing them of activities occurring in school and parents according to the Principal place a high level of trust in school. The need for parents to work hard on their parenting skills is stressed given that children of the present generation are perceived to have more complex needs.

SV school started 40 years ago with the founder’s vision of quality education. The school’s current principal- Mr. Sharad explains that his father envisioned a set of schools that would provide education of high quality to children regardless of socio-economic status. The aim behind the setting up of the schools was to provide an affordable education that stressed cultural and traditional values. The schools are run by a family trust comprising Mr. Sharad’s paternal uncles. All decisions related to hiring of teachers, admissions and teacher training are taken by Mr. Sharad. The vice-principal is responsible for the daily decisions regarding teacher substitutions, timetable changes, dealing with visitors and sorting out parent and teacher related issues. The school has an ICSE and an SSLC section each with an approximate strength of 800 with 35 students to a class.

The guiding philosophy of the school is to create caring and compassionate individuals who will be an asset to their communities, children are taught that they are contributory agents to society. The uniqueness of the school according to the principal lies in placing importance on building traditional value systems. This system of inculcating values occurs via a 3 fold process. Teachers are required to conform to values such as punctuality and be role models for the students within the classroom- values spoken of are to be practiced. The second way is by involving students in an ongoing manner in celebrating festivals. Though the overwhelming majority in school- 98percent are Hindus, the school celebrates all religious festivals. This according to the principal builds a sense of respect for other religions and also gives them a sense of identity and belongingness. The third process relates to showcasing aspects of Indian culture such as organising concerts, inviting performing artists to school to deliver lectures and demonstrations and taking the students for handicraft exhibitions.
Mr. Sharad explained that he took over the running of the school when his father passed away a few years ago. Having spent most of his adult life in the west, readjusting to the ways of the school did prove to be challenging- ‘I admire some of the thinking styles of the west, so when I came back to India I started by looking at what was happening in the school. But systems like ours are resistant to change-my teachers asked why we had to do anything different and I asked why not? So I’ve had to work hard on getting them to reflect- we’re not there 100 percent but they have changed a bit and have seen that for their own benefit by applying certain principles of work, work ethics, and structure they can enjoy a better quality time with their family. I also believe that teachers should finish their work in school, after all 96 percent of the staff are women- all married with families. During the test week which happens every 2 months we get the students to leave by mid morning, this frees up time for the teachers to finish corrections. I feel the teachers have now moved to a level where they can self- correct, they are more aware and ask for feedback’. 

At the start of the academic year, one week is set aside for the entire faculty to create a curriculum road map for the year and to participate in training activities. These training inputs are need based and differ every year- ‘We feel that teachers’ skills like pencils need to be sharpened regularly’. Teachers also attend situational awareness classes conducted by Mr. Prasad where they are given specific classroom situations and helped to understand these and deal with them effectively.

The 1 week of training is seen as an immersion in teacher training and is the school’s way of ensuring that teachers understand their role and how they impact on their students. Referring to required characteristics for a teacher, Mr. Prasad highlights the value of patience, tolerance, compassion and caring. The lack of accountability among teachers in general is an issue he feels is responsible for teachers failing to take ownership for their actions-‘they always want to blame somebody- the system, the book- but never this is the problem with me- I need to correct myself, I learned during my stay abroad that if we need to stay successful we are not going to be judged by how much we know but whether we can adapt to the changing global scenario, so we have a long way to go as a country with regard to how teachers see change, they need to take ownership and responsibility for the students in their classrooms’. 

Mr. Prasad personally conducts 2 observations for all teachers annually and feedback is given in the presence of the Vice-Principal or the HOD. For new teachers observations may be more frequent. Teachers are not given prior notice of observations; they submit weekly notes of lessons and are hence required to follow through on their lessons and to be prepared always. Teacher feedback is not restricted to content; it extends to teacher management and soft skills in the classroom. The teacher is encouraged to be reflective of the feedback which is then filed in their personal records- ‘so before I start formally
finding fault I try and give the teacher a chance to correct. I believe everybody can perform we just have different ways of doing it and we as management have to be consistent in our monitoring efforts'. In addition Mr. Prasad walks around the school every morning to get a sense of the happenings. This also provides him glimpses of which teachers are having a difficult time and who are the students who tend to get into inappropriate behaviours.

Students are required to follow the school’s discipline policy as mentioned in the school almanac. The Physical Education teachers are called etiquette officers and are required to ensure that students are orderly and silence is maintained during whole school gatherings such as the daily assembly In dealing with students and matters of discipline- Mr. Prasad feels the need to intervene only when the teacher admits that she can no longer handle the issue-' I need to step in then because the behaviour has clearly crossed a limit and it needs something more than what the teacher has been trying. I get into diagnostic mode and try and find the root of the problem and there could be many reasons- demands of the curriculum, self, teacher related, peers, my teachers and even my support staff are trained to be aware of problem behaviour.

Sometimes the student is spoken to directly and attempts are made to resolve the issue, if this approach also does not work then the school calls in the parents to convey their concerns. The school believes that problematic behaviours are identified early and if the intervention required is felt to be beyond their resources they sometimes suggest interventions such as meeting with a psychiatrist or psychologist. Students are given exposure to participating in interschool cultural events. Students are encouraged to take part in academic oriented general knowledge quizzes, math and science Olympiads. Sporting events are restricted because of the space available that both sections have to share.

SM School

Tightly wedged between a church and a political party’s office head quarters, SM school opens onto a busy arterial road. The school and church share the same entrance gate. The broad footpath in front of the school becomes the default parking space for school vehicles and is congested at most times of the day and especially during the morning and school leaving hours. Vehicles and slogan shouting party members
from the next door political party office also spill over onto this space when there are visits by senior political members. The school consisting of 900 students is spread across 3 floors of a building. At the first level are a few middle school classes, the Principal’s office and the reception cum administrative space. The basement has a courtyard structure- a central open space with a raised platform structure for a stage and classrooms around this area. The elementary classrooms and the elementary school’s Head Mistress’s office are located in this level. Assemblies are conducted for the high school and elementary section on alternate days in this space which is also used as a play area.

The school does not have an adjoining play ground; students are taken in the school vans to a ground about 1.5 kms away that is shared by a college and two other schools. Most physical education periods are conducted in the cemented courtyard since the logistics and costs involved in transporting the students to this ground, according to the Principal was proving to be cumbersome. During lunch breaks teachers of some classes in the elementary school preferred not to send their classes out to play given the incidence of students sustaining injuries or getting into physical fights in the congested courtyard space. Students would be asked to stay within the class or play in the narrow passages adjoining their classrooms. Behind the school is a ‘dhobhi- ghat’ and some of the classrooms have their windows open out onto this. On some days the strong smells from the donkey sheds and of bleach would require the only available windows in a class to be closed.

The classrooms have sturdy looking desks and benches that can seat 4 in the lower classes and 3 in middle and high school. Benches are arranged in two columns allowing for the teacher to walk around the class and in the middle aisle. Each class also has a bulletin board which displays a chart made by a group of students on a unit being studied or a festival. The school was started by the church about 18 years ago; it began as an elementary school in the basement of the church and gradually expanded to a full fledged school serving students from Grades 1 to 10. A unit catering to needs of children who are mentally challenged was also set up a decade ago.

While the Special Opportunities unit is housed in the main school building, it is treated as a separate unit, the children attending this have separate uniforms, a separate school van and different bell timings. There is no attempt made to include them in any of the regular school academic or co-curricular activities. The educational philosophy guiding the setting up of the school was to provide education to children of the church members who couldn’t afford the bigger schools. The school is open to children of other religious faiths who are given fee concessions based on a merit system. Children of church members receive a highly subsidised education and 1percent of the school income is earmarked for providing scholarships for meritorious students of other faiths.
The school is governed by a board consisting of church members headed by the Presbyter- in- charge. Typically the presbyter’s wife oversees the running of the Special Opportunities unit. The Principal in consultation with the Board finalises hiring of new teachers and the designing of the academic calendar. Financial issues such as fee concessions, teacher salaries and expenses for the school are exclusively handled by the Board while the Principal and Head Mistress handle the daily running of the high school and elementary school respectively. The school follows an ICSE curriculum from grades 1 to 10. An overwhelming majority of students-90 percent belong to the Muslim community owing to the location of the school; close to a central market area run almost exclusively by this community.

According to the teachers most mothers are at least high school educated and are homemakers. Fathers mostly have a high school education and are owners of small shops in the surrounding market areas. The predominant language used in school is a local Urdu dialect. Parents meet with teachers twice year to discuss their child’s progress. Daily communication between parent and school is maintained through a school diary. Teachers report that some mothers meet them informally at the end of the day- especially if their child has had a long leave of absence and needs to catch up on class notes. The Head- Mistress- Mrs Reena mentions that she once organised for a psychologist to speak to the parents and only a handful of parents showed up for the talk. Following this she hasn’t organized any other talks.

Describing herself as a strict disciplinarian, Mrs. Reena talks about the high level of discomfort teachers and parents experienced when she took over 4 years ago as Head Mistress-‘None of them were used to my levels of discipline- it was too comfortable for them because there was only 1 principal and she had so many administrative concerns to attend to that she had little time to come down to the elementary section. The first few months were not comfortable for them or me’.

Mrs. Reena attributes her style of leadership to early school influences of being in a Convent school and of being ‘petrified’ by the nuns but also learning a lot from how they conducted themselves. She married an army officer shortly after her B.Ed. and her first professional experience was in an Army school that was headed by a Colonel’s wife-‘So as a teacher and even as a mother I’ve been influenced by these styles and I’ve always been a strict disciplinarian and I feel that discipline is required’. Mrs. Reena checks on teachers’ lesson notes every week and also walks around the elementary area in the mornings, occasionally stepping into classes to observe. Teacher respondents in the study mentioned that they often threatened the class or students who were being troublesome with inviting Mrs. Reena into their class on the morning rounds.

Feedback to teachers regarding their teaching or classroom management is immediate. Teachers are called to her office and feedback is given. If the teacher does not show any substantial improvement after
2 such interactions-‘I just tell them on their face, I then don’t see where I’m saying this- whether its in front of the children or the other staff- it doesn’t matter. The teachers now know this and are careful about not repeating mistakes’. The lack of resources and space available according to her has dampened plans for teacher and section improvement. Admitting that there are no systematic teacher training inputs she adds that teachers need to be aware of student problems. The focus needs to be on the child and not just completing the syllabus, the teacher is required to be loving and also be specific and quick to identify difficulties in children.

In dealing with discipline issues, Mrs Reena opines that since most children come from ‘humble middle income homes’ they are more amenable to rules and respect their teachers as opposed to students from privileged backgrounds. She reports being more concerned about issues of personal hygiene than discipline-‘Yes there has been an increase in the aggression levels - generally we are able to discipline them but our education extends to telling them that they need to take a bath everyday and wear undergarments. We actually wanted to change the colour of their socks to grey or black but we never did because then they’ll probably never wash them at all’. Fifteen minutes is set aside every morning for the class teacher to address these issues and during weekly assemblies there is a thorough check.

Repeated warnings result in the school calling in the parents and conveying their concerns. Teachers mostly deal with behavioural issues at the class level, serious offences such as those involving physical aggression are dealt with more stringently. Students are given suspensions for repeated misdemeanours-‘This year I’ve had to tell two parents to take their children home, teach them some discipline and only then consider bringing them back to school. In the past this method works because its only then that the parents listen and take us seriously’.

Mrs. Reena remarked that though she was constrained in making curriculum changes, she had brought in changes in terms of the assessment procedures- doing away with allotting marks and using a more objective and visual format for test worksheets. Students are also assessed at the end of the month in elementary school- this she felt had eased the burden of lengthy content for students. Students experiencing academic difficulties are given time and attention at the end of the day in remedial classes. If the difficulties are greater than the help being offered, the child is asked to pursue the SSLC syllabus in another school. Extracurricular activities such as music are scheduled once a week for the entire elementary section.
PR School

Situated away from the main road, PR School faces a small park and large play ground and is surrounded by 4 other schools and modest independent residential buildings. The play ground is shared by the other schools as well and is inevitably crowded with students of all ages at the end of the day as they wait for their school vans to turn up. During this time there is a lot of chaos as auto rickshaws, vans and scooters thread their way through the narrow by lanes in search of their child passengers. The access to an open play ground opposite school often creates conflicts between the school and parents with the school stating that they are not responsible for the child’s safety after the last bell and cannot provide for any teacher supervision while the parents feel that their children are compelled to wait here because the school does not have adequate transport and available vans often run 3 trips. The receptionist stated that she gets a minimum of 5-8 calls every evening from parents of younger children anxious to know their ward’s whereabouts despite being aware of the school’s policy.

The tall grey school gates open onto a granite stone paved open space with a stage on one end and a smaller hall on the other. Classrooms are located in 2 buildings of 3 levels each. The main building constructed around a small courtyard space houses a waiting area, the administrative staff, the Principal’s office, staffrooms at each level and classrooms buildings. The second building- the Annexe is the newer building which came up as the school grew in strength and has mostly the Kindergarten section, some of the primary classes and staff rooms. Classes can be accessed through stairs in the front and at the back, these are approximately 4 feet in width and teachers lay a lot of emphasis on safety on the stairs since students are frequently shifting from their classes to other areas of the school. Toilets are located on every floor.

Individually owned, the school follows an ICSE curriculum and is part of a group of 3 other schools in Bangalore that follow a CBSE and an International curriculum respectively. The Director appoints the Principal and is involved in the selection of the school coordinators of elementary, middle and high school sections. The Principal has regular meetings with the Director to keep him abreast of happenings in school. The daily running of the school, appointing heads of departments, dealing with student admissions and parent concerns are the Principal’s responsibility. She gets inputs on practically a daily basis from the 3 section coordinators. The section coordinators are responsible for the smooth functioning of their sections, they have regular meetings with Heads of Department, check on teacher lesson notes, conduct teacher observations and problem solve crises situations before an issue/child/teacher is referred to the Principal. The Coordinators and Principal often stay on in school engaged in meetings that conclude almost 2 hours after school has given over. The elementary coordinator mentioned that weeks
go by without her being aware of how her children are coping with their homework because on most days she reaches home closer to their dinner time.

The classrooms have adequate space for the teacher and students to walk around. Desks are arranged in 3 columns with 6 individual desks in every row. Bulletin boards on two sides of the classroom have colourful displays of a particular Unit being taught across the various subjects. The school has a Smart Board facility set up in a common area for the higher classes.

Started 15 years ago with a vision of providing a good quality of education and fostering values of leadership, patriotism, sportsmanship and all round development, the school currently caters to 830 students from Kindergarten to grade 10. Students to PR School come from within a 8-10km distance. Most parents are graduates and employed as salaried professionals. Mothers who are employed form a significant number. Students come from a range of South Indian linguistic backgrounds hence use English to communicate in school. Parent- teacher meetings are held twice a year. The student handbook is required to be signed on a regular basis by the parent and teacher and carries school/class related information. In addition the school arranges for a parenting specialist or a counsellor to address the parents once a year on a parenting related issue. This event typically draws a lukewarm response from parents in spite of the speakers being very experienced and engaging according to the Principal.

New teachers are formally observed at least thrice a month, these observations may be conducted by a range of senior teachers and feedback is conveyed to the Coordinator of the section and to the teacher. Appraisals occur annually for the entire staff and feedback is received from multiple sources. The Coordinators are required to undertake observation rounds every morning, these could involve actual sitting in class or being in the vicinity close enough to know what the teacher is doing, according to Mrs. Najma the Coordinator for the elementary section, ‘A teacher needs to know that she’s accountable, that’s why we have so many checks in place, I also randomly collect student note books at the end of the week to check if the books have been corrected. Only if a teacher knows that she’s being watched will she improve’. Describing her leadership style as ‘approachable’ she explains- ‘Teachers are not scared of me, its not in my style to be that way- even if I would like to be that way. As a leader one has to be approachable and be a good listener. Also whenever I give feedback I always put the positive things first so for example- Your teaching plan was good but perhaps if you had used some teaching aids your class would have been more effective- So I give the message at the same time supported the teacher. We can’t be openly critical; a teacher should also feel appreciated.’

Referring to the need for creating more interactive and creative classrooms, Mrs. Najma believes that if school can help children feel more confident in themselves, if teaching methods are innovative then a lot
of psychological problems commonly seen in children will not exist. Schools according to her are more responsive to the child’s needs because children are monitored and supervised unlike modern homes where both parents are working and the child possibly has no one to receive him/her or pay any attention, hence schools should be places where children feel safe and comfortable and good values can be inculcated.

Emphasising the need for training inputs for teachers that foster these effective teaching practices, Mrs. Najma mentions that at the beginning of the academic year, staff from all the PR schools in Bangalore regardless of years of experience are required to undergo 2 complete days of training- experts are invited to deliver these sessions. New teachers also go through orientation programmes about the school’s processes in addition to the training sessions. On some occasions teachers receive training inputs during the school term either in school or are sent for workshops organised by reputed teacher training organisations.

Students are referred to her only if the teacher reports not being able handle the behaviour; these involve the student being aggressive, using foul language, refusing to comply with teacher instructions and being ‘hyper’ in class. The student is spoken to, highlighting his positive qualities and reminding him that he’s an important part of the class and the school. In addition the parent is called and spoken to. The goal of these discussions is to try and find a solution by establishing the root cause of the behaviour. Sometimes parents are referred to outside professionals; while some parents receive this suggestion negatively, there have been parents who have followed through on the school’s suggestions and have returned to thank them for picking up a problem in its early stages. The school however does not employ a counsellor or special educator or consider this a requirement currently.

Each class is required to observe the first 20 minutes of the school day as ‘home-rule’ time. During this time students are familiarised with the rules of the school as mentioned in their handbooks. Teachers apparently have discussions with the students on values- helping them differentiate right from wrong; stressing do’s and don’ts of behaviour- ‘teachers interact with students on all these issues and put it in their heads.’ The school actively encourages students to participate in a range of interschool competitions and teachers are specifically designated to help the students prepare for these competitions. Extracurricular activities such as dance, music, sports and martial arts are offered in school as after school activities at an additional cost.
4.3 Teacher and Student Data

The challenges of conducting classroom based research as documented by Anderson and Robert (1989) indicate that the key strands of classroom teaching in terms of outcomes of student learning and interactions and decisions made during instructional planning and teaching are largely unobservable and involve an element of time; these phenomena often occur frequently and simultaneously in a complex chain of interrelated events. While there appears to be a definite lack of theory about classrooms, there are models of classrooms- the majority of which offer a similar characterization of classroom phenomena. These models are usually a combination of concepts based on time-duration, behaviour-frequency or things- presence or absence features. The activity structure of classrooms is fairly predictable; however particular teacher and student behaviours are not.

The following tables 4.4 and 4.5 list teacher and student group data. Table 4.4 provides teacher demographic data at a glance. Information regarding age, qualification, years of experience and grade taught are listed under teacher demographics. Data indicates that all the teacher respondents are female. This is in keeping with teacher statistics across the world that there tends to be a greater representation of women in the elementary teacher workforce possibly because of the age group of students and the common perception of women teachers being able to use maternal skills to handle the complexities of younger children. In all the sample schools, the teachers who conducted sports and physical education in the elementary section were male. They were also required to enforce and maintain discipline during whole school gatherings often by repeatedly using whistles and issuing stern verbal commands.

The average age of teachers in this group was approximately 37 years and the average number of years of professional experience was 8.7.
Table 4.4
Teacher demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Serial no</th>
<th>Teachers</th>
<th>School</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Years of experience</th>
<th>Qualification</th>
<th>Grade taught</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Anuradha</td>
<td>PI</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>B.A.</td>
<td>3,4&amp;5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Noor</td>
<td>PI</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>B.Sc.</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Julia</td>
<td>PI</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>B.A.</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Kanika</td>
<td>DS</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>B.Sc;B.Ed.(regular)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Ratna</td>
<td>DS</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>M.A;B.Ed.(regular)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Anita</td>
<td>DS</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>B.Com;B.Ed.(distance)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Vani</td>
<td>SV</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>B.A;B.Ed.(distance)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Beena</td>
<td>SV</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>B.Sc;B.Ed.(regular)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Ragini</td>
<td>SV</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>B.Sc;B.Ed.(regular)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Daya</td>
<td>SM</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>12th; TCH</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Priya</td>
<td>SM</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>12th; TCH</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Jerusha</td>
<td>SM</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12th;TCH</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Malini</td>
<td>PR</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>B.A.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Bhavana</td>
<td>PR</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>B.Com.(Montessori)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Sindu</td>
<td>PR</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>M.A;B.Ed.(regular)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All teacher respondents were female

With the exception of one teacher, all teachers in the group were married and had children. Only 3 teachers in the group were not graduates and had a 12th grade pass in addition to TCH training. While most teachers in the group had received some form of teacher training, there were 4 teachers who had no professional training inputs.

Table 4.5 refers to student demographic data. Data indicates a representation of students from grades 1-5. The average age of a student in this group was 8 years, ranging from 6 years to a maximum of 11 years. Half the group- 8 students had scores of 10 on the SDQ- Hyperactivity score indicating high ratings or the definite presence of ADHD type behaviours. With the exception of one student, all the other students identified by teachers as displaying ADHD type behaviours were male. Prevalence figures for ADHD across cultures indicate that a higher proportion of boys than girls appear to be challenged by behaviours such as restlessness, being fidgety, impulsivity and peer related aggressive interactions.
### Table 4.5
Student demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Serial no:</th>
<th>Students</th>
<th>School</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>No: of years in present school</th>
<th>SDQ-H Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Abhay</td>
<td>PI</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Umesh</td>
<td>PI</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Chaitanya</td>
<td>PI</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Daksh</td>
<td>DS</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Rohan</td>
<td>DS</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Sahil</td>
<td>DS</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Shuban</td>
<td>SV</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8**</td>
<td>Sheela</td>
<td>SV</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Varun</td>
<td>SV</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Surya</td>
<td>SM</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Tarun</td>
<td>SM</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Umeed</td>
<td>SM</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Lalit</td>
<td>PR</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Arnav</td>
<td>PR</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Suman</td>
<td>PR</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**- Only female student in the study

Using information provided by these tables, teacher interviews and my observations, brief descriptions have been provided of the teachers and the students they identified as displaying ADHD type behaviours. The objective of these brief teacher-student descriptions is to locate them in actual classroom contexts, providing an organic feel of the respondents who contributed their time, beliefs and thoughts to this study and a reminder that in being able to use a qualitative framework of research each of them represents more than a number.

1. **Anuradha (Teacher) and Abhay (Student)**

Anuradha teaches Kannada for grades 3, 4 and 5 at PI School. A graduate with no formal teacher training she started off her teaching career by giving tuitions in Kannada to children in the neighborhood. She wanted to pursue her Master’s but was unable to due to family related problems. Her father-in-law encouraged her to try teaching and she landed her first job at the present school. Anuradha has been associated with the school for the past 10 years and believes that she is able to manage her class fairly well as most students become quiet when she walks into class because of her reputation as a strict teacher.
Anuradha taught Abhay the previous year as well and observes that in comparison to last year, this year-grade 03, he appears to be more inattentive and from being a ‘rank’ student is now at class average levels. She describes Abhay as ‘not dull, he knows everything, he’s just lazy and stubborn’. According to her, Abhay gets into frequent trouble with the other teachers but with her he’s better behaved because she’s strict with him.

2. Noor (Teacher) and Umesh (Student)

Noor is the class teacher of grade 05 at PI School and has been teaching science, math and Hindi for the past 8 years in the present school. A B. Sc. graduate, she had to give up her correspondence B.Ed. course midway when she got pregnant. Noor describes teaching as her passion and remembers constantly playing the teacher role in her childhood but doesn’t see the relevance of completing her B.Ed. now and would rather pursue an M.Sc. degree. In contrast to her earlier role of being a strict disciplinarian she has come to realize that the more open and relaxed a teacher the greater is the student’s comfort and learning. Noor is cautious about complaining of Umesh’s behaviour in her class. In the past his parents have reacted to her complaints on one occasion by placing a heated knife on his leg, ostensibly to teach him discipline. Consequently the child missed 3 weeks of school physically recovering. She tries to involve him frequently in class discussions but his restless behaviour and being dreamy on occasion places quite a burden on her, knowing that she can’t involve the parent and has to therefore resolve the problem behaviours on her own.

3. Julia (Teacher) and Chaitanya (Student)

Julia is a graduate with no formal teacher training. She is currently the class teacher for grade 04 and has been employed at PI school for the past 3 years teaching math, science and English. Prior to joining the present school she taught religious studies in Oman for 3 years. She decided to enter teaching when her children were older and she needed to feel occupied. Julia opted for teaching since she feels ‘It’s a safe job and I like the fact that children listen to what I have to say and I can share of my knowledge’. Julia feels that Chaitanya’s behaviour places a significant burden on her and interferes with his learning and interacting with his classmates- ‘Even if the teacher has corrected him, he keeps talking and roaming around class, it’s like a habit now, he wastes his time and disturbs the other students. He takes an entire period to write 1 or 2 questions’. Chaitanya apparently gets beaten practically daily by his father and his mother gets defensive in parent teacher meetings- blaming the other students in class for her son’s behaviour. Julia observes that he’s good with math but feels that he is not responding to her attempts to correct his behaviour.
4. Kanika (Teacher) and Daksh (Student)

Kanika has been associated with DS School for the past 2 years and teaches Science and Math to grade 05 students. Shortly after her graduation she completed her B.Ed. degree and taught immediately after in another school for 6 years. Kanika enjoys teaching having grown up watching her father teach. She is puzzled by what she sees as a ‘complete lack of discipline and lack of fear and respect for the teacher among modern day students’. This according to her impacts on instructional time as a good part of the class is spent dealing with behavioural issues. Kanika observes that Daksh’s behaviour significantly impacts his learning and his interactions with his peers. Most of his work is incomplete because of his tendency to be wandering in class and not attending to instructions. Daksh’s mother is also a teacher in the same school which sometimes leaves Kanika feeling uncomfortable about giving feedback to her colleague. On occasion Daksh does hand in neat work which Kanika cites as evidence that he is in fact capable of grade appropriate work when he chooses to.

5. Ratna (Teacher) and Rohan (Student)

Having finished her B.Ed 18 years ago, Ratna remarks that her professors would have had no inkling of how different education and children were going to be and hence feels that her training is outdated in meeting the needs of children exposed to a glut of information. Ratna has been associated with DS school for the past 3 years and teaches Social Studies and English to 4th graders. Prior to this she taught in an Army school and finds that differences in student discipline in her earlier place of employment and the present school can be attributed school philosophy. Describing her job as her passion she opines that teaching has become more challenging as the teacher is now required to be 2 steps ahead of the student, be able to hold their fluctuating interest levels and maintain some discipline. Ratna was warned by the previous class teacher of Rohan’s aggressive behaviours and tendency not to heed teacher instructions. She has tried spending time with him during lunch breaks and giving him more classroom responsibilities but does not see any major change in his behaviour. The parents have also not followed through on her suggestions and seem resigned in talking about his behaviours.

6. Anita (Teacher) and Sahil (Student)

Describing her foray into teaching as occurring by chance and not intentional, Anita has teaching experience of 7 years and has been employed with DS School as a grade 01 class teacher for the past 3 years. She was earlier working in an elementary school in Delhi before her husband was transferred to Bangalore. Her experience of teaching interested her and along with working she completed a distance B.Ed. programme. Anita believes that new changes in the CBSE assessment and grading procedures are not helping students ‘toughen up and deal with life’. Working with students with learning needs in a
regular classroom according to her is not everyone’s calling and that school managements cannot expect or demand that all teachers will be inclusive in their approach.

Sahil was diagnosed with ADHD in the beginning of the year. His mother is a medical doctor and was able to pick up symptoms early especially since her older son was also diagnosed with the same condition. Anita observes that Sahil’s learning does get affected by his behaviours but she feels that the mother’s support and practical suggestions have helped her understand his ADHD and hence respond effectively.

7. Vani (Teacher) and Shubhan (Student)
Vani has 12 years of experience and has been associated with SV School for the past 2 years teaching geography, history and Kannada. She has worked in three Kendriya Vidyalaya schools for about three years in each school before shifting to Bangalore. Having worked with a CBSE curriculum all these years, Vani feels that the CBSE curriculum is fairly detailed in terms of what is expected of the teacher where as the ICSE tends to be more extensive and has not kept pace with changes in assessment. Vani started off studying for medicine but illness lead to discontinuing her studies. She completed her graduate degree and encouraged by her family completed a distance B.Ed. programme. She describes Shubhan as intelligent but not wanting to pay attention because he is ‘just too naughty and playful’. His behaviours impact quite a lot on his learning and peer interactions and in turn are stressful for her to handle in class. Vani feels that as Shubhan goes to higher classes he will improve ‘Because parents begin to actually pay attention to children and their learning only in high school’ aware that their wards are just a few years away from sitting for professional entrance exams.

8. Beena (Teacher) and Sheela (Student)
Upon completion of her B. Sc, Beena tried out teaching for a year in a neighborhood school and liked the experience enough to complete a regular B.Ed. degree. She will be completing her third year at SV school as class teacher for grade 04 teaching math and science. Beena has worked in 2 schools prior to this and has a total of 6 years of teaching experience. She remembers her training as helpful, the practical teaching classes that they had to conduct more than the theory classes. Inputs received in school have also helped her grow as a professional- an area that was largely ignored in the earlier schools where she worked. As a science teacher she feels she has to keep asking students and help them come to ‘conclusions and truths’ and this is when she observed Sheela as not participating. Describing her as ‘mostly lost’, Sheela is not disruptive and is able to engage with her class mates. Beena is aware that other teachers report Sheela’s inattention as more problematic and she attributes this to Sheela’s interest in science and the constant questioning teaching style that happens in class- ‘Maybe that forces her to attend.’
9. Ragini (Teacher) and Varun (Student)

Ragini says she knew from her childhood itself that she would one day become a teacher. After she completed her B.Ed.(regular) she applied for a teaching position at SV school and was accepted. This is her 5th year in the school and she has been teaching math and science to third graders. A mother to a toddler she feels that the school’s timings and policies of completing corrections within school as helpful to managing her family life. The first thing a teacher should be able to demonstrate according to her is the ability to control; only if she can manage a class can she begin to teach. Ragini describes Varun as a very active boy, good with sports and running events but having difficulties in listening to her instructions in a classroom situation. Often Varun needs repeated reminders to get back to his seat and get started with his work. Work is frequently incomplete and is sent home. Varun’s behaviours as observed by Ragini interfere a great deal with his learning and place a lot of stress on her as a teacher. The parents in their interactions with her have also conveyed similar concerns about his behaviour at home—‘Sometimes when I hear them I feel sad; I get some relief when school ends but for them, they spend so much more time with him, it must be very hard’.

10. Daya (Teacher) and Surya (Student)

School to Daya was always a place she dreaded—‘I would get teased because of my dark complexion and I also wasn’t a very bright student, so I would mostly be ignored by teachers’. Daya opted to do her TCH after her second P.U.C.(12th Std.) with the desire of reaching out to children and helping them feel accepted in class. Stressing on the importance of an emotional connect in the classroom, a teacher according to her should be able to demonstrate love and concern for her students, they should feel comfortable enough to confide in her. Daya has 7 years of teaching experience and this is her 4th year in SM School. She was originally hired as the Art and Craft teacher but after a year she requested to be made a class teacher and has since then been class teacher to grade 02 students. Daya felt Surya matched a lot of statements on the vignette presented; he needed extra supervision and more frequent reminders to complete his class work—‘He’s always more interested in what his neighbors are doing than the book in front of him and sometimes he just gives irrelevant answers’. Daya worries that while Surya may be amenable to teacher commands now, this may not be the case as he grows older.

11. Priya (Teacher) and Tarun (Student)

Priya had her heart set upon pursuing her B. Com. degree after her Second P.U.C. but was forced by her brother to pursue a TCH course instead. She even failed the first term of her course to protest the decision but gradually came around to accepting and later enjoying it. Priya now has 14 years of teaching
experience, having worked in 3 other schools for 10 years before joining SM school. She has been grade 01 teacher and prefers dealing with younger students as they tend to be- 'more accepting of what you have to say, they admire you and are easy to correct. The older ones will not show respect and even if you correct them they don’t bother about repeating their mistakes'. She also recognizes that their age prevents them from remembering all the class rules; hence she needs to be patient in reminding them. Tarun according to her practically needs someone next to him to help him stay focused with the task on hand. Priya says she has to be extra vigilant around him because he has been aggressive with the other students and there are days where she doesn’t send him out in the lunch break concerned about the number of complaints that would be waiting for her after the period was over. Tarun’s behaviours are slowing down the pace of his learning and there are concerns about how he will fare in the next class when there is a greater emphasis on written work.

12. Jerusha (Teacher) and Umeed (Student)
Jerusha mentioned that she would rather have studied to be a nurse but the sight of blood always made her feel queasy. She did her TCH after completing Second P.U.C. and was offered a job in the school she was interning. Jerusha moved to SM school 4 years ago and teaches science and math to 5th graders. This grade according to her is an important one- ‘It is the beginning of middle school and from here onwards the subjects all get very hard’. Jerusha feels that teaching gives her a sense of purpose in her life- ‘I don’t teach only for a salary’, and recently got married only on the condition that she would be allowed to continue teaching. Her class this year has some of the most ‘badly behaved’ children she has seen. Umeed she observes gets into frequent arguments with his friends, always wants to have his point accepted and resorts to punching when he doesn’t get his way. In class he’s distracted by the fancy stationery items he brings and needs several teacher reminders to complete his work. Jerusha believes that if parents don’t support what is done at school then trying to work with the child only in school is futile- ‘Parents need to be strict, the child may not like it, but we are doing it for his good and in school we can only do this much after that it’s up to the parent’.

13. Malini (Teacher) and Lalit (Student)
After her graduation, Malini was involved in the family business of running a photography shop. Her friend encouraged her to try working at a play school which she did and decided to continue with it- ‘I love being around children and maybe this is my destiny’. Malini feels that doing a teacher training course such as a B.Ed. is a ‘waste of time but I’ll do it if it’s compulsory, not otherwise’. She feels that in dealing with this age group a teacher needs to be loving and accepting of their naughtiness- ‘Children should be
naughty now, this is the age, if not now then when they are 35?’ She also has to be firm in setting rules and disciplining them- ‘the work has to be completed.’ Lalit in her class frequently asks for breaks. She sees him as a bright child but unable to focus on his work. He does get restless and is typically never in his seat but when asked a question sometimes he is able to provide the correct answer. Lalit tends to be better behaved in Malini’s class because according to her she has very clear rules-‘In my period everybody has to be ship-shape.’ Malini believes that children of the present generation are burdened by parental expectations and have ended up losing their childhood.

14. Bhavana (Teacher) and Arnav (Student)
Bhavana did a Montessori course as ‘time-pass’ soon after her graduation while waiting for marriage proposals. However it was only after her children started nursery school that her sense of unhappiness with how they were being taught motivated her to start teaching. Bhavana has 8 years of teaching experience and has been associated with PR school for the past 6 years. Both her children are also studying in the same school. Bhavana believes that a teacher should be passionate about her job; it is this passion that directs her interactions in the classroom. As class teacher of grade 01 she feels that clear simple rules and their repetition is the key to a well managed classroom. Bhavana describes Arnav’s restlessness in class as akin to that of popcorn-‘He’s always jumping up and down’. Arnav displays a keen interest according to her in everybody else’s matters and often tries to ‘help’ the teacher by shouting out general instructions to the class. She feels stressed by his behaviours and observes that it is beginning to impact on his learning.

15. Sindu (Teacher) and Suman (Student)
On completion of her M.A. in Hindi, Sindu opted to do a B.Ed.- (regular course). She has 6 years of teaching experience and has been employed at PR School for the past 2 years. Prior to this she has taught in 2 Army schools and finds that she misses the general atmosphere of discipline associated with these schools. Sindu is impressed however with the proficiency in English that students display in this school and feels that if it weren’t for her husband being in the Armed Forces she would prefer this school for her children rather than the Kendriya Vidyalaya that they have been enrolled in. She was appointed as class teacher of grade 02 in the middle of this year as the previous class teacher resigned on health grounds. Suman was referred for a formal diagnosis at the beginning of the year in response to concerns about his impulsive and aggressive behaviours. The diagnosis indicated ADHD; following his diagnosis the teachers have not been given specific inputs on how to respond to his behaviour. Sindu feels that parent involvement has helped address some of the behaviour concerns and she reports an improvement in his behaviour since she took charge as class teacher.
The descriptions provided in this chapter have attempted to give us glimpses of the plural complexities of teacher perspectives, schools and classroom practices. By creating a personalized context for the schools, teachers and students who formed the core of the study, this chapter respects the need to view social reality as constructed by the actors themselves and aligns with the qualitative aspect of the study’s research methodology. Using qualitative data analysis methods, core patterns and themes that emerged in the study will be highlighted and discussed in the following chapter.