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Towards Safe and Sensitive Schools: A Participatory Action Research Project

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Abstract

India's schools have been frequently evaluated along parameters that are focused on the quality of their facilities, and less often, the effectiveness of the instruction. There are no published studies that concern the social and emotional environment that envelops a child at school. This paper summarises a participatory action research program that was undertaken by three schools in that state of Karnataka, India. The goal of the yearlong intervention was to measure and enhance the safety and sensitivity of their environments. The Whole School Ecosystemic Model formed the basis of the intervention. The paper begins by highlighting three key aspects that foster a caring and positive environment – constructive, nurturing and collaborative. Data collected before and after the intervention illustrates the impact of the program on the attitudes and behaviour of teachers and students. Results indicate that they performed better on the collaborative aspect in comparison to the other two aspects.

Keywords: safe, sensitive, constructive, collaborative, nurturing, Quality Circle Time, Whole School Ecosystemic model, teacher student interactions, disciplining

Towards Safe and Sensitive Schools: A Participatory Action Research Project

> *... At the heart of this pedagogic relationship lay the Brahminical ideal of the teacher's moral authority. The teacher was supposed to possess sacred knowledge which he knew best how to transfer to a student... the teacher's role vis-à-vis the children continued to follow the Brahminical idea…*
>
> *… The teacher as a guru thus survived the onslaught of colonization. His moral authority over children remained unchallenged, and the child's need to be treated as an individual remained a foreign idea…the schoolteacher continued to perform an ancient political function, that of subduing the spirit of curiosity and questioning...*
>
> *Krishna Kumar (1991)*

Kumar's portrayals of teachers have survived India's colonial times. They would still be considered accurate depictions of the country's education system in the 21st century. Personal interactions of all kinds – teachers with students and students amongst themselves – are frequently marked by harshness of tone, insensitivity towards others' feelings, and a sense of inadequacy in expressing ideas and feelings. Authoritarianism and judgment pervade a majority of these interactions in schools across the country.

A 2007 country-wide study by the Indian Ministry of Women and Child Development (see [1]) claims that half the children at school face various forms of emotional abuse: being shouted at, rudely spoken to, and abusive language. Three in four boys and one in four girls suffer humiliation from comparisons made in class. Out of a sample of 3163 children, an overwhelming 65% report having been beaten by teachers. From time to time, Indian news media carries reports of children being harshly treated at school, sometimes with fatal consequences.

Teaching at school is plagued by poor motivation, insufficient training to manage large and diverse classrooms (Ramachandran, 2005), social distancing and prejudiced attitudes towards children (ASER 2010, Mazumdar, 2001). Not surprisingly, the primary reason for children aged 5-14 to drop out of school is a lack of interest in studies (Jayachandran, 2007).

Motivation

In 2005, the National Council for Educational Research and Training, a school-level advisory body set up by the Government of India, updated its National Curriculum Framework (NCF, 2005). Emphasizing collaboration, the document suggests creative uses of school and classroom spaces. Schools are urged to adopt policies of inclusion, which are pertinent in a setting where students are discriminated on the basis of caste, gender and class. Rather than stoking an extreme spirit of competition and rewarding winners, teachers must encourage participation by all children. The document asks schools to create a nurturing and enabling environment:

> *An enabling environment for children would be one that is rich in stimulation and experiences, that allows children to explore, experiment and freely express themselves, and one that is embedded in social relations that give them a sense of warmth, security and trust.*

Even though the NCF document is well conceived, there are no records of attempts being made by schools nationwide to implement these policies, and to assess them for their effectiveness in creating a positive culture. Studies on schooling in India are predominantly econometric in nature, covering areas such as enrollment rates, attendance, facilities provision (ASER 2011), and trends in teacher absence (Kremer, Chaudhury, Rogers, Muralidharan, & Hammer, 2005). Kingdon and Dreze (2001) have identified factors such as mid-day meals and parental education that influence a child's participation at school.

The available literature makes no mention of any concerted effort to examine the more substantive issues of safety and sensitivity in Indian schools. This paper elaborates on the Safe and Sensitive Schools Project – henceforth referred to as SASS – which was a planned intervention carried out by The Teacher Foundation (TTF). Its principal goal was to help the schools create an environment that was nurturing, constructive and social. This change would be reflected across their policies, spaces, and interactions between students, staff and other stakeholders.

The SASS intervention was structured along Jenny Mosley's Whole School Ecosystemic Model (WSE) of Quality Circle Time (QCT). The paper begins by outlining the WSE Model, followed by a discussion of the key aspects of a

safe and sensitive school environment. These aspects are the building blocks for qualitative and quantitative instruments that will be used to assess the status quo, as well as the impact subsequent to the SASS intervention. The findings of the assessment will provide educators some directions for further research.

The Whole School Ecosystemic Model (WSE)

In a series of writings, Burns (1979, 1982) claimed that academic achievement and self-esteem formed a virtuous cycle. He pointed out that not many programs had focused on improving the teacher-student relationship. This led thinker-practitioners to experiment with models that incorporated and enhanced self-esteem, and focused on psychological safety in schools. In the UK, Jenny Mosley developed the Whole School Ecosystemic (WSE) Model, which adopted a comprehensive approach to positive behavior, as well as personal and social development at school. Figure illustrates the various aspects of the Whole School Ecosystemic model developed by Jenny Mosley.

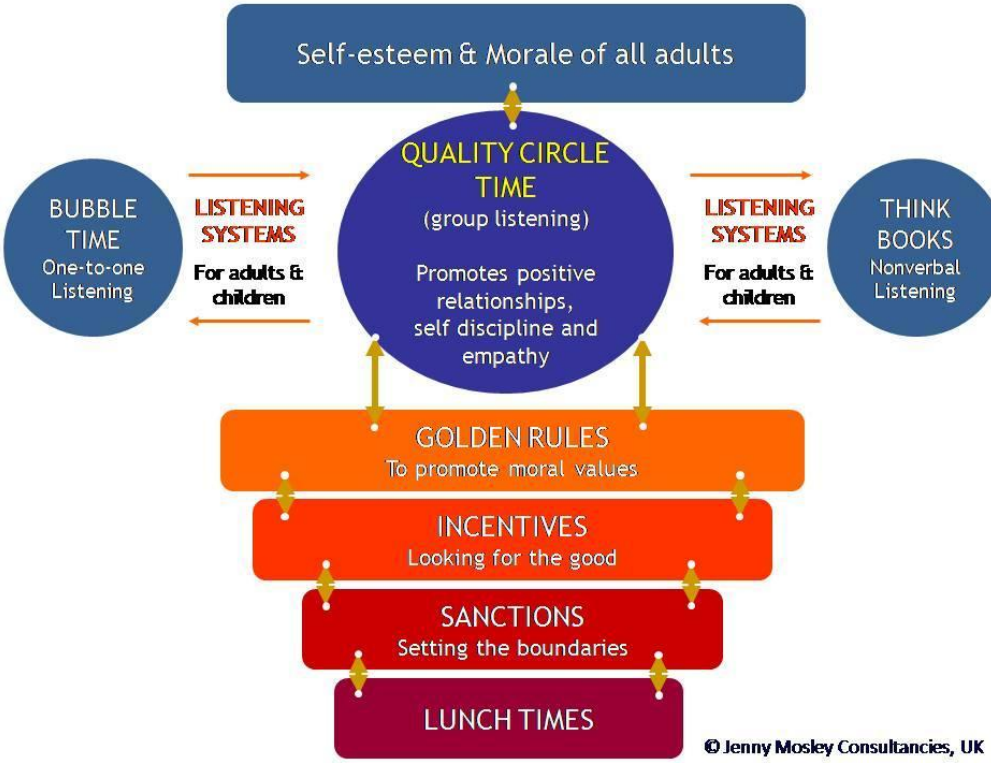

Figure 1: The Whole School Ecosystemic Model

The core idea of the WSE model (see Mosley 1993, 1999) are its three listening systems – Quality Circle Time (QCT), Think Books and Bubble Time. According to Mosley, a safe school is one that listens – teachers listening to students, students listening to each other, and the head listening to the teachers. QCT, or the group listening system, fosters a collaborative atmosphere, which encourages the children to experience doing things together and accepting others as they are. The quality circle is a non-hierarchical structure that facilitates active group work, wherein every individual has an equal opportunity to participate. Bubble Time (one-on-one listening) and Think Books (non-verbal listening) provide a nurturing umbrella for all interactions and learning within the school.

These listening systems are held in place by the 'Golden Rules' that Mosley terms the backbone of the WSE model. These rules are the moral values of gentleness, kindness, honesty, respect for each other, and for property and work ethic – all necessary ingredients for a safe and sensitive school. The Golden Rules are strengthened with consistent, transparent incentives in the form of rewards and sanctions. Sanctions, unlike punishments, are not disempowering. They promote self-regulated behavior rather than mere obedience or compliance (Mosley 2000).

Through its components, the WSE Model pervades all aspects that contribute to the ethos of the school. A positive change in any one aspect will have an impact on other related parts of the system. In 2008, the UK government's Office for Standards in Education surveyed 29 secondary schools to "identify sustained good practices in re-engaging

disaffected students in learning." The report (OFSTED, 2008) validates the benefits of Quality Circle Time as a curricular inclusion, to meet specific social and emotional needs of learning in children.

The SASS Project selected the WSE Model for its universal appeal. Regardless of the type of school and the dominant socio-economic stratum that comprise its enrollment, the approach endeavors to forge vibrant relationships amongst the heads, teachers, support staff and the student community. The key feature of the WSE model is its emphasis on safety and sensitivity in school.

Safety and sensitivity in schools

Rogers (1983) claims that learning comes about when the teacher's relationship with the students imbibes three conditions – genuineness, empathy and unconditional positive regard. Corey & Corey (1970) affirm that all school experiences should provide opportunities for building constructive human relationships. According to them, a sensitive school environment is one that nurtures, where students and teachers perceive each others' feelings and express their thoughts without fear or humiliation.

Recent brain research also proves that the memory of emotional responses (references?) is far stronger and long lasting than the memory of facts and events. In his *Letters to the Schools* (1978), philosopher J. Krishnamurthy urged educators to nurture a spirit of openness and introspection, so that the process of learning could be multifaceted and continuous.

Besides offering emotional safety, a school must ensure that its classrooms are conducive to the core learning function. Learning can be regarded as a process of active construction of knowledge that is facilitated by the teacher. This approach finds its roots in Vygotsky's theory of social constructivism (1976), guided participation (Rogoff, 1990) and directed discovery (reference?). The teacher provides children with opportunities for participation (Holt-Reynolds, 1998), involves them in the decision making process (LeCrompte, 1978), and facilitates two-way feedback. This aspect is embodied within Bluestein's dimension of academic safety (see Table 1).

Dimension	Description of the environment
Emotional safety	Students experience a sense of belonging. They feel valued and are treated with respect and acceptance. All members of the school freely express their feelings without fear of reprehension.
Academic safety	The teacher stimulates and facilitates students, beginning from wherever they are, and helps them realise their potential. It emphasises openness and acceptance to a variety of student experiences.
Behavioral safety	A disciplinary setup that is positive rather than disempowering, and cooperative rather than authoritarian. It includes strategies such as relationship building, success orientation and encouraging students to be better.
Social safety	Conventional support structures in the life of the child are stressed upon. These primarily include teachers and peers. Social safety leads to responsive and collaborative conflict resolution, empathy towards others, responsibility for words and actions, and valuing diversity.
Physical safety	Attuned to the physiological needs of the child. Besides meeting the need for water and food, a balanced "sensory diet" is essential. Play and work keeping in mind factors such as readiness of the pupil to learn and master certain skills and a conducive and safe school environment.

Table 1: Bluestein's Dimensions

The school environment extends beyond the realm of classroom and teacher-student dynamics. It includes other forms of interactions among students, teachers and heads. Vygotsky regarded development as arising from social interactions first, before being internalised by the child. A school must support responsive and collaborative conflict resolution (Smith and Scott,1990) and a diversity of experiences. This resonates with the ideas encompassed in the WSE Model, which lays great store on the relationship between the teacher and the learner, as well as interactions with peers. Bluestein (2001) characterises safe school environments using the five dimensions in Table 1.

There is an increasing awareness in schools to institute a curriculum that will foster safety and sensitivity among its staff and students. An explicit provision is made within the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE)'s Continuous Comprehensive Evaluation (CCE) initiative (2011,p.55). for enhancing and assessing social and behavioral skills of children in Indian schools.

We now illustrate and derive aspects of safety and sensitivity, which we shall be using to evaluate the SASS Project:

> **The *Constructive* aspect** connotes a positive classroom environment, with teachers encouraging students to voice their questions and viewpoints, and to share their experiences without hesitation or fear of committing mistakes. The themes under this aspect also include opportunities for two-way feedback, positive discipline and recognition. We can regard this aspect as embodying Bluestein's Academic and Behavioral safety.
>
> **The *Nurturing* aspect** highlights a school culture that is warm and empathetic, and fosters an overall feeling of self worth, and a sense of belonging. The themes under this aspect include openness and acceptance towards others' feelings, building relationships and trust. We can regard this aspect as embodying Bluestein's Emotional safety.
>
> **The *Collaborative* aspect** captures interpersonal dynamics among the various stakeholders - student peers, teachers, support staff, management and parents. The themes under this aspect are composed of social skills like confidently interacting with others and participating in school activities. We can regard this aspect as embodying Bluestein's Social safety.

Intervention

> *Within participatory action research the researcher is the tool for facilitating change, rather than the owner, director and expert in the research project.*
>
> *M Walter - Social Research Methods, 2nd ed., M. Walter, ed. (2009)*

We have described the need for schools to focus on enhancing safety and sensitivity. Emphasising these aspects, WIPRO Applying Thought In Schools (WATIS) commissioned the SASS Project. The project covered 11 schools over a 2 ½ year time frame. These schools formed a spectrum of private institutions, which catered to pupils from varying socio-economic strata. Five schools formed the first phase of the intervention, and the rest were included in the second phase. Three schools from Phase 2 were selected to be part of our research. TTF's intervention in these schools lasted for a year (2010-2011).

The intervention – whose individual steps are outlined in Table 2 – is patterned along a participatory action research (PAR) model. The necessity for such an intervention arose from extensive discussions between the researcher (TTF) and the communities of interest (schools). TTF then proposed the Whole School Ecosystemic Model that is widely being implemented in several UK schools.

Months	**Steps of the Intervention**	**Objective**	**Topics of intervention**
Months 1 & 2	2 day training on Whole School QCT	To introduce the philosophy of QCT, it's purpose and the structure and process followed to conduct QCT with students	Getting familiar with the different components of the WSE model that included Quality circle time, golden rules, personal values and rewards systems besides others
	Time tabling of QCT	To ensure QCT is timetabled in the weekly calendar, and becomes a part of the school curriculum followed by all the teachers in the school	
	Identification of SPARKS	To identify and choose a few teachers to take the lead and work closely with the teachers to ensure the QCT sessions are being done regularly and in the proper manner,	

		and provide the required support	
	SPARKS Orientation	To take the Sparks through their roles as Sparks, and their specific responsibilities	
Month 3 & 4	Initial QCT observations and feedback of teachers	To ensure teachers are conducting the QCT sessions in the right manner with specific focus on the demeanor, the process followed and the topic discussed, thus equipping them to work more effectively with the rest of the teachers	Some of the topics that the teachers chose to address through QCT were either as general as the golden rules or specific class based issues such as bullying, interpersonal relations, dealing with stress, and so on.
	QCT demos conducted by TTF facilitators	To further familiarize the teachers with the structure, the rules and the process of QCT, by conducting live demos with the school children.	Topics such as being honest, respecting each other, peer relation and expressing themselves were covered.
Months 5 through 9	QCT Planning session	To enable the teachers to conduct QCT sessions on relevant topics (bullying, peer pressure, and so on)	
	QCT observations and feedback of teachers and SPARKS	To ensure teachers are conducting the QCT sessions in the right manner with specific focus on the demeanor, the process followed and the topic discussed, thus equipping them to work more effectively with the rest of the teachers	Some of the common topics of QCT were golden rules, interpersonal relations, respecting class property and ways of conserving the environment.
	Introduction of Golden Rules	To introduce the 6 Golden Rules to the teachers as an effective way of instilling key universal values among their students, and thus help discipline them.	The 6 golden rules are: 1. We are gentle 2. We are kind and helpful 3. We listen 4. We are honest 5. We work hard 6. We look after property
	Classroom Observations and Feedback conducted by TTF facilitators	To ensure teachers are following the QCT rules and the ethos even in classroom and other non-QCT situations/interactions	
Every Month	Meeting with the Heads and Sparks	To review what has happened the previous month; discuss and resolve concerns/issues; share success stories; plan for the next month	

Table 2: The SASS intervention framework

Research

The research portion of the SASS project focusses on two objectives. The first is the interplay of the various factors in the school environment (relationships, policies and spaces) that contribute to safety and sensitivity in school. The second objective is to study the impact of intervention on factors that contribute to the constructive, nurturing and collaborative aspects described earlier in this paper. The paper captures the responses of teachers and students with respect to the intervention, and primarily examines the improvement among teachers.

Methodology

Diagram here to illustrate the parts of the study i.e. quantitative and exploratory and quantitative -methodology steps.

Participant profile

For the research, three schools were chosen from the 11 intervention schools (see Table 2) that represented the full range of schools that were part of the intervention. The selection was based on the fee-structure of the schools.

SA (School A)	Co-ed private school with low fee structure. Many students are from the same neighbourhood, and belong to a lower socioeconomic stratum. It is affiliated to the provincial educational board and handles pre-K-10 levels. The pupil-teacher ratio in the class is 60:1.
SB (School B)	All girls private missionary school with medium fee structure. Many students are from the same neighbourhood, and have a middle-class background. It is affiliated to the provincial educational board and handles K-7 levels. The pupil-teacher ratio in the class is 45:1
SC (School C)	Co-ed private school with a high fee structure. Students come from across the city, and are from both middle-class and affluent backgrounds. It is affiliated to a premium national educational board and montessori method and handles K-12 levels. The pupil-teacher ratio in the class is 30:1.

(The fee structures of these schools are expressed on a comparative scale and range from Rs. x to Rs. y) A total of 1598 students and 140 teachers were selected for the study. These students formed the entire population of Grades 3, 4 and 5. Remove population numbers and include just Add sample numbers. And put percentages for each school. (In the form of a table)

For the Exploratory phase, the method of nested design was used to determine the sample. Yoshikawa et al (2008) explain the design as "embedding or nesting a qualitative sample within a larger quantitative sample" (pp.349). A random sample of 20-24 students from each class was selected. The sample size was based on confidence levels of 95% as well as ensuring a reasonable group of participants for the focus group discussion that would represent the entire target population.

Tools and Techniques

A mix of quantitative and qualitative methods was adopted to make sense of the rich and multidimensional data. A survey instrument was administered within the selected schools at two points of time: pre-intervention (diagnosis) and post-intervention (evaluation). The questionnaires were handed out to students of Grades 3, 4 and 5 within their classrooms. To reduce the likelihood of copying, there were three different arrangements of questions for each survey. Two and sometimes three facilitators were present in the class throughout a period of 45 minutes. The first question was explained to the child. Similarly, the questionnaire was also administered with the teachers.

After an initial analysis, the facilitators carried out a qualitative exploration in the form of structured focus group discussions (FGD) with the stakeholders. This allowed the community to interact openly and share their feelings and experiences in a more holistic manner. It shed light on the 'whys' and 'hows' of the practices, behaviors and beliefs that emerged from the quantitative data analysis.

The FGDs were conducted with students and teachers of four Phase 1 schools. Themes surrounding a child's general liking for school, discipline issues, and interactions with teachers and friends were formulated.

A survey instrument in the form of a questionnaire was prepared to evaluate the three key aspects of the school environment that are nurturing, constructive and collaborative. Six months into the intervention, the researchers carried out an exploratory study using focus group discussions to further understand student and teacher responses that were elicited in the earlier questionnaires.

After a year, the original questionnaire was again administered to the students and teachers, and data was collected for analysis, and to derive further action steps.

Focus Group Discussion

During Phase I of the SASS project, focus group discussions (FGD) were conducted with students and teachers of four schools, spanning Grades 3 to 8. Students from each class sat in a circle, in the absence of any teacher. They were told that the purpose of the exercise was to solicit their inputs on various aspects of their school. For some questions, all the participants responded one by one, whereas other questions could be answered on a voluntary basis. One facilitator conducted the discussion and another one noted down the responses of the students.

Each FGD lasted for an hour. In order to avoid boredom and create an impactful discussion, different activities such as games, pictures and puppets were used. Based on the honest feedback and in-depth responses to questions asked during these FGDs, themes surrounding a child's general liking for school, discipline issues, and interactions with teachers and friends were formulated. These themes fed into the conception of a survey to evaluate the three key aspects of safety and sensitivity as mentioned earlier.

Survey Instrument

From a program evaluation standpoint, it was important to learn how the respondents felt about themselves and their school environment. A wide range of questions addressing the various elements of a safe and sensitive school constituted the questionnaire for Grades 3, 4, 5 and teachers (see Annexure 1).

Given the differences in the maturity levels of the children and their reading abilities, the questionnaires were kept pictorial[1]. The formats proposed by Harter (1997) provide uniformity in the way children understand and respond to the questions. Each question item consists of a pair of titles and pictures that depict a specific context. There is a caption below each picture, which the child will respond to. See Exhibits 1 and 2 for the structure.

In keeping with the core objective of the project, the survey aimed to capture the *feelings* of students in general, and in response to what happens to them at school. Two types of questions were drawn up:

> ***Profiling question***: Characterises the *respondents* on the basis of their attitudes and innate beliefs. A profiling question presents a set of two different situations and responses for the student to choose from.
> ***Reaction question***: Characterises the *reactions* of a respondent to a specific situation. A reaction question presents the same situation with two different responses, which the student will have to choose from.

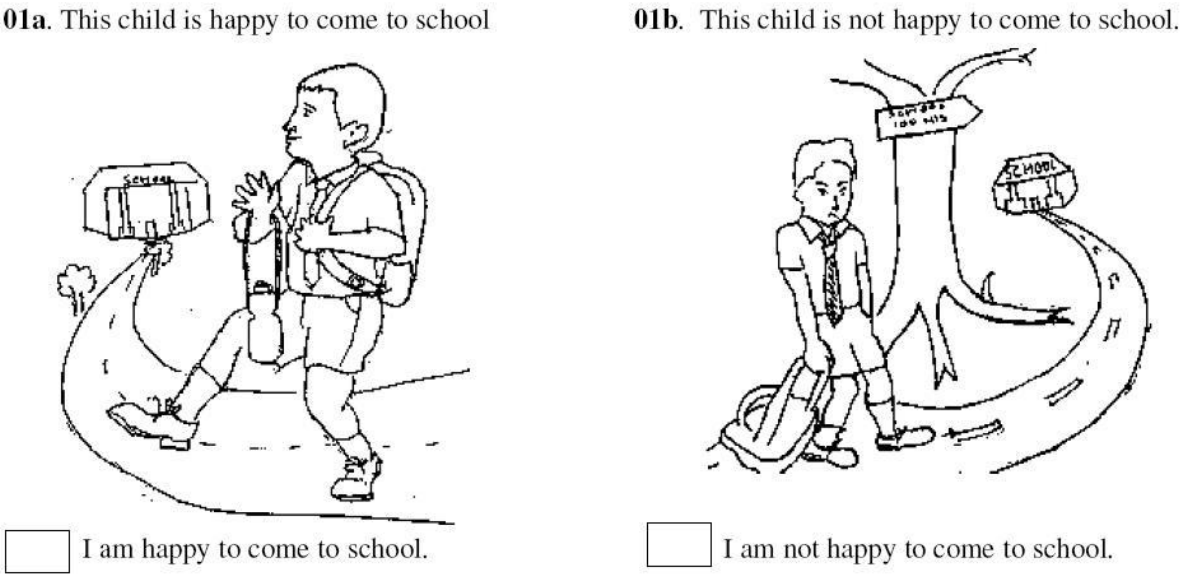

Exhibit 1: Profile Item

[1] The idea for taking this approach came from a private conversation with Dr. Gayle Valiant, Psychologist, Melrose Public School

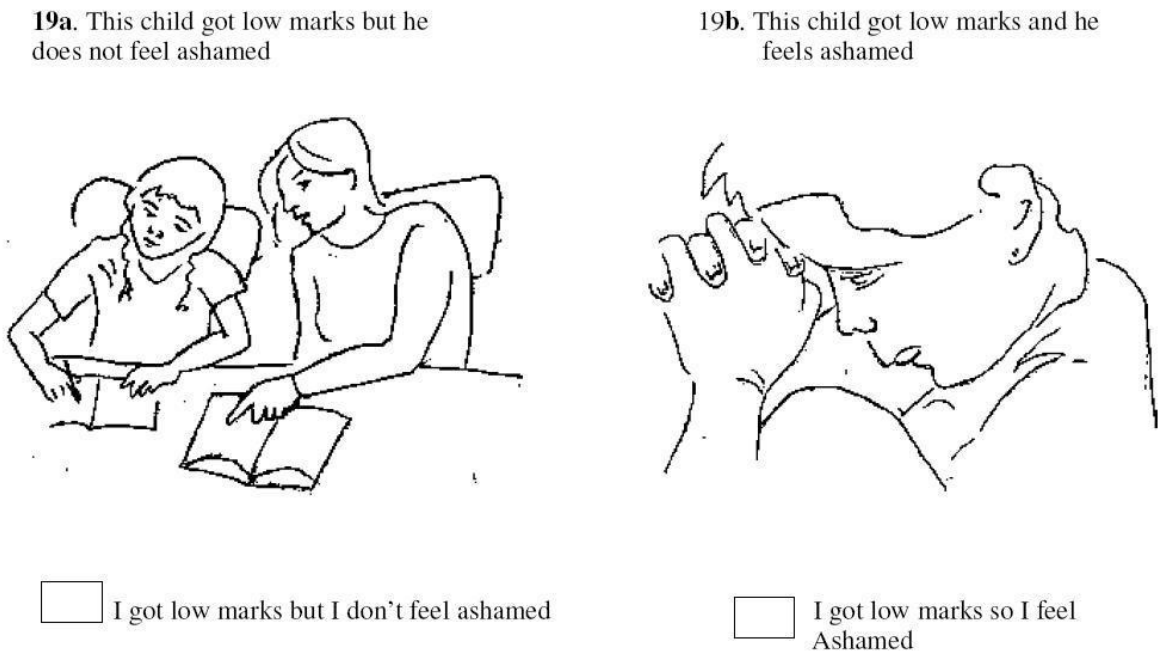

Exhibit 2: Reaction Item

A profiling question might elicit a uniform response from children, irrespective of their immediate experience. For example, a resilient child and a vulnerable child would both admit to liking school, since it was based on their individual feelings towards coming to school. In contrast, the response to an experience or situation may vary based on the nature of that child.

Further to this an open-ended questionnaire was administered to the teachers. The purpose was to delve deeper into the thoughts and feelings of the participants and elucidate the responses that were not adequately discussed in the focus group discussions.

Guided by the FGDs, the composition of each survey instrument was different, taking into account the maturity levels of children as they move into higher sections. Profiling questions made up over two thirds of the survey. The reason for this was that they would capture the emotional state of the students, based on what happened in school.

Data Analysis

We used the Moodle learning management system to facilitate data capture. The responses of the questionnaires were keyed into Moodle that provided a preliminary analysis in form of percentage of participants selecting one response over the other. Further to the preliminary analysis, we calculated scores for Constructive, Nurturing and Collaborative aspects in all the 3 schools. This was done through weighted calculation of the relevant questions under each aspect.

Each question in the questionnaire has a set of responses with a 2 point scale for classes 3, 4 and 5 and 3 point scale for teachers. For questionnaires of classes 3, 4 and 5, the yes responses to each question were coded as'1' and used as data for analysis. The qualitative data obtained from Focus group discussions were analysed using the Thematic content analysis. The responses were coded for emerging themes and the frequencies for each response was calculated. Similarly, responses from the open ended questionnaires and were placed under appropriate categories of themes derived from the earlier thematic content analysis. We then explored the responses under the themes to identify patterns both within and between focus groups.

Findings

We analysed the findings from the quantitative as well as the qualitative study under three aspects - Constructive, Nurturing and Collaborative. While the constructive and nurturing coefficients decreased as students moved up in their classes, the collaborative coefficient increased. Overall, the SASS index decreased as students move from 3rd standard (0.82) to 4th standard(0.79) to 5th standard (0.72).

All of our quantitative hypotheses have been tested with a significance level of 0.1. In the paragraphs that follow, we make our statements with p values less than this level.

The Constructive Aspect

Under the constructive aspect, we explored the student-teacher relationship and classroom environment that contribute to 'academic safety' and 'behavioral safety' in schools.

Preintervention: The study investigated the disciplining techniques used by the teachers. As students move up from class 4 to 5, students responses showed that punishments by teachers increased.

For school A, praise by teachers increase as students move from class 4 to 5 ($p < 0.1$). In school B, more students expressed that they are punished if they make a mistake compared to schools A and C. In school B, as students move from Class 3 to 4 and then from class 4 to 5, there is a significant increase in the praise of children by the teachers ($p < 0.1$).

To further explore the concept of discipline, we asked teachers whether the students were punished for bad behavior. The responses of the teachers vary in the three school with 33% of school C and 72% of school A teachers stating that students are punished for bad behavior.Differences were also observed in teachers responses in the three schools when asked about corporal punishment. An average of 66% of teachers in Schools A and B mentioned that they hit students compared to 6% in school C.

We also explored the teachers' and students' understanding of the notion of discipline ib the qualitative study. The unequivocal findings showed that teachers in all three schools consider lack of discipline as being either a disruptive behavior by the child in school (shouting in class, teasing another child) or irresponsible academic behavior (not completing work in time, not being prepared for tests). The student responses also resonated with the responses of the teachers. In the same light, we found that the children received praise from the teacher when they performed well or answered in class and maintained discipline in class.

The different ways in which the students were punished included sending them out of the class, standing at the door, writing impositions, missing out the games period, kneeling down. Other hurtful ways like sitting in a squatting position and hitting the child were common in school A and School B. The reasons given by teachers to justify the prevalence of hitting were that it instills fear in students and they will not repeat the mistake. We asked the students about their feeling of being punished. A majority of Students in class 5 mentioned that they feel embarrassed as they are punished in front of others. Students in school B and C also mentioned that sometimes they are unfairly punished and the teacher picks on those who have bad reputation. Some students at School C also stressed that they feel angry and begin to dislike the subject. Student also feared that the teachers will discuss them with others and laugh at them.

Appreciation and recognition are imperative to fostering both emotional as well as behavioral safety in schools. About 40% of teachers in both schools A and B affirmed that children are praised only when they do well in exams. 84% of teachers of School C said that they praised students for aspects besides academics as well. The Chi Square Analysis of teachers' responses did not show a significant difference amongst the three schools, when we asked if teachers liked some students more. (What would this mean?)

The qualitative findings for this aspect enunciated the forms of interactions of teachers and students. Students in all the three schools expressed that they would mostly go to the teacher when they have a doubt. Majority of students said that they get a chance to speak in class when they have to answer a question asked by the teacher or ask a doubt.
The teacher responses of School A and B indicated that students are sometimes hesitant to approach teachers as they are shy or have a fear of being shouted at. Though most teachers in School C alleged that students are not hesitant to talk to teachers.

In order to further deliberate on this aspect, we asked the students about occasions when the teacher pay attention to them. More than 50% of responses suggested that teacher pay attention during academic related tasks. A lot of responses triggered that children who get good marks receive more attention from the teacher. On the other hand, children who 'disturb' the class by talking or distracting others are given attention. A student from school B trying to encapsulate the situation said, "only those students are given attention who have a good reputation or a bad reputation".

A significant number (is this correct) of students from Schools A and C felt that teachers often notice the high achieving students and ignore their mistakes thus reasserting the tendency for bias towards students.

The prominent impact of academics over the daily experience of students was also observed in the responses of students when they were asked about being praised by teachers. Most of the times, teachers praised students when they did well in exams, completed their school work in time and gave answers in class.
Post-intervention: The results of student responses showed a significant increase in praise of children by the teacher in schools A and B. Teachers' responses in school A and B suggested, overall appreciation of children by teachers have increased and they are praised for different aspects and not just for doing well in exam. Fewer teachers in School A maintained that only some students were praised. A remarkable improvement was observed in the disciplining techniques used by teachers in school A. The following table shows the change in responses of teachers on certain aspects of disciplining.

Table: change in responses of teachers on certain aspects of disciplining in school A

Aspects of Discipline ($p<0.1$)	Preintervention responses (in percentages)	Post intervention responses (in percentages)
Hitting by teachers	64	26
Punishment necessary for discipline	53	26
Students are scolded in front of others	28	11

The Nurturing Aspect

Emotional safety in school fosters a nurturing environment (Bluestein, 2001). The findings seek to explore children's feeling of worth with respect to school work and interactions in school.

Pre-intervention: More than 90% of students in all the schools proclaimed that they were happy to come to school. In the qualitative study, we asked children why they liked to come to school. More than 50% of students in School A and B conveyed that they like school as they learn new things, gain knowledge. Most of the students in School C like school as they get the chance to meet friends and have fun with them. Performance in exams has been often linked to child's feeling of worth. the findings from student responses revealed that the percentage of students who felt ashamed when they got low marks in exams is highest for school B in class 3 (64%), class 4 (74%) and class 5 (75%).

The number of responses of students feeling ashamed increased from class 3 to 4 to 5 across the three schools. The qualitative findings highlighted the students perceptions about examinations. A majority of students across the three schools felt scared about giving exams. Having a large syllabus to complete, forgetting answers or unable to finishing the paper were some of the reasons given for the fear. The other aspect that they feared was being scolded by parents. More than 80% of students in school A feared that their parents will beat them if they got low marks. Being Compared to others and made fun of emerged as other reasons for feeling ashamed when they get low marks.

The study further explored how the school management valued their teachers. Teacher findings revealed that on an average, six out of every ten teachers in the three schools felt value. On being asked, if the school gives freedom to teachers, the Chi square analysis presented a significant difference in responses of the three schools. Compared to school A (21%) and School B (29%), a large percentage of school C teachers (60%) conveyed that the school always give them a lot of freedom. Also only 2% of school C teachers expressed that they are overworked compared to School A (36%) and School C (9%). The qualitative findings reflected that the teachers feel valued when they have freedom to use different kinds of teaching aids, they are appreciated by the management and when their ideas are acknowledged. On being asked about their attitude towards students, less than 50% teachers in school A and School B said that they were kind to students. Approximately half the teachers in in these schools (School A 57%, School B, 56%) felt that some students were scared to talk to them .

With regard to changes in their school, a majority of teachers suggested that there should be more opportunities for interaction between teachers and management. 80% teachers in School C also stressed that the school should implement more stringent ways of disciplining children.

Post-intervention: what to write for students?? Teacher responses in school A and B reflected that teachers were praising childrennot just for getting good marks but for other aspects as well. There is a significant decline in number of teachers in school A who stated that students are scolded in front of others.

The Collaborative Aspect

The findings under the collaborative aspect shed light on the interactions amongst the various members of the school- students, teachers and management. Peer interactions form the core of this aspect which includes listening to one another and not resorting to bullying or teasing which may cause hurt to others.

Pre-intervention:

When asked whether they have friends in school, a higher percentage of students across grades and schools **(>88)** stated having friends and spending time with them. Qualitative analysis indicated that a majority of students considered being with friends as they share good times with them and are able to understand each other's thoughts and feelings. Students also preferred talking about their problem to their friends instead of the teacher. A student in School C expressed, "Teachers and students can never be at the same level, friends know us and what we are going through".

Instances of bullying and teasing seem to be considerably prevalent with more than 60% of students in all the three schools stating that they are being made fun of and teased by their friends. The percentages being higher in Schools B and C (> 80). Qualitative findings revealed common forms of teasing like laughing at others, mocking their names and appearance. Some students in school A mentioned that older children would scold and beat them. On being asked what would they do if they teased, most students in school A expressed that they would complain to the teacher unlike School B and C students who would mostly laugh it off or tease them back.

To explore the relationship between students and teachers, we asked the students about their interactions with the teachers. About 50% students said that teachers mostly interact with children who study well. Other interactions involve asking doubts or answering in class. Some students also mentioned that if the teacher is in a bad mood, they won't interact with her. Most students also suggested that the teacher should have more interactive sessions where talk about things besides academics.

During focus group discissions, teachers were asked on interaction with their colleagues. The findings depicted a cordial and positive relationship between teachers. Most of the teachers in all three schools stated that their colleagues are friendly and helpful and they work as a team. Teachers of school C also mentioned that the school management treats all teachers equally and this contributes to a conducive working environment. More than 70% of teachers mentioned that they have never lost their cool with colleagues. However, gossiping and backbiting were observed to be major reasons for unhappiness amongst colleagues. Student responses also reflected that teachers would also gossip about them. Absence of teamwork was also another reason elicited by teachers of school A and School B that made them unhappy to work with their colleagues.

Post-intervention:

The post intervention findings revealed that the relationship with friends across classes remained intact with School A and School C going a few notches up.

Instances of making fun and teasing among students reduced considerably reduced (difference of 10% to 12%) across classes in 2 of the 3 schools.

Furthermore students were seen to be more perceptive to listening to one another in class or outside as well especially in School A.

Overall there was an improvement in the collaborative aspect esp in School C (See table below) with the t tests showing significant difference in a couple of classes in Schools A and C.

Table: Change in responses of students (higher class) on certain aspects of peer interactions in School A (in percentages)

Statements (p<0.1)	Pre intervention	Post intervention
Not making fun	68	89
Having friends	88	99
Not teasing	73	89
Listening to each other	59	80

Student responses wrt to bullying and teasing is further corroborated with that of the teachers with most of them esp in School A and School C confirming to positive and better interactions amongst their students. We can see a difference of around 10-15% in the pre and post intervention responses. (See table below)

Table: change in responses of teachers (School A and C) on certain aspects of peer interactions (in percentages)

Statements	Pre intervention	Post intervention	Pre intervention	Post intervention
Students are bullied by other children	40	33	69	65
Students ar ignired by others	45	30	54	46

Conclusion

At a broader level some of the changes have been:

- teacher interactions with students has increased in a positive manner
- teachers' perception with regard to discipline has considerably improved
- teachers' recognition & praise is not restricted to academic achievement
- the impact is seen across different facets of teacher – student relation in the school
- the collaborative aspect has significantly increased across the schools

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Annexures

STRUCTURE OF OUR FINDINGS

First, we provide descriptive data. Then we statistically analyse it.

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Put these at the end of the paper, as exhibits referred to from within

Table 1 - School A

Category	Question	Class 3(pre/post %)	Class 4(pre/post %)	Class 5(pre/post %)

Table 2 - School B

Category	Question	Class 3(pre/post %)	Class 4(pre/post %)	Class 5(pre/post %)

Table 3 - School C

Category	Question	Class 3(pre/post %)	Class 4(pre/post %)	Class 5(pre/post %)

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Keep the discussion mixed, w.r.t qual & quant. Let the quant findings corroborate the qual findings, and vice versa

Constructive

Pre-intervention:

General observations: Are there any fundamental differences between schools?
And between the classes in each school?

Post-intervention:

General observations: Are there any fundamental differences between schools?
And between the classes in each school?

Nurturing

Pre-intervention: General observations, A, B, C
Post-intervention: General observations, A, B, C

Collaborative

Pre-intervention: General observations, A, B, C
Post-intervention: General observations, A, B, C