



**Collaboration or Compliance: A multiple case study approach exploring teachers'
perspectives on interactions with parents within the framework of social accountability
in rural Sitapur, India.**

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Declaration

This thesis is the result of my own work and includes nothing which is the outcome of work done in collaboration except as specified in the text. It is not substantially the same as any work that has already been submitted before for any such degree, diploma or other qualification at the University of Cambridge or any other University or similar institution. It does not exceed the prescribed word limit of 80,000 words set by the Degree Committee.

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Mansi Nanda

Abstract

Efforts to improve learning outcomes in developing countries have led to a growing interest in increasing the capability of citizens, including parents, to directly hold teachers accountable and make them responsive to their needs for better quality education (World Bank, 2004; Joshi, 2014; Ringold et al., 2012). This concept, also known as social accountability, refers to the extent and capability of citizens to hold service providers accountable and make them responsive to their needs (Fox, 2015; Joshi & Houtzager, 2012; Malena et al., 2004). While initiatives focused on social accountability in health and education sector have proliferated in recent years, the focus has mainly been on empowering citizens and building their capacities to demand accountability, encouraging them to actively participate in dialogue with the service providers, and measuring its impact on final outcomes such as improved service delivery (Joshi & Houtzager, 2012; Fox, 2015; Joshi, 2013). However, an important aspect of this model that has received less attention is the interface between citizens and service providers. Within education sector, this implies that the relationship between teachers and parents significantly influences the connections established between the two parties and the potential for meaningful discussions about children's learning (Dyer, Jacob, et al., 2022). Understanding this relationship is crucial as it also impacts the responsiveness of teachers to parents, thereby enhancing our comprehension of the mechanisms that contribute to the success of social accountability initiatives. When teachers and parents have a collaborative relationship characterised by dialogue, open communication and willingness to work together, teachers are more likely to be receptive to the concerns and demands of parents. Such a collaborative relationship enables teachers to better understand and appreciate parents' perspectives, which can lead to a greater level of responsiveness. However, when the relationship between teachers and parents is strained or lacks collaboration, teachers may be less responsive to the demands of parents, even if they are legitimate.

This thesis aims to expand on the mechanism to achieve success in social accountability initiatives by exploring the relationship between teachers and parents from the perspective of

teachers in rural Sitapur, India. By examining teachers' perspectives on their interactions with parents, the thesis sheds light on the nature of their relationship with parents, which has anticipated effects on teachers' responsiveness towards the parents and implications for the development of an accountable education system. Using Joshi's (2014) framework of social accountability, the thesis addresses the overarching question: What can we understand about the teacher-parent relationship through government primary school teachers' perspectives on interactions with parents in rural Sitapur, India? To address this question, the thesis adopts a multiple case study approach, drawing on semi-structured interviews with 17 primary school teachers (including head teachers, regular teachers, and para teachers), teacher survey data and two observations. It examines teachers' perspectives on the opportunities they have to interact with the parents, their willingness to engage in these interactions and what their experiences within these interactions convey about the relationship forged with parents. Spread across six government primary schools, these teachers were purposively sampled based on their initial willingness to be involved in a larger evaluation study that aimed evaluate whether schools' accountability for learning can be strengthened from the grassroots by bringing schools and communities together to improve children's learning in rural Sitapur, India (Faculty of Education, University of Cambridge, 2018).

The findings from the thesis show that despite the presence of opportunities within and outside school mandates for teachers to interact with parents, there is a lack of collaboration and reciprocity between teachers and parents. Teachers' perspectives on the formal interactions with parents exhibit a compliance driven mindset, where the focus is on parental presence over participation in official meetings. These interactions are characterised by one-way information flows and an absence of dialogue between teachers and parents. Moreover, negative experiences in the past, lack of being able to realise the expected benefits from interactions have resulted in teachers categorising parental interactions as a low-priority task and assigning only functional roles to parents that do not seek dialogue or collaboration. This diminishes the likelihood of teachers responding to parents' demands or concerns. The findings highlight that the lack of connectedness between teachers and parents does not stem from a lack of willingness on the part of teachers, but rather from a lack of understanding of the requirements for building a reciprocal relationship with parents. Teachers seemed to be unaware that the interactions with parents are not conducive to collaboration.

The main contributions of this thesis are twofold. First, it critically examines the prevailing models of social accountability that focuses primarily on empowering citizens. It emphasises the pivotal role of the teacher-parent relationship in influencing teachers' responsiveness to parental demands and providing a platform for parental expression. By recognising the significance of this relationship, the findings emphasise the need to understand the micro context and unpack the causal chain within the social accountability mechanism (Joshi, 2014). Second, the thesis adds to the limited evidence in the existing literature around social accountability in education. It emphasises the importance of interactions in helping build a collaborative relationship between teachers and parents within these initiatives. While previous studies have acknowledged the significance of creating spaces within social accountability mechanisms, the immediate relationship between teachers and parents has been understudied. Understanding this relationship underscores the need to create an enabling environment for social accountability initiatives and recognizes the specific dynamics between teachers and parents (Fox, 2015, Grandvoinet et al., 2015). Overall, the thesis enhances our understanding of mechanisms within social accountability by examining the perspectives of teachers in rural Sitapur, India, regarding their interactions with parents and the resulting relationship between the two.

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List of acronyms

ASER: Annual Status of Education Report

BERA: British Educational Research Association

CAA: Citizenship Amendment Act

DPEP: District Primary Education Programme

ESRC: Economic and Social Research Council

GOI: Government of India

NCAER: National Council for Applied Economic Research

NCERT: National Council of Educational Research and Training

NCF: National Curriculum Framework

NCFTE: National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education

NCTE: National Council for Teacher Education

NEP: National Education Policy

RCT: Randomised Control Trial

RMSA: Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan

RTE: Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education

SMC: School Management Committee

SSA: Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan

VEC: Village Education Committee

Chapter 1. Introduction to the thesis

1.1 Introduction

The learning crisis in developing countries, particularly in India and the Global South, is well-documented (World Bank, 2018; UNESCO, 2014; Pritchett, 2015; Asim et al., 2017; Dunder et al., 2014). There is a wide consensus among policymakers that while access to education has improved significantly, children's learning has not kept pace. Data from several assessments in India have revealed that children do not acquire basic foundational skills in school (ASER, 2019; Beatty & Pritchett, 2012) despite recognition of the fact that their acquisition is an important prerequisite for lifelong learning (GoI, 2020). The learning gap is more prevalent in rural areas where children belong to disadvantaged backgrounds (Alcott & Rose, 2017; Rolleston & James, 2015) in terms of income, parental education levels, and the absence of parental support in children's learning. In addition, teachers teaching in government schools in India are insufficiently trained to handle classrooms with multiple grades and differentiated learning levels, and the curriculum is set way above the actual learning levels of children (Kaul, Bhattacharjea, Chaudhary, Ramanujan, Banerji, Nanda, 2017; Pritchett & Beatty, 2012; Chavan, 2015; Bhattacharjea, Wadhwa & Banerji, 2011). Teachers are required to complete the curriculum within the school year, and the Right to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act does not allow grade repetition until the end of primary schooling, regardless of the students' learning levels (GoI, 2009). This has led to children, especially in rural areas in India, progressing through eight years of schooling without learning much.

In recent years, the recognition of these poor learning outcomes, particularly within public schools in developing countries, has gained prominence in policy discussions, prompting the implementation of initiatives aimed at enhancing these educational outcomes. Emphasis has been placed on increasing the accountability of schools (UNESCO, 2017; Yan, 2019; Mbiti, 2016). Accountability can take several forms such as the establishment of performance benchmarks or standards by governments, which schools are expected to adhere to, coupled with ongoing monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to gauge progress. Moreover, formal structures require teachers to report their achievements and daily activities to higher authorities within a formal structure, facing repercussions if predetermined standards are not met. A recent paper by Dyer, Jacob, Patil and Mishra (2022) contributes valuable insights to the discussion on accountability mechanisms. The authors in the study accentuate the pitfalls of 'long'

mechanisms of accountability, where an excessive focus on administrative aspects can hinder genuine engagement and collaborative partnerships between teachers and parents over time. The challenges posed by the performative nature of school-family communications identified in their research mirrors the limitations of bureaucratic accountability practices. Such inherent weakness and inefficiencies within these ‘long’ forms of accountability setup have given rise to an alternate dimension of accountability, the social accountability or the short route accountability (World Bank, 2003; Ringold, Holla, Koziol, Srinivasan, 2012; Joshi, 2014). This form of accountability refers to the ways in which communities, parents, and other stakeholders can hold schools and other education providers accountable for their performance. This perspective is rooted in the belief that schools should be beholden not only to governmental bodies but also to the communities they serve, ensuring responsiveness to local needs and concerns.

Social accountability is important because it can help ensure that schools become responsive directly to the needs and concerns of their communities, and that they are accountable not only to government authorities but also to the people they serve. It not only provides an opportunity for the community to voice their opinions and concerns and hold service providers accountable for their performance, but also promotes greater participation and engagement of communities within the education system. Social accountability can take many forms by involving communities in the process of monitoring and evaluating school performance. These forms are more participatory and deliberative than confrontational, and include community scorecards, citizen report cards, public hearings, and other mechanisms for public participation and feedback (Joshi, 2014; Aiyar, 2010; Brummel, 2021). By engaging in social accountability, communities can help identify problems, track progress, and ensure that schools meet the needs of all students, including those from marginalized and disadvantaged groups (Malena et al., 2004; Fox, 2015).

In India as well as in other developing countries, there has been an increase in social accountability initiatives aimed at empowering parents and building their capacity to demand accountability from schools through various channels, as documented in studies by Banerjee et al. (2008), Aiyar et al. (2009); Ringold et al. (2012); Pandey et al. (2009); Galab et al. (2013). However, these initiatives have primarily focused on the role of citizens or parents in enhancing accountability, and there is a notable gap in the literature regarding the relationship between teachers and parents. There are several reasons why establishing and understanding this

relationship between teachers and parents is crucial. First, social accountability mechanisms are premised on the idea that citizens demand accountability from service providers. However, to demand accountability, citizens must communicate with the service providers and voice their demands or concerns. Second, effective social accountability initiatives will also require service providers to respond to citizens' demands. The nature and dynamics of the teacher-parent relationship can affect whether teachers are receptive to the demands of parents and are motivated to communicate and interact with the parents (Joshi & McCluskey, 2018), making this relationship an important interface between citizens' demands and responsiveness of service providers within social accountability mechanism. Despite the significance of teacher-parent relationship in fostering effective social accountability in education, there is limited research examining this relationship. While previous studies have focused on the impact of social accountability initiatives on student outcomes, they have largely neglected to explore the nature of the relationship between teachers and parents and how this relationship can facilitate or hinder the success of such initiatives.

To further add to this understanding of this relationship and connection between schools and families within social accountability in education, this thesis addresses the following question: What can we understand about the teacher parent relationship through government school teachers' perspectives on interactions with parents in rural Sitapur, India? Understanding how teachers perceive their interactions with parents can provide insights into the nature of relationship that is likely to develop between teachers and parents. This can further determine teachers' responsiveness to parental demands for improved education of children. To do this, I adopt the concept of social accountability in education. I specifically rely on Joshi's (2014) conceptualisation of social accountability as it offers a helpful framework for comprehending the dynamics between teachers and parents. This framework highlights the need to unpack the causal chain or theory of change to understand how desired outcomes are achieved within the process of social accountability. This approach aligns with the aim of the thesis to explore the relationship between teachers and parents. This relationship can be viewed as a component of social accountability, contributing to the understanding of the conditions under which the provision of information to citizens can elicit a response from service providers.

1.2 Thesis aims and significance

The overarching aim of the thesis is to gain an understanding of the teacher parent relationship through government school teachers' perspectives on interactions with parents in rural Sitapur, India using the framework of social accountability. Specifically, it investigates teachers' perspectives on the opportunities they have to interact with the parents, their perceived benefits of these interactions and expectations from parents, and their experiences of interactions. It uses qualitative research methods, including in-depth interviews with teachers, observational data and descriptive quantitative survey data on teachers to provide a rich and nuanced understanding of teachers' relationship with parents through gaining an understanding of interactions between them.

The main contribution of the thesis is that it addresses an existing gap in our understanding of social accountability mechanisms by highlighting how teachers' perspectives and experiences influence their interactions with the parents and the resulting relationship forged between the two groups. While previous studies have acknowledged the significance of creating spaces within social accountability mechanisms, the immediate relationship between teachers and parents has lacked adequate attention. The nature of the relationship between teachers and parents can have a significant impact on teachers' responsiveness to parents within social accountability. A collaborative relationship between teachers and parents built on trust is more likely to make teachers responsive to parents' concerns and suggestions. On the other hand, an uncooperative relationship lacking trust may lead teachers to be less willing to listen to parents' concerns and may be less responsive to them. Understanding this relationship also underscores the need to create an enabling environment for social accountability initiatives and recognizes the specific dynamics between teachers and parents (Fox, 2015, Grandvoinet et al., 2015). The findings from the thesis can inform the development of strategies for promoting collaborative and reciprocal relationships between teachers and parents in the education system, which can enhance social accountability and ultimately, improve student outcomes.

In addition, the deteriorating quality of education has been blamed on the teachers, who have often been presented as a part of the problem of low-quality education in government schools (Kundu, 2019; Sarangapani & Pappu, 2021). Even the national education policy (NEP) of India (GoI, 2020) characterises teachers as the ones responsible for inadequate quality education (Sayed, Subramanian & Jain, 2021). This has led to development of a culture of teacher

accountability stemming from a position of distrust in teachers. Consequently, initiatives towards improving teacher accountability have often been confrontational, focusing on keeping a check on teachers through increased monitoring and surveillance to keep absenteeism on check or through increased community participation in schools (Mukhopadhyay & Ali, 2021). This thesis, however, pushes towards adopting a non-confrontational approach towards improving teacher accountability to the parents by aiming to understand the potential of collaborative relationships between teachers and parents from the perspectives of teachers themselves. Such an approach does not view teachers as the problem but attempts to understand their perspectives and willingness to interact with the parents. An understanding of these perspectives is the first step towards identifying if interactions are helping build connectedness between teachers and parents, as well providing evidence on the type of support needed by teachers to build a collaboration with parents.

The focus on teachers is justified due to several reasons. First, most students in rural locations in India are first-generation learners, whose parents face difficulty in following what happens in schools and in identifying the low learning levels of their children. Even if parents are provided with information related to children's learning and their rights, they often perceive that they lack the authority to question teachers' practices (Narwana, 2015; Ramachandran et al., 2005). In such situations, it is the teacher who is likely to lead the interactions with parents. Second, research has shown that teachers play a significant role in encouraging parental involvement in children's education (Goodall & Montgomery, 2013; Islam, 2017; Epstein, 2010). Such an involvement is likely to encourage a collaborative relationship between teachers and parents, which has consequences on teachers' responsiveness to parents' concerns within social accountability mechanism. Third, as facilitators of education, teachers play a significant role in the overall functioning of the school and in influencing the goal of educational reform (Kundu, 2019; Singh et al., 2016; Rawal & Kingdon, 2010). Any attempt to change the education system needs to consider the perspectives of teachers. By examining teachers' perspectives, this research can highlight what makes teachers initiate interactions with parents and identify the ways in which teachers can become responsive to parents' concerns in rural India.

1.3 Background to the thesis

The thesis originates from a larger project entitled ‘Can schools’ accountability for learning be strengthened from the grassroots? Investigating the potential for community-school partnerships in India’¹The project is an evaluation study that was designed and conceptualized in January 2018 by the Research on Equitable Access and Learning (REAL) Centre in Faculty of Education, University of Cambridge, ASER Centre, New Delhi and Pratham Education Foundation, New Delhi, India. While Pratham Education Foundation was the implementing partner of the randomised control trial (RCT) designed within the evaluation study, the REAL Centre and ASER Centre led the research to show the impact of this RCT on children’s learning. The embedded nature of this thesis can be explained through the design of the evaluation study.

The evaluation study was designed to explore the potential of community-based accountability relationships to raise children’s foundation learning outcomes with a focus on the most disadvantaged primary-school learners, especially those living in rural areas and attending government schools. It aimed to understand whether, and how changes occur when school actors are supported to view their accountability as being primarily to their local community and their goal as raising all children’s learning. To do this, it evaluated a grassroots intervention that supports teachers to work directly with the parents and other members of the village community to develop a shared understanding of children’s learning levels, collaborate in planning how to raise these levels, and facilitate action both inside and outside the classroom. In addition to analysing changes in children’s learning, it also aimed to examine the intervention’s capacity to create changes in school-community relations, and teachers’ attitudes, perceptions, and actions in the classroom (Sabates, Bhattacharjea & Wadhwa, 2020).

The evaluation study was a mixed methods study in rural villages in Sitapur district in Uttar Pradesh state in India. The first component of the study was a quantitative study which included surveys with head teachers, language teacher, household information, parent survey, village information and children’s learning outcomes. This data collection was led by ASER Centre,

¹ The funding for the project was obtained jointly by Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) and Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) in UK. The RCT activities were supported through funding provided by Mars Wrigley Foundation and Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (<http://www.educ.cam.ac.uk/centres/real/researchthemes/teachingandlearning/accountability/>)

who trained and hired teams to conduct the above surveys in three phases (Baseline: September to December 2018; midline: September to December 2019; endline: Online 2021). The second component of the evaluation was a qualitative sub-study designed to understand the perspectives of community members in the village and teachers within the schools on various aspects related to the evaluation study. The central team members at ASER Centre² focused on the community members in the village and I, through this thesis, focused on the teachers within the schools situated in these villages. The villages and schools shortlisted for the qualitative sub-study belonged to the treatment group within the RCT that focused on both schools and communities³. As such, while this thesis is my independent research, it is tied with the evaluation study in three ways. First, the participation of teachers in the RCT formed the basis of sample selection for this thesis. This is because teachers' voluntary participation in the community-based evaluation indicated their willingness to engage with the parents. This formed the starting point of this thesis, where I chose the schools in which teachers showed their interest in engaging with the parents⁴. Second, to answer the research questions in the thesis, I observed the parent-teacher meetings organised as a part of the RCT, as well as utilized the data from the baseline teacher survey collected as a part of the evaluation study (Chapter 2). Thirdly, I use the information about villages in which my sample schools were located to describe the context of these schools (Chapter 4).

Overall, the evaluation study can be viewed from the lens of social accountability in education, as its objective is to facilitate collaboration between teachers and parents to improve children's learning. Within this, the focus of the thesis is to understand the relationship between teachers and parents from the perspective of teachers. This perspective can add valuable insights into the likelihood of responsiveness of teachers to parents within the framework of social accountability.

² The central team members at ASER Centre were Akanksha Pandey, Ankita Jha, Poorva Shekher and Purnima Ramanujan. They focused on the understanding the role of community members within the qualitative sub study.

³ The RCT had a control group and two treatment groups. In treatment group 1, the focus was only on community members and in treatment group 2, the focus was on both schools and community members.

⁴ Several activities were included in the evaluation such as volunteer-led classes for children, community events organised in the village and parent-teacher meetings organised in the school. All these activities were aimed at encouraging ownership of children's learning and bringing teachers and parents together.

1.4 Definitions of key concepts

In this section, I provide the definition of some of the key concepts that I use throughout the thesis. Given that these concepts could have different meanings across contexts and there is no single definition that can be ascribed to them, I provide an operational definition based on the literature in the field, to indicate the way in which I use these concepts in the thesis.

Teachers' perspectives

In this study, the term 'perspectives' refers to a particular viewpoint or way of looking at something. It encompasses an individual's beliefs, attitudes, values, experiences, and assumptions, which all play a role in shaping how they perceive and interpret information, events, or situations. I use this generic definition because scholars often use the terms perspectives, beliefs, and perceptions interchangeably within education research, making it difficult to narrow down or pinpoint a specific term. For the purposes of this study, I define these perspectives as those that represent teachers' beliefs, which, in turn, are influenced by their experience, education, and tend to guide their practices. This definition is closer to Pajares' (1992) definition of beliefs as personal constructs that provide understanding and judgments. Throughout this thesis, I examine teachers' perspectives on the opportunities they have to interact with parents, benefits derived from such interactions and their experiences with parents within these interactions.

Interactions between teachers and parents

In this thesis, I focus on interactions between teachers and parents. I define these interactions as any opportunity that teachers get to communicate with the parents. The key requirement of such interactions is the presence of both teachers and parents. This definition of interactions is closely related to Goodall's (2016) definition of communication within home-school partnership. She differentiates between the communication and dialogue by stating that communication implies giving/receiving information whether the response is forthcoming or not, while dialogue requires a response. Based on the definition adopted for this thesis, interactions could include dialogue, but this is not necessarily the case.

Collaborative relationship

The term 'Collaboration' in this thesis implies teachers and parents working together. Goodall and Montgomery's (2013) model on parental involvement presents a continuum which starts

with ‘parental involvement in school’, where school is the main controller of interactions and communication. The second point in the continuum is ‘parental involvement with schooling’ where teachers seek information from parents, who are assumed as active contributors to children’s learning. The third point in the continuum is parental engagement with children’s learning where parents play a central role in children’s learning and teachers are eager to learn from parents.

Through this thesis, I aim to understand if interactions help to build a collaborative relationship between teachers and parents. I define these collaborative relationships as closest to the second point in the continuum of Goodall and Montgomery’s framework. Such a type of relationship presupposes that parents and teachers are inclined towards a shared agency and shared responsibility of children’s learning. This implies that a collaborative relationship is one where both teachers and parents are willing to actively participate in dialogue with each other. In such a relationship, teachers acknowledge the role played by parents in children’s learning and actively seek their advice and involvement in the school.

Community members and citizens

For the purposes of this thesis, ‘community members’ refer to individuals who reside in the same geographic area. In the literature on family-school engagement and school-based management policies in India, there are a variety of terms used to describe these community members, including parents of children attending government, private, or other types of schools, as well as other village residents like the village head. It is worth noting that while this thesis specifically examines parents of children in government schools, they are just one subset of the larger community.

While ‘citizens’ is a generic term that refers to any person belonging to a country, for this research, I use ‘citizens’ in discussions related to social accountability in education, where it refers to the users of educational services, and teachers are considered service providers.

1.5 Motivation for the thesis

The motivation for pursuing this research came from my own experience of working with the ASER Centre, which is the research and assessment arm of the Pratham Education Foundation in India. It is one of the largest non-government organisations (NGO) in the field of rural

education in the country. Working in a large-scale organisation gave me an opportunity to travel extensively across different states in India, meet teachers, students, and their families living in rural areas and get a bird's eye view of the factors that drive communication in a village setting. My interest in community participation in schools and the relationship between schools and families was piqued after I participated in one of the campaigns organised by Pratham Education Foundation in 2016 'Lakhon Mein Ek' (translation: One in a million). This was essentially a 'call to action' to mobilise community members to make them aware about children's learning levels in their village. Beyond improving children's learning, the aim of the campaign was to build a sense of ownership towards children's learning. Although I was only an observer of the campaign at the time, the response from the community sparked an interest in exploring how their participation could have a positive, multiplier impact on children's learning. Around the same timeline, a project on increasing accountability through the grassroots was proposed to be conducted in rural Sitapur, India. This was an extension to the 'Lakhon mein Ek' campaign⁵ that aimed to measure the impact of community-driven activities on children's learning, by encouraging both teachers and parents to work together. This seemed both impactful and exciting, and I was particularly interested in understanding teachers' role within these activities and how they interact with the parents and other community members within the project.

1.6 Thesis Outline

This section outlines the structure of the thesis. In Chapter 2, I provide a comprehensive review of the literature related to parent teacher relationship within social accountability. I begin by explaining the model of social accountability by stating its various definitions that exist in literature and then describe its components through various models. Additionally, I explore both theoretical and empirical evidence to identify the gaps in our understanding of social accountability. This is followed by evidence related to parent teacher interactions in India to explain the linkages between interactions, relationship formation and teacher responsiveness.

⁵ Lakhon mein Ek campaign was initiated by Pratham Education Foundation in 2015 in India. The campaign was a call-to-action campaign to work towards improving the status of children's learning in 100,000 villages. The aim of the campaign was to raise awareness of children's low levels of learning by involving the local volunteers from the village. In addition to raising awareness, the campaign also aimed to instil community involvement in children's learning through organising reading groups in neighbouring houses who were supervised by an adult within these households.

To tie everything together, I present a conceptual framework that is based on the social accountability model and incorporates the elements from the larger evaluation study while presenting the focus of the thesis. The chapter concludes by identifying the specific research questions addressed in the thesis.

In Chapter 3, I present the overall research design of the thesis. I start by providing a reflexive account of my own positionality within the research which is followed by stating the theoretical underpinnings of the research. This includes a discussion on the research paradigm followed in the thesis and the research approach adopted. In addition to this, I explain the sampling process and describe the characteristics of the research participants, the diverse research methods I use to collect data and the techniques I use to analyse this data. Next, I expand on the timelines for this research, the various challenges I encountered during data collection, especially the disruptions caused due to the COVID-19 pandemic. I then detail the ways in which I ensured this research is rigorous and also explain the limitations of the research design. Lastly, in this chapter, I describe the ethical considerations for this research where I expand informed consent and responsibilities towards the research team I was working with.

In Chapter 4, I provide an overview of sites within which the sample schools are located. I start with a brief description of context of Uttar Pradesh and Sitapur. I then expand on the villages in which the case study schools are located. Given that this thesis involves discussions around government primary school teachers' communication with parents, it is important to have a basic understanding of the villages in which these schools are located, particularly those in the sample. Accordingly, I use the qualitative summaries about the accessibility, occupational and educational scenario in the village collected by the qualitative team at the ASER Centre, combined with my own observations of these locations. In addition to this, I also provide summaries from the data collected from the quantitative surveys as a part of the evaluation study to provide an overview of accessibility and facilities of the villages, schools, household information related to parents' visit to the schools. The purpose of this chapter is to provide a basic understanding of the context in which government primary school teachers' communication with parents is taking place. Such a detailed contextual understanding of the study setting can enhance the transferability of research findings and help scholars/readers make informed decisions about the applicability of the research findings to their own contexts.

Chapters 5, 6 and 7 are the three analytical chapters that address the three research questions in the thesis. In Chapter 5, I focus on understanding the dynamics of interactions between teachers and parents from the perspective of teachers. The chapter aims to answer the research question: “What are teachers’ perspectives on the opportunities they have to interact with parents?” The goal is to gain insights into how teachers perceive opportunities for interactions, how do they use these opportunities to ultimately identify whether these interactions contribute to building a positive collaborative relationship with parents. The chapter begins with an introduction that sets out the research question and explains the purpose of the question. The chapter provides a comprehensive understanding of the perspectives of teachers on the opportunities they have to interact with parents. It sheds light on how teachers use these interactions through describing the different forms of interactions, their purposes and the factors that potentially influence these interactions.

Chapter 6 delves into teachers’ perspectives on the benefits derived from interactions with parents and their expectations from parents. The chapter begins with an introduction that emphasizes the importance of understanding teachers’ willingness to establish collaborative relationships with parents. The research question addressed in this chapter is: “What are teachers’ perspectives on the benefits of interactions with parents and their expectations from parents?” The aim is to gain insights into the factors that influence teachers’ willingness to interact with parents and maintain a positive relationship with them. Overall, the chapter provides insights into teachers’ perspectives on the benefits they derive from interactions with parents and their expectations from parents. It explores teachers’ willingness to engage with parents to establish a collaboration with them.

In Chapter 7, I focus on teachers’ experiences of interactions with parents and aim to understand the interconnectedness between experiences, perspectives and relationship forged between teachers and parents. The chapter begins with an introduction that builds upon the previous chapter’s exploration of teachers’ willingness to interact with parents. The research question addressed in this chapter is: “What do teachers’ experiences of interactions with parents convey about the relationship between the two groups?” The objective is to identify how this relationship may evolve over time. To answer this question, I primarily rely on qualitative interviews with teachers. I also draw upon my own observations of parent-teacher meetings conducted within schools as part of a larger evaluation project. Overall, this chapter

delves into teachers' experiences of interactions with parents, aiming to understand the longevity of the relationship between these two groups.

In Chapter 8, I use the findings from analysis conducted in Chapter 5, 6 and 7 to present a discussion. The chapter draws on the evidence from the three research questions answered in the previous chapters to present and discuss the findings from the perspectives of understanding the relationship between teachers and parents. It also brings together the findings and draw connections with the literature reviewed in chapter 2.

Chapter 9 forms the conclusion to the thesis. In addition to presenting a summary of the key findings, I discuss the key contribution of the findings. I also reflect on the thesis to present its limitations and scope for future research in understanding the relationship between teachers and parents.

1.7 Concluding remarks

This chapter presented a broad overview of the thesis, its aims and objectives. The thesis is focused on understanding the perspectives of government primary school teachers within rural locations in Sitapur, India. It is framed around increasing accountability in education which is viewed as one of the solutions to improve children's learning problems across rural locations in India and other developing countries as well. For this, it utilises the social accountability framework by Joshi (2014). The thesis is drawn from a larger project that aimed to bring schools and communities together and measure the impact on children's learning. Given this overview, in the next chapter, I review the existing empirical and theoretical evidence related to this research.

Chapter 2. Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I review literature around parent teacher interactions within the realm of social accountability in education. In section 2.2, I explain the search criteria I used to identify the relevant existing research. In Section 2.3, I explain the model of social accountability in education by defining the concept, its various conceptualisations and its core features. In section 2.4, I review the research that has been conducted related to social accountability in education. In doing so, I aim to identify areas of prior scholarship to contextualise my own research and identify the gaps in understanding of social accountability in education. In section 2.5, I review the evidence related to parent teacher interactions in India to explain the linkages between interactions, relationship formation and teacher responsiveness. In section 2.6, I explain the conceptual framework of the thesis which combines the model of social accountability with the elements of the larger evaluation project and the focus of this thesis. Within this, I also justify the focus on teachers' perspectives. In section 2.7, I summarise the overall literature and define the specific research questions that this thesis addresses.

2.2 Literature search strategy

The literature search was initiated by conducting an initial scoping of existing research that was broadly related to school-community partnerships. A Boolean search was carried out on literature databases such as Educational Resources Information Centre (ERIC), Scopus, and Google Scholar. Key search phrases used were 'school-community partnership,' 'school-family collaboration,' and 'parent-teacher relationship.' This search revealed evidence from developed countries, highlighting the importance of partnership in improving student achievement. One of the most cited works found from this search was Joyce Epstein's framework on types of parental involvement, which acted as a practical guide to building stronger school-community partnerships (Epstein, 2010; Epstein, 2011). The framework highlighted the close relationship between the concepts of school-community partnership and parental involvement in children's learning. This led to an expansion of the search criteria to include parental involvement in schooling and community involvement in educational improvement, which led to the discovery of Janet Goodall's seminal work on school-family partnership (Goodall, 2016; Goodall & Montgomery, 2013; Harris & Goodall, 2008). These works have been written in relation to developed countries, particularly the United States and

the United Kingdom. However, they highlighted the importance of communication between teachers and parents to build school-community partnerships.

In order to find the relevant studies in context of India and other developing countries, I modified my search criteria from school-community partnership to ‘community participation in schools’ and ‘community involvement in schools’, ‘accountability relations’. This modification came from my experiences of, and first-hand communication with researchers working in education in India. As mentioned in Chapter 1, my motivation for undertaking this research stemmed from my work as a researcher with the Pratham Education Foundation before I began my PhD. I was aware of the organisation’s initiatives around community participation and engagement in education, especially in rural areas. I used the reference list from the published works in these initiatives to select relevant work that have focused on community involvement in India. In addition to this, I also relied on first-hand communication with researchers who had knowledge about Indian organisations that focus on school and community partnerships, such as Saajha⁶; those that worked to improve foundational learning outcomes of children such as the Central Square Foundation⁷; and those that worked on understanding the accountability of schools in India such as the Accountability Initiative.⁸ All of the above helped provide three areas of focus for my literature review: 1) formal channels of engagement that exist in primary schools run by the government; 2) teachers and parents do not share an equal space and a disconnect exists between the two; and 3) discussions around

⁶*Saajha*, means partnership. It is a non-profit organisation that works in four states- Delhi, Jharkhand, Karnataka and Maharashtra in India since 2014. Their aim is to enable parents of children studying in government schools to become partners in their child’s education. They work at school level as well as community level to enable parental participation in child’s learning.

⁷ Central Square Foundation is a non-profit organisation working with the vision of improving learning outcomes of children from low-income communities. They partner with various social impact organisations in education to build research on positive impact of innovative solutions that address critical issues in education and create effective tools around these issues. These include early learning, technology in education, system governance and classroom instructions.

⁸ Accountability Initiative is a research group which is a part of Centre for Policy Research in India. It works on strengthening transparency and accountability in governance which is responsive to the citizen needs. Their work focuses on understanding state capabilities and efficiency of public service delivery in India. Their work helped me in locating my research within the broader area of accountability.

community participation in schools can be viewed from a perspective of accountability and public service delivery in education.

The evidence on parent-teacher relationship and community participation in schools showed its close connections with the concept of social accountability that assumes an accountability relationship between citizens and service providers, which in the case of the education sector, are parents and teachers respectively. This determined my next search for relevant literature that considered the concept of social accountability and its application within the education sector. I also expanded the search for social accountability literature to include concepts such as ‘service delivery’, ‘citizen participation in education’ and ‘transparency and accountability’ which were used as keywords. The review included journal articles that focused on conceptual understanding of the concept of social accountability. I also included studies conducted with a focus on increasing teacher accountability to community/parents in India. The results led to two categories of studies. First, the studies related to identifying whether social accountability initiatives work. In addition to presenting various models of social accountability, these studies synthesised findings from some of the most cited initiatives undertaken in the field of social accountability. The second category of studies included in the review were those that measured the impact of various social accountability initiatives undertaken within education space. I restricted the focus of these studies to India.

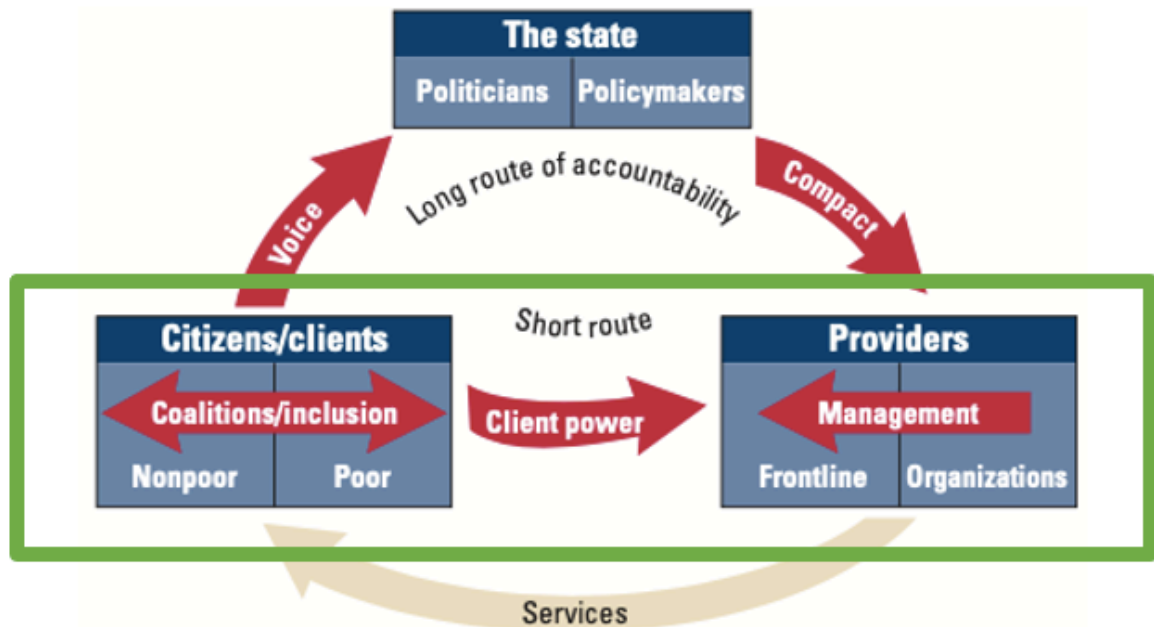
2.3 The concept of social accountability in education

2.3.1 Defining social accountability within the wider definitions of accountability.

Accountability in education, in general is viewed as a key factor for improving service delivery or efficiency of public schools (UNESCO, 2017; Yan, 2019; Mbiti, 2016; Bruns, Filmer and Patrinos, 2011). It comprises a set of relationships between different stakeholders such as parents, schools and government. The World Development Report published by the World Bank (2003) identified failures in service delivery as shortcomings within accountability relationships. In its model of accountability, the report described the accountability relationship along two lines, the long route, and the short route. The former involves: (i) citizens holding the government accountable through democratic mechanisms of political representation, such as elections; and (ii) the government, in turn, holding service providers accountable for delivering services to the population, through formal mechanisms in public administration.

Figure 1 presents the accountability framework and illustrates the two routes through which accountability can be achieved.

Figure 1: The Accountability Framework showing long route and short route accountability (World Bank, 2003, p.49)



Source: World Bank (2003). The green highlighted area defines the focus of the concept of social accountability.

Due to inefficiencies within the long route, for example, the powerlessness of poor people, lack of information and knowledge, lack of provisions to make the state accountable have given rise to the short route of accountability which involves a direct service-delivery link between citizens and service providers and is often referred to as bottom-up accountability or social accountability (Ringold et al., 2012; Malena et al., 2004).

Malena et al. (2004) provide a detailed conceptual understanding of social accountability. They clarify that social accountability is not a distinct form of accountability, but rather an approach to holding service providers accountable. They defined it as “an approach towards building accountability that relies on civic engagement, i.e., in which it is ordinary citizens and/or civil society organizations who participate directly or indirectly in exacting accountability” (Malena et al., 2004, p.3). It refers to formal or informal mechanisms by which citizens hold service providers’ accountable. It can be distinguished from general accountability in that it

involves reputational pressure and tends to be more collaborative in nature (Joshi & Houtzager, 2012).

Fox (2015) offers a comprehensive synthesis of the concept of social accountability. He states, *“In practice, the concept includes a wide range of institutional innovations that both encourage and project voice. Insofar as social accountability builds citizen power vis-à-vis the state, it is a political process—yet it is distinct from political accountability of elected officials, where citizen voice is usually delegated to representatives in between elections. This distinction makes social accountability an especially relevant approach for societies in which representative government is weak, unresponsive, or non-existent.”* (Fox, 2015, p.346)

2.3.2 The various models of social accountability

From the framework (Figure 1), it is clear that social accountability requires a direct interaction between citizens and service providers in addition to ‘client power’. This client power refers to the ability of parents and other stakeholders to demand that schools provide good quality education. This ‘client power’ involves various mechanisms that empowers parents to hold education providers accountable. These mechanisms include public reporting, community scorecards, participatory budgeting, and other forms of citizen engagement (World Bank, 2003; Malena et al., 2004; Aiyar et al., 2009). As the concept of social accountability has evolved over time with various scholars contributing to a better understanding of the mechanism guiding the usage of the concept, different models and terms have been used to describe the core elements within social accountability. Joshi (2014) uses a simplistic model of social accountability and broadly describes the three components within the social accountability- the information, citizen action and state response (Figure 2).

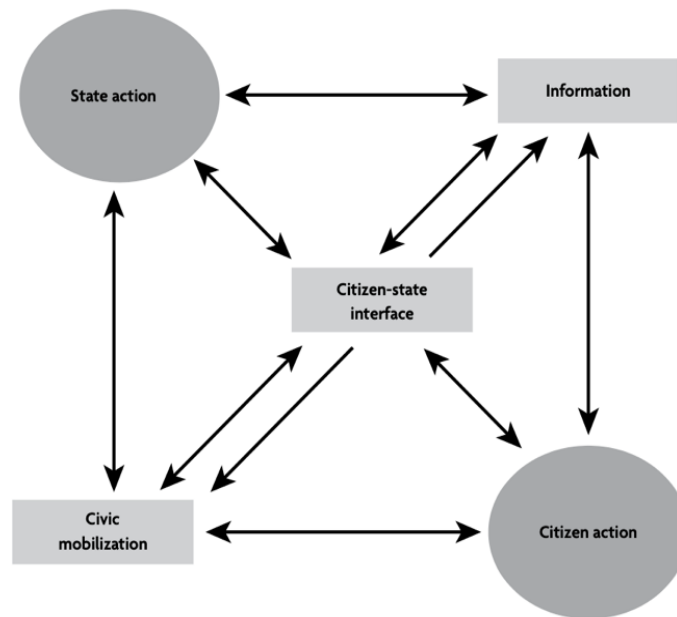
Figure 2: The components of the social accountability framework (source: Joshi, 2014, p.28)



Joshi (2014) discusses the social accountability model emphasizing that the journey from the increased availability of information to citizen action and hence to the state's response, is not linear, and requires a look at the characteristics of each of these components. For example, information has its own characteristics of usefulness including whether it is clear or not (Fox, 2007); whether the form in which it is provided is understandable; the source of the information; and the type of information provided (Joshi, 2014). The way in which the information is disseminated to citizens, and how they utilize it, plays an important role as well (Aiyar, 2010). Similarly, citizen action and state's response can take several forms. In the case of the former, choice, and participation and voice are the main forms of citizen action through which they can hold the service providers accountable. Similarly, the providers response can involve making improvements in service provisioning; changing their own behaviour, and advocating for reforms at a higher level, to name a few.

Grandvoinet, Aslam and Raha (2015) presented an extended model of social accountability to account for the complexities of state and citizen actors. They called social accountability the interplay of five constituent elements. These five core elements include – 'information', 'civic mobilization', 'citizen action', 'citizen-state interface' and 'state action' (Figure 3). Within this, 'citizen action', which is considered the primary focus of social accountability implies making demands or claiming for better public goods; 'state action' implies the extent to which the governments, service providers are responding to the demands of citizens; 'information' represents the intermediaries that are required to convey the necessary information to citizens to support their action; 'citizen-state interface' signifies the interactions between citizens and state; 'civic mobilization' is considered necessary to spur and facilitate citizen 'voice' to demand accountability. The authors move beyond the state and citizen dichotomy and emphasise the importance on the relationship between citizens and state. They recognise that 'information', interface and civic mobilization components act as levers for 'citizen action' and 'state action' (Grandvoinet et al., 2015, p.6). Similar to Grandvoinet et al.'s model, Joshi and Houtzager (2012) move beyond the dichotomy and conceptualize social accountability as "*an ongoing political engagement by social actors with the state as part of a long-term pattern of interaction shaped by both historical forces and the current context*" (Joshi & Houtzager, 2012: p.146). Both these models are an attempt to unpack the complexities of social accountability mechanism.

Figure 3: The five elements within social accountability (Source: Grandvoinet et al., 2015, p.5)



Brummel (2021) proposes a conceptual framework to study the functioning of social accountability of public sector organizations in practice. He draws on Bovens’s conceptualisation of accountability which is considered as a relational concept and is defined as “a relationship between an actor and a forum, in which the actor has an obligation to explain and to justify his or her conduct, the forum can pose questions and pass judgement, and the actor may face consequences” (Bovens, 2007, p.450). The definition of social accountability given by Brummel is “a horizontal and explicit accountability relationship in which a public sector organization gives an account vis-à-vis citizens and societal actors, including the media. An accountability relationship should entail two additional elements to be classified as social accountability: (a) it should consist of a non-hierarchical but a horizontal relationship between the account-holder and the account-giver and (b) the account-holder should be classified as a societal actor (i.e., citizens, clients, and organized groups, including the media) and that claims to represent a particular societal interest with regard to a public authorities’ conduct. (Brummel, 2021, p.1053). Brummel proposes a framework of social accountability that emphasises importance of taking into account ‘nature of account-holder’ (i.e. whether account holder is an individual, an external organised forum or an institutionalised forum), the involvement of both account-holders and account-givers in all phases of accountability processes (i.e. gaining an understanding into the conditions under which engagement between

the two is more likely to occur) and understanding their behavioral strategies and intentions (i.e. whether their behaviours support consensual or confrontational styles).

Brummel's framework advances the conceptualisation of social accountability by bringing in aspects of relationship between the account holder (the citizens) and the account giver (service providers). It also extends the model by adding the behaviour and styles through which citizens and service providers form a relationship. According to the study, consensual behaviours are characterized by mutual agreement, cooperation, and collaboration between actors, while confrontational behaviours are characterized by conflict, contestation, and opposition between actors. The paper argues that both styles of behaviour can be effective in promoting social accountability, depending on the context and the actors involved.

Along the similar lines of confrontational vs consensual behaviours, Hevia and Vergara-Lope (2019) distinguish the concept of social accountability from educational accountability by clarifying the nature of these concepts. They state that while educational accountability can be considered as performance-based accountability, where standardized test results generate pressure on schools, social accountability emphasises the participation of citizens in resolution of problems, seeks to give greater voice to the citizens and is based on building relationship. They state that the theory of change of educational accountability rests on the idea that disseminating the results to local communities will generate 'positive pressure' on schools and teachers to improve those results. However, according to them, this has two major limitations. First, that the provision of information alone may not be sufficient to induce accountability. Second, the type of relationship within this proposed model is based on distrust, particularly distrust of the teachers' abilities and training, and of principals' adequacy and parents confronting the teachers instead of fostering mutual trust. For this reason, they regard social accountability in education as a solution to overcome biases in educational accountability. For them, social accountability approaches should work so that they encourage participation of parents and teachers, and political and educational institutions in a single front fostering mutual trust to improve children's learning. Secondly, the social accountability initiatives should be designed and implemented using strategic actions (Hevia & Vergara-Lope, 2019, p.36). These strategic actions imply supplementing local information with capacity to change course of action that is non-confrontational in nature.

There are two main ways of achieving social accountability in education. One way is through choice and competition. This implies that parents (who form citizens/clients) can make teachers (who form service provider) accountable to improve the school performance through a market-based mechanism where they opt for private schools or other schools to induce competition. Under this mechanism, it is assumed that such a form of choice will lead to competition with the private schools and generate pressure on government schools to improve services. However, in case of parents in rural areas in India, this choice is not likely to work since government schools are the only places where they can afford to send their children. The second way in which social accountability can work is through “voice and participation.” In this approach, parents and community members are encouraged to voice their concerns and become active participants in the decision-making processes of the school. This involves setting up mechanisms for regular communication and creating opportunities for active participation of citizens such as school management committees (SMC) and parent-teacher meetings (PTM). These can provide forums for parents to voice their concerns. Along the same lines, Aiyar, Posani, Patnaik and Devasher (2009) also proposed a generic framework of social accountability by discussing the failures of India’s two flagship programmes: the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA)⁹ in education and the National Rural Health Mission (NRHM)¹⁰ in health and suggesting potential ways of enhancing social accountability in these two programs. In their paper, they emphasised the two important components to work together voice and compact. Voice refers to the ability of citizens and civil society organizations to demand accountability from the government and public service providers. Compact refers to the agreement between citizens and the government that outlines the responsibilities of each party in ensuring accountability in public service delivery. According to them, *“Social accountability in public service delivery is a product of two things working together: a system of institutions designed*

⁹ The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) is a national program launched by the Government of India in 2001 to provide free and compulsory education to all children between the ages of 6 and 14. The program aims to improve the quality of education and ensure that every child has access to education. The paper cites the SSA as an example of a program that has implemented social accountability mechanisms, such as community scorecards and public hearings, to improve service delivery and ensure accountability.

¹⁰ NRHM is a national program launched by the Government of India in 2005 to improve the availability and accessibility of quality healthcare in rural areas. The program aims to strengthen health systems, improve service delivery, and empower communities to demand better healthcare services. The paper cites the NRHM as an example of a program that has implemented social accountability mechanisms, such as community scorecards, to improve service delivery and ensure accountability.

in a manner that makes accountability structurally possible, and an informed and mobilized citizenry that can draw upon platforms for engagement to make accountability demands on the system. That is, strong voice, in conjunction with strong compact” (Aiyar, Posani, Patnaik & Devasher, 2009, p.13). Through their framework (Figure 4), the authors argue that for social accountability to be effective, the state must play an active role in facilitating citizen engagement and participation.

This can be done by creating institutional structures and mechanisms that enable citizens to provide feedback, make complaints, and participate in decision-making processes related to public services. The authors suggest that the state can adopt various mechanisms to facilitate citizen engagement and strengthen citizen voice, including: a) Providing access to information: The state can provide citizens with access to information on public service delivery, such as service standards, performance targets, and expenditure details. This can enable citizens to hold public service providers accountable and demand better services; b) Creating channels for feedback and complaints: The state can create channels for citizens to provide feedback and make complaints about public service delivery. These channels include setting up helplines, suggestion boxes, and online platforms for feedback; c) Establishing participatory decision-making processes. The state can involve citizens in decision-making processes related to public service delivery. This can include setting up citizen committees or holding public consultations on service delivery issues.

Figure 4: The two components essential for success of social accountability (Source: Aiyar et al., 2009, p.13)



Overall, the section highlights the definitions and conceptual models of social accountability. Each model attempts to unpack the mechanism of social accountability and provides different

elements that need to be considered. Joshi (2014) presents a simplistic model that defines the main components within social accountability, ‘information’, ‘citizen action’ and ‘state response’. To extend this model, Grandvoinet et al.’s model adds to it the component of ‘citizen-state interface’ and ‘citizen mobilisation’. Further, Hevia and Vergara-Lope (2019) and Brummel (2021) present different styles of accountability- consensual and confrontational. These highlight the ‘relational’ nature of social accountability. Finally, Aiyar et al. (2009) emphasise the importance of institutional channels and ability of citizens to use these channels to voice their concerns.

2.4 Current research on social accountability in education

The primary objective of this section is to conduct a synthesis of the available research on social accountability in education. By conducting this review, I intend to provide a comprehensive background to the research on social accountability in education and identify gaps and limitations in the existing literature, which helped me in formulating the research questions of this thesis.

For the purposes of this review, the evidence related to social accountability can be divided into two main categories. The first category includes the set of studies that aim to measure the impact of specific tools used within social accountability- for example- citizen monitoring and information provision on either learning outcomes of children or participation of citizens. Given the focus of this research on rural schools in India, I restrict the review of empirical evidence to the context of education within India. The second category includes studies conducted to understand the overall impact of social accountability initiatives. In addition to providing conceptual clarity on social accountability, these studies aim to lay out whether social accountability initiatives work or not. In doing so, these studies highlight important factors that need to be considered while designing initiatives focused on social accountability and achieving success within these. The next two sections discuss these two categories within the research evidence on social accountability.

2.4.1 Empirical evidence on the impact assessment of specific social accountability tools

Social accountability initiatives use various tools to hold education providers accountable, such as citizen scorecards, community monitoring, and information provision. All these tools or instruments involve citizens in the oversight of government services and can therefore, be

considered social accountability initiatives (Ackerman, 2005). This section reviews the existing literature on the impact assessment of some of these tools used in education sector and highlights the key findings and limitations of these studies. The review of these studies has revealed that the focus of these initiatives have largely been from perspective of citizens, with one of the main stakeholders, the service providers' perspective (in the case of this thesis, the teachers) being neglected. Most of the evidence within social accountability in education in India overlaps with the evidence on community participation in schools. I review this evidence from the lens of social accountability and its components.

One of the studies focusing on the 'information' component of social accountability was conducted by Pandey, Goyal, and Sundararaman (2009). The study examined the impact of information campaigns on school performance in three states in India: Uttar Pradesh (UP), Madhya Pradesh (MP) and Karnataka. The randomised intervention tested whether information about roles and responsibilities in village education committee (VEC), when disseminated through village meetings and campaigns, had any effect on children's learning outcomes. The findings showed that while it did impact learning outcomes, it was fairly small. The study also pointed to some intermediate outcomes from these information campaigns- increased teacher effort in UP, increased visits made by parents to the schools, as well as increase in the number of meetings between teachers and parents. The findings of the study showed information campaigns might be important for improvement in learning and have positive effects on variables such as teacher effort, parent- teacher interactions and parental involvement in school. However, it did not focus on the mechanism that could have led to improved learning outcomes. For example- how information campaigns led to an increase in interactions between parents and teachers and what made teachers increase their efforts. These questions could help unpack how and what changes do information campaigns bring among the different stakeholders participation in school as well as with each other that could affect children's learning outcomes. Nevertheless, the study showed that there is some linkage between the intermediate outcomes of increased parent visits to school, increased interactions between parents and teachers and improved learning outcomes of children.

Banerjee et al., (2008) in their study moved beyond information provision. The study was undertaken in Uttar Pradesh state in India by Pratham education foundation. It evaluated three interventions aimed at encouraging beneficiaries' participation in monitoring public services and relied on two components within social accountability in education - information

component and citizen action. It looked at the impact of informing citizens about the roles and responsibilities of the Village Education Committee (VEC) members on their participation in schools and children's learning levels through three types of intervention. The first intervention focused on providing information to the committee members about their roles and responsibilities within the VEC. The second intervention aimed to enhance the effects of the first intervention by incorporating additional activities. In addition to informing the members about the rights and duties within VEC, Pratham team members also focused on informing the parents and the VEC members about status of children's learning. The various neighbourhood report cards were aggregated to form the village report card, which was then discussed at the village-wide meeting, aiming to facilitate community-wide discussions around the issue of learning levels in children. The third intervention was an extension of the first and second intervention and invited and trained local volunteers to conduct classes for children after school. The hypotheses of the interventions were that increased information to the existing institutions will lead to greater involvement and mobilising citizens about children's learning status will encourage them to actively get involved in functioning of school which will then lead to improved overall performance of school and children's learning. In this sense, the study used information provision and citizen report cards as social accountability tools to understand how it impacts the overall performance of children as well as if it changes the involvement of parents in functioning of government schools. The results from the experiment showed neither information sharing nor mobilising citizens around children's learning status brought any changes in community involvement in monitoring of schools. However, the third intervention saw changes in learning outcomes for children who attended the classes. According to the authors, one thing that set the third intervention apart from the first two, in addition to involvement of local volunteers, was that the community could do this activity without engaging with the school. The results from the interventions revealed that although parents and VEC members were more aware about their roles and responsibilities and status of children's learning, there were no change observed in their engagement with the schools. However, the third intervention showed a significant improvement in children's learning levels indicating that offering villagers alternative forms of participatory actions has the ability to improve learning outcomes for children. One of the main limitations of this study is that while it raises awareness, furnishes information and mobilises citizens about status of children's learning levels in expectation that this would lead to increased participation in monitoring school functioning, it disregards and completely ignores the role of teachers as well as the relationship between parents and teachers within this citizen-led initiative.

This importance of relationship between parents and teachers is pointed out by Galab, et al. (2013). The authors describe the findings from a particular project called ‘Vidya Chaitanyam (VC)¹¹ in Andhra Pradesh that aimed to support citizens to demand, monitor and advocate for quality service delivery from government education providers. The idea of the project was to empower the members of the school management committee (SMC) to hold their local schools to account through regular face-to-face ‘inspection’ visits to collect the scorecard data and through the publication of results at the local SMC and at local women’s self-help groups (Galab, et al., 2013, p.14). The design of the project was based on capacity building among illiterate and semi-literate mothers, to assess the quality of basic education in state schools, using simple scorecard process. The project had a few sequenced interventions. First, it designed information campaigns to build local awareness and knowledge of Right to Education Act. Second, it designed a simple scorecard that was set out to capture the basic quality criteria for schools. This scorecard was designed as a tool to guide expectations of the community and to support discussions in SMCs. Third, the intervention involved training of local self-help group meetings in using the scorecard, approaching the teachers in school, monitoring the quality of school and reporting back to the school management committee. Fourth, it included door-to-door campaigns to encourage parental attendance at SMC meetings. Fifth, it included training the SMC on effective management procedures and participation expectations. This component gave parents a forum to voice their concerns and discuss scorecard performance.

The project’s theory of change was that improved awareness of rights and service expectations, coupled with improved transparency would empower the community to demand improvements and make schools more accountable. One of the strongest characteristics of the study’s findings is that it delved into the mechanisms that led schools to become more accountable. The key findings showed significant improvements in school accountability and governance, seen through the improved functioning of SMCs, improved parental attendance, more purposeful discussions in SMC meetings about school quality, increased pressure from parents for school improvements, which in turn improved school responsiveness because of the pressure. According to the authors, the intervention led to increased frequency of meetings and an increased parent-school interactions. These SMC discussions enabled both parents and teachers

¹¹ Vidya Chaitanyam translates to self- help group partnership in education programme. The project included 500 schools and 50000 children. The project was conducted between 2008-2012 in 7 regional mandals in Andhra Pradesh.

to equally identify relevant school quality issues. This was because of the scorecard that played an important role in developing a shared understanding of dimensions of school quality. Qualitative evidence in the study showed cases where scorecards helped parents understand the key features to look for in their child's school. SMCs started having written agendas. Another key finding was that parents were able to apply pressure and voice at SMC meetings. The report highlighted two key changes that were critical for school improvement: a more equal power balance between the community and school and a sense of joint responsibility for school and student performance. The power balance ensured parents voice were heard at the SMC, and the joint responsibility ensured shared sense of ownership developed through genuine dialogue. The success of the initiative has been attributed to profound changes in parent-school relationship (Galab, et al., 2013, p.34). The study is a good example of projects implementing social accountability initiatives and unpacking the mechanisms that lead information provision, citizen action to improvement in quality of schools. It adds to the limited evidence on assumed linkages through which social accountability initiatives lead to desired outcomes. The study raises an important aspect of understanding the success of social accountability initiatives, the relationship between parents and teachers. At the same time, the study focuses only on the side of citizens and fails to consider the perspectives of teachers about monitoring the schools, how it changes their motivation and mindset to engage with the citizens. The report touches on how headteacher in the schools was sensitized towards the women's new role and parents' rights to challenge the school management indicating the important role that the teachers play in success of implementing such an intervention. Secondly, a genuine dialogue enabled an improved relationship between teachers and parents.

A recent study was undertaken to provide evidence in the field of community involvement in schools to highlight the attempts at open government in India (Chugh, 2021). The study describes three case studies (two from Delhi and one from Uttarakhand) that highlighted good practices regarding the functioning of SMC in India. The commonality across the three case studies was that there was collaboration between teachers and the community members, where teachers actively sought the support from the members, parents could freely come to the school and interact with the teachers and had trust in each other. However, of these the two cases are from Delhi, which is an urban location where it is likely that parents are more educated and well-off in comparison to rural areas. In case study 2, '*A rebuilt school, community-built hostel and mid-day meals for slum children in Uttarakhand*' (Chugh, 2021, p.52) elaborated on how with the support of community, the head teacher was able to get the school roof reconstructed,

toilets built and repaired. This indicates that partnership between teachers and parents can be beneficial.

One of the few studies that have explored responsiveness of service providers to demands of the citizens is reflected in a recent brief by Joshi and McCluskey in 2018. The authors acknowledge limited understanding of service providers response to the increase in citizens' voice and utilised a framework to understand the conflict faced by public officials. This framework highlighted several factors that shape the responsiveness of service providers. These included factors such as organizational, professional and those related to the citizens. Their study combined literature on public sector responsiveness and used the information from interviews with mid- to senior-level public officials from countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America, whom academics and practitioners had identified as being supportive of transparency and accountability reforms. One of the most relevant findings suggests that the willingness of public officials to respond to citizen demands is dependent on the level of trust between them, and the legitimacy of the citizens' claims (Joshi & McCluskey, 2018, p.7).

Another relevant study in this field has recently been conducted by Dyer, Jacob, Patil and Mishra (2022) in two states¹² in India. In their study, the authors take an accountability lens to understand the connections between schools and families. The study illuminates how the prevailing mechanisms through which schools and families connect, often engender formalistic and bureaucratised relations, underscoring their limitations in fostering direct and meaningful interactions between homes and schools to discuss children's learning. By exploring the relations between home and school, the study emphasises the importance of direct community engagement and establishing meaningful connections that can address the multifaceted needs of the students. Findings from the study show a similarity of disconnections between teachers and parents across government, low-fee private schools and non-government schools. They claim that this disconnection is located within "*system features*" common across the school types, where system consists of "*cultures, mindsets, expectations, norms, procedures and practices*" (Dyer, Jacob, Patil & Mishra, 2022, p.4). The study points to how the platforms that exist for developing connectedness, such as school management committees (SMC), daily

¹² Bihar and Rajasthan

diaries¹³ and parent-teacher meetings (PTM) are more formalistic in nature and often driven by the state. The nature of relationship formed between school-families and communities as a result of engaging in these platforms is such that it constrains meaningful discussion on learning. While the study focuses on understanding connections in relation to learning, it offers useful insights for the thesis by highlighting the importance of taking into account mindsets, expectations and perspectives in understanding the relationship between teachers and parents in India.

Overall, the empirical evidence shows that social accountability initiatives in the education sector, which involve citizen participation and hold education providers accountable, have shown mixed results in terms of their impact. While information campaigns and mobilizing citizens around children's learning status have had limited success in increasing community involvement in monitoring schools, alternative forms of participatory actions, such as involving local volunteers in conducting classes for children after school, have demonstrated positive effects on learning outcomes. Additionally, the success of social accountability initiatives is influenced by the relationship between parents and teachers, with improved collaboration and a joint sense of responsibility leading to better school accountability and governance. However, the perspective of teachers and their responsiveness to citizen demands need further exploration and understanding for the effective implementation of social accountability interventions.

2.4.2 Studies focusing on theoretical understanding of mechanism of social accountability.

While social accountability has gained increasing attention in the field of education as a means to improve governance and service delivery, several studies have attempted to evaluate the effectiveness of various social accountability mechanisms in improving education outcomes. In this section, I critically analyze these studies by examining their findings to identify gaps and limitations in them. The analyses provide insights into the need to focus on understanding and unpacking the mechanisms that contribute to the success of social accountability initiatives in education.

¹³ Daily diaries is one of the ways in which the low-fee paying private schools forged connections with the parents in the study.

Fox (2015) argues that the relevant theory related to broader umbrella term of ‘social accountability’ has lagged behind the practices associated with it. He conducted a meta-analysis of 25 quantitative evaluations in which he argues that "what works" question needs to distinguish between tactical and strategic approaches for promotion of citizen voice to contribute to improved public sector performance. Tactical approaches primarily focus on disseminating information on service delivery outcomes and resource allocation at the local level to under-represented stakeholders. These approaches involve bounded interventions centered on citizen voice as the sole driver, with the underlying assumption that information provision alone will inspire collective action capable of influencing public sector performance. They are based on two propositions which Fox calls unrealistic. Firstly, they assume that individuals who have been marginalized and lack power will inherently perceive vocal participation as yielding more benefits than costs, even if they recognize the associated costs. Secondly, such approaches assume that localised voices, calling for accountability, can exert sufficient influence on public sector performance without the support of external allies possessing perceived and actual leverage. In contrast, strategic approaches adopt a different stance. They prioritize the dissemination of actionable information, as perceived by users, alongside measures that actively facilitate collective action, incentivize service providers, and share power in resource allocation. Strategic approaches aim to scale up citizen voice and collective action while enhancing the state's capacity to respond to citizen demands, and thus offer a more promising trajectory for social accountability initiatives. These approaches create an enabling environment which can empower the citizens to exercise their voice. The study concludes that ‘voice’ needs ‘teeth’ to have bite, but teeth may not bite without voice. Here, 'voice' refers to citizen participation and engagement in holding public officials accountable, while 'teeth' refers to the state's institutional capacity to respond to citizen voice, which includes both legal and administrative mechanisms for addressing citizen demands and ensuring government officials are held accountable for their actions. Fox argues that social accountability strategies that effectively combine both 'voice' and 'teeth' are more promising for promoting government accountability and improving service delivery outcomes.

Fox’s study offers useful insights into re-interpreting the evidence on social accountability while also shifting the focus on understanding the conditions under which social accountability initiatives work. It emphasises the need to combine voice with teeth. However, according to my understanding, one of the main limitations of the study is that it fails to acknowledge the immediate relationship between citizens and service providers which might affect the ability

to undertake collective action within strategic approaches. This relationship between citizens and service providers can be one of the main ‘enabling environments’ for citizens to voice their demands and for service providers to listen and respond to the same. The nature of interactions between the two groups can determine the legitimacy of their relationship and further the collective action. Even though the propositions in the study support a synergy between citizens and the state, they only account for governmental responsiveness at the level of reforms. Nevertheless, the study highlights the importance of bringing both citizens and the state together for the success of social accountability.

Joshi (2013) in her study on assessing the impact of transparency and accountability initiatives in service delivery, emphasises the role of service providers’ responsiveness within social accountability. Along with the other assumptions, she states the main assumptions of the model of social accountability that relate to the service providers. These include “...*that the exposure of poor performance will lead to greater responsiveness; that failures in service delivery are due to poor motivation on the part of public officials and not lack of resources or capacities; or that the existence of accountability and transparency mechanisms will have a deterrent effect on errant officials and make them behave better.*” (Joshi, 2013, p.41). Joshi states that these might not always be true and provider responsiveness could be varied. For example, increased citizen voice could be met with a ‘backlash’ or these providers might be immune to exposure of poor performance and even sometimes might not have the capacity and resources to respond. Joshi’s paper adds to the limited evidence in the field that considers the effects of service providers’ responsiveness. It highlights the importance of looking at service provider responsiveness as a variable component instead of an assumption within social accountability.

The significance of bringing actors together can also be seen from another study conducted by Westhorp et al. (2014). The authors undertook a systematic review to identify the underlying mechanisms that contribute to the success or failure of community accountability interventions in improving education outcomes in low and middle-income countries.¹⁴ The review suggested that community accountability and empowerment interventions can leverage social capital to engage fearful or reluctant service providers and officials in a collaborative process. The study aimed to answer the question: "Under what circumstances does enhancing community accountability and empowerment improve education outcomes, particularly for the poor?" It

¹⁴ The regions in the study included Asia, Central America, Mexico, Africa and Oceania.

examined specific community accountability interventions (such as community score cards, citizen report cards), and selected decentralisation, school-based management and community schools initiatives. The review found that community accountability and empowerment interventions can improve education outcomes in some circumstances. It identified the categories of intervention within which community accountability and empowerment interventions fit and collated the evidence for intermediate outcomes and student-learning outcomes from the interventions. The study proposed 11 different mechanisms that operate in community-accountability and empowerment interventions. According to them, most of these mechanisms are unable to reach the ultimate outcome of improved student learning and reach only an intermediate outcome. These intermediate outcomes can be considered proxies for understanding the context within which it is more likely for community-accountability and empowerment interventions to achieve an improvement in student learning outcomes. Of the various mechanisms identified within the review, one related to engaging service providers and officials. According to this mechanism, “*Community-accountability and empowerment interventions may need to leverage existing social capital in order to engage fearful, or otherwise reluctant, service providers and officials in a collaborative process*” (Westhorp et al., 2014, p.120). While the report provided evidence of this mechanism from a study in Ethiopia and Ghana, these were brief, indicating limited research in understanding the relationship between service providers and citizens. When seen in context of education, this could include teachers and parents. Such a mechanism can also be applied to the education sector, where parents and teachers may have a relationship that affects the quality of education provided to students. Thus, working towards building and understanding collaboration between parents and teachers can contribute to a better understanding and effectiveness of community accountability and empowerment interventions or social accountability initiatives in education.

Joshi and Houtzager (2012) further emphasize the importance of understanding the complex and dynamic nature of power relations and social interactions within social accountability. In their study, they examine the rise of social accountability as a response to the inadequacy of traditional accountability mechanisms in delivering public goods and assesses its impact. The authors argue that the focus on labeled 'mechanisms' or 'widgets' of social accountability, such as social audits and community score cards, tends to depoliticize the political processes through which marginalized populations access services. depoliticization occurs when the broader political dynamics and power struggles that shape access to services are neglected. By reducing social accountability to predefined tools or interventions, the complex and dynamic nature of

power relations, social mobilization and collective action can be overlooked. These mechanisms are often presented as technical solutions that can be applied universally, without considering the specific political, social, and historical contexts in which they are implemented. Instead, the authors propose a more comprehensive understanding of social accountability that emphasizes ongoing political engagement between social actors and the state, shaped by both historical and current contexts. This view enables a better understanding of the impact of social accountability on service delivery outcomes, as well as the reasons why social groups undertake social accountability in some contexts but not others.

The study by Joshi and Houtzager offers a useful critique to initiatives focusing on labeled 'mechanisms' or 'widgets' of social accountability and emphasise the need to understand the complex and dynamic nature of power relations and social interactions. In this sense, the findings can be related to the importance of understanding the relationship between teachers and parents, as well as the responsiveness of teachers to parents' demands within the context of social accountability in education. Seeing the relationship between teachers and parents as an enabler or a constraint of responsiveness of teachers contributes to a greater contextual understanding of social accountability mechanisms. It allows for a deeper understanding of the power dynamics, communication channels, and decision-making processes that shape educational outcomes. While Joshi and Houtzager's study emphasizes the importance of understanding the complex and dynamic nature of power relations and social interactions in social accountability, it overlooks the potential influence of service providers' perspectives on citizens' actions, i.e. the ways in which service providers' perspective might influence these citizen actions.

Furthermore, Grandvoinet, Aslam and Raha (2015) also emphasise the relationship between citizens and service providers. In their study, they acknowledge the increasing push towards understanding the mechanism that leads to improved service delivery outcomes within social accountability. This mechanism involves recognising and identifying the longer trajectories that bring about change within social accountability. According to the authors, studies categorised under social accountability often do not discuss these mechanisms and instead focus solely on measuring the final outcome of improved learning. The authors refer to the lack of understanding this mechanism as the 'black box' and propose a framework that describes the different elements within social accountability (

Figure 3). As described in the previous section on models of social accountability (section 2.2) this framework comprises of five main elements which are information, civic mobilisation, citizen action, citizen- state interface and state action. This study stands out as one of the very few attempts to understand the characteristics of the interface between citizens and the state. This interface is considered as a “*core element of social accountability*” (Grandvoinet et al., 2015, p.38). The authors highlight the importance of acknowledging the iterative nature of citizen-state engagement, viewing social accountability mechanisms as if they “*primarily stem from the potential of the citizen-state interface, which is itself a dynamic, iterative engagement between citizen groups and state officials*” (Grandvoinet et al., p.45). The study presents a list of useful questions that help to unpack this citizen-state interface. These include identifying the type of existing interface platforms (whether there is an existing channel for citizens to engage with the officials), awareness of the interface platforms (whether citizens or officials are aware of such a platform), credibility of the interface (is the existing channel or mechanism to engage trusted by citizens and officials), accessibility of the interface platform (is the existing channel accessible to both citizens and officials). Additionally, the study offers valuable insights into the importance of understanding the existing channels of interactions between citizens and service providers, as well as identifying the nature of these interactions. It distinguishes between social accountability in education and community participation in schools by stating that unlike community participation, social accountability does not solely focus on whether citizens have opportunities to participate in decision-making with service providers, but whether they can demand the service providers to explain their actions.

Yet another study recognising the importance of unpacking the process of social accountability is Joshi (2014). The study places emphasis on understanding the ‘micro’ and ‘macro’ context within which social accountability initiatives are undertaken. The macro context within the study involves the need to consider the history of citizen-state engagement, which could include processes such as decentralisation in the country. An example of this in context of India could be the following. Decentralisation reforms have enabled the involvement of citizens in school decision making through the creation of formal structures such as Village Education Committee (VEC) and school management committee (SMC), with the aim of improving school accountability and ensuring responsiveness to local needs (Aiyar, 2010). However, a number of scholars have questioned the implementation and functioning of these committees, as studies have shown that committee members are unaware of their roles and responsibilities,

do not receive timely training and the committees do not function according to the regulations (Singh, Agarwal & Mathu, 2016; Jha, Ghatak et al., 2014; Oxfam India, 2015). All of this combined implies that while structures exist for teachers and parents to communicate regularly, the functioning of these structures plays a significant role in determining the engagement between teachers and parents. To understand the micro-context, Joshi (2014) states that it is important to consider the mini-causal pathways that drive the way in which initiatives within social accountability unfold and the extent to which they are successful. Within the micro-context, she emphasises the need to unpack the initiatives within social accountability in terms of the theory of change or causal chain to understand how desired outcomes work. Such an approach also helps in identifying any bottlenecks within the causal chain. Joshi (2014) also elaborates on two ways to unpack the causal chain: first, to understand the ‘components’ of the pathway and second, to understand the mechanisms through which each of the components could lead to the other. She uses a framework (See Figure 2) to state that the implicit assumption of the model is that the provision of some kind of information/ transparency will lead to citizen action, which will then together lead to a state response. However, the relationship between these three components could work in any direction and is often not straightforward. She provides a series of steps in the form of questions that need to be considered at each disaggregated state of reaching from information to state response. This, she calls ‘tracing the causal chain’, and it includes identifying specific features of information (whether it is new, credible, understandable), identifying the specific motivation of citizen action (whether they understand the information, do they care, do they think their actions will have any impact), and identifying the type of state response (do they think citizens have legitimate grievances, do they care about their reputation, do they feel responsible for a public good). All these together then lead to gaining a better understanding of the contextual conditions that make social accountability initiatives work. Joshi’s framework provides a useful starting point to think about unpacking the overall model of social accountability. Given its focus on unpacking the mechanism of social accountability, it is well suited to be used as a framework to establish the focus of my thesis on understanding the relationship between teachers and parents (see section 2.6).

Overall, these studies provide valuable insights into the complexities of the mechanisms of social accountability. While social accountability has gained attention as a means to improve governance and service delivery, the studies highlight the need for a deeper understanding of the mechanisms that contribute to the success of social accountability initiatives. While some

studies emphasize the importance of strategic approaches that combine citizen voice with state responsiveness, others highlight the need to consider the engagement among the various actors involved. Nevertheless, these studies highlight the incomplete exploration of some of the important aspects within social accountability that form the gaps in research. I discuss these in the next section.

2.4.3 Gaps in research on social accountability

The review of the evidence on social accountability in the previous two sections helped in identifying the two major gaps in existing knowledge and understanding of social accountability in education as a concept.

The first gap relates to limited focus on direct engagement between teachers and parents. The literature review of empirical studies within social accountability in education in India revealed that an improved relationship between teachers and parents are important within social accountability in education. However, this is often seen as an intermediate effect of social accountability initiatives, where an improvement in parent-teacher relationship is considered as one of the factors leading to the final outcome of improved student outcomes (Pandey et al., 2009; Galab et al., 2013). The literature reviewed on models and mechanisms of social accountability highlights that the citizen-state interface is one of the main components within social accountability (Grandvoinet et al., 2015). While the emphasis on the interface is useful, these conceptual understandings by various scholars have overlooked the immediate and direct relationship between citizens and service providers - in our case, the teachers and parents. Exploring this immediate relationship is of great value, especially considering the recent evidence from India highlighting how a lack of connection between teachers and parents can impede genuine engagement, leading to an overall lack of meaningful discussion about student learning (Dyer, Jacob, et al., 2022). Furthermore, comprehending this relationship can help in unpacking the pathways through which social accountability ultimately contributes to improved service delivery outcomes (Joshi, 2014).

The second gap relates to the limited focus on perspectives of service providers. Both empirical and theoretical evidence on social accountability reveals the existence of limited evidence from the side of service providers, in our case, the teachers. The evidence reviewed demonstrates that studies conducted within community participation in school have mostly focused on the side of parents. These experiments have looked at the impact of making the members of these

committees aware of their roles and responsibilities through information campaigns and attempted to empower them to ensure better monitoring of the schools (Banerjee et al., 2008; Pandey et al., 2009). These experiments have also led members to actively engage in a dialogue with school teachers (Galab et al., 2013).

However, crucial aspects such as teachers' views, their willingness to engage with parents and the obstacles they encounter in doing so, have received comparatively less attention. This knowledge gap underscores a deficiency in our understanding of social accountability in education. The significance of these perspectives is further emphasised by Dyer, Sriprakash et al. (2022) who highlight the assumptions inherent in the social contract presumed by RTE Act in India. In their work, the authors delve into interviews with parents and teachers from two Indian states to shed light on the challenges they face in fulfilling their roles. These roles encompass parents ensuring their children's regular attendance. The study points to how this role assigned to parents through the social contract assumed by RTE, often overlooks the realities, where children need to care for their younger siblings when parents are earning a livelihood. Similarly, teachers are tasked with ensuring children's regularity at school, but their practical role involves navigating diverse expectations. They are expected to counsel parents, reshape their mindsets and concurrently teach the children. The study emphasises the significance of recognising that actors tasked with collectively working together might not always have the capability or willingness to fulfil these roles and responsibilities.

2.5 Linking teacher-parent interactions, relationship formation and teacher responsiveness

While there is limited empirical and theoretical evidence on how interactions and a positive relationship between parents and teachers could lead to enhanced social accountability, there is evidence to show the how interactions between teachers and parents can be linked with the relationship forged between the two as well as teacher' responsiveness to parents.

Islam (2017) provides evidence on parent-teacher meetings and its impact on student outcomes in Bangladesh. The study conveys the potential benefits from interactions on students' learning outcomes. The randomised field experiments involving regular face-to-face meetings between teachers and parents in rural locations in Bangladesh showed that these meetings led parents to spend more time assisting their children as well as monitoring their schoolwork. They

conducted thirteen face-to face meetings between 2011 and 2012. Within the treatment group, parents were invited and encouraged to attend the face-to-face meetings. In these meetings, the teachers showed each parent a report card containing information about the performance of their child, as well as how the child performed in comparison to other children in the classroom. In addition to this, teachers also suggested ways in which parents can help children at home. The experiment resulted in some positive findings. The parent-teacher interactions had a positive effect on student outcomes. This effect was largest for better performing children; however, lower ranked children gained greater benefits with more interactions. In addition to this, the treated students also showed more positive attitudes, higher aspirations, spent more time studying and received help from the parents. The results also showed an increased parental involvement in their children's studies, improvement in teacher and student absenteeism and changes in teachers' efforts. This indicates that these interactions might not be just teachers conveying on how to help children at home, but also might be leading to greater parental engagement in school. The findings from the study revealed a reduction in teacher absenteeism, suggesting that the collaborative nature of these interactions influenced teacher commitment and accountability. This indicates that regular teacher-parent interactions have the potential to establish a collaborative partnership where teachers and parents work together to support and enhance children's learning experiences.

In the case of India, although limited, there is some evidence to show how interactions between parents and teachers can lead to forming a positive relationship between the two groups that can significantly contribute to the responsiveness of teachers to parents' concerns. This evidence comes from the work related to teacher motivation in India. STiR Education's¹⁵ work in India provides important insights into understanding how communication between teachers and parents can motivate the teachers to develop a positive relationship with the parents. STiR Education's program on teacher motivation and student learning, points to the vital role the local community can play in making teachers feel valued and respected, to the extent that it can motivate them to invest time and energy in improving teaching practice (IDinsight, 2018, p.22). STiR's theory of change is based on the idea that better motivated teachers can make an enormous difference to the global learning crisis. The underlying assumption and logic behind

¹⁵ STiR Education is an international NGO working in India and Uganda. The organisation focuses on changing the behaviours and attitudes of teachers through igniting their intrinsic motivation and utilising teacher networks. The organisation started in 2012 with 25 teachers in New Delhi, India and has now reached 200,000 teachers together in India and Uganda.

this theory is that ‘recognition’ from the school (students and colleagues), the wider community (parents, other people in the village) and the teacher’s own family, can improve support, valuation, and visibility of teacher efforts. This in turn can lead to an increased motivation for the teachers. They state that *“teachers’ level of motivation to improve their teaching practice to help children learn, to the extent that this is visible and interesting to the families and communities surrounding the school, may influence how the community views the value of education and particular types of teachers”* (IDinsight, 2018, p.18). One of the activities included within their model involved an explicit focus on making teachers’ efforts visible to the parents. STiR’s model in India points to the linkages between the recognition teachers receive from the community, and their motivation to improve teaching practices.

A few qualitative studies in India indicate how interactions with parents and a positive relationship with them could be of value to the teachers, thereby increasing the likelihood of teachers’ responsiveness to parents. Qualitative evidence in India suggests that community appreciation for their efforts is important to teachers (Mooij, 2008; Ramachandran et. al., 2005). Lack of respect and appreciation from their supervisors and from the community were cited as key reasons for low motivation among the government school teachers in India (Mooij, 2008). In response to a series of questions through focus group discussions, the study revealed the importance teachers attached to community appreciation, with some teachers mentioning it accounted for some of the ‘best moments’ in their career. Appreciation received from government officials was also important. While describing their ‘worst moment’, some teachers mentioned a lack of respect from the community, which was a demotivator. The study also reported teachers’ frustration at the lack of parental support and described teachers’ desires to regain the respect as professionals from the community members.

In their study, Edge et al. (2017) explored how governments, states, districts, schools, and NGO actors worked to support teacher motivation and retention. Their research was carried out in Jordan, Scotland (UK), Uganda, Ontario (Canada), Uttar Pradesh (India) and Shanghai (China). A comprehensive review of Uttar Pradesh’s key education policies, and analysis of interviews with 11 major actors in the education system (including stakeholders from the government at the state, district, and block levels, as well as from teacher unions and civil society) revealed that community engagement could enable parents to recognise the challenges teachers face, as well as to understand the different ways of teaching that teachers implemented in classrooms. Such engagement could contribute to positive perceptions of the teaching profession (Edge et

al., 2017, p.73). By engaging more with parents, teachers are likely to change the perceptions of parents and the local community towards the school by displaying their efforts, and thereby gain respect from the community. Gaining this respect is likely to motivate the teachers. This evidence indicates the need for teachers to convey their efforts to the parents, for it to lead to appreciation and respect from them, and although it does not detail specific information about regular interactions between teachers and parents, these interactions could potentially form a mechanism for teachers to convey their efforts and gain appreciation from parents. Therefore, regular interactions between teachers and parents can serve as a mechanism for teachers to convey their efforts, gain recognition, and foster appreciation from parents, ultimately enhancing their responsiveness to parents' concerns.

2.6 The conceptual framework of the thesis

A conceptual framework orientates the thesis and provides a logical structure of connected concepts, to demonstrate how ideas in a study relate to one another. For this reason, I combine the components of social accountability, the evaluation study, and the focus of this research, to present the conceptual framework. Accordingly, I first discuss the details of the evaluation study and then situate it within the broader framework of social accountability in education to define the focus of the thesis.

2.6.1 Details of the evaluation study from which the thesis originates.

As mentioned before, this thesis originated within an evaluation study called 'Increasing accountability from the grassroots in rural Sitapur, India'. Although the thesis doesn't draw conclusions from the evaluation activities, it uses the study's sample and objective to provide context for its focus on teachers' responsiveness. To establish parallels and links with this research, it's important to understand the design, aims, and objectives of the evaluation. This can enhance the understanding of teachers' perspectives which is the focus of the thesis.

The evaluation study aimed to measure the impact of a randomized controlled trial (RCT) on children's foundational literacy and numeracy outcomes. The RCT investigated whether learning outcomes could be improved through community-based activities when teachers participated in them. The study randomly assigned 400 villages, each with at least two government primary schools, to three groups: villages where the focus was on both schools and communities (200 villages), villages where the focus was only on communities (100

villages), and a control group (100 villages). The study aimed to evaluate the impact of the RCT on parents' and school actors' perceptions of, attitudes to, and practices around the learning potential of all children. It also aimed to understand the processes by which community-based learning activities and stronger school-community interactions can change children's learning.

The evaluation's theory of change was that by involving both parents and teachers in activities that focused on children's learning would foster a shared sense of responsibility for children's learning. However, the evaluation made an important assumption that teachers were willing to participate in these community activities and interact with parents in ways that would lead to a dialogue and prospective partnership between the two. This is what the thesis focuses on, as it attempts to understand the perspectives of teachers to interact with parents. The conceptual framework of the thesis describes this linkage between the evaluation study's activities and the focus of the thesis.

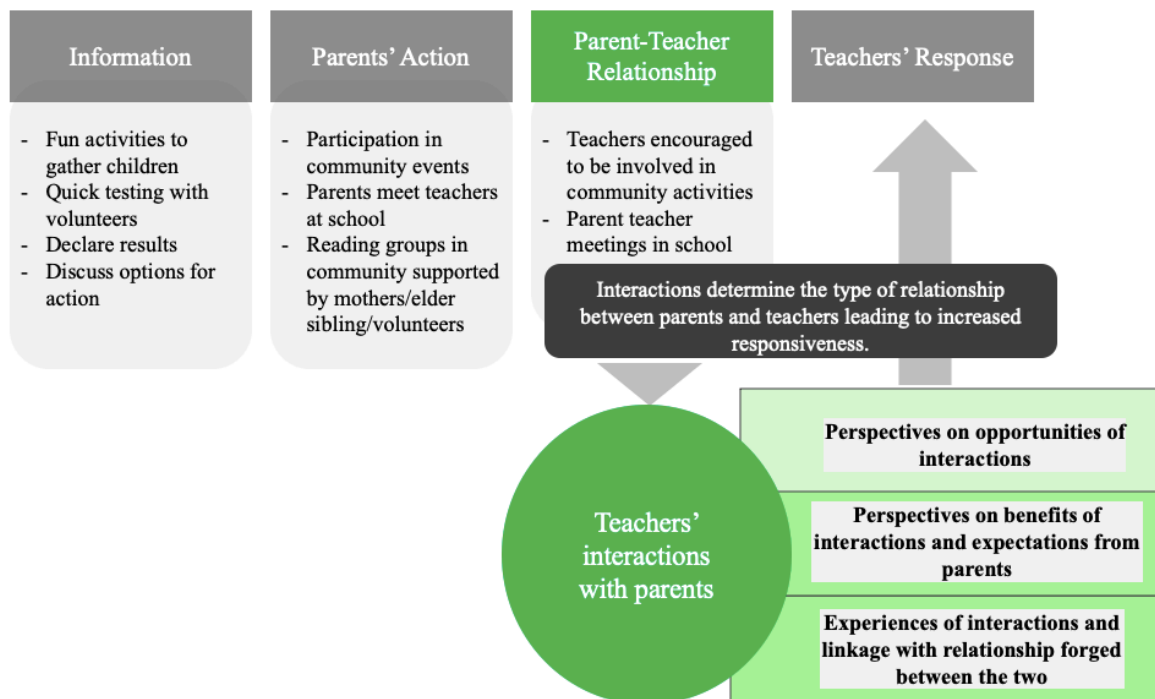
2.6.2 Combining the components of social accountability, aspects of the evaluation and focus of the thesis.

To situate the evaluation activities within the realm of social accountability and clarify the thesis focus, I have adopted Joshi's (2014) framework on social accountability. This framework is particularly fitting for several reasons. Firstly, it offers a clear indication of the primary elements involved within social accountability. Secondly, Joshi (2014) emphasizes the importance of the causal chain that connects these elements, highlighting the interconnectedness and influence between them. This aligns well with the aim of the thesis, which is to explore the relationship between teachers and parents and understand how their interactions contribute to the causal chain. Lastly, Joshi's (2014) framework emphasises the need to unpack the micro-context, which is crucial for examining the specific dynamics within the teacher-parent relationship. This relationship serves as a significant micro-context that influences the responsiveness of teachers to parents. By employing Joshi's (2014) framework, the thesis effectively delves into the intricacies of the teacher-parent relationship within social accountability.

The causal chain of social accountability described by Anuradha Joshi (2014), works on the principle of increased availability of information as well as an active citizenry acting as a lever

for change. This informed active citizenry (Information) then leads to citizens demanding accountability (citizen action) from public officials, which further leads to a response from the service provider. If this response is positive, it is likely to lead to improved service delivery. For the purposes of this research, I have narrowed the definitions of citizen and service providers to refer to parents and teachers respectively to represent social accountability in education. I start with the three main elements of the social accountability framework and connect these to the activities conducted within the evaluation study to which my research relates (see Figure 5).

Figure 5: The conceptual framework depicting social accountability and focus of the thesis.



*Source: Author

At the top of the figure, the grey boxes represent the components of social accountability framework as adapted from Joshi (2014). I use the term 'parents' action' instead of citizen action and 'teacher response' instead of state response. Within this causal chain, I add 'parent-teacher relationship' which acts as an interface between parents' action and teachers' response and is also the focus of this thesis. Below these grey boxes are descriptions of the activities conducted as a part of the evaluation carried out in the villages. This thesis places emphasis on understanding the relationship between teachers and parents through gaining insight into the interactions between the two. This is shown at the bottom of the figure in green. To understand

these interactions, I consider three aspects of teachers' perspectives (represented in green rectangular boxes). I first explore the perspectives of teachers on the opportunities they have to interact with the parents to understand if these help in building a positive relationship between teachers and parents. Secondly, I explore teachers' perspectives on the benefits of interactions with the parents as well as their expectations from parents to understand the willingness and motivation of teachers to form a positive collaborative relationship with the parents. The perceived benefits of interactions with parents and the expectations that teachers have of parents can play a significant role in determining their willingness to interact with parents. Thirdly, I explore the perspectives of teachers on their experiences and what these convey about the relationship forged between the two groups. The experiences of teachers in their interactions with parents play a crucial role in shaping the sustainability of the relationship between the two parties which can have a significant impact on teachers' responsiveness to parents. Ultimately, these inform teachers' response to the parents' demands. Thus, overall, the thesis aims to understand teachers' responsiveness to parental actions created as a part of the evaluation study in the village.

The evaluation encompassed a series of initiatives centering around 'information' and 'citizen action'. These included strategies such as making parents aware of their children's low learning levels. This dissemination of information dissemination was accompanied by an active participation of volunteers from within the village to help support children's learning. These local volunteers were ones who had at least completed their secondary education and were willing to teach children in primary grades. These dedicated volunteers organised children into reading groups throughout the village and conducted activities related to basic foundational learning with them in the village. All these were aimed at encouraging involvement of parents and informing them about learning outcomes of their children so that they could be more confident in discussing their child's education with the teachers. To facilitate these parents' discussions with the teachers (Citizen Action), meetings were also planned within the evaluation study. Within the 'service provider response' the evaluation prompted teachers to actively participate in community activities as well as the parent-teacher meetings. However, the teachers' responses to this encouragement remained uncertain, constituting the focus of this thesis. I argue that to understand whether teachers would be willing to discuss children's learning with parents (teacher responsiveness) and encourage parental involvement in the school, it is important to focus on how they see their relationship with the parents. This relationship can be understood by exploring teachers' perspectives on their interactions with

parents. For example, regular interactions with parents, if seen positively by the teachers imply more likelihood of teachers' listening and discussing children's learning with the parents. This assertion is drawn from recent scholarship focused on India which delves into various forms of connections between teachers and parents, highlighting how bureaucratic accountability practices can hinder genuine engagement and meaningful discussion about student learning (Dyer, Jacob, et al., 2022). These reflections hold significant relevance for advancing accountability structures that genuinely serve the interests of students, ultimately contributing to the overarching goal of improving educational outcomes.

2.6.3 Justifying the focus on teachers' perspectives

The focus of the thesis, as can be seen from the conceptual framework above, is on understanding the relationship between teachers and parents through teachers' interactions with parents. Within this, the perspectives of teachers are emphasised. There are multiple reasons for this focus on teachers, which I explain below.

1) The critical role played by teachers in influencing interactions with parents

First, Indian education policy places the responsibility on teachers for ensuring parental involvement in schools and for building a collaborative space for parents to be involved in schools. The National Curriculum Framework (2005) states that “...*the school must explore opportunities for active engagement by parents and community in the process of learning*” (NCERT, 2005, p.89). The National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education (NCTE, 2009) states that “*the teacher must be equipped not only to teach but also to understand the students and community of parents so that the children are regular in schools and learn*” (p.2). In addition, teachers are also required to include “*locally relevant content*” (p.14) in children's learning. This brings in an indirect responsibility of communicating with the parents and community members, on the teachers.

This importance assigned to teachers is also supported by research in parental involvement which states that teachers' invitations and encouragement lead to enhanced parental involvement in children's education (Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005). The importance is even more pronounced in case of India, especially in rural areas where most parents belong to vulnerable groups. In such areas, there may not be significant participation of community in schools and the SMCs formed might be inactive. Hence, more

efforts are required from teachers to ensure participation of community (Santhakumar, 2018). This critical role assigned to teachers makes a strong case to understand the practices teachers engage in, as well as their perspectives that influence these practices.

Additionally, a number of programs and organisations that have undertaken efforts to bring schools and communities together in India have faced challenges due to lack of cooperation from the teachers. Saajha, for example, is a non-government organisation that has been working with government schools in parts of India since 2014, focusing on partnerships between families and schools. It aims to build the leadership capacity of both parents and teachers in ensuring accountability for children's learning, in locations such as Delhi, Jharkhand, and Karnataka. Saajha conducts workshops with school principals and teachers to reduce the social divide between parents and teachers, while also empowering the community to play an active role in decision-making in schools. One of the major challenges Saajha has faced is the opposition from teachers and teacher unions (Central Square Foundation, 2014), thereby raising the need to address the challenges and gain an understanding on how teachers perceive these engagements with parents.

Interventions designed to mobilise communities to improve school functioning require accountability and responsiveness of school actors, and it is thus important not just to understand their views, but also address the challenges they face. An initiative was launched in Delhi,¹⁶ under the programme Mission Buniyaad, which focused on strengthening foundational skills among children in primary schools. Community engagement was one of the key components aimed at developing the school to function as an autonomous unit (Boston Consulting Group, 2021). As a part of the programme, SMC members were regularly trained and encouraged to take part in activities and workshops conducted to build their capacities. A mechanism was also put in place to provide SMC members and the schools' leadership teams with feedback. While these initiatives had an impact on school accountability, they faced the challenge of resistance from schools due to a shift in power from school leaders to SMC members. This problem was addressed through gradual, extensive training by the state

¹⁶ Situated to the north of the country, New Delhi is India's capital, and lies within the National Capital Territory of Delhi (NCT). Government schools in Delhi have recently made several attempts to revive the quality of education under the political leadership of the *Aam Aadmi Party*.

government and on-ground communication with the community members. Ultimately, a majority of teachers claimed that SMCs helped them connect with parents.

2. Teachers' perspectives impact their practices

There is a strong reason to believe that teachers' perspectives are likely to affect the ways in which they communicate with parents and develop a relationship with them. The evidence related to teachers' beliefs in context of India shows its close connections with teacher practices. Several studies conducted in context of India have shown how the beliefs that teachers hold in play a significant role in influencing their actions. This evidence further highlights the significance of understanding teachers' perspectives as they are often the indicators of what they intend to do. While most of the evidence has focused on teachers' beliefs about the student they teach in relation to their pedagogy within the classroom, it points to the link between what teachers believe and how they act in their daily lives, thereby raising a need to understand these perspectives.

Sabarwal et al. (2022), in their work aimed at understanding teacher effectiveness in developing countries, reflect on existing literature to understand how teacher beliefs matter, how well these have been incorporated in design and evaluation of education interventions in developing countries as well as analyse the data on 20,000 teachers across nine developing countries¹⁷ on their beliefs. Their study puts forward insights on how teacher beliefs impact teacher effectiveness. They show that teachers have a fixed mindset about the ability of children to learn. This is likely to affect the ways in which they teach. Next, they show that teachers believe their absenteeism is acceptable if students are left with work to do in classroom. They also show that teachers believe in exerting more efforts for well performing students, who are better resourced than those who are lagging, thus, reinforcing rather than compensating for gaps in learning between these students. According to the authors, these insights affect the policy designs. They argue that this linkage between the beliefs teachers hold and their ability to influence the outcomes of educational reforms on ground: *“If teachers continue to believe that there is not much they can do to help poor students, then policy-mandated extra classes for lagging students might not be very effective”* (p.100). Similarly, De and Malik (2021) also discuss the aspects of teacher beliefs influencing teachers' practice in their study on

¹⁷ These included Afghanistan, Argentina, Indonesia, Myanmar, Nigeria, Nepal, Pakistan, Senegal, Tajikistan, Tanzania.

understanding connections between social distance, teacher beliefs, teacher practice and student outcomes in the context of India and Pakistan. They describe the two pathways that link teacher's beliefs with children's learning- first, through expectations of students and how they learn and second, through their own effort. They measure social distance in terms of differences in education and income levels of teachers and parents of children they teach. They show that teacher beliefs about children belonging to poor families and illiterate parents affect the ways in which they teach these children. Combining these two aspects, they show how social distance shape teachers' beliefs and practices in rural India and Pakistan. Their study shows that teachers' conceptualisation of a good student reflects characteristics of children who would typically belong to well-off and economically stable families. They also show that most teachers in their study believe that children of parents with low levels of education or low income have lower capability of learning. These beliefs, according to the authors, might be reproducing disadvantages that the students arrive in school with. The two studies indicate the criticality of understanding teachers' perspectives as these perspectives tend to shape their actions, including their interactions with parents and the development of relationships with them.

The significance of teachers' perspectives has been acknowledged by Dyer et al. (2004). The authors discuss the importance of local knowledge for improving the quality of in-service teachers training in India. They emphasise the role of teacher beliefs to push for a knowledge-based approach for teacher development. They state, "*the nature of teachers' knowledge and skills, and how they are applied, are embedded in and shaped by teachers' attitudes and beliefs, and those attitudes and beliefs themselves reflect contexts in which teachers have grown up, taken their professional training, and now practise*" (Dyer et al., 2004, p.41). In doing this, they argue that it is important for teacher development programmes to address teacher beliefs that are formed through their functioning within the local context, where teachers have specific beliefs about children belonging to rural and urban areas, about literate and illiterate parents and their own capacities to bring changes in learning levels of children attending the government schools.

Ramachandran (2020) suggests placing teacher beliefs at the centre because they influence their attitudes towards children and shape the pedagogy in classrooms. She claims this importance of beliefs from her own experience of working with the teachers. She provides an example "... *teacher's prejudices, biases and attitudes can also be a critical barrier to learning.*

If teachers believe that some caste/class of children do not have the innate ability to learn, they are most likely to ignore the concerned children and focus only on those who they believe can learn” (Ramachandran, 2020, p.12).

3) Teachers’ perspectives can influence the outcomes of reforms

Evidence in case of India has shown that teachers have the ability to influence the outcomes of reforms. This evidence comes from studies that have focused on teachers’ union membership in India¹⁸. The political connectedness of these unions have a strong influence on reforms, thereby, emphasising the importance of gaining more insights into teachers’ perspectives about what they value. Additionally, these teachers could pose credible threats through influencing the votes by informal campaigns to the community members living around the schools where they teach. Teachers are also attractive to the politicians because of their sheer number (Béteille, 2009).

Numerous studies on teacher unions in India have shown how a highly politicised teacher workforce has resulted in low levels of accountability where teachers have consistently opposed the use of performance-based pay and promotion and attempts at ensuring a code of conduct for teachers to make teachers realise the importance of reaching the school in time (Khandelwal & Biswal, 2004; Béteille, 2009; Kingdon & Muzammil, 2009; Béteille, et al., 2016).

In relation to teacher union’s influence on participation of parents and community members in schools’ functioning, they have successfully been able to change the focus of reforms based in the past. To explain this, it is important to understand the structural reforms undertaken by the Government of India in 1992 to open the economy that impacted the education sector. To

¹⁸ Teacher unions in India have a long-standing history with the first union being set up in 1890 with the objective of stimulating interests in art of teaching, encouraging its study and promoting sociability (Béteille, Kingdon & Muzammil, 2016). Uttar Pradesh was the first to set up a state-level teacher union in the country (Gupta, 2013). The teacher unions fall into the categories defined by geographical level (national, state, district), school level (primary, secondary, higher secondary), school type (government, private-aided, private), contract type (regular teaches on permanent contracts and para teachers on fixed contracts) and subject type (Beteille et al., 2016). According to Kingdon and Muzammil (2009), there are two potential pathways that could be used to justify union membership: 1) where teachers believe it empowers and enables them to implement innovations to maximise child welfare; and 2) where teachers may rely on membership to provide ‘cover’ if they are unable to fulfil their responsibilities.

improve the overall quality of schools under the 1992 District Primary Education Program (DPEP), emphasis was placed on five key areas: (i) school infrastructure; (ii) contracting local teachers; (iii) enhanced community involvement in schools; (iv) in-service training; and (v) increased monitoring of dropout rates and children's learning¹⁹. At the time, given the government's failure to consult teacher unions, they faced opposition from the teachers to their decision to involve community, who leveraged the power of union membership to successfully do so. This has also been the case in Uttar Pradesh (Kingdon & Muzammil, 2009). When the draft version of the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act was circulated in 2005, it included provisions that constituted widely empowered school management committee (SMC) for each school. The powers of the SMC included teacher appointments, salary disbursements, and the ability to take disciplinary action against teachers (Béteille et al., 2016). Other provisions within this included, the formation of a school-based cadre which suggested that once a teacher had been posted to a school, s/he would not be able to easily seek a transfer. While these provisions were meant to improve teacher accountability, they faced heavy opposition from union members. There was strong criticism of the fact that SMC members often lacked the experience to supervise teachers (Chakravarty, 2010) and doubts were raised about the ability of local community (panchayats) to raise money for paying teacher salaries (Kingdon & Muzammil, 2009). Accordingly, the role of SMCs was reduced considerably when the bill was finally enacted in 2009. In its current form, the Right to Education Act mandates all government, private-aided schools to have an SMC in which parents form a major percentage of the membership. The role and function of the committee includes: (a) monitoring the working of the school; (b) preparing and recommending a school development plan; and (c) monitoring the utilisation of grants received from the appropriate government authorities (GoI, 2009). Thus, teacher unions have successfully changed the focus of reforms by leveraging their power and opposing initiatives that involve community participation and accountability, as seen in the case of school management committees (SMCs). The opposition from union members resulted in the reduction of SMCs' powers and a shift towards greater parent representation in the enacted Right to Education Act. These findings underscore the importance of gaining deeper insights into teachers' perspectives and values, as they play a significant role in shaping the educational landscape and determining the success of reforms.

¹⁹ Information about DPEP accessed from <https://www.educationforallindia.com/page91.html>

Overall, understanding teachers' perspectives is crucial for fostering teacher parent relationships, shaping educational practices, and achieving successful education reforms, as they play a critical role in influencing parental involvement, their own teaching methods, and the outcomes of reform efforts.

2.7 Concluding remarks

In conclusion, this chapter presents a comprehensive literature review on social accountability in education and teacher-parent relationship. The literature search strategy employed ensured a thorough examination of relevant studies, contributing to the robustness of the findings from the literature reviewed. I explored various definitions of social accountability along with an analysis of its core features and assumptions, providing a solid foundation for subsequent research. The empirical evidence presented regarding the impact assessment of specific social accountability tools offered valuable insights into their effectiveness and potential for improving educational outcomes. Furthermore, the examination of studies focusing on the theoretical understanding of the mechanisms of social accountability shed light on the underlying processes and dynamics at play deepening our understanding of how social accountability operates in the education sector. However, it became evident that there are significant gaps in research, particularly regarding the direct engagement between teachers and parents, as well as limited perspectives from service providers. These gaps highlight the need for further investigation and understanding teachers' voices in research on social accountability. One notable gap identified is the limited focus on relationship between teachers and parents, while another is the limited attention given to the perspectives of service providers (or teachers in the case of this thesis). Previous studies on social accountability have predominantly focused on the perspectives of parents, while neglecting the views and challenges faced by teachers in engaging with parents. Understanding teachers' perspectives is crucial, as their beliefs and attitudes significantly impact their actions and practices, influencing the outcomes of educational reforms, as evidenced by the influence of teachers' union membership on reform processes in India.

Given these gaps, I then expanded on evidence in case of India to show the interconnectedness between teacher-parents interactions, relationship formation and responsiveness of teachers to parents. Next, I presented the conceptual framework of this thesis, which combines the components of social accountability, aspects of the larger evaluation study and the specific focus on teachers' perspectives to understand the relationship between teachers and parents.

This provided a solid basis for examining the dynamics of teacher-parent interactions within the context of social accountability in education. Using the framework of social accountability, the overarching question addressed in the thesis is “**What can we understand about the teacher parent relationship through government primary school teachers' perspectives on interactions with parents in rural Sitapur, India?**”. The specific research questions are:

RQ1: What are teachers’ perspectives on the opportunities they have to interact with the parents?

The purpose of this question is to understand how teachers perceive the opportunities of interactions and whether these help build a positive collaborative relationship between teachers and parents.

RQ2: What are teachers' perspectives on benefits of interactions with parents and their expectations from parents?

The purpose of this question is to understand the willingness, motivation, or hinderance for teachers to establish and maintain collaborative relationship with the parents.

RQ3: What do teachers' experiences of interactions with the parents convey about the relationship between the two groups?

The purpose of this question is to understand the nature of their relationship with parents based on teachers' experiences of interactions and how such a relationship may evolve over time.

By answering the above three questions, the thesis aims to contribute to the knowledge base on social accountability in education by bringing a focus on the relationship between teachers and parents. The subsequent chapters will delve into the empirical analysis, providing insights and recommendations that can guide policy and practice in fostering effective teacher-parent interactions and enhancing social accountability in education systems. In the next chapter, I present the overall methodology adopted for answering these questions.

Chapter 3. Research Design

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I begin by explaining my positionality, which largely shaped how this research was conducted (section 3.2). Next, I explain the social constructivist paradigm that I adopted in my research and provide a justification for choosing this paradigm (section 3.3). I then discuss the overall approach of the research (section 3.4), which includes detailed explanation of the research strategy considered appropriate, the sampling process, the research methods employed and the procedures for analysing the data collected. In the next section, I specify the aspects of the data collection, including the timeline for the data collection and challenges faced, provide details on how the COVID-19 pandemic impacted the overall research design, its implications on the focus of this research and describe the limitations of this research design (section 3.5). In the following sections, I expand on how I ensured rigor throughout the research (section 3.6) and the ethical considerations that guided this research (section 3.7), including: obtaining informed consent of participants, following the ethical procedures during my fieldwork, and fulfilling my responsibility as a part of being involved within the larger evaluation study.

3.2 Research Positionality

Research positionality reflects the values and beliefs of the researcher and explains how the researchers view themselves within a given research (Darwin Holmes, 2020). It involves the researcher's reflexivity on the nature of knowledge and the researcher's relationship with the research context as well as with the research participants (Corlett & Mavin, 2018). Reflexivity entails questioning one's own choices within a research context and finding positionality often requires this reflexivity on how one sees themselves within the research (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013). For this reason, I would like to briefly outline my experience of working in education research in rural India and how this influenced the focus of this research on teachers. My position as a researcher for this thesis must be seen in relation to my past work in India. Being part of the ASER Centre²⁰ in India for more than three years provided invaluable insights into working with children and families in rural settings. Working as a researcher at ASER

²⁰ASER Centre is the research and assessment arm of Pratham Education Foundation, which is the largest NGO working in the field of education. Its specific focus is on children's learning improvement, specifically in rural areas. I worked as a senior researcher ASER Centre.

Centre allowed me to observe the functioning of rural government schools through regular visits to the rural locations, as well as through the data I analysed. This experience helped me understand the dynamics of the relationships in these rural locations and the views and perceptions around government schoolteachers. These perceptions acted as one of the reasons that sparked my interest in understanding teachers' views about parents.

My experience of working with schools and communities in India highlighted the tendency of respondents, especially the teachers, to provide socially desirable responses. Part of the reason for this could be due to their fear of being reported to the authorities. To try and counter this, I spent considerable time with each participant teacher to help create an environment of trust so that they could freely express their thoughts. This involved spending 3-4 days only to have general conversations with the teachers in a particular school where I introduced my study, tried to build a rapport with them through self-disclosure, sharing information about myself and my PhD as well as talking about their concerns around sharing any information with me. Bergen and Labonté (2019) discuss a similar approach in their study on addressing social desirability bias in qualitative research. This prolonged engagement also gave me a better understanding of the schools' context and the situation in which the teachers worked.

My position within the research could be considered that of an outsider. The issue of insider vs outsider is much discussed by scholars in relation to positionality, because researchers can often come from backgrounds that are completely different from those of their research participants (Darwin Holmes, 2020). Despite my familiarity with their rural locations, the language, non-verbal cues, and an understanding of the context in which government school teachers work, the research participants did not consider me an insider. This was due to my urban upbringing, as well as my education in the UK. My outsider position fits well with Mercer's (2007) definition. Mercer states that instead of being a dichotomy, the insider-outsider position is a continuum with multiple dimensions, and that in reality, the researchers often move back and forth between the insider and outsider positions. Following this definition, I can state that my position is inclined more towards an outsider.

A disadvantage of this outsider position was that the teachers did not know my intentions, they considered me as a journalist who would then publish their statements in newspapers. Accordingly, they were not confident and did not openly talk to me in the beginning. However, I managed to overcome this disadvantage by spending a considerable amount of time

explaining the purpose of my research. Often, teachers doubted the purpose and end-use of my research, asking why someone studying in the United Kingdom would receive funding to carry out such a study in rural Sitapur. It therefore took significant time and effort to make them feel comfortable, as opposed to how it might have been for an insider or someone they would have known. It is important to state this position because the additional time I spent with them built some measure of a rapport, and they were then able to share their experiences and views comfortably.

As I had described in chapter 1, my thesis is part of a larger grassroots evaluation study led by the Pratham Education Foundation in India, ASER Centre and the REAL Centre. Being attached to this study had both advantages and challenges, that ultimately affected the design of this thesis. The most significant advantages included: gaining access to the government schools and the research participants; receiving support from the teams working on ground and being able to reflect on the findings with the research teams based in India and the United Kingdom. The challenges included: mapping the activities conducted within the evaluation study to my own data collection focus for the thesis; and adapting the research timeline based on the timelines of the larger study. There were overlaps in my time in the field and larger study's survey data collection rounds. To avoid consuming too much of teachers' time in school, I ensured to not make a visit to the schools shortlisted for my thesis if they were recently surveyed. Another challenge of being attached to the evaluation study meant explaining to the teachers how I was not representing Pratham Education Foundation or their views. These teachers held less-than-positive views about Pratham Education Foundation and thought that the organisation is working to promote privatisation of education.²¹ I had to convince them of the independence of my research to ensure that the information they shared with me is solely for the purpose of my own thesis. However, irrespective of these challenges, being part of the evaluation study strengthened my research, and as I will explain later, added to the credibility and dependability of the findings.

²¹ Similar views were held by 3 teachers in the sample and came up during initial conversations with them.

3.3 Research Paradigm: Adopting a Social Constructivist Paradigm

In general, a paradigm is ‘a comprehensive belief system, worldview, or framework that guides research and practice in the field’ (Willis, 2007: p.8). Creswell and Poth (2018) explain social constructivism as a worldview in which individuals develop a subjective meaning of their experiences. These meanings are often varied and lead the researcher to look for complexity. Hence, within this paradigm, the goal of the research is on understanding the individual and their interpretations of the world around them, thereby assuming that reality is socially constructed (Creswell & Poth, 2018: p.24). The social constructivist paradigm assumes a subjective epistemology which means that the data and the researcher's interpretations are not independent of each other. Within this, the goal of the research is to rely as much as possible on the participants’ views of the situation. Under this paradigm, the research is not guided by a theory; instead, it follows the data and either develops a theory or pattern of meaning.

According to Lincoln et al. (2018), research conducted within the social constructivist paradigm usually believes that context is important and needs to be considered in pursuit of any understanding. However, there is a need to understand the individual, rather than universal laws. In this process, I was constantly interacting with the meanings that teachers attach to their views about parents, as well as reflecting on how I was interpreting these meanings while interacting with the teachers. For example: What do teachers understand by meaningful/useful interactions when they state interactions are of no use, and understanding how have the teachers come to this perspective? Adopting this paradigm, I factored in the individual beliefs of the teachers to understand how they attached meaning to their roles and responsibilities of interacting with the parents, thus placing them at the centre. One of the assumptions under the paradigm is that of ‘relativist ontology’, or the existence of multiple realities, which implies that meaning is constructed through one’s interactions with others (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p.35). Although I mainly used a qualitative approach to the data collection, I also analysed the data from the teacher survey descriptively and added my own field reflections to support the arguments I make. I also ensured that I am constantly discussing the observations about teachers with the field teams, running the evaluation on ground, who were also regularly observing the teachers. Therefore, I believe that the conclusions I have drawn are not just a result of the statements of the teachers but are a combination of how I interpreted these different sources of data associated with the evaluation study.

The overarching aim of this research is to understand the relationship between teachers and parents by examining the perspectives of teachers on interactions with parents using the framework of social accountability. This requires an in-depth understanding of the complexities and nuances of teachers' experiences, their underlying motivations that in turn shape their willingness towards building a relationship with the parents. To achieve this, a qualitative approach was deemed appropriate, which aligns with the social constructivist paradigm. This approach allows participants to share their experiences in their own words, revealing unexpected insights and shedding light on new areas of exploration. Choosing a paradigm has important implications for the methodology and as noted by Creswell and Poth (2018) and Lincoln et al. (2018), the social constructivist paradigm emphasises data collection methods that focus on understanding participants' views and experiences on a given phenomenon. In this study, I used methods that were designed to capture the perspectives of teachers, which I describe in more detail in the next section.

3.4 Research Approach

3.4.1 Multiple case study design

As mentioned before, this research has sought to understand teachers' perspectives of their interactions with parents. To fulfil this objective, a multiple case study design was considered appropriate due to two reasons. First, a multiple case study design allows for a detailed examination of specific cases, in our case the individual teachers, to explore the complexities and nuances of their interactions. By selecting individual teachers as the unit of analysis within each school, the research can delve deeply into their unique experiences in their interactions with parents. This level of analysis allows for a fine-grained exploration of dynamics within teacher and parent relationship by uncovering individual perspectives of teachers in different school contexts. Second, such a design can provide rich and detailed data essential for understanding the intricacies of teachers' experiences and perspectives on interactions with parents. By examining the interactions of teachers across multiple cases, the research can identify broader patterns and challenges of teachers' interactions with the parents.

In general, a case is defined as 'a bounded system' and is considered as an object. Stake (1995) describes two types of cases- instrumental and intrinsic. He defines intrinsic case as something that interests the researcher and is researched because it will expand on the particular case. This contrasts with instrumental case where the focus is on understanding a phenomenon and the

case plays a secondary role in understanding it (Stake, 1995, p.3). For this thesis, the cases selected (teachers) form the instrumental cases since the focus through this selection is to understand their perspectives on interactions that they have with the parents. Creswell and Poth (2018) describe another category of cases, ‘the multiple case study’, which closely aligns with the instrumental case, but considers more than a single case. Stake (2005) explains that multiple case studies are appropriate for projects where the phenomenon is of more interest than an individual case. In this thesis, the phenomenon I intend to research is interactions between teachers and parents. Studying a single case would have limited the possibility of identifying the diverse ways in which teachers experience the interactions with parents. It would also limit our understanding of the different situations teachers face across different schools for them to continue interactions with the parents. The overall purpose of the thesis is not to provide an objective record of how teachers interact with parents, but to understand the characteristics of these interactions and to identify if these help teachers in building a collaboration with the parents. Hence, I employed a multiple case study design, involving several teachers working in rural government primary schools.

Teachers in these case study schools form the unit of analysis for my research, and they include: i) the head teacher, who is usually responsible for the overall functioning of the school; ii) the regular teacher, who is a full-time, permanent teacher, responsible for classroom teaching; and iii) the para teacher, who is a contracted teacher belonging to the local community, and who shares similar responsibilities to those of a regular teacher. Although the RTE Act (2009) specifies the roles and responsibilities of head teachers and teachers in government schools, these are often shared based on the availability of teachers. For example, a recent study in India showed that often head teachers, who are responsible for the overall functioning of the school have to undertake teaching duties, which are ideally the responsibility of regular teachers and para teachers (Ramachandran et al., 2016). The rationale for including all these different types of teachers was based on the distinct responsibilities each of them have within the school and its implication on the ways in which they interact with the parents. The head teachers are the deciding authority in the school and were assumed to be responsible for interactions with the community. Regular teachers are in closer contact with children through classroom teaching and were assumed that they are in a better position to communicate about the child’s learning to parents. As para teachers usually belong to the local community, it was assumed that their interactions with, and views about parents would differ from those of the other regular teachers, who often do not reside in the village where the schools were located.

3.4.2 Sampling: Selecting cases

The sampling of the schools within which the teachers were chosen was undertaken in collaboration with the research team at the ASER Centre. The larger evaluation study also had a qualitative sub-study designed to understand the mechanisms that could help strengthen school-community relationships, to encourage a shared responsibility for children's learning. This sub-study had two strands – one that focused on community members' perspectives on children's learning, and the other, on teacher perspectives. The community-focused study was led by the research team at the ASER Centre and through this thesis, I focused on teachers' perspectives. To ensure a coherent study design, it was decided that the study locations for the qualitative sub-study would be common for both the teacher and community strands.

According to Stake (2005), the way cases are chosen in a multi-case design play a significant role in understanding the phenomenon. He explains that “*a multi-case study starts with recognising what concept or idea binds the cases together*” (Stake, 2005, p.23). For this thesis, this concept was responsiveness of the teachers towards the activities planned within the evaluation study (See details of the evaluation study in section 1.3). Since my focus was to understand the perspectives of teachers on interactions with parents, I chose teachers within the schools that showed initial positive responsiveness towards the activities within the evaluation study. These activities conveyed that the teachers were interested in working with the community members (including parents of children they teach) and must be seeing some advantage in being a part of the evaluation. At the same time, Stake (2005) also advised that within a multi-case study it is also important to have opposing cases²² so that the phenomenon can be studied in different environments. For this reason, I also included one school in which the teachers did not show an interest in engaging in the activities planned within the evaluation study activities. In total, I included 5 responsive schools and 1 non-responsive school.

Multi-stage, purposive sampling was used to select these case study schools. Within each of these schools, I interviewed all teachers- the head teacher, the regular teachers and the para teachers. According to Miles et al. (2013), purposive sampling includes techniques where participants are selected based on researcher's judgment regarding relevance to answering the research question. Patton (2015) describes purposive sampling as a technique for identifying and selecting information-rich cases, which implies selecting cases that are especially

²² Stake (2005) calls these cases as those belonging to atypical settings (Stake, 2005, p.23).

knowledgeable and or experienced with a phenomenon of interest. For this thesis, these information-rich cases were those that showed positive response to the activities within evaluation study. It was multi-stage since I did the selection twice. For the first time, this purposive selection was done in collaboration with the teams at ASER Centre. This involved selection of 4 schools. Due to differences in our objectives and availability of time, I added two more responsive schools in my sample after completing data collection in the four schools.

I first describe the selection of first four schools. This selection was a collaborative activity conducted by me together with the research team at ASER Centre. Given our foci on teachers and community members respectively, the first phase involved the selection of sites where there were responsive and non-responsive schools as well as responsive and non-responsive community members. I refer to this as ‘Stage 1’ of selection based on key informants. Here, cases represented villages where the activities within the evaluation study were being conducted in both schools and in the village (treatment group 2). The key informants were the field teams responsible for running the RCT activities within the evaluation study on ground.²³ They were considered key informants since they had first-hand information about the activities conducted within the evaluation study and responses of the teachers and community members to these activities.

Stage 1: Shortlisting cases based on information from key informants

In October 2019, I, along with the qualitative research team met with 16 senior field team members leading the evaluation in Sitapur district. The field teams were asked to nominate four sites in each of the blocks²⁴ that they were handling as a part of the evaluation study. They were asked to choose two sites that were considered ‘responsive’, and two that were considered ‘difficult.’ The ‘responsive’ sites were those villages where teams could see positive engagement from both teachers and community members, with the likelihood that continued participation would lead to further improvements in the relationship between the two. The ‘difficult’ sites were those villages where there was not much support or positive engagement from either the community and/or the school, despite similar levels of effort to achieve this. To

²³ The teams running the evaluation on ground were divided based on blocks. There were senior team members who supervised these on-ground teams. They were called the team leaders.

²⁴ Each team leader was responsible for more than one block. The four villages nominated by the team leaders could belong to any of the blocks and not necessarily the same block.

facilitate the selection of these sites and maintain uniformity in categorisation, teams were given a set of parameters and asked to nominate sites bearing in mind the engagement and response from the school and community members on the given set of parameters. These parameters are provided in Appendix B and have also been summarised in Ramanujan et al. (2022), as I present in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Parameters used for stage 1 selection of sites based on information from key informants

Stakeholder	Guiding questions
Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are volunteers in the village engaged and regular in running learning camps? • Do volunteers take initiative in organising community school events? • Do parents send their children to participate in intervention activities, and/or organize peer-groups themselves? • Have parents' views about the government teachers changed? Are they ensuring that their child attends school? • Have influential members in the community engaged and helped advocate for the project, either directly or indirectly?
School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do teachers know about the intervention? Do they take an active interest? • Are teachers aware of the volunteers who teach children in the villages? Do they engage with program teams when they visit the school? • Do teachers involve themselves in community activities? Has there been any change in what teachers do? • Have the teachers' thinking about their own role and/or that of the community/parents changed?

Source: Ramanujan et.al., (2022)

Based on the above set of parameters, the teams identified a total of 51 sites, of which 25 were categorised as 'responsive', and 26 as 'difficult'. Teams also provided their rationale behind each recommendation in writing.

Stage 2: Narrowing down selection using quantitative criteria

To further narrow down the list of sites obtained in stage 1, I followed a series of steps. In the first step, the aim was to reduce the number of villages while maintaining the geographic spread. For this, one village per block within each of the category of 'responsive' and 'difficult' sites was selected. This was done using a set of quantitative indicators from the baseline data on school size and teacher allocation, household educational levels and socio-economic advantage and disadvantage among the households. Throughout this process, the rationale was

to maximise variation (Collins et al., 2007; Palinkas et al., 2015) and select villages that differed from one another on these dimensions (Ramanujan et al., 2022). These criteria are documented in detail in the appendix B. The next step was to reduce the number of overall blocks. For this, only those blocks that were accessible and were at a similar distance from the Sitapur city, were considered. For the final step, three indicators that were considered crucial for the overall study were prioritised: teacher and parental awareness of children's learning levels (if they were aligned) and student enrolment and attendance of the children. The level of (mis)alignment indicated a lack of awareness among schools and parents in relation to children's learning. If there is alignment between teacher and parental awareness, it suggests effective communication and collaboration between teachers and parents. Conversely, if there is a lack of alignment, it highlights the need for improved communication and engagement between teachers and parents. The enrolment and attendance of children were considered key proxies for school size and functioning (Ramanujan et al., 2022). Larger school and lower attendance might have different challenges in terms of teacher-parent interactions as compared to smaller schools with higher attendance. I included schools that presented different combinations of enrolment and attendance numbers to account for the varied experiences and perspectives of teachers in these schools.

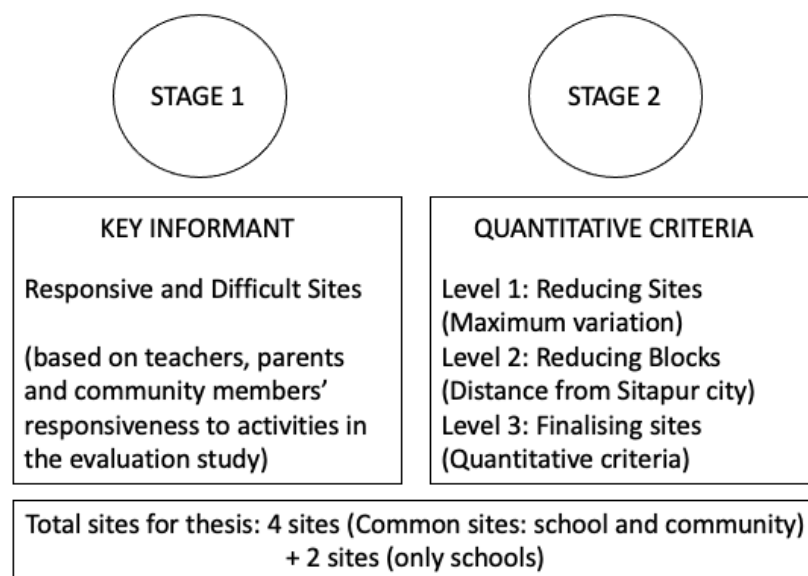
In total, 4 sites were identified after the stage 2. Of these, 3 sites were categorised as 'responsive' and 1 was categorised as 'difficult' site, which respectively consisted of 3 responsive and 1 'difficult' school in my sample. These two stages of sampling were conducted in the months of September and October 2019, when the RCT within the evaluation study had been on-going for around 2 months. The timing to conduct sampling was considered appropriate since, 2 months exposure to the RCT would enable the possibility of getting insights from the field teams (the key informants for stage 1) about involvement of communities and teachers within the evaluation.

After completing data collection in four case study schools, I added two more schools in my sample. These schools were situated very close to village 3 (school 3) and village 4 (school 4). These two schools were identified as being responsive sites by the field teams. These also seemed to be adding more value to understanding parent-teacher interactions.²⁵ One of these schools had a female head teacher (head teachers in the other selected schools were male) and

²⁵ These two schools were also a part of the evaluation that was working in both schools and village.

I believed its inclusion would provide unique insights into how a female head teacher interacted with the parents. The second of the two schools did not have a head teacher because she was on leave and the school was being handled by two regular teachers. The field teams praised these teachers and reported that they received recognition and praise from the people in the village. This case seemed to add value to see the nature of interactions in the absence of a head teacher. Such a sampling approach of adding new cases at a later stage has been described by Miles et al. (2013) as acceptable within the qualitative research since these help in gaining new insights into phenomena. Since the two newly added schools belonged to the same geographical location, it was assumed that these schools would share some similarities with the other sampled schools.²⁶ I have summarised the process of selection of cases from the two stages in sampling process in Figure 6.

Figure 6: Summary of the sampling process



Overall, the selection of schools and unit of analysis being individual teachers were carefully considered to provide a comprehensive and insightful exploration of teachers' perspectives on interactions with the parents. The schools chosen for the thesis were specifically selected because the teachers in these schools showed genuine interest in engaging with the parents within the larger evaluation study. This interest made them the ideal case for exploring the dynamics of teacher-parents relationship. Furthermore, the unit of analysis for this research

²⁶ It must be noted that these two schools were added only for their school focus within the qualitative sub-study. For the community focus, the original four shortlisted sites were used.

are the individual teachers within these schools. This choice is crucial as it enables a detailed examination of a rich array of insights on experiences, perspectives and practices followed by the teachers in their interactions with the parents. By focusing on individual teachers, the thesis aims to uncover the unique nuances, variations and individual agency that might be influencing the dynamics of relationship between teachers and parents. In all, there are six case study schools in this thesis. Within these schools, there are a total of 17 teachers (5 head teachers, 6 regular teachers and 6 para teachers) who were interviewed. In Table 2, I provide the basic information about these case study schools. I also describe these schools and the villages in which they are located to provide a contextual understanding in Chapter 4.

Table 2: Description of sampled teachers across 6 case study schools.

School	Teacher Coding	Designation	Gender	Total teachers in the school (N)
School 1	Dinesh	Head teacher	Male	6 (One regular teacher was on maternity leave)
	Suresh	Regular teacher	Male	
	Amit	Regular teacher	Male	
	Komal	Para teacher	Female	
	Ritu	Para teacher	Female	
School 2	Rama	Head teacher	Female	3 (Two regular teachers did not consent to be interviewed)
School 3	Rajesh	Head teacher	Male	4
	Mohan	Regular teacher	Male	
	Arun	Para teacher	Male	
	Neha	Para teacher	Female	
School 4	Ankit	Head teacher	Male	2
	Gaurav	Regular teacher	Male	
School 5	Ameera Khan	Head teacher	Female	3
	Sangita	Para teacher	Female	
	Ramlal	Para teacher	Male	
School 6	Vikram	Regular teacher	Male	3 (The head teacher was on maternity leave)
	Deepak	Regular teacher	Male	

*In subsequent chapters, I combine school codes, teacher codes, their designation and gender to represent each case. For example: School 1, Dinesh (Head teacher, M) represents Dinesh from school 1, who is a head teacher and ‘M’ denotes male. Similarly, F would imply female.

3.4.3 Research methods and analysis

Creswell and Poth (2018) describe in their work the five main qualitative approaches in research, highlighting that case studies often utilise multiple sources such as interviews,

observations, documents or artefacts (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Building upon this approach, I employed interviews, observations and my own field notes to gain a comprehensive understanding of teachers’ perspectives. While the majority of the thesis’s findings are derived from these primary sources and methods, I also utilised data from the baseline teacher survey conducted at the beginning of the evaluation study. In this section, I will provide a detailed description of these research methods and their alignment with the research questions.

To gather qualitative data, I interviewed 17 teachers across 6 case study schools; I observed 2 parent-teacher meetings in 2 case study schools; and I also relied on my field notes. In addition to this, I undertook secondary data analysis for 1,612 teachers who were surveyed as a part of the evaluation study at baseline (October 2018- January 2019) for their background, educational qualifications and training, and understanding their attitudes and perceptions towards children’s learning. Table 3 provides a list of the methods used in the thesis mapped to the research questions that this thesis aims to answer.

Table 3: Summary of research questions linked with methods and purpose of the specific data being collected.

Research Questions	Methods	Purpose
RQ1: What are teachers’ perspectives on the opportunities they have to interact with the parents?	Interviews Field Notes	To understand how teachers perceive the opportunities of interactions and how they use them to identify whether these help to build a positive collaborative relationship between teachers and parents.
RQ2: What are teachers' perspectives on benefits of interactions with parents and their expectations from parents?	Interviews Field Notes Teacher Survey	To understand the willingness of teachers to establish and maintain collaborative relationship with the parents.

Research Questions	Methods	Purpose
RQ3: What do teachers' experiences of interactions with the parents convey about the nature of their relationship with parents?	Interviews Field Notes Observation	To understand the interconnectedness between teachers' experiences, perspectives and relationship forged between teachers and parents.

D) Interviews

According to Stake (1997), “*the interview is the main road to multiple realities*” (Stake, 1997, p.64). I conducted one-on-one semi-structured interviews with 17 teachers in six government primary schools. Within these interviews, I identified broader areas of interest that helped in understanding the participants’ experiences and opinions (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2018). Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2018) list the main focus of qualitative approaches to interviewing such ‘explanation’, ‘interpreting’, ‘valuing quality’, ‘capturing uniqueness’ (Manion & Morrison, 2018, p.511). These approaches are more open ended and responsive as well as quicker to commence and enable data gathering since the categories need not be decided I advance. They state that within a semi-structured interview, “*questions are more open ended and there is minimum direction or control exhibited by the interviewer*” (Manion & Morrison, p.512). I conducted these interviews with the teachers to understand the ways in which they interact with the parents; identify the reasons for such interactions; gauge their perspectives on benefits (if any) derived from them; capture the experiences of teachers and their expectations from parents with respect to children’s learning.

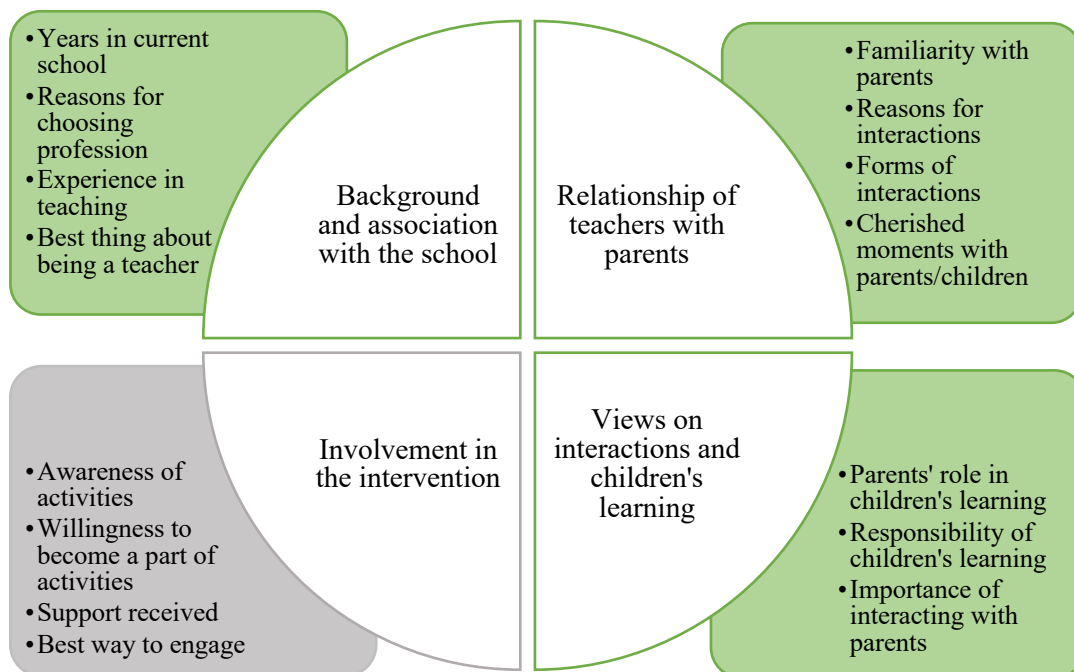
Denzin and Lincoln (2011) suggest that interviews are a suitable method for conducting in-depth investigations, which made them a good fit for my case study research. By using semi-structured interviews as my primary method of data collection, I was able to confirm the formal channels of interaction between teachers and parents that were already known from the literature review, as well as identify some of the informal ways in which teachers engage with parents. The interviews provided an opportunity to ask follow-up questions and explore aspects that the teachers valued in relation to their interactions with parents, resulting in a more comprehensive understanding of the teacher-parent relationship.

The interview process had four components (as shown in Figure 7). The first part of the interview focused on the teachers' background and their connection to the school, including questions related to their profession and how they perceive themselves within the school. The second part of the interview focused on the different ways in which teachers interact with parents, by asking about their familiarity with people in the village and reasons for these interactions. The third section aimed to understand the teachers' perspectives on parents and their interactions with them, including their views on the parents' role in their children's learning, who they believed was responsible for their learning, and the importance of teacher-parent interactions. The fourth section focused on the teachers' overall involvement in the evaluation study, including their awareness of the various activities conducted in the evaluation, their willingness to participate in these activities, the support received from other teachers in the school, and their views on the best way to engage with people in the village. Due to several challenges that resulted in irregular activities in the villages and schools conducted as a part of the evaluation (section 3.5.1), only the questions related to teachers' opinions on interacting with people from this section were used in the study. The semi-structured one-on-one interviews were conducted in Hindi, but they were originally designed in English and then translated by me. The complete semi-structured teacher interview guide, both English and the translated Hindi version have been included in appendix A.

For analysing the interviews, I followed the reflexive thematic analysis (RTA) approach developed by Braun and Clarke (2006, 2021a). Within this approach, the authors emphasise an important feature that sets it apart from a general theme-based analysis is its focus on reflexivity. In this thesis, I adopt a constructivist paradigm which posits that knowledge is constructed through dialogue and learning from experiences. To investigate the teachers' views on interacting with parents, I designed an interview which emphasizes understanding of teachers' actions and behaviors. I aimed to explore the teachers' perspectives to gain an understanding of the nature of relationship between teachers and parents. This required interpretation of the meaning teachers assigned to their interactions with parents. To analyze the data collected through qualitative interviews and observations in a way that incorporated the teachers' interpretations and meanings, I used reflexive thematic analysis, which was appropriate for this context. This is because while I gave primacy to teachers' perspectives and experiences, the findings are indicative of how these perspectives were interpreted by me.

The first step in the analysis involved familiarisation with the data. This is considered an important step towards interpreting the data (Braun & Clarke, 2021a). Some of the teacher interviews were recorded (audio only) with permission while some had to be handwritten, for those teachers who were uncomfortable being taped. For the former category, interviews were transcribed verbatim and typed in Roman letters to avoid any loss of information through the translation process. For the latter, I converted the handwritten responses into digital files which were a mix of Hindi and English. The process of transcribing formed an important part of familiarization with the data. I then added these transcripts to NVivo software and converted them into a working dataset. I transcribed the interviews myself. After this, I read the complete interviews, listened to the audio recordings, and prepared notes. This exercise helped in familiarising me with the content of the interviews. I also referred to my field notes to search for patterns and meanings teachers attributed to interactions. While reading the transcripts, I was constantly thinking and asking how the response of teacher on their interactions with parents was influenced by their own assumptions or their experiences, what experiences did they categorise as negative and positive, and how they related these to parental responses.

Figure 7: Four different areas of focus in semi-structured interviews with the teachers.

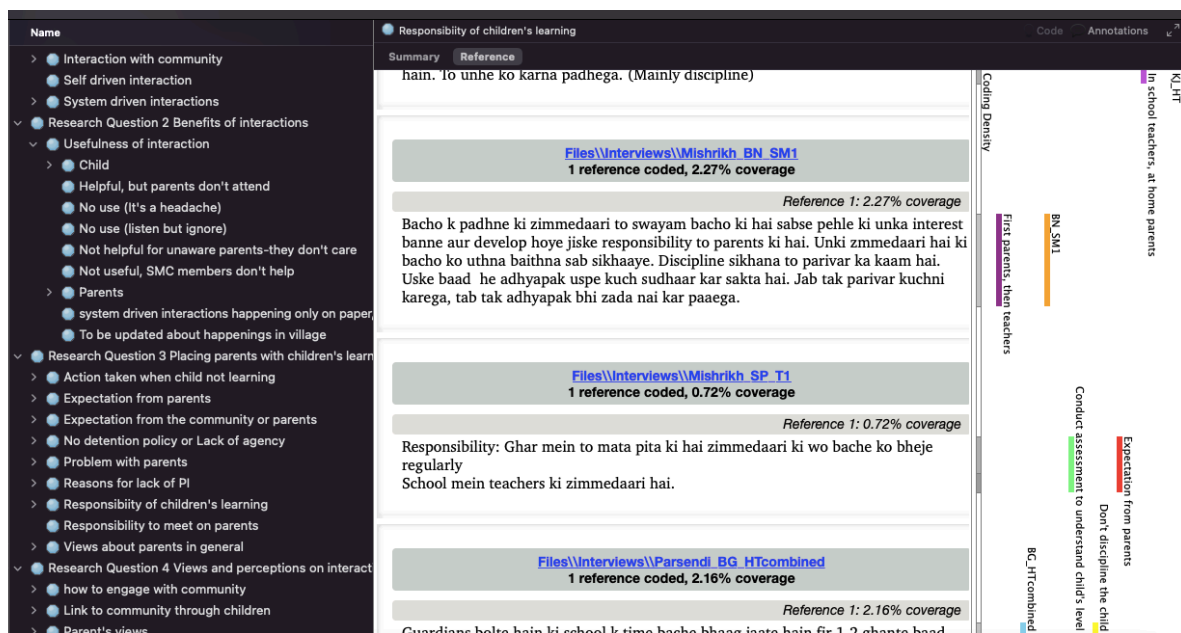


The next step in the analysis process was coding the interviews. Coding is a process through which the data is reduced to manageable ideas and concepts that are related to the research questions. Clarke and Braun (2013) state the process of coding as the building blocks of analysis in a reflexive thematic analysis. The process of coding is undertaken for assigning descriptive or interpretive labels for pieces of information that are relevant in answering the research question. Unlike a codebook approach that has pre-determined ideas and codes developed, the process of coding within the reflexive thematic analysis approach is more organic and flexible and often, new ideas emerge as one code (Braun & Clarke, 2021a). While I did not have pre-determined ideas for my codes, the initial coding process for me, started with labelling and organizing the interviews into groups. These groups were similar to the overall categories of the interview schedule (See Figure 7).

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The next step was to refine the codes. In this phase, I renamed and combined the codes created in the previous step. I renamed the codes with similar meanings to make them more understandable and shorter, and merged the ones with similar meaning. To do this, I was continuously going back and forth between the existing codes, reading transcripts, and making notes. This refinement of codes led me to use more latent codes, which focused more on deeper, conceptual level meaning. Here, I combined several codes where teachers discussed what parents should do, into one single code of expectations from parents. A snapshot of the codes and themes generated in NVivo can be seen in Figure 8.

Figure 8: Snapshot of coding and themes in NVivo



The next step in reflexive thematic analysis was developing the themes from codes. Braun & Clarke (2006) define a theme as, “*something that captures important information about the data in relation to the research question and represents a patterned response or meaning within the dataset*” (p.82). However, these definitions were clarified by the authors in their later works. Braun and Clarke (2013) state that the themes under reflexive thematic analysis are patterns of shared meaning, united by a central concept or idea. This implies an understanding of the key concept behind the codes is what drives the codes together. The themes, as they state, are often not summaries of codes, but need to capture a shared meaning (Braun & Clarke, 2021b).

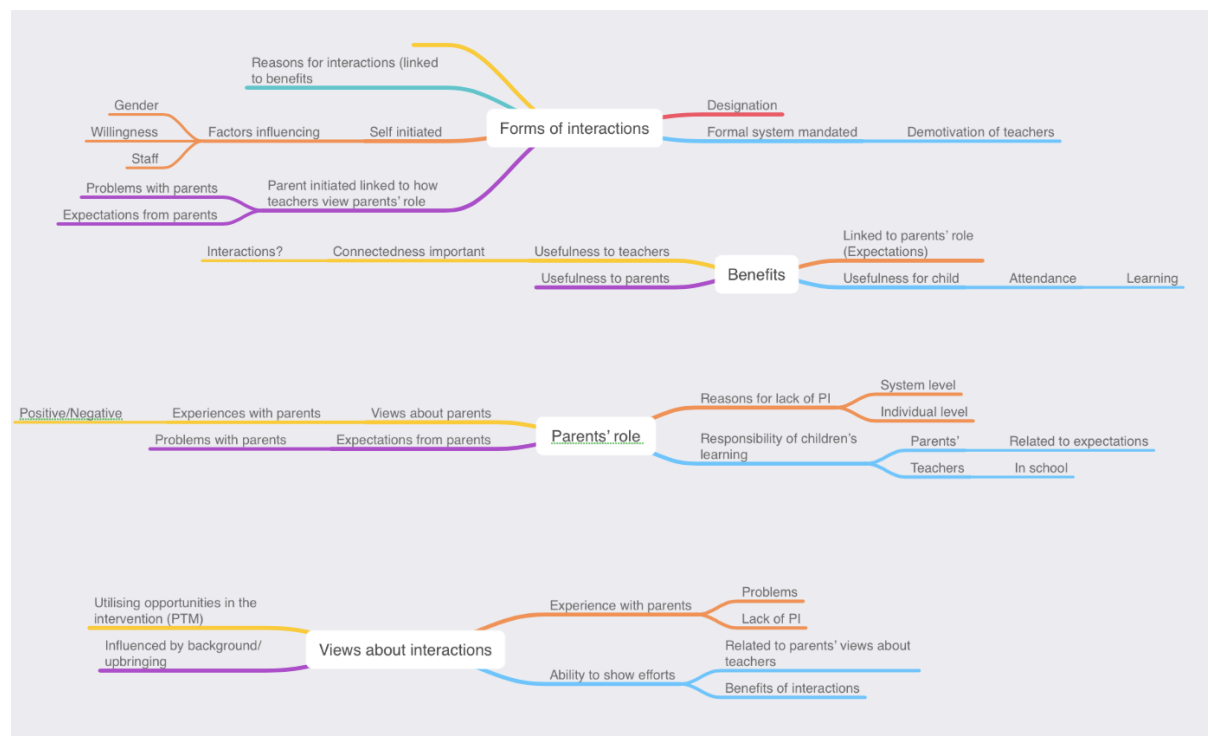
I employed an iterative approach to code and analyse the interview transcripts, which resulted in the generation of codes that aided in comprehending different aspects contributing to the diverse perspectives of teachers. For instance, I coded segments of the interview transcripts where teachers expressed their desires or expectations regarding parental involvement (such as wanting parents to provide updates on the child's progress, expecting parents to monitor their child's studies, or noting instances where teachers show disappointment at parents' little interest in their child's well-being). These codes were then consolidated and categorised as 'Expectations from Parents,' serving as a valuable sub-theme within the broader theme of 'Willingness of teachers to interact with the parents'. This broader theme also included subtheme of 'Benefits derived from interactions'. Such a coding process matches the overall constructivist paradigm adopted in the thesis, where I placed importance on teachers' subjective understandings of nature of interactions, willingness and nature of relationship with parents while creating the key themes, based on which I wrote my analysis. I generated several such codes throughout the interviews. For understanding connections between codes, generating themes that are aligned with the research questions, fine graining the code, I went back and forth between the different codes and transcripts. I mapped the codes and themes together to identify the central organising concept. I provide an example of this in Figure 9.

According to Braun & Clarke (2021b), *“demonstrating coding reliability and the avoidance of ‘bias’ is illogical, incoherent and ultimately meaningless in a qualitative paradigm and in reflexive TA, because meaning and knowledge are understood as situated and contextual, and researcher subjectivity is conceptualised as a resource for knowledge production, which inevitably sculpts the knowledge produced, rather than a must-be-contained threat to credibility”* (Braun & Clarke, 2021, p.334-335). Following the above-mentioned steps, the relevant themes identified for answering the research questions are listed below.

1. Opportunities to interact: Includes forms of interactions, potential factors affecting interactions and purposes of interactions
2. Willingness of teachers to interact with parents: Includes perceived benefits and challenges of interactions with parents, action taken by the teacher in class, responsibility of children's learning and expectations and complaints from parents.
3. Experiences of interactions: includes background of the teachers, preferred strategies to interact with the parents, parents' perceptions about school and ability of interactions to change these views.

The details of the themes and codes included in each of themes are included in Appendix C. These themes were used to answer the research questions posed in this thesis. I discuss these themes across the analysis chapters (Chapter 5, chapter 6 and chapter 7), where, besides describing what the themes include, I draw connections with the research question as well.

Figure 9: A mapping of patterns, codes and themes to identify the key organising concept at the time of theme development.



II) Observations

Observation as a research process offers an opportunity to gather firsthand data in naturally occurring social situations (Cohen et al., 2018). According to Robson (2011), observations provide an opportunity to see the difference between what people do from what they say. Various authors have classified the role of researchers and the observations. For example, Cohen et al. (2018) describe the four forms of observations where, depending on the involvement of researcher in the act being observed is classified into complete participant, participant as observer, observer as participant and complete observer (Cohen et al., 2018, p.543). Similarly, McCartan and Robson (2016) explain that participant observations are more aligned with qualitative approaches as compared to structured observations that align with fixed designs that derive from a quantitative approach. They point to a third type of observation,

the “*unobtrusive observation*” where the observations are “*structured but non participatory*” (McCartan & Robson, 2016, p.320).

As a part of this thesis, I employed observations as a method to gain insights into the interactions between teachers and parents during parent-teacher meeting organised in the school as a part of the RCT within the larger evaluation study. I had initially intended to use these observations to capture teachers’ involvement in all the activities organised within the evaluation study to understand if these led to any changes in teachers’ perspectives about interacting with the parents. However, neither the planned activities within the evaluation nor the second round of interviews planned could be conducted due to the disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic (section 3.5.1). Subsequently, I utilised the two observations of parent-teacher meeting (a planned activity within the evaluation study) that I conducted in two of the sampled schools.

For this observation, I place myself within the category of ‘observer as a participant’ in the sense that I was present in the school and was introduced to the parents at the time of the meeting, but I was not contributing to any discussion in the meeting. I designed the observation schedule based on guidelines provided by Spradley (1980). McCartan and Robson (2016) provide a summarised version of these guidelines (McCartan & Robson, 2016, p.328) that I used for designing the observation guide. I wanted to understand what was happening and then conduct a follow up with teachers about their views on these interactions. The dimensions by Spradley (1980) in descriptive observation include information about space, actors, activities, physical elements, events, the sequence of events, goals and feelings. While I did not use all these dimensions in my observations, I utilised most of them leaving out the goals and emotions since I believe these aspects are better understood from conversations that researchers have with participants. The observation guide I used to record data from the meeting is given in Appendix A.

I conducted a total of two observations. First in school 1 and the second in school 2. These observations were of the meetings between teachers and parents that were organised as part of the evaluation study. These were the only locations I could observe the meetings since they occurred on the same day across all schools included within the evaluation. I chose these schools because they were situated in the same block and close to each other due to logistical convenience as it minimized travel time and logistical challenges associated with visiting

multiple distant locations. This enabled me to efficiently conduct the observations and ensure consistency in data collection. These meetings were recorded (audio only) with the consent of the head teachers, who were leading the meeting in their respective schools. The parents were aware of the purpose of my presence in the school. These meetings were facilitated by the field teams, who played an active role in organising them and ensuring parental attendance and discussions around parental involvement in the child's learning.

At the analysis stage, I used these observations along with the responses from the interviews to understand teachers' overall experiences of interacting with parents. I used the data from these two observations to reflect on what these experiences of interactions convey about the likelihood of forming a collaborative relationship between teachers and parents. I did this by combining the interpretations from these observations with the responses from the teacher interviews on their interactions with the parents. McCartan and Robson (2016) agree with such usage of observation as a supplementary method. They state that "*observations can be used as a supportive or a supplementary method to collect data that may complement or set in perspective data from other means*" (McCartan & Robson, 2016, p.321). I compared the two observations to understand how experiences of teachers shape the ways in which they interact with the parents and over time lead to teachers forming a strong opinion about the ability of such interactions. This helped me in unpacking the connection between teachers' experiences of interactions with parents and how these could be shaping the relationship forged between the two groups.

III) Teacher Survey

As part of the evaluation study, a sample of 1852 teachers who regularly taught Hindi to grades 2, 3 and 4 were surveyed between October 2018 and Jan 2019 by the field teams. I was involved in the initial stages of design of this survey which collected information related to:

- i. Demographic information, educational and professional background
- ii. Teachers' responsibilities in school
- iii. Attitudes and perceptions around children's learning
- iv. Information related to sampled children's learning levels

The teacher survey was administered in Hindi by enumerators hired by ASER Centre. These enumerators had gone through intensive training before data collection commenced in

September 2018. The teams were trained by the ASER Centre, who were leading the research side of the evaluation study. The teacher survey questionnaire is provided in Appendix E. Table 4 provides a summary background of these teachers.

Table 4: Background information of Hindi teachers (Source: Teacher survey)

Teacher Designation	Appointed or Deputation HM	In- charge/ HM	Regular teacher	Para teacher
%	10.48	10.96	50.76	27.81
N	194	203	940	515
Teacher Sex	Male	Female		
%	54.59	45.41		
N	1011	841		
Teacher Religion	Hindu	Islam	Sikh	Others
%	93.63	6.1	0.16	0.1
N	1734	113	3	2
Teacher Caste	General	SC	ST	OBC
%	34.72	24.14	0.43	40.33
N	643	447	8	747
Teacher Location	Same village as school	Other village	City	
%	11.34	32.83	55.83	
N	210	608	1034	
School Posting by own choice	Yes	No	No preference	
%	68.3	27.11	4.59	
N	1265	502	85	
Transport used by teacher to reach school	Walk	Bicycle	Public Transport	Own transport
%	12.96	6.53	20.68	55.67
N	240	121	383	1031

Since the teacher survey targeted only Hindi language teachers, not all teachers sampled for my thesis were included in this survey. The survey was designed to focus on understanding these teachers' attitudes and perceptions towards children's foundational learning, as well as the barriers they faced in supporting it, which was not directly relevant to my research questions on understanding varying perspectives of teachers on interactions with the parents. However, I utilise some information from the survey data for two purposes. First, I use the information

about teachers' awareness of children's learning from the survey as one of the parameters for narrowing down the selection of case study schools²⁷. Second, I use descriptive analysis of three questions related to children's learning in relation to the arguments I make while answering research question 2 on expectations teachers have from parents in Chapter 6.

IV) Field notes

Throughout my fieldwork, I used notes to record my own thoughts while having conversations with the teachers, any ideas that could help me initiate conversations with the teachers in future, and any relevant information related to the school that I could use to draw linkages at the time of the interview. I also noted the general conversations I had with the teachers, in addition to the interviews. I took these notes in front of the teachers, ensuring they were aware that I am documenting information during our conversations.

Field notes serve as a valuable tool for capturing the contextual details of research participants' statements. They also enable researchers to document their methodological decisions and conceptual reasonings (Miles et al., 2013). Given that my research was part of a larger evaluation study with multiple concurrent components, I maintained two distinct categories of notes during my fieldwork to ensure comprehensive documentation.

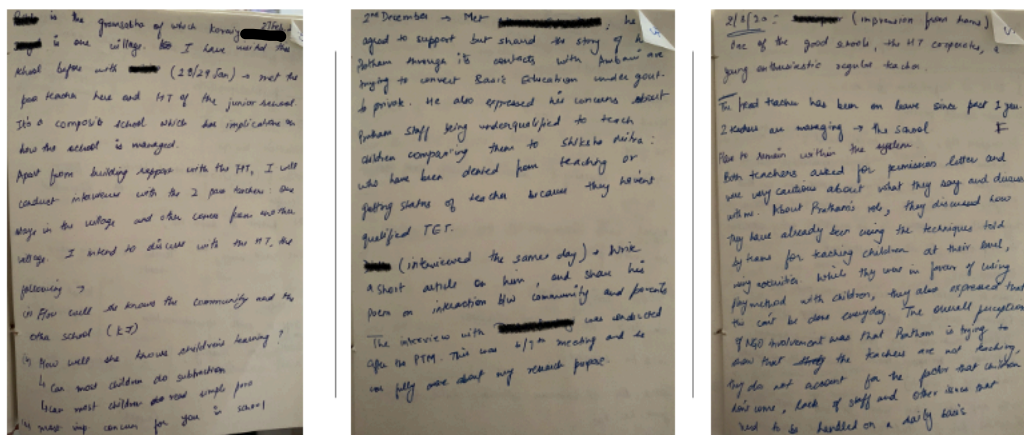
1. Observation notes: These were notes about the schools I visited, in which I explained what I saw, heard, and felt during my initial conversations with the teachers. It also included a description of anything unique about the village or the school which came up in conversations with the teachers or the field teams running the evaluation on ground. For example- in School 2, I was specifically asked to meet the union leader before the teachers agreed to talk to me. I noted down such details in these notes.
2. Methodological notes: These notes were about any modifications to the way in which I was collecting data or the teachers I included in the sample. For example, after my visit to school 3 twice, I did not manage to meet the regular teacher because he was assigned a task in the district office. This made me realise that I had to preschedule the interviews with them.

²⁷ Details in Appendix B.

I used these notes throughout my fieldwork, as well as in meetings with the research team at the ASER Centre. These notes helped me keep track of the schools I visited, observations I made within these schools and the people I met there. I also noted my own views and interpretations of the situations I encountered in the school, and on various aspects such as my first impressions of teachers. The contextual information provided by the field notes served as a backdrop that enhanced the understanding of perspectives of teachers during the analysis phase.

Throughout my fieldwork, I consistently relied on these notes, which enhanced my conversations with the teachers. I also referred to these notes - using them as memos – while coding the interviews, that allowed me to explore the potential linkages between various aspects of teachers’ perspectives in relation to their interactions with parents. Examples of my field note are shown below in Figure 10. In addition to the above intended purposes, these detailed field notes helped me recollect the details of the schools I visited. These were helpful in the phase during COVID-19 pandemic when I had to modify the research focus.

Figure 10: Samples from my field journal



Source: Author (names of participants/villages/schools have been concealed)

3.5 Data collection challenges, timeline and limitations of research

3.5.1 Challenges faced during data collection

I encountered several challenges during my seven-month long fieldwork that began in starting September 2019 and ended in March 2020 that affected the research design of this thesis. These challenges were related to political instability in the district of Sitapur (in the months of

December 2019 and January 2020) and the COVID-19 pandemic (March 2020- November 2020).

Due to the Citizenship Amendment Law protests in 2019, the schools were closed for about 10 days (about 1 and a half weeks) in the last week of November 2019. Authorities across many parts of India, including the state of Uttar Pradesh imposed section 144 of Criminal Procedure Code in December 2019 to January 2020 in the wake of these protests. This prohibited any gathering of more than 5 people at a time.²⁸ This implied that activities that aimed at bringing together teachers and parents through the evaluation could not be conducted in these months. Once the situation improved in February 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic led to a nationwide lockdown and schools were closed again in March 2020. Due to these, very few activities related to teachers and parents could be done as a part of the evaluation study.

The original focus of this research was to understand and capture the differences observed in teachers' perspectives to interact with parents through their involvement within the activities of the larger evaluation study. The research design included two rounds of interviews with the teachers with a six-month gap between them. Between the two rounds, it was expected that teachers would be exposed to activities planned within the larger evaluation study, and that this would provide an opportunity to identify the any changes in their perspectives regarding parental interactions. However, due to political instability, progress in the evaluation study was already slow by March 2020. The nationwide lockdown and school closures due to COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020 made it difficult to further the evaluation activities. Consequently, the second round of interviews with the teachers that were focused on understanding changes in teachers' interactions with parents due to their involvement in the evaluation, could not be conducted. Given this situation, I decided to adapt the focus of my research to explore the teachers' existing perspectives on interactions with the parents to understand the relationship they have with the parents and assess the potential of collaboration between the two. I had obtained this information from the first round of teacher interviews and 2 observations of parent-teacher meetings conducted in two schools.

²⁸ Anti-CAA Protests, 19 December 2019, The Hindu. [Anti-Citizenship Act protests on Dec. 19 | One dies of alleged firearm injury in Lucknow; two die in police firing in Mangaluru - The Hindu.](#)

3.5.2 Data collection timeline

Given the above challenges, the final data for this thesis included six schools spread across three blocks in Sitapur district, through which qualitative data was generated for 17 teachers in total, including head teachers, regular teachers and para teachers. The activities planned within the larger evaluation study in schools and the villages began in July 2019. The selection of cases was undertaken two months after these activities began which ensured that the field teams on ground had a clear understanding of the sites and could differentiate between the sites with positive and not-so-positive response. This information was utilised in the first stage of selection of the cases for the thesis. The interviews with teachers began in November 2019 with initial 4-5 days being spent in rapport building with the teachers in the selected cases (schools). I started the fieldwork with semi-structured interviews with teachers in four schools. I also conducted the observations of parent-teacher meetings organised as a part of the evaluation study in school 1 and school 2 in the month of November. Meanwhile, the activities within the evaluation study were carried out in phases till November 2019, with disruptions bringing the activities to a halt in January 2020. These timelines are shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Timeline for the data collection and activities planned within the evaluation study.

Month and Year	Rapport building with teachers	Qualitative interviews conducted	Activities within the evaluation study	Parent-teacher meetings observed
July 2019			√	
August 2019			√	
September 2019	Case selection		√	
October 2019			√	
November 2019	√ (S1,S2)	√	√	√
December 2019	√ (S3,S4)	√	Evaluation halted due to anti-CAA protests	
January 2020	√ (S5, S6)			
February 2020		√	√	
March 2020		Schools shut due to spread of COVID-19.	Evaluation halted due to spread of COVID-19.	

S1-S6 represent schools in my sample.

3.6 Accuracy of the findings

3.6.1 Dependability of the study

Since most of the research is qualitative in nature, I looked for ways in which the results could be made reliable and trustworthy. Lincoln and Guba (1985) use the term ‘dependability’ for qualitative research which corresponds to ‘reliability’ in quantitative research. Triangulation is difficult within the paradigm of constructivism since the assumption is that researchers themselves assign meaning to the views of participants (Urquhart, 2013). It therefore becomes important to establish whether the research findings are an accurate representation of the participants’ views. According to Lincoln & Guba (1985), there are three strategies to ensure the credibility of a qualitative study. These include prolonged engagement in the field, persistent observations and multiple sources of data. As explained in the last section, I used interviews, observations and teacher survey data to answer the research questions. This ensured a more holistic understanding of teachers’ perspectives. I expand on the other two strategies in detail below.

Prolonged engagement in the field

Starting in September 2019, I spent approximately 10 days in the field with the research team from the ASER Centre, who were focusing on the community aspect of the qualitative study within the evaluation study. Within this timeframe, the objective was to gather as much information as I could about the villages in which the sample schools were located. I detail out this information in the next chapter. I describe the connectivity of these schools from town, where most teachers teaching in these schools reside. In addition, I also describe how the villages and the schools look like in terms of infrastructure and facilities and what most people in the village do. These contextual understandings about the villages and people living there are important since the focus of the thesis is on interactions between teachers and these people.

During the month of October 2019, I revisited the schools included in my research to observe the involvement of teachers and parents in various events organised as a part of the larger evaluation study. Additionally, I maintained regular meetings with the field teams to gain insights into the responses and perceptions of the local communities surrounding my sample schools. To ensure a comprehensive understanding of the research context, I dedicated approximately 5-6 days in each site during my fieldwork. This extended period allowed me to immerse myself in the school environment and become acquainted with its daily functioning.

Throughout the duration of the thesis, I maintained consistent and active engagement with the schools under investigation. This deliberate approach facilitated a steady flow of information from three distinct sources: the field teams, my direct observations of participating teachers, and the participants themselves.

Periodic checks and discussions with the research teams

As mentioned earlier, I conducted my research in the same sites in which the qualitative team from the ASER Centre were focusing on the communities. This provided an opportunity to exchange our individual ‘first impressions’ of teachers and our notes of these locations. The impression of teachers from my interview transcripts matched the teams’ observation and understanding of these schools and teachers. There were regular ‘check-ins’ and discussions on initial findings between me and the ASER Centre’s research teams. This gave me the confidence that the interviews provided a good representation of the teachers and the schools.

In addition to these measures, I took further steps to ensure rigor and transparency of the research process. One important aspect was sharing my initial findings with the research team and holding multiple meetings with the researchers involved in the larger evaluation study. This practice not only provided valuable perspectives of the teams, but also helped mitigate the potential influence of any personal bias while I was analysing the data. To maintain a systematic record of the research process, I maintained a field diary. In this diary, I noted all important details such as sampling decisions, research procedures, and interactions with people I met during my visit to the schools. This field diary served as a reference point throughout the research journey.

All these steps not only provided an avenue for critical reflection on the collected data, but it also ensured that the conclusions I drew were based on multiple sources of information, while increasing the credibility, dependability and trustworthiness of the findings of the study.

3.6.2 Utilising the findings from the pilot study

Pilot studies are conducted to test methods and research procedures, and to refine the content for data collection (Stake, 2005; Yin, 2009). The main advantage of conducting a pilot study is that it might warn some of the major issues in the research procedures, complications in administering or even uncover the local politics affecting the research process (van Teijlingen

& Hundley, 2002). Before finalising the data collection tools and initiating fieldwork for the thesis I conducted a three-week pilot in government schools in Sitapur in March 2019. There were six sample teachers for the pilot which either belonged to the control group within the evaluation study or were from the government schools in Sitapur city. The findings from the pilot study helped in multiple ways in refining the various elements to be considered in the research design, making sampling decisions and better planning of the data collection for the research.

Given that most parts of my interviews were specifically designed for teachers who had decided to be a part of the evaluation study, I opted to pilot a limited set of questions within the interview to assess their clarity and the most effective way to pose them. Additionally, conducting the pilot study allowed me to gain insights into the feasibility and value of my proposed study. Through the pilot study, I aimed to achieve three objectives:

1. Explore the views of teachers on engaging with the parents of children they teach.
2. Finalise a procedure for shortlisting case study sites, which involved understanding of the activities, locations and familiarisation with the field teams involved in conducting the evaluation study.
3. Gain an understanding of the different channels of engagement that already exist between teachers and parents.

The findings from the pilot helped me familiarise myself with the field teams who were carrying out the evaluation on the ground. As mentioned before, the process of initially shortlisting sites for case study relied on key stakeholders which were the senior field team members. During my pilot, understanding how each team member was assigned to specific villages and what role they had within the evaluation, gave me the confidence to rely on their decisions. The conversations with them, about planning of the activities within the evaluation study revealed what their roles would have been in the activities, their frequency and quality of communication with people in the village and the teachers in the school. This familiarisation also helped me in understanding the various activities that were planned as a part of the evaluation, which I could later align with my own fieldwork.

In addition to this, the pilot study also raised two other issues related to managing my time in the field, that needed to be addressed while planning for my fieldwork. One of these related to the need for flexibility in meeting the head teacher. During the pilot, I observed that there were

specific days when the head teachers were not available in school, because, for example, they were busy in training or visiting block headquarters to submit reports to the block development officer. Most teachers would ideally wait for the head teacher to talk to me first, before allowing me in the school or talk to me. The other issue related to taking the time to explain and help teachers understand the purpose of my research. During my pilot study, although I explained the purpose of my research before the teacher interviews commenced, I observed that they often were sceptical about responding, especially when someone from Pratham Education Foundation accompanied me²⁹. To address these issues, I planned to spend at least five to ten days in each school with the intention of visiting it multiple times. This allowed sufficient time for unexpected delays as well as to have conversations about my research. I also ensured that I visited the school alone, so that teachers felt comfortable around me and were confident that my research was independent of the evaluation or any other research being conducted by Pratham Education Foundation.

Finally, the findings from the pilot study revealed that teachers weren't necessarily only using the SMCs or formal channels of communication to interact with parents. They used self-devised ways of communicating with the parents: visiting parents during the break time to make them aware about other issues like sanitation, to interact with the parents which helps them in building a rapport with the parents. This allowed me to modify the type of interview questions I had prepared: instead of limiting my questions to formal engagement mechanisms, I asked how familiar they were with parents and other community members in the village.

²⁹ Recent efforts in the state towards 'teaching at the right level' led to a partnership between the Pratham Education Foundation and the state government of UP. It led to the launch of a programme called 'Graded Learning', in 113,000 government primary schools. The programme involved training teachers to group and teach children based on their current/existing reading and mathematics levels. At the time I was undertaking my field work, teachers were undergoing this training. However, informal conversations with some of the teachers revealed that they considered the staff from the Pratham Education Foundation to be a threat. These teachers expressed negative views about the Foundation's staff, stating that often, the data they collected was inaccurate and portrayed a negative image of teachers in reports to higher authorities. These teachers were sceptical about sharing information relating to their students or their own teaching when I was accompanied by someone from the Foundation. I was also informed that teachers had been told by their union leaders not to provide any information to anyone without written permission from the education officers.

3.6.3 Limitations of the research design

While the research design for this thesis fits well with its intended purpose of understanding teachers' perspectives on interactions with the parents, there are certain limitations to consider. These design limitations have implications on the analysis of the data collected as a part of this research.

The first limitation is that the multiple case study design that focuses on individual teachers within schools, presents difficulty in capturing a comprehensive view of the school's collective perspectives due to the individualized nature of the data collected. This hinders the ability to conduct a comparative analysis at the school level. Each teacher has their own unique perspectives and experiences, which may not be representative of other teachers in the same school. As a result, it becomes challenging to draw broader conclusions about the perspectives of teachers at the school level and make any cross-case comparisons.

A second limitation of the research design is that it cannot fully utilize the survey data on teachers since it is only available for teachers teaching the language (Hindi) subject, as opposed to all teachers in the school. Ideally, having survey data available for all teachers could have provided valuable information related to teachers' background (caste, religion, their childhood), their educational qualifications, working condition (hours spent on training, planning classroom activity, meetings) and their perceptions towards children's learning. Considering these parameters would have led to a more nuanced understanding of teachers' perspectives about parental interactions.

A third limitation of the research design arose due to the impact of COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic necessitated several modifications to the original research design. Originally, the research design entailed conducting two rounds of interviews with the teachers spaced six to seven months apart, during which time, the teachers would engage in activities planned within the larger evaluation study. These activities were intended to facilitate support and provide opportunities for teachers to interact and communicate regularly with parents. However, the prolonged school closures caused by the pandemic significantly affected both the evaluation study and the interviews with teachers, which were intended to capture any changes in teachers' perspectives on interactions with the parents.

Despite these limitations, the current research design has the capacity to capture valuable insights into teachers' perspectives on interactions with parents and if these support in building a collaboration between them.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

A researcher's role is to ensure that their study is intrinsically and instrumentally ethical (Oliver, 2010). To ensure that my research was ethical, I followed formal procedures for obtaining consent from teachers, while providing assurances of anonymity and confidentiality. Institutional ethics committees have a vital role to play in the research process, and accordingly, I sought and received approval for my fieldwork and research instruments from the ethics committee at the Faculty of Education, at the University of Cambridge.

While describing other ethical considerations, Young Lives (2016) mentions that any research related to teachers needs to be undertaken responsibly, to avoid fueling the view that teachers are part of the problem. Instead, they suggest that if the findings are negative, the researcher should strive to find how teachers can be supported. Accordingly, I also ensured that my findings and interpretations did not have any adverse consequences either for the research teams I was working with, or for the participant teachers. Although I have not used the interview data to draw conclusions or make statements about who is responsible for children's low learning levels, I was conscious that the views and opinions expressed by teachers could potentially lead to negative reactions and ill will from parents. During my fieldwork, I often made visits to the villages in which the sample schools were located. I ensured not to share any negative opinions that teachers had about parents.

I was already aware that public sentiment towards teachers and teaching in government schools in India was often negative; and from my own observations in the pilot study, I had noticed that a lack of appreciation of their work demotivated teachers. To ensure they felt comfortable around me, I spent the first 4-5 days in each school just explaining the purpose of my research, answering questions, or clarifying doubts that teachers may have had. I was also sensitive in the way I framed my interview questions so that they were judgement-free and did not blame the teachers. For example, to understand if teachers feel they are responsible for children's learning, instead of asking what their responsibility is, I asked them who they thought was responsible for children's learning. Another example of such question, was, in attempting to

understand what teachers did not like about the school, I asked them to describe their experience of a bad day in the school. Such a way of asking question gave primacy to the views of teachers without attaching a judgement to it.

During my fieldwork, I positioned myself as a student seeking to understand teachers' experiences and what mattered to them. I explained to the teachers why I had selected them, how their views would be helpful and what I intended to do with the data. In all respects, I adhered to the ethical guidelines set out by the British Education Research Association (BERA, 2018). In addition to BERA, I also adhered to the guidelines of conducting research in government schools in India. This involved obtaining formal permissions from education boards in India. Since the sample schools I included in my thesis were a part of the larger evaluation study, these permissions were obtained by Pratham Education Foundation in India.

3.7.1 Informed consent and ethical procedures

At all times, informed consent was always sought, and participants were given the right to withdraw from the interview process at any time; they were also allowed to withdraw their permission for the use of their data at any time. Informed consent means that the research participants are made aware about the overall purpose of the research and the main features of the design, as well as of possible risks and benefits from participation in the research project (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2018, p.33).

I had obtained formal permissions to be in schools from all the stakeholders involved and ensured that my research abided by national laws and codes of practice.³⁰ I obtained these permissions from the organisations involved in designing and conducting the larger evaluation study. However, I separately met with the teachers in my sample schools to obtain their consent to be interviewed. Some teachers asked me to get permission from their block's union leaders, and in one instance, I had to go and meet the union leader personally, to explain the purpose of my research. This proved successful and I was allowed into the school and the teachers agreed to speak to me. However, this also raised concerns about their consent, since their participation may not have been entirely voluntary, as it was in part influenced by their union leader's permission, or that of the block development officer. A similar concern has been raised in the

³⁰ Since the sampled schools were part of the larger evaluation study, formal permissions from the concerned district education officers had already been requested and granted.

context of conducting fieldwork in the Global South (Naveed, Sakata, Kefallinou, Young & Anand, 2017). I could not find a way to change this. However, I tried my best to explain to the teachers that they could choose not to answer the interview questions without any negative consequences. I also translated the consent form into Hindi and handed it over to them for their scrutiny. However, some teachers were not willing to provide written consent and claimed that they could be identified by their signatures and I had to obtain verbal consent. I had initially thought I would record their consent, but this did not work for a few teachers who didn't want to be recorded in any way. Robinson-Pant & Singal (2013) discuss similar ethical issues encountered by education researchers working across cultures. They describe the experiences of researchers within comparative and international educational research to show the need to adapt ethical procedures in the field which involves explaining the concept of signing a consent form to the local participants and discussing the reasons for conducting the research in contexts that lack a research culture (Robinson-Pant & Singal, 2013).

Pushing research participants into doing something with which they are uncomfortable, could have had adverse consequences for my research objectives which required a certain level of trust. Accordingly, I explained that the consent forms were there for the protection of their rights, and left it to them to decide if they wanted to return it to me. Indeed, towards the end of my fieldwork, most of these teachers returned their consent forms with signatures. For 1 teacher, I only rely on the verbal consent obtained at the beginning of the interview. It was particularly important to be mindful of teachers' time and effort. For this purpose, I informed them about the approximate time it could take to complete the interview and ensured that the same did not interfere in their work. I used the lunch hour to have informal conversations and build a connection with them. At all points, teachers were aware that I was taking notes from our conversations.

3.7.2 Confidentiality and anonymity

Beyond informed consent, it was also important to assure teachers of confidentiality and anonymity, and to keep them informed about the progress of the research project. This ensured that teachers became part of the entire process, instead of just being respondents. I explained the aspect of confidentiality in detail while asking for teachers' consent. This approach was important in building a trustful relationship with the teachers where they would feel comfortable sharing their honest opinions and experiences in school and the community. I

ensured that information shared with me did not harm the teachers or the community members at any stage after the research. The information I collected from the participants, including their personal information such as their names, the name of the school was logged in a coded format rather than by names, to ensure anonymity. This information was held securely and could only be accessed by me, or a member of the research team working with me on the qualitative study, with my explicit permission.

3.7.3 Responsibilities to the research teams

Being a part of a larger evaluation study and having designed the qualitative sub-study in collaboration with the research teams at the ASER Centre, I had certain responsibilities towards the research members involved. Accordingly, I ensured that the research team members were informed of my research decisions at all stages, and that there was no conflict of interest in either approaching the participants or using the data produced by the project. At regular intervals, I ensured that opportunities to present my work to the wider teams were helpful for all researchers. For example, during the COVID-19 lockdown, the research teams at the University of Cambridge and the Pratham Education Foundation produced a knowledge series, in which everyone involved in the project shared their findings and learnings. At these sessions, I presented the initial findings emerging from the interviews, and shared some of my own insights from conversations with teachers about what they liked, and what some of their apprehensions were in relation to the evaluation activities. These insights were helpful to the program design teams who were planning the next stages in the study. All these measures enabled me to work collaboratively with the research teams so that we could learn from each other's experience, avoid any overlaps, and build on the findings constructively.

3.8 Concluding remarks

In this chapter, I presented the overall research design, the philosophical paradigm adopted and the methodology of the study. With the objective of exploring teachers' perspectives on interactions with parents and assessing the potential for collaboration between schools and families, a social constructivist approach was adopted. Such an approach allowed for an exploration of the ways in which teachers construct meaning through their interactions with parents, which helped in providing insights into the nature of their relationship with parents and potential areas for improvement. Within this, I used multiple case study design to interview the teachers across six schools. In addition to these, I provided a detailed roadmap for the

research methods employed, data analysis technique used, challenges faced in collecting data and limitations of the research design. In order to enhance the transparency and credibility of the study, I provided detailed information on the measures taken to ensure that the research is conducted in a rigorous and ethically responsible manner. In the next chapter, I present an overall context of the setting of the schools that will be helpful in understanding the specific environment in which the research took place and help in gaining a better grasp of the physical and logistical context in which the study was conducted.

Chapter 4. Understanding the context and case study setting: Schools, Villages and Households

4.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to provide a description of the villages where the sample case study schools are located. Given the focus of this thesis on teachers' interactions with parents who live in area surrounding the school, it is relevant to have some understanding of what these villages and schools look like. It is also important to understand the type of work opportunities available and the overall educational scenario in these villages.

Taken together, this overview of the villages and schools helps in understanding the research context and the unique characteristics of the location and its educational scenario. Such a description also helps situate the sampled case study schools within the environment in which they are located and can assist readers in better determining the extent to which the findings may be applicable to other settings. I will begin with a brief overview of the educational context in the state of Uttar Pradesh. Then, I will proceed to describe the specific locations within Sitapur that are relevant to the case study schools in the sample.

4.2 Understanding the context of Uttar Pradesh

Uttar Pradesh (UP) is situated in the north of India, and is one of the country's most populous states, with approximately 200 million inhabitants. According to Census 2011, Uttar Pradesh has the largest rural population in the country (Census, 2011). The state has been classified as one of the 'lagging states of India' (World Bank, 2010). In terms of primary education, UP is regarded as one of the lowest performing states in terms of primary school outcomes (ASER, 2019). While the ASER³¹ results from 2016 to 2018 have shown improvements in early-grade learning outcomes, the average performance of the children in the state in 2018 reflects serious learning deficits among primary school children. About 50% of children in class 5 were unable to read a text that was appropriate for class 2 in UP (ASER, 2019).

³¹ ASER here refers to the Annual Status of Education Report. The report presents state-wise data for learning levels of children aged 6-14 years living in rural locations in India assessed through administering a simple assessment tool focused on foundational arithmetic and reading skills of enrolled as well as out-of-school children. Starting 2005, ASER report has shown a decline in learning outcomes of the children.

Schools in UP vary according to levels, the type of management, and the medium of instruction. Based on level, there are primary (from standard 1 to standard 5), upper primary (from std 6 to std. 8), secondary (standard 9 and standard 10) and senior secondary schools (standard 11 and standard 12). There are three major categories of schools in the state based on the type of management: 1) 'government-run schools' that provide free education for children up to the age of 14; 2) 'private-aided schools' that are supported financially by the government but managed privately charging a nominal fee, and required to follow the rules set by government; and 3) 'fee-charging private schools' that are owned and managed privately. It is often the case that children belonging to socially marginalised families and girls attend government schools while those from wealthier households attend private schools (Ramachandran, 2004; Bhattacharjea, Wadhwa & Banerji, 2011).

The drive towards achieving universal access to elementary education has led to the opening of more schools, and the recruitment of staff teachers based on the pupil teacher ratio (PTR), in accordance with the RTE Act. In order for the state to ensure a regular supply of teachers, they had recruited contract teachers. In general, there are three types of teachers in government schools: 1) regular teachers; 2) head teachers - both of which categories are on fixed salaries; and 3) contract teachers (also known as para teachers or shiksha karmis)³². Contract teachers are hired from the local community, paid 1/3rd of the salary of regular teachers, and are not entitled to the same benefits. The practice of hiring contract teachers has been the subject of much debate (Muralidharan & Sundararaman 2013, Goyal & Pandey 2010 and Atherton & Kingdon 2010) in relation to de-professionalising the teacher cadre. On the one hand, these are teachers with lower qualifications, but on the other, they are potentially building accountability by hiring teachers from the community and on contract. Uttar Pradesh witnessed a gradual phasing out of contract teachers wherein contract teachers were decided to be regularised (Ramachandran et al., 2016). However, in 2017, this decision was revoked, and those that had been regularised, were reinstated as contract teachers in the state³³. This in turn, led to protests from para teacher unions in the state.

³² It was observed during the fieldwork that the newly established schools did not have para teachers.

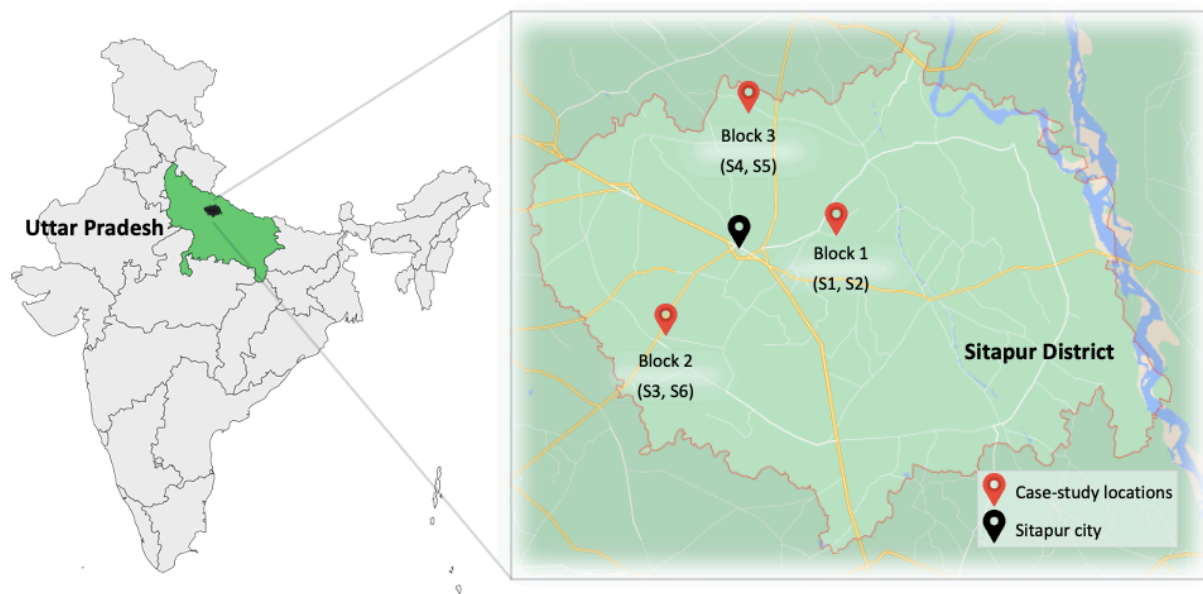
³³ Scroll (2017). In Uttar Pradesh's botched effort at regularising contract teachers, a lesson for other states. CBGA India. Available at <https://www.cbgaindia.org/inthe-media/uttar-pradeshs-botched-effort-regularising-contract-teachers-lesson-states/>

4.3 Understanding the context of Sitapur and case study sites

Sitapur is one of the eight most populous districts within UP and is situated 89kms from Lucknow, the state capital. According to the 2011 Census, about 88% of the population in Sitapur lives in rural areas. Figure 11 shows the location of the district within the state of Uttar Pradesh. Sitapur has a total of 19 blocks³⁴. As I mentioned in the methodology chapter, these schools are located in three blocks within the district of Sitapur in Uttar Pradesh. The larger evaluation study was conducted in 16 blocks and the case study schools for this thesis were located in 3 blocks. I have explained the criteria for selection of these schools in methodology chapter (section 3.4.2) which described that one of the criteria for shortlisting the schools included the distance of the blocks in which they were situated from the main city. For example, schools in blocks that were difficult to reach due to lack of transport were excluded from the sampling done for this thesis. In general, all three blocks have good connectivity in terms of road networks, and I was able to access the blocks using state transport and shared private transportation. The state transport included local buses run by the state government. These run at fixed timings from a main area identified within the block. Private transportation includes private-run buses that charge money. These buses either run on short, fixed routes within the block or sometimes, without any fixed schedule between the blocks. During my fieldwork, I observed that the reliability of these buses was questionable in terms of their timings. Private transport also includes shared taxis for long distance travel or shared three wheelers and rickshaws to cover shorter distances ranging from 2 to 6 kms.

³⁴ A block refers to a geographical administrative unit that is one level below the district. The state of Uttar Pradesh is divided into multiple districts and each district is further divided into several blocks. A block consists of several villages and is headed by a block development officer. The block serves as an administrative unit where various government functionaries like agriculture, education, health, rural development coordinates their activities to deliver services (Datta & Sodhi, 2021; Pal, 2004).

Figure 11: Representation of case study locations on map of India



*S1-S6 represent the case study schools
Source: Author

4.3.1 Sources of information for description of the case study setting

There are three sources through which I obtained information about these villages and the schools to present a description of the locations in this chapter.

The first source of information is based on data collected by the qualitative research team at the ASER Centre³⁵ who prepared a detailed description of each village (appendix E), by collecting information from the community members living in the village, through participatory structured conversations. These summaries include information on 1) the population of the village 2) how the households are divided; 3) the facilities and services in the village; 4) what most children in the village do; 5) their education levels; and 6) occupation of most adults in the village. This information is available for four villages surrounding the four

³⁵ The evaluation study also involved a qualitative sub study that was designed by focusing on the schools and communities. I focused on school and teachers, the research team at ASER Centre (Akanksha Pandey, Ankita Jha, Poorva Shekher and Purnima Ramanujan) led the community side of the qualitative sub study. The schools I chose were located in the same villages as the focus of the teams at ASER. They collected the village information details by speaking to people in the village.

schools sampled for this thesis³⁶. I use this information to provide short summaries of each of the village in which case study schools are located. By providing this information, the thesis creates a broader understanding of the communities from where the children come from and attend the case study schools.

The second source is the various survey data collected as a part of the evaluation study. These included village information survey³⁷, household information survey³⁸ and school information survey³⁹. I use these surveys to describe information specifically for the case study schools, the villages in which these schools are located and household information of the parents who send their children to these case study schools.

The third source of information is for the remaining two schools that were only included in this thesis and not in the larger evaluation project. For these, I use my own observations and interaction with teachers to describe the villages surrounding them.

4.3.2 Village Description: Qualitative study

In this section, I present the summaries (Source 1) of the 4 villages collected as a part of the qualitative sub-study that focused on community members. Detailed village descriptions were prepared by the teams by following a participatory approach where community members were asked a set of questions to know more about the infrastructure facilities and educational provisioning and occupational status of people living in the village. These descriptions related to the accessibility of the village in terms of mode of transport that needs to be taken from the main Sitapur city, the size of the village, the educational scenario and income generating activities for most people in the village. I used these detailed descriptions to create summaries of each village. Figure 12 below shows the maps of the villages prepared by the teams

³⁶ These 4 villages can be mapped onto 4 schools in my sample. However, I had added 2 schools at later stage in my fieldwork. Similar information for villages surrounding these schools is not available since these were not a part of the qualitative sub-study focused on community members.

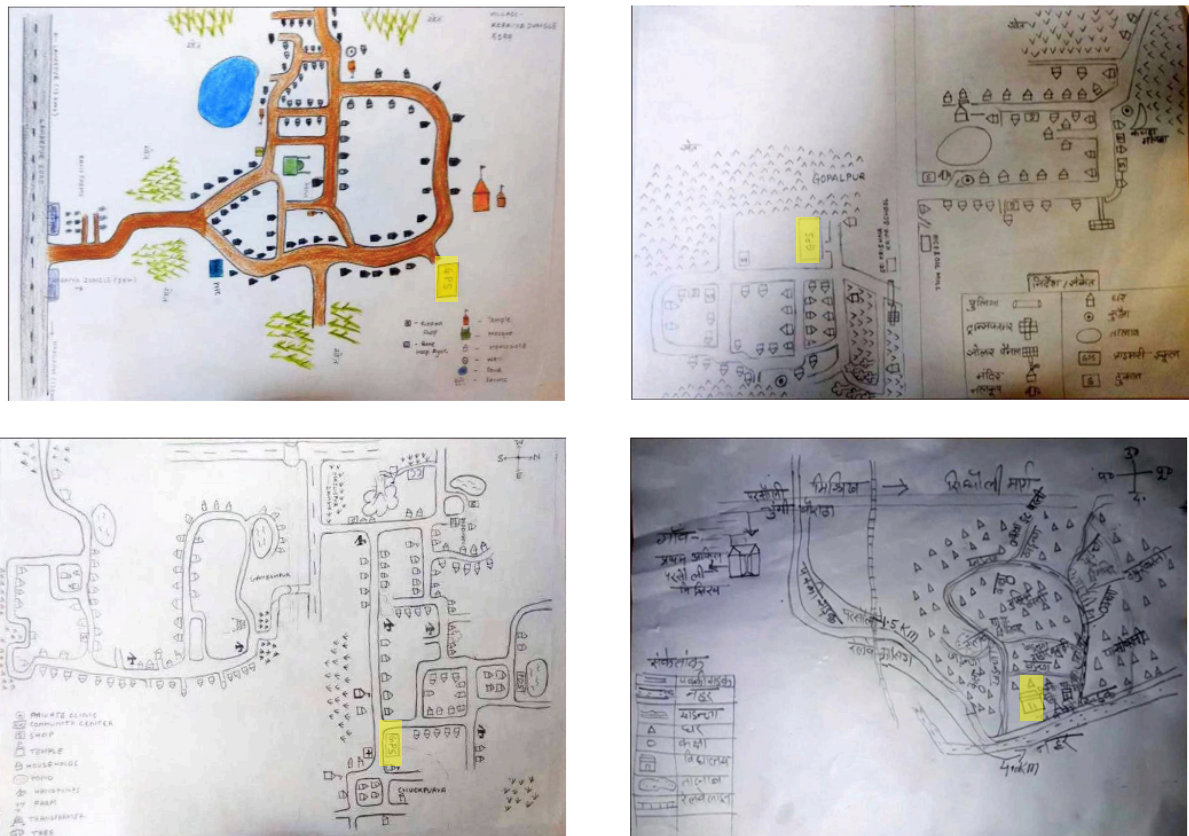
³⁷ Village Information Survey included questions related to basic facilities and infrastructure such as road, electricity, post office, medical centre, other shops.

³⁸ Household information Survey included caregivers' demographic information, educational status, perception and involvement in children's learning, visits to the school and awareness about SMCs.

³⁹ School Information Survey included information on appointment and attendance of teachers, list of all teachers, school monitoring and support related information, school infrastructure and facilities.

conducting the on-ground evaluation. These maps provide an idea of how each village is spread and within these yellow highlighted parts indicate where the case study school is located in the village.

Figure 12: The hand drawn maps of the villages where case study schools are located



Village 1, School 1 (Block 1)

Accessibility and division of village

The village is located about 7-8kms from Sitapur city. While this village is well connected by road, there is no direct, regular public transport link available. Shared three wheelers are available up to a point, and beyond that, one needs to walk for about 1km to reach the village. Depending on the mode of transport used, it can take between 15 minutes to about 40 minutes to reach this village. The government primary school (School 1 in my sample) is situated about 500 metres from the entrance to the village.

There are around 150 households in the village. This village is not divided based on caste⁴⁰ but there are two dominant groups who live here - the Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Other Backward Castes (OBCs). SCs are larger in number and are further divided into three categories: Passi, Chamaar, Raidas.

Facilities in the village

The village has a post office, public distribution system (PDS)⁴¹ outlet and a private clinic. For other facilities such as a bank, an ATM, or a private hospital, people need to travel to Naipalapur which is about 3-4kms away. There is only one government primary school in the village (School 1 in my sample). I know from my own observations within this school, that there is a dedicated building as a pre-school centre but this was non-functional on most days of my visit. While there are no private schools within the village, several private schools are situated on the main road, outside the village. The nearest private school is about 1.5kms from the village and there is one government secondary school in a nearby village.

Education levels and income generation activities: adults and children

Most men in this village have completed primary education (standard 5), while others are uneducated. While women have either never been enrolled in a school or some of them have attained primary education. Most children are enrolled in the government primary school situated within the same village. Very few children attended the pre-primary centre attached to the school regularly. After completing primary school, children either go to the government middle school or a private school in Sitapur city located about 7-8kms from the village.

Almost all children in the village usually complete education till standard 8. After that, especially for the girls, if the family owns a bicycle, the girl is sent to study in a private school

⁴⁰ A section of Indian society was denied certain basic rights due to which they have remained economically, socially and educationally disadvantaged. These were called the Scheduled Castes (SC) and Schedule Tribes (ST). The Indian constitution provides special provisions for this category of population to guarantee them the minimum rights. It was considered the duty of the states to promote educational and economic interests of these weaker sections to protect them from exploitation and injustice. Another category of socially disadvantaged groups was created later in 1979 through Mandal Commission. These are termed as Other Backward Classes (OBC).

⁴¹ The PDS is a government-run food distribution scheme that distributes food grains at an affordable price to tackle the problem of food security in India through outlets. To get the benefits, a family needs to show a 'ration card' which proves their below poverty line (BPL) status.

or a government secondary school in Sitapur. However, this is rare. Most boys are sent thereafter to government-middle school. There are multiple higher education facilities within 2kms of the village, but parents prefer to send their children to the government and private colleges in Sitapur city.

Agriculture is the main source of income for the households in this village. Women and young girls were also seen embroidering clothes which is also an income generating activity. A few artisans were involved in carpet-weaving. Families who have their own grocery shops – known as kirana shops - are often supported by their children who work in the shops in the evening. The village has short term outbound migration where young males and sometimes entire families migrate to cities in search of work in factories and jobs round the year and return in 2-3 months.

Village 2, School 2 (Block 1)

Accessibility

This village is located about 9-10kms from Sitapur city and is well connected by road as well as accessible using a shared e-rickshaw or a three-wheeler. It takes about 30 minutes to reach this village. There are no buses running from the city to this village. The government primary school is situated at the entrance to the village.

There are around 30-40 households in the village. The village is organised based on caste. The first few households at the entrance of the village belong to the Passi community, which are considered to be Scheduled Tribes. The rest belong to the Chamaar community, known as Scheduled Castes. Within the latter community, the more affluent households live within the village, while the rest live on the periphery. In general, women in the village do not go out of the house much due to safety issues related to rampant problem of alcoholism among men in this village.

Facilities in the village

This village lacks facilities such as a post office, public distribution system shops and any healthcare services. For even basic healthcare, people have to travel about 4-5kms to the community health centre of the block. Apart from a few grocery shops, the village has a stationery store. The village had one government primary school here, which forms School 2 in my sample. Through my own observations, I was able to confirm the presence of a pre-

school facility here, although it did not hold classes regularly. In addition to this, there was a private school in the village from pre-primary to standard 12. A few families sending their children to private school outside the village, expressed dissatisfaction with the quality of education in these private schools.

Education levels and income generation activities: adults and children

Most men have completed primary education till 5th, others remain uneducated. Women have either never been enrolled in school or have attended primary schools for a few years. There is a government primary school in this village, in which most local children, as well as those from an adjoining village are enrolled. Older children go to the government middle school (Standard 6 to 8) about 3kms away and some families send their children to private senior secondary schools (up to standard 12) situated about 4-5kms away. Girls in the village usually complete their education till standard 8. Most are unable to study further due to safety issues and sexual molestation caused due to rampant alcoholism in the village. Outward migration is common, with young men moving to cities to work in factories. Most boys in the village drop out after class 8, and look for daily wage jobs in Sitapur. Very few children in the village were pursuing higher education.

The primary income-generating activity for men is agricultural or manual labor or working in a shop locally or in Sitapur. Men from the Passi community were observed sitting idle, and they earn mostly by selling alcohol.

Village 3, School 3 (Block 2)

Accessibility

This village is situated around 22kms from Sitapur, and has a concrete road leading to the village. There are state transport buses from Sitapur city to this block's centre, although the service can be erratic at times. From there, one has to take an e-rickshaw to cover a distance of about 6kms to reach the village. There are no direct buses to reach the village, and the travel time from Sitapur is usually between 1.5-2 hours.

The village is comprised of a mixed caste population. Caste-based divisions are visible where the lower caste families reside at the periphery of the village. This village also has Muslim households, and they get together with the Hindu residents twice a year for common celebrations.

Facilities in the village

The nearest post office and the nearest bank is about 6 kms away from the village. Within the village, there are two government schools in proximity to each other. One is a primary school - this is School 3 in my sample - and the other is an upper primary school (standard 6 to standard 8). Most children in the village attend these two schools. There are no private schools in the village, but there is one private school about 2kms from the village. The village has several small shops and some families run their own small food shop within the village. The public distribution system (PDS) outlet has been non-functional for a long time.

Education levels and income generation activities: adults and children

Most men have completed secondary education while most females have been educated up to primary school or lower. An increasing number of youth are seen enrolled in senior secondary schools. The government primary and upper primary schools account for almost all of the student enrolments. A few children from the village attend the private school for senior secondary education in the main block, which is about 6-7kms from the village. Affluent households send their children to the private school. Girls from the Muslim households are usually educated up to Grade 8 as it is not considered useful for them to study further. For Hindu households, the girls are sent to the private school and encouraged to study beyond standard 8th as well. Most boys in the village engage in income-generating activities immediately after school finishes. Boys usually complete their senior secondary education from schools in the main block. A small number of youth (including girls) in the village also attend undergraduate colleges in Sitapur city.

Primary income-generating activities for adults include manual (non-agricultural) and agricultural labour. There is outbound migration to cities to search for jobs in factories. A majority of the women do not participate in any income-generating activity.

Village 4, School 4 (Block 3)

Accessibility

This village is situated around 26kms from Sitapur town, and is well connected by road. From Sitapur city to the block main area, there is a state transport bus. From the main area of the block, the village is about 12kms away, and private buses run regularly on this route. The village is about 1km from the nearest bus stop and it takes a total of 2 hours to reach the village from Sitapur city.

There are about 100 households in the village divided on the basis of religion, with one section consisting of Hindu households, and the other, consisting of Muslim households. No interaction occurs between the two communities.

Facilities in the village

There is one family healthcare centre in this village which functions at times. A famous ayurvedic clinic that specialises in treatments for bone fractures is located here. The village has a few grocery (kirana) shops. There is one government primary school in the village (School 4 in my sample). There is a government upper secondary school as well in the nearby village. There are a few secondary level private schools around 2-5kms away from the village.

Education levels and income generation activities: adults and children

Most men in the Hindu settlement of the village have completed secondary education while most females have attained primary education, with a few having progressed to higher secondary education. The education levels of adults in the Muslim settlement is lower than the ones in Hindu settlement. Most children belonging to lower affluent households go to the government primary school in the village, and later to the government upper primary school in the nearby village (Village 5). Children belonging to more affluent households attend private schools outside the village (situated about 4-5kms away). Most children from the Hindu settlement attend private schools, while those from the Muslim settlement attend government schools. Children from the Muslim settlement also attend Madarsas⁴², and thus their attendance at government schools can be irregular. Most girls from the Muslim settlement drop out of formal schooling after standard 5, but continue to go to the Madarsa. Girls in the Hindu settlement study in private schools till standard 10, and as there are no colleges in, or close to the village, they usually do not study further. Most boys in the village drop out of school after standard 10, and engage in income-generating activities such as working on farms. A few boys pursue under graduate courses in another district or the nearby block which is about 9kms

⁴² Madarsas are religious education institutes especially for Islamic religious instruction. These have been a subject of debate for a long time in Uttar Pradesh state. Recently, in view to promote education in Madarsas, Uttar Pradesh Board of Madarsa Education has affiliated 100 new madarsas in the state and there has been a push towards improving the quality of education in these institutes by imparting education in English, Computer and Hindi as well.

away. Most boys from the Muslim settlement drop out after class 8 although a few complete standard 10.

Primary income generating activities include agricultural labour, manual labour in the brick kiln labour, and informal jobs in nearby shops. Along with household chores, women are also engaged in cattle rearing. Some young females in the Hindu settlement engage in embroidery to earn a living, while some from the Muslim settlement engage in rope weaving. There is outbound migration to Sitapur, Lucknow, and other nearby cities, where men are away for 2-3 months or even longer, depending on the work.

Village 5, School 5 (Block 3)

Accessibility

This village is situated close to village 4 and the two villages belong to the same Gram Panchayat⁴³. It is around 26kms from Sitapur and 12kms from block headquarters, and is well connected by road. There is a state transport bus from the city to the central area of the block in which the school is located. Regular private bus services operate from this central area to 250 metres of the village.

Facilities in the school

Detailed information about households and facilities is not available for this village since it was not a part of the sample for qualitative sub-study focusing on community. However, being situated close to village 4, the facilities nearby village 4 are common to this village as well.

Since I visited the government primary school which formed a part of my sample, I use my own observations from these visits to the school as well as through my conversations with the teacher to describe some facilities in the village. There is one government primary school (School 5 in my sample), one government upper primary school (Std 6-8) and two private schools; primary and senior secondary within the village. The government primary school is attached to an upper primary school although they each have separate classrooms. There is only a male head teacher for the upper primary school.

⁴³ Gram Panchayat is a term used to denote the basic governing institute in Indian villages at the grassroots level. It usually comprises of five villages, located close to each other.

Village 6, School 6 (Block 2)

Accessibility

This village is situated very close to Village 3. It falls under the same Gram Panchayat as village 3 and is located around 22kms from Sitapur city. The village is well connected by road. From Sitapur town to the block central area, there is a state transport bus. The bus service is erratic at times. From there, one has to take local rickshaws to cover a distance of about 8kms to reach the village. Located about 1km away from Village 3, it takes approximately 1.5-2 hours to reach this village from Sitapur.

Facilities in the village

Detailed information about households and facilities is not available for this village since it was not a part of the sample for qualitative sub-study focusing on community. However, being situated close to village 3, the post office, bank and clinic facilities described around village 3 are common to this village as well.

Since I visited the government primary school (School 3), I use my own observations from these visits to the school to provide an overview of the village. There is one government primary school in this village. This is School 6 in my sample - which is situated towards the opposite end of the village entrance, and is run by two male regular teachers. Most adults in the village are involved in agriculture. Children in the village attend the secondary school (Std 6 to std 8) in the neighbouring village 3.

4.3.3 Description of case study schools and their corresponding village and household information: Survey data

In this section, I provide a description of the six villages where the six case study schools in this thesis are located. In addition to this, I also provide information on these case study schools and households of children studying in these schools. These are based on the questions asked as a part of various surveys administered in September 2018⁴⁴ as a part of the larger evaluation study. The complete surveys are provided in the Appendix E. The purpose of this information is to establish the research setting in which the case study schools are located as well as

⁴⁴ This data was collected as a part of the baseline data collection for the evaluation study. These surveys were collectively designed by teams at REAL Centre, ASER Centre and myself. These surveys were translated into Hindi. The enumerators were hired and trained by ASER Centre for collecting this data over the period of three months. I was present in the training conducted for these surveys in September 2018.

demonstrate the similarities across these case study settings. The descriptions show that these villages, schools and households were similar in terms of infrastructure, resources and distance from the city.

Table 6 provides an overview of the basic facilities such as infrastructure, access to services and educational facilities in the villages where case study schools were located. A look at the table shows that Village 1 seems to have a comparative advantage in terms of having a post office. In addition, the village also has a government-run Public Distribution System (PDS) shop. The presence of a government PDS shop in a village indicates that the village has access to essential food supplies and basic commodities at subsidised rates. The PDS is a government-run system in India that aims to provide food and other essential items to eligible households at affordable prices. The existence of a government PDS shop in village 1 suggests that the government has established infrastructure and systems to ensure the availability and distribution of essential supplies to the households. It indicates that the village is part of the government's efforts to address food security and welfare measures for its inhabitants. Village 4 and 6 are at an advantage since they have access to primary healthcare services within their vicinity, which can be beneficial for the community members, including the school-going children.

The table also provides some information about the case study schools. It highlights year of establishment of these schools. The three schools are relatively newly opened (after 2011). These schools did not have any para teachers assigned, given that the policy to hire these teachers was curtailed in 2011 by the government of UP. All schools have a Hindi as a medium of instruction. All schools claimed that they had conducted a school management committee (SMC) meeting last month indicating that there might be some form of communication occurring between teachers and parents. The table also summarises the basic infrastructure in the sample schools. These reflect the physical working conditions of the teachers, which are similar across the six schools. While five of the six villages had a concrete road, only two schools were accessible by road. Often, the teachers teaching in these schools do not live in the village and having a concrete road indicates ease of access for these teachers to reach these schools. Similarly, while all the villages had an electricity connection, five of the six schools did not have any electricity in the school. Two schools did not even have a toilet facility within the school. This can have implications on the overall school environment and can help in understanding the contextual factors that may shape teachers' perspectives on interactions with

the parents. Additionally, the table points to the incidence of multi-grade teaching for grades 2,3 and 4 in all the case study schools. This presence of multi-grade teaching suggests that the case study schools face certain challenges in terms of teacher-student ratios. It indicates that teachers in these schools have to handle the task of addressing the diverse needs and learning levels of students from different grades simultaneously. The incidence of multigrade teaching highlight the circumstances of teachers in rural India which can potentially impact the time and effort required to communicate with the parents of these children. A number of studies have acknowledged that often teachers teaching in rural schools in India face key challenges such as high pupil teacher ratios, insufficient learning resources like textbooks, stationery, and lack of school infrastructure as well (Sinha, Banerji & Wadhwa, 2016; Kundu, 2019; Bawane, 2021; Sarangapani & Pappu, 2021).

Next, there is information related to the households in villages where the case study schools are located. This information is available only for 30 households in each village. These households are of children who were sampled for the larger evaluation study. I included information that indicated communication between these families and the schools in the sample. It is surprising that in all these villages, more than 50% could not name at least one teacher in the school where their child studied. While teachers state they conducted SMC meetings within the last month, more than 50% of the parents reported that they did not know about the SMC. This information is indicative of the low level of communication existing between the teachers and parents across the locations. This is despite the fact that all schools claim to have conducted SMC meetings last month. One explanation of this could be that the parents in these households are not members of the SMC and hence, do not know much about the school or the teachers. This could also be corroborated by the fact that despite schools claiming to conduct SMC last month, more than 50% of people in villages were not aware about what SMC is.

Table 6: Description of village, schools and households from the survey data

Parameters	Village 1 (S1)	Village 2 (S2)	Village 3 (S3)	Village 4 (S4)	Village 5 (S5)	Village 6 (S6)
Village Information						
Concrete road leading to village	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y
Electricity connection	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Post office	Y	N	N	N	N	N
Bank	N	N	N	N	N	N
Government ration shop/PDS	Y	N	Y	N	N	N
Government primary healthcare centre	N	N	N	Y	N	Y
Private Health Clinic	N	N	N	N	N	N
Computer Centre or Internet café	N	N	N	N	N	N
Private School	N	Y	N	Y	Y	N
School Information						
Concrete road leading to school	Y	N	N	N	N	Y
Year of school establishment	1965	2012	1964	2012	-	2013
Medium of instruction - Hindi	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
SMC meeting conducted last month	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Textbooks available for Std 2,3,4	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Timetable available	Y	N	Y	Y	N	Y
Storybooks	Y	N	N	Y	Y	N
Midday meal	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Boundary wall	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Drinking water	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Electricity	Y	N	N	N	N	N
Toilets	Y	Y	N	Y	N	Y

Parameters	Village 1 (S1)	Village 2 (S2)	Village 3 (S3)	Village 4 (S4)	Village 5 (S5)	Village 6 (S6)
Incidence of multigrade teaching observed (For grades 2,3,4)	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y
Household Information**						
More than 50% did not visit the school in the current year	N	Y	Y	N	Y	N
More than 50% do not know at least 1 teacher's name	Y	Y		Y	Y	Y
More than 50% do not know about SMC	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
More than 50% report the school call them regularly	Y	N	Y	Y	N	Y

**Information available for only those households whose children were sampled for the evaluation study (N=30 from each school). The grey shaded areas imply the information is not available from the surveys. Y denotes 'Yes' and N denotes 'No'. "S" denotes School. Source: Village information survey, school information survey, household information survey data collected by enumerators as a part of the larger evaluation study.

4.4 Concluding remarks

In this chapter, I have provided a comprehensive description of the villages in which the case study schools are situated. The main objective was to gain a deeper understanding of the research context and the unique characteristics of the location and its educational scenario. In order to provide a comprehensive description of the villages, I utilized various sources of information. The village summaries provided rich insights into the social, cultural, and economic aspects of the villages, allowing for a deeper understanding of the children's lives who attend the case study schools. The survey data provided information on various aspects, including the characteristics of the villages, schools and households which showed the similarities across the four case study sites. Overall, this chapter has contributed to a more nuanced understanding of the research context and provided a backdrop for understanding the specific settings and communities in which this research on teacher parent interactions is conducted. The subsequent chapters are analytical chapters where I address the three research questions posed in the thesis.

Chapter 5. The perspectives of teachers on opportunities to interact with parents: Understanding the dynamics of the relationship between teachers and parents.

5.1 Introduction

The literature review chapter pointed to limited evidence on understanding the teacher-parent relationship within social accountability and a lack of focus on teachers' perspectives. In this chapter, I answer the first research question, **What are teachers' perspectives on the opportunities they have to interact with the parents?"** The purpose of this research question is to understand how teachers perceive opportunities for interaction and how they use these opportunities. The objective is to understand if these help to build a positive collaborative relationship between teachers and parents. To fulfil this objective, I asked the teachers about their familiarity with the people in the village and the formal meetings conducted in the school. The responses revealed varied opportunities of interactions that the three types of teachers interviewed (head teacher, regular teacher and para teacher) had with the parents of children they teach. Additionally, the responses also revealed the reasons for which these interactions are undertaken by the teachers. Additionally, the perspectives of teachers also indicated some of the underlying factors that determined how they used the opportunities of interactions.

While the various opportunities of interactions stated by teachers reveal their perspectives about them, examining the reasons for interactions helps uncover the specific modalities that these interactions take. Teachers may have various reasons for initiating or participating in interactions, such as sharing student progress, addressing concerns or challenges, seeking parental support, fostering collaboration and promoting parental involvement in their children's education. Understanding these reasons can provide insights into the dynamics that shape the teacher-parent relationships. In addition, the factors affecting the forms of interaction can help identify contextual elements that either hinder or facilitate the development of a collaborative relationship. Combined, the opportunities, the reasons and the factors affecting interactions between teachers and parents can help in understanding the overall dynamics between teachers and parents.

In section 5.2, I discuss the various opportunities of interaction between teachers and parents. In this section, I also describe the various reasons for which interactions are undertaken by the

teachers. Since the analysis combines teachers' perspectives on the opportunities of interactions and the specific modalities of these interactions, I refer to these as the forms of interactions. These forms of interactions refers to the specific methods or channels through which teachers and parents engage with each other during those opportunities. In section 5.3, I describe the factors that are likely to influence these interactions. In 5.4, I present the concluding remarks which summarises the findings.

5.2 Forms of interactions between teachers and parents

The teachers interviewed were asked about their level of familiarity with the people in the village and the purposes for which they interacted with them⁴⁵. The discussions about teachers' familiarity with the villagers revealed the various opportunities they have to interact with the parents⁴⁶. Additionally, some teachers mentioned the 'Pradhan,' the village head responsible for overseeing school operations such as mid-day meals and major repairs⁴⁷.

All seventeen teachers I interviewed had met the parents of the children they taught at least once. Further investigation into how these teachers knew the parents unveiled the different ways in which teachers interacted with them. These interactions can be broadly classified into three categories, which form the basis of analysis in this section:

1. System-mandated interactions
2. Self-driven interactions
3. Interactions initiated by parents

In addition to the responses provided above, there were several instances where the teachers' statements indicated the specific forms of interaction they engaged in with parents. Throughout the interview transcripts, I coded and classified these forms of interaction under the aforementioned three categories. It's important to note that these categories are not mutually exclusive; a teacher may describe interactions falling under both system-mandated interactions

⁴⁵ Q4 in the semi-structured teacher interview guide (See Appendix A).

⁴⁶ Parents here refer to those whose children are studying in the school in which the teacher teaches.

⁴⁷ The head of the village is also called '*Sarpanch*' or '*Pradhan*' in Hindi. This person is an elected head of a village-level statutory institution of local self-government called '*Panchayat*'. He is responsible for ensuring provisioning of mid-day meals and overseeing the functioning of the government schools in the villages of which he is the assigned head.

and self-driven interactions. For example: A teacher stating carrying out meetings in the school as well as going and visiting parents in the village to call them for meetings was included in both ‘system-mandated’ and ‘self-driven’ interactions.

5.2.1 System-mandated interactions

System-mandated interactions referred to those interactions that were undertaken because they had been instituted by government legislation. In general, teachers in government schools in India are required to undertake certain forms of interactions. Of these are interactions conducted within the school management committee (SMC). The RTE Act in India mandates all government, private-aided schools to have an SMC, which is composed primarily of teachers, parents, and elected members of community and is responsible for monitoring school functioning and managing its finances. Three-fourths of the committee members must be parents of children enrolled in the school, with 50% being women. One fourth members of the committee should consist of an equal proportion of schoolteachers, local authorities, and students (GoI, 2009). The constitution of the SMC was envisaged in Sections 21 and 22 of the Right to Free and Compulsory Education Act (2009). These committees were established to create a link between local communities and the schools to enhance the learning environment for children. As part of this commitment under SSA, the members were also supposed to be trained in several aspects of their roles and responsibilities. The roles and functions of the committee include: (a) monitoring the overall working of the school; (b) preparing and recommending a school development plan; and (c) monitoring the utilisation of grants received from the appropriate government authorities (GoI, 2009; Singh, 2011)

In addition to this, the RTE Act also prescribes teachers to conduct meetings with parents (parent-teacher meeting or PTM) to discuss issues relating to their child, such as their educational progress and their attendance (GoI, 2009). However, it is only recently, that the government of Uttar Pradesh has made it compulsory for all government schools to hold such meetings.⁴⁸ Government schools in India are also required to hold cultural events, for example, to celebrate national holidays such as Independence Day and Republic Day, to which parents, the village head and other community members are invited (Davis et al., 2019). While the schools often receive official circular for conducting such events, the RTE Act remains silent

⁴⁸ NDTV Education (January 1, 2020): “UP Government Schools to Start Parent-Teacher Meetings (PTM)”. <https://www.ndtv.com/education/up-government-schools-to-start-parent-teacher-meetings-2157145>.

on these events. In general, teachers in government schools are required to undertake these system-mandated interactions as a part of their official roles and responsibilities and are even required to keep records of these for higher administrative authorities.

The interviews with the teachers revealed the ways in which teachers interacted with the parents within the category of system-mandated interactions. While a few teachers mentioned inviting parents and the head of the village for cultural events such as celebration of Republic Day and Independence Day, it is not clear if these were mandated by the system or not. Given my own knowledge about functioning of government schools in rural India as well evidence from a study on MCD schools in New Delhi (Davis et al., 2019), I assumed that these were system-mandated interactions. Such interactions accounted for the most prevalent form of interactions that teachers stated in their interview. A small number of teachers in the sample described calling parents and head of the village (Pradhan) to cultural events such as the Republic Day and Independence Day celebrations in the school.

School 4, Ankit (Head teacher, M): *“Pradhan is called for cultural events in the school. For other meetings, parents are called, but they are usually busy in household work, so very few can come.”*

School 5, Ameera Khan (Head teacher, F): *“I know the pradhan [head of the village]. In my initial days in the school, he used to help with the mid-day meals in the school. He used to attend the events such as 15th August [Independence Day] and 26 January [Republic Day] or used to send some of his people to the school on these occasions.”*

Several implications arise from the provided excerpts. First, the cultural events offer teachers an opportunity to bring parents and community members together. However, the focus of teachers seems to primarily be on inviting and informing rather than discussing the event's agenda with the parents. The mention of parents' busy schedules and limited attendance at meetings suggests challenges in engaging them in school-related activities. Consequently, the scope for communication and collaboration between teachers and parents appears limited, with specific tasks allocated to individuals such as the Pradhan. This allocation restricts

opportunities for teachers to interact with parents and may hinder the development of a collaborative relationship.

Moving further on, teachers in most cases, discussed the SMC meetings, and only occasionally mentioned parent-teacher meetings while stating their discussions with the parents. They used the term ‘meetings’ for both SMC meetings as well PTM. Discussions about SMCs revealed that they were designated to take place on a fixed day every month, and teachers were expected to take a photograph of themselves with the other attendees.

A few excerpts from my interviews show that government legislation is the main driver behind these interactions, i.e., they are things that ‘need to be done’. These excerpts point to the compliance nature of these forms of interactions.

School 1, Suresh (Regular teacher, M): *“...Yes, meetings are conducted, but mostly as a formality. Sometimes like the SMC head who has the main responsibility is called, he comes and signs...”*

School 4, Gaurav (Regular teacher, M): *“SMC meeting occurs on first Wednesday of every month. This day is fixed by the authorities. The day of the meeting, we tell parents to come, wait for them and when approximately 8-9 people come, we conduct the meeting. But usually, only ladies come that too after repeatedly going and calling them. What can we do, we have to wait since this is something that has to be done.”*

School 5, Ameera Khan (Head teacher, F): *“...This is a compulsion, so we have to do it. We meet parents and other people in the village in these meetings....”*

(Field notes: February 24, 2020; Second visit to School 5)

The two para teachers talked to me separately and mentioned how the head teacher is a Muslim and it is best that she stays away from any controversies in the village since people in the village make up stories [“baate banate hain”]. They mentioned that only 1-2 people come for the meetings and there is unsaid communication between the staff that it is ok till the time the head comes and signs for the meetings.

School 5, Ramlal (Para teacher, M): *“...We meet the parents so that there is some communication which keep’s children’s attendance in check. I do this to keep my job. If the children do not come to school, so what is going to happen to my job...”⁴⁹*

Most teachers mentioned low levels of parental attendance in these meetings. The fact that they had to put in extra working hours while waiting for at least some parents to turn up to meetings, even led to disappointment for some teachers. While all committee members’ presence is stipulated by the RTE Act (GoI, 2009), the statements of teachers reflect that teachers consider it an official meeting even if the head of the SMC puts his signature or if a few parents attend the meetings.

School 1, Dinesh (Head teacher, M): *“If we call 15-20 people, about 4-5 of them turn up...”*

School 3, Rajesh (Head teacher, M): *“The problem is that in SMC meeting, very few people come and attend it. Only 3-4 people come and attend. The main person is the head of the SMC. It is important to talk to that person. There is a purchase committee also that takes care of the purchases made for the children. But the problem is only 1 or 2 people in these committees are active and are regularly present in the meetings.”*

School 4, Ankit (Head teacher, M): *“...on the day of the meeting, we have to tell parents to come, we have to wait for them too... When around 10 people are there, we conduct the meetings. Usually around 6-7 ladies turn up. Rest all males are busy in their work...”*

School 5, Ameera Khan (Head teacher, F): *“When only 2-3 people come, we have to go to the village, sometimes to the field to call parents. I ask the para teacher in the school to call parents or inform them a day earlier. But still the parents do not come and leave for work. I have to face a lot of problems because of this. I have to stay back after the school, beg parents to please come to the meetings, explain them. It requires*

⁴⁹ Here, it is unclear whether the teacher met parents as a part of the SMC meeting or PTM.

a lot of coordination. But upar wale log (the inspection officials) do not see all this. We only have to manage these.”

School 6, Deepak (Regular teacher, M): *“We do call parents. But they do not come since they have too many tasks to be done. They think that if they come to school for an hour, they will lose out on earning 50 rupees. So, they do not come.*

The above excerpts suggest that teachers' interactions with parents during formal meetings exhibit a compliance-driven orientation. This inference is derived from the following observations: First, the teachers' disappointment and proactive measures taken to ensure parental attendance underscore a strong emphasis on fulfilling attendance requirements. Their expressed need to wait for parents and the challenges encountered when parental attendance is lacking further reinforce this compliance-oriented perspective. Second, teachers perceive formal meetings as official gatherings and consider the presence of the head of the SMC or even a few parents as sufficient to meet the stipulated requirements, even in the face of low attendance. This underscores a compliance-driven approach aimed at fulfilling formalities rather than a purpose of building collaborative relationship. Lastly, the excerpts highlight teachers' efforts in coordinating with parents, employing persuasive tactics to encourage attendance, and managing logistical aspects of the meetings. These actions reflect a recognition of the necessity to satisfy compliance-related expectations concerning parental involvement in school activities.

In addition, the added responsibility of ensuring, and reporting on, parental attendance at these meetings has also led to feelings of frustration. For example, Ameera Khan in School 5, reported that she had been happier as a teacher, and although she had been promoted to head teacher, she missed being connected to her students:

School 5, Ameera Khan (Head teacher, F): *“See, meeting parents and all these things are responsibility of the head, and not the duty of the regular teachers. Since the time I have been promoted as a head teacher, I have to deal with so many people. When I was a teacher, the only thing I had to do was, be with children and there was no need to interact with people. Any complaint from the teacher or officials, must be*

dealt by the head teacher. I was very happy being a regular teacher in this sense as I used to get time with children, the one thing that I really liked doing...

Although this was the only participant who discussed the changes in roles and responsibilities, her experience shows how the responsibility of facilitating these interactions rested on the head teacher and could sometimes demotivate them.

The reasons for interactions, within these mandatory meetings, are those related to general ‘quality of education’, child’s attendance and school functioning such as the mid-day meals.

School 6, Deepak (Regular teacher, M): *“The gunwatta [education quality] is the main discussion in SMC and PTM”.*

School 5, Ramlal (Para teacher, M): *“...how do we improve the education, parents should send child regularly, that we are here to make them aware, rest is up to them. These are the discussions in the meetings...”*

School 5, Sangita (Para teacher, F): *“...there are SMC meetings, the head of the SMC comes once a month. If a child is not coming to school, if there is any other problem like in terms of mid-day meal, there are so many problems that are discussed in the meetings...”*

School 5, Ameera Khan (Head teacher, F): *“...like recently it was in the news that a little girl got burns while the meal was being prepared. So, there were discussions with parents around how we are ensuring their safety during the mid-day meal preparations...”*

These interactions also included discussions around activities that required utilisation of funds made available by the government for school development.

School 4, Gaurav (Regular teacher, M): *“...it all depends on what is the current issue in the village. There are timings for everything. Like in July, the main issue will*

be related distributing uniforms for children- things like when will the uniform be ready, when will parents receive it, who all will get it. Such things are discussed... then there will be SMC meetings to also discuss that exams are approaching, so about quality of education...”

The RTE Act also mentions within the roles and responsibilities of teachers that they need to ‘maintain regularity and punctuality (of students) in attending school’ (GoI, 2009). A few teachers claim to occasionally visit the village to meet parents, if the student has been absent from the school regularly, or more urgently, if the student has been absent on the day of an exam.

School 1, Ritu (Para teacher, F): “If children do not come then we have to go and call them, we contact their parents. We go to their place and ask them to send the child to school ...”

School 2, Rama (Head teacher, F): “*In the month of April, when the admissions begin, we have to go, there is no option. Otherwise, if there is something urgent, like during exam time, when the child is not coming, we go... usually he [the male teacher in the school] goes. But if he is not there and it is urgent, I go”.*

The reasons mentioned in the excerpts above offer valuable insights into the dynamics that shape teacher-parent relationships. Firstly, teachers’ stated reasons of interactions around education quality demonstrate that teachers view interactions with parents as an opportunity to initiate discussions with them. Reasons related to the utilization of government funds and ensuring safety during meal preparations highlight the significance of transparency and accountability in teacher-parent relationships. By involving parents in these discussions, teachers exhibit a commitment to open communication, trust, and shared responsibility. Secondly, the reasons provided also indicate that teachers recognise the importance of parental support and involvement in their children's education. By seeking parental support on topics such as regular attendance, meal preparations, and school development, teachers demonstrate an appreciation for the critical role parents play in fostering their children's educational journey. However, these ways of communicating indicate more one-sided information sharing rather than discussions and dialogue with the parents that could enable a collaborative relationship.

5.2.2 Self-driven interactions

The second form of interactions that I identified are those that teachers initiated of their own accord, without any compulsion from the system. Such interactions are usually undertaken because teachers value the outcomes derived from them. These self-driven interactions included those which the teacher undertook to develop a sense of connectedness with the families, with the intention of getting to know them and the problems they faced. This included references made by teachers to deepen their levels of familiarity with parents.

School 4, Ankit (Head teacher, M): *“we meet and interact with parents, so that there is jaan pehchaan [getting to know each other better]”*

School 6, Deepak (Regular teacher, M): *“... the more we meet, the more bonding we will have. Parents will also understand that we treat their children as our children”*

These included interactions in which the teacher sought to place emphasis on meeting parents to discuss the problem of child’s overall learning and development.

School 1, Dinesh(Head teacher, M): *“I try to find out the reason child is not able to learn. In most cases, the reason is likely to be found within the family. So, contacting the parents helps.”*

School 1, Suresh (Regular teacher, M): *“...we go and tell parents in the village and enquire about the reason the child is not coming to the school and identify the problem. Actually, there is only one problem that parents make their children work on farms or make them take care of the younger siblings...”*

School 3, Neha (Para teacher, F): *“I don’t meet them [parents] a lot. The purposes are those related to education or health. There are a lot of children who are not regular to the school, so I have to go and call them, meet their parents. This happens at least 5-6 times a month. Now when I go to call the children, sometimes parents mention that the child is coughing or has a cold and a fever. So, I have to educate them a little about the health of the child...”*

The importance of such forms of self-driven interactions is highlighted by one of the teachers, who gave the example of a tree which had grown in the middle of the school and had to be removed; but since this was done in consultation with parents, it faced no objections.

School 1, Dinesh(Head teacher, M): *“...staying in touch with parents and asking for their opinion helps avoid any conflict later. Parents and SMC members also think that if they have together decided something, it is right...”*

These self-driven interactions also included those that were undertaken out of a sense of social obligation. In the interview, teachers were asked if they had been invited to any personal events by people in the village, and if so, whether they had attended⁵⁰. The purpose of this question was to understand if there is any communication between these two stakeholder groups, apart from the formal mechanisms. Unsurprisingly, their responses varied based on the number of years they had spent at the school and where they lived. For example:

School 6, Deepak (Regular teacher, M): *“Till now, it has only been a year, but no one has invited us for any personal event. But we have cordial relations with everyone. However, it is not that kind of relationship where they start inviting us.”*

School 3, Arun (Para teacher, M): *“Yes, of course. I am from the village only. Whenever someone calls, I always go”*

Even the ones who did not live close to the village, mentioned going to these events. While these teachers suited their convenience, they were committed to meet the people who invited them. This reflected their willingness to maintain connectedness with the parents and the wider community living in the village voluntarily.

School 3, Rajesh (Head teacher, M): *“Yes [I go]. If I’m unable to go on the day of the event, I go their place the next day to convey my wishes...”*

⁵⁰ Q5 in the semi-structured teacher interview Guide (Appendix A)

School 4, Ankit (Head teacher, M): *“If there are any personal events such as a wedding, or if some parent is organising a function and I am called, I go. I even ask if there is any work that I can help them with...”*

While most teachers responded positively to this question, 2 of 17 teachers answered that they did not engage with community members outside the school. In school 2, the head teacher throughout her interview expressed her opinions about interactions being of no use. Given her pre-conceived notions about the parents (who she thought are often ignorant) of children she taught, she avoided attending any personal events she is invited to. However, in school 5, the head teacher, although acknowledges that she should attend these events and engage with the parents, lack of transport facilities at specific times did not allow her to do the same.

School 2, Rama (Head teacher, F): *“No, we don’t go. The invite is sent but we do not go. Is it necessary that since they have called, we are supposed to go? We do not”*

School 5, Ameera Khan (Head teacher, F): *“the thing is I would like to go, it creates a positive environment if I go and meet. But what can I do? There is only one bus that leaves from here at 2.30pm, I have to leave then...”*

The responses from para teachers, who lived in the same village, were also included in the self-driven interactions. For them, interactions with the parents were usual, regular forms of communication because they belonged to the community and lived near the school; and thus, these interactions didn’t require any conscious effort on their part. Most para teachers in my sample (5/6) stated that they were in regular touch with their students’ families. This was not just in their role as a teacher, but also as a neighbour, since they were either living in the same village, or had lived there in the past.

School 1, Komal (Para teacher, F): *“...it is my village, so I know everyone. I’ve stayed here since a very long time. Even the head of the village knows me well. He used to be our neighbour...they [people in the village] treat me like their daughter. This is how they talk to me...”*

School 1, Ritu (Para teacher, F): *“...people in the village give me respect and listen to me...they sometimes stop me on my way back home to ask about when they will get the uniform ...”*

School 5, Sangita (Para teacher, F): *“...I belong to the village only. I am like an elder sister to them. They come to me if there is any problem and even I ask them if the child is not coming regularly...”*

An example of a para teacher showing how they felt more connected to people in the village is provided below.

School 3, Arun (Para teacher, M): *“... a lot of teachers come from the city, and it gets difficult for them to go in the village and talk. We are locals, it is easier for us to reach, talk and relate to the situation of parents as well...”*

The above excerpts shed light on the self-driven interactions, initiated by teachers without any compulsion from the system. These serve various purposes and contribute to building a sense of connectedness with families. One aspect of these self-driven interactions is the teachers' intention to develop familiarity with parents and gain insights into the problems they face. By making efforts to establish "jaan pehchaan" (getting to know each other better), teachers aim to foster a sense of connectedness and mutual understanding. This highlights their belief that increased interactions contribute to building stronger bonds with parents. Additionally, teachers engage in interactions to address the overall learning and development of students. They recognize that understanding the child's challenges often requires contacting parents as the reasons for difficulties may be found within the family context. These discussions demonstrate a collaborative approach, where teachers seek parental insights to identify and address obstacles to their students' education. Moreover, these self-driven interactions extend beyond formal mechanisms and encompass social obligations. Teachers attend personal events and engage with community members voluntarily, illustrating their commitment to maintaining connections with parents and the wider community. These efforts contribute to a positive environment and demonstrate a willingness to actively engage with parents outside of their official roles. Notably, para teachers, who often reside in the same village as the students' families, naturally engage in regular forms of communication as part of their role as neighbors and community members. Their interactions with parents occur seamlessly and require no

conscious effort, further emphasizing the importance of proximity and familiarity in fostering collaborative relationships.

5.2.3 Interactions initiated by parents.

The third form of interactions between teachers and parents that I identified from the interviews, were those that were initiated by parents. These included instances where teachers state that parents approach them for several reasons. These reasons included not having received the free, government-sanctioned entitlements for children enrolled in the school⁵¹; lodging complaints against the teacher for scolding the child; and, although rare, keeping a check on the teachers.

School 6, Vikram (Regular teacher, M): *“...they [the parents] come related to the child, to talk about their own problems and also to check if the teacher is present...”*

Most teachers in the sample appreciated parents who regularly visited the school to check on their child’s progress. For them, these visits indicated parents’ interest and involvement in their child’s education. At the same time, teachers stated that there were few such parents, and categorised them as ‘jagruk’[aware⁵²], making a clear distinction between them, and those they deemed ‘jagruk nahi hai’ [not aware] parents, i.e., who didn’t visit the school to check on their child’s educational progress. Teachers also drew connections between these ‘jagruk’ parents and students’ performance because these parents took care of the child, sent them to school regularly, and disciplined the child at home too, which indicated parental involvement. These categorisations indicate the effects that teachers’ interactions with parents can have on their teachers’ perceptions about the students. Examples of such categorisations are provided below:

School 6, Vikram (Regular teacher, M): *“2-3 guardians are such who visit the school regularly, complain about the child, discuss about the child too. These parents keep a check on regularity of teachers also”.*

⁵¹ These included textbooks, uniform and shoes and a school bag for the children.

⁵² Aware here implied being vigilant about what the child does at home.

School 5, Ameera Khan (Head teacher, F): *“...Parents come themselves. Sometimes when I scold the child or hit them, they come. No one comes for anything related to studies. Some aware parents, only 1 or 2, sometimes come and talk when the child is not given homework. Once the child goes back home, they sit with them and make them study, and their children are also good in studies...”*

Some teachers viewed parent-initiated interactions negatively, stating that these sometimes ended in arguments and fights which led to a chaos in the school. This demotivated the teacher who then did not encourage parents visiting the school to complain. Teachers also expressed negative opinions about parents who came for school visits only to receive entitlements such as school uniforms and school bags for their children.

School 3, Arun (Para teacher, M): *“...parents only pay attention when there is a benefit attached to it. For example, at the time of distribution of school uniform and bags. But no one comes to talk about how the education is going on...”*

School 5, Sangita (Para teacher, F): *“The main thing is if we call parents, or generally also if they come, they only ask what we are going to get...”*

Teachers also reported that parents visited the school to complain if their child was being scolded or beaten. According to some teachers, corporal punishment was sometimes essential for disciplining the child. However, they expressed helplessness at the fact that if they did so, either the parents came to fight with them, or the child stopped attending school.

School 5, Ramlal (Para teacher, M): *“...if we say anything to the child, the parents come and start complaining against us to the head teacher...”*

One of the reasons that teachers resented this type of parental involvement was that quite often, they themselves were aware of the problems within the school system, and hence avoided meetings with parents. This situation is explained well by one of the teachers in School 6.

School 6, Deepak (Regular teacher, M): *“The government had sent shoes to the BRC, we had to get it from there. But the size of the shoe was not correct, and the quality was also not good. These shoes got torn within a month’s time. Guardians come and questions us, but we do not have any answer. Bags were also worn out within a month’s time. How to handle such situations. We also do not have anything to say...”*

The above excerpts indicate that the parent-initiated interactions reflect a mixed picture, with some teachers valuing and appreciating parents' active involvement, while others expressing reservations due to negative experiences or systemic limitations. The excerpts suggest that teachers hold specific pre-conceived notions about parents, which significantly impact their expectations and perceptions regarding the potential for establishing a collaborative relationship. These pre-conceived notions, including the categorization of parents as "aware," can potentially hinder the development of relationships with parents if teachers are not open-minded or willing to challenge their own assumptions.

Overall, the forms of interactions provide valuable insights into the micro-context which tend to influence the responsiveness of teachers within social accountability mechanism. The presence of a compliance-driven mindset suggests that there may be institutional or systemic factors that prioritise meeting requirements over fostering meaningful dialogue. This reflects a culture where accountability is often reduced to fulfilling formal obligations rather than actively engaging with stakeholders. The rarity of self-driven interactions indicates that there may be barriers that discourage teachers to initiate such interactions which have the potential to lead to a collaborative relationship between teachers and parents. The existence of pre-conceived notions and the resulting lack of trust between teachers and parents highlight the micro-contextual dynamics that influence the relationship between teachers and parents. While teachers may perceive parent approaches as complaints rather than opportunities for constructive dialogue, this leads to a reluctance to engage. This suggests that there may be underlying cultural or attitudinal factors shaping the micro-context and impacting the teacher-parent relationship. In conclusion, these perspectives highlight the underlying micro-contextual factors that can influence teachers’ responsiveness. The limited scope of dialogue and collaboration implies that there are less chances of teachers to listen to parents’ concerns and hence, be less responsiveness to them within social accountability mechanism.

5.3 Possible factors that are likely to affect the forms of interactions between teachers and parents.

Analysis of the teacher interviews pointed to some of the factors that seemed to be influencing the ways in which teachers interacted with parents. Within my sample, I included three types of teachers- the head teacher, the regular teacher and the para-teacher because I envisioned that each of these categories of teacher would have different motivation to engage with the parents and hence, might interact with the parents differently. In addition to this, the analysis of the interview transcripts also indicated two other factors that might be affecting these interactions. These were teacher's gender and the total number of teachers in the school. I expand on these two, along with the teacher designation in this section.

5.3.1 Teacher designation

Owing to their different roles within the school, three types of teachers were sampled for this research. As described in the methodology chapter (section 4.4.1), they included head teachers, regular teachers, and para teachers. Since SMCs were a requirement in all schools, teachers were asked to describe details of these meetings. The detail in which different types of teachers within the same school responded to this question indicated their responsibilities for conducting these meetings. For example, para teachers only discussed the status of these meetings, i.e., whether these meetings occurred at the school. Some of them explained that such meetings were decided by the head, and that they didn't have much of a role to play in them. Some examples from my discussions with para teachers are shown below:

School 1, Komal (Para teacher, F): *"We do not have any information about such [SMC] meetings. Maybe these occur, but I do not know".*

School 1, Ritu (Para teacher, F): *"SMC meetings happen, the village head also comes. But Sir [the head teacher] only decides about the meeting. We do not have any role in it. If he asks, we come and help".*

School 3, Arun (Para teacher, M): *"SMC is there. About 2 months back an SMC meeting occurred. But it was not conducted in a proper way. Neither the SMC head knows about it much. Even I am also not informed about it much...you should meet the SMC head and ask them questions to know the status... There are enough programmes*

like SMC, PTM, mother's meet to connect with the people in the village. However, in reality these work only on paper."

School 3, Neha (Para teacher, F): *"Meetings occur, but we do not have much role in it. Also, these meetings are only at block level not at school level I think."*

These excerpts from most of the para teachers I spoke to, showed that they did not have any direct involvement in, or responsibility for conducting these system-driven SMC meetings in the school. However, one of the head teachers described how para teachers played a supporting role in helping her, as well as in arranging these meetings:

School 5, Ameera Khan (Head teacher, F): *"...it is difficult for me to leave the school and go. The para teacher here lives in the village, so I ask her to convey the messages or check if a particular child is not coming while coming to the school ..."*

In responding to questions about the SMC meetings, regular teachers said that they often helped the head teacher, who were the ones mainly responsible for organising these meetings. However, the regular teachers did not have minute details about the meetings.

School 4, Gaurav (Regular teacher, M): *"Ideally the role of meeting parents is of the head teacher. But since we are only two teachers in the school, we divide and do this work... The SMC and PTM can be considered the same thing. It [the topic of discussion] all depends on what is the current issue in the village..."*

School 6, Deepak (Regular teacher, M): *"The issue of education quality is the main discussion in SMC and PTM. The village head is informed if there are some infrastructural issues in the school...But I am not aware about further details of SMC as the head knows more about it"*

In their responses, head teachers indicated that they themselves believed they played a central role in such committees. When asked to describe the SMC meetings, their responses were detailed, indicating their awareness of the committees; explanations about the members who

were part of them; how they were elected; and the topics that were discussed. This also indicated that head teachers were aware of the prescribed regulations for these meetings.

School 1, Dinesh (Head teacher, M): *“There are a total of 15 members in the SMC, the village head, the head teacher and the parents of children studying in the school. These committees are formed to give representation to females, lower caste groups and meetings are conducted every month... any suggestions given by the committee members are considered and problems faced by them are discussed. Recently, I discussed the issue of cutting a tree that was causing hinderance in the school and jointly decide how to best make use of the wood from the tree for the purpose of the school...”*

School 3, Rajesh (Head teacher, M): *“There are 15 members in the committee. Discussions regarding uniforms, tender, quotations, and fund utilisation occurs in the meetings. If there are any problems regarding these, we discuss that. Especially in PTM we talk about children’s attendance with parents, that children are not coming...”*

School 4, Ankit (Head teacher, M): *“In SMC, we discuss the issue of school development. On the first Wednesday morning of every month, we discuss where all improvement is required, and work is required to be done in the meeting... We conduct these meetings in the village only”.*

School 5, Ameera Khan (Head teacher, F): *“In SMC meeting, there is a chosen head with whom the meeting is conducted every month if a child is not coming regularly, any other problem is being faced, the meals that are cooked and other things... There are so many problems in the school, all these are discussed in the meeting. SMC members are made to discuss these issues and monitor the activities in the school. Now I cannot go to the village and roam around every day. Firstly, I am a female. Secondly if I leave school and go to talk to people in the village, the children’s education gets affected. Hence, SMC members are asked to help in case children are not coming regularly, they can ask parents to send...”*

The excerpts show that designation of the teacher plays a significant role in determining their engagement in system-mandated and self-driven interactions with parents, as well as in influencing the interactions between parents and teachers. Head teachers, being central figures in School Management Committee (SMC) meetings, exhibit comprehensive knowledge about the committees and actively participate in decision-making processes related to school development, problem-solving, and parental involvement. Thereby, these teachers have more opportunities for direct and meaningful interactions with parents. On the other hand, para teachers, as indicated by their responses, have limited involvement and responsibility in conducting system-driven SMC meetings. They often rely on the head teacher for decision-making and lack detailed knowledge about the meetings. Thus, para teachers, unless initiating the interactions themselves, may have fewer chances to engage in interactions that foster deliberate collaboration with parents.

5.3.2 Gender

The female head teachers in the sample did not engage in the self-driven interactions. There were two female head teachers in the sample, both of whom reported that it was difficult for them to go into the village and talk to parents. The difficulty arose due to two reasons.

Firstly, these teachers did not have their own vehicle. Given the schools' often remote locations, insufficient transport facilities made it difficult for them to meet parents after school hours. In comparison, most male teachers owned a motorcycle and quickly could access their students' homes in the village.

School 5, Ameera Khan (Head teacher, F): *“These things [interacting and connecting with parents] take time. Some teachers can do that easily after having meals and then going after school hours. But for me, this is not possible. I have a private vehicle that picks up 10 other teachers, so I do not have time...”*

While the issue here seems to be of a lack of transport, rather than just the gender, the fact that it is common for females to use the public transport while for males to have own a two-wheeler, implies that gender of the teacher plays a role here.

The second issue faced by these female head teachers was related to a discomfort felt in interacting with the people in the village alone and dealing with management issues in the school alone. For example, in School 5, the head teacher raised concerns about corrupt SMC members to signal her reluctance to engage with the parents within the SMC. The teacher also explained that clashes with the village head in her previous school had caused problems for her, which was why she avoided any discussions in her current school.

School 5, Ameera Khan (Head teacher, F): “...*There are some places where SMC heads are corrupt and suggest the teacher to either use the money that comes for SMC for our own benefit, or they file a complaint against the teacher. Although this has not happened to me, I fear all this.*”

“...I cannot go to the village every day. You see, I am a female... in the earlier school, I did not know the relationship shared between the head teacher and village head. I used to do my work by marking attendance every day, but once the village head asked me to fill more attendance than actual number of children present. When I objected, he created a scene. So, I cannot handle such things alone...”

In School 2, the head teacher showed her discomfort in going into the village to meet parents, saying:

School 2, Rama (Head teacher, F): “...*the place [village] is not for us. It is not a place worthy of going...*”

“...sir [the other male regular teacher] goes, before him, we hardly used to go in the village...”

An excerpt from my field notes indicated a specific situation in a village in which the school (School 2) was located, and why the head teacher might have felt uncomfortable going there. This was part of a conversation I had with the teacher, where she asked me to avoid going to the village alone.

(Field notes: December 1, 2019 & December 4, 2019)

The head teacher informed me that the situation in the village is not good. The people engage in the business of alcohol production and most of them are drunk.

I was suggested that I should change my mind since no one will say anything, and it is not safe to go there.

I did not have any female regular teachers in my sample and most female para teachers in the sample belonged to the village and communicated naturally with the parents. While the case of two female head teachers was not sufficient to prove if gender affected the interaction decisions of the teachers, it did raise a concern about safety and possibility of not owning their own vehicle as affecting their interactions with the parents.

5.3.3 Number of teachers in the school

Based on my own assessment, another variable that may have links with the self-driven interactions was the number of teachers appointed in the school. In School 1, for example, where the head teacher himself took the initiative to interact with parents, there were three other regular teachers and two para teachers in the school handling children in five grades. This provided the head teacher an opportunity to visit families even during school hours. The head teacher in this school stated that he went to visit parents in the village thrice a week. In contrast, in School 4, the head teacher stated that it was not possible for him to leave the school to meet parents, but that he would be willing to talk to them if they came to the school. He was supported by just one regular teacher managing five grades. So, despite his willingness, to engage with parents, he was unable to do so during school hours.

It must be noted that the number of teachers appointed to a primary school is based on the number of children enrolled. The current student to teacher ratio as stipulated by the Right to Education Act (GoI, 2009) is 30:1. While the number of students enrolled in school 1 were more than those in school 4, it was still difficult for only one teacher in school 4 to handle all the grades themselves, if the head teacher visited parents in the village during the school hours. Given this scenario, it did not seem realistic for a head teacher to engage in relationship building during school hours.

Overall, it seems that female teachers and those teaching in schools with low staffing levels only engaged in system-mandated interactions or those initiated by parents who visited the school, thereby, reducing their chances of forming a collaborative relationship since both system-mandated and parent-initiated interactions tend to hinder the development of a collaboration.

5.4 Concluding remarks

In conclusion, the analysis of teachers' perspectives on opportunities they have to interact with parents as well as the forms they choose to interact highlight important dynamics in the teacher-parent relationship. The findings show that teachers engage in various forms of interaction with parents. These include system-mandated interactions, self-driven interactions and parent-initiated interactions. These forms of interactions tend to be influenced by teachers' designation and responsibilities within the school. Head teachers actively participate in the system-mandated interactions. In contrast, para teachers have limited involvement, relying on the head teacher for decision-making within the school. While most of the teachers mention undertaking the system mandated interactions, female teachers relied on support from their male colleagues, or local para teachers. Since self-driven interactions take time and effort, they also require the availability of a sufficient number of teaching staff.

Teachers initiate interactions with parents for reasons such as sharing student progress, addressing concerns, seeking support, fostering collaboration and promoting parental involvement. However, the stated ways of communication indicate more one-sided information sharing rather than fostering dialogue and mutual understanding. Teachers' compliance-driven orientations and the perceived need to fulfil formalities shape the teacher-parent relationship. Most teachers emphasize fulfilling attendance requirements and meeting formal protocols, potentially hindering a genuine collaborative relationship. Furthermore, teachers pre-conceived notions about parents lead teachers to discourage interactions with parents. Such an avoidance potentially hinders the formation of a relationship based on trust between the two groups.

Overall, the chapter highlights that while various opportunities exist for teachers to interact with the parents, the way that teachers perceive these opportunities determine the forms of interactions they undertake. This then helps in identifying the micro-context for understanding relationship between teachers and parents. In next chapter, I address the second research question related to the willingness of teachers to interact with the parents and form a collaboration with them.

Chapter 6. Teachers' perspectives on benefits of interactions and their expectations from parents: Understanding teachers' willingness to form a collaboration with parents.

6.1 Introduction

Chapter 5 explored teachers' perspectives on opportunities to interact with the parents to gain insights into whether these interactions help in building collaborative relationship with the parents. The next step now is to identify the willingness of teachers to establish such a relationship with the parents. To do this, I will address the second research question: **What are teachers' perspectives on benefits of interactions with parents and their expectations from parents?** The purpose of this research question is to understand the willingness of teachers to establish and maintain collaborative relationship with the parents. The perceived benefits of interactions with parents and the expectations that teachers have of parents can play a significant role in determining their willingness to interact with parents. If teachers perceive that their interactions with parents are helpful, they may be more willing to engage in these interactions. Similarly, if teachers have high expectations of parents in terms of their involvement in their child's education, they may be more likely to seek out opportunities to interact with them and build a relationship with them.

To address this research question, I reflect on what teachers believe are the benefits from the interactions they have with parents in section 6.2. Teachers form an integral part of communication with the parents and described earlier in the thesis (Chapter 2), teacher unions have a strong influence on implementation of education reform initiatives in the past. Hence, it is important to understand their willingness to initiate interactions with the parents. I further explore teachers' expectations from parents in section 6.3. Finally, in section 6.4, I combine the findings from the benefits derived and expectations from parents to answer the research question and provide a conclusion to the chapter.

6.2 Benefits and challenges of interacting with parents

The question uses information from qualitative interviews with teachers and seeks to provide answers to whether outcomes from interactions with parents motivate the teacher and make them proactively seek participation in such engagements. Teachers were asked if they felt that

regular interactions with parents were beneficial⁵³. Their responses were further probed to also understand their perspectives on the challenges faced in undertaking these interactions. The analysis showed that while teachers seem to have theoretical understanding of the benefits of interactions, they believe that they are unable to achieve the benefits due to a lack of parental responsiveness. Such a mindset further leads the teachers to assign interactions as a low-priority task. I begin first by first describing the perceived benefits of interactions stated by the teachers (section 6.2.1), followed by the challenges they face in realising the benefits of these interactions (section 6.2.2). I then map the forms of interactions undertaken by the teachers with their stated benefits to reflect on the underlying reasons for why teachers are unable to achieve the benefits they expect from interactions (6.2.3).

6.2.1 Perceived benefits of interactions with parents

The responses of teachers demonstrate that they acknowledge the benefits of interactions with the parents. They discussed these in relation to benefits to children; benefits to parents; and finally, benefits to themselves. I coded these benefits into two categories: those related to children and teachers, and those related to parents and teachers.

1. Benefits related to children and teachers

Teachers mentioned that regular interactions with parents were beneficial for children. They made connections between these interactions and children's learning by linking them with the child's attendance. For example, teachers said that if they did not meet the child's parents, the child's attendance levels would fall, which in turn would affect their educational progress.

School 4, Ankit (Head teacher, M): *“There is nothing that can be done without baat-cheet [one-on-one conversation] ... if the child comes regularly, his/her learning level will improve, at least to some extent...”*

School 1, Ritu (Para teacher, F): *“...if there is regular contact with the parent, then parents remain active... they ensure that the child attends [school] regularly and this improves the learning level of the child...”*

⁵³ Q8 in the semi-structured teacher interview guide (Appendix A).

School 3, Rajesh (Head teacher, M): “... if a parent or a guardian comes to school, or if we go and meet them, then there is some conversation... We contact the parents when the child is not coming to school. We meet them and ask why the child is not coming...”

The other benefits in this category included those in which the teachers said it helped them gain a better understanding of the child.

School 1, Suresh (Regular teacher, M): “...Us meeting them [parents] is useful since if we get along together, so parents already know their children, but we know only a little about them- what is the child doing at home, how active is the child, what does the child eat. All this [sharing of information] will help in solving the problems of the child and understanding the child more.”

School 6, Vikram (Regular teacher, M): “It is good when parents come and meet me, since I get to know more about what they want for their children. This helps me in modifying my teaching accordingly”.

Teachers also discussed how these interactions could help them stay up to date about the child’s activities at home, for example, whether the child was studying at home, or revising.

School 4, Gaurav (Regular teacher, M): “Yes, it is important for parents to tell us what the child does at home. We teach children everyday- whether it is at prayer time, how to wish the teachers or what they need to do once they go home. When parents come and inform us about the child’s activities at home, we will understand how much the child is learning. It will also help in assessing the child better...”

School 6, Deepak (Regular teacher, M): “... it is important to have discussions with parents so that we get to know the routine of the child; what is the child doing at home, whether the child is mischievous. We can teach and instruct them accordingly...”

2. Benefits related to parents and teachers

Most teachers mentioned how their interactions benefited parents as well as themselves. They stated that these interactions could help teachers forge better relationships with parents, which in turn could lead to greater parental support for the school. To my understanding, this ‘parental support’ meant that if parents and teachers remained on good terms, there would be more agreement with, rather than opposition to each other’s views. They used specific phrases such as “*humari baat sunnte hain*” [parents listen to us], “*Vidyalaya ko apna maante hain*” [parents feel a sense of ownership towards the school], and “*lagaav badhega*” [relationship with parents will develop].

According to the teachers, these interactions also included benefits for the parents. For example, parents could learn more about the school, and their own child’s learning level. There would be a chance to learn about each other’s problems and as the relationship progressed, teachers felt it could help identify where the child lagged or needed more support.

School 3, Arun (Para teacher, M): “...if we go and meet parents, we will get to know and understand their problems. They will also feel that some teacher is coming and caring about our problems and wants our child to succeed. This will help in ways like they will also start listening to what the teacher tells, take care of the child, and sit with the child to overlook what he is doing. This will also reduce fear in their minds, and they could openly ask the teacher about the child...”

School 3, Neha (Para teacher, F): “Yes, these [interactions] are important to keep in touch. This is because teacher also gets to know how much the child understands. Parents should contact teachers to know more about their child”.

Overall, teachers perceived these interactions as a tool to generate parental support in school, and to increase their involvement in the child’s education at home.

School 3, Rajesh (Head teacher, M): “...the benefit of interaction is that we stay in school for 5 hours, but after that it is the parents who take care. If we keep a connection with the parents, they will also think that the school is useful for them and the child...”

School 1, Dinesh (Head teacher, M): *“...Since I go regularly, everyone in the village knows me. They feel happy that someone from the school has come for their child. Leaving aside 1-2% of guardians, everyone else gives a good response, they scold their children and motivate them to attend school every day.”*

However, there were 3 teachers who felt that such interactions were of no use. It seems like these perceptions have been formed based on teachers’ experiences with parents in the past.

School 1, Amit (Regular teacher, M): *“...We meet the people in the village, have conversations. At that time, the response is positive but later, nothing happens. Till the time conversation is happening, it looks like parents will do something. Later, they go back to the same. So, what is the point of any conversation...”*

In School 2, the head teacher was against calling parents to the school, as well as going on a home visit to meet them, since she felt that it was unnecessary and time consuming and didn’t bring about any changes in the way in which parents contributed to children’s education.

School 2, Rama (Head teacher, F): *“...no, there is no use. It is only a headache. We have to do meetings; it is such a headache and there is absolutely no difference in parents thinking. In SMC meetings, there are discussions about sending the child in clean uniform, regularly, parents should take care. But parents themselves are illiterate, what care will they take of their children?”*

“... we do not have any problem with the parents, even if they are not aware and they do not listen to us, let them be. We have nothing to lose. We come here, teach. That is enough...”

In school 5, the head teacher also felt interactions were not of any use. She raised concerns about corrupt SMC members to signal her reluctance to engage with the parents within the SMC.

School 5, Ameera Khan (Head teacher, F): *“As such there is no benefit [of interactions], neither for me nor for the children...ideally SMCs were formed for our*

benefit. Since the members belong to the village, know them well, it is easier for them to get any work done. We choose members based on how much the parents in the village listen to them. There are some places where SMC heads are corrupt and suggest the teacher to either use the money that comes for SMC for our own benefit, or they file a complaint against the teacher. Although this has not happened to me, I fear all this.”

6.2.2 Perceived challenges to interactions

Teachers’ responses showed that most of them perceived regular interactions with the parents to be beneficial. These benefits included improvement in attendance, greater support from parents, and their own enhanced understanding of the child. However, the same teachers also tended to blame parents for not being able to achieve these benefits. The excerpts below show this:

School 1, Suresh (Regular teacher, M): *“...the response from meeting parents is not what it should be. This is because there is unemployment, people do not have money, their priorities are different. A lot of children contribute to the households. Parents have to focus on work so they neglect education of the child, this is the main thing... this situation can only change if parents start coming and seeing what is happening in school, so they will become aware and devote some time on their child.”*

While teachers often described the potential benefits they valued, at the same time, they also listed the problems and challenges faced within these interactions, as seen in Table 7. In the first column, I have listed the codes that represent teachers’ perspectives on the benefits of parental interactions; and in the next column, I have shown the codes that represent teachers’ perceived challenges to parental interactions.

Table 7: Mapping the perceived benefits and challenges of interactions with the forms of interactions undertaken by teachers with parents.

Teachers	Perceived benefits of interactions	Perceived challenges of interactions	Forms of interactions
Dinesh	<p>For a better understanding of the child.</p> <p>Useful for improvements in attendance and learning.</p> <p>Helpful in getting parents' support.</p> <p>To show parents their child is taken care of.</p>	-NA-	<p>System mandated interactions</p> <p>Parent-initiated interactions</p> <p>Self-driven interactions</p>
Suresh	<p>For a better understanding of the child.</p> <p>Getting to know each other's problems.</p> <p>To make parents listen to you.</p>	<p>Parents do not pay attention to the child.</p> <p>Parents do not visit the school.</p>	<p>System-driven interactions</p> <p>Self-driven interactions</p>
Amit	No use in engaging parents.	<p>Parents listen but ignore teachers' advice.</p> <p>Parents who are aware will listen, others do not.</p>	System-driven interactions
Komal	<p>Helpful in getting parents' support.</p> <p>Useful so that parents know their child's level.</p>	<p>Parents do not pay attention to the child.</p> <p>Parents do not send the child to school regularly.</p>	Parent-initiated interactions
Ritu	Helpful for making parents listen to you.	<p>Difficult to reach all parents.</p> <p>Parents who are aware will listen, others do not.</p>	<p>Parent-initiated interactions</p> <p>Self-driven interactions</p>
Rama	No use trying to engage parents.	They have never listened, nor will they ever do.	System-driven interactions

Teachers	Perceived benefits of interactions	Perceived challenges of interactions	Forms of interactions
Rajesh	<p>For a better understanding of the child.</p> <p>Useful as attendance will fall without trying to engage parents.</p> <p>Helpful for making parents listen to you.</p> <p>Helpful since parents treat the school as their own.</p> <p>To create a bond with parents.</p> <p>To show parents their child is taken care of.</p>	<p>Parents' lack of awareness.</p> <p>Parents do not send the child to school regularly.</p>	<p>System-driven interactions</p> <p>Self-driven interactions</p>
Mohan	<p>Helpful for making parents listen to you.</p>	<p>Parents do not listen.</p> <p>Parents do not pay attention to the child.</p>	<p>System-driven interactions</p> <p>Parent-initiated interactions (limited to aware parents).</p>
Arun	<p>Will get to know each other's problems.</p> <p>Helpful for making parents listen to you.</p>	<p>Meetings occur only on paper, since parents do not come to the school at all.</p>	<p>Self-driven interactions</p>
Neha	<p>For a better understanding of the child.</p>	<p>Parents do not care about the child.</p> <p>Parents do not visit the school.</p>	<p>System-driven interactions</p> <p>Parent-initiated interactions</p>
Ankit	<p>Helpful.</p>	<p>Parents do not attend meetings.</p> <p>Parents do not care about the child's hygiene.</p> <p>Lack of awareness among parents.</p>	<p>System-driven interactions</p>

Teachers	Perceived benefits of interactions	Perceived challenges of interactions	Forms of interactions
Gaurav	Useful for improvements in the child's attendance and learning. Helpful in assessing the child. Helpful to be updated on what is happening in the village.	Difficult to reach all parents. Parents don't provide any useful information about the child.	System-driven interactions Parent-initiated interactions
Ameera Khan	Not helpful	SMC members do not help in improving attendance. Parents listen but ignore teachers' advice.	System-driven interactions
Sangita	For a better understanding of the child. Important to interact to create awareness.	Parents do not pay attention to the child. Parents who are aware will listen, others do not.	System-driven interactions Self-driven interactions
Ramlal	To maintain attendance.	Parents are not aware	System-driven interactions Self-driven interactions
Vikram	Get to know about parents' aspirations and modify teaching. Helpful for making parents listen to you. Helpful for parents to know more about the school. Helpful to get parents' support	Parents listen but ignore our advice.	System-driven interactions Parent-initiated interactions
Deepak	To show parents their child is taken care of.	Parents do not visit the school. Parents do not attend meetings.	System-driven interactions Parent-initiated interactions

Table 7 above shows that all teachers, except one, blamed the parents for not being able to achieve the benefits from interactions with the parents. The lack of parental responsiveness is seen as a challenge by the teachers. This blame on parents for lack of realisation of perceived benefits from interactions show that teachers' often fail to acknowledge their own role in encouraging the parents to become more involved in their child's education.

Additionally, teachers expressed disappointment at parents not looking after their children.

School 4, Ankit (Head teacher, M): *“These [interactions] are helpful but when parents are called, they do not come and keep busy in their household work...”*

School 3, Mohan (Regular teacher, M): *“...if we contact the parents to ask why they are not sending the child to school, they just say we go to the farm, we do not know. They do not look after the children or listen to us, that is the problem...”*

School 1, Komal (Para teacher, F): *“...if we approach the guardians, they support us, but for those who are not aware and not educated at all, they do not listen to us, and neither do they understand anything.... They say that we will do as you say, but only follow it for a few days and then again resort to the same problem and do not send their children regularly to school....”*

6.2.3 Mapping the forms of interactions with teachers perceived benefits

While teachers acknowledged the perceived benefits of interactions with parents, they also claimed that these remained unrealised because of a lack of parental responses. To further understand the underlying reasons for why teachers are unable to achieve the benefits they expect from interactions, I mapped the perceived benefits mentioned by teachers, with the formal of interactions that they mention they undertake in Table 7.

The mapping exercise shows that the teachers who stated there were no benefits from their interactions with parents, relied only on system-mandated interactions. It also shows that teachers who perceived interactions have some benefits, relied on a mix of system-mandated, parent-initiated, and self-driven interactions. One of the main outcomes from this mapping exercise is that there needs to be a change in the ways in which teachers undertake interactions

with the parents. Relying on system-mandated interactions might not work as good as a combination of other forms of interactions for teachers to be able to achieve the benefits from interactions. However, despite employing other forms of interaction, teachers continue to experience low parental response. This implies two things; first, that interactions undertaken by them fail to be an effective communication channel for the teachers and second, there is a general lack of awareness among the teachers on what is required to build connectedness and collaborative relationship with parents. In either case, this lack of realization of benefits makes it likely for teachers to consider these parental interactions as a low priority task.

Overall, teachers stated that interacting with the parents was beneficial for learning more about i) the child – which might even help with their assessment; ii) the family’s situation; and iii) building better connections. They also perceived that such interactions would help parents learn more about their child’s progress, which in turn could increase parental involvement at home. These indicate that teachers have a clear theoretical understanding of how interactions can benefit various groups involved. However, the fact same teachers blamed parents for not being able to realise the benefits of interactions indicate that they underestimate their own role in encouraging collaborative relationship. Despite undertaking several combinations of forms of interactions with the parents, teachers are unable to receive the benefits they expect from interactions. Hence, they often tend to consider interactions as a low priority task and only undertake the compulsory interactions (system-mandated interactions). All of these together, makes it less likely for the teachers to initiate interactions with parents themselves and thereby reduces chances of forming a collaborative relationship.

6.3 Teachers’ expectations from interacting with parents

In order to understand the willingness of teachers in interacting with parents and forming a collaborative relationship with them, I explore their expectations from the parents. Teachers’ expectations from parents can provide insights into their willingness to involve parents in the child’s education. If teachers have high expectations from parents, they are likely to seek out opportunities to interact with them and build a relationship with them. To understand these

expectations, I draw on data from my own qualitative interviews with the teachers as well as the data from the quantitative teacher survey that was collected as part of the evaluation study.⁵⁴ I begin first by identifying who, according to teachers, is responsible for children’s learning, and how they involve parents if a child in their class is not performing well (section 6.3.1). I then reflect on teachers’ overall expectations from parents, to understand the roles they assign to them in relation to children’s education (section 6.3.2).

6.3.1 Teachers’ perspectives on responsibility of children’s learning and parental involvement in the process.

To understand the willingness of teachers to form a collaborative relationship with the parents, I explore how they involve parents in children’s learning. To do this, I analysed the responses of teachers on two questions from my qualitative interviews and three questions from the baseline teacher survey. These questions are listed in Table 8.

Table 8: Questions from the quantitative teacher survey and qualitative interviews related to teachers’ beliefs about involvement of parents in children’s learning

Quantitative Teacher Survey (baseline)	Qualitative Teacher Interviews
Who do you think has the greatest responsibility to ensure children learn? (Q27)	Who do you think is responsible for children’s learning?
What is the main course of action if a child has poor academic result (Q21)	What do you do if a child is not learning well in your class?
How often do you invite parents to discuss children’s learning? (Q25)	-

Evidence from qualitative teacher interviews

I asked teachers who they thought was responsible for children’s learning, to understand if teachers believed in a sharing any responsibilities with the parents. Understanding how

⁵⁴ While the quantitative teacher survey data was available before the qualitative interviews commenced, it was not designed for the purpose of understanding teachers’ perspectives, nor was it available for all the teachers in my sample to make a direct comparison. Therefore, I only use the data from quantitative teacher survey that related to teachers' interactions with parents.

teachers place themselves and parents in children's learning is an indicator of the willingness and the ways in which teachers intend to involve the parents. For example, teachers would be more likely to seek out opportunities of interacting with parents if they believed that this responsibility was shared; however, they would be less likely to do so if they believed that this responsibility is theirs alone.

Teachers' responses revealed that most of them believed in a shared responsibility, but with very specific roles assigned to each party. Teachers believed that they were responsible for learning once the child was in school, and that parents were responsible outside the school or at home.

School 5, Sangita (Para teacher, F): *"...The main responsibility is that of mother and father. They are the child's first school. The teacher's responsibility comes later. How is the child coming to school, that is parents' responsibility. If he is clean or not. Once the child is here, we are the ones taking up responsibility..."*

School 4, Gaurav (Head teacher, M): *"See, it is teachers' responsibility when the child is in school. Of course, this is true only when teachers feel this responsibility as well as others let the teachers fulfil this responsibility. Parents' responsibility is to first send the child to school, then help and support the child with studies at home. This could include just ensuring that the child reviews what is taught in class. How long does the child remain in school, very few hours. So, unless at home parents do not see or control the child, make him listen and discipline him, we cannot do anything..."*

School 1, Komal (Para teacher, F): *"...If the child is in school, teachers are responsible, if at home then guardians..."*

School 6, Vikram (Regular teacher, M): *"In school, it is our responsibility, but it is parents' responsibility to send the child regularly to school"*

School 3, Mohan (Regular teacher, M): *"...It is our responsibility because we teach the child. It is us who need to ensure the child understands. This is the main thing, but then comes the parents. If the parents support, send the child and spend time with them at home then the child will become good in studies..."*

Next, I asked the teachers about what they do when a child in their class was not performing well. The question assumed that if teachers value and seek active involvement from parents in supporting their children's education, they are likely to approach the parents in case of child's poor learning outcomes.

Analysis from the interviews showed that only 3 out of 17 teachers approached the child's parents when a child was not performing well in their class. All the other teachers tried to solve the problem themselves, by employing various strategies, such as adopting peer learning.

School 4, Gaurav (Regular teacher, M): *"...A senior or someone more intelligent than the child is given the responsibility to teach..."*

School 1, Suresh (Regular teacher, M): *"...I have recently come up with a solution to this learning problem in my classroom. I make groups of intelligent and weak children. We continue teaching but this way there is communication between the intelligent and the weak child. This way each one's interest is intact..."*

Another strategy included giving the child some work based on his/her level of understanding and continuing to teach the rest of the class. Teachers said they employed this strategy to maintain the child's interest in learning, even if he/she was struggling to keep up. At the same time, it allowed the teacher to continue teaching the other children in the class.

School 1, Amit (Regular teacher, M): *"...If a child is not being able to learn, I give that child his level of work. This way the child keeps busy in his work and rest of the children can study..."*

3 out of the 17 teachers who stated that they approached the struggling child's parents gave distinct reasons for doing so.

School 1, Dinesh(Head teacher, M): *"I try to find out the reason child is not able to learn. In most cases, the reason is likely to be found within the family. So, contacting the parents helps"*

The teacher also justified his approach through an example:

“Once a child was not coming to the school regularly. He used to come for a few days, then again showed irregularity. I had talked to his parents and conveyed that they need to send the child to school but nothing improved... I decided to visit the family myself on a day when the child was not in school. When I went there, I saw that the father was beating the child and repeatedly asking him to go to school. I immediately realised that this might be the reason the child is afraid of school. I asked the father to not beat up the child ever again. I asked the child to come with me and on our way back I asked him to relax and not feel pressured and try to come regularly. I also told him he could come to me whenever he was facing any problem in school or at home...”

Another teacher stated that he approaches the parents to explain that they should contribute towards improving their child’s learning by taking care of them at home. The teacher used generic terms like *“dhyaan do”* [pay attention to the child], and *“samay do usse”* [devote time] while talking to parents instead of providing specific guidance on how this could be done. In another instance, a head teacher was asked what he did when a child in his class was not learning.

School 4, Ankit (Head Teacher, M): *“If the child is not learning despite having been taught properly, then I call the parents and ask them to pay attention to the child and devote some time with him at home and send him regularly.”*

The third teacher discussed contacting parents specifically to understand the reasons for the child’s irregular attendance.

School 3, Rajesh (Head teacher, M): *“...we contact the parents when the child is not coming to school. We meet them and ask why the child is not coming. Some are not sent because of a genuine problem, while some parents are just careless.”*

During the teacher interviews, there were several references that emphasises the linkages between children’s learning and their attendance. According to teachers, a discontinuity in child’s attendance makes it more likely for him/her to forget what they had been taught. Hence, teachers believed that sending the child regularly to school was one of the most important roles parents could play in their child’s learning.

Teachers' response to the question about the action they took when a child was not learning well indicates two things. Teachers rarely think about contacting parents in relation to issues in a child's learning; and in rare cases when they approach the parents, it is usually to ensure the regularity in the child's attendance. Teachers make connections between interactions with parents and the possibility of an improvement in a child's attendance and his/her learning. Thus, while teachers' state children's learning to be a shared responsibility, this is only seen as maintaining regularity of the child. The emphasis placed by teachers on parental responsibilities, particularly in relation to attendance, suggests that they are motivated by parents who actively support their child's attendance and maintain effective communication with the school. Conversely, the limited parental involvement observed in the analysis can be seen as a hindrance to the development of a collaborative relationship. Teachers may perceive a lack of parental engagement in addressing attendance issues as barriers to establishing a strong partnership.

Evidence from the quantitative survey

While the intention behind the teacher survey was not to understand teachers' perspectives about parental involvement in children's learning, certain questions that related to teacher parent interactions were included in this analysis. In relation to the quantitative survey questions detailed in Table 8, I reflect on the responses below.

In the first question teachers were asked who they felt had the greatest responsibility for children's learning⁵⁵. The responses were mixed: 58.4% of 1,852 teachers believed that they had the greatest responsibility for ensuring children learnt, while 39.4% believed it was the parents' responsibility. The second question related to the course of action teachers took when a child was performing poorly. Only 6.6% of teachers said they would call the parents to discuss the child's results. This corroborates the results from the interviews, i.e., teachers often do not rely on parents to help improve children's performance in the classroom. The third question related to the frequency with which teachers invited parents to discuss their child's learning⁵⁶. 54% said they issued monthly invitations to parents, while 35% said they invited parents to a meeting as and when required. This could imply that while teachers believe parents

⁵⁵ Q27, Section 1 in the teacher survey (Appendix E).

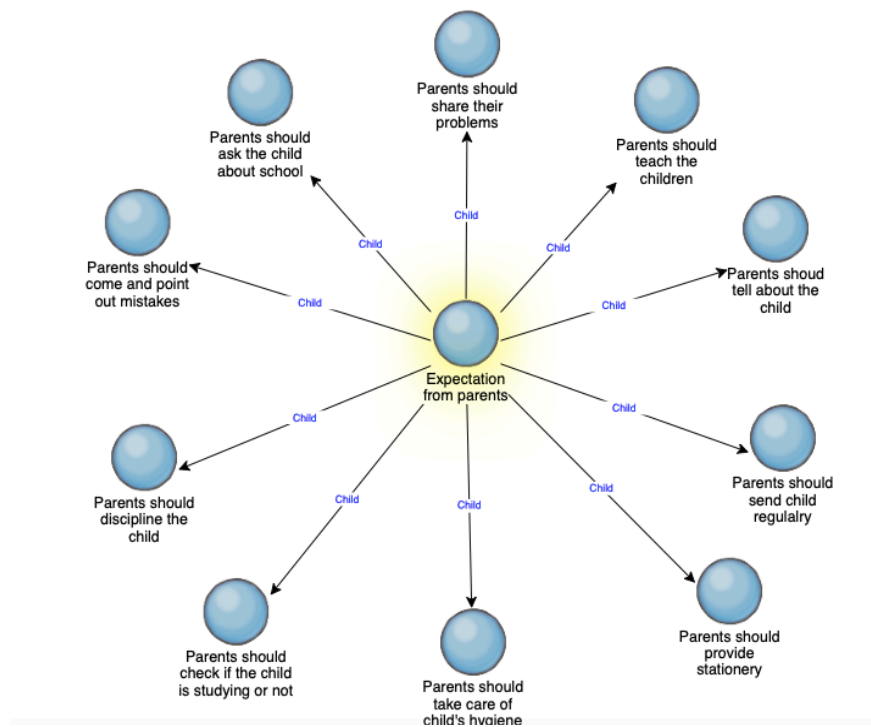
⁵⁶ Q25, Section 1, teacher survey (Appendix E)

do not have a role in what the child is learning in school, they still invite parents to the meeting to discuss children’s attendance in case a child is not learning well.

6.3.2 Teachers’ expectations from parents

The qualitative interviews provided insights into the support teachers expect from parents whom they saw as being responsible for children’s learning. It is difficult to pin down a single question that revealed these expectations, since teachers mentioned them throughout the interview in several ways. For example, some teachers revealed their expectations of parents while discussing the ways in which parents’ accountability towards children could be improved; they also discussed them in relation to the problems teachers have with the parent. I coded all these instances where teachers discuss the roles of parents under the sub-theme ‘expectation from the parents’. The codes included in this sub-theme are presented in Figure 13 and are elaborated below. A look at the figure shows that various statements that were given by teachers that represented their expectations. These expectations came through while teachers discussed importance of interactions, benefits derived from it. These expectations were implied in case of the complaints teachers had against the parents, for example, when teachers state that parents do not ensure that children attend school regularly.

Figure 13: Teachers’ expectations from parents



1. Ensuring the child attends school regularly

This was the most common expectation teachers had from the parents. They discussed how parents often send their children to visit relatives – sometimes for a week to 10 days – which meant the child kept missing school. Teachers felt that parents should be responsible for sending their child to school every day. This expectation was often presented as a disappointment by the teachers.

School 2, Rama (Head teacher, F): *“...we don’t ask them [parents] to do anything, but only send their child to the school every day. But they do not even do this. They say their children do not listen, run away...”*

School 3, Rajesh (Head teacher, M): *“...The main thing is the guardians should understand what we tell them, they should know that even our aim is proper growth and development of their child and hence should send them regularly...”*

School 4, Ankit (Head teacher, M): *“...There have been efforts to improve the level of the child, we meet the parents and tell them that they should at least send the child regularly to school, but they do not even do this much. We cannot force them to do anything, neither can we scold the child, nor hit them or fail them...”*

School 4, Gaurav (Regular teacher, M): *“It is a common occurrence that parents tell me that I should find out where their child is and drag him to school. But I can’t keep doing this every day. This is not my, but parents’ work...”*

2. Ensuring the child is supported with studies at home

The second expectation was that parents should help children with their studies at home. This included supervising and checking the child’s homework, asking about what had been done in school and encouraging him/her to revise daily.

School 6, Deepak (Regular teacher, M): *“...it is important that guardians pay attention to the child at home. That they sit for an hour or two with the child and ask him to write whatever is written in the notebook and study it well. This will help maintain continuity so the child will also not forget anything...”*

Such a form of parental involvement also included ensuring that the child did some revision:

School 5, Sangita (Para teacher, F): *“Let us say the child stays in school for 6 hours, but then he goes home. If parents are not seeing the homework that is provided in school, does not make the child sit and ensure the child does work, check the child’s notebook so how will things work. Main thing is that parents should see the homework and sit with the child.”*

School 5, Ramlal (Para teacher, M): *“...parents’ responsibility is to motivate the child at home, to look at what is taught in school and complete homework...”*

For teachers, parental support at home also meant teaching basics like alphabets and letters to the child at home. However, when asked how parents could teach children when they themselves had only basic education, one teacher responded:

School 1, Amit (Regular teacher, M): *“...For those whose guardians are not literate, they can ask someone else to teach. If continuity must be maintained, all these things need to be done. In today’s time, there is no household where there is not a single person who can teach a grade 1 to grade 5 child about basic letters and words...”*

While teachers expected parental involvement in teaching within the home, it did not always imply that parents themselves should teach, rather, that a known adult could perform this task. In general, teachers very closely related regular parental involvement at home – *“bacho pe dhyaan dena”* [pay attention to the child] - with children’s learning. Teachers categorised parents into those who were *“jagruk”* [aware] vs those who were not *“jagruk nahi hai”* [unaware]. Aware parents sent their child regularly to school, supervised them at home and thus these children were often performed well.

School 4, Ankit (Head teacher, M): *“...Some parents know what their child is learning. They take care of their children. I’m not sure what they do at home, but they do send children regularly and their children are good in studies also...”*

School 5, Sangita (Para teacher, F): *“...Some children’s parents visit the school and meet whenever work is not given for home. These children are good in studies also*

then. If the school is closed, they come and ask or call. But, out of 100, only 1 or 2 such parents are there...

School 1, Suresh (Regular teacher, M): *“In the village there are only 1-2 people who are aware. If we leave them, rest all only visit the school when either sweater or the uniform is being distributed and they only understand this, they do not discuss anything related to the child’s education...”*

3. Ensuring the child has basic stationery and good hygiene

Another expectation teachers had was that parents should provide their child with the appropriate stationery such as notebooks, and pens or pencils that aided in children’s studies. Most teachers stated that it was very difficult to teach when the students had nothing to write on, and that some parents didn’t seem to care:

School 3, Mohan (Regular teacher, M): *“If parents become aware, take care of children like see (pointing to a child in class) they don’t have stationery, then this school can become just like a private school...”*

School 3, Neha (Para teacher, F): *“...parents just send the child like this, no pencil, no copy, nothing...”*

School 4, Ankit (Head teacher, M): *“...Now it is parents’ duty to provide at least a copy⁵⁷ and a pencil. Kids in lower grades such as 1 and 2, don’t even have a copy or a pencil. This is their starting. How am I supposed to teach them if such basic things are missing...”*

School 6, Deepak (Regular teacher, M): *“...parents need to take care of ‘dainik kriya kalaap’ [daily activities] like hygiene of the child, not taking the child anywhere during the duration of school, providing stationery...”*

Teachers state that often when approached about this, parents tend to give the excuse of not having enough money, as one teacher pointed out with some disappointment:

⁵⁷ The word ‘copy’ here implies a notebook, which is used by children.

School 2, Rama (Head teacher, F): *“...A girl named Kiran [name changed] ... her mother did not send her to school because she has been misplacing her pencil every day. But she herself spends 40 rupees a day in chewing tobacco, etc, but a 2-rupee pencil cannot be bought for the child. Now you tell me, everyday should I look for pencils or should I teach...”*

Teachers also gave specific examples of how basic things like dealing with their lack of hygiene and arranging for notebooks could be both energy and time consuming and diminished their enthusiasm to teach.

School 4, Ankit (Head teacher, M): *“...here parents do not support. For example, now it is lunch time, you also saw how one child had a runny nose and I asked him to clean it; the guardians are not at all aware. The child comes in whatever condition he is, here in school we must take care of their hygiene, I do not like that at all...”*

A few teachers expanded on their views about parents by making comparisons between parents who sent their child to a private school and those who sent their child to a government school,

School 5, Sangita (Para teacher, F): *“...when a child goes to private school, parents pack lunch, when they are paying a fee in the school, they feel that we are giving Rs. 1000 so our child should learn something but over here it is free, so come if you feel like or do not come if you do not feel like. You should check their notebooks, date wise I give them homework, but children go home and tear the paper, parents should see if the child is keeping the notebook properly or not. Main problem is the parents do not take care of the child at home...”*

School 3, Neha (Para teacher, F): *“...parents should sit with the child and at least ask them to study... but they do not do this... parents just send the child like this, no pencil, no copy, nothing... And if at all they ever send the child to a private school, then these parents will take proper care to dress the child, provide a proper notebook, they just send the child in whatever condition he/she is”*

Such a comparison reflects how teachers believe that an increase in parent accountability could be achieved only when they start paying a fee.

Overall, teachers expected parents to take care of basic hygiene, to ensure the child looks presentable in their uniform, and to send them to school with the stationery the child might need. However, since parents didn't provide their child with basic supplies, teachers had to spend more time arranging for them, than teaching in the classroom. In addition to this, for some teachers, having to deal with such basic things – which they saw as the parent's responsibility – led to a sense of demotivation to engage with the parents and lowered their expectations from parents.

4. Ensuring regular visits to the school to monitor and inquire about the child's progress

Teachers also expected parents to visit the school regularly so that they observe what is happening in the school.

School 1, Suresh (Regular teacher, M): *"...I do not feel bad if the head comes and points out mistakes. I even want that parents should come and tell if there is something wrong being done in the school. But the problem is parents do not come..."*

School 1, Amit (Regular teacher, M): *"It is important that parents share if the child is studying at home, and if he is not, then the reasons for the same..."*

School 3, Rajesh (Head teacher, M): *"...If someone comes and checks so why not. If we are doing decent work and guardians come to see, we will also feel good..."*

Some teachers also state their expectation from parents to attend organised meetings in schools. These were most cases expressed as a disappointment.

School 3, Mohan (Regular teacher, M): *"...we inform parents about meetings, call them, and wait for them, but they do not come. Some parents come towards the end, only to put their signatures..."*

School 6, Deepak (Regular teacher, M): *"...Main thing is parents often do not have time to visit the school and come to meetings. We try to call them, but they do not come..."*

Teachers even expressed their disappointment at parents visit to the school when it is not related to their child's performance.

School 1, Ritu (Para teacher, F): *"...it will be good if parents come and talk about the child, but main thing is attendance that parents should keep a check on..."*

School 5, Ameera Khan (Head teacher, F): *"Parents come...Sometimes when I scold the child or hit them, they come. No one comes for anything related to studies..."*

School 3, Arun (Para teacher, M): *"...Currently, parents do not feel it is their responsibility to visit the school. This is the main weakness. They do everything else but do not care what their child is doing and learning in school..."*

While these teachers revealed their expectation that parents should visit the school to discuss about their child, none of them mentioned their own role in enabling such an involvement of the parents. The responses of teachers indicate that they often perceive their role as organisers and sources of conveying information to the parents. How this information is used and how parents respond to it is not factored in.

According to the National Curriculum Framework, "All schools need to look for ways in which parental participation and involvement can be encouraged and sustained" (NCERT, 2005). Despite this, none of the teachers discussed the role they or the schools might have in creating a friendly environment, as their comments indicate:

*"Agar parents chahengey tabhi kuch ho paaega"*⁵⁸ [change will happen only if parents want it to]; *"Jinke parents dhyaan dete hain and aate hain school wo padhai mein ache hain"*⁵⁹ [children whose parents care and visit the school are good in studies]; and *"Parents ko school mein lana hai to unse paise lene chahiye"*⁶⁰ (If you want to get parents to visit school, then charge them money)".

⁵⁸ School 3, Arun (Para teacher, M)

⁵⁹ School 5, Sangita (Para teacher, F)

⁶⁰ School 3, Mohan (Regular teacher, M)

Their expectations around parental involvement made it clear that the onus for realising these, did not rest with teachers, as seen in Table 9. The coded statements in the table, categorized as 'reasons for lack of parental involvement,' offer examples of teachers' perspectives on their own role in ensuring parents fulfil the expectations set by teachers. It suggests that teachers do not feel it is their responsibility to create a conducive environment to ensure parents are aware about their roles and how they can ensure the parental involvement expected. This finding indicates that teachers may not view themselves as primarily responsible for ensuring parents understand their expectations and how they can fulfil them.

Table 9: Evidence to show teachers' lack of acknowledgement of their role in welcoming parents in school

Quotes from the teacher interviews	Interpretation of teachers' response
<p><i>“Parents should be made aware. Someone needs to do this so that parents come and visit”</i> School 1, Suresh (Regular teacher, M)</p>	<p>Someone other than the teacher themselves should ensure that parents visit the school to meet teachers.</p>
<p><i>“...Government should implement a law that guardians are required to visit school or ask the guardians to pay some fees, then only their views will change...”</i></p> <p><i>“If there will be a law, then parents would forcefully come to school and once they come to school, they will see whether the children are studying or playing... [currently]guardians only come to school on days when we are distributing dress [uniform]...”</i> School 3, Mohan (Regular teacher, M)</p>	<p>The government is responsible for ensuring that parents regularly visit schools.</p>
<p><i>“The response from meeting the parents is not what it should be. This is because there is unemployment,</i></p>	<p>Parents' lack of responsiveness is because they have other priorities they need to take care of.</p>

Quotes from the teacher interviews	Interpretation of teachers' response
<p><i>people do not have money, their priorities are different... ”</i></p> <p>School 1, Suresh (Regular teacher, M)</p>	
<p><i>“...in these times despite all the facilities, the guardian is unaware. All this is because government is providing everything for free. Guardians are, hence, not willing to listen to any other information...”</i></p> <p>School 2, Rama(Head teacher, F)</p>	<p>Access to free education is the reason for lack of parental involvement.</p>

Overall, teachers' perspectives about parents can have a major influence on the actual involvement of parents in children's learning. According to Comer (2001), the way the school culture provides a signal to parents determines how they respond to it. The attention and support provided by a school creates trust in the school and builds on the possibility of developing a collaborative relationship. It is for this reason that I explored teachers' expectations from parents, and how they situated their roles in relation to children's learning. The findings from the qualitative interviews and quantitative survey data showed that teachers believed in a shared responsibility for children's learning. However, the indication from the above analysis is that the majority of teachers prefer to address poor learning outcomes themselves rather than immediately involving parents. Additionally, teachers tend to assign functional roles to the parents such as ensuring regularity of child to the school, ensuring provision of stationery to the child, supporting the child at home, and visiting the schools to update about the child. Teachers considered sending the child to school regularly as one of the most significant roles parents could play in supporting their child's education. However, teachers do not tend to involve parents in matters related to child's academic performance. These results imply that teachers are more likely to seek parental support when faced with a problem - such as irregular attendance - than for an update on the child's academic performance and progress. Given this, teachers do not discuss their own role in ensuring that parents fulfil the expectations that teachers have from them. Instead, they believe that the provision of information about what parents should do with the children is enough. Teachers often rely on

others to create such an awareness of parental involvement in children's learning. Overall, teachers' perspectives on parental responsibilities and their approaches to addressing learning difficulties can influence the extent to which they engage with parents and form a collaborative relationship with them.

6.4 Concluding remarks

In conclusion, the analysis of teachers' perspectives on benefits of interactions as well as expectations from the parents reveal their willingness to interact with the parents. Teachers' perspectives on benefits derived from interactions as well as on shared responsibility of children's learning reflect teachers' theoretical understanding of how interactions should be collaborative. However, despite using multiple forms of interactions with parents, teachers are unable to realise the benefits of developing connectedness with parents and encouraging parental involvement in children's schooling. This indicates that teachers' lack of awareness on what is required to build a collaboration with the parents. While it is more likely for teachers to seek out opportunities for interactions if they believe in a shared responsibility of children's learning, their approaches to address learning problems and expectations from parents limit the interactions only to a few tasks such as maintaining regularity of child, disciplining the child and supporting the child at home. Additionally, teachers' lack of obligation towards creating a conducive environment for parental involvement suggests that teachers may have certain expectations from parents but may not prioritise or actively work towards creating an environment that fosters such parental engagement.

Overall, the findings suggest that while teachers recognize the potential benefits of interactions with parents and have expectations from parents, there are challenges in translating these expectations into effective collaboration. Teachers' perspectives on their own responsibilities, their focus on specific parental roles, and the limited emphasis on creating a conducive environment for parental involvement all influence their willingness to engage with parents and hinder the development of a collaborative relationship. To further understand the nature of relationship between teachers and parents, I analyse the experiences of teachers on interactions with the parents in detail in the next chapter.

Chapter 7. Teachers' experiences of interactions with parents: Understanding the sustainability of relationship between teachers and parents.

7.1 Introduction

Having analysed the teachers' perspectives on benefits of interactions and expectation from parents in chapter 6, I will explore teachers' experiences of interactions and draw linkages with the nature of relationship formed between the two groups in this chapter. To do this, I mainly draw on qualitative interviews with teachers and my own observation of parent-teacher meetings conducted within schools as a part of the larger evaluation project to address the third research question: **What do teachers' experiences of interactions with the parents convey about the relationship between the two groups?** The purpose of this question is to understand the nature of relationship between teachers and parents based on teachers' experiences of interactions and identify how such a relationship may evolve over time. To do this, I analyse teachers' experiences of interactions and see how they have shaped the way in which teachers interact with the parents to form a collaborative relationship. Specifically, I ask about their preferred strategies of engaging with the parents, their reliance on interactions to bring any changes in parents' perspectives about them and how teachers' background, experiences with parents have shaped the ways in which they use interactions and build a relationship with the parents.

7.2 Teachers' experiences of interactions with the parents

To reflect on teachers' experiences, I first attempt to understand their perspectives on best ways to maintain connectedness with the parents (section 7.2.1). Second, I ask teachers about their perspectives on using interactions to gain appreciation from the parents (section 7.2.2). The response to both the question are revealed through qualitative teacher interview. The purpose behind exploring these experiences is to gauge the nature of relationship between teachers and parents.

7.2.1 Teachers’ perspectives on best way to maintain connectedness with the parents.

In order to understand teachers’ experiences with the parents, I asked what according to them was the best way to maintain connectedness with the parents and other people in the village⁶¹. Teachers’ responses can be seen in Table 10 where I have grouped these into various categories that reflect teachers’ interaction preferences. Overall, four categories emerge from the responses: meetings, cultural events and plays, distributing free items and through children.

Table 10: Teacher responses relating to the best way to remain connected with the parents

Teacher responses ⁶²	Categorisation
<p><i>“...If meetings are called, some guardians will definitely turn up and discussion around child’s shortcomings and good qualities can be discussed. We can tell them, this is an effective way to keep a connect with the community”- School 1, Komal (Para teacher, F)</i></p> <p><i>“There needs to be interaction with the guardians. The best way is to explain them that if they want the child to succeed, the child needs to come regularly to the school. They [parents] should come and talk about the shortcomings of the child, their own problems, these things should be told in the meetings.” – School 1, Suresh (Regular teacher, M)</i></p> <p><i>“The main thing is parents need to know how they will benefit, then only they will engage. What is the direct benefit they are getting. If they are told about the benefits through some play, so they will definitely come [to meetings]”.- School 3, Rajesh (Head teacher, M)</i></p> <p><i>“There are enough programmes like SMC, PTM [Parent Teacher Meeting], mother’s meet to connect with the people in the village.</i></p>	<p>Through meetings</p>

⁶¹ Q18 in semi-structured teacher interview guide (Appendix A).

⁶² Responses to this question are not available for Ankit because the audio recording was not clear. The responses of Rama and Neha have not been included here for the following reasons: Rama, indicated that she did not believe in connections with parents; and Neha’s response to this question related to expectations from parents, rather than what teachers could do to be connected with parents.

Teacher responses ⁶²	Categorisation
<p><i>However, in reality these work only on paper. If these programmes start functioning properly, then school and people in the village will develop a connect and children's learning level will also improve because both will work together then.</i>" – School 3, Arun (Para teacher, M)</p>	
<p><i>"If there is something interesting that is done, like a function or something, this leads to guardian's interest."- School 5, Ramlal (Para teacher, M)</i></p> <p><i>"Street play type is good. It can help in bringing a change in routine for people and they will take more interest in what is being said."- School 3, Mohan (Regular teacher, M)</i></p> <p><i>"If there is some play or drama, then through this if we tell parents something, they will come."- School 1, Ritu (Para teacher, F)</i></p> <p><i>"Cultural events if organised in schools can help in changing opinions of parents. Because of the event, the parents will come to school and see the facilities." – School 3, Arun (Para teacher, M)</i></p>	<p>Through cultural events and plays</p>
<p><i>"If something to eat or drink is given, then some people might come to listen."- School 5, Ameera Khan (Head teacher, F)</i></p> <p><i>"Give them something, then everyone will come. I can say some points. They will get bored after 2-4 times, then stop coming to listen to me."- School 5, Sangita (Para teacher, F)</i></p> <p><i>"Keep something to drink and eat, people will come the next time you call them" – School 6, Deepak (Regular teacher, M)</i></p> <p><i>"Especially when there is something to be distributed, they will definitely come. Sometimes, I even say that if you do not come to the meeting, you will not get a sweater for the child. Although I give it to them later, but still this makes them come to the meetings." – School 3, Rajesh (Head teacher, M)</i></p>	<p>Through distributing free items</p>

Teacher responses ⁶²	Categorisation
<p><i>“If you tell them there is something that will be distributed, everyone will come. Instead of children, you say everyone else will be given something, then see everyone will turn up. Otherwise, they will not.”</i> – School 1, Amit (Regular teacher, M)</p>	
<p><i>“If there is some message that needs to be given to parents, then the best medium is children. Whatever is being told to the child, the child goes and tells parents.”</i> - School 4, Gaurav (Regular teacher, M)</p> <p><i>“Children can be told that they need to tell parents to come.”</i> – School 6, Vikram (Regular teacher, M)</p> <p><i>“Best way [to engage] is through children. Through children, we can convey any message to the parents. I believe whatever is being taught to the child in class, the child goes and tells it to someone at home and that’s how anything or any message can be reached to the families”</i></p> <p>School 1, Dinesh(Head teacher, M)</p>	<p>Through children</p>

While the first category ‘through meetings’ provides examples of teacher responses demonstrating reliance on the formal meetings, the other two categories ‘through cultural events and street play’ and ‘through distributing free items’ demonstrate the strategies teachers use to capture the attention of parents in attending these meetings and events. The aim of teachers seems to be on increasing parents’ interests in visiting the school and/or attending the meetings organised by the teachers. For example: when discussing ‘meetings’ as the preferred strategy, the focus of teachers is on informing parents about them, and when once attended, teachers plan to convey certain messages to the parents. These messages include explaining them the importance of keeping the teacher apprised about the child’s routine at home or the importance of regularly interacting with them. While discussing street plays and cultural events, the focus of teachers is on getting parents to attend these events to be able to convey important information to them. The category of ‘distributing free items’ included giving away something consumable such as food and drinks in general for the meetings. Again, the purpose of this was to make parents interested in making visits to the school to attend meetings. In

addition to this, the fourth category ‘through children’ provides examples of teacher responses demonstrating reliance on children to convey the messages to the parents.

The understanding of teachers’ preferred ways of maintaining connectedness with the parents helps in gaining insight into their experiences with parents and how they use interactions with them. These four categories highlight two main features related to teachers’ experiences with the parents. First, parental visits to the school and their presence in the formal meetings and events is considered a sufficient requirement to build connectedness between teachers and parents. This belief leads teachers to focus more on attracting parents to the school through use of various strategies. Second, the teachers view interactions as mechanisms to convey information or messages to increase parental involvement.

Teachers' strategies to engage with parents reveal what teachers think that parents value. Instead of focusing on discussions around education or children's learning, teachers often prioritize strategies such as providing free food and drinks and organizing entertaining activities like street plays. This preference may stem from their understanding that these incentives are more likely to capture the attention of parents.

One reason for this preference is that teachers are aware that parents value these extrinsic benefits. For instance, some teachers mentioned that parents have started to devalue the education provided in government schools precisely because everything is offered free of cost. As a result, there is a lack of parental accountability and interest since they perceive they have nothing to lose. Consequently, these parents primarily visit the school to receive free items or to complain when their entitled benefits are not provided.

School 5, Ramlal (Para teacher, M): “...Yes, parents do come for the meetings, very few of them. If we call them, they say, what will they get. That is the main problem...”

School 1, Amit (Regular teacher, M): “...*Some parents are aware and understand whatever we tell them. Others are just concerned with what will they get from the school...*”

School 3, Mohan (Regular teacher, M): “...guardians only come to school on days when we are distributing dress [uniforms]... they are only concerned with getting the uniform or ensuring that children get the mid-day meals in school...”

According to these teachers, certain education policies are designed in ways that make parents believe there is no problem. An example of this relates to the ‘no detention policy’ that was referenced by teachers. The policy, under the RTE act states that students could not be held back until they had completed their elementary education, that is, Class 5 (GoI, 2019). While the rationale behind formulating this policy was that being detained and having to repeat a year is seen as a demotivating factor for the child, which in turn is likely to lead to higher dropout rates. However, teachers felt that this system of automatic promotion meant that often parents did not have any markers and opportunities to realistically assess their child’s academic performance.

School 3, Mohan (Regular teacher, M): “...The worst thing that the government has done is that the child cannot be retained in the class. When the child does not know anything, neither can the child read or write, the guardian is not checking. So, only once we fail the child will the guardian come to know and will visit the school. But if we send the child to the next grade, so the guardian will feel everything is ok and will not pay any attention...”

School 4, Gaurav (Regular teacher, M): “...parents do not know if the child is learning or not. They think that the child’s class has changed from Grade 1 to Grade 2, so everything is good...”

School 5, Sangita (Para teacher, F): “...Earlier there was this rule that if a child fails, then the child is given one more chance, after that the child is not eligible for any entitlements from the school. This ensured that parents keep a check on children because otherwise they would lose out the entitlements. This ensured parents regularly check what the child is doing...”

This reliance on strategies emphasizing parental presence stems from teachers' desire to bridge the information gap and provide parents with a more accurate picture of their child's

educational journey. By doing this, teachers aim to foster a collaborative relationship where parents are better equipped to support their child's academic development.

7.2.2 Teachers' experience of relying on interactions with parents

To understand teachers' experiences further, I explored their level of reliance on interactions. To do this, I asked teachers two questions: the first related to parents' perceptions about teachers; and the second, a follow-up, asked if teachers believed that these perceptions of them could be changed.⁶³ These questions were framed keeping in mind the literature review on interconnectedness between teacher parent relationship and teachers' responsiveness (Section 2.5). The review showed that teachers in government schools in India value the appreciation and respect of the parents and the larger community. In addition to this, interactions with parents are viewed as mechanisms for teachers to portray their efforts to the parents, in turn leading to possibility of being appreciation by them, thereby acting as a motivator for the teachers. The assumption here is that teachers' initiatives for parental interaction depend on their assessment of the response they could generate, as well as their trust in capability of interactions to change parents' negative perceptions of them.

Teachers were specifically asked what according to them parents think about the school and the teachers. The responses revealed that teachers were divided on the subject. Some believed that parents had a negative perception about them and the school; and others believed that parents who visited the school regularly had positive views.

School 1, Suresh (Regular teacher, M): *“In the previous school, when I sometimes used to talk to the guardians, they used to think that I am here because there might be some supervision on-going in the school. This is the view that most parents have...”*

School 1, Amit (Regular teacher, M): *“Some parents think it [the school] is good, some do not. Parents usually send their children to school so that they will receive some things for free from the school. Some parents also send their children for studying...”*

⁶³ Q9 in the semi-structured teacher interview guide (Appendix A).

School 2, Rama (Head teacher, F): *“You should ask this question to them. They think that teachers are paid a lot, so they should take care of the child who comes to school. They think it is extremely easy and we get paid for each and everything. If we are going and calling children, we are being separately paid for that, if we are doing something in school, we are specifically being paid for that as well- this is what their mindset is. If we provide them with pencils from our own money, they think the government must have paid for this. People in the village do not value education because it is free.”*

School 3, Rajesh (Head teacher, M): *“The ones who do not come to the school, they think, and this is a very common perception, that there is no learning in government schools”*

School 5, Ameera Khan (Head teacher, F): *“...they [parents] think good about me. They always treat me with respect. I don't know what they think about education... I also invite them properly whenever I have to convey any information, so they treat me well...”*

School 6, Vikram (Regular teacher, M): *“Parents, now think that teaching has improved in the school in comparison to previous years...”*

While teachers spoke of parents' negative perceptions, they also acknowledged the problems within the school system.

School 4, Gaurav (Regular teacher, M): *“The main thing is a table and a chair. Children will only be able to learn once they sit comfortably. Proper learning can only happen if a child has a desk and a chair...”*

School 5, Sangita (Para teacher, F): *“In government schools, there is so much time that gets wasted. First, children come late, then 1-1.5 hours also gets wasted in mid-day meal. These things don't happen in private. Over there, if a child is late, he/she is sent back. But here, if we send a child back, the child stops coming to school...”*

I then asked teachers a follow up question to see if they felt that regular interactions with parents had the potential to change parents' negative perceptions. While most teachers agreed

that negative parental perceptions could be changed, they relied on parents to make the visits to schools to observe infrastructure and ways in which teachers teach. Teachers believed that once parents visit the school, see the infrastructure, and observe what is being taught, their perceptions would change.

School 1, Komal (Para teacher, F): *“...if we approach the guardians, they support us, but for those who are not aware and not educated at all, they do not listen to us and neither do they understand anything. It is difficult to change their perceptions, how can we!”*

School 1, Suresh (Regular teacher, M): *“...see the opinions of parents can be changed if we regularly interact with them. Main thing is we need to get the parents in the school. Once they visit the school, they will see the facilities related to food and education here, sports played, then they will realise things are happening and this will change their perspective”*

School 3, Rajesh (Head teacher, M): *“...around 50% parents who are aware think that the school is good. For those who are not aware, we conduct rallies and ask them to come to school and see the changes in school. This is how their opinion will change...”*

School 3, Arun (Para teacher, M): *“...cultural events if organised in schools can help in changing opinions of parents. Because of the event, the parents will come to school and see the facilities- they will look at the classroom, if there is a gate, wall painting, place to sit. All these things will help change their opinion...”*

School 5, Sangita (Para teacher, F): *“...change in opinions will only occur if parents want it. They should first see what all is taught in the school, if there is any education being provided in the school or not. They should keep a check. Not only on the schools but also if children have done work...”*

Teachers also believed that a change in parents’ views was an automatic process; that once the school facilities improved, when free government provisions arrived on time, parents would also observe these changes. One of the teachers even suggested changing the official policy, to

make it compulsory for parents to visit the school. This would ensure that parents visited the school regularly, instead of only once or twice, to collect their entitlements.

School 3, Mohan (Regular teacher, M): *“... they [the government] should make such rules that if the child doesn't attend school for more than 10 days or if the attendance is less than 60%, then the child will not be entitled to the benefits received from the government such as meals, or uniform...”*

School 3, Rajesh (Head teacher, M): *“If the infrastructure improves, the staff is proper, and guardians are aware, then the quality of education will improve...”*

School 6, Vikram (Regular teacher, M): *“...The second thing is that it should be ensured that the children should timely receive the things they are entitled to. For example: It has been almost end of the year and children have not received their books yet. Now, the parents who are a little aware, they come and ask us, but we don't have any answers...”*

Teachers expressed their helplessness and blamed the government for assigning the duties and responsibilities that divert them from the main activity of teaching children and they feel this is observed by parents who then form a negative perception about the teacher. This is explained well by two teachers in the sample.

School 1, Dinesh(Head teacher, M): *“...we are educators, and our role is to educate and assigning us other tasks is wrong. These tasks disturb the teacher. Now let's say I am teaching children, now in the middle of the class I sometimes have to go and see the mid-day meal preparation... Sometimes, there are elections, other times there is census. All these disturb children's education because already there is limited time... teachers also need to take care of the cleanliness of the school, toilet facilities, also maintain a relationship with the people in the village. Our minds get diverted...”*

School 4, Gaurav (Regular teacher, M): *“Throughout the day we keep getting reminders and notices that we need to furnish data. There are some formats where teachers' information need to be shared immediately. Such instances don't occur once, but 50 times. Sometimes, we have to share the same information again. There are*

programmes such as 'kaya kalp' or other programmes and what not. Sometimes it is written information, sometimes we just receive a message on phone, and we need to immediately respond. Every other day we need to attend some training like for Mina Manch, graded learning, now there will be for Nishtha app..."

By describing these responsibilities, teachers point to their helpless situation and reflect their own inability to bring any change in perceptions of parents, given the reality of classrooms in the government schools.

Overall, teachers' experiences with parents have led them to believe interactions have a lower ability to help teachers in gaining appreciation from the parents. Teachers predict that parents are less likely to respond, given that they hold negative perceptions about the school. This then, further discourages the teachers to interact with the parents. In this way, the experiences from interactions tend to create a loop where teachers do not take initiative predicting a negative response, which further acts as a barrier in developing a collaborative relationship between the two groups.

7.3 Exploring the connections between teachers' experiences and the resulting possibility of developing a collaborative relationship with the parents

Previously, I demonstrated teachers' experiences of interactions with parents. For teachers, maintaining a connect with parents implies focusing on getting parents to formal meetings and events to convey messages such as the importance of education. In addition, I also demonstrated teachers' low reliance on interactions to gain appreciation from parents towards them and the school. I now move onto untangle how the overall experience of a teacher tends to shape the relationship forged between teachers and parents. To do this, I draw on the cases of two head teachers from two different case study schools in the sample. The analysis shows that teachers' background and experiences with parents shape their perspectives and ultimately impact the ways in which they interact with the parents. These detailed case explanations highlight the complexity of detangling the embeddedness of teachers' perspectives in their experiences and how they are linked with the ways in which teacher's interact with the parents. It should be noted that these detailed cases in no way are representative of either head teachers or government schools in general.

The reason why I chose these two schools (and the two head teachers within it) was that I had conducted observations of parent-teacher meetings that had been organised at these sites, as part of the evaluation study⁶⁴. My observations of these two head teachers within the organised parent-teacher meeting provided an opportunity to understand the dynamics of their relationship with parents.

These two schools were located within the same block, and thus fell within a similar geographical context. Both these schools were in different villages but were set at a similar distance from the main city of Sitapur. The two schools and their head teachers represented extreme opposites in terms of:

1. Their views about benefits from interactions: one believed interactions with parents were useful for the child, parents, and teachers, while the other believed they were pointless.
2. The forms of interaction undertaken by them: one used both system-mandated and self-driven interactions, while the other used system-mandated meetings only.

I focused on each head teacher's background in terms of i) their reason for choosing teaching; ii) their experience of interacting with parents in the past. I did this to understand the influence of their experiences on the interactions that they had with parents. I then related these with the interactions they undertake with the parents and predicted the relationship they are likely to form with them.

Case 1: Dinesh (School 1, Head teacher, Male)

Dinesh is a male head teacher and he had been at the school for about 10 years. He chose teaching because his family, including his grandfather, father and brother had been in the same profession. He plans to remain in the profession and want to improve his skills to become a better teacher.

Dinesh's primary focus is on the overall development of his students. For example: Dinesh claimed that he regularly visited the village, around thrice a week, to meet parents of children who had not been attending school. During these visits, he also discussed the child's health,

⁶⁴ Observations from these meetings are provided in appendix C.

and other aspects related to their schooling and education. He believes that parents are happy to see him:

“...Since I go regularly, everyone in the village knows me. They feel happy that someone from the school has come for their child. Leaving aside 1-2% guardians, everyone else gives a good response, they scold their children and motivate them to attend school every day...”

Dinesh talked about regular SMC meetings and mentioned that the most commonly discussed topics were those that affected both the school and parents, such as funds that the school had received, and aspects of children’s education.

Dinesh also stated that that if he received an invitation to an event from a parent or member of the community, he made sure he attended, which indicated his willingness to engage with his students’ families, and members of the wider community.

He recollected how his childhood experiences had shaped his beliefs about regular interactions with parents. Based on this experience, he felt that it was important and beneficial to regularly interact with the parents.

“When I started my education, my teachers used to visit my house themselves. They used to come to our place and meet my parents. They used to inquire about my daily routine such as whether I take a bath every day, whether I share food with my elder brother and whether I am honest. This is the type of environment in which I have been educated and these morals have been instilled in me since the beginning. This is the reason I believe that for a child’s overall success, it is important to interact with the parents...”

He also believed that while parents in the village were happy with the teachers and the functioning of the school, there were some parents who made comparisons with the facilities in private schools, such as classroom furniture, computers, and a bus for students to commute to the school. He was confident that once these things were provided, and teachers were freed

from other duties, all parents would have positive perceptions of the teachers as well as the school.

When asked about the best way to stay connected with parents, he reiterated his focus on children:

“...Best way is through children. Through children, we can convey any message to the parents. I believe whatever is being taught to the child in class, the child goes and tells it to someone at home and that’s how anything or any message can be reached to the families...”

During the parent-teacher meeting organised in the school as part of the activities planned within the evaluation study Dinesh encouraged parents to raise concerns they may have had about the school or children’s learning. He also tried to encourage parents to speak, giving them both the time and the opportunity to express their concerns.

Overall, Dinesh showed that he is actively involved with parents and his actions reflected a collaborative approach towards parents and an encouragement of dialogue between the two. He used institutional structures such as the SMC, as well as self-driven interactions to build and maintain relationships with parents, and to some extent, even the wider community. His perspectives about interaction with the parents seemed to be shaped and influenced by his own childhood experiences, in which his father also played an important role. He believed in the abilities of parents and approached them if he was concerned that the child was not progressing. His child-centred approach led him to an enhanced level of interaction with student families to understand the child better, which is one of the main benefits derived from interactions. Overall, his experiences have shaped his perspectives that interactions with parents are helpful for teachers and children. This in turn has shaped the ways in which he interacts with the parents and develop a collaborative relationship with them.

Case 2: Rama (School 2, Head teacher, Female)

Rama is a female head teacher who had been at the current school for about 7 years. She chose teaching because that was the only option available, and she plans to remain in the profession

because it is comfortable and convenient to come to school, work throughout the day, and then leave.

Rama's focus throughout her interview was on how parents didn't listen to her. Rama talked about SMC meetings being a headache, and added that although such meetings were conducted sometimes, they were of no use. The excerpt below is from Rama's response to being asked whether interactions with parents were helpful.

"...In SMC meetings, there are discussions about sending the child in clean uniform, regularly, parents should take care. But parents themselves are illiterate, what care will they take of their children."

Rama's opinions about parents and her perspectives about how parents feel about her or other teachers in the school were not positive, and she believed that interactions did not bring any benefits.

"...We conduct meetings and often tell them [parents] so many things. But they don't listen at all. They just want to know how they will benefit. Today, if I tell them they will get a sweater, so everyone will come, but otherwise no one will..."

In terms of children's learning, Rama held the belief that children's learning is the responsibility of teachers as long as the child is in school. After that, she stated that it does not matter what the child did. She gave an example of a girl whose mother had not been sending her to school because the girl lost a pencil every day. Citing this case, Rama concluded that the parents weren't bothered about their child's education at all. At the same time, she mentioned how despite her efforts to distribute notebooks and pencils to children from her own salary, parents still do not listen to her.

"...They [parents] think it is extremely easy and we get paid for each and everything. If we are going and calling children, we are being separately paid for that, if we are doing something in school, we are specifically being paid for that as well- this is what their mindset is. If we provide them with pencils from our own money, they think the government must have paid for this..."

When asked about the best way to stay connected with parents, she stated that interactions were not a viable option for stimulating any meaningful discussion with the parents.

'...This is of no use. No point of engaging with these people- we have not done that before; we will not do it now...'

Rama's beliefs about parents are also reflected in her indifferent attitude towards the parents and a belief that often parents make excuse for not looking after their children.

"... we do not have any problem with the parents, even if they are not aware and they do not listen to us, let them be. We have nothing to lose. We come here, teach. That is enough..."

When invited for celebratory events, she stated

"No, we don't go. The invite is sent but we do not go. Is it necessary that since they have called, we are supposed to go? We do not"

Rama's case represents that of a teacher with a compliance-driven mindset. During her interview, she claimed that all her paperwork related to the school was always in place.

"I do not sit idle in the school ever. My registers are always complete. I finish each works' day."

When asked if she would be willing to conduct a meeting with parents in the school, she said:

"...call them [parents] if you want to. It will be nice if they come. We can treat it as our SMC meeting."

During the parent-teacher meeting, Rama engaged in one-sided conversation in which she raised issues about the lack of care these parents had for their children. After the meeting, Rama was observed getting all the parents' signatures on a register. This indicated that Rama's motivation to participate in the activity was to fulfil the official obligation of conducting a

meeting rather than considering it as an opportunity to involve parents and discuss problems with them.

Overall, this case shows that Rama's negative perceptions about parents prevented her from interacting with them in the same way as Dinesh. She had restricted herself to compulsory interactions, that were a requirement of her role. Given her negative perceptions and less-than-positive experiences, Rama's interaction with parents was limited. She used the opportunity created by the evaluation study to merely convey a few messages and get parents to sign the register, instead of engaging them in discussions or seeking their opinions.

The cases of Rama and Dinesh shows how the perspectives of these two teachers differed based on their past experiences, and how these in turn affected the ways in which they interacted with parents. In the case of Dinesh and Rama, their contrasting experiences influenced their interactions with parents. Both used the opportunity provided by the evaluation study in different ways: the former, to genuinely work to build better relations with parents, and the latter, to use it merely as a box-ticking exercise. Given this, Dinesh is more likely to develop a collaborative relationship with parents while Rama is more likely to develop a formal relationship devoid of trust, dialogue and discussion.

7.4. Concluding remarks

In this chapter I explored teachers' experiences of maintaining connectedness with the parents. I did this by analysing teachers' preferred ways of interacting with the parents. Teachers' choice of strategies to maintain connectedness with parents indicates their understanding of what parents' value. This has been influenced by their experience with parents where in the past, teachers try to close the information gap and provide parents with a more accurate picture of their child's educational journey. By doing this, teachers aim to foster a collaborative relationship where parents are better equipped to support their child's academic development. However, the one-sided information flow and presence of parents instead of participation does not create a collaborative relationship. Teachers' experiences with parents limited accountability and reduced interest in education hinders the development of a collaboration and reduces the likelihood of teachers being responsive to parents.

Furthermore, the analysis revealed that the majority of teachers do not depend on interactions to alter parents' negative perceptions about teachers. Despite valuing parental appreciation, teachers' experiences have shaped their belief that interactions are unlikely to bring about desired changes in how parents perceive them. As a result, teachers attach less significance to parents, predict that parents are less likely to respond, which further discourages the teachers to interact with the parents. In this way, the experiences from interactions tend to create a loop where teachers do not take initiative predicting a negative response, which further acts as a barrier in developing a collaborative relationship between the two groups.

Given these sentiments, I described two cases to draw connections between teachers' experiences and their interactions. These cases highlight how two teachers used same opportunity to connect with parents in very different ways. It also showed that teachers' overall experience including their own background shape their perspectives about parents and decisions on parental interactions with them. Overall, these negative experiences have consequences on the sustainability of interactions between teachers and parents. Given their negative experience, teachers may become less responsive to parents and their relationship may become strained or even unsustainable.

In the next chapter, I bring together the findings from all three research questions to discuss what these mean in terms of understanding the relationship between teachers and parents within social accountability in education.

Chapter 8. Discussion

8.1 Introduction

This thesis builds on the argument that to increase teacher accountability to parents, it is important to understand the perspectives of teachers about their relationship with parents and identify whether such relationships encourage collaboration between the teachers and parents. Such a relationship can be understood through the ways in which teachers interact with the parents on a regular basis and how they perceive their own as well as parents' role in such interactions. The significance of this relationship stems from the concept of social accountability which is seen as one of the ways through which linkages between citizens and service providers as well as local governments can be strengthened to improve overall public service delivery outcomes. One of the main building blocks of such a conceptualization of social accountability in education is based on building coalitions between different stakeholders (Malena et al., 2004). However, there is limited evidence base in case of developing countries including India on relationship between parents and teachers and how the type of relationship may affect the responsiveness of teachers towards parents' demands created within the realm of social accountability in education. Understanding of this relationship adds to our knowledge of micro-context within the social accountability mechanism which helps in unpacking the mechanisms that lead to success in social accountability initiatives through increased responsiveness of service providers to parents (Joshi, 2014).

This research set out to explore the nature of relationship between teachers and parents from the perspectives of the teachers teaching primary schools in rural Sitapur, India. Specifically, it explored a) the perspective of teachers on the opportunities they have and the forms they use to interact and build collaboration with the parents; b) their perspectives on benefits of interactions and expectations from parents; c) the linkages between teachers' experiences and the type of relationship forged between them and the parents. Chapter 5, 6 and 7 presented the analysis separately for each of the above research question. This chapter discusses the findings from the three chapters and how these relate to the existing literature on social accountability.

8.2 Formal institutional channels as well as informal channels provide opportunities to interact, but teachers' perspectives on these opportunities indicate limited scope of collaboration.

The first research question in the thesis addressed “What are teachers’ perspectives on the opportunities they get to interact with the parents?”. The purpose of this question was to understand how teachers perceive the opportunities of interactions and if these help to build a positive collaborative relationship between teachers and parents. Within this, I explored the not just the opportunities, but also various forms of interactions undertaken by teachers, reasons for these interactions and identified the possible factors influencing the interactions that teachers have with parents. The argument was that when teachers have more opportunities to interact with parents, they are more likely to develop an understanding of the concerns and perspectives of parents. Further, regular interactions with parents can also help teachers to build trust and establish a positive relationship with them. This combined can lead to increased teacher responsiveness to parent concerns. Additionally, more opportunities to interact with parents can help teachers to monitor student progress more closely and provide targeted support to students who may be struggling. All of these can contribute to development of a collaborative relationship between teachers and parents and can help teachers to become more responsive to the needs and concerns of parents within social accountability mechanism. However, the overall findings from the analysis revealed that even though several opportunities exist for teachers to interact with parents, the ways in which teachers utilise them determine if these could build a collaborative relationship with parents.

8.2.1 Teachers exhibit compliance-driven orientation towards system-mandated interactions with parents.

The findings from the interviews on opportunities that teachers have to interact with the parents revealed that existing interactions can be categorised into system-mandated interactions, self-driven interactions and parent-initiated interactions. Of these, the first category relates to the institutionalized channels of interactions, such as SMC meetings, and occasional references to cultural events and rallies to increase enrolment. Within these, the most mentioned interactions were the SMC meetings. While teachers claim that these meetings are conducted on a regular basis in the school, these were often restricted to only a few members and with those who are held responsible on paper, such as the head of the SMC member. This indicates the compliance-

driven nature of these interactions. In addition, teachers' disappointment and proactive measures taken to ensure parental attendance underscore a strong emphasis on fulfilling attendance requirements. Their expressed need to wait for parents and the challenges encountered when parental attendance is lacking further reinforce this compliance-oriented perspective. Such an attitude tends to restrict the opportunities for teachers and parents to build a positive collaborative relationship with parents since these interactions seem to largely lack this crucial element of dialogue between the two groups.

This finding highlights a potential limitation in the institutionalization within social accountability in education. Despite the existence of formal, system-mandated interactions between parents and schools, the focus seems to be more on ensuring parental presence rather than fostering genuine collaboration and dialogue. This suggests that the institutionalization of social accountability in education may not be effectively translating into meaningful engagement and involvement of parents in the decision-making and improvement processes. The emphasis on compliance in these mandated interactions, rather than building a true partnership with parents, indicates a disconnect between the formal mechanisms of social accountability and the desired outcomes of improved educational service delivery. It suggests that there may be a need to critically examine the institutionalization of social accountability in education and ensure that it goes beyond compliance-driven interactions to genuinely empower parents and contribute to improved educational outcomes. This compliance-driven nature of interactions resonates with the findings from Dyer, Jacob, Patil and Mishra (2022) which points to how the various platforms existing across government as well as low-fee paying private schools in India are state-driven and often, instead of encouraging meaningful discussion about children's learning, are seen as box-ticking exercise and a way to track children's attendance. The accounts of teachers provided in their study show how SMCs are conducted in "*in light of legal and habitual norms of bureaucratic management, such that it apparently functions – yet without meaningful community connection*" (Dyer, Jacob, Patil & Mishra, 2022, p.9). Additionally, daily diaries in private schools act as a written record of fulfilment of teachers' obligations to 'communicate' with the parents (p.12) since most parents in these locations just sign these off without being able to read it.

Additionally, this finding adds to the discussion on creation of spaces within social accountability initiatives by Aiyar et al., 2009. In their study, the authors highlight the importance of creating formalized structures, processes, and mechanisms that enable citizens

to actively participate in decision-making, monitoring, and evaluation of public programs and services. The paper emphasizes that institutionalization goes beyond the mere existence of legal frameworks or policy mandates. It requires the establishment of platforms and spaces that facilitate citizen engagement, dialogue, and feedback, as well as capacity building among citizens to effectively participate in these processes. They also stress that the success of social accountability initiatives hinges on citizens' ability to hold service providers and government agencies accountable for the delivery of quality services. The finding from the teacher interviews in the thesis further builds on the argument and highlights that creation of spaces also need to take into consideration the perspectives of service providers for institutionalization to become relevant factor influencing social accountability initiatives. The finding from the thesis further contributes to this argument by emphasizing the importance of considering the perspectives of service providers, in this case, teachers, when creating spaces for institutionalization. This highlights the need to incorporate the viewpoints and experiences of service providers to ensure that the institutionalization can help teachers in building a collaborative relationship with parents and thereby, increase the likelihood of responsiveness to parents' concerns within the mechanism of social accountability.

8.2.2 The self-driven interactions convey teachers' intentions to develop familiarity with the parents and their commitment to maintain connections with parents.

The second form of interactions revealed during the interviews are the ones that teachers undertook in addition to the system-mandated interactions because the outcomes derived from them were considered valuable. These self-driven interactions extend beyond formal mechanisms and encompass social obligations. Teachers attend personal events and engage with community members voluntarily, illustrating their commitment to maintaining connections with parents through establishing greater familiarity with them. These efforts contribute to a positive environment and demonstrate a willingness to actively engage with parents outside of their official roles. These interactions also include instances of teachers trying to build connectedness with the parents by making visits to their homes. These forms of interactions indicate that teachers realize that understanding the child's challenges often requires contacting parents as the reasons for difficulties may be found within the family context. These discussions demonstrate a collaborative approach, where teachers seek parental insights to identify and address obstacles to their students' education.

One aspect of these self-driven interactions is the teachers' intention to develop familiarity with parents and gain insights into the problems they face. By making efforts to establish "jaan pehchaan" (getting to know each other better), teachers aim to foster a sense of connectedness and mutual understanding. This highlights their belief that increased interactions contribute to building stronger bonds with parents. Consequently, these self-driven interactions are opportunities that teachers create themselves voluntarily and hence, within such interactions it is more likely that teachers are more responsive to the parents' concerns. This can help teachers to become more responsive to the needs and concerns of parents. However, such self-driven interactions are time-consuming and require some experience. While Dinesh set a good example, it is important to see this in relation to the overall situation in his school, as well as his background and experience within the teaching profession. Apart from him and his role as head teacher, this school had five other teachers to look after five standards/classes. This provided Dinesh with the time to make regular visits to the village during school hours. This was difficult in other schools which didn't have enough teachers. In addition to this, not only did he have over 20 years' experience, but he also belonged to a family of teachers (his father and brother both are teachers) who may have provided informal guidance on the means and benefits of interacting with parents, thus, contributing to his overall approach. Similar situations, however, were not shared by other teachers in the sample.

Self-driven interactions were also carried out naturally, as in the case of para teachers who lived in proximity to the school, and thus their students' families. Two of them in the sample, teachers 4 & 10, mentioned the comfort level that existed between parents and themselves. While these teachers didn't consciously interact with the parents to build connectedness, their perspectives indicate the importance of developing familiarity with parents to form a certain level of trust, which is one of the main features of a collaborative relationship.

8.2.3 Parent-initiated interactions constrain the development of collaboration due to teachers' pre-conceived notions.

Examining teachers' perspectives on interactions with parents shed light on the formation of collaborative relationships between the two parties. Parent-initiated interactions, as the third form of interaction, often seemed to encounter obstacles due to teachers' pre-conceived notions. These notions are shaped by the reasons for which parents approach the teachers. Negative perceptions arise when parents approach teachers to lodge complaints or engage in disputes

regarding government provisions or disciplinary matters. Such interactions are largely received with dissatisfaction by teachers, who perceive them as additional responsibilities and struggle to manage these situations without sufficient support. Furthermore, interactions centred around complaints about entitlements, such as the lack of free provisions like books and uniforms, leave teachers feeling helpless and lacking agency. As these entitlements are beyond their control and handled at the block level, teachers express reluctance to encourage such forms of parent-initiated interactions. In contrast, parent-initiated interactions related to checking on their child's progress or attending school meetings are viewed positively by teachers, albeit occurring rarely. Teachers categorize parents who initiate such interactions as 'aware,' and they attribute better academic performance to children whose parents are actively involved.

The National Education Policy, 2020 in India places the responsibility for working in collaboration with the parents on both teachers and parents (GoI, 2020, p.21) but emphasises the importance of positive views of teachers on parent-initiated interactions. When teachers view parent-initiated interactions as positive, it provides encouragement to the parents to approach the teachers. However, when viewed negatively, teachers are likely to detest these initiations by parents. This negative attitude of the teachers can have a multiplier effect in rural locations, further pushing away parents belonging to disadvantaged backgrounds, who would benefit the most from communicating with the teachers. This is because, often these parents are neither aware nor confident in approaching the teachers, who are more educated and have a higher socio-economic status.

Similar consequences have been observed by authors focusing on perceptions of teachers about parental involvement in both developed and developing countries (Suoto-Manning & Swick, 2006; Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005; Ashraf et al., 2015, Ahmed, Rönkä & Perälä-Littunen 2021; Barton, Ershadi & Winthrop, 2021). These studies have highlighted the fact that when parental involvement in schools is seen as an interference by the teachers, it can have negative effects on the interactions between parents and teachers as well as on children's learning. This is because teachers' negative attitudes have the potential to create a self-fulfilling loop which could further discourage parents from communicating with them. When parents feel that teachers are not receptive to their concerns, they are less likely to approach teachers with issues related to their child's education. This, in turn, can lead to a decrease in likelihood of teacher responsiveness to parent concerns.

A lack of teachers' agency and control over entitlements lead them to resent parent-initiated interactions. A straightforward solution to this, as also pointed by the teachers is to ensure an overall improvement in quality of education in government schools. Such a change is warranted and necessary. However, another solution could be to bring a change in culture of teacher parent interactions where teachers are encouraged to share problems with the parents. This can result in teachers becoming more open to listening to the parents and thereby, becoming more responsive towards their concerns. Such a change can be brought through training of teachers and sharing positive cases where sharing problems have led to possible solutions instead of conflicts.

8.2.4 Para teachers are a useful resource to support collaborations between teachers and parents.

Three types of teachers, head teachers, regular teachers, and para teachers, were deliberately included in the sample owing to the different roles they played within the school, and the different ways in which they might relate with students' families. The head teachers in our sample played a significant role in carrying out interactions with parents. This is in line with their official roles and responsibilities that include handling overall functioning of the school (Ramachandran et al., 2016). In my sample, there were 2 female and 3 male head teachers across six schools. All of them had to juggle multiple responsibilities ranging from teaching to organisation and coordination of multiple activities such as midday meals, distribution of entitlements, maintenance of records, to ensure the smooth running of the school. These multitudinous tasks, combined with staff shortages, meant that regular interactions to build connectedness were considered a low priority and were thus rarely observed in the sample. This was possibly despite seeing the potential value in these interactions and a general sense of willingness to interact with the parents.

Against this backdrop, the role of para teachers seems invaluable. They usually belonged to the same village in which the school was located. In our sample, 2 out of 6 para teachers stayed in the same village and 2 had lived there in the past. Overall, para teachers seemed well placed to build collaborations between parents and schools. These para teachers seemingly had informal connections with the parents of the children they teach since they shared the same background and lived close by.

Para teachers in the sample also supported female head teachers who couldn't go into the village to meet student families (school 3, Arun). They also helped gather information about parents in the village (school 1, Komal) and believed that being part of the local community acted in their favour when building a rapport with students' families through casual interaction.

A key finding is that the role of para teachers is underestimated. Living in the same geographical context and being a part of the community means that they are more likely to understand parents' problems and can possibly spend more time with them. However, most para teachers' statements reveal that they are not involved in official organised meetings such as the SMC. Consequently, their interactions with parents were largely restricted to informal encounters, or while acting as messengers on behalf of head teachers. However, given their existing forms of interaction with parents, they offer the best opportunity for schools to build better relations with parents. Hence, para teachers' efforts need to be recognised and they should officially be assigned responsibility for interacting with parents, while head teachers could be assigned a supervisory role in these relationships.

Overall, the discussion on teachers' perspectives on the opportunities they have to interact with parents indicates a bleak possibility of collaboration. The results reveal that the formal mechanisms for engaging parents and teachers encompass institutionalised channels such as school management committee meetings (SMC), parent-teacher meetings, cultural events, as well as informal forms of engagement initiated by parents themselves. When social accountability mechanisms are institutionalised, they become an integral part of the formal system and processes within education governance (Malena et al., 2004). The institutionalisation of social accountability in education entails the existence of formal policies, laws, regulations, or structures that recognise and support citizen involvement in monitoring and improving education service delivery. This can enhance the sustainability and effectiveness of social accountability mechanisms by integrating them into the routine functioning of the education system. However, the findings indicate that despite the regularity of mandated interactions, they do not effectively involve parents in schools as they tend to be compliance-driven rather than fostering collaboration with parents.

Additionally, the findings from this research question highlight that while teachers have opportunities that enable them to interact with parents, the nature of the resulting relationships is likely to be determined by teachers' perspectives on these opportunities. Although

institutionalisation plays an important role in social accountability, how teachers use these channels significantly influences their purpose and outcomes. Similarly, teachers' avoidance of meeting parents due to their own pre-conceived notions about them hinders the development of a relationship between the two groups. Consequently, this reduces the chances of building a collaborative relationship where parents are included and engaged in regular conversations and making teachers unresponsive to parental demands and voices. Finally, self-driven interactions show promise in fostering connectedness and making teachers responsive to parents. However, these interactions are rare due to their time-consuming nature and often are dependent on the gender of the teacher and availability of staff to teach in school. To undertake such interactions, teachers seem to have insufficient support available.

These findings aligns with Joshi's (2014) emphasis on unpacking the micro-context and the macro context within social accountability. Within the macro context, it becomes evident that institutionalisation plays a crucial role within social accountability in education. The formal mechanisms for engaging teachers and parents, such as the SMC meetings, parent-teacher meetings are the institutionalised channels within the education system. However, the findings suggest that these mandated interactions tend to be compliance-driven and do not effectively involve parents in a way that leads to a collaboration. This aligns with Joshi's emphasis on unpacking the micro-context, as the nature of relationships between teachers and parents is influenced by teachers' perspectives on these opportunities for interaction. Additionally, findings also highlight that teachers' avoidance of meeting parents based on their pre-conceived notions hinders the development of a collaborative relationship which has implications on motivation for citizen action emphasised within the framework proposed by Joshi. Finally, the rare self-driven interactions between teachers and parents show promise in fostering responsiveness, but their occurrence is limited due to time constraints and other factors like teacher gender and availability of staff. These combined highlight how the findings relate to Joshi's study on unpacking the micro and macro contexts within social accountability initiatives which provides a useful framework for understanding the relationship between teachers and parents within the thesis. It highlights the significance of institutionalisation, the functioning of formal structures, teachers' perspectives on opportunities for interaction, and the role of self-driven interactions in fostering collaboration and responsiveness within social accountability mechanisms in education.

8.3 Teachers show a willingness to work in collaboration with parents, but their stated approaches to interactions do not show signs of connectedness.

The second research question aimed to understand the willingness of teachers to interact with the parents and form a collaborative relationship. To do this, I explored teachers' perspectives on the benefits derived from interactions and their expectations from parents. Within teachers' perceived benefits of interactions, I also reflected on the implied barriers to interactions. Within expectations from parents, I reflected on the roles that teachers assign to parents in relation to children's learning. These perceived benefits play a key role in determining teachers' willingness to interact with the parents and initiate formation of a collaboration with them. The assumption is, if teachers perceive that interactions with parents are beneficial, they will be more willing to engage in these interactions. On the other hand, if teachers do not see the benefits of interacting with parents, it may indicate a more distant or even adversarial relationship between teachers and parents.

Similarly, forming a collaboration requires a teacher who is willing and trusting of the ability of parents and supports them to become more involved in the school. Positive expectations can serve as a catalyst for open communication, shared decision-making, and a sense of connectedness between teachers and parents. Teachers with positive expectations are also more likely to see the potential benefits of parent involvement and view interactions as opportunities for meaningful dialogue and collective problem-solving. Conversely, negative expectations can create barriers to effective communication and hinder the establishment of a collaborative relationship. If teachers perceive parents as uninterested or unresponsive, they may be less motivated to initiate interactions or involve parents in decision-making processes. This can limit the potential for teachers responding to parents' demands and concerns within social accountability.

The analysis in chapter 6 revealed that while teachers acknowledge the benefits that interactions with parents can bring, they still consider these interactions as a low priority task since they are unable to achieve the perceived benefits. A closer look into the forms of interactions and expectations of teachers from parents helped in unpacking these perspectives further. A number of implications are derived from these results which I explain in the following sub-sections.

8.3.1 Misalignment between teachers' theoretical perspectives and reported approach to interact with the parents.

Teachers' perspectives on the benefits derived from interactions with parents reflect their theoretical understanding of what interactions should achieve. However, their desire for active involvement is not reflected either in the ways in which they report about approaching parents or in their expectations from them.

Teachers described the perceived benefits that could arise from regular parental interactions. These can be divided into two categories; those related to the child and teachers and those related to parents and teachers. The stated benefits related to the child and teachers included improvement in children's attendance in the school and enabling the teachers to gain insights on what the child does at home. These help the teacher in better assessment of the child and adapting the way they teach. The benefits related to the parents included building connectedness with the parents, creating parents' interest in school and increasing parental involvement with the child. Teachers stated that such interactions with parents would lead to greater parental help and support for them and the school, expressed through parents listening to them and treating school as their own. These perspectives on how interactions with parents can be beneficial reflect that teachers have a good theoretical understanding of interactions helping in building a collaboration. However, in practice, majority of the teachers did not think of approaching the parents in case a child in their class is facing learning difficulties. Instead, most teachers attempt to solve the problem of students' poor learning outcomes themselves, using various strategies such as peer learning or providing differentiated work. Additionally, teachers tend to blame parents for not being able to realise the benefits. When teachers do not perceive significant benefits arising from interactions with parents, they may develop negative expectations about future interactions and regard interactions as a low-priority task.

Both the quantitative teacher survey as well as the qualitative interviews showed that teachers believed in a shared responsibility of children's learning. The qualitative interviews further explored the kinds of responsibilities teachers see for themselves as well as for parents. However, when a student wasn't performing well in their class, most teachers didn't discuss the problem with parents. Instead, they adopted various pedagogical strategies, such as mixing struggling students with those who were better learners; and teaching according to the child's level of understanding. Only 3 out of 17 teachers referred to parents in their response. The

reasons cited for contacting parents included identifying reasons for learning difficulties within the family context, emphasizing the importance of parental support, and addressing issues related to irregular attendance. This is similar to the responses from the quantitative teacher survey, in which only 6.6% of 1,852 teachers held discussions with parents when a child wasn't learning. This preference for internal problem-solving by teachers could stem from a belief in their professional expertise and their responsibility for facilitating learning within the school setting. It also suggests that teachers may see parental involvement as secondary or supplemental to their own instructional efforts.

These findings also align with the various expectations that teachers have from parents. These expectations include ensuring the child attended school regularly, checking the child's homework and making sure they revised, ensuring the child had the necessary resources (e.g., notebooks and stationery), and making regular visits to the school. Most teachers felt that sending the child to school regularly was the most helpful thing parents could do, because they linked attendance to learning outcomes. These findings show that while teachers believe in shared responsibility of children's learning, the functional roles they assign to parents indicate low expectations from them and limit the interactions merely to the transfer of information, rather than collaboration.

The mismatch between teachers' desire of forming a connectedness with the parents and their reported approach to involving them makes it challenging for teachers to achieve the intended benefits of collaboration and connectedness. As a result, they tend to prioritise interactions with the parents at a lower level. Although teachers have a theoretical understanding of how interactions can be beneficial, in practice, they primarily approach parents only for specific tasks and only seek opportunities to interact when related to those tasks. This limited role may lead teachers to perceive parents as less influential or engaged in their children's education, thereby reducing their motivation to actively respond to parental demands. In addition, the lack of realisation of benefits can demotivate teachers from actively engaging with parents and responding to their concerns. As a result, teachers may prioritize other tasks over interactions with parents, considering them low-priority and further reducing their willingness to form collaborative relationships and likelihood of responsiveness of teachers to parents within social accountability.

8.3.2 Teachers seem to be unaware about what is required to build a collaboration with parents.

While teachers describe the potential benefits of interacting with parents, they also blame a lack of parental responsiveness to their efforts as the reason for not being able to realise the expected benefits. The mapping exercise of what teachers perceive as the benefits of interactions with the forms of interactions undertaken by them (section 6.2.2) reveals that teachers relying on only system-mandated interactions do not experience any benefits from interactions with the parents. Additionally, despite undertaking a combination of different forms of interactions, some teachers are not able to realise the benefits completely. These teachers tend to blame the parents' lack of responsiveness to their efforts. This tendency to blame the parents has been documented in other studies in India. For example: Brinkmann (2015) focused on teachers' learner-centred beliefs to understand their connections with teachers' pedagogy practices. She explored teachers' beliefs around why some students did badly or failed to learn. 46% of teachers cited family-related reasons, such as a lack of parental support, problems within the family and household chores; and 33% of teachers mentioned child-related factors, such as low intelligence and learning disabilities. Only 8% believed it was their fault for not effectively performing their role to ensure all children learned. Similarly, in their study on teachers' time on task and their practices across three states in India (Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh), Sankar and Linden (2014) explored teacher perceptions of the teaching-learning process in both government and private schools. They showed that teachers blamed parents for students' lack of learning, specifically the lack of parental interest. Sinha, Banerji and Wadhwa (2016) also explored teacher beliefs in their study on teacher performance in Bihar. More than half the teachers in their sample blamed parents for children's failure to learn. A similar outcome was observed by Bhattacharjea, Wadhwa and Banerji (2011), who showed that often, teachers in government primary schools, especially in rural areas, believed that they, and the schools, were doing the best they could, thus absolving themselves of any blame for poor student performance.

Given this, the interpretation of Table 9 in chapter 6 indicate that teachers do not acknowledge their own role in creating an environment to encourage parental involvement. Since teachers continue to employ multiple forms of interactions with the parents, they tend to believe they are doing their best. This finding has several implications. First, the current forms of interactions undertaken by the teachers fail to effectively involve parents in children's

schooling and education. Second, despite showing a desire to involve parents in children's education, teachers are unable to do so indicates their limited understanding of effective strategies that can foster productive parental involvement, hindering the potential for collaboration. Third, teachers' reliance on parents for interactions contributes to further reduced responsiveness of teachers to parents.

The way in which teachers view parents' role acts as a contradiction to the holistic perspective of shared responsibility for children's learning envisioned by Indian policy makers. For example: The National Curriculum Framework (2005) advises teachers to invite community members (which includes parents) into schools to share their knowledge and experiences. The policy document states that:

The participation of the community in the child's world of education and learning should allow for the community to:

1. Transfer oral history (dealing with folklore, migration, environmental degradation, traders, settlers, etc.) and traditional knowledge (sowing and harvesting, monsoons, processes related to traditional crafts, etc.) to children, while the school encourages critical reflection wherever it is required
2. Influence the content of subjects and add local, practical, and appropriate examples
3. Support children in their exploration and creation of knowledge and information
4. Support children in their practise of democracy through their participation in information generation, planning, monitoring and evaluation with local governments and schools
5. Monitor the realisation of children's rights as well as violations of these rights
6. Participate in addressing the constraints faced by children
7. Participate in setting criteria for vocational training
8. Enable the village to become a learning environment for children realising the concept of the 'village as a school'.

(NCERT, 2005)

Although the above framework emphasises the importance of working together with the community members, neither the framework nor the NEP (GoI, 2020) actually provides teachers with strategies they could use to create such involvement.

In terms of relating the teachers' perspectives about parents with building a collaborative relationship with them, Goodall and Montgomery (2013) provide useful starting points for placing schools in relation to parental involvement with them. They suggest that parents and teachers need to work together and each need to recognise the value of the other to support their children's development and learning. This invokes dialogue between the two and could potentially lead to a collaborative relationship. However, the existing perspectives of teachers about the parents' role in children's learning leads them to limit the discussions they have with the parents. Such a role construction undermines the potential of these discussions to lead to collaborative partnership between teachers and parents because teachers tend to only communicate their expectations through interactions with the parents, rather than encouraging more involvement of parents and creation of a space for dialogue. Furthermore, teachers' insufficient knowledge about their own roles and strategies further constrains their reliance on interactions with the parents.

The lack of realisation of benefits has given teachers strong reasons to expect future unsuccessful interaction, leading them with little motivation to continue the same. The tendency of teachers to assign interactions as a low-priority task implies that teachers are less willing to interact and form a collaborative relationship with the parents. However, to break this cycle, it is important to ensure teachers achieve the benefits of such interactions, which could encourage them to willingly initiate a collaborative relationship with parents. These findings need to be viewed in terms of Joshi and McCluskey (2018) work that focuses on pressures to the public officials emerging from below through citizen actions seeking responsiveness from the public officials. It states that "*Engagement with citizens can transform public officials' perceptions of citizens' claims and their legitimacy. Through repeated interactions that demonstrate integrity, they can earn each other's trust. If this trust exists, public officials will be more willing to 'stick their neck out' for citizens*" (Joshi & McCluskey, 2018, p.8). In context of this research, this implies that one of the consequences of these findings is that a lack of parent response has led teachers to form negative perceptions about parents and discouraged the teachers from making further efforts to improve interactions. This in turn reduces the opportunity to build trustful relationship between these two groups.

While positive expectations from interactions can serve as a catalyst for open communication, shared decision-making, and a sense of connectedness between teachers and parents, the findings from the above analysis shows that teachers are less motivated to initiate interactions

and build a collaboration with the parents. These findings indicate that teachers' responsiveness to parents' concerns within social accountability may be affected by their lack of knowledge about own role and uncertainty about effective strategies for engagement. By providing support to enhance teachers' understanding of their own role can enhance their relationship with the parents, it is possible to increase the likelihood of their responsiveness to parents' concerns within social accountability mechanism. Additionally, efforts should be made to promote positive perceptions of parents through professional development programs, training, and supportive school environments. By nurturing positive expectations, teachers are more likely to engage in interactions with parents, build trust, and develop a collaborative relationship that fosters student success and promotes social accountability in education.

The above findings can be related to the explanations given by Joshi (2013). She emphasises the importance of service providers' responsiveness within social accountability. She questions the assumptions made within social accountability mode, such as the belief that exposure of poor performance will always lead to greater responsiveness from service providers. Instead, Joshi suggests that provider responsiveness can vary, and there might be cases where providers are immune to the exposure of poor performance or lack the capacity and resources to respond effectively (Joshi, 2013). The analysis of teacher responses echoes this argument that teachers may not always be responsive to citizen voice. Additionally, the analysis emphasises the importance of enhancing teachers' understanding of their role within interactions and nurturing expectations from parents that reflect an equal partnership. These findings align with Westhorp et al. (2014) recommendation of the need to leverage social capital to engage reluctant providers. They recommend involving a diverse range of actors (citizens, service providers, civil society), building trust and open communication within social accountability initiatives. By creating a collaborative interaction channel, where teachers actively seek parental involvement and value their opinions, the likelihood of collaboration and responsiveness within social accountability mechanisms can be increased.

8.4 Teachers' experiences of interactions with the parents tend to determine how their relationship will evolve over time

The third research question in the thesis addressed "What do teachers' experiences of interactions with the parents convey about the relationship between the two groups?". The purpose of this question is to understand the interconnectedness between experiences,

perspectives and relationship forged between teachers and parents. Within this, I explored teachers' stated preferences of maintaining connectedness with the parents. I also explored teachers' experiences of interactions by analysing the extent to which they rely on interactions to change parents' views about the teachers. These views were important since, the literature review (section 2.5) pointed that teachers value respect and appreciation from the parents. To unpack the interconnectedness between experiences and perspectives of teachers, I also expanded on case studies of two head teachers, who were a part of the larger evaluation study. I examined the ways in which they use the opportunity of collaborating with the parents and highlighted what this conveys about the relationship they are likely to build with parents, which in turn tend to influence the experiences they will share with the parents.

The argument was that teachers with positive experiences will be more willing to give parents an opportunity, more likely to provide a platform to parents to voice their concerns, and thus, be more responsive to parents. Such positive experiences would mean a possibility of building a collaborative relationship between teachers and parents. Within such a relationship, teachers will more likely be responsive to parents' concerns and suggestions in the future and sustain a positive relationship. On the other hand, if teachers have negative experiences, they may become less responsive to parents and the relationship may become strained or even unsustainable.

The findings from the analysis reveal that teachers' experiences of interactions have made them believe that the ways in which they interact with parents is sufficient to enable connectedness with parents. This is because for teachers aim to foster a collaborative relationship by sharing information with the parents. However, the one-sided information flow and focus on presence of parents instead of participation does not create a collaborative relationship. Such an approach implies the possibility of teachers witnessing not-so-positive experiences of interactions with the parents. As a result, teachers attach less significance to parents, predict that parents are less likely to respond, thereby, discouraging the teachers to respond to parents. In this way, the experiences from interactions tend to create a loop where teachers do not take initiative predicting a negative response, which further acts as a barrier in developing a collaborative relationship between the two groups and reducing the likelihood of responsiveness of teachers to parents.

8.4.1 Teachers' experiences have led them to assign importance to parental presence and reliance on one-way information flows

A review of teachers' preferred ways to engage with parents helps to gain insight into the communication dynamics between the two. It also reflects the experiences that teachers have had with the parents. These help in identifying patterns and strategies that teachers commonly apply, which further assist in comprehending how information is shared, how feedback is given and how discussions are conducted between parents and teachers. These experiences of teachers convey what according to them works well to build connectedness with the parents.

The analysis showed that teachers employ various strategies that prioritise the presence of parents. This is done out of a genuine desire to bridge the information gap and offer parents with a more accurate picture of their child's educational journey. By doing this, teachers aim to foster a collaborative relationship where parents are better equipped to support their children's academic development.

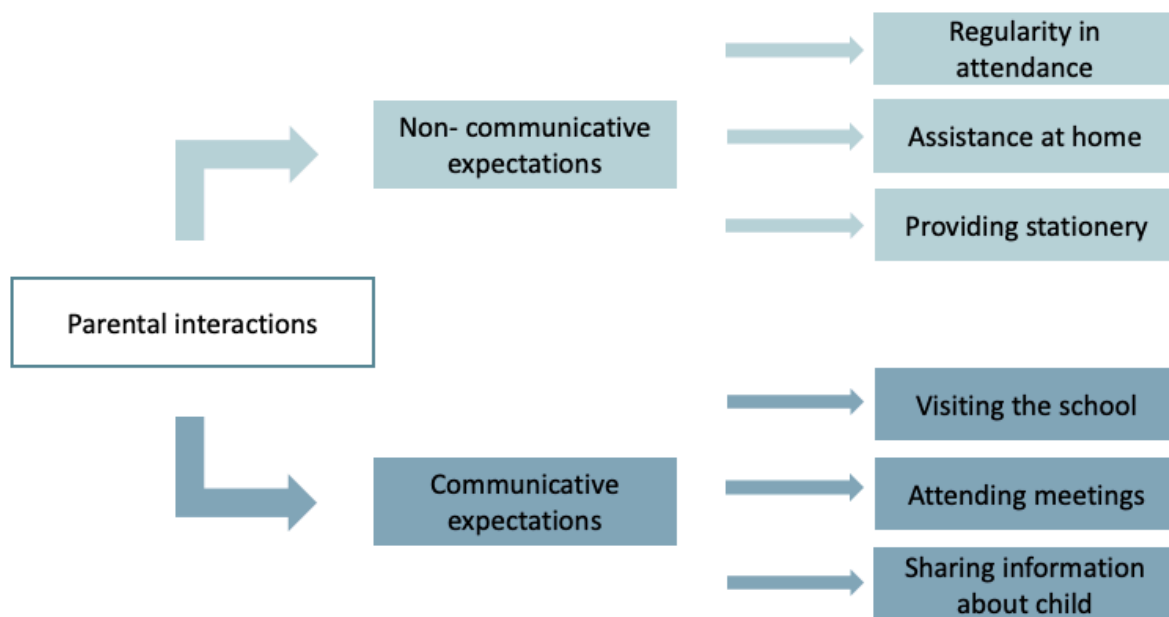
Accordingly, two features emerge based on teachers' experiences and preferred interactions to maintain connectedness with parents. First, teachers' experiences have made them believe that conveying messages and information to parents is enough to build a connectedness with them. This leads them to prioritise parental presence in the meetings rather than parental participation. Thereby, the interactions that they prefer are characterised by one-way flow of information from teachers to parents. Second, to ensure parental presence, teachers tend to use strategies that aim to attract parents' attention, such as distributing free things or organising events which tends to convey what teachers, based on their experience thinks will be of value to the parents.

The information flow from teachers to parents is translated into conveying the expectations that teachers have from the parents. These expectations, as discussed before, include sending the child to school, assisting the child with studies at home, ensuring the child has basic resources such as notebooks, stationery and ensuring regular visits to the school including but not limited to formal organized meetings.

Figure 14 illustrates how teachers understand parental interactions, and how they are viewed as mechanisms of conveying expectations to the parents. These expectations can be classified into communicative and non-communicative categories, where communicative expectations

include parents visiting the school and attending meetings when asked by the teachers. The non-communicative expectations include specific references teachers make when they discuss what parents should be doing with their children such as ensuring regularity, assisting the child at home by ensuring the child revises what is done in class. These also include dressing the child appropriately when he/she comes to the school.

Figure 14: Teachers’ understanding of parental interactions as a mechanism for conveying expectations



Source: Author, adapted from the ideas of Barge and Loges (2003)

These findings can be seen in relation to two discourses on parental involvement pointed by Barge and Loges (2003). They describe the two discourses of parental involvement rooted within the communication between teachers, parents and students. The first one relates to interactions between teachers and parents done for transfer of information. They state that, “*student academic information must be provided to parents—and parents must effectively motivate and discipline their children*” (Barge & Loges, 2003, p.158). Within this discourse, the authors state that power relationships are organised hierarchically and teachers [and school administrators] occupy a superior position. The findings from teachers’ preferred ways of interacting with the parents can be closely related to this discourse. Within this, teachers are the ones deciding how and what information needs to be conveyed to the parents. Such a discourse implies that teachers voices are dominant while parents are passive receivers. This is

contradictory to building a collaborative relationship which requires exchange of dialogue over a period of time to build trust and provide opportunities to each party to understand the concerns of the other.

The alternate discourse presented by Barge and Loges (2003) relates to the theme of partnership within which interactions are to create supportive relationships between teachers, parents and students. This discourse allows for parents and teachers to have differing views about child's development and share equal voices. In this case, communication is about 'negotiating, understanding and agreements' among the teachers, parents and community members. While adopting such discourse is likely to lead to collaboration, current teachers' interaction with parents in my sample is nowhere close to this discourse.

A similar model is formulated by Goodall and Montgomery (2013) that describes parental involvement based on who between the teachers and parents takes a lead in interactions.

The authors categorise these as 'parental involvement in school', 'parental involvement with schooling' and 'parental engagement in children's learning' and place it along a continuum. Within this, they claim that 'parental involvement in school' involves teachers taking on a lead and parents are a passive recipient of information that the teachers share. This is where the existing interactions between teachers and parents in the sample can be placed. The second point on the continuum is 'parental involvement with schooling' which is characterised by exchange of information between parents and teachers, with both acknowledging the others' roles in improving the learning of the child, and existence of a dialogue. The main benefit from being at this point of the continuum is a fuller picture of the child. While some teachers in my sample were inclined towards this second point on the continuum, where they expressed the benefits of interactions with parents as getting to know more about the child, their actual interactions with parents represented the first point on this continuum which is parental involvement with the school. The authors add a third point along this continuum which they call 'parental engagement with children's learning'. This point is characterised by the highest level of parental agency. Within this, parental involvement is likely to be taking place away from the school and parents' aspirations play an important role in contributing to the child's learning. However, this thesis does not have any data to discuss this point along the continuum.

The above models when viewed within the context of the findings of this thesis, help in understanding how teachers' experiences affect their commonly used strategies to interact with

parents. These strategies show a clear practice of information flow, rather than a partnership. Within such interactions, the teachers control the content and flow of information, and parents are merely passive recipients. This characteristic of interaction does not encourage a dialogue between the teachers and parents, making it unlikely for a collaborative relationship to emerge where the voices of parents are heard. What is required is a shift for teachers and parents along the continuum. As this shift occurs, there would be a change from “*information giving (on the part of schools) to sharing of information between parents and schools*” (Goodall & Montgomery, 2013, p.402). Such a shift can lead to a possibility of more dialogue and exchange of information between teachers and parents building a positive relationship between teachers and parents. Within such a relationship, teachers are more likely to be responsive to parents’ concerns and suggestions and sustain a positive relationship with them.

A shift in interactions is required where parents instead of being passive recipients of information from the schools, actively engage with the teacher. In general, in rural areas in India, this shift is often difficult to achieve without the support of the teachers. Santhakumar (2018) explains this difficulty in context of rural India by stating that these are the areas in which most parents belong to socially vulnerable groups and thus may not have significant participation levels in schools, and where SMC committees may be inactive. He adds that formal community participation in these locations often suffers from elite capture⁶⁵, thus, excluding the most disadvantaged who could in fact benefit the most from their interactions with teachers. This is also corroborated by a recent study conducted in Sitapur, which has shown that parental involvement is associated with household economic status, where wealthier families are more likely to be involved in children’s learning (Cashman et al., 2021). The study pointed that household wealth is associated with five parental involvement activities – checking the child’s notebook; helping the child with their studies; telling the child stories; visiting the school; and knowing the teacher’s name – within this rural population of parents of low-achieving children in Sitapur district, Uttar Pradesh, India. In addition, the results of the study also showed a positive association between household economic status and school

⁶⁵ The term elites that Santhakumar (2018) uses relates to those people within the rural settings who are relatively socio-economically advantaged, aware of importance of education and are thus, the ones that are more confident in participating in the schools. This resonates with the term ‘elite capture’ that has been used in community development research in Global South (Dutta, 2009) where resources transferred by governments for the benefit of the larger population are utilised by a few individuals of superior status, be it economic, political, educational, ethnic, or otherwise.

visiting habits of parents in the sample - after controlling for effects of social capital such as parental education, employment status, gender of parent, caste and religion. Additionally, often, parents themselves resist involvement with the school due to their own negative experiences (Drèze and Kingdon, 2001) or due to the social distance that exists between parents and teachers in rural areas (Kingdon, 2010; De and Malik, 2021). These can often hold back parents from interacting with teachers themselves. In such a scenario, it becomes important for the teachers to initiate parental interactions and create a welcoming environment in the school, in case the intention is to build a collaboration with parents.

The importance of teacher invitations has been demonstrated in contemporary studies on parental involvement. For example, Hoover-Dempsey et al. (2005) explored the contributors of parental involvement in children's schooling and learning. Within these, invitations from the schools are considered one of the most important factors in improving parent-school relationships. It reflects a positive attitude of teachers towards parents. Such invitations, according to the authors tend to convey that parents are valued and offers a starting point for creation of partnerships between the two groups. Epstein's work on home school partnership over the years has focused on providing strategies and models for teachers to work towards increasing parental involvement and improving the relationship between the two (Epstein, 2011; Epstein, 2018).

A collaborative approach based on reciprocal dialogue is currently absent in interactions between teachers and parents. In a true collaboration parents' opinions and voices would be valued. However, the ways in which teachers in the sample understand interaction with parents, make it unlikely that a collaborative partnership between the two could be achieved. An absence of such a collaborative relationship makes it difficult for parents' voices demanding accountability to be heard by the teachers.

The study by Fox (2015) emphasizes the importance of creating an enabling environment for social accountability initiatives. It argues that strategic approaches, which involve empowering citizens and enhancing the state's responsiveness, are more effective for social accountability. These approaches align with the broader context of social accountability mechanisms, taking into account factors beyond the immediate relationship between teachers and parents. The findings the interviews reveal that teachers prioritize conveying information to parents and valuing their presence. However, it also indicates a limited focus on active participation from

parents and a lack of two-way communication. By combining these perspectives, it becomes clear that an enabling environment for social accountability requires both strategic approaches at the broader level and attention to the dynamics between teachers and parents at the specific level. Together, these perspectives highlight the importance of strategic approaches and the need for active participation and two-way communication to build an enabling environment for social accountability in the education sector.

8.4.2 Teachers' experience of interactions with parents reflect low reliance on interactions to gain appreciation from parents.

To reflect on their experiences with parents, teachers were asked what opinions parents held about them and the school. It was assumed that if teachers believed that parents viewed them negatively, they would be unlikely to listen to and cooperate with the teachers. Simultaneously, if teachers were aware of these negative views, they would not be inclined to initiate interactions with parents.

The findings from the analysis of the above question showed that teachers' perceptions about the parents are based on who they think is 'aware' or 'not aware'. Those that they deemed 'aware', visited the school, asked about their child's progress, and ensured their regular attendance. According to teachers, such parents had positive perceptions of the school and the teachers themselves. However, for the category of 'not aware' parents, who didn't visit the school or didn't support their child's regular attendance, the teachers felt that they usually held negative perceptions about them.

As a follow up question, these teachers were also asked if they felt parents' opinions could be changed through regular interactions. The assumption was that if teachers believe that interactions can help bring about parents' positive perceptions about them, they are likely to rely more on interactions with parents, and hence, have more positive experiences with them. Responses from the interviews showed that while teachers wanted parents to have positive opinions of them, they did not undertake any interactions with the purpose of bringing any changes in these opinions. This is because in their experience, a change in parents' opinions is likely to result from better school infrastructure, substantial number of teachers based on number of grades taught, extra administrative staff, and the timely allocation of free materials. This indicates that teachers don't rely on interactions to effect a change in parents' opinions;

and even if teachers want to be appreciated and respected, their experiences have led them to believe that regular interactions wouldn't help. This in turn feeds back into teachers interacting even less with the parents, thereby, reducing the chances of forming a collaborative relationship characterised by exchange of dialogue even more.

Several factors influence the ways in which teachers view parents. Patte (2011) points out that teachers can be influenced by their previous experiences of parental involvement. The culture of the school also impacts their beliefs. For example, if a school operates with a sense of isolation where they do not interact with the parents, teachers may adopt this idea and avoid parental contact; and in turn, parents respond by staying away, creating a vicious cycle in which neither party drives communication (Suoto-Manning & Swick, 2006). Given that currently, teachers frame interactions with parents negatively, leads them to avoid parental contact, which is likely to increase the communication gap between the two and reduce the possibility of developing trustworthy relationships.

8.4.3 Teachers' experiences with parents shape their perspectives on interactions and determine the sustainability of the relationship forged between the two groups.

There seems to be a reciprocal relationship between teachers' experiences and perspectives. Teachers' experiences tend to shape their perspectives on interactions. These perspectives drive teachers to undertake certain forms of interactions, which in turn influences their experiences. To unpack this relationship, I detailed out the case of two head teachers in detail in Chapter 7. I presented two extremes of teachers' interactions with parents and demonstrated how these interactions are often mediated by the overall experiences of the teachers. These experiences often tend to be influenced by background of the teachers, as well as the forms of interactions that they undertake on a regular basis with the parents.

The two cases showed that a positive perception towards the parents and a belief that including them in discussions around the child is helpful, motivated Dinesh to exert greater efforts in engaging with the parents and building a sense of connection with them. He believed that this connection was beneficial because it ensured a productive environment for the child, while enabling him, as a teacher, to learn more about the children and their family situation. In contrast, Rama's negative experiences of interactions with the parents in the past led to a lack

of interest in exerting an effort to interact with them beyond those for which she would be held accountable by the higher authorities.

Given these perspectives, an opportunity provided to both teachers through the project to engage with parents was used quite differently by each one. Dinesh's positive experience and outlook meant that he fully engaged with the organised meeting to pursue the chance to build a collaborative relationship with parents, based on lines of open communication. In contrast, guided by negative experiences and outlook, Rama used the opportunity to treat it as an SMC meeting, including obtaining parents' signatures in the register, which could then be reported to the authorities. Moreover, she didn't encourage any form of dialogue or gave the opportunity to parents to speak in the meetings, but instead led a one-sided conversation with them, asking them to provide their child with stationery and to send them to school regularly.

Dinesh is a prime example of the strong engagement that is possible in these schools, if teachers view parents as part of the solution, rather than the problem. However, it is equally important to highlight the stark contrasts in the schools themselves. Dinesh, who was the head teacher in school 1, utilized multiple ways to interact with the parents. He is a male teacher with own vehicle to go on rounds to the village making it easier for him to engage with the community members. Rama, the head teacher in school 2, on the other hand is a female head teacher who reported feelings of insecurity and a lack of support while interacting with the parents alone. This raises an important factor about having positive experiences influencing the interactions. Positive experiences play a crucial role in shaping the relationship forged between teachers and parents because such experiences are likely to make the teachers interact and initiate interactions more. This is likely to lead to more opportunities to build trust and exchange information between teachers and parents and create possibility of forming a collaborative relationship.

In addition to this, the availability of staff made School 1 different from the rest. This school had five other teachers apart from the head teacher himself to handle five grades. This provided the teacher with an opportunity to visit the village within school hours to make connections. The other schools either did not have enough teachers or were headed by female teachers who did not feel comfortable going in the village by themselves. While these variables emerged as important and relevant during the analysis of teacher interviews, there is not enough data to

show if gender, availability of staff and availability of own vehicle significantly affects the ways in which teachers interact with the parents.

The two cases not only highlight the role of experiences of teachers' interactions with the parents but point to the need for education systems to understand and define the purposes of parent-teacher interactions within the roles and responsibilities of teachers. For example, if the parent-teacher interactions are defined along the lines of whether meetings occurred, then both Rama and Dinesh would be at par in terms of their engagement with the parents. However, if interactions are viewed more deeply in terms of their purposes and their ability to build a collaborative relationship between the two groups, then it is unlikely that Rama's case would show any changes in the type of relationship shared with the parents and benefit from such interactions.

Overall, the findings from teachers' experiences with parents shed light on the dynamics of their relationship by unpacking the linkages between experiences, perspectives and relationship formation. Teachers' interactions with parents are influenced by their experiences, shaping their strategies to foster connectedness. The analysis reveals a hierarchical power dynamic where teachers control information flow, prioritising one-way communication which predominantly reflects teachers' control and limited dialogue with parents. Additionally, teachers' perceptions of parents also impact their interactions. Actively engaged and supportive parents are viewed positively, while less involved parents are perceived negatively. However, teachers do not actively try to change parents' opinions, believing that improvements in school infrastructure are necessary. This maintains limited interaction and widens the communication gap. Teachers' experiences and perspectives shape their interactions, affecting the sustainability of the parent-teacher relationship. Positive experiences motivate teachers to engage with parents, while negative experiences lead to minimal effort beyond mandatory requirements. Case studies of head teachers illustrate these contrasting approaches. To foster positive relationships, a shift towards a collaborative interaction model is crucial. Dialogue and information exchange between teachers and parents needs to be emphasised. This requires changes in teachers' perspectives and understanding the factors influencing their views of parents. Addressing the communication gap can lead to positive experiences of teachers in interactions with the parents. This in turn, is likely to increase teachers' responsiveness within social accountability mechanism.

This notion of trust and reciprocity connects to the study on conceptualization of social accountability by Grandvoininnet et al. (2015). The study emphasises the iterative nature of citizen-state engagement and the need for building trust in the citizen-state interface. When teachers have positive experiences with parents and actively engage in dialogue and information exchange, trust and reciprocity are more likely to develop, leading to higher levels of cooperation and collaboration, thereby, improving the perspectives of teachers on interactions with parents. This reinforces the iterative nature of teachers' interactions of teachers with the parents.

8.5 Concluding remarks

In conclusion, the discussion of the findings in this chapter shed light on the nature of the relationship between teachers and parents, particularly in the context of social accountability in education. These findings complement the emerging conceptualisations of social accountability that acknowledge the complex and iterative nature of social interaction in social accountability (Joshi & Houtzager, 2012; Grandvoininnet et al., 2015; Fox, 2015), recognise the need to unpack the mechanism of change within social accountability (Joshi, 2014), understand the characteristics of components within the model of social accountability (Joshi, 2013) and take into considerations the incentives of actors involved within social accountability engagement (Joshi, 2014).

This chapter combined and discussed the findings from the analysis chapters that addressed the three research questions posed in the thesis. The analysis reveals that while formal institutional channels and informal interactions provide opportunities for interaction, there is a limited scope for collaboration between the two groups. The perspectives of teachers on these opportunities significantly influence whether the resulting relationship between teachers and parents is collaborative. Teachers exhibit a compliance-driven orientation towards system-mandated interactions hindering the development of a collaborative relationship. Their pre-conceived notions about parents constrain collaboration, while self-driven interactions demonstrate commitment but are rare due to time constraints.

Furthermore, teachers' perception of the benefits and expectations from interactions affects their willingness to engage and form a collaborative relationship with parents. To change these perspectives, it is crucial to ensure that teachers are able to realise the benefits of interactions

and perceive them as valuable. Efforts should be made to enhance teachers' understanding of their role and provide training and support to promote positive perceptions of parents. By nurturing positive expectations, trust can be built between teachers and parents, leading to open communication, shared decision-making, and a sense of connectedness can develop leading to increased likelihood of teachers' responsiveness to parents within social accountability. Addressing the communication gap and emphasizing dialogue and information exchange between teachers and parents is essential to foster positive relationships. Teachers' experiences play a significant role in shaping their perspectives on interactions and resulting efforts put in building a relationship with parents through interactions. Positive experiences tend to motivate them to engage with parents beyond mandatory requirements while negative experiences restrict the teachers to engage with parents only, when necessary, thereby, diminishing the chances of formation of collaborative relationship between teachers and parents.

The next chapter presents the overall conclusion to the thesis by summarising the key findings. It also describes the key contributions of this research and identifies future areas for research related to understanding the relationship between teachers and parents within social accountability in education.

Chapter 9. Conclusion

9.1 Introduction

The research was initiated against the backdrop of a learning crisis in developing countries, with a particular focus on India. While access to education has improved, there is a consensus among policymakers that children's learning outcomes have not kept pace. Attempts at raising low learning outcomes in developing countries have led to significant interest in increasing the capability of citizens, including parents to directly hold teachers accountable, and to make them responsive to their needs for better quality education (World Bank, 2004; Joshi, 2014; Mbiti, 2016). This concept of parents demanding accountability directly from the teachers, also known as social accountability in education, has risen due to weak and inefficient traditional modes of accountability. Social accountability provides an opportunity for communities to voice concerns, participate in monitoring and evaluation, and ensure schools meet the needs of marginalized and disadvantaged students. It is considered to be multi-faceted concept with main elements being information, citizen action, response from service providers (Joshi, 2014). Theoretical evidence on social accountability suggests a need to focus on mechanisms that lead from information to improved service delivery outcomes (Joshi, 2014; Joshi & Houtzager, 2012). Additionally, the empirical evidence from social accountability in education initiatives in India shows that the primary focus has been on the citizens (or parents) and there is a significant gap in understanding the relationship between teachers and parents.

To address this research gap and contribute to a comprehensive understanding of mechanisms leading to the success of social accountability, I focused on exploring the perspectives of government school teachers in rural Sitapur, India regarding their interactions with parents. By understanding how teachers perceive their interactions with parents, the research aims to shed light on the challenges teachers face in engaging with parents and the strategies they employ to communicate with the parents. This investigation provides insights into the mechanisms that could lead to successful social accountability practices and move beyond the simplistic question of whether social accountability works or not (Fox, 2015).

I adopted a multiple case study approach within which I interviewed a total of 17 teachers including head teachers, regular teachers, and para teachers. In addition to this, I also used two observations and teacher survey data. I selected these teachers based on their initial willingness

to engage with the parents within a community-led evaluation project. I also chose one case where the teacher did not show interest in engaging with the parents. I asked these teachers about their perspectives on opportunities they have to interact with parents, how they use these opportunities and if they find these beneficial. I reflected on the reasons for interactions, teachers' expectations from parents and their experiences of interactions with the parents. The purpose was to understand how these perspectives shape their relationship with parents, and if such a relationship is collaborative in nature. By understanding this relationship, the thesis makes the case that teachers' responsiveness to the demands made by parents within the framework of social accountability is likely to be dependent on the type of relationship between teachers and parents.

In the sections below, I present the key findings from the thesis (section 9.2), followed by the contributions to the wider research environment (section 9.3). I then present the suggested areas for further research (section 9.4), limitations of the research (section 9.5) and finally the conclusion to the thesis (section 9.5).

9.2 Key Findings

The overarching question of the thesis was “What can we understand about the teacher parent relationship through government primary school teachers' perspectives on interactions with parents in rural Sitapur, India?” using the framework of social accountability.

Understanding the relationship between teachers and parents is crucial because it helps in unpacking the causal chain that leads to increased provider responsiveness within social accountability mechanism. The findings from the thesis show that teachers' perspectives on opportunities they have to interact with the parents influences the modalities of the interactions undertaken. A compliance-driven mindset, limited guidance and support on self-driven interactions and pre-conceived notions about parents leading to avoidance of interactions with them highlight limited scope of dialogue and collaboration between teachers and parents. This indicates that teachers are less likely to be responsive to parents. The reason for this is that responsiveness requires more than just meeting compliance requirements. It involves active engagement with parents and listening to their concerns, fostering meaningful dialogue, which is currently missing in the interactions undertaken by the teachers.

Additionally, the findings from teachers' perspectives on the benefits of interactions and expectation from parents point to a mismatch in desire to form collaborative relationship with parents and the reported approaches of interactions undertaken by the teachers. While teachers believe in shared responsibility of children's learning, they assign specific tasks to parents that are conveyed through mere transfer of information. Assigning such roles neither supports open communication nor builds on any collaboration. Given this, teachers are unable to realise the benefits expected from interactions, for which they blame parents. At the same time, teachers also tend to be undermine their own role in encouraging parental involvement in child's schooling. The lack of realisation of benefits lead teachers to assign interactions as a low priority task. Since teachers perceive parents as disinterested, they may become unresponsive to parents' concerns and demands.

Next, teachers' experiences of interactions with parents play a role in determining how the relationship between teachers and parents is likely to evolve. Teachers choice of strategies to connect with the parents is influenced by their experience of what they feel parents value. However, they do not seem to be aware that these strategies place emphasis on interactions that are characterised by one-way flow of information and focus on parental presence limiting dialogue and scope of collaboration between teachers and parents. Additionally, teachers' experiences have also led them to believe that interactions are unlikely to change any negative perceptions parents might have about them. While gaining respect is an important motivator for the teachers, this belief results in teachers assigning low significance to parents. This further discourages teachers to respond to parents. This creates a loop wherein teachers do not take initiative predicting a negative response, which further acts as a barrier in developing a collaborative relationship between the two groups and reducing the likelihood of responsiveness of teachers to parents. Positive experiences reinforce the perspectives of teachers to involve parents and can thus lead to a collaboration. Hence, these should be the first point of change. Below, I expand on the three research questions in the thesis which summarises the key findings.

Research Question 1: What are teachers' perspectives on the opportunities they get to interact with the parents?

The purpose of this question was to understand how teachers perceive the opportunities of interactions and if these help to build a positive collaborative relationship between teachers and parents. The findings from the analysis of teacher interviews showed that teachers'

perspectives varied based on whether the interactions were formal or informal. Teachers exhibited a compliance-driven mindset in case of formal interactions, in which their focus was on fulfilling their duties on paper by communicating only with the heads of formal committees, thereby, limiting the scope of dialogue with the parents and reduced likelihood of these interactions leading to a collaboration with parents. Additionally, the informal interactions are often driven through teachers' own willingness to build a relationship with the parents. However, within these, teachers seem to be unaware of the best ways to engage with the parents and often, end up making requests to parents to visit the school and send their children regularly. While these self-driven interactions of teachers indicate their willingness to go beyond the system mandated requirements to connect with the parents, these tend to be time-consuming and often depend on teachers' gender, ownership of private vehicle as well as the number of teachers available in the school.

Overall, the finding reveals that opportunities that exist for teachers to interact with the parents do not encourage dialogue and likelihood of forming a collaborative relationship. Such a lack of collaboration makes it difficult for parents to trust the teachers and voice their concerns within social accountability. The finding raises questions about the extent to which the institutionalisation of social accountability in education is truly enabling and empowering for parents. It suggests that there may be a need for a shift in focus towards fostering collaborative relationships, active participation, and shared decision-making between parents and schools. This involves re-evaluating the existing institutional mechanisms and exploring alternative approaches that prioritize meaningful engagement and partnership-building with parents.

Research Question 2: What are teachers' perspectives on benefits of interactions with parents and their expectations from parents?

The purpose of this question was to understand the willingness and motivation or hinderance for teachers to establish and maintain collaborative relationship with the parents. The finding from the analysis showed that teachers' theoretical understanding of how interactions could benefit them, parents and the child indicates a collaborative mindset. However, this theoretical understanding is not reflected either in the ways in which they report about approaching parents or in their expectations from them. These expectations include ensuring the child attended school regularly, checking the child's homework and making sure they revise, ensuring the child had the necessary resources (e.g., notebooks and stationery), and making regular visits to the school. Teachers often only seek opportunities to interact in relation to these specific tasks.

Such an approach limits the scope of building connectedness, which in turn, diminishes the possibility of realising the benefits teachers expect from interactions. Despite undertaking multiple forms of interactions with the parents, teachers are unable to realise the benefits, which forces them to place these interactions as a low-priority task.

These findings have two main implications. First, the current forms of interactions fail to effectively involve parents in children's schooling and education. This is because despite undertaking multiple forms of interactions, teachers are unable to gain the benefits of interactions which are related to understanding the child more, building a connectedness with parents. The lack of realisation of benefits affects teachers' willingness to initiate and connect with parents beyond the official meetings, which often do not encourage genuine collaboration. Second, despite showing a desire to involve parents in children's education, teachers are unable to do so indicating their lack of knowledge about strategies that can best encourage this type of involvement. This can limit the potential for shared accountability and hinder the achievement of positive outcomes for students.

Research Question 3: What do teachers' experiences of interactions with the parents convey about the relationship between the two groups?

The purpose of this question was to understand the nature of their relationship with parents based on teachers' experiences of interactions and how such a relationship may evolve over time. The findings from the analysis show that teachers' experiences of interactions shape the ways in which they predict the outcomes of their efforts to interact which determine how the relationship is likely to evolve over time. While positive experiences are important for teachers to continue efforts towards building a relationship with parents, the findings show these are unlikely to be achieved from the existing interactions. Teachers' preferred ways of interacting with the parents are characterised by an emphasis on parental presence and one-way information flow from the teachers to parents. Such interactions neither encourage parental participation nor any dialogue between teachers and parents. In addition, teachers' overall experiences with parents tends to influence the extent to which they take initiatives to engage with the parents. A reciprocal relationship exists between teachers perspectives and their experiences. Their experiences in the past have led the teachers to focus more on parental presence rather than participation. The general experiences of teachers, including their background tend to influence their perspectives towards parents and the ways in which they involve them. Positive experiences reinforce the perspectives of teachers to involve parents and

can thus, lead to a collaboration. While these positive experiences were rare, the case of Dinesh shows that teachers with positive experiences are more likely to give parents a chance, more likely to provide a platform to parents and hence, could be more responsive to parents. These positive experiences indicate a possibility of building positive relationships between teachers and parents.

While Dinesh's example in the thesis shows that it is possible to experience the positive outcomes from existing systems of interactions, his case is an exception. Dinesh's childhood experience combined with his strong belief of including parents in discussions and also being supported by a number of teachers in the school enables him to undertake multiple forms of interactions and connect with the parents. However, similar situation might not exist for all teachers. Thus, Rama's case presents a contrast to Dinesh and re-emphasise the need for teachers to experience the benefits of interactions. Once teachers themselves see the results, they are likely to continue relationship-building activities with parents. The role of the state and policymakers is important in this regard. The policy documents often play a key role in determining the key focus areas of training programmes for teachers and building teacher mindsets; and they also act as a reference point for teachers in the day-to-day running of the school. The findings from the thesis indicate that teachers often seem to lack the awareness of strategies that can help them build collaborative relationships, even though such relationships tend to be valued in principle by the teachers. The need for such strategies is not felt since teachers often are unaware that their interactions with the parents do not support formation of a collaborative relationship. Thus, these findings highlight the importance of reflecting on policies from which teachers derive both meaning from, and purposes of parental interaction.

Overall, the thesis brings attention to the crucial role of the teacher-parent relationship in shaping teachers' responsiveness to parental demands and establishing a platform for parents to voice their concerns. This level of responsiveness, which is often lacking even in emerging conceptualisations of social accountability like Fox (2015) and Joshi and Houtzager (2012), underscores the significance of this relationship. The thesis advocates for addressing teachers' perceptions and expectations as a means to facilitate positive interactions and collaboration, thereby expanding the understanding of social accountability. By recognising the importance of this relationship and highlighting the need to address teachers' perceptions and expectations in order to foster positive interactions and partnerships, the thesis unpacks the causal chain that moves from information to citizen actions to service provider responsiveness and ultimately to

improved children's learning within the framework of social accountability. These findings call for a need to rethink how the institutional spaces that provide opportunities for teachers to collaborate with the parents work in practice. These findings extend recent scholarship that has raised similar issues of bureaucratic norms acting as a hinderance in building connectedness between teachers and parents and enabling schools and communities to work collectively towards children's learning (Dyer, Jacob, et al., 2022; Aiyar, 2010; Dyer, Sriprakash et al., 2022). Additionally, the findings show that, more than the existence of these opportunities, the perspectives of teachers determine how the opportunities of interactions are utilised and to what extent these encourage formation of a collaborative relationship between teachers and parents.

While a collaborative relationship is likely to lead teachers to listen to parents' demands and collectively work towards a solution, the findings show that the current relationship between these two is far from achieving this. Formal mechanisms for interaction have failed to provide any opportunity to build an effective partnership. Teachers' perspectives further restrict existing interactions to purely functional roles. Some teachers in the sample have shown willingness to build connections with parents, using different forms of interaction, some of which go beyond system mandated requirements. While this indicates a possibility of building collaborative relationship, these interactions are rare. Teachers tend to value a sense of connection with parents, however, thus far, interactions have not led them to making parents equal partners in child's learning. This contradicts the overall characteristics of collaboration which requires both groups to engage in dialogue with each other.

When teachers view parents as partners in their students' education, this automatically translates into teachers' seeking out more opportunities to interact and engage with the parents and be more responsiveness to parents' concerns. Thus, to bring a change in perspectives of teachers, the first step is to build on positive experiences of the teachers. This calls for an urgent need to define the focus and purposes of interactions in policy documents as well as provide guidance on mechanisms that can lead teachers to build collaborative relationships with parents. This is important, because often, teachers use these policy documents and their prescribed mechanisms as reference points on which they base their actions (Dyer, Jacob et al., 2022). These guidance can help teachers initiate interactions with parents with the purpose of building connectedness and thus, result in likelihood of forming a collaborative space where parents can raise their concerns and teachers show a willingness to respond to these concerns.

9.3 Contribution of the thesis

The thesis presents a critical perspective on the original models of social accountability that assumed information provision and empowering the citizens can automatically lead to provider responsiveness within the mechanism of social accountability. The findings complement the emerging conceptualisations that recognise the complex, iterative nature of social accountability in several ways.

First, the findings provide empirical evidence on importance of understanding the micro context within the framework of social accountability. This context has been described as ‘unpacking of the causal chain’ by Joshi (2014). The findings from the thesis highlight that the perspectives of teachers significantly influence the nature of relationships, with their compliance-driven orientations hindering collaboration. The analysis emphasises the role of formal structures and teachers’ perspectives in shaping the interactions between teachers and parents. It also touches upon the need to unpack the causal chain by discussing the factors that influence teachers’ willingness to engage and form collaborative relationships with parents. It emphasises the significance of positive experiences and expectations in motivating teachers to go beyond mandatory requirements and actively seek parental involvement. By doing so, it aligns with the goal of fostering collaboration and responsiveness within social accountability mechanisms. Together, these findings complement the emphasis placed by Joshi (2014) on understanding the micro contexts in order to unpack the causal pathways and mechanisms that drive social accountability initiatives and their success. Additionally, such an approach of viewing and analysing the context and mechanism of change resonate with Dyer, Jacob, Patil and Mishra’s suggestions on adopting a process-oriented instead of indicator-oriented approach for assessment of the health of school-family connection (Dyer, Jacob, Patil & Mishra, 2022, p.18).

Second, the thesis highlights the dynamics between teachers and parents by emphasizing the importance of fostering active participation and two-way communication between them. In doing so, it underscores the importance of developing an enabling environment for parents to voice their concerns to the teachers. This complements the findings from the study by Fox (2015) that stresses the importance of creating an enabling environment for social accountability initiatives. Fox argues that strategic approaches, which include empowering citizens and enhancing the state’s capacity to respond, offer a more promising trajectory for

improving government accountability and service delivery outcomes. This broader perspective helps to understand the conditions under which social accountability mechanisms work. These approaches align with the broader context of social accountability mechanisms, considering factors beyond the immediate relationship between teachers and parents, the state's responsiveness to the parental demands and concerns. However, the findings from the thesis highlight the specific dynamics between teachers and parents. It reveals that teachers prioritise conveying information to parents and valuing their presence. At the same time, it also indicates a limited focus on active participation from parents and a lack of two-way communication. These results show that while an enabling environment for social accountability might require strategic approaches at the broader level, an attention to the dynamics between teachers and parents at the specific level are equally important. While strategic approaches provide a framework for empowering citizens and enhancing the state's capacity to respond, the findings from the thesis emphasize the importance of fostering active participation and two-way communication between teachers and parents. Together, these perspectives highlight the importance of strategic approaches and the need for active participation and two-way communication to build an enabling environment for social accountability in the education sector. The findings highlight that the quality of interactions between teachers and parents can determine the legitimacy of their relationship.

Third, the thesis contributes to understanding of the citizen-state interface which is considered a core element of social accountability (Grandvoininnet, et al., 2015) by providing insights into the dynamics of the relationship between teachers and parents within the education sector. The thesis highlights the limited scope for collaboration between teachers and parents, which indicates a constrained interface between citizens (parents) and service providers (teachers). This corresponds to the importance of understanding the characteristics of the citizen-state interface within social accountability highlighted by Grandvoininnet et al. (2015). The study emphasizes the iterative nature of citizen-state engagement and recognizes the potential of the citizen-state interface as a dynamic and iterative engagement between citizen groups and state officials. This aligns with the thesis, which identifies that relationship between teachers and parents tend to be continuously influenced by teachers' perspectives, their willingness to interact and their experiences. It suggests that efforts should be made to enhance teachers' understanding of their role and promote positive perceptions of parents to build trust and create an enabling environment for collaboration. The findings from the thesis emphasise the need for a shift towards a collaborative interaction model between teachers and parents. It suggests

that fostering positive relationships requires increased dialogue and information exchange. By addressing the communication gap and promoting collaborative interactions between teachers and parents, the likelihood of positive experiences and increased responsiveness within the social accountability mechanism can be enhanced.

In addition to the above, the thesis adds to our understanding of the significance of considering teachers' perspectives within the context of social accountability. It is commonly observed that those in positions of power shape the terms of engagement. Specifically, in rural India, as highlighted in the thesis, teachers play a crucial role in initiating interactions with parents and making decisions about these engagements. Consequently, it becomes imperative to grasp their perspectives and work towards addressing any negative perceptions they may hold. The findings emphasise that the interactions between teachers and parents are influenced by how teachers perceive these interactions. While teachers go beyond their expected duties, a lack of positive response from parents can demotivate them. Over time, these experiences have led teachers to develop counterproductive perceptions that hinder effective collaboration with parents. They tend to interact with parents only when absolutely necessary, believing that parents generally hold negative opinions of them and that these interactions are unlikely to change those views or yield desired benefits. Consequently, teachers categorize these interactions as low-priority tasks. Moreover, teachers often fail to recognize their own role in encouraging parents to take initiatives in communication, and they possess limited knowledge about effective strategies to involve parents in school matters. These factors together erect barriers to establishing collaborative partnerships between schools and families. The thesis findings contribute to a discourse on teachers that shifts away from perceiving them as a problem and sheds light on some underlying reasons for their current interactions with parents. This discourse acknowledges that teachers' perspectives are shaped by their years of experience in the education system, and their practices are influenced by their past encounters with parents. Hence, it is crucial for teachers to have positive experiences in their interactions with parents, which can foster their willingness to form collaborative relationships and be responsive to parental concerns.

This thesis also contributes to the debate around para teachers, and their role in Indian classrooms. Those in favour of regularising and hiring para teachers claim that they help in reducing pupil-teacher ratios, lower the cost of providing elementary education (Kingdon & Sipahimalani-Rao, 2010), increase teacher effort and lowers teacher absenteeism due to the

contractual nature of their employment (Goyal & Pandey, 2013; Kingdon & Banerji, 2009; Kremer, Chaudhury, Rogers, Muralidharan & Hammer, 2005). Those against this practice, cite reduced professional training and lower educational qualifications as the reasons for not regularizing these para teachers. It is believed that hiring of these para teachers have led to a degraded status of the teaching profession, loss of respect (Béteille & Ramachandran, 2016). Para teachers' unions have increasingly embarked on protests to change their temporary status into one that is permanent, and to increase their salaries. Given this debate, the findings of this thesis highlight the important role para teachers can play in communicating with parents and helping build collaborations between schools and parents. Officially assigning a relationship-building role to para teachers can make them feel more welcome in the school. It could also help head teachers who often struggle to keep up with the range of responsibilities in the day-to-day functioning of the school. If this assigned role is compensated with performance-based pay, it could act as a vital incentive for para teachers, who are usually demotivated due to their extremely low salaries (Béteille & Ramachandran, 2016).

9.4 Scope for further research

Based on the findings and acknowledged limitations of this thesis, several promising avenues for future research emerge, which are outlined below.

9.4.1 Identifying the ways in which teachers and parents conceptualise children's learning.

This thesis looked at how teachers view their own, as well as parents' role in children's learning, and drew linkages with the ways in which teachers involved parents in the education process. However, a deeper understanding of how teachers think children learn, will further help in providing deeper insights into the reasons and forms of interactions these stakeholders are likely to have. If children's learning is viewed by teachers as merely teaching in a classroom using the books provided, then the role of parents is reduced to sending the child to school regularly. However, if teachers conceptualise children's learning as the holistic development of the child that goes beyond textbooks and the classroom, then the role of parents could be seen as that of partners in children's learning. It is then, that parents will be invited to share and collaborate with schools as part of the child's educational journey. To get a better understanding of how parents and teachers value each other, it will be helpful to explore their

conceptualisations of how children learn. This in turn could also influence the way in which teachers are trained in terms of pedagogy.

9.4.2 Combining parent and teacher perspectives.

The qualitative sub study designed as part of the wider evaluation study had two strands (section 1.3). While the focus of my thesis was on schools and teachers, the research team at the ASER Centre focused on the parents of children studying in these schools, as well as other prominent members living in the village who were believed to value education. Emerging evidence from a qualitative sub-study that focused on community members in the same locations revealed that teachers' expectations are often not conveyed properly to parents. Moreover, while the teachers in my sample believed parents had negative perceptions of them, most parents in the villages had positive feedback on the teachers.⁶⁶ These initial reflections point to an interesting area of research that combines teacher and parents' perspectives about each other to help in designing better mechanisms for communication.

9.4.3 Identifying and exploring the role of NGOs in influencing teacher responses.

During my fieldwork, I spent considerable time with the teachers in my sample schools, and also observed the ways in which the teams running the activities within the evaluation on the ground, approached these teachers for their support. Being present in the school and with a teacher at the time when teachers were approached by the teams provided me an opportunity to understand the immediate concerns that teachers had about participation in a community-led evaluation. It revealed a new factor that might be influencing the way in which teachers in government schools respond to an initiative by an outsider, i.e., the Pratham Education Foundation in this instance. I found that teachers' willingness to engage in the evaluation depended on how they were approached by the teams, as well as how clearly, the teams were able to convey the roles teachers might have within the evaluation. In addition to this, I also observed that teachers in the sample doubted the intentions of the Foundation in carrying out this study. They sometimes did not think the field teams, who had been hired by the Foundation to run the evaluation, had any authority to interview/ask them questions. These initial observations present a potential area of research in which the measurement of outcomes of an

⁶⁶ Based on regular check-ins and conversations with the research team at the ASER Centre, New Delhi, India. December 2020. The teams interviewed parents, especially mothers of children who were studying in the sample schools in my research.

evaluation or an experiment with teachers are seen to be dependent on the perceptions of actors towards the facilitating organisation.

9.4.4 Exploring Collaborative Approaches to Teacher Accountability and Parental Involvement

In India, government school teachers are directly hired and paid by the state government, making them accountable to the government rather than parents. However, there is a growing push to increase teacher accountability to parents, evident in past decentralization reforms and policy narratives emphasizing collaborative work between teachers and parents for children's learning. Despite challenges in implementing accountability measures, such measures have often framed teachers as problems requiring surveillance, using methods such as CCTV cameras, biometric attendance recording, and social media posts.(Sayed & Sarangapani, 2021; Jha, Minni & Ahmed, 2021). Recent research criticises current supplementary accountability approaches, which are based on distrust in government agencies, leading to increased self-guarding and reduced scrutiny. Such measures have not been well received, as they ignore the problems teachers face, for example, arriving late due to a long commute using state transport and disregard the other non-teaching duties that teachers need to fulfil such as children's surveys, census and election duties, provisioning of scholarship to disadvantaged sections and provision of mid-day meals (Ramachandran et al., 2018; Shankar and Linden, 2014; Jha et al., 2014). Several authors have argued that this has not only created feelings of distrust but has also demotivated teacher and have reduced them to another input within the schools (Kundu, 2019; Mukhopadhyay & Ali, 2021; Sayed & Sarangapani, 2021).

An alternative to this enforced accountability is a collaborative approach which deliberately sidesteps confrontation, and instead positions parents and teachers as equal partners, working collaboratively to improve children's education. For this, it is important to enable both parents and teachers to understand the complexities of the problems they each face and act in concert to find a solution, based on their individual capacities. However, for the most part, there is a lack of information on, and understanding of the ways in which parents can be involved effectively, leading teachers to use their own knowledge and experience to convey functional expectations from parents. This limits the prospects of genuine collaboration and potential for enriched partnerships.

This dilemma finds resonance in the findings put forth by Dyer, Jacob, et al. (2022). Their study underscores the nuances within school-community interactions. It unveils that despite these interactions appearing as mere routine and perfunctory actions, they nonetheless require a joint and deliberate endeavor from both educational institutions and families. However, this labor is predominantly centered around administrative "inputs" and "outputs" – encompassing attendance, fees, events – with scant attention directed towards the intricate "processes" and "outcomes" of education such as a comprehensive understanding of children's learning journey. The study's insights indicate the transformative power of effective school-community relations and appeals for a reconfiguration of existing communication patterns in context of India. Aided by comprehensive training and capacity building initiatives, it may be possible to develop a collaborative space in which parents and teachers can work together. Many examples exist across schools in India, where a collaboration between teachers and parents have led to improved outcomes for the school. Chugh (2021) point to some of case studies in India that show how effective school community relations, coordination between the school teachers and parents can lead to a relationship based on mutual trust and trust between the two groups, and ultimately to improved functioning of the schools. Highlighting these new ways of working together that emphasise enhancing interactions between the public sector and relevant actors, involving trust-based knowledge sharing and joint problem exploration would be beneficial to advance our understanding of collaborative approaches to achieving accountability.

9.5 Limitations of the research

While this thesis has contributed valuable knowledge to the broader field of social accountability, it also has some acknowledged limitations. These limitations, however, can create opportunities for future research.

The first limitation of this research is that it only takes into consideration the perspectives of teachers among the school actors. The conversations with teachers in the sample revealed that monitoring authorities such as the block development officers' role who oversee/supervise the daily functioning of the schools, have affected the teachers' priorities in their daily tasks. Similarly, the union leaders also seem to play an important part in influencing decisions taken by teachers on a daily basis. Thus, these other actors together play a key role in influencing teachers' practices and their perspectives can be incorporated in future research to understand the role of different school actors in influencing how teachers respond to the parents' demands for improved education.

The second limitation of this research is that the selection criteria for schools was based on their proximity to the Sitapur city. This excluded consideration of issues faced by teachers in schools located at the periphery of the district. However, this decision was made consciously to focus on identifying characteristics of teachers who already are willing and able to engage with the parents. The long commuting times coupled with natural calamities affecting the villages⁶⁷ in school located at the periphery, made it difficult for teachers to reach their schools on time. It was therefore unlikely that they would have had any spare time to expend on parental engagement, and I excluded them from my sample. However, this leaves out an important category of problems arising from teaching in remote and inaccessible areas, which could be explored in future, to understand these barriers to interacting with parents.

A deliberate decision was made to not include caste as a factor in this study on teachers' perspectives about interactions with parents and resulting relationships, as the aim was to explore if teachers themselves bring up this aspect of caste in interactions with parents. However, this omission could be seen as a limitation, as caste is a significant factor in the social and cultural context of India, and its absence from the study may have limited the comprehensiveness of the findings. Further research that explores the role of caste in teacher-parent interactions could provide valuable insights into this aspect of education in India.

This research has a limitation in that it only focused on teachers who demonstrated an interest in engaging with parents at the beginning of the evaluation, which was assumed to be a sign of motivation and willingness to engage with parents and the wider community. However, it is known from past studies and interventions that projects often fail due to a lack of sustained motivation (Central Square Foundation, 2014). It is therefore unclear whether these teachers would have remained motivated and interested in engaging with parents throughout the full course of the evaluation.

The original design of the study included two rounds of interviews with teachers to capture changes in their engagement levels and the effect of their involvement in the evaluation's activities on their interactions with parents. The interviews were spaced out over 6-8 months during the evaluation period. Although COVID-19 school closures forced a modification of the research strategy, these limitations can provide useful insights for future research designs,

⁶⁷ Some of the villages located closer to the periphery of Sitapur district were frequently affected by floods.

particularly around considering the initial and continued motivation of participants in evaluation studies.

9.6 Conclusion of the thesis

The thesis embarked on an exploration of the relationship between teachers and parents, situated within the context of social accountability in education. By delving into this understudied dynamic, the research addressed critical gaps in the existing literature. While prior models of social accountability have focused on citizen empowerment, the thesis's focus on the immediate interface between teachers and parents underscores a pivotal role in the accountability landscape. It revealed the importance of viewing interaction as a central element in successful accountability mechanism, urging a shift from focus on citizen empowerment to a more detailed and collaborative perspective.

These findings have important implications for fostering effective teacher-parent interactions and enhancing social accountability in education. Efforts should be made to ensure teachers are supported to promote positive experiences. Building trust, open communication, shared decision-making and a sense of connectedness are crucial for cultivating positive relationships. The findings from the thesis can be viewed as an essential starting point in bridging the gap between service providers and beneficiaries within the social accountability paradigm. Addressing the existing communication gap and emphasising dialogue and information exchange can increase the scope of collaboration between teachers and parents and lead to an increased teacher responsiveness to parents' demands.

The evaluation study, of which this thesis was a part of had hoped to achieve similar levels of collaborations. Through its design it aimed at bringing together schools and families with the intention to create a shared responsibility of children's learning. The purpose behind conducting activities in the village was to make parents aware and involved in children's learning. At the same time, teachers were also encouraged to get involved in these activities, to consciously bring both actors together and interact more. While the evaluation experiment did not run its full course, it provided me with an opportunity to reflect on the current structures of interactions between teachers and parents that showed a lack of collaboration and the absence of a reciprocal relationship between teachers and parents. In order to build and develop a lasting collaboration, it is essential that teachers view parents as equal partners in children's learning. The findings in the thesis show that the experiences that teachers have had in the past,

where they try to involve parents, have led to failure. What is then required is some level of guidance to teachers on how to build such a collaboration, which is currently missing from the policy documents. These results can be taken forward to build collaborative relationships between teachers and parents, which are more likely to improve children's learning and perhaps, make teachers feel accountable to the parents.

Looking ahead, further exploration of the impact of collaborative relationships on student outcomes and the long-term sustainability of social accountability efforts would provide valuable insights. By continuing to study and improve the teacher-parent relationship within from the lens of accountability, we can strive for a more effective education system. Through concerted efforts, including open communication, trust-building, and shared responsibility, an environment that fosters positive relationships and ultimately enhances the overall well-being and success of students can be created. By working together, teachers and parents have the power to shape the future of education and ensure that every child receives the quality learning experience they deserve.

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Appendix A. Data Collection Tools

This study involved two data collection tools- the semi-structured one-on-one teacher interview and observation of parent-teacher meeting, organised as an activity within the larger evaluation study. In this section, I present both these data collection tools. The teacher interview guide was designed in English but translated to Hindi to ease the conversations with the teacher. The observation guide was for my own observations and hence, remains in English.

A1 Semi-Structured Teacher Interview Guide

A. Background and association with the current school

1. How long have you been associated with the current school?

1. आप वर्तमान स्कूल से कब से जुड़े हैं?

2. Why did you choose to be a teacher? Do you plan to remain in this profession?

2. आपने शिक्षक बनने का विकल्प क्यों चुना? क्या आप इस पेशे में बने रहने की योजना बनाते हैं?

3. How long have you been teaching? What's the best thing about being a teacher?

3. आप कब से पढ़ा रहे हैं? शिक्षक होने के बारे में सबसे अच्छी बात क्या है? सबसे बुरा क्या है?

B. Relationship of the teacher with the parents, local community, and those within the school system

4. How well do you know people in the village? (How often do you meet them and for what purposes?)

4. आप गाँव के लोगों को कितनी अच्छी तरह जानते हैं? (आप उन्हें कितनी बार और किन उद्देश्यों से मिलते हैं?)

5. Has anyone in the village invited you for personal events? Do you go?

5. क्या गाँव में किसी ने आपको व्यक्तिगत कार्यक्रमों के लिए आमंत्रित किया है? क्या आप जाते हैं?

6. Does the headteacher or other teachers in the school live in the village? What type of discussions do you usually have with other teachers?

6. क्या विद्यालय में प्रधानाध्यापक या अन्य शिक्षक गाँव में रहते हैं? आप आमतौर पर अन्य शिक्षकों के साथ किस प्रकार की चर्चा करते हैं?

7. In the past, has there been any event or any special day for you at school that you remember and cherish? Could you describe that? (Alternately, ask about their worst day in the school)

7. अतीत में, स्कूल में कोई घटना या कोई विशेष दिन हुआ है जिसे आप याद करते खुश हो के? क्या आप उसका वर्णन कर सकते हैं? (वैकल्पिक रूप से, स्कूल में उनके सबसे बुरे दिन के बारे में पूछें)

C. Views on interactions and children's learning

8. Do you think regular interactions with people in the village and parents are helpful? How?

8. क्या आपको लगता है कि गाँव में लोगों एवम माता-पिता के साथ नियमित बातचीत मददगार हैं? कैसे?

9. What do parents and other members in the community think about this school? Do you think it is possible to change their views?

9. माता-पिता और समुदाय के अन्य सदस्य इस स्कूल के बारे में क्या सोचते हैं? क्या आपको लगता है कि उनके विचारों को बदलना संभव है? कैसे?

10. Can you tell me about the parent teacher meetings and SMC meetings in the school?

10. क्या आप मुझे स्कूल में अभिभावक शिक्षक बैठकों और एसएमसी बैठकों के बारे में बता सकते हैं?

11. What do you do if a child in your class is not learning well? Who do you feel is responsible for it?

11. अगर आपकी कक्षा का कोई बच्चा अच्छा नहीं सीख रहा है तो आप क्या करेंगे? आपको कौन लगता है इसके लिए जिम्मेदार है?

12. What can people in the village as a whole do to ensure children who are not learning well, do so? (Do you think it is important to discuss any issues or progress of children with you?)

12. जो बच्चे नहीं सीख रहे हैं, उन्हें सुनिश्चित करने के लिए गाँव के लोग क्या कर सकते हैं?

D. Involvement in the intervention

13. How did you get to know about the activities in the village?

13. आपको गाँव में होने वाली गतिविधियों के बारे में कैसे पता चला?

14. Can you tell me more about why did you want to be a part of the program? Or do you want to be a part of the programme and in what ways?

14. क्या आप मुझे इस बारे में अधिक बता सकते हैं कि आप कार्यक्रम का हिस्सा क्यों बनना चाहते हैं?

15. Do other teachers and headteachers support you in this initiative? How?

15. क्या अन्य शिक्षक और हेडटेचर्स इस पहल में आपका समर्थन करते हैं या करेंगे? कैसे?

16. What do you think will be parents and other members in the village's reaction be on a) your participation; b) overall activities: Jhatpat, Halla Bol

16. आपको क्या लगता है कि आपकी गाँव की प्रतिक्रिया में भागीदारी पर और समग्र गतिविधियाँ: झपट, हल्ला बोल, पर माता-पिता और अन्य सदस्य के क्या विचार होंगे?

17. What all activities do you intend to participate in? What type of support or assistance do you require for the same?

17. आप किन सभी गतिविधियों में भाग लेने का इरादा रखते हैं? आपको किस प्रकार की सहायता की आवश्यकता है?

18. According to you, what is the best way of engaging with people in this village?

18. आपके अनुसार, इस गाँव के लोगों से जुड़ने का सबसे अच्छा तरीका क्या है?

19. Are you aware of some of the teaching techniques that will be shared with you? In what ways do you feel this will be helpful?

19. क्या आप कुछ शिक्षण तकनीकों से अवगत हैं जो आपके साथ साझा की जाएंगी? किन तरीकों से आपको लगता है कि यह मददगार होगा?

20. Is there anything else that you'd like to share?

20. क्या कुछ और है जिसे आप साझा करना चाहते हैं?

A2 Observation Guide

Observation Guide

Date:

Place:

Start Time:

School code (if applicable):

Sample Teacher Code:

Type of activity and background:

School staff present:

Any other prominent community member besides parents:

Describe briefly:

- A) The type of activity

- B) Physical setting (Where is the activity going on)

- C) Describe the specific activity or event

- D) Teacher engagement level and nature of engagement
[Very Active (3) Not that active (2). Not active at all (1)]

- E. Describe what each of them were doing along with the context
 - Head Teacher
 - Other teachers
 - Parents
 - Any other community member (Who)

- F. Topics discussed

- G. Own comments/reflective notes

End time:

Appendix B. Sampling Criteria

In chapter 4 on methodology, I detailed sampling process for this research, which was conducted in collaboration with the central research team at ASER Centre. Below, I provide a detailed criteria that was used for shortlisting and finalising the four common sites from the aspect of school and community. These have been referred as the Stage 1 (based on information from key informants) and stage 2 (based on quantitative criteria) in the thesis.

B1 Parameters used for selection of case study sites based on information from the key informants (Stage 1)

In order to facilitate the selection and maintain uniformity in categorization, teams were given the following parameters (detailed below) and asked to nominate sites (schools-villages) keeping in mind the engagement and response from the school and community on the parameters mentioned below.

Parameters	Community	School	Rationale
Awareness and Interest	<p>Are parents and other community members aware of the intervention activities?</p> <p>Are they aware of library groups and/or volunteer-led camp classes held in their villages and hamlets?</p> <p>Do they send their children to camps or organize peer-groups themselves?</p> <p>Are volunteers in the village engaged and regular in running the camps?</p> <p>Are there other (influential) members in the community who have engaged and helped advocate for the project, either directly or indirectly?</p>	<p>Do teachers take an active interest in the intervention?</p> <p>Are they aware about the volunteers who teach children in the villages and engage with PAHAL teams when they visit the school?</p> <p>Are they aware of and/or involve themselves in the activities done in the community?</p> <p>Example: By participating in rallies or helping organise/prepare</p>	<p>Teachers and community members' interest and awareness of activities is indicative of their level of interest in the intervention.</p> <p>A teacher who is not aware of and interested in community activities is unlikely to put in the effort to engage with the community or the intervention in the future.</p> <p>A community with more aware members is likely to engage more in the intervention activities later.</p>

Parameters	Community	School	Rationale
		children for events like 'Halla Bol'	
Attitude and Activity	<p>This change in parents' attitude could be towards the teachers, and/or towards themselves.</p> <p>Are they beginning to understand and take up the activities suggested as part of PAHAL? For e.g. Illiterate parents might have earlier thought that they could not do anything, but now ensure that the child is studying in the evening, individually or in a group and completing whatever homework is given. Or, they have begun sending their children to attend the volunteer-led classes.</p> <p>Have the parents' views about the government school/teachers changed? Are they ensuring that their child attends school and have started going to drop them instead of not doing so earlier? Are they more forthcoming in sharing/discussing issues with teachers as compared to earlier?</p> <p>At the community level, do the volunteers engage with parents – either by checking on irregular children or by sharing teaching techniques?</p>	<p>Has the teachers' thinking about their own role and that of the community/parents changed?</p> <p>For example, initially teachers might have been wary or dismissive of the program, saying that not much will change in the community. But, after witnessing PAHAL activities in the community, they have been more forthcoming in engaging/thinking about the community?</p> <p>Has there been any change in what teachers do? This could be giving additional or regular homework or using TaRL teaching activities.</p> <p>Teachers might have welcomed and encouraged the running of library groups and camp classes in the villages</p>	<p>A change in attitude of teachers or parents is a direct indicator of a positive impact that the intervention is bringing. Such villages will be important for understanding the mechanisms of change in the perception of actors, both towards their own selves as well as towards other stakeholders.</p> <p>Changes in attitudes and actions can also result in changes in the relationship between school and community and can be indicative of a reduction in the distance between the school and the community. It is likely to reveal the benefits that both see in such interactions.</p> <p>Adopting some of the teaching techniques indicate the willingness of teacher to put more effort into teaching. These could be the schools and teachers</p>

Parameters	Community	School	Rationale
	Think about how the library groups and camp classes are bringing a change - is it creating an interest among the parents or teachers? Volunteers could have helped PAHAL teams in mobilizing the community, requesting their participation in events like Halla Bol.	by telling parents to send their children to these.	with higher engagement with the intervention. The library groups are an important link between what is happening in the community and schools. Wherever there are camps running and volunteers engaging actively, it is more likely that teachers would get to know about the activities.

*In the table, all references to ‘intervention activities’ imply those activities that were planned within the evaluation study

B2 Parameters used for selection of sites based on quantitative criteria (Stage 2)

This has been referred to as stage 2 of sampling in the thesis. This stage involved shortlisting the villages obtained from stage 1 information about ‘responsive’ and ‘difficult’ sites. The first level shortlisting was based on school indicators and household educational status (priority was given to obtaining maximum variation). The aim of this level of shortlisting was to obtain maximum geographic spread. Hence, one ‘responsive’ and one ‘difficult’ village from each block was shortlisted. In the next level, ‘distance from district headquarters (city of Sitapur)’ was given priority. Within this, blocks that were at the periphery were excluded and those that were equally distanced and convenient to reach were selected. The third level shortlisting was based on two main parameters that were assumed to be of importance in understanding parent-teacher interactions. These included children’s enrolment and attendance; and awareness of teachers and parents about children’s learning. The table presented here, lists the indicators that were used from the baseline survey data, collected as a part of the evaluation study. The rationale for using these is also listed in the table.

	Indicator	Rationale
School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student enrolment and attendance in sample grades • Number of teachers employed and number present • Number of multi-grade classes • Number of sample teachers with travel time less than 30 minutes • Number of sample teachers living in the same village 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand school context (size) and functioning (attendance). • Understand teacher allocation across grades as well as challenges of organising teaching and learning. • Understand teacher proximity and connection to the community and children.
Household	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % HHs by caste distribution • % HHs by home construction material (Permanent, Semi-permanent, Temporary) • % HHs by asset ownership • Education of HH members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand distribution of socio-economic advantage and disadvantage among sample households. • Understand household education and learning support context.
Teacher and parental awareness of children's learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of children at different levels of reading and numeracy • % teachers by whether they correctly or incorrectly identified children's learning levels • % HHs by ability of child to read grade-level textbook and count till 100 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand alignment or misalignment of teacher and parental perception with children's learning levels.
Distance from district headquarters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distance in kilometres 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Logistical consideration for ease of travel and access by the research team.

Appendix C. Analysis details of interviews and observations

C1 Themes, sub-themes generated from interviews with teachers

The data from semi-structured one-on-one interviews with the teachers were analysed using reflexive thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2021a). In the methodology chapter (chapter 4), I describe the procedure I followed to code this data, generate categories and subsequent themes. Here, I present a more detailed version showing what sub-themes were included in the final themes generated. It also describes the codes and definitions that were used for including the information in specific themes.

Final Themes	Sub-themes	Sub-themes	Codes and Definitions
Opportunities to interact	Nature of interactions	Forms of interactions	Included all three forms of interactions System mandated: all forms of interactions which teachers' indicated as compulsory and a requirement of the education system Self driven: all forms of interactions which teachers' indicated to develop a sense of connectedness with the families, as social obligation, or done as being a neighbor by the para teachers. Parent-initiated: all forms of interactions which teachers' indicated that were initiated by the parents.
		Indicative factors affecting interactions	This was divided into 3 categories: Teacher designation: included any references made by the teacher to designation dependent interactions. Teacher gender: included any references made by the teacher to their gender playing a role in how they interaction with parents. Others: included references made by the teacher about the burden of their work, lack of transport, or general reference to lack of time was included in this category.

Final Themes	Sub-themes	Sub-themes	Codes and Definitions
		Purposes of interactions	<p>Child: Issues related to the child, such as irregular attendance, not being dressed properly, and anything to do with their health, formed the main reasons for teacher-parent interactions. Also included generic references to ‘children’s education’.</p> <p>School: these included references related to varying aspects of the school, which involved: school development or infrastructure; the distribution of free entitlements such as books and uniforms; and the organisation of cultural events and meetings such as the SMC and PTMs. These also included generic references made by teachers about the quality of education, without much elaboration on specific aspects of concern.</p> <p>Building connectedness: All references made by teachers where they indicate getting in touch with parents to improve the relationship, irrespective of details were included. This also included to being invited for personal celebratory events, whether the teacher attended or not. It also included responses where teachers state that they were not invited (New teacher). These were coded as Social Obligation.</p>
Willingness to interact with parents	Usefulness of interactions	Perceived benefits of parental interactions	<p>Responses to whether the teachers felt regular interactions with parents were beneficial.</p> <p>Beneficial for child: included references made to child's attendance and learning</p> <p>Beneficial for parents: included references made to parents' better understanding of the child.</p> <p>Beneficial for teachers: included references made to building a connection with the parents, better understanding of the child</p> <p>No benefit: Included references made by teachers where they mention interactions are of no use, irrespective of whether they expand on it or not.</p>
		Perceived challenges of parental interactions	Included references made by teachers to parents' lack of attendance to the meetings organised in schools, parents not listening and following teachers' advice and not helping the child at home.
		Forms of interactions	Same as above

Final Themes	Sub-themes	Sub-themes	Codes and Definitions
	Teachers' views about parents	Action taken for non-performing child in class	<p>Responses on what a teacher does if a child is not performing well. This included references where teachers stated</p> <p>Approached parents: This included all cases where teachers reported approaching the parents as a response to this question. This mainly included checking on reason for attendance.</p> <p>Solve problem themselves: This included a range of solutions that teachers provide for when a child is not being able to learn in their class. These were, adopting peer learning, giving the child work based on their level of understanding, explaining the concept to the child again.</p>
		Responsibility of children's learning	<p>Responses to question related to responsibility of children's learning. This was divided into categories</p> <p>Parents and Teachers: wherever teachers describe that learning is a shared responsibility was coded in this category. These included references made by teachers stating that mainly parents are responsible, but then also stated their own responsibility as restricted to once the child is in school.</p>
		Expectation from parents	<p>These included references made by teachers throughout the interview which conveyed what parents should do for their children. These also included:</p> <p>Complaints about parents: Any reference made by teachers which related to complaining against the parents or conveying disappointment when parents did not certain activities. For example, parents do not pay attention to the child, parents do not check child's homework. All these were coded as complaints about the parents.</p> <p>Suggestions to improve schooling: Any reference made by teacher which conveyed expectations from parents but at the same time was a suggestion by them was included in this category. For example: charging money from parents to increase their accountability; this included an expectation from parents to be more involved in child's learning and as a solution to it, the teacher suggests charging a fee.</p> <p>The main categories for overall expectations included: Child's attendance, support at home, provision of basic stationery, ensuring personal hygiene and making regular visits to the school.</p>

Final Themes	Sub-themes	Sub-themes	Codes and Definitions
			<p>Another coding within this theme was: Reasons for lack of PI: This included references made by teachers where they explain the reasons for lack of parents' involvement in child's learning. This was coded to understand if teachers' view their own role in this lack of parental involvement.</p>
Experiences of interactions with parents	Teachers' views about interactions	Preferred strategies to connect	<p>Response to the question on preferred ways to remain connected with the parents. It can be divided into the following categories: through meetings: this included references made by teachers where they primacy was given to parents attending meetings, implying that teachers saw connectedness with parents if they attended the meetings through distributing things: included reference made by teachers where in order to get parents' attention they stated to keep something to eat or drink through cultural events or plays: included references made by teachers where they stated that parents are more interested in case something fun is organised. Again, this was to seek parental attention through children: this included references made by the teachers where they stated that children were the best medium to convey messages to the parents and stay connected with them.</p>
		Parents' perceptions about school	<p>Responses of teachers on question about what parents think about the school and teachers. It was divided into two broad categories: Positive: included references where teachers state that parents think good about them, appreciate them, or believe teachers are doing their best. Included references made to aware parents, who are believed to have positive perceptions about the teachers. Negative: included references where teachers referred to unaware parents or those who did not visit the school stating they do not know and perceive teachers as negative. It also included references made by teachers where they state that parents believe teachers are paid for everything.</p>

Final Themes	Sub-themes	Sub-themes	Codes and Definitions
		Ability of interactions	<p>This included response to the question on possibility of changing parents' perceptions. It can be divided into two categories:</p> <p>Possible: included cases where teachers believed it was possible to change parents' perceptions and explained the reasons. These ranged from making parents aware and parents visiting school.</p> <p>Difficult: included cases where teachers believed it was difficult to change parents' perceptions unless infrastructure and other improvement occur in the school. These included references made by teachers to improvement in overall quality of schooling leading to an automatic change in perception of parents.</p>
		Background of the teacher	<p>This included the number of years the teacher has been associated to the school and in general is in the profession, the reason for joining teaching and if they planned to remain in the profession.</p>

C2 Original observations of parent teacher meetings (School 1 and School 2)

Observation Guide (School 1)

Date: 30 November 2019

Place: School

Start Time: 12.30pm (Scheduled for 11am)

School code (if applicable): 200

Sample Teacher Code: MP_HT (School 1, Teacher 1)- Dinesh

Type of activity and background: Parent-teacher meeting organised in school.

The meeting was facilitated by the intervention teams, where they proposed a date and time to the head teacher. They also explained the head teacher about the intervention team's role in the meeting and that the head teacher could either provide input or discuss anything else that they wanted to. The head teacher agreed and informed parents a week before the meeting. The meeting was scheduled at 11 am but parents did not turn up and hence, the intervention teams went in the village to call them.

School staff present: No other teacher attended the meeting. They were teaching children in the classroom.

Any other prominent community member besides parents: None

Describe briefly:

- E) The type of activity: The parent teacher meeting was attended by 10 parents in the beginning and later joined by 3 more parents. There were mostly females, only 4 males. It started with an introduction of everyone present. The head teacher knew all parents by their names He introduced two people present from the intervention team as well as me to the parents. He knew that the intervention teams are conducting activities in the village with children. He introduced me and informed the parents that I am here as an observer of the functioning of the school.

F) Physical setting (Where is the activity going on): The meeting was organized in the school ground and proper arrangement to sit in a group was made. Tea and biscuits were arranged for parents.

G) Describe the specific activity or event

The event started with head teacher introducing us and head teacher initiating conversation with the parents. About 10-14 parents attended with initially 10 parents, and later on 3 other joined. The 3 who joined later were SMC members. He asked parents to one by one describe things that can be good and those that aren't about the school. The parents started responding but most of them talked about the good things. The head teacher thanked the two mothers who talked about the 'good education' in the school but also explained how it is equally important that parents describe the problems or changes they wish to see in the school.

Some of them started mentioning the problem like improving the classrooms (murammat) and infrastructure overall. One of them even offered to help with any construction work if required.

Another discussion was related to sometimes teachers not checking child's homework. A parent raised this complaint stating that one of the teachers did not check and it became difficult to understand if the child was doing it correctly. To this the head teacher assured that he will ask all teachers to check and if it happens next, the parent should inform the head teacher. There were discussions around play during the break in school hours. The teacher was explaining the benefits of children engaging in games while one parent objected and raised an issue stating that it wastes so much time while teachers do not want to do anything. The head teacher along with the intervention teams also explained the benefits of play time to the parent.

There were discussions around attendance as well to which the head teacher asked all parents to cooperate if they see any child who is missing school. 'This will help me since then I will devote time with children in school who are coming regularly'

One of the intervention team members reacted to this and explained to parents how they could use simple techniques to keep a check if their children are doing their homework. He, along with the head teacher, also guided parents that they should drop their children and maintain a habit of regularly meeting the head teacher.

The meeting ended with an organized game conducted by the intervention team with the parents.

H) Teacher engagement level and nature of engagement

[Very Active (3) Not that active (2). Not active at all (1)]

Very actively engaged, two-way communication where teacher explains the procedure of how the funds that are there available will be used for construction.

H. Describe what each of them were doing

- Head Teacher: Main teacher in the meeting
- Other teachers: No other teacher present. Dinesh came outside the classroom due to a conflict between one parent and the head teacher.
- Parents: Mostly females, 4 males. Actively listening to the teacher and intervention team. Also contributing by raising issues and their own problems.
- Any other community member (Who): None

I. Topics discussed:

School infrastructure

Appreciation of education

Attendance of children: contribution of all parents requested

Complaint about teachers sometimes not checking the homework given

J. Own comments/reflective notes

Most parents spoke freely once the head teacher comforted them. A few were critical as well. The head teacher maintained his calm and accepted the issues raised and assured that action would be taken soon.

End time: 1.20 pm

Observation Guide (School 2)

Date: 4 December 2019

Place: School

Start Time: 11.30 pm (Scheduled for 11am)

School code (if applicable): 100

Sample Teacher Code: BG_HT (School 2, Teacher 6)- Rama

Type of activity and background: Parent-teacher meeting organised in school.

The meeting was facilitated by the evaluation teams, where they proposed a date and time to the head teacher. They also explained the head teacher about the evaluation team's role in the meeting and that the head teacher could either provide input or discuss anything else that they wanted to. The head teacher agreed that if the teams manage to get parents to the school, these meetings could be conducted. The meeting was scheduled at 11 am and the teams, including me, went in the village to call them. We mostly spoke to mothers, who could be found in the village, but they were apprehensive about visiting the school. They enquired the reason for being called to the school and were curious since, this had never happened before.

School staff present: The male teacher was on medical leave and the other regular teacher in the school was teaching children.

Any other prominent community member besides parents: None

Describe briefly:

- I) The type of activity: The parent teacher meeting was attended by 14 mothers. The meeting began with head teacher raising an issue with a mother about the irregularity of her child to the school. This conversation then led to head teacher complaining to the mothers and asking them the reason they do not look after the child. The head teacher knew the mothers and addressed them with their child's name. The evaluation team observed the meeting in the beginning and did not contribute much.

J) Physical setting (Where is the activity going on): The meeting was organised in one of the classrooms, while children were sitting outside in a group.

K) Describe the specific activity or event

The meeting began with the issue of attendance and parents not providing children with notebooks to write on. One of the mothers' discussed the issue of corporal punishment with the head teacher and reported the reason her daughter was not attending school was because she was beaten up. To this, the head teacher responded that it is important to discipline the child and the mothers should do the same if their child refuses to come to school.

3 female volunteers came in between the meeting. These volunteers were in grade 6 and 8. The head teacher knew that the evaluation team was working with them in the village to teach children up to grade 5. The head teacher asked them to go home and even enquired why they were missing school that day. They were not allowed inside the classroom.

The head teacher also talked to one of the mothers and stated that she smokes the entire day but does not check on the child. She stated that "Even if you are not educated, it is important that you send your daughter so that she can be educated" and questioned the mothers about whether they want a better life for their daughters.

This was followed by the evaluation team explaining to the mothers how they could use simple techniques to keep a check if their children are doing their homework. Mothers seemed interested and agreed that they could do this. They also guided parents that they should drop their children and maintain a habit of regularly meeting the head teacher. To this, the head teacher responded that there is no need to come to school but ensure that the child is dressed properly. She stated that while children receive two set of uniforms for the school, they continue to wear the same set for several days. She asked the mothers to ensure that once the child comes home, the child changes the uniform.

The meeting ended abruptly with other regular teacher calling the head teacher since she was unable to handle all children, who were running around in the ground. The

teams asked the mothers to come outside for an organised game. The head teacher asked the mothers to sign in a register to confirm their presence.

L) Teacher engagement level and nature of engagement

[Very Active (3) Not that active (2). Not active at all (1)]

Very actively engaged, one-sided conversation where the head teacher mainly raised complaints to the mothers.

K. Describe what each of them were doing

- Head Teacher: Main teacher in the meeting
- Other teachers: No other teacher present.
- Parents: Mostly females. Only two mothers spoke in the entire meeting to justify why their daughter was not attending regularly.
- Any other community member (Who): Volunteers from the village who were part of the evaluation study.

L. Topics discussed:

Irregularity of children

Lack of attention of mothers on their children

Suggestion to educate the girls to improve their lives in the future

Utilising the two set of uniforms given to the children, ensuring hygiene.

M. Own comments/reflective notes

Most parents spoke freely once the head teacher comforted them. A few were critical as well. The head teacher maintained his calm and accepted the issues raised and assured that action would be taken soon.

End time: 12:45 pm

Appendix D. Ethical Checklist and Consent Forms



Ethics Checklist and Consent Form

Informed Consent Form

Teacher Code:

Background

My name is Mansi Nanda and I am a part of the research team conducting a grassroots intervention study for which you were earlier approached, and you volunteered for the study that will be conducted in this village and the school. I am a PhD candidate at the University of Cambridge in the United Kingdom. This research piece, although linked with the study you volunteered to be a part of, is however for my PhD and is an independent piece of work.

Purpose of research

The current research attempts to look at motivation of in-service teachers in public schools in rural India. In order to get a holistic view about what matters to the teachers teaching in public school in rural India, I am undertaking a qualitative approach to get an in-depth understanding of different motivations that guide teachers to put in effort to change their interactions with the parents. I predict that findings from my research will be able to provide some guiding points to steer education reforms by focusing on what matters to the teachers with intention to support them in the future.

In order to gain access to this information, I would like to conduct two interviews with you each of which will last approximately 60 minutes. These questions will be related to your views about (a) interactions with parents and other community members, your role and involvement as well as expectation from the intervention programme, (b) your experience of actually interacting with community members and c) your involvement in the programme. The interviews will be spread over the course of three to four months depending on your availability and the meetings that will be conducted in the school. Besides these, I will also be conducting some observations while you engage with the parents and/or other community members.

Ethics and Confidentiality

With your consent, I would like to record the interview. This will be helpful for me in conducting my analysis. The data, once collected, will be stored on my personal laptop of which only I will have access to. All materials, including audio-recordings and transcripts made of these, will be destroyed once the study is complete.

All interviews will be confidential, including your name, the name of the school and its location, together with any other personal information which may inadvertently lead to your identification. To ensure complete anonymity I will instead assign you with a code so that you cannot be identified.

Participant rights

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary and any time you feel you would not like to answer further; you are free to do so without any consequences.

How the data will be used

The data collected from this interview will be used for my analysis in order to complete my final thesis in fulfilment of the PhD requirements at University of Cambridge. The findings of my study might also be used in making modifications in the programme in which you volunteered to be a part.

I would hereby request you to please confirm if you agree to take part in the study and give permission for me to quote your statements in my thesis without disclosing your name by signing the agreement below.

For further information

You can reach me at my mobile no. _____ if you want to know anything else about my study or have more questions.

Yours sincerely

Mansi Nanda

PhD Candidate, University of Cambridge

mn502@cam.ac.uk

Ethics Checklist

Please mark all statements you agree with by putting an “X” in the box next to it

I have read and understand the information on the informed consent letter

I grant consent for my interview to be audiotaped and transcribed

I understand who will have access to the data collected during the study

I understand how personal data will be stored and what will happen to the data at the end of the study

I understand that research will be written up in a thesis, be published as an article in academic journals, used for presentations at conferences and for future research

I consent to be a participant in this study having fully understood my rights as a participant in this study

Name of participant:

Name of researcher:

Signature:

Signature:

Date:

Date:



UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

अचार विचार चेकलिस्ट और सहमति फॉर्म
सूचित सहमति

अध्यापक कोड: _____

पृष्ठभूमि

मेरा नाम मानसी नंदा है और मैं एक शोध दल का एक हिस्सा हूँ जो जमीनी स्तर पर हस्तक्षेप अध्ययन कर रहा है जिसके लिए आपसे पहले संपर्क किया गया था। मैं यूनाइटेड किंगडम में कैम्ब्रिज विश्वविद्यालय में पीएचडी उम्मीदवार हूँ और यह शोध मेरे पीएचडी के लिए है एवम एक स्वतंत्र काम है।

अनुसंधान का उद्देश्य

वर्तमान शोध सीतापुर में पब्लिक स्कूलों में शिक्षकों की प्रेरणा को देखने का प्रयास करता है। ग्रामीण भारत में पब्लिक स्कूल में पढ़ाने वाले शिक्षकों के लिए क्या मायने रखता है, इसके बारे में समग्र दृष्टिकोण प्राप्त करने के लिए, मैं उनका साक्षात्कार लेकर सीतापुर में गुणात्मक दृष्टिकोण कायम कर रही हूँ। मैं यह अनुमान लगाती हूँ कि मेरे शोध से प्राप्त निष्कर्ष भविष्य में शिक्षकों के लिए क्या मायने रखते हैं, इस पर ध्यान केंद्रित करके कुछ शिक्षा संबंधी सुधारों के लिए कुछ मार्गदर्शक बिंदु प्रदान करने में सक्षम होंगे।

इस जानकारी तक पहुंचने के लिए, मैं आपके साथ दो साक्षात्कार आयोजित करना चाहूंगा, जिनमें से प्रत्येक लगभग 40 मिनट तक चलेगा। ये प्रश्न आपके माता-पिता और अन्य समुदाय के सदस्यों के साथ बातचीत और कार्यक्रम में आपकी भूमिका और भागीदारी से संबंधित होंगे। साक्षात्कार आपकी उपलब्धता और स्कूल में आयोजित होने वाली बैठकों के आधार पर तीन महीने में फैलाया जाएगा। इनके अलावा, मैं आपके माता-पिता और / या अन्य समुदाय के सदस्यों के साथ जुड़ने के दौरान कुछ टिप्पणियों का भी आयोजन करूँगी।

नैतिकता और गोपनीयता

आपकी सहमति से, मैं साक्षात्कार रिकॉर्ड करना चाहूंगा। यह मेरे लिए मेरे विश्लेषण का संचालन करते हुए बाद में मददगार होगा। डेटा, एक बार एकत्र होने पर, मेरे व्यक्तिगत लैपटॉप पर संग्रहीत किया

जाएगा, जिसमें से केवल मेरी पहुंच होगी। अध्ययन पूरा होने के बाद ऑडियो-रिकॉर्डिंग और इनसे बने टेप सहित सभी सामग्री नष्ट हो जाएगी।

सभी साक्षात्कार गोपनीय होंगे, जिसमें आपका नाम, स्कूल का नाम और उसका स्थान शामिल होगा, साथ में कोई अन्य व्यक्तिगत जानकारी जो अनजाने में आपकी पहचान को जन्म दे सकती है। पूरी गुमनामी सुनिश्चित करने के लिए मैं आपको एक कोड के साथ असाइन करूंगा ताकि आपको पहचाना न जा सके।

प्रतिभागी अधिकार

इस अध्ययन में आपकी भागीदारी पूरी तरह से स्वैच्छिक है और किसी भी समय आपको लगता है कि आप आगे जवाब नहीं देना चाहेंगे; आप बिना किसी परिणाम के ऐसा करने के लिए स्वतंत्र हैं।

डेटा का उपयोग कैसे किया जाएगा

इस साक्षात्कार से एकत्र किए गए डेटा का उपयोग मेरे विश्लेषण के लिए किया जाएगा ताकि कैम्ब्रिज विश्वविद्यालय में पीएचडी आवश्यकताओं की पूर्ति में मेरी अंतिम थीसिस को पूरा किया जा सके।

मैं आपसे अनुरोध करती हूँ, यदि आप अध्ययन में बिना अपने नाम का खुलासा किए, भाग लेने से सहमत हैं तो नीचे दिए गए स्टेटमेंट पर कृपया इसकी पुष्टि करें।

अधिक जानकारी के लिए

यदि आप मेरे अध्ययन के बारे में कुछ और जानना चाहते हैं या अधिक प्रश्न पूछना चाहते हैं तो आप मुझे मेरे मोबाइल नंबर पर पहुंचा सकते हैं _____.

सादर

मानसी नंदा

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एथिक्स जाँच सूची

कृपया उन सभी कथनों के सामने "✓" चिह्नित करें, जिनसे आप सहमत हैं।

मैंने सूचित सहमति पत्र पर जानकारी पढ़ी और समझी है।

मैं अपने साक्षात्कार को ऑडियोरकार्ड और हस्तांतरित करने की सहमति देता हूँ।

मैं समझता हूँ कि अध्ययन के दौरान एकत्र किए गए डेटा तक किसकी पहुंच होगी।

मैं समझता हूँ कि व्यक्तिगत डेटा कैसे संग्रहीत किया जाएगा और अध्ययन के अंत में डेटा का क्या होगा।

मैं समझता हूँ कि शोध को एक थीसिस में लिखा जाएगा, अकादमिक पत्रिकाओं में एक लेख के रूप में प्रकाशित किया जाएगा, सम्मेलनों में प्रस्तुतियों के लिए और भविष्य के अनुसंधान के लिए उपयोग किया जाएगा।

मैं इस अध्ययन में एक भागीदार होने के लिए सहमत हूँ, इस अध्ययन में एक प्रतिभागी के रूप में अपने अधिकारों को पूरी तरह से समझता हूँ।

भाग लेने वाले का नाम:

शोधकर्ता का नाम:

हस्ताक्षर:

हस्ताक्षर:

दिनांक:

दिनांक:

Appendix E. Data collection tools from the evaluation study

In chapter 4, I provide the overall context of the villages in which the case study schools are located. For this, I utilise the information from village description format prepared by the teams at ASER Centre which forms the first source of understanding the context as described in this chapter. In addition to this, I also utilised the data available from various surveys collected at the beginning of the evaluation study. I provide these formats here, for reference.

E1 Village Description (Qualitative)

MANDATORY DETAILS TO BE MENTIONED AT THE START OF THE INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

Village ID: _____ **Village Name:** _____

1. Where is the village?

- For example: distance from the nearest town? Distance from block and district HQ?
- What is the connectivity by road and by public transport?
- How long does it take by bus from the nearest town?
- How far to the nearest railway station?

2. What facilities/services exist?

- You have already marked some on the map, such as schools, banks, post office. List these here.
- Do these facilities function? Attempt to understand the resident's views on the same and alternative facilities that they may go to in case the one in the village is not functional.
- Also write down other facilities. For example: what kinds of shops (e.g.: cycle repair, kirana shop, dhaba)? What public or private services (eg: beauty parlour, clinic)? Mark these on the map if possible. Visit as many as you can.
- For how many hours a day does the village get electricity? How easy is it to get water?

3. What do children do?

- Do all the children in the village go to school?
- Are there some children who don't go (eg: vulnerable caste groups in some tolas, or girls, etc)?
- Till what class do most girls in the village study? (This will also be tied to the question on facilities in the village). Why not more than this?
- Till what class do most boys in the village study? (This will also be tied to the question on facilities in the village). Why not more than this?
- Where do boys and girls go if they want to pursue higher education?
- Do most children go to the government school? Reasons for this?
- Do children go outside the village to study? For example? Why do they go outside?
- What else do children do in this village?
- What are the other educational/income-generating opportunities availed by boys in this village? For example, do boys join Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) and if so, what are the courses that they join? Do they join these programs after completion of Grade 12th or after Grade 10th?
- What are the other educational/income-generating opportunities availed by boys in this village? For example, do girls join local vocational programs that teach stitching, computers etc.? If so, where are these programs located?

4. What do the adults do?

Ask separately about men and women. Also ask about different tolas in the village if there are any.

- What is the main mode of income earning for the residents of this village? For example, agriculture, or self-employment, manual labour
- Do women participate in income earning activities? If so, how?
- Does the village have inbound or outbound migration? If so, which and what are the seasonal patterns?
- What is the general level of education among the adults of the village? For both men and women separately. Till what class?

5. Who lives here?

- For example: what is the population (number of households and number of people)?
- Are there people of all ages (or do many migrate)?
- Are there specific kinds of population groups (eg: certain castes or ethnic groups)?
- How is the village organized (eg: caste-wise or religion-wise tolas)?
- Languages spoken?
- Are there occasions when everyone in the village comes together or is it mostly tola-wise?
- Intervention specific details:
 - How many library groups are running and where? (Tolas and mohallas)
 - How many children are coming to the volunteer led classes?
 - How many volunteers are currently engaged and where are they situated?
 - How many influential people are involved in the intervention activities?
 - Who are they?
 - Where are they situated? (Do they belong to specific tola, caste and class?)

Add-ons:

1. Add your team and your own observations of things that you see. For example, do you see youth hanging out in the village and playing cards? Do you see women returning from the fields etc.
2. For each of the educational facilities in the village, take a picture and file it in the prescribed format.

E2 Teacher Survey

Village Name:		
Village ID:		
School Name:		
School ID:		
Name of the Teacher:		
Teacher ID:		
Survey Date: / / 2018	Start time:	
Teacher's Phone Number	_____	
Sex	1. Male 2. Female	
What is your age?	1. Under 30 2. 30-39 years 3. 40-49 years 4. 50-59 years 5. 60 and above	
What is your current appointed post in this school?	1. Appointed HM or HM on Deputation 2. Acting (In-Charge) HM 3. Regular Teacher 4: Para Teacher	
In what year were you first appointed as a teacher?		
Since when have you been teaching in this school?		

SECTION 1: General Information

1	What is your religion?	1. Hindu 2. Muslim 3. Christian 4. Sikh 5. Buddhist 6. Jain 66. Don't wish to answer 77. Other (specify) _____	
2	What is your caste?	1. General 2. SC 3. ST 4. OBC 66. Don't wish to answer 88. Don't know/can't say	
3	What language do you speak at home regularly? (Pick any one option)	1. Hindi 2. Urdu 3. Bhojpuri 4. Haraynvi 5. Bundeli 77. Other (specify) _____	
4	What is your marital status?	1. Unmarried 2. Married 3. Widowed 4. Divorced/separated	If Q4 = 1 then skip Q 5 and 5.1
5	Do you have children who are age 6 or older?	0. No 1. Yes	If Q5=0 then skip Q 5.1
5.1	If yes, have any of your children ever studied in this school or in any other government school?	0. No 1. Yes	
6	Where did you spend your most of your childhood time? In this district or somewhere else?	1. Mostly in this district 2. Mostly in a different district	
7	Where did you spend most of your childhood time? In a village or in an urban area?	1. Mostly in this very village 2. Mostly in a village (but not this one) 3. Mostly in a town	
8	Where do you currently live?	1. In this village (as the sample school) 2. In another village 3. In a town	
9	For your current post, is this district your posting of choice?	0. No 1. Yes 2. Did not have a preference	

10	Is this school your posting of choice?	0. No 1. Yes 2. Did not have a preference	
11	How do you travel to work?	1. Walk 2. Bicycle 3. Rickshaw 4. Scooter/Motorbike 5. Car 6. Public transport 7. Other (specify) _____	
12	How long does it take you to travel to work (one way) on a normal day?	Min _____	
13	What is the highest level of education that you have completed?	1. Secondary (matric/class 10) 2. Higher secondary (class 12) 3. Bachelors (BA, BSc.) 4. Masters (MA, MSc) 5. MPhil/Ph.D 7. Other (specify) _____	
14	What certificate for teaching do you hold? (Pick multiple options if applicable) What was the duration of the course ? (Write duration in months corresponding to the course)	0. I do not hold any certificate 1. D.Ed./ ETT/JBT/ETE _____ 2. B.El.Ed _____ 3. B.Ed _____ 4. M.Ed. _____ 5. D.El.Ed (Spl Ed) _____ 6: D.Ed _____ 7. OT (Language) _____ 8. C.P.Ed. _____ 9: Special Basic Training Certificate _____ 10: Basic Training Certificate _____ 7. Others (Specify) _____	If Q14>0 then write duration in months
15.a	Did you receive any in-service training in the past school year?	0. No 1. Yes	If Q 15=0 then skip 15.1
15.b	If yes, how many days of in-service/professional development training did you receive in the past school year ?	_____ days	
16	Which grades are you teaching this year ? (Pick multiple options if applicable)	1: Std 1 2: Std 2 3: Std 3 4: Std 4 5: Std 5 6: Std 6 7: Std 7 8: Std 8 7. Other (Specify) _____	

17	Which subjects are you teaching this year? (Pick multiple options if applicable)	1. Hindi 2. English 3. Maths 4. Environmental studies 5. All 77. Other (specify) _____	
18	What is your current monthly take-home pay ?	1. Less than 10,000 2. 10,000-20,000 3. 21,000-30000 4. 31000-40000 5. 41,000-50,000 6. More than 50,000 66. Don't wish to answer	
19	On average, how many hours do you spend on administrative and non-teaching tasks per day? (Include activities such as filling registers or helping with the midday meal)	_____ hours	
20	On average, how many hours do you teach per day? (Do not include other school activities such as filling registers or helping with the midday meal)	_____ hours	
21	What is the main course of action you take if a child has poor academic results?(<i>Select any one</i>)	0. Nothing, there is nothing I can do about it 1. I tell the parents to make the child study 2. I ask the parents to send the child for tuition 3. I tell the child to study harder 4. I promise them incentives for better performance (eg sweets, gifts, praise) 5. I spend extra time teaching the child, before or after school 6. I make the child sit with other children who can help 7. I make the child sit with others at the same level 8. I move the child to the front of the class 9. I try to check their understanding more often in class 10. I scold the child 11. I beat the child 77. Other (specify) _____	
22	During this academic year have you ever tested children's foundational learning?	0. No 1. Yes 66. Don't know/can't say 99. No response	
23.a	Do you plan how many days to spend on each chapter at the beginning of the academic year?	0. No 1. Yes	

23.b	If yes, do you strictly follow that plan?	0. Never 1. Always 2. Usually 3. Sometimes	
24.1	Who gives you suggestions for your teaching most often?	0. None 1. Head teacher 2. Another teacher 3. Cluster or block official 4. A parent or community member 5. SMC member 77. Other (specify) _____	If Q24=0 then skip Q24.1 and 24.2
24.b	If yes, how often do they give you suggestions?	0. Never 1. Rarely 2. Sometimes 4. Frequently	
25	How often do you invite parents to school to discuss children's learning/grades?	0. Never 1. Once a year 2. Once in 6 months 3. Every month 4. As required	
26.a	Have you heard about a program called 'Graded Learning'/'Teaching at the right level'?	0. No 1. Yes 88. Don't know/ can't say	If Q26.a = 0 or 88, then go to Q.27
26.b	Have you ever participated in a training on Teaching at the Right Level?	0. No 1. Yes 88. Don't know/can't say	
26.c	When did you take part in the training on Graded Learning program? (<i>Write month and year</i>)	_____ (MM) _____ (YYYY)	
26.d	For how many days was this training?	_____ (Days)	
27	Who do you think has the greatest responsibility to ensure that children learn? (<i>Read out the options and pick only one</i>)	1. Parents 2. Teachers 3. Head Master 4. SMC 5. District Authority	

Section 2: Attitudes and Perceptions on Learning

"I am going to ask you a few questions to you. Each question is related to your school, teachers, children's learning levels, their families and the community. Please listen to these questions carefully and for each, tell me what do you think about it. There are no right or wrong responses for these questions, so please respond without any hesitation. For every question, answer in a yes/no/don't know or can't say." *(If after reading a question, the teacher does not respond, read it out once more only. If you still don't receive a response, select the "No response" option.)*

S.No.	Question	Responses	Skip Rule
1	Can children in the classes you teach able to read their Hindi textbooks of their class?	0. No 1. Yes 88. Don't know/can't say 99. No response	
2	Can most children in this school able to do two-digit subtraction with borrowing by the time they reach grade 4 ?	0. No 1. Yes 88. Don't know/can't say 99. No response	
3	Do children in your classroom both clever and weak students improve their learning levels?	0. No 1. Yes 88. Don't know/can't say 99. No response	
4	Do girls and boys, in general, learn equally?	0. No 1. Yes 88. Don't know/can't say 99. No response	
5	Do girls, in general, learn to read faster than boys?	0. No 1. Yes 88. Don't know/can't say 99. No response	
6	Do boys, in general, learn mathematics faster than girls?	0. No 1. Yes 88. Don't know/can't say 99. No response	
7	Do children, in general, from lower social categories have more difficulties in learning?	0. No 1. Yes 88. Don't know/can't say 99. No response	
8	Does children from poor families often lag behind in learning because their parents are often illiterate?	0. No 1. Yes 88. Don't know/can't say 99. No response	
9	Do the majority of children in the classes you teach have been promoted to the next class without learning the previous class' curriculum?	0. No 1. Yes 88. Don't know/can't say 99. No response	

10	Do you have enough material available in the classroom to make sure all children in your class learn well?	0. No 1. Yes 88. Don't know/can't say 99. No response	
11	Do you have enough subject knowledge to make sure that all children in your classroom learn well?	0. No 1. Yes 88. Don't know/can't say 99. No response	
12	Do you know how to identify children who are behind the expected level?	0. No 1. Yes 88. Don't know/can't say 99. No response	
13	Do you know how to teach children who are falling behind the expected learning level?	0. No 1. Yes 88. Don't know/can't say 99. No response	
14	Can you help children from disadvantaged backgrounds to learn?	0. No 1. Yes 88. Don't know/can't say 99. No response	
15	Is it important for you that your teaching helps children overcome the challenges while learning?	0. No 1. Yes 88. Don't know/can't say 99. No response	
16	Will you be able to help children lagging behind in your class this year?	0. No 1. Yes 88. Don't know/can't say 99. No response	
17	Is it important for you to make sure that students whose parents are illiterate can learn?	0. No 1. Yes 88. Don't know/can't say 99. No response	
18	Are you concerned about the learning of children from lower social categories in your class?	0. No 1. Yes 88. Don't know/can't say 99. No response	
19	Are you worried when children in your class get promoted without learning the curriculum of the previous class?	0. No 1. Yes 88. Don't know/can't say 99. No response	
20	<i>(If the respondent is In-charge HM, then skip this question and select the "Not Applicable" option".)</i> Does the head teacher help you to improve children's learning in your class?	0. No 1. Yes 88. Don't know/can't say 99. No response	

21	Do you get support from community members to help children who have fallen behind the expected learning level in your class?	0. No 1. Yes 88. Don't know/can't say 99. No response	
22	Is the support from community members helpful to improve children's learning?	0. No 1. Yes 88. Don't know/can't say 99. No response	
23	Do the teachers do everything they can to improve children's learning?	0. No 1. Yes 88. Don't know/can't say 99. No response	
24	Do the parents do everything they can to improve children's learning?	0. No 1. Yes 88. Don't know/can't say 99. No response	
25	Do the community members do everything they can to improve children's learning?	0. No 1. Yes 88. Don't know/can't say 99. No response	

Section 3: Information related to sample children

We will be visiting the homes of some of the children in Std [2,3, 4] to talk to their parents. We also wanted your opinion about these children.

S.No.	Question	Responses	Skip Rule
1	Do you know any of these children?		
	Child 1	0. Don't know 1.Know	
	Child 2	0. Don't know 1.Know	
	Child 3	0. Don't know 1.Know	
	Child 4	0. Don't know 1.Know	
	Child 5	0. Don't know 1.Know	
	Child 6	0. Don't know 1.Know	
	Child 7	0. Don't know 1.Know	
	Child 8	0. Don't know 1.Know	
	Child 9	0. Don't know 1.Know	
Child 10	0. Don't know 1.Know		
2	Are any of them frequently absent from school?		
	Child 1	0.Not absent 1.Frequently absent 88. Don't know/can't say	
	Child 2	0.Not absent 1.Frequently absent 88. Don't know/can't say	
	Child 3	0.Not absent 1.Frequently absent 88. Don't know/can't say	

	Child 4	0.Not absent	1.Frequently absent	88. Don't know/can't say	
	Child 5	0.Not absent	1.Frequently absent	88. Don't know/can't say	
	Child 6	0.Not absent	1.Frequently absent	88. Don't know/can't say	
	Child 7	0.Not absent	1.Frequently absent	88. Don't know/can't say	
	Child 8	0.Not absent	1.Frequently absent	88. Don't know/can't say	
	Child 9	0.Not absent	1.Frequently absent	88. Don't know/can't say	
	Child 10	0.Not absent	1.Frequently absent	88. Don't know/can't say	
3	Have you met any of their parents in the last 1 month?				
	Child 1	0.Haven't met	1.Met		
	Child 2	0.Haven't met	1.Met		
	Child 3	0.Haven't met	1.Met		
	Child 4	0.Haven't met	1.Met		
	Child 5	0.Haven't met	1.Met		
	Child 6	0.Haven't met	1.Met		
	Child 7	0.Haven't met	1.Met		
	Child 8	0.Haven't met	1.Met		
	Child 9	0.Haven't met	1.Met		
Child 10	0.Haven't met	1.Met			
4	Do you think any of them are not able to read a text like this? [show ASER story]				
	Child 1	0.Not be able to read	1.Be able to read	88. Don't know/can't say	
	Child 2	0.Not be able to read	1.Be able to read	88. Don't know/can't say	
	Child 3	0.Not be able to read	1.Be able to read	88. Don't know/can't say	
	Child 4	0.Not be able to read	1.Be able to read	88. Don't know/can't say	
	Child 5	0.Not be able to read	1.Be able to read	88. Don't know/can't say	
	Child 6	0.Not be able to read	1.Be able to read	88. Don't know/can't say	
	Child 7	0.Not be able to read	1.Be able to read	88. Don't know/can't say	
	Child 8	0.Not be able to read	1.Be able to read	88. Don't know/can't say	
	Child 9	0.Not be able to read	1.Be able to read	88. Don't know/can't say	
Child 10	0.Not be able to read	1.Be able to read	88. Don't know/can't say		
5	Do you think any of these children would be unable to solve a subtraction sum like this one? [show ASER subtraction]				
	Child 1	0.Unable to solve	1.Be able to solve	88. Don't know/can't say	
	Child 2	0.Unable to solve	1.Be able to solve	88. Don't know/can't say	
	Child 3	0.Unable to solve	1.Be able to solve	88. Don't know/can't say	

Child 4	0.Unable to solve	1.Be able to solve	
Child 5	0.Unable to solve	1.Be able to solve	
Child 6	0.Unable to solve	1.Be able to solve	
Child 7	0.Unable to solve	1.Be able to solve	
Child 8	0.Unable to solve	1.Be able to solve	
Child 9	0.Unable to solve	1.Be able to solve	
Child 10	0.Unable to solve	1.Be able to solve	

End time of the survey:

E3 Village Survey

ESRC: VILLAGE SURVEY

VILLAGE NAME	
---------------------	--

VILLAGE ID	
-------------------	--

SCHOOL NAME	
--------------------	--

SCHOOL ID	
------------------	--

Surveyor 1's Name:	
---------------------------	--

Surveyor 2's Name:	
---------------------------	--

DATES PRESENT IN VILLAGE:	From: ___/___/2018	To: ___/___/2018
----------------------------------	--------------------	------------------

A. BASIC VILLAGE FACILITIES		<i>Observe yourself (Tick)</i>	<i>Instructions</i>	
A.1	Pucca/tarred road leading to the village?	YES	NO	
A.2	Electricity connection in the village?	YES	NO	<i>Look for electricity poles, wires, etc</i>
A.3	Post office in the village?	YES	NO	<i>Look for a post office building/sign board</i>
A.4	Bank? (Any type)	YES	NO	<i>Bank can be any kind (govt/private/cooperative)</i>
A.5	Government Ration/PDS Shop in the village?	YES	NO	<i>Only government/sarkari ration/PDS shops</i>
A.6	Govt. Primary/Sub Health Centre in the village?	YES	NO	<i>Only Government/Sarkari ration/PDS shop should be considered.</i>
A.7	Private Health Clinic?	YES	NO	<i>Look for any clinics/doctors indicating that there is a private health facility. Does NOT include alternative medicine like Hakims, Vaidis etc.</i>
A.8	Computer centre or Internet Café in the village?	YES	NO	<i>Look for centre outside of school and home</i>

B. LIST OF KEY VILLAGE/COMMUNITY MEMBERS

Ask the Sarpanch and HM of sampled school for names of people other than school staff who are interested in education in the village and can be interviewed. List their suggestions here.

S.No.	Name	Affiliation/location	Suggested by: 1. Sarpanch/Pradhan/Ward member 2. School Head Master 3. Other (specify) _____
1			
2			

C. SCHOOLS INSIDE THE SAMPLE VILLAGE

List all schools situated inside the village offering Std 1 or higher. Visit the schools and note down the school type (government, private, other) and the lowest and highest grade offered by the school.

S.No.	Full Name of the School	School Type	Lowest grade offered	Highest grade offered	Remarks
1		G P O			
2		G P O			
3		G P O			
4		G P O			
5		G P O			
6		G P O			
7		G P O			
8		G P O			
9		G P O			
10		G P O			
11		G P O			
12		G P O			
13		G P O			
14		G P O			
15		G P O			
16		G P O			
17		G P O			
18		G P O			
19		G P O			
20		G P O			

G = Government , P = Private , O = Other

E4 Classroom Observations Survey

ESRC Study: CLASSROOM OBSERVATION						असर ASER		
A. GENERAL INFORMATION								
Observe a Hindi period when teaching activities are taking place (not an exam, test etc). Fill Section A BEFORE you go into the classroom.								
A.1 Block:	<input style="width: 95%;" type="text"/>	CODE	<input style="width: 95%;" type="text"/>	A.5 Surveyor names:	CODE			
A.2 Village:	<input style="width: 95%;" type="text"/>			1	<input style="width: 95%;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 95%;" type="text"/>		
A.3 School:	<input style="width: 95%;" type="text"/>			2	<input style="width: 95%;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 95%;" type="text"/>		
A.4 Teacher:	<input style="width: 95%;" type="text"/>			A.6 Date of observation:	DD	MM		
					YYYY			
A.7 Which class are you going to observe?	Std.	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5				
A.8 Did you see a timetable that shows a Hindi period for this class at this time?						<input type="checkbox"/> Y	<input type="checkbox"/> N	
<p><i>Go to the classroom to be observed. If a teacher is present, ask her permission to sit in the class for that period. Sit at the back or somewhere where you can observe the class without interrupting what is going on. The purpose is to understand the main activities that the teacher and the students are doing. While observing, do not talk to students or teachers. Just observe.</i></p>								
B. CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT AND ORGANIZATION								
Fill Section B AS SOON AS YOU ENTER the classroom/space where the class is taking place Make sure you do the observation at a time when a class is supposed to be taking place.								
B.1 Tick all the classes sitting in this classroom/space								
	<input type="checkbox"/> Std 1	<input type="checkbox"/> Std 2	<input type="checkbox"/> Std 3	<input type="checkbox"/> Std 4	<input type="checkbox"/> Std 5	<input type="checkbox"/> Std 6	<input type="checkbox"/> Std 7	<input type="checkbox"/> Std 8
B.1.a If more than 1 class is sitting together than choose one of the following options:								
a.	<input type="checkbox"/>	Children from each class were sitting in separate groups						
b.	<input type="checkbox"/>	Children from all classes were sitting in mixed class groups						
<p><i>If option a, then fill all questions based on the class you are there to observe. If option b, then answer all questions based on all the children in the class.</i></p>								
B.2 What kind of class is it? (Tick ONE option)								
a.	<input type="checkbox"/>	A regular class for ALL children from these classes						
b.	<input type="checkbox"/>	A special/remedial class for ALL children from these classes						
c.	<input type="checkbox"/>	A special/remedial class only for weak children from these classes						
B.3 Where is this class taking place? (Tick ONE option)								
a.	<input type="checkbox"/>	In a classroom						
b.	<input type="checkbox"/>	In a verandah						
c.	<input type="checkbox"/>	Outdoors						
B.4 Classroom infrastructure. Mark either Y or N for each of the following statements:								
a.	There is space for EVERY child present to sit comfortably.					<input type="checkbox"/> Y	<input type="checkbox"/> N	
b.	There is space for the teacher to walk up to EVERY child.					<input type="checkbox"/> Y	<input type="checkbox"/> N	
c.	ALL children are sitting on chairs.					<input type="checkbox"/> Y	<input type="checkbox"/> N	
d.	ALL children are sitting on mats/tat pattis.					<input type="checkbox"/> Y	<input type="checkbox"/> N	
e.	There is at least one blackboard that is easy to write on.					<input type="checkbox"/> Y	<input type="checkbox"/> N	
f.	The children in the back can easily see the writing on the blackboard.					<input type="checkbox"/> Y	<input type="checkbox"/> N	

- g. There is chalk in the classroom.
- h. There is TLM (other than textbooks) displayed on the walls (eg: posters, maps).
- i. There is TLM (other than textbooks) that children can hold and use.
- j. Children's creative work is displayed.

Y	N
Y	N
Y	N
Y	N

SECTION C. SNAPSHOT OF TEACHING-LEARNING ACTIVITIES IN THE CLASSROOM

Once you are sitting in the class and observing what is happening, and have filled out Sections A and B, take one 'snapshot' of what is going on in the classroom every 10 minutes till the period is over. Please note that this section should be filled only on the basis of activities in one glimpse.))

C.1 Snapshot number:

C.2 Snapshot time:

HH	MM
----	----

C.3 During this snapshot, which class textbook is the teacher using?

- Std 1
 Std 2
 Std 3
 Std 4
 Std 5
 Std 6
 Std 7
 Std 8
 None

C.4 Teacher activity. What is the teacher doing during this snapshot?

Speaking activities

- a. Reading aloud from the textbook
- b. Reading aloud any other material (Other books, charts, story cards etc.)
- c. Talking to students (about the lesson)
- d. Talking to students (unrelated to the lesson)
- e. Asking students oral questions related to the lesson
- f. Asking students to recite, together or one by one
- g. Having a discussion or conversation with students

Y	N
Y	N
Y	N
Y	N
Y	N
Y	N
Y	N

Writing activities

- h. Writing on the blackboard
- i. Asking students to write on the blackboard
- j. Giving students dictation
- k. Asking students to do any kind of written work (eg: in copies or slates)

Y	N
Y	N
Y	N
Y	N

Other teaching activities

- l. Checking students' written work
- m. Supervising while students use any TLM other than textbook
- n. Supervising while students work in groups or in pairs
- o. Asking students to do any activity that is NOT textbook based
- p. Listening while students speak

Y	N
Y	N
Y	N
Y	N
Y	N

Non teaching activities

- q. Doing school work but not interacting with students
- r. Doing something that is unrelated to students or school work
- s. Not doing anything at all
- t. Not in the classroom

Y	N
Y	N
Y	N
Y	N

C.5 Classroom organization. How are the students sitting during this snapshot?

- a. They are sitting in straight lines facing the teacher
- b. They are sitting in one large circle
- c. They are sitting in small groups

Y	N
Y	N
Y	N

d. They are moving around (no fixed seating)

Y	N
---	---

b Where is the teacher sitting during this snapshot?

- a. Sitting on a chair
- b. Sitting on the floor
- c. Standing in front of the class
- d. Moving around the class

Y	N
Y	N
Y	N
Y	N

C.6 Student activity. During this snapshot, are students e

- a. Yes, everyone in the class has been given the same task/activity to do
- b. No, different students or groups have been given different task/activities
- c. Students have not been given any task or activity

Y	N
Y	N
Y	N

C.7 What are MOST students doing during this snapshot?

- Listening activities
 - a. Listening to the teacher
 - b. Listening to another student or students
- Reading activities
 - c. Reading from a textbook (aloud or silently)
 - d. Reading something other than a textbook
- Writing activities
 - e. Copying from the blackboard or from a textbook
 - f. Taking dictation
 - g. Writing answers to questions
 - h. Any type of creative (free) writing
 - i. Writing on the walls or on the floor
- Speaking activities
 - j. Discussing a class-related topic with each other
 - k. Giving collective responses to the teacher
- 'Doing' activities
 - l. Playing a game
 - m. Making something
 - n. Acting, singing, dancing etc
- Off-task activities
 - o. Doing an activity that is not related to the class

Y	N
Y	N
Y	N
Y	N
Y	N
Y	N
Y	N
Y	N
Y	N
Y	N
Y	N
Y	N
Y	N
Y	N
Y	N
Y	N

C.8 What teaching-learning material are MOST students using during this snapshot?

- a. Textbook
- b. Copy/slate
- c. Other materials to read
- d. Other materials to write on (eg: chart paper, floor)
- e. Any other material (eg: shape card, puzzles, globe): _____

Y	N
Y	N
Y	N
Y	N
Y	N

SECTION D. CLASSROOM OBSERVATION SUMMARY

This section contains some general questions about the class. Fill this section after the period is over.

D.1 Overall, which of the following statements best describes what you observed in the classroom?

<input type="checkbox"/>	A teacher and students were present. The teacher was teaching and/or managing student activities all of the time.
<input type="checkbox"/>	A teacher and students were present. The teacher was teaching and/or managing student activities some of the time.
<input type="checkbox"/>	A teacher and students were present. The teacher did not teach at all.

D.2 During the entire period that you observed, did the teacher:

- a. Go up to any students seated in the middle or back of the class?
- b. Call at least 3 children by their name?
- c. Smile, laugh, or joke with one or more students?
- d. Praise or encourage one or more students?
- e. Make sure that MOST children had a chance to say something?
- f. Use local information to explain a topic/concept in a more relevant way?
- g. Give corporal punishment?
- h. Use negative language or verbally abuse children?
- i. Scold or punish any child (other than corporal punishment or verbal abuse)?
- j. Carry a cane or stick in the classroom?

Y	N
Y	N
Y	N
Y	N
Y	N
Y	N
Y	N
Y	N
Y	N
Y	N

D.3 During the entire period that you observed, did you see the following materials being used by children?

- a. Barakhadi chart
- b. Picture cards
- c. Para cards
- d. Story books
- e. Flash cards

Y	N
Y	N
Y	N
Y	N
Y	N

D.4 During the entire period, did you see the teacher ask students in the observed class to speak or write about any open ended question or topic?

Y	N
---	---

If yes, please note down up to 3 open ended questions/topics here:

- i. _____
- ii. _____
- iii. _____

E5 Household Survey

ESRC HOUSEHOLD QUESTIONNAIRE (MAIN SAMPLED CHILD)

Instructions:

1. *Fill this format for one sample child.*
2. *Definition of a Household: All members living in the same house and eating from the same kitchen as the Sample Child will be considered part of one household.*
3. *If there is more than one sample child living in the same household and eating from the same kitchen, fill the Additional Household Format for the second Sample Child.*

Sample Village ID:		Sample Village Name	
Sample School ID		Sample School Name	
Class of the Sample Child		Sampled Child ID	
Name of the Sampled Child		Sex of Sampled Child	1: Boy 2: Girl
Date of survey (DD/MM/YYYY)	_____/_____/_____ 2018	Start time of the survey	
Full name Surveyor 1		Full name Surveyor 2	
Location of this House/tola or mohalla name			
GPS OF THE HOUSEHOLD			

Verbal Consent

Do you agree to participate in this Interview?	0: No	IF 0 → END THE SURVEY
	1: Yes	

Section 1: General information

1	Name of the primary respondent	
2	Relationship of the primary respondent with [SAMPLED CHILD]	1:Father 2:Mother 3:Sibling 4:Grandfather/Grandmother 5:Uncle/Aunt/ 77:Other relatives (Specify) _____
3	Name of the Head of the Household	
4	Contact No. of any member of the Household	
5	What is main religion of the household members?	1: Hindu 2: Islam 3: Christian 4: Sikh 5: Buddhist 6: Jain 66: Don't wish to answer 77: Other 88: Don't know
5.1	What is your caste?	Skip Q 5.1 if Q5 is 2-88
6	What is the reservation category of members of this household?	1: General 2: Schedule Caste (SC) 3: Schedule Tribe (ST) 4: Other backward class (OBC) 66: Don't wish to answer 88: Don't know

Section 2: Family engagement with SAMPLE CHILD’S School

IMPORTANT:

1. *This section is to be filled for each sampled child, individually and separately. As far as possible the following questions should only be administered to a parent of the Sampled Child. If neither parent is available on the day of your visit, return another day.*
2. *Administer this section to the guardian only if both parents are deceased or do not live regularly in the household.*

I will ask you a few questions related to your engagement with the school in which the [Sampled Child] studies and his/her teachers.

1.	Does [sample child] goes to [sample school’s name]?	0. No / नहीं 1. Yes / हाँ 88: Don’t know / पता नहीं	
1.1	Does your child go to a government school or a private school?	1. Government school 2. Private school 88: Don’t know / पता नहीं	If answer to Q 1 is 0, then skip 1.1
2.	<u>After the [SAMPLED CHILD] was promoted to the current class, have you or any other household member visited the [SAMPLED CHILD]’s school?</u> <i>(Select any one)</i>	0. No / नहीं 1. Yes / हाँ 88: Don’t know / पता नहीं	IF 0 or 88 → SKIP Q. 2.1 GOTO QUESTION 3
2.1	If yes, what was the reason for your last visit? <i>(Can choose up to 2 options)</i>	1: To discuss/collect scholarship, textbooks/ uniform 2: To discuss teachers’ behavior (Physical or verbal punishment) with child/children 3: To discuss child/children’s learning levels or marks	

		4: To discuss child/children's attendance or behavior	
		77: Other (Please specify) _____	
		88: Don't know	
3.	Do you know the name of any of [SAMPLED CHILD]'s teachers? <i>Do not prompt.</i>	1: Respondent could give name of at least 1 teacher 88: Don't know name of even 1 teacher	
4	Do you know about the School Management Committee (SMC)?	0. No 1. Yes 99. No response	
4.1	If yes, are you part of the School Management Committee of the Sampled School?	0. No 1. Yes 88. Don't Know / Can't Say 99. No response	Skip 4.1 if Q4 = 0
4.2	If yes, when did you last attend an SMC meeting?	1. Less than a month ago 2. 1-3 months ago 3. 3-6 months ago 4. 6-12 months ago 5. More than one year 99. No response	Skip 4.2 if Q4.1=0/88
5.	Does anyone from this household help the [SAMPLED CHILD] at home with his/her studies? <i>(If anyone other than family members living in the sampled household help the child, record it as 'No')</i>	0. No 1. Yes 88. Don't Know / Can't Say 99. No response	
5.1	If yes, who helps [SAMPLED CHILD] at home? <i>(Multiple choice)</i>	1. Parents 2. Siblings 3. Someone else	SKIP 5.1 IF Q.5 = 0/88

		99. No response	
6	Does the [SAMPLED CHILD] take any <u>paid tuition class</u> currently?	0. No 1. Yes 88. Don't Know / Can't Say 99. No response	
6.1	If yes, how much do you pay for the [SAMPLED CHILD'S] tuition per month (write only number)?		SKIP Q. 6.1 IF Q.6 = 0/88
7	Do you know if there has been any activity in the village related to children's learning? (<i>Other than PTA</i>)	0. No 1. Yes 88. Don't Know / Can't Say 99. No response	
7.1	If yes, did the [SAMPLED CHILD] participate in this activity?	0. No 1. Yes 88. Don't Know / Can't Say 99. No response	Skip 7.1 and 7.2 if Q.7= 0/88
7.2	Did you participate in this activity?	0. No 1. Yes 88. Don't Know / Can't Say	
8	In a week, how often does [sample child] study/do homework at home after returning from school?	0 Never 1 Occasionally 2 Regularly 88 Don't know/can't say 99. No response	
9	Does [SAMPLED CHILD] ever attend arranged study groups in the villages?	0 No 1 Yes 2 This doesn't happen in this village 88 Don't know/can't say 99. No response	
9.1	If Yes, how many times in a week does [SAMPLED CHILD] attend these study groups?	1 Occasionally 2 Regularly 88 Don't know/can't say 99. No response	Skip 8.1 if Q. 8 = Option 0 / 2/ 88

10	Do you ever look at [SAMPLED CHILD]'s textbooks or notebooks?	0. No 1. Yes 2. Child does not have textbooks or notebooks 99. No response	
11	Do you or anyone else read or tell stories to [SAMPLED CHILD]?	0. No 1. Yes 99. No response	
11.1	If Yes, in a week, how often do you read or tell stories to [SAMPLED CHILD]?	0. Never 1. Occasionally 2. Regularly 88 Don't know/can't say 99. No response	Skip 11.1 if Q. 11 = No
12.	What responsibilities do parents have to improve their children's education? <i>(Multiple choice)</i>	0 No responsibilities 1 Sending children for tuition 2 Helping children with their homework 3 Checking children's notebooks 4 Talking to children's teacher 5 Buying books/notebooks 6 Telling children to study 7 Sending children to school 8 Spending money on children's studies 77 Other (specify) _____ 88 Don't know / can't say 99. No response	
13	Who has the greatest responsibility to ensure that children learn? Read out options and choose only one	1. Parents 2. Teachers 3. HM 4. SMC 5. District administration 99. No response	

Section 3: Perceptions, attitudes and actions related to Sample Child's learning and education

I am going to read out a few sentences to you. Each statement is connected to your child's learning levels, teacher, family and the community. Please listen to these statements carefully and for each, tell me whether you agree or disagree. There are no right or wrong responses for these statements, so please respond without any hesitation." [If after reading a statement, the respondent does not respond, mark no response. Read it out once more only].

1	[SAMPLED CHILD] learns whatever is taught to him in the class	0. No 1. Yes 88. Don't Know / Can't Say 99. No Response
2	[SAMPLED CHILD] can read his/her Hindi textbook easily	0. No 1. Yes 88. Don't Know / Can't Say 99. No Response
3	[SAMPLED CHILD] can count till 100	0. No 1. Yes 88. Don't Know / Can't Say 99. No Response
4	[SAMPLED CHILD] is learning as much as other children in his/her class	0. No 1. Yes 88. Don't Know / Can't Say 99. No Response/
5	Teachers do not treat [SAMPLED CHILD] the same way as other children in the class	0. No 1. Yes 88. Don't Know / Can't Say 99. No Response
6	You can support [SAMPLED CHILD'S] studies/learning at home	0. No 1. Yes 88. Don't Know / Can't Say 99. No Response

7.	You have time to help my [SAMPLED CHILD] learn at home	0. No 1. Yes 88. Don't Know / Can't Say 99. No Response
8.	You ask [SAMPLED CHILD] what they do in school everyday	0. No 1. Yes 88. Don't Know / Can't Say 99. No Response
9.	You tell [SAMPLED CHILD] to work hard in school	0. No 1. Yes 88. Don't Know / Can't Say 99. No Response
10.	You encourage [SAMPLED CHILD] to read books other than school textbooks	0. No 1. Yes 88. Don't Know / Can't Say 99. No Response
11.	The school (or teachers) invites you regularly to discuss the learning levels of [SAMPLED CHILD]	0. No 1. Yes 88. Don't Know / Can't Say 99. No Response
12.	You worry when [Sampled Child] is not able to read simple text or do simple math.	0. No 1. Yes 88. Don't Know / Can't Say 99. No Response
13.	[SAMPLED CHILD] was promoted to the current grade without having learned the curriculum of the previous class	0. No 1. Yes 88. Don't Know / Can't Say 99. No Response
14.a.	For girls: You are concerned that [SAMPLED CHILD] is learning less than the boys	0. No 1. Yes 88. Don't Know / Can't Say

		99. No Response
14.b	For boys: You are concerned that [SAMPLED CHILD] is learning less than the girls	0. No 1. Yes 88. Don't Know / Can't Say 99. No Response

Section 4: General perceptions, attitudes on learning and education

Now I will read some questions to you. Every question is related to the of all children. Listen carefully to these questions and tell me what you think about these questions. Answer these questions in Yes / No / Don't know. [If after reading a statement, the respondent does not respond, mark no response. Read it out once more only].

1.	Meeting with the teacher is a waste of time.	0. No 1. Yes 88. Don't Know / Can't Say 99. No Response
2.	Boys learn faster than girls.	0. No 1. Yes 88. Don't Know / Can't Say 99. No Response
3.	Teachers do everything they can to improve children's learning.	0. No 1. Yes 88. Don't Know / Can't Say 99. No Response
4.	Parents do everything they can to improve children's learning.	0. No 1. Yes 88. Don't Know / Can't Say 99. No Response

5.	Community members do everything they can to improve children's learning.	0. No 1. Yes 88. Don't Know / Can't Say 99. No Response
6.	You would like to volunteer time in the school if it helps children get a better education.	0. No 1. Yes 88. Don't Know / Can't Say 99. No Response

Section 5: Household Roster (for all household members)

Instructions for the surveyor

1. *This sheet is to be filled for ALL MEMBERS IN THE HH (3 years and above) who have been living in this household regularly for the last 6 months and eat from the same kitchen as the Sampled Child.*
2. *Those individuals who are not family members but who live regularly in the sampled household should ALSO be surveyed.*
3. *DO NOT take information about individuals who are currently visiting the sampled household or have stayed with the sampled household for less than 12 months.*
4. *If the father or mother of the sampled child is dead, do not fill their information.*

Total number of members in the household									
For all members of the household (3-18)					For all members of the household	Presently enrolled in School/college		Not enrolled in school/college in present	
Roster ID	Name of the member	Age	Sex	Relationship with the sample child	Main occupation	Class	Type of school/college	Highest level of education	Type of school/college last attended
			1: male 2: female	0: Sample child 1: Mother 2: Father 3: Siblings 77: Other	1: Student 2: Unemployed 3: Housewife 4: Agriculture 5: Agricultural labor 6: non-agricultural labor like construction work etc. 7: Artists working independently like mason, carpenter, electrician etc. 8: Home based occupation like beedi rolling etc. 9: Small business 10: Any other job(Government/Private) 66: Doesn't apply 77: Other (Specify) 88: Don't know	0: Pre-school(Anganwadi) 1: Std 1 2: Std 2 etc ... 12: Std 12 13: Graduate (B.A / B.Sc / B.Tech / B.Com) 14: Post graduate (M.A / M.Sc / M.Tech / M.Com) 77: Other (Specify)_____ 88: Don't know	1: Government 2: Private 77: Other 88: Don't know	0: Never enrolled 1: Std 1 2: Std 2 etc ... 12: Std 12 13: Graduate (B.A / B.Sc / B.Tech / B.Com) 14: Post graduate (M.A / M.Sc / M.Tech / M.Com) 77: Other (Specify)_____ 88: Don't know	1: Government 2: Private 77: Other 88: Don't know
1									
2									

Section 6: Household Indicators

Instructions for surveyors:

1. This information is being collected to understand the relationship between child's learning level and economic status of the household.

2. Observe and mark accordingly for questions in this section. Ask when and where necessary.

1	Type of house? (Select one option)	1: Kuccha 2: Semi pucca 3: Pucca
2	Is there electricity connection in the HH?	0 : No 1: Yes
2.1	Skip if Q.2=No Is there electricity during the HH visit?	0 : No 1: Yes
3	Is there a toilet facility available for use inside the house?	0 : No 1: Yes
4	What is the primary mode of cooking in the household? (Select one option)	1: Sticks, firewood, dung 2: Coal stove (Angithi) 3: Kerosene Stove 4: Gas stove/ LPG 5: Bio gas 6: Smokeless chullah
5 What transportation assets does your household have? <i>FOR EACH ITEM IN THE LIST, TICK IN ANY ONE COLUMN</i>		0 : No 1: Yes
1	Bicycle	
2	Motorcycle/Scooter	
3	Car	
4	Tractor	
5	Cart (with bullock	
6	Auto rickshaw	
77	Other	
6 Which of the following reading material does your household have? <i>FOR EACH ITEM IN THE LIST, TICK IN ANY ONE COLUMN</i>		0 : No 1: Yes
1. None		
2. Religious books		
3. Any book other than school textbooks		
4. Newspaper		
7A: Does this Household have the following things?		0 : No 1: Yes

<i>FOR EACH ITEM IN THE LIST, TICK IN ANY ONE COLUMN</i>			
1	Mobile Phone		
2	T.V.		
3	Clock/Watch		
4	Radio		
5	Electric Fan		
6	Table		
7	Chair		
8	Pressure Cooker		
9	Sewing Machine		
Ask questions in Question 7B only if the number of possessions in Question 7A is 6 or more.		0 : No	1: Yes
10	Computer		
11	Mixer/Grinder		
12	Washing Machine		
13	Refrigerator		
14	Air Cooler		
IS THERE AN ADDITIONAL SAMPLED CHILD LIVING IN THIS HOUSEHOLD AND EATING FROM THE SAME KITCHEN?		0 : No	1: Yes
IF YES, FILL THE ADDITIONAL SAMPLE CHILD FORMAT.			
IF NO, PROCEED TO THE HOUSEHOLD OF THE NEXT SAMPLE CHILD IN YOUR LIST.			

E6 School Survey

ESRC Study: SCHOOL SURVEY										
Read all questions and instructions carefully. Collect information ONLY FOR THE SAMPLE SCHOOL WHICH IS ON YOUR LIST OF SCHOOLS. Do not collect information for any other school even if it is in the same building or on the same campus.										
Block:	<input style="width: 95%;" type="text"/>	Block ID:	<input style="width: 95%;" type="text"/>							
Village:	<input style="width: 95%;" type="text"/>	Village ID:	<input style="width: 95%;" type="text"/>							
School:	<input style="width: 95%;" type="text"/>	School ID:	<input style="width: 95%;" type="text"/>							
			Date of School Survey:	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 33%; text-align: center;">DD</td> <td style="width: 33%; text-align: center;">MM</td> <td style="width: 33%; text-align: center;">YYYY</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input style="width: 95%;" type="text"/></td> <td><input style="width: 95%;" type="text"/></td> <td><input style="width: 95%;" type="text"/></td> </tr> </table>	DD	MM	YYYY	<input style="width: 95%;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 95%;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 95%;" type="text"/>
DD	MM	YYYY								
<input style="width: 95%;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 95%;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 95%;" type="text"/>								
Surveyor names:			Time of survey							
a. <input style="width: 95%;" type="text"/>			<input style="width: 95%;" type="text"/>							
b. <input style="width: 95%;" type="text"/>										
Respondent Name: <input style="width: 95%;" type="text"/>										
Contact: <input style="width: 95%;" type="text"/>										
Designation:										
<input style="width: 20%; border: none;" type="text"/> <input style="width: 20%; border: none;" type="text"/> <input style="width: 20%; border: none;" type="text"/> <input style="width: 20%; border: none;" type="text"/>										
Appointed/Deputation HM In-charge HM Regular Teacher Para Teacher										
A. GENERAL SCHOOL INFORMATION										
A.1 Is there a road that leads to the school?										
		<input style="width: 40px;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 40px;" type="text"/>							
		Yes	No							
A.2 If yes, What type of road is it?										
		<input style="width: 40px;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 40px;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 40px;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 40px;" type="text"/>					
		Turf/ Cement /	Brick Sealing	Mud	No Road					
A.3 In which year was this school established?										
				<input style="width: 20px;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 20px;" type="text"/>					
				<input style="width: 20px;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 20px;" type="text"/>					
				Write year						
A.4 What is the official Medium of Instruction in the school?										
		<input style="width: 40px;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 40px;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 40px;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 40px;" type="text"/>					
		Hindi	Urdu	English	Other					
B. TEACHERS APPOINTMENT AND ATTENDANCE										
<i>Source: Ask Head Master. If Head Master is unavailable, ask Senior Most Teacher</i>										
Teacher designation	Number appointed (Ask)	Number present (Observe)	Day 1							
B.1 Appointed or Deputation HM	<input style="width: 40px;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 40px;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 40px;" type="text"/>							
B.2 In-charge HM	<input style="width: 40px;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 40px;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 40px;" type="text"/>							
B.3 Regular Teacher	<input style="width: 40px;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 40px;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 40px;" type="text"/>							
B.4 Para teacher	<input style="width: 40px;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 40px;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 40px;" type="text"/>							
B.4 Did you see an attendance register for teachers in the school?										
		<input style="width: 40px;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 40px;" type="text"/>							
		Yes	No							
C. LISTING OF ALL TEACHERS IN SCHOOL										
<i>Source: Ask Head Master. If Head Master is unavailable, ask Senior Most Teacher</i>										
List details for all teachers IN THE SCHOOL . Also include the HM in this list.										

Teacher ID No.	Full Name of the teacher]	Sex	Teacher Type	Subjects taught to Std 2?	Subjects taught to Std 3?	Subjects taught to Std 4?
		1: Male 2: Female	1: Appointed or Deputation HM 2: In-charge HM 3: Regular Teacher 4: Para Teacher	0: None 1: Hindi 2: Math 9: All 77: Other (specify)	0: None 1: Hindi 2: Math 9: All 77: Other (specify)	0: None 1: Hindi 2: Math 9: All 77: Other (specify)
<i>Example</i>	<i>RENU SHARMA</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1, 2</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>0</i>
1						
2						
3						
4						
5						
6						
7						
8						
9						
10						

D. HINDI TEACHERS FOR STD 2, 3 AND 4

Source: Ask Head Master. If Head Master is unavailable, ask Senior Most Teacher

From the above list, select teachers who regularly teach Hindi to Std 2, 3 and 4. If during the field work, the regular Hindi is not available, write down the name and ID of the teacher who would be teaching Hindi to the concerned classes

	Teacher ID	Name	If there is no Hindi teacher currently for this grade, tick in this box
Std 2			
Std 3			
Std 4			

E. SCHOOL MONITORING AND SUPPORT

Source: Head teacher OR seniormost teacher present. Check the relevant register if possible.

Instruction: For each question, tick <u>any one</u> of the options.		In the last week	In the last month	In the last 3 months	In the last 6 months	More than 6 months ago	Never	Don't Know
1	When was the last time the School Management Committee had a meeting?							
2	When was the last time a Cluster Resource official or Block Resource official visited the school?							
3	When was the last time the Block Education Officer visited the school?							

F. LIST OF PROMINENT VILLAGE MEMBERS

Source: Ask the Head Master

S.No.	Name	Institution/post

G. SCHOOL INFRASTRUCTURE AND FACILITIES

Source: Observe yourself and tick accordingly

1 Have textbooks been received for the current academic year for each of the following classes?

	Hindi		Math	
Std 3	Yes	No	Yes	No
Std 4	Yes	No	Yes	No
Std 5	Yes	No	Yes	No

2	Did you see a time table for the school?	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No
3	Is there a set of storybooks that children can take out?	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No
	If yes: did you see any student taking a book?	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No
4	Did you see evidence of students eating a hot cooked midday meal today?	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No
	If no: how many days since MDM was served?	<input type="text"/>		<input type="text"/>	days

Write 999 if Midday Meal has never been served.

Is there a complete boundary wall?

Yes No

6	
---	--

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No
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Is there any arrangement for drinking water?

Yes No

6	
---	--

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No
--------------------------	-----	--------------------------	----

If yes: could you drink water?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------

a. How many pukka rooms are being used for teaching today?

Note: exclude washrooms

7	
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b. How many pukka rooms are closed or being used for other purposes?

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Did you see the Mid-Day meal menu displayed anywhere in the school?

Yes No

8	
---	--

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No
--------------------------	-----	--------------------------	----

Is there an electricity connection in the school?

Yes No

9	
---	--

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No
--------------------------	-----	--------------------------	----

If yes: was there electricity during your visit?

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No
--------------------------	-----	--------------------------	----

10 What toilet facilities are available in the school?

	Is there a toilet?		If yes, was it locked?		If unlocked, was it usable?	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Common toilet	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Girls' toilet	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Boys' toilet	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Teachers' toilet	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>