

# **UNDERSTANDING THE PERCEPTIONS AND PRACTICES OF PRIVATE SCHOOL TEACHERS IN THE INTEGRATION OF EMPATHY IN CLASSROOMS**

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By

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A thesis submitted to Brac Institute of Educational Development in partial  
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Science in Early Childhood Development

Brac Institute of Educational Development  
Brac University  
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## **Declaration**

It is hereby declared that

1. The thesis submitted is my/our own original work while completing degree at Brac University.
2. The thesis does not contain material previously published or written by a third party, except where this is appropriately cited through full and accurate referencing.
3. The thesis does not contain material which has been accepted, or submitted, for any other degree or diploma at a university or other institution.
4. I/We have acknowledged all main sources of help.

**Student's Full Name & Signature:**

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## Approval

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## **Ethics Statement**

Title of Thesis Topic: Understanding the Perceptions and Practices of Private School Teachers in the Integration of Empathy in Classrooms

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### 1. Source of population

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### 2. Does the study involve (yes, or no)

- a) Physical risk to the subjects
- b) Social risk
- c) Psychological risk to subjects
- d) discomfort to subjects
- e) Invasion of privacy

### 3. Will subjects be clearly informed about (yes or no)

- a) Nature and purpose of the study
- b) Procedures to be followed
- c) Physical risk
- d) Sensitive questions
- e) Benefits to be derived
- f) Right to refuse to participate or to withdraw from the study
- g) Confidential handling of data
- h) Compensation and/or treatment where there are risks or privacy is involved

### 4. Will Signed verbal consent for be required (yes or no)

- a) from study participants
- b) from parents or guardian
- c) Will precautions be taken to protect anonymity of subjects?

### 5. Check documents being submitted herewith to Committee:

- a) Proposal
- b) Consent Form
- c) Questionnaire or interview schedule

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## ABSTRACT

This qualitative study focused on exploring the perceptions of private school teachers about the importance of empathy and to learn about their current practices regarding the integration of empathy in the teaching learning scenario. Empathy is vital for building strong interpersonal relationships and has been tied to positive outcomes in harmony and collaboration, in this era of globalization. In the light of the increase of violence, cruelty and the divide between people, the society as a whole can be characterized as facing an “empathy deficit”. It has become imperative to bring focus on the socio emotional development which in turn will aid in cultivating compassion, altruism and empathy.

As children spend a significant amount of crucial time of their development in school it is vitally important for teachers to know about the importance of empathy and be able to empathize with children and their emotional needs. Children from 2 years of age may have the rudimentary level ability to cognitively interpret; experience and react to the physical and psychological states of others. Moreover, both nature and nurture play a role in shaping individual differences for children’s concern for others. So, it is essential for teachers to have empathy in order to model empathic behavior and to foster empathy.

This qualitative study focused on understanding teachers’ values, beliefs, and language in relation to empathy. It was conducted in 2 private schools in Dhaka. 4 (2 from each school) non participatory classroom observation was conducted and in-depth interview of 2 teachers (1 teacher from each school) was conducted using a semi structured questionnaire, consisting of both convergent and divergent questions. Two major themes and seven subthemes emerged from the data. The two major themes are: (a) teachers’ knowledge and perception of empathy in teaching criticism distorts empathy, and (b) teachers’ expression of empathy in the teaching and learning scenario. Overall, the study found that most teachers showed understanding in knowledge of empathy and expressed varying degrees of empathy for children in the teaching learning scenario. Some teachers despite of having the knowledge cannot take actions to build positive relationships with children. The recommendations derived from this research study suggest that further large-scale study, on-going empathy and special education training for teachers and establishing encouraging and supportive school environment for teachers in regard to integrating empathy in classrooms.

### **Key Words:**

Empathy; rapport; share feelings; emotions; expression; engagement

## **DEDICATION**

I would like to dedicate this thesis to six wonderful people: my friend, Biva, who has been a loving, caring and empathetic friend from the day we became friends; my parents, Shahana Habib and Habibul Islam Bhuiyan who are my anchor and my biggest support system; my husband, Salauddin Tauseef, who has forever supported and believed in me; my mother-in-law, Maleka Surayya Banu ,who whole-heartedly wished that I finish my degree and last but not the least, my son Mikayeel, from whom I learn so much every day, who brings out my strongest self and simply makes everything perfect (almost always).

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## List of Acronyms

BSAF	Bangladesh Shishu Adhikar Forum
IDI	In-depth interview
MI	Multiple intelligences
S1	School 1
S2	School 2
SE	Socio emotional
S1 T1	Teacher 1 of School 1
S2 T1	Teacher 1 of School 2
S1 T2	Teacher 2 of School 1
S2 T2	Teacher 2 of School 2

## **Chapter 1**

### **1.Introduction and Background**

#### **1.1 Introduction**

In the classic novel “To Kill a Mockingbird,” Lee (1960), writing as protagonist Atticus Finch, teaches his daughter that, “You never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view ... until you climb inside of his skin and walk around in it”. Empathy is the power to understand other peoples’ perspectives. It is the ability to walk in another person’s shoes and understand that person’s experience. Empathy is a way of connecting with other people that shows that one understands what another person is going through. Empathy is crucial for connecting individuals, for being non-judgmental, for gaining diverse perspectives and building interpersonal relationships for collaboration and progress in life.

Since children spend a lot of their time in close proximity to teachers, teachers play a crucial role in shaping a child’s life. Children in their early years of development go through major socio-emotional changes where it is hard for them to express themselves or explain their wants and needs. Empathy is a powerful skill that can help teachers better understand students’ behavior and can help them figure out strategies to help the students. Feeling understood and supported is especially important for children to stay motivated, learn about self-awareness, and advocate for themselves.

Empathy—the power to understand others’ perspectives—is an essential skill for all children to master. In order to instill empathy in children it is vital that teachers model empathic behavior and provide a stimulating environment for the children to cultivate the skill. It is not only important for teachers to understand the importance and know the components of empathy but it is imperative for them to respond with empathy, tune into the students’ emotions to show that they truly understand and accept all students.

## **1.2 Statement of the problem**

The ability to empathize is an important part of the socio-emotional development of children as it affects an individual’s behavior toward others and their quality of social relationships. Therefore, it is very important for children to receive empathy and to develop empathy through social relationships and experiences. Teachers play an important role in fostering the intellectual and social development of children during their formative years (Phajane, 2015). Empathic teachers have the ability to foster empathy within their learners. When teachers are being empathetic by paying attention to the children’s cues, responding to individual needs with consistency and positivity, the learning environment is significantly enriched. Moreover, the teachers’ expression of empathy can positively affect children’s emotion regulation skills and can heighten children’s self-motivation and self-efficacy. Empathic teachers have the ability to foster empathy within their learners. Children’s learning can be enriched when the teachers create a caring, supportive, and responsive environment.

Attachment figures are perceived by children as predictable, consistent, empathic and emotionally available. In a classroom, attachment provides feelings of security, so that children can explore freely. Thus, children, especially young children, may seek to form attachment relationships with teachers. (Bergin & Bergin, 2009)

Given the vast importance of empathy in teaching, the study attempts to understand the perceptions held by the teachers of two private schools in Dhaka, regarding the integration of empathy in their classrooms.

### **1.3 Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study was to understand the role of empathy in the teacher-student relationship and classroom scenario. The focus of the study was to explore the private school teachers' perceptions about the importance of empathy and understand how they developed empathic understanding for children and to learn about their current practices regarding the integration of empathy in the teaching learning scenario.

### **1.4 Justification of the Study**

According to Unicef (2013), early years of childhood form the basis of intelligence, personality, social behavior, and capacity to learn and nurture oneself as an adult. Children spend a major amount of time with teachers at school. Teachers play a very crucial part in influencing and shaping children's lives. A positive relationship with a teacher can make an exponential difference in a child's development. An empathic

teacher can create a positive, secure and stimulating environment for children to thrive it.

In the time of changing dynamics in the education sector, it is imperative to explore the perceptions and practices of educators for integrating empathy in the classroom setting. According to Bangladesh Shishu Adhikar Forum (BSAF) between April to June of 2019, incidence of child rape went up by 102% from the previous quarter. Given the alarming rise in child abuse in recent times, it is critical to integrate empathy in teacher-pupil relationships and day-to-day lesson delivery.

The researcher chose teachers of 6-year-old learners as the target population because formal education starts from that age. The teachers' practice of empathy reflected in their manner of providing feedbacks, and how they assessed academic performance. Moreover, due to difficulties in access to public schools, the researcher chose private schools as the study location.

The aforementioned research in the literature in the review, especially in the context of Bangladesh where there are very few pre-existing researches on this, shows that there is a need for further study to explore the knowledge and practices of teachers' regarding integration of empathy in the classroom.

## **1.5 Research Topic, Research Questions and Objectives**

The topic of this research was to explore the teachers' understanding about empathy and to see how teachers express empathy for children in the classroom setting. The following research questions were addressed to fulfill the purpose of this study:

1. What are the teachers' perceptions about teaching with empathy?
2. In what ways do teachers express their empathy in their relationships with young learners?

The following objectives were intended to meet in order to answer the research questions:

3. To explore teachers' understanding about the importance of empathy in teaching.
4. To observe how teachers deal with the students in classroom setting with empathy.

## **1.6 Operational Definitions**

### **Private School:**

Schools wholly owned, funded, and managed by private entities and citizens are called private schools (Cheng & DeLany, 1999).

In the context of this study, private school is a school run and supported by individuals or a corporation and follows government designed as well as school authorized additional curriculum in Bangladesh.

**Empathy:**

“Empathy is the process of understanding a person’s subjective experience by vicariously sharing that experience while maintaining an observant” (Zinn, 1993).

In the context of this study, empathy is the ability of the teacher, a) to feel what the child is feeling, b) to understand what the child is feeling and c) to respond and communicate in a way that helps meet the child’s needs

**Empathic:**

Haynes and Avery's (1979) characterized empathy as the ability to recognize and understand another person's perceptions and feelings, and to accurately convey that understanding through an accepting response.

In the context of this study, being empathic is showing the ability to understand another person’s feeling and perspective and responding to their needs.

**Special needs:**

Children with special health care needs are those who have or are at increased risk for a chronic physical, developmental, behavioral, or emotional condition and who also



require health and related services of a type or amount beyond that required by children generally (McPherson et al., 1998).

In the context of this study, special needs in the education setting describe individuals who require assistance for disabilities that may be medical, mental, or psychological.

**Inclusion:**

Inclusive education refers to a wide range of strategies, activities and processes that seek to make a reality of the universal right to quality, relevant and appropriate education for example, by acknowledging that learning begins at birth and continues throughout life, and includes learning in the home, the community, and in formal, informal and non-formal situations (Stubbs, 2008).

In the context of this study, inclusion is the philosophy of taking every child's needs into consideration, not only children with disabilities, or only children of ethnic diversity or socioeconomic backgrounds, but inclusion of all.

**Different Intelligences:**

The theory of different or multiple intelligences (MI) broadens the traditional view of intelligence as solely composed of verbal/linguistic and logical/mathematical abilities and maintains that all humans have at least eight different intelligences that represent a variety of ways to learn and demonstrate understanding thus paving away of understanding intelligence that teachers can use as a guide for developing classroom

activities that address multiple ways of learning and knowing (Christison & Kennedy,1999).

In the context of this study, Different Intelligences is the theory referring to the ways in which students learn and acquire information. An understanding of which type(s) of intelligence a student possesses can help teachers adjust her intervention style in the classroom.

**Emotion Regulation:**

Emotion regulation refers to changes associated with activated emotions. These include changes in the emotion itself (e.g., changes in intensity, duration) or in other psychological processes (e.g., memory, social interaction) (Cole et al., 2004).

In the context of this study, emotion regulation is the process of management and regulation of emotions in response to stimuli.

**Socio-emotional issues:**

Child socio emotional (SE) development is defined as “the developing capacity of the child from birth through 5 years of age to form close and secure adult and peer relationships; experience, regulate, and express emotions in socially and culturally appropriate ways; and explore the environment and learn—all in the context of family, community, and culture. SE competence facilitates cognitive development and school

readiness, improved school performance, and subsequent lifespan outcomes, such as adult health and employment success (Palmer et al., 2013).

In the context of this study, socio-emotional issues are the factors affecting the integrative process of socio emotional development where children acquire the capacity to comprehend, experience, communicate, and manage emotions and to develop meaningful interpersonal relationships.

**Knowledge:**

In philosophy, knowledge is defined as a “justified true belief” encompassing the truth, belief and justification conditions. Putting together these conditions for knowing, one may conclude that “the necessary and sufficient conditions for knowing that something is the case are first that what one is said to know be true, secondly that one be sure of it, and thirdly that one should have the right to be sure” (Bolisani & Bratianu, 2018).

In the context of this study, knowledge is the accumulated beliefs, facts, information, and skills from one’s experience or education.

**Perceptions:**

The way in which someone regards something; the natural ability to understand or notice something quickly; a view of a phenomenon that is purely subjective (Ahsan, 2012).

In the context of this study, perception is the mental image or the way one views, understands and interprets something.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Literature Review**

The researcher has gone through several literatures in both national and global context to determine what work has already been done on understanding the perceptions and practices of private school teachers in the integration of empathy in classrooms. The literature review has been organized in the following manner:

#### **2.1 Definition of Empathy**

“Empathy is the process of understanding a person’s subjective experience by vicariously sharing that experience while maintaining an observant” (Zinn, 1993). The phenomenon of empathy is essential for interpersonal communication (Decety, 2011). Empathy plays a critical interpersonal and societal role, which enables humans to share experiences, needs and desires and to provide an emotional bridge that promotes pro-social behavior (Riess, 2017). Decety & Jackson (2004) summarized the three components of empathy (affective, cognitive, and response) in the following manner: “For many psychologists, empathy implies at least three different processes: feeling what another person is feeling, knowing what another person is feeling, and having the intention to respond compassionately to another person’s distress”.

Empathy, the power to understand other people’s perspectives and share another person’s feelings is an essential skill. The ability to empathize is critical to human interpersonal relationships. In this era of globalization, where we have significant

exposure to diversity in, its various form, it is imperative to foster empathy in children. In the social context, outside home, in school, we are exposed to rich diversity in forms of race, religion, language, culture, socioeconomic background and different abilities. It is crucial for every field of service to understand the need and work on increasing the empathic ability of its practitioners. The former US president Barack Obama, during his speech to the graduates of Northwestern University, Illinois, had talked about an “empathy deficit” facing their nation. He spoke about the importance of cultivating empathy (Obama, 2006). Researches from the west show that different fields are recognizing and valuing the need for empathy in their practice. Larson & Yao (2005) explored empathy in healthcare in the US and has found that physicians’ empathy with patients leads to more effective healing and more professional satisfaction for the physician. Larson and Yao supported other researchers whose findings indicate that treatment outcomes are improved when empathy is involved (Di Blasi & Kleijnen, 2003; Larson & Yao, 2005). Gerdes & Segal (2011) showed the importance of empathy for social work practitioner and suggested that the clients have “improved outcomes” when they have received empathic treatment. They also found that if social work practitioners themselves are empathic, they are more capable of balancing their roles and are more effective in their work with clients (Gerdes & Segal, 2011).

## **2.2 Role of Empathy in Early Childhood Development**

The ability to empathize is an important part of socio-emotional development of children affecting their behavior toward others and their quality of social relationships.

Social relationships play a pivotal role in human development. Early relationships provide the basis for children's lifelong relationships with adults and with peers. Children may experience the feeling of what another person is feeling i.e. affective empathy, in some form, as early as infancy and toddlerhood. Cognitive empathy is also sometimes referred to as theory of mind or perspective taking, is the ability to accurately imagine another's experience. Children in preschool and early elementary school years show significant gains in the area of cognitive empathy partially because of children's increased language capacities to facilitate empathic reflection as well as to express empathy (McDonald & Messinger, 2010). "The ability to empathize develops with contributions from various biologically and environmentally based factors". (McDonald & Messinger, 2010). Therefore, in order to develop empathy in young children, it is important for them to be in a stimulating and secure environment where they can observe empathic exchanges and also have ample opportunities to engage with others who are empathic.

A very serious problem in school setting, bullying, is an issue which is caused from lack of empathy. Children with low empathy tend to fail to feel the emotions of another person, hence can exhibit violent and cruel behavior towards others. Studies by Nansel and co-authors show that bullying has become a serious problem for the youth of the US and both bullies and victims are at risk for later psychiatric or psychosocial problems as they become adult (Nansel et al., 2001). Bullying is not a problem just in the United States. In Bangladesh, 35% of students aged 13 to 15 years reported being bullied one or

more days in the past 30 days or being involved in a physical fight at least once in 2014, reports Unicef (2018). Empathy may provide a way to help students develop pro-social behavior and reduce bullying (Feshbach & Feshbach, 2009).

### **2.3 Role of Empathic Teachers**

“Teachers play an important role in fostering the intellectual and social development of children during their formative years” (Phajane, 2015). Bronfenbrenner’s bio ecological theory model thoroughly discusses the four layers of environment in which the developing child is engaged. The model shows the context of microsystem to be the most immediate environment that the child is exposed to. It comprises of the child’s primary caregivers/parents, siblings, school & neighborhood. Hence, the model easily identifies the essential role of teachers to be crucial in child development (Learning Theories, 2007).

Children’s socio-emotional, cognitive, linguistic, in other words, their holistic development can be influenced by the environment created by the teacher. Children’s learning can be enriched, and their self-efficacy can be boosted by the caring, supportive, and responsive environment built by the teacher. Acting with empathy can help the teachers better understand the learners and can also help foster empathy within the learners.

Some researches of the west show Early Childhood Education have recognized the need to understand and increase the empathic ability of the teachers. Cooper (2004) explored



empathic teachers as moral models for students in an elementary school in the United Kingdom. The author found that empathy was an implicit part of being a caring, supportive, and responsive teacher. It was also seen that teachers noted the importance of empathy in helping them to become more effective teachers. In the United States, McAllister & Irvine (2002) studied teachers' beliefs regarding empathy and its perceived effectiveness with students from culturally diverse backgrounds. The study confirms the significance of affective issues in learning and the role of empathy in the facilitation of personal, social, moral and academic development.

#### **2.4 Literature Review in the National Context**

With respect to research on empathy in Bangladesh, some work has been done to measure and examine empathy in medical students. For example, arguing that empathy in medical professionals are associated with better patient compliance, satisfaction and clinical outcomes, Mostafa et al. (2014) found empathy scores to be correlated with gender and clinical training in medical college. The role of empathy is also recognized in other sectors. A2i is employing an empathy methodology for innovation where relatively senior government officials are put in citizens' shoes and are forced to navigate public systems without any official privileges. This helps participants identify possible gaps in their own agency's delivery system and innovate solutions to improve the overall quality of services (Chowdhury & Beresford 2017).

In Bangladesh, Dutta, M. et al. (2014) studied teachers' beliefs and attitudes in supporting young children's emotional wellbeing in classroom situation. The study found that classroom was better managed by teachers who were cordial to students compared to teachers who threaten, frighten and beat the students. Expression of empathy and affection of teachers helped children to regulate their emotions in the classroom.

Lady Syeda Sarwat Abed, Founder and Director, BRAC Institute of Languages, during the announcement of launching Bangladesh's first "Empathy Lab", noted that it is imperative to instill cognitive empathy in Bangladeshi children to prepare them to respond quickly and effectively to social challenges, and for everyone to get the freedom, confidence, and social support to drive positive change. (BRAC News, published 27/03/2018).

The purpose of this review was to explore the perceptions and practices of private school teachers in the integration of empathy in classrooms in national and global context. Different definitions of empathy have been discussed. It is clear from the research reviewed that empathy is a vital aspect of teaching and learning. Along with this, it is also clear that the need for teaching and showing empathy to children is getting some recognition in the west. Researches from the west show that apart from education, different fields are also recognizing and valuing the need for empathy in their practice. However, while reviewing literature in the national context, it was found that very few studies have been done on this particular topic. This exploratory study is very

important as the dynamics of the education sector in Bangladesh is changing and it is imperative to explore the perceptions and practices of educators for integrating empathy in the classroom setting.

## **Chapter 3**

### **Research Methodology**

#### **3.1 Study Design**

A qualitative study was conducted as the researcher intends to explore the perception of both Bengali and English medium private school teachers of 6-year-old learners, regarding the integration of empathy in classroom. The two modes of education systems gave the researcher a better scope to see the varied perspectives, knowledge and practices of the teachers in two different school settings.

#### **3.2 Study Setting**

This study was carried out in two schools in Dhaka -an English Medium school and a Bangla Medium school. The researcher purposively selected and observed two teachers of 6-year-old learners from each of the aforementioned schools.

#### **3.3 Study Population**

The study population was teachers of 6-year-old learners in private schools of Dhaka. The researcher chose one English and one Bengali Medium school to see the expression of empathy in two different languages. The researcher had no intention to compare the two mediums of schools.

### **3.4 Sample Size and Sampling Method**

The total sample size of the study was 4 teachers. There were 2 teachers of 6-year-old children each school. The sampling method was non-random and purposive. The schools were selected on the basis of convenience of the researcher.

### **3.5 Data Collection Tools**

In-depth interview (IDI) questionnaire and observation guideline were prepared and used as data collection tool for this qualitative study and prior to data collection was reviewed by expert opinion of the thesis supervisor.

### **3.6 Conceptual Framework of Factors Affecting Empathy**

Empathy cannot be measured; it is a skill or attribute which can either be implicitly or explicitly possessed by a person. Some people may not know the meaning of the word empathy but may be highly empathic. After reviewing numerous relevant researches on the importance of empathy in classroom the researcher identified variables which led her to classify important factors and its association to empathy. The factors are mostly linked with teacher's skills of managing children in different classroom situations. The researcher identified feedback, conflict/problem management, self-regulation, rapport, gender, classroom environment and other socio-emotional issues to be factors which reflect a person's level of empathy. These factors were connected to the data collection tools and analysis of data to get a clearer picture of the teacher's perception of empathy and the expression of empathy in classrooms.

### **3.7 Data Collection Procedure**

For this study qualitative data was collected from two sources: (i) via 4 in-depth interviews (IDI) (2 teachers from each school) to obtain detailed information from respondents; (ii) via 4 non-participant classroom observations (2 observations for each school) of two private schools.

The researcher interviewed 4 teachers to know about their perceptions about integrating empathy in their classroom. The IDI was conducted using a semi structured questionnaire, consisting of both convergent and divergent questions. Note-taking and audio recording was used for collecting data followed by memo writing after collecting the data. To avoid distraction during interview the researcher focused more on memo writing and used a fully charged high quality sound recorder to record the interview. The audio was later transcribed for data analysis.

The researcher conducted 4 non participatory classroom observations (2 from each school) to observe teachers' practice of integrating empathy in the classroom setting. The researcher took field notes where she documented everything seen and heard, the researcher's own reactions, experiences and thoughts during the observation. Field notes was taken with the aid of a *protocol*, an important tool that provides structure for recording information from observation (Gay et. al 2012).

### **3.8 Data Analysis**

The data analysis procedure began from the first interaction with the participants of the research study and from then it was an ongoing process throughout the qualitative study. The collected data was organized sequentially and categorized into two files being IDI and Observation. The data was reviewed and thoroughly read multiple times noting observations and remarks. All the data was immediately backed up electronically. The key points directly corresponding to the research questions were highlighted. The audio data was transcribed, and the memos were written or revisited. The field notes, memos and transcriptions were summarized and repeatedly read to identify themes. Based on the identified themes, perceptions and practices of the respondents were summarized, analyzed, synthesize and interpreted to determine the results.

### **3.9 Ethics**

Email was sent by the researcher to both the school authorities to seek permission with a brief overview of the nature and purpose of the study. After the school authority approved permission and assigned teachers, those teachers were contacted to seek for their consent. The purpose, objective and the nature of the study was explained to the respondents. The researcher answered respondents' queries regarding the study. After taking signed consent from the respondents individually, the procedure of data collection was explained. It was made sure that the respondents' comfort is given priority. The respondents were informed that they have the option to withdraw from research if they feel uncomfortable. They were assured of their confidentiality and

anonymity. It was specifically mentioned that the recorded data or their personal information will not be released outside this study in order to ensure their confidentiality. The researcher maintained professional boundaries with respondents in order to maintain impartiality and professionalism.

### **3.10 Validity and Reliability**

The researcher's extensive literature review and academic her guidance for formulating measurement tools which helped achieve the purpose of the study. The tools were reviewed by experts to test out the validity of tool. Upon revision the researcher had to change a few interview questions in order to make them logically interrelated with the research questions.

The researcher recorded the interviews and then transcribed the data, to avoid missing information. Audio recording and note taking was also done during classroom observations. The researcher carried out note-taking during interviews, discussions and observations which were then transcribed carefully.

The validity of the data was ensured through the collection heavy descriptive data, use of ample citations from the field notes and interview transcripts. The interview questionnaires and observation guidelines were created in alignment to the research objectives and research questions.



### **3.11 Limitations of the Study**

Although all genuine initiatives were taken to conduct this research there were considerable limitations. This study faced difficulty due to shortage of time which limits the flexibility of the researcher. The researcher was limited to only private schools in Dhaka and a small sample size due to shortage of time and lack of access to public school. Schools with varying curriculums and policies could not be chosen due to convenience sampling. The study if conducted in a large scale with larger and diverse sample, the study would have been more comprehensive. However this study would provide some understanding of how teachers perceive empathy and how they integrate empathy in the classrooms.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Results and Discussion**

#### **4.1 Characteristics of the Respondents**

The respondents of School 1 have four years of teaching experience with 6-year-olds. They all have a minimum educational qualification of having a Bachelor's degree. Two of them have a Master's degree. Both the schools have in house trainings which are ongoing. Teachers of both schools did not receive any formal training on how to deal with special children, but the teachers of School 2 collaborate with psychologists from Shishu Bikaash Kendra and use the psychologist's guideline to cater to the special needs children.

#### **4.2 Results**

The researcher conducted her research in one English Medium school and one Bengali Medium school. The purpose of this research was to explore the teachers' understanding about empathy and to see how teachers express empathy for children in the classroom setting. The sole objective of observing two different mediums was to see the expression of empathy in two different languages. She observed one class of 6-year-olds in each school for two consecutive days. The researcher refers the English medium school as School 1(S1) and the Bangla medium school as School 2(S2). She also conducted in depth interviews with two teachers teaching the same class in each school. The researcher refers to the English Medium school teachers as Teacher 1 of School 1

(S1 T1) and Teacher 2 of School 1 (S1 T2). She refers to the Bangla medium school teachers as Teacher 1 of School 2 (S2 T1) and Teacher 2 of School 2(S2 T2). In total four classroom observations were done and four in depth interviews were conducted. The aforementioned tools provided detailed information to understand the perceptions and practices of private school teachers in the integration of empathy in teaching and learning. The data collected was manually organized. The researcher constructed meaning by identifying patterns and themes that emerged from the in-depth interview transcripts, observation transcripts, observation notes and journal. The multistage process of organizing, categorizing, synthesizing and analyzing the data was cycled through a few times to narrow down and make sense of the data. The data that was relevant to the research was organized into the following themes and subthemes.

#### **4.2.1 Teachers' knowledge and perception of empathy in teaching**

It is very important for teachers to have a clear understanding about the emotional well-being of young children. Teachers, who have a fair perception and a clear understanding about children's socio-emotional development, are likely to have either implicit or explicit understanding about empathy. This theme has been analyzed into sub-themes to get a more detailed picture of the teachers' knowledge and perception of empathy in teaching.

#### **4.2.1.1 Teachers' perception of importance empathy in teaching**

Teachers were asked what they think of empathy and their view of its importance in the teaching-learning scenario. All of the teachers agreed that empathy is very important for teaching because it helps teachers build relationships with students and overall makes learning very successful. Teachers of School 2 had to be explained the exact meaning of empathy. In respect to that Teacher 2 of School 2 mentioned,

*"Yes, of course it is very important because it helps to build relationships between students and teacher. And in a case where a child is stuck in a thought or problem and is not be able to focus on anything else if I don't understand his point of view, I will not be able to bring him out of it. Receiving my support will enable him to move forward and that is our objective. If I show empathy to the child, it is something he will carry on later in his life." (Interview 17.09.19, S2T2)*

Teacher 1 of School 1 explained:

*"Empathy is all about understanding what the other person feels. I need to know how the student is feeling so I can treat the student accordingly." (Interview, 09.09.19, S1T1)*

Teacher 2 of School 1 explained:

*"Empathy is when someone can feel for someone. Of course, it is important for us. Empathy and caring are all interrelated so if I don't feel for my students, I can't take care of them." (Interview 17.09.19, S1T2)*

In saying how to cultivate empathy, teachers say that it is something that has to be cultivated since childhood and that it is something children have to be exposed to in

order to have it within them. In saying how to cultivate empathy Teacher 2 of School 2 explained,

*"It depends on what kind of environment I grew up in and with what type of values. So, empathy is something that has to be a part of the teachers' personality it is not something that if someone drinks a potion he will magically have empathy." (Interview 17.09.19, S2T2)*

#### **4.2.1.2 Teachers' goal for their students**

The teachers' goals for their students reflect their expectations from the children and clarify their priorities. It was seen that three out of four teachers had empathic goals for their students. When Teacher 2 of School 1 was asked about goals for her students, her facial expression showed annoyance as she said,

*"My goal? (Laughed out loud) My goal is of course to settle them down! Some of them just don't settle. And I need them to behave in a way that I want them to behave. If they aren't settled, then how can I deliver my speech? Of course, we have annual goals which we have to reach. Of course, we have weekly goals and we have to meet them" (Interview 11.09.19, S1T2).*

The main goal of Teacher 2 of School 1 is to fulfill whatever curricular goals have been set by the school and don't have much input into it. That is why she needs her learners to sit and be quiet while she delivers her lesson.

Teacher 1 from the same school had separated her academic and social-emotional goals for her students where she gave equal importance to both. So, we can see two teachers

of the same school teach under the same philosophy but have separate goals for their learners. She answered,

*"I would say that first of all we have some objectives to meet in terms of education so that would be number one. And in general, to be kind and good human beings because that it is what we really value at the school. And also, to be a happy person" (Interview, 09.09.19, S1 T1)*

Teacher 1 of School 2 said her goal for her students throughout the year is to be there for her students as a companion in the learning process and that she wants her students to enjoy what they are learning and be comfortable to learn at their own pace.

Similarly, the Teacher 2 from School 2 was very excited while sharing his goal. He said,

*"I teach science and the main crux of science is to ask questions, be curious and to be astonished at the wonders of science. I always try to encourage my children to be curious, I create a space for them to ask questions and I want them to find the subject interesting. So, my goal in terms of education-I want my children to be curious and to have fun in my class. When they later come across something that I have taught they get happy and excited to be able to relate to it and then they remember me at that moment of joy that and say "Oh! Bhaiya taught us this!" (Interview 17.09.19, S2T2)*

#### **4.2.1.3 Teachers' attitude towards inclusion**

Teachers who hold inclusion as a philosophy believe in the inclusion of all, not only children with disabilities, or only children of ethnic diversity or socioeconomic

backgrounds, but of all. To analyze this subtheme, I have categorized inclusiveness in the classroom into the following parts:

### **Knowledge on the spectrum of special needs and how to address it**

Teacher 1 from School 2 mentioned their special needs learners' school policy is that during admissions they take three special needs children for every 20 children. They have a guideline from the child psychologist which they follow, and they keep a regular correspondence with the psychologist. The parents also provide them a shadow teacher for assisting the child. She also explained that since they have years of experience in dealing with different types of children they can deal with the rest who are slightly different, maybe are too hyper or have any phobia. For phobic children their first strategy is to make them feel safe and secure and to give them assurance. This shows that teacher has up-to-date and adequate knowledge about special needs and can differentiate between special need children and children who are slightly different from others. Moreover, the regular correspondence with a psychologist for the special need children helps her address their needs.

Teacher 1 from School 1 when asked if she has any children with special needs in her class; how she defines their special needs and how she addresses them, explained,

*"So, we have about 4 or 5 students with special needs. They all have different special needs and we have to treat each of them differently. Another student is a special needs child, but you will not understand that he is because he is actually very advanced, and he will do everything on time and actually really quickly. Sometimes he will have trouble regulating his emotions, so that is a*

*problem. The other student we have is also very similar, he knows everything but just requires extra attention and depending on his mood he will either do his work or will not. Since we have so many special needs students in one class, it becomes challenging for us as teachers. Amongst 12 students I would say that about 5 need extra help. So almost 50% of the total class needs extra help. We try to keep them in a place where the support staff can go and watch all of them together. But then again, it is not always possible, but we still try to do as much as we can."* (Interview, 09.09.19, S1T1)

Teacher 2 from School 1 described special needs as,

*"One special need is that some children have no attention span. They don't even sit for two minutes. Another special need is that someone likes kinesthetic activities or hands-on activities. Some are extremely hyper. These are not learning styles, learning style is different, these are learning difficulties." (Interview 11.09.19 S1 T2)*

Therefore, it is apparent that not all the research participants have the right kind of knowledge on the spectrum of special needs and how to address it. The researcher's journal entry after conducting in depth interviews at School 1 revealed that.

*"The teachers seem to have a gap in knowledge regarding special needs. One teacher during the interview said that they need training on dealing with children with special needs. They have no information about the diagnosis of the children who they are claiming to have special needs. They have not seen the doctors' files or haven't corresponded with the doctors. Another teacher is confusing differing learning styles with special needs. They even feel that having 5 out of 12 "special children" is a very critical issue and that they need more assistance." (Journal 11.09.19)*



Additionally, teachers of both schools said that they help children of special needs by making the classrooms inclusive and help them learn strategies to deal with their emotional outbursts. The following narrative from an interview highlights how the Teacher 1 of School 1 and Teacher 2 of School 2 deal with meltdowns which are more intense and frequent for special needs children.

*"Most of the special needs problems are not academic; they are usually about emotion regulation. So, again we talk to them and take time to find out what is bothering them and why they are doing what they are doing. So, we want to find out what is upsetting someone."  
(Interview, 09.09.19, S1T1)*

Similarly, Teacher 2 of School 2 explained,

*"The special needs children in this class have problems regulating their emotions and most of the times need assistance in carrying out regular activities so they always have shadow teachers with them." (Interview 17.09.19, S2T2)*

### **Knowledge about different intelligences and how to address them**

The research participants possess desirable knowledge on different intelligences and how to address them. One of the participants, Teacher 1 of School 2 shared her knowledge that instead of pressurizing the children they let them learn at their own time and pace. The following data provides some light in this regard:

*"Each child is different. I had a child who had trouble writing but could express everything by drawing. He knew so much! The stories of his drawings were so detailed that we once wrote as*

*he drew and told the story and the story was over two pages! He knew so much but the poor thing had trouble writing. He couldn't write for a long time. Now he can. We waited; we always wait". (Interview17.09.19, S2T1)*

Similarly, Teacher 2 of School 1 says,

*"Sometimes children who are not at the same pace, may be who doesn't like discussions or doesn't want to write or draw I just give them pictures and ask them, and they explain, and I write for them". (Interview 11.09.19, S1T2)*

### **Knowledge on individual preference and how to address them**

Data showed that teachers believed that children have individual preferences and they cater to those preferences. The teachers were respectful and empathic to the child's personal choice. Teacher 2 of School 1 revealed her views as,

*"One super hyper kid he loves cars so I said if you listen to me now, I can give you a car picture and you can colour it." (Interview 11.09.19, S1T2)*

On the other hand, Teacher 1 of School 2 explained,

*"One child has phobia but all he needs is assurance and security. If I give that to him before during and after work, he is just fine." (Interview17.09.19, S2T1)*

The data obtained from the research participants of both schools express the same understanding and concern about children's individual preferences and varying intelligences. However, the gathered data shows that there is lack of knowledge

regarding the different spectrum of special needs. Different learning styles and individual needs are being perceived as special needs.

#### **4.2.1.4 Teachers' understanding of the importance of building rapport with the students**

Teachers, who value building a rapport with each student, successfully build a sense of belonging in the children; they create a friendship with each child and help them learn in their full potential. Reviewed data explored different aspects of teachers' understanding regarding the importance of building rapport with the students. Upon asking how they feel an ideal student- teacher relationship should be everyone said that it should be friendly.

Teacher 2 of School 2 said that the relationship should be of friendship with healthy boundaries. Another teacher expressed herself by saying,

*"I give more importance to relationship building than learning. The child is here to learn, and I am here to build relationships. If I can build trust only then he can comfortably follow my instructions and learn what I am teaching. If I can make the children believe that I am there for them and they get the higher priority it will make everything easy. I feel that we need to give each child individual attention and we need to build a relationship with them! That's the most important part of teaching." (Interview 17.09.19, S2T1)*

The data obtained from in-depth interviews in two schools reflected the views on allowing the children to share their feelings with the teacher in the classroom. The

following quotations from the interviews highlight the participants' opinions in this regard:

Teacher 1 of School 2 mentioned that,

*"For children of this age I have to let them share whatever they are feeling and I have to let them share it instantly because until I give them the scope to share or express they will not be able to concentrate on anything else. What they are trying to say is very important for them".*  
(Interview 17.09.19, S2T1)

Similarly, Teacher 2 of School 2 shared that,

*"I always show curiosity when they share experiences or talk about things which intrigue them. This is my strategy for building a friendly relationship with them. And yes, whenever they want to share feelings in class, I allow them." (Interview 17.09.19, S2T2)*

While the aforementioned participants discussed the importance of allowing children to share their feelings whenever they want to the other participants focused more on the appropriate timing of sharing feelings. The following quotations elaborate these participants' opinions:

Teacher 2 of School 1 said,

*"Yes, of course, I allow but not in the circle time. Then I say, let's not talk about these now. And sometimes it is not the time to talk about those; I have a lot of things planned for the class, so I don't let them talk about their feelings. On days when I have some time, like 5 minutes I let them share their feelings. I especially do this on Sundays." (Interview 11.09.19, S1T2)*

On the other hand, Teacher 1 of the same school explained,

*“Depends on the time. If we are talking about a lesson in a group and they want to just share their personal feelings, we tell them to wait and talk about it when it is not a group discussion. But generally if they are ever upset, we stop whatever we are doing to help them. We can either call the student out or talk in the room. Or they can go into a space, which can be the reading corner or anywhere, and talk there or go out of the class”. (Interview, 09.09.19, S1T1)*

The teachers of School 2 mentioned that they apply physical touch as an expression of affection and find it very useful in building rapport with students. While teachers of School 1 mentioned that there is a no-touch policy in the school. The teachers of the School 2 replied to the issue of touching to show physical affection as follows:

Teacher 1 said,

*“Touching helps in the expression of affection because when I hug a child it is sharing of positive energy. But again, if a child is not comfortable with physical touch then I verbally try to show my affection.” (Interview 17.09.19, S2T2)*

Similarly, Teacher 2 also explained,

*“Yes, physical touch is important to show affection and is specifically important for children who are restless or those who try to disrupt the class”. (Interview 17.09.19, S2T1)*

The English medium school has a no touch-policy, so teachers find other ways to express their affection and build rapport with the learners. They show their affection verbally by saying how happy she is to see the students or through body language such as smiling.

Furthermore, the Teacher 2 of the English Medium School mentions that she tries to be friendly with the children but keeps a limit as it sometimes gets problematic. Her interpretation of the problem is highlighted in her explanation:

*“Over-friendliness can sometimes be a problem. They get over hyper. Like once I wanted to do a language activity via singing and dancing but all of them got over excited and didn’t follow any of my instructions and I couldn’t do my activity. So, I have to be strict and then others also have to suffer.” (Interview 17.09.19, S2T2)*

While the teacher is identifying the aforementioned issue as repercussion of being over friendly; it is actually the lack of classroom management that has led to the disruption of the activity.

#### **4.2.1.5 Teachers’ perceptions about error and feedback**

Teachers were asked about how they give feedback to children and how they try to fix errors children make. Though different teachers provide feedback through different methods everyone agreed that children’s mistakes should not be pointed out, instead their effort or the process of their work should be recognized. They all mentioned that children feel very motivated when given positive feedback. In this context the Teacher 2 of School 2 mentions the school policy and the curriculum guideline has rules for teachers in providing feedback. She elaborates,

*“At the end of the lesson we gather all the work and sometimes they do show and tell, i.e. showing and telling how one did their work and seeing how the others did it and sometimes I give individual feedback. Sometimes few of them don’t do their work properly but we are not*

*allowed to say right or wrong so we say you can do it this way, or this will look nicer." (Interview 11.09.19, S1T2)*

Similarly, Teacher 1 of the same school explains,

*"We don't mention that that's a mistake. We say can you please look at this again, whatever you did is nice, but can you check if there is any way that you can make this better? Sometimes they figure it out themselves but sometimes they cannot, when they cannot I help them." (Interview 11.09.19, S1T1)*

On the note of repeated errors Teacher 2 of School 1 explains that she checks if the children really do understand the concept or not and then explains accordingly on a different time.

*"At first I check if they are doing it on purpose. If they are doing it on purpose then I make them do it again and again until they do it right but if I see that they are not getting it then I stop talking about it at that point and later another day I try to explain the error to them." (Interview 11.09.19, S1T2)*

Whereas the Teacher 1 of the Bangla medium school says that in all probabilities it is not a matter of repeated errors, rather the child has a thinking process behind her output and the teacher accepts the errors as the child's way of thinking. In cases where she sees that a gross error in concept is being made and child is bent on the idea then she calls him or her aside and says,

*"Don't you think this is a little messy? So maybe you have done it this way and I will do it another way and we can keep both". (Interview 17.09.19, S2T1)*

#### **4.2.1.6 Teachers' understanding of emotion regulation**

The researcher explored the teachers' understanding about how children manage their own behavior and emotions and also how the teachers help children regulate their emotions. Teachers have to be aware of their own self-regulation skills so that children can learn from them. And also, it is necessary to be relaxed and emotionally balanced because only when teachers are so, it will help them to be empathic to others' emotions.

Teacher 1 of School 1 showed understanding on how to teach children about self-regulation through videos and role plays and by this encouraged children to talk about their negative feelings like anger and how to regulate them. The following excerpts from the interviews highlight the teachers' understanding on self-regulation.

*"In general, once a week, we have a class about controlling yourself. Let's say, if you're ever angry at someone, what will you do, will you hit them or talk about your feelings or is there something you can do to calm yourself down. So, every week we will find a new topic to discuss, for example one could be about personal space. Another week it could be about controlling your emotions or anger. This week it was conflicts. So, we will watch videos or do activities or do role plays so they learn how to regulate themselves." (Interview, 09.09.19, S1T1)*

And also, both teachers of the Bangla and English medium school mentioned that when children have outbursts they talk to the child and look for ways to calm him/ her down.

When asked about teachers' self-care and how that affects their attitude in the class Teacher 1 of School 1 and Teacher 2 of School 2 mentioned that they travel, eat and



sleep well to stay fit, emotionally and mentally. They asserted that their emotional wellbeing is directly linked to their performance as teachers. One of the teachers mentioned that he needs to be in a “happy place” mentally in order to build a good relationship with his students. Teacher 2 of the English medium school said that she doesn’t need to do anything because she likes coming to school and that keeps her well.

When researcher asked what they do during school hours if they are upset. Teacher 1 of the Bangla medium school said when she is not feeling well emotionally, she mentions that to her students at the beginning of the class and asks for their help to cope. That in turn models for students on how to communicate bad feelings instead of lashing out. Teacher 2 of the same school mentioned that he shuffles classes around by talking to his colleagues so that he can collect himself in the free period and then take class. Teacher 1 of the English medium school said that the school routine allows for enough breaks where she can take a minute and compose herself. Both these cases tell the researcher that the school allows for this kind of flexibility that helps teachers stay relaxed and balanced.

#### **4.2.1.7 Teacher’s perception about other social-emotional issues in the teaching-learning scenario**

When asked about critical issue Teacher 2 of School 1 mentioned that when children get super hyper it “becomes very difficult to manage them” On the other hand Teacher 1 of School 2 said that the conflicts and resolving the emotional reasons causing the conflict is one of the critical issues. She emphasized that the teacher needs to deal such

issues with an open mind and think from the children's point of view during their intervention.

In terms of conflict both teachers of the Bangla medium school and Teacher 1 of English medium school had mentioned that they intervene when students are unable to solve conflict on their own and try to act as neutral as possible.

*"They will obviously get into conflicts, it's natural. I intervene and act as a mediator. For major conflicts which involve physical fights, we have to involve our supervisors and school authority."*

*(Interview 17.09.19, S2T2)*

Teacher 1 of school 2 also mentions an effective strategy that helps when solving a problem related to children (conflict). She asks for the other children's opinion on how to solve it and her experience has said that taking majority's consensus usually helps students to solve conflicts. On the aspect of bullying, all teachers have said that the learners of this age group usually have conflicts on an equal ground rather than one child dominating or creating the conflict. But on top of that teachers have mentioned that both the schools have a zero-tolerance policy for bullying.

The data gathered show that on gender equality, all teachers have agreed that there are no separate activities or measures for boys or girls. They believed that boys and girls are equal and that it is not necessary to see either of their personalities or skills unique to a specific gender.

## **4.2.2 Teachers' expression of empathy in the teaching and learning scenario**

As important as it is to have a clear perception and knowledge about empathy and/or factors affecting empathy it is equally important that the teachers know how to express empathy. This theme has been analyzed into sub-themes to get a more detailed picture of how teachers integrate empathy in teaching.

### **4.2.2.1 Reflection of empathy in the classroom environment**

The data gathered and analyzed show the reflection of high level of empathy in the classroom environment of School 2. The children were laughing and talking before the teacher entered the classroom and when the teacher entered, they greeted her with smiles. They seemed very comfortable with the teacher and the teacher also looked very happy and at ease. The meet and greet lasted five minutes and the teacher gradually settled them in. The children were allowed to sit however they wanted to.

During an activity on day 1 observation of School 2 the teacher was helping children construct the dialogues of a play and let them choose their roles. The children were sharing opinions about how some scenes should be like. The teacher took the children's opinions into consideration and discussed further with the other students to take their perspectives into account. In both the observation days at this school it was seen that the teacher let the children be however they want to be. Some children got lost in thoughts or played with their stationery or even fell asleep, but they soon started paying attention to the teacher. She did not scold them or discipline them for drifting off

sometimes. The teacher on both the days of classroom observation was seen to give the children a signal five minutes before the class ended so that they could wrap up their work and settle down.

On the other hand the data obtained shows that the School 1 the teacher on both the days tried to create a comfortable environment by turning on some music as the children worked. The children came in from another class. The teacher greeted them. Some of them greeted back and some didn't. The teacher's interactions were instruction heavy and two-way communication was not frequent. The children seemed very tired. The children did not have the option to choose their seats or put any of their opinions during the lesson. Although the teacher was not rude, she did not have happy or friendly expression either. She had numbers set for them where they are supposed to sit. There was no flexibility in seating arrangement. During class time she keeps reminding learners of the rules and tries to bring their attention back to class by reminding them of the classroom rules.

*"So, let's get back to what we have to do. Please let me talk. Remember what the rules are? If you want to talk raise your hand and wait. Raise your hand if you want to speak." (Classroom Observation," School 1, 09.09.19)*

#### **4.2.2.2 Teachers' approach in achieving their goal in the teaching-learning scenario**

Both teachers were seen to focus a lot and spend significant time of the class hours on settling the students. Teacher of School 1 was seen to constantly remind learners of the class rules about raising hands or doing what they are told. She also uses kind words like thank you so as to model to the learners on how to show politeness or kindness.

Some of the interactions of the teacher with learners who were "not listening to her" or to get his attentions are as follows:

*"Razdan, let's go! Can you follow me? Do you think you can follow me? Thank you! (After Razdan follows her instruction) Can you please sit down? Razdan, I am speaking with you please listen to me." (Classroom Observation, School 1, 11.09.19)*

The teacher was also seen to achieve her goal as to control her emotions and be patient even in disruptive scenarios as she does not scream or raise her voice at them but just says that the students must have forgotten the rules to remind them of the rules. The learners being settled and attentive are placed at highest priority because the teacher has some objectives according to her lesson plan and they need to be met within a certain amount of time.

Teacher of School 2 also starts the class by settling the children at first and the teacher has to take measures to make sure the learners are not becoming too disruptive. Researcher notes that there is no rush in the teacher to complete a set of class

activities. She is very gentle with them even though some children start to get rowdy. Students talk amongst themselves and the teacher reminds them to be quiet. She says the following things a few times throughout the class to quiet the children down and settled:

*"Let's not all make noise please. Now everyone please sit down, I want to see everyone sit down. Sit up straight everyone. Now, whomever will be able to sit down quietly will be given some tasks." (Classroom Observation, School 2, 17.09.19)*

But she also lets the students be how they wanted to be and gave them freedom to do what they wanted but she made sure her activity was fun and engaging so that even if learners got distracted with something of their own they came back to the main activity going on in class. When one of the students had fallen asleep while listening to the story the teacher let him be. She also completely ignored those students who are distracted. Even so, the students then come back into attention hence the method of ignoring them worked to the teachers' benefit. The teacher was also enthusiastic in explaining games to the learners and asks the students to raise their hands if they have any questions. She calls out some students to repeat her instructions after she is done giving them. She also says things make the learners feel engaged and important in the class activity by saying:

*"Okay I will write it first and you all can help me and see if I'm doing it correctly." (Classroom Observation, School 2, 04.09.19)*

When the teacher reviews a story that was read in a previous class it was seen that most of the learners couldn't remember what the story was, and the teacher took it in stride and said:

*"Okay everyone now listen to the story carefully. This is because many of you may have forgotten or might not remember the exact story line." (Classroom Observation, School 2, 17.09.19)*

These examples show that the teachers take the time to explain to the learners why she is giving certain instructions. This in turn helps learners to understand the logic behind the instruction instead of just blindly doing it.

#### **4.2.2.3 Teachers' implementation of inclusion in the classroom**

The children with special needs in School 2 had individual shadow teachers and it was seen that they were unable to carry out any task without the help of the shadow teacher. The shadow teacher was completely focused to the assigned special needs children. In School 1 there was one support staff helping out and acting as an aide to the teacher but, in general, the children could carry out regular tasks by themselves.

The class teachers in both the schools were seen giving individual attention to the children, they went over to the learners while they were doing activities to help children and talked to them individually. The following quotations also show how the teachers also took into consideration the different pace, intelligences and learning styles of the children.

Teacher of School 2 was seen telling the children,

*“Let’s have everyone’s attention! Now I will read out the text again and those who have not yet found the words can find the words and mark them on your books. Those who are still having difficulty in writing down the proper spelling of the word please look at the board and you can copy if you want” (Classroom Observation, School 2, 17.09.19)*

Teacher of School 1 reassured her students by saying,

*“It’s okay if you cannot finish today. You can do it tomorrow as well.” (Classroom Observation, School 1, 09.09.19)*

*“I mean if you want you can draw pictures instead of writing the words. (Classroom Observation, School 1, 11.09.19)*

#### **4.2.2.4 Teachers’ strategies of building rapport with learners**

The teacher of School 2 had very expressive facial expressions when she conducted the classes. When she showed excitement her eyes gleamed, she made her eyes big when she was surprised; she leaned forward and raised her eyebrows when she showed curiosity to the children’s statements. Her expressions were especially exaggerated so that young children can easily understand her and reciprocate accordingly. On the other hand the teacher of School 1 said very positive and empathic things like *“Great job!”* or *“I love what you are doing!”* or *“Are you having any problem?”* But her facial expression remained the same all throughout the class. She hardly smiled or showed curiosity when the children spoke, and her tone of voice remained same all the time.



The teacher of School 2 seemed to have a great rapport with her class. She addressed the children as “*Babu/ Baba,*” and the teacher is referred to as “*Apumoni*” (which is the standard address for female teachers in School 2). She accepted hugs and made the children laugh with her jokes. If she wanted a child to stop an action, she made very casual statements, for example,

*“A lot of you bite your pencil like it is a lollipop, don’t do this.”(Classroom Observation, School 2, 04.09.19)*

Also, when a student screams out very loudly in the middle of the class the teacher does not scream at him/her but only calmly asks that what the reason was for the scream. The teacher was seen using positive physical contact. The students seemed to have a very easy access to the teacher. A girl from another section came to this class and the teacher touched her cheek and asked what the student needed.

The rapport between the students and teacher of school 1 was unclear. The children looked bored, tired and did not engage much with the teacher but during the activities the students did not hesitate to ask for help. The teacher attended every child and helped them. She was in a hurry to complete all the activities she had planned and was focused on giving instructions.

#### **4.2.2.5 Teachers' strategies of providing feedback**

Teacher of School 1 gave lots of positive feedback when children “were following the rules” set in the class. And she used them as a model to tell other students that they should behave like those students too. The following quote reflects her philosophy,

*“I like that Rehan was following the rules, he went back right to this spot right after washing his hands and Ashia is being super quiet and patient, I really like that. And Aslam too, great job! I like that Ashia and Aslam are sitting crisscross.” (Classroom Observation, School 1, 09.09.19)*

*Aron that looks amazing! How can I help you? Yes, I like that! Can you write the date please? (Observation 11.09.19, S1T1)*

Teacher of School 2 congratulates some students on their efforts and then goes on to appreciating the class as a whole. Both these strategies are common to teachers of both schools. She is also careful to comment on the child’s work process and focus less on the product which can be seen in the following speech:

*“Oh, wow you did amazing! I really like that you are putting so much effort into your work. You are working very hard. I like that very much.” (Classroom Observation, School 2, 04.09.19)*

Similarly, the teacher of School 1 also appreciated her students by saying,

*“Wow see she is already done writing! Very good. You all are doing well, you know everything.” (Classroom Observation, School 1, 11.09.19)*

The facial expressions and gestures, of teacher of School 2, like a little jump and claps while giving feedback is what makes her different from School 1 teacher who has not been seen to use much body language when conveying her emotions to the children.

The teacher of School 1 also adopts the technique of consulting students on how to solve problems that others are having and encourages learners to work in groups because *“it (exercise or activity) can get a little difficult”*.

In cases where a learner made errors in a class activity the teachers in both the schools were careful not to point out their mistake but work around it, to help the child see the correction. The teachers were accepting of the child’s point of view. Following interaction between learner and teacher of School 1 noted by the researcher shows the interpretation:

*“Aron (learner) wrote one word in all capital letters and the teacher asked him to write the first letter capital and the rest in lowercase but he said that he wanted to keep it that way and then she said that “Okay, that’s fine if you want to keep it that way. Can you just make one more for me? One for you, one for me.” And then the learner wrote his name again with the first letter capital and the rest in small case.” (Journal 11.09.19, S1T1)*

#### **4.2.2.6 Teachers’ strategies of emotional regulation for self and learner**

In School 1 teacher was careful to tend to learners who needed help in emotion regulation and was seen to be empathic to their feelings also. A specific incident when a child was crying the teacher stopped the class and went up to the child and asked her

various questions like, *“Are you feeling sick? Is something bothering you? Can I help you in any way?”* Then the child shows that she got hurt and she said that she is feeling sad thinking about it. The teacher says that she is sorry that she got hurt but the wound looks healed and that she had done a great job keeping it clean. In another case when a boy started making loud sounds the teacher did not acknowledge and went about classes as usual and the other students were seen to follow suit; later the child stopped on their own then. When asked about it later the teacher mentioned that the child has a habit of making these sudden sounds in the class and at first when she used to ask him about it, he was seen to become more disruptive so she adopted the strategy of not paying attention to it and he would self-soothe.

On day 2 of classroom observation of School 1 the teacher was seen to do breathing exercise with learners before starting the class and this was done to help the students with the transition of a new class and it also helped some learners to calm down. The teacher was also seen to take deep breaths and time off to compose herself on day 2 when the class was becoming a little noisy. Later, she said that 3 teachers were absent on that day and she was very stressed about the situation. This shows a channel of honest communication between learners and teachers so that everyone knows why the teacher wasn't behaving as her usual cheerful self. Additionally, she also shared with the students that she was feeling very overwhelmed and that she would appreciate their help, which also modeled to the learners that it is always better to share problems and ask for help. A point to note here which portrayed matured empathy on the learner's

part, is that a child asked the teacher if the situation was something be worried about or if she was feeling sick, in turn the teacher explained that she has a lot of work pressure today and that she is feeling tensed. During the lesson the teacher was also seen taking small breaths to catch a break and help in her emotion regulation.

On day 1 observation of the same class, whenever the class was becoming very noisy and a few students were causing severe disruptions during the lesson the teacher's empathic responses were quick and spontaneous but on day 2 she took time to compose herself and formulate non-angry responses.

Also, on day 2 observation of School 2, a specific incident happened when one child got extremely upset when he heard ambulance sirens from outside. The class teacher and the shadow teacher were seen attending him. The shadow teacher hugged the child tight swaying back and forth and was whispering soothing words to his ears and the class teacher was also stroking his hair explaining why the ambulance needed to keep the siren on. She also closed the balcony door so that the sound would bother him less and the child was seen to calm down gradually.

The teacher was also seen to adopt another strategy to calm the children down. When they were getting quite noisy and disruptive, she asked them loudly but calmly whether the classroom door needed to be closed so that other classes are not disturbed by their noise or whether the students will eventually quiet down by themselves. This reminded

them that they were being noisy and that this noise is disturbing for others and after hearing learners were seen to quiet down gradually by themselves.

#### **4.2.2.7 Teachers' strategies of dealing with other social-emotional issues in the teaching- learning scenario**

The teachers of both schools use various strategies to manage conflict between learners such as acknowledging both sides of the conflict and not belittling anyone's issues. But they also make sure to call out when a learner's behavior is hurtful or can be considered to be rude. In that aspect, teacher of School 1 called out a learner's behavior by at first praising everyone on being able to complete the puzzle but later mentioned that the learner who lashed out by throwing the puzzle pieces on the floor because he did not want to share did not make a "strong choice". The following was her speech:

*"You guys did an amazing job. But at the end we did something that wasn't a strong choice, some of us. Misuri are you supposed to talk like that? Rowan can you tell me what went wrong? Were we being too rough with the puzzles? Were we good with our belongings? Aren't we all superheroes, so was that the right thing to do?" (Classroom Observation, School 1, 09.09.19)*

Teachers were also seen to ask questions to learners when they were unwanted behavior with their peers like taking their food way, snatching their pencil, pinching a classmate, etc. This helped the child to reflect on their behavior and finally seen to avoid these kinds of behavior throughout the class period. Teacher of School 1 asked "Aslam did I see something that wasn't so kind?" (Classroom Observation, School 1, 11.09.19) and then tells him not to do it anymore and continues with the class activity.

Researcher also noted that the teachers of both schools were consciously gender neutral in their speech and behavior and also used examples from lesson materials to represent that. When a learner (boy) of School 2 mentions to the teacher about how a girl cannot catch a jackal the teacher takes the time to explain to him that surely a girl is just as capable as a boy to catch a jackal. The boy blinked at the teacher and his expression indicated that he was thinking deep.

### **4.3 Discussion**

The research findings indicate that most teachers showed understanding in knowledge of empathy and expressed some degree of empathy for children in the teaching learning scenario. Most of the teachers had a positive understanding about children's individual preferences and had a positive attitude towards children with special needs. Teachers also realized the need of an amiable relationship with the children in order to enhance any teaching-learning scenario. Upon further analysis of the findings, the researcher's interpretation of the results has been discussed, divided into the following themes.

#### **4.3.1 Teachers' perceptions about teaching with empathy**

The researcher analyzed the data and interpreted that, teachers who naturally and continually made kind and positive statements about children in the teaching-learning context held a *clear* view/knowledge about empathy. The Oxford Online Dictionary defines the term *clear* as a) easy to perceive, understand, or interpret; b) leaving no doubt; obvious or unambiguous. On the other hand, the teachers whose responses and

dealings with learners varied in terms of positivity, forethought and affection were considered to lack knowledge regarding empathy. Empathy was the key factor which set the two groups of teachers apart.

It was seen that, for both of the teachers of School 2 , empathy was a part of their nature and despite of not knowing the exact meaning of the word, the skill was embedded in them, which was reflected in their caring and responsive attitude towards children. For example, Teacher 2 perceives the empathy to be the foundation of building relationships. He mentioned that if he is unable to understand a child's point of view, he will never be able to be responsive to the child's needs.

Similarly, his goal for his students was also empathic. He wants to instill curiosity in his students and create a learning environment where children can ask boundless questions. This is a reflection of his awareness of the endless potential of a child's mind, which if tapped into with empathy and care, can bring about an opportunity for life-long learning. This perception correlates with an objective for preprimary education by the 'National education policy 2010' which states that, *"Before the children begin their formal education, we need to create an environment conducive to the growth of the universal human dispositions like the senses of endless wonder, infinite curiosity, joy and inexhaustible fervor that reside in the deep recesses of the infantile psyche. And this environment will prepare the children mentally and physically."* It also shows that this teacher has clear individualized goals for his learners which are separate from the school curriculum. His goal reflected Krathwohl's (1973) affective domain of learning



which is concerned with feelings, values, enthusiasm or excitement concerned with learning. Moreover, this teacher said that he often talks to his students outside class and believes that showing curiosity in the children's stories or talking about their areas of interest helps build rapport. Decety and Jackson (2004) also discussed how conversations create scopes for people to share experiences and feelings and thus aids in development of empathy. Analyzing all the aforementioned findings the researchers interpreted that this teacher had a clear understanding of the importance of empathy in teaching and learning and it was constantly portrayed in all of the responses.

The teachers of School 2 provided responses which were aligned to one another thus showed clarity in their views. On the contrary, the teachers of School 1 provided responses which were not aligned to each other and portrayed discrepancies in their views. For example, Teacher 2 of School 1 defined empathy as the ability to feel for someone and said that it is very important in teaching. She asserted the importance of empathy by saying that empathy and caring are interrelated, so if she doesn't have empathy she cannot care for her students. Despite of showing a clear knowledge of the term empathy, there were certain philosophies of this teacher which showed lack of empathy. She said that she only lets children share their feeling on Sundays as most of the times she has a lot of things planned for the class and it's not the time to talk about feelings then. The analyzed data shows that the teacher does not encourage social interactions as it obstructs her curricular plans and she is not taking the children's perspective into consideration either. Empathy is the attribute and/or skill that enable

teachers to understand, feel, communicate and to respond to the needs of the children. As Goleman (1995) stated, *“For all rapport, the root of caring, stems from emotional attunement, from the capacity for empathy”* (p. 96). Contradictory responses such as the aforementioned show that the teacher may know the definition of the word empathy but there is a lacking in her overall perception of empathy.

When asked about the teachers’ self-care and how that affects their attitude in the class, the teachers who had clear views of empathy and alignment in their responses, mentioned that they travel, eat and sleep well to stay fit, emotionally and mentally. They emphasized the importance of having a relaxed and balanced life as it is directly linked to their performance as teachers. Jordan & Schwartz (2018) also emphasized the importance of self-care and self-empathy for own wellbeing and noted that such practice models for students to understand that failures and disconnections are part of being human. Teacher 2 of School 1, on the other hand, said that she doesn’t need additional self-care as spending time with her students is therapeutic for her but on the contrary when asked about her goals for her students; which she considers to be a barrier for curricular goals of the day.

Teacher 1 of the School 2 also showed high level of empathy and held distinct views about her understanding of empathy and the factors affecting it. She described her goal for her students as being their companion in the learning process. This teacher held inclusion as a philosophy and showed high level of knowledge on the spectrum of special needs. She believed that each child is different and said that she tries to cater to

individual differences and abilities. Her perception shows similarity in view with a research done by Stojiljković et al. (2012) where they claimed that empathy is an important personal capacity for an effective teacher. In order to carry out their roles successfully, it is vital for the teachers to understand the individual ways that students think, learn and interact. The teacher's responses in this study reflect her nonjudgmental views regarding children and their abilities and show that she is highly empathic. The alignment in her knowledge and the spontaneity in her answers reflected clarity in the perception of empathy.

The researcher found that School 1 teachers showed lack of knowledge regarding the special needs. The researcher reviewed some literature to clarify the definitions of *special needs, different intelligences and learning styles*. According to Willingham, Daniel T, (2015) *Learning Style* is one's own unique way or technique of processing information. There are many theories competed and contested, a common concept is that individuals differ in how they learn. Howard Gardner (1983) theorizes that people do not have just an intellectual capacity, but have many kinds of intelligence, including musical, interpersonal, spatial-visual, and linguistic intelligences. The theory of *different intelligences* considers the full range of abilities and talents that people possess. According to the Merriam Webster online dictionary, *special needs* is defined as any of various difficulties (such as a physical, emotional, behavioral, or learning disability or impairment) that causes an individual to require additional or specialized services or accommodations (such as in education or recreation). In the context of this study it was

seen that both the teachers of the English medium school showed lack of knowledge regarding the special needs. What they described as special need was more of a difference in learning styles and differing intelligences.

### **4.3.2 Expression of Genuine Empathy**

The analysis and interpretation of the findings led the researcher to coin the term “*genuine empathy*”. Oxford Learners Dictionary clarified the definition of the term genuine as a) real; exactly what it appears to be; not artificial and b) sincere and honest; that can be trusted. As previously mentioned in the operational definition, empathy in the context of this study, is the ability of the teacher, a) to feel what the child is feeling, b) to understand what the child is feeling and c) to respond and communicate in a way that helps meet the child’s needs. Both, empathic and non-empathic statements emerged in response to the first research question- What are the teachers’ perceptions about teaching with empathy? Similarly, both empathic and non-empathic response was seen while addressing the second research question, “*In what ways do teachers express their empathy in teaching and learning?*” The theme expression of *genuine* empathy emerged from the responses and actions of the teachers who expressed sincere intentions to understand the children and their point of view, showed clear views and knowledge about empathy and the factors affecting empathy. The teachers who express *genuine* empathy not only have a clear understanding about the importance empathy but their response to the children in various contexts also reflects empathy.

Teachers who are truly empathic focus more on the students, their feelings, their current state and their problems, rather than the academic objectives. Teacher 1 of the School 2, who showed a clear perception of empathy, also expressed genuine empathy in the classroom setting. The children were very comfortable around her and they shared feelings and opinions without any fear but rather with confidence. According to Light & Zahn-Waxler (2012) the ability to empathize with someone else is not only limited only to feelings of distress or negative emotions. They said that empathy extends to positive emotions as well. Similarly, this teacher was also seen taking great excitement in hearing the stories that her students had to share and was seen sharing jokes with them. The teacher, in every step took the children's opinions and choice into account; showed respect and affection to the children and kept all their needs into consideration. This reflects her belief that building a relationship with the children is more important for learning rather than just fulfilling academic goals, which is also mentioned as an objective for preprimary education by the 'National Education Policy 2010'- *"Teaching will be conducted in a pleasant environment characterized by love and care in appreciation of children's spontaneous vigor, spirit and their natural inquisitive faculties and curiosity."*The teacher's facial expression and gestures and her honest way of explaining the cause of her distress to the children showed that not only did she have a clear perception of empathy but also expressed *genuine* empathy. There was a clear alignment in her perception and practice of empathy.

Teacher 1 of School 1 made many empathic statements but alignment in perception and practice was only found in her empathic way of giving feedback. This teacher had ample knowledge about empathy but in the classroom, it was seen that she was more focused on meeting the curricular goals. The children at other times looked bored, sleepy and detached in the classroom but during the activities the children were very eager to ask for help. The teacher gave each child attention individually and provided empathic feedback. She was very calm and happily answered all the queries of the children regarding the activities. She was also seen praising the children for putting effort and cheered for their little achievements in work. This practice of hers shows similarity with the findings of a study done by Dutta, M, et al. (2014) where they found that the teachers were aware of the fact that children expect recognition and want to be appreciated by their teachers. Moreover, Teacher 1, while sharing her views on the importance of empathy, said that she thinks empathy is all about understanding what the other person feels. She also mentioned that she needs to know how the student is feeling so that she can treat the student accordingly. On the contrary, when asked if she let the children share their feelings in class, she said that it depends on the time. She said that, during the lesson, she usually asks the children to wait to share their feelings till it is discussion time. In practice, it was seen that the teacher barely gave the children any opportunity to share their feelings. Whenever they raised their hands, she kept reminding learners of the rules and tried to bring their attention back to the class by reminding them of the classroom rules. Dutta, M, et al (2014) also observed in their study that students wanted to share a lot of things in the classroom but sometimes the

teachers were not willing to listen to the kids and sometimes they stopped them abruptly which again we can see an alignment in both researches. This teacher also has an empathic goal for her students but in practice it was seen that meeting educational objectives was her primary goal. She was focused on finishing all the activities that was scheduled for the class and in the process of achieving her goal she was not being able to be responsive to the children's emotional needs. She also believed that student teacher relationship should be comfortable and friendly, but her lack of facial expression and positive body language created awkwardness in her communication with her students. Once again research findings were found to be similar to the study done by Dutta, M, et al. (2014) where they said that, *"most of the teachers are well aware of the core areas of emotional development such as: giving positive feedback, effective class management, gender issues, promoting creativity, friendliness. However, in terms of implementation, the teachers are far behind from their pre-conceived knowledge."* The researcher found the same discrepancy in her findings from School 1.

On the other hand, the teacher of School 2 had very expressive facial expressions and she exaggerated her expressions so that young children can easily understand her and reciprocate accordingly. This shows that the teachers who express *genuine* empathy do not have any discrepancies in their perception and practice. They not only have a clear understanding about the importance of empathy but their communication and response to the children also reflects empathy. Some teachers despite of having the proper knowledge regarding importance of empathy, is not being able to bring it to practice.

It can be concluded from this study that some teachers intuitively knew that empathy creates a positive teaching-learning environment and practiced it spontaneously because they were aware of the effects it had on the learners' social emotional development and how it helps to build rapport. Some teachers conceptually knew what empathy was and how it affects teaching-learning because of their school policy but a discrepancy was noticed in their interactions with the learners. The teachers' ability to empathize with children was evident in how they responded to the needs of the children and in the case of one school it seemed that the focus subconsciously was on the academic need primarily.

#### **4.4 Conclusion**

The study was conducted to explore the private school teachers' perceptions about the importance of empathy and to learn about their current practices regarding the integration of empathy in the teaching learning scenario. The study reflected that most teachers have knowledge on the importance of empathy in the teaching learning scenario. The results of the study obtained through exploration and interpretation of different observation and interviews concluded that some teachers despite of having the knowledge cannot take actions to build positive relationships with children. It was observed that teachers prioritize children's academic attainment over their emotional needs. Overall it was seen most teachers practice giving constructive and positive feedback to encourage children to reach their academic goals. However, it was noticed that there is a gap between teacher's belief and understanding and classroom practice.



The study suggested further development and accumulation of knowledge which can be achieved through the implementation of some key recommendations as per this study. Moreover, intensive large-scale research needs to be done in the area of teachers' understanding of empathy and their practice of empathy in the classroom. If teachers are empathic they can identify learners' individual needs, styles and preferences, it will help the children realize their unique potentials and help them grow into adults with high self-esteem and a lifelong curiosity to learn.

#### **4.5 Recommendations**

The research expects to understand the private school teachers' perceptions about the importance of empathy and their current practices regarding teaching with empathy, and learn what measures could be taken to ensure integration of empathy in classrooms. From the findings, the researcher felt that the following recommendations will help enhance the teachers' understanding of empathy and which in turn will help to incorporate empathy in the teaching-learning scenario:

1. A nationwide teachers' survey to learn about the integration of empathy in the classroom could be undertaken to provide a clearer picture of what is being practiced across the country.
2. A key step for school authority is to create an encouraging and supportive school environment for teachers. The school management should build and sustain platforms for teachers to focus on their self-care. The teachers should have

access to facilities for physical exercise, counseling sessions and classes on mindfulness meditation. A number of studies have explored how mindfulness and meditation can support compassionate and empathetic thinking and doing in the classroom (Fuertes & Wayland, 2015; Hartel, Nguyen, & Guzik, 2017).

3. Some teachers have the basic understanding of empathy, yet they do not express it in their interactions with children. Therefore, rigorous and frequent trainings are required for them so that they can learn to express empathy towards their learners and address their needs. Moreover, the study also revealed that empathic teachers thought that empathy was a part of their nature, there is further scope for developing teachers' competence in this field. According to Decety and Jackson (2004), empathy is hardwired in our brains and, through interactions with others, it develops. Researchers believe that empathy can be learned and that it is possible to train or enhance empathy (Feshbach & Feshbach, 2009). In the light of that the researcher also felt that training programs for teachers are required to increase teacher's understanding of empathy and to be empathic to children's needs.
4. Monthly parent-teacher meetings and regular informal sharing sessions will create platforms for parent teacher interactions and partnerships. Effective communication between teachers and parents can promote teacher's interest and knowledge regarding children's overall needs which in turn will help them to deal with the child with greater empathy.

5. The school policy and curriculum planning should have the option for teachers to have their flexibility and freedom to make spontaneous changes in the classroom setting as required. This will help the teachers to address and manage the needs of the children more empathetically.
6. Schools should collaborate with institutes who provide courses and on-going training on special education. Ideas in education are always evolving and changing, and because of this, there is always something new to learn. Moreover knowledge and training in special education will help teachers build confidence in their ability and skills to meet the individual challenges that they will encounter in classrooms having student/s with diverse needs.

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## ANNEX -1.

### Consent Letter

August 25, 2019  
xxxx  
Academic Supervisor  
xxxxx  
Dhaka

**Subject: Permission for a non-participatory classroom observation and interview of teachers**

Dear Ms xxxx,  
Hope this email finds you well. I am Mehtaz Islam Salauddin, a student of MSc in Early Childhood Development at BIED, BRAC U.

As part of a Masters program at BRAC University, I am required to conduct a study and write a thesis based on the findings of the study. For my thesis, I aim to understand the perception and practices of private school teachers, who teach 6-year-olds, in their classrooms. The findings of the research will help understand the current practices in delivery of curriculum in classrooms, and help improve and innovate new methods for future applications.

I am writing to you to request for an opportunity to observe one KG II classroom of your school and conduct an interview of two KG II teachers. If granted the permission, I will conduct three (same class, three days) non-participatory classroom observations and one interview each for two KG II teachers.

I assure you that, strict confidentiality will be maintained and the name of the school will not be revealed in the report.

I shall remain grateful if you could please grant me the permission to conduct the proposed observation and interview to support conducting my research.

Thank you.

Yours sincerely,

Mehtaz Islam Salauddin



## **ANNEX -2.**

### **INFORMED CONSENT FORM**

**Name of Investigator:** Mehtaz Islam Salauddin

This is a short research study. Please take your time to read the document and decide if you would like to participate in this study. Please feel free to ask questions at any time.

#### **INTRODUCTION**

As part of a Masters program at BRAC University, I am required to conduct a study and write a thesis based on the findings of the study. For my thesis, I aim to understand the perception and practices of private school teachers, who teach 6-year-olds, in their classrooms. The findings of the research will help understand the current practices in delivery of curriculum in classrooms, and help improve and innovate new methods for future applications. You are being requested to participate in this study because you are a teacher of 6-year-olds in a primary school.

#### **DESCRIPTION OF PROCEDURES**

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be interviewed about your experiences in the classroom with your students. We value your opinion and there is no right or wrong answer to the questions asked in the interview. The interview is expected to last about 90 minutes. We will conduct the interview in the school premises at a time which is convenient for you. The interview will be audio taped with the researcher's phone recorder. The recordings will be stored as a highly confidential file and will not be shared with elsewhere. The researcher may contact you further for clarifying information if necessary.

#### **RISKS**

This study will not involve any risks. If you are uncomfortable responding to a question, you may choose not to answer. If you would like to stop participating at any time, you have the right to do that.

#### **BENEFITS**

If you decide to participate in this study there may be no direct benefit to you. It is hoped that the researcher will do a further large scale study in the national context where the information obtained from this study will benefit society by helping us understand

#### **PARTICIPATION RIGHTS**

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary and you may refuse to participate or leave the study at any time.

**CONFIDENTIALITY**

Records indentifying participants will be kept confidential and will not be made publicly available. Anonymity and confidentiality of respondents will be made through the use of pseudo names.

Information collected for this study is for the thesis paper of the researcher. The researcher is pursuing MSc Program in Early Childhood Development at BRAC Institute of Educational Development at BRAC University (BIED BRACU). As part of the program, each student requires conducting a study on a specified topic and writes a thesis based on the findings. Therefore the data collected will be shared with the teachers at BIED, BRAC U. BIED, BRAC U maintains the confidentiality of research data to ensure that research is don e in ethical and legal way and the participants are treated fairly. By signing this consent form, you give the researcher the permission to use and share the information provided, within the limits described above.

**QUESTIONS OR PROBLEMS**

For any questions or problems you can directly email the researcher at  
mehtaz.salauddin@gmail.com



**PARTICIPANT SIGNATURE**

Your signature indicates that you voluntarily agree to participate in this study, that the study has been explained to you, that you have been given time to read this document and that your questions(if any) have been satisfactorily answered. You will receive a copy of the signed and dated informed consent prior to your participation in this study.

Participant’s  
Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Participant’s                      Signature:                      \_\_\_\_\_                      Date  
\_\_\_\_\_

**INVESTIGATOR SIGNATURE**

I certify that the participant has been given adequate time to read and learn about the study and all of their questions have been answered. It is in my opinion that the participant understands the purpose and the procedure that will be followed in this study and has voluntarily agreed to participate.

Investigator’s Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## ANNEX – 3

### Data Collection Tools

Keeping the following research questions and objectives in mind the data collection tools will be prepared.

#### **Research Questions**

- What are the teachers' perceptions about teaching with empathy?
- In what ways do teachers express their empathy in teaching and learning?

#### **Research Objectives**

- To explore teachers' understanding about the importance of empathy in teaching.
- To observe how teachers deal with the students in classroom setting with empathy.

### Teacher's In-depth Interview Guideline

#### **Classroom Environment**

##### ***Objectives:***

- *To understand the classroom environment*
- *To see the teacher's attitude towards students*

##### **Questions**

- Tell me about your classroom
- What is your biggest goal for your students throughout the year?
- Can you identify different intelligences amongst your classroom? If yes, how do you cater to them?

#### **Friendliness**

##### ***Objectives:***

- *To understand the teacher's rapport with students*

##### **Questions**

- What type of a relationship should a student and a teacher have?
- What factors help you be friendly with your students?
- Describe the times it is difficult for you to be friendly in class

#### **Self-Regulation and Control**

##### ***Objectives:***

- *To see how the teacher responds to a meltdown*
- *To understand how the teacher aids children's self-regulation skills*

##### **Questions**

- How do your students manage their own behavior and emotions?
- Please describe the way/s in which you have helped a child regulate his/her behavior and/or emotion while s/he was having a meltdown.
- Do you think the cultures and the values of the students and their families influence how your students regulate their behavior and emotions?

- When you are in discomfort, physical or emotional how do you regulate your emotions?

### **Feedback**

#### **Objectives:**

- *To know the tone and words of empathy used in positive feedback*
- *To understand the teacher's perception about repeated errors*

#### **Questions**

- What words do you usually use while pointing out mistakes?
- How do you feel and react when a student makes the same errors repeatedly?
- What do you think about positive feedback?
- How do your students react when they receive positive feedback? Give one specific example

### **Conflict Management**

#### **Objectives:**

- *To understand the strategy/ies the teacher uses for conflict management*
- *To see if the teacher's own distress plays a role in her conflict management*

#### **Questions**

- When students get into conflicts do you intervene to resolve the issue?
  - If yes, what tone of language do you use during the intervention?

### **Bullying**

#### **Objectives:**

- *To understand the teacher's perception about bullying*
- *To know the teacher's practices in managing bullying in classroom*

#### **Questions**

- Do you witness your students getting bullied? If yes, do you intervene?
- How does the student share that s/he is getting bullied?
- How do you manage the victim of bullying?
- What measures do you take against the bullies?

### **Expression of affection**

#### **Objectives:**

- *To understand the teacher's expression of affection towards her students*

#### **Questions**

- How do your students react when you express your affection towards them (maybe give them a hug or a pat on the back)? Please share an example.
- Do you think your expression of affection has any impact on the child's overall emotional development? If yes, how?

### **Gender**

#### **Objectives:**

- *To understand the teacher's perception about gender differences*
- *To know how the teacher's perception about gender differences affect her classroom management strategies.*

#### **Questions**

- Are there any activities which you specifically choose for boys? If yes, why? If not, why not?
- What different techniques do you have for the management of girls and boys?

**Empathy:**

**Questions**

- What is the definition of empathy to you? Do you think it's important for teachers to be empathic? Could you please explain in detail with your own experience?
- What, specifically, has helped you develop empathy for the children you work with?
- How, if at all, do you think being empathic helps students' academic performance?
- How can empathy be cultivated in children?

**Others**

- Do you think your own emotional wellbeing has any effect on your level of empathy?
- How do you deal with students who need additional help in following instructions?
- What are the most critical/ sensitive issues/factors that you feel are difficult to manage? What do you do in such cases?
- What kind of help do you feel would be helpful in this regard?

**Suggestion**

- Is there anything you think I am missing out on empathy?
- Would you like to say something more about empathy in teaching and learning?

# Classroom Observation Guideline

## Classroom Environment

1. What is the reaction of the students when the teacher enters the class?
2. What expressions did the teacher have when she entered the class? Mention both verbal and non verbal cues.
3. How long did the meet and greet last? Did the teacher ask the students how their day was coming along? Were the students' responses short or elaborate?
4. How does the teacher address the students?
5. Does she do any warmup activity or jumps straight in academic work?

## Friendliness

1. How is the teacher's facial expression during the lesson delivery?
2. How does she react when a child causes a disruption during the class?
3. Does the teacher have a good rapport with her class?
4. Does the teacher express affection towards the students?

## Self-Regulation and Control

1. Is the teacher seen to help any child regulate their behavior? If yes, how?
2. Does the teacher have control over her emotions?
3. Can the teacher stay calm in stressful situations?
4. How does the teacher model self-regulation skills?

## Feedback

1. What words does the teacher use to point out errors?
2. How does the teacher address repeated errors?
3. Does the teacher give individual feedback?
4. How does the teacher give feedback to each student in front of the whole class?
5. What are the reactions of the students to the teacher's feedback?
6. Does the teacher use positive physical contact (hug/pat on the back/ ruffling hair) while giving positive feedback?

## Conflict/Problem Management<sup>1</sup>

1. What is the teacher's immediate response to conflicts/problems?
2. Is the teacher bringing in her own emotions while dealing with children's problems/conflicts?
3. Is the teacher quick in jumping into judgments?

## Gender

1. Does the teacher show any gender bias?
2. What activities do the teacher conduct which allows boys and girls to work together?

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<sup>1</sup>By "problem" the researcher means, any activity/behavior which disrupts the delivery of lesson.

**Empathy**

1. Does the teacher's delivery of the lesson reflect empathy?
2. Does the teacher work on the individual needs of each student?
3. How does the teacher deal with students who need additional help in following instructions for class work and homework?
4. How does the teacher stay calm while dealing with students? Especially in situations where she needs to show empathy?
5. Does the teacher's understanding of empathy reflect in her classroom practices?