ACCESS, PARTICIPATION AND DIVERSITY AMONG LEARNERS IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS OF KERALA

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By

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2026

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the work presented in the thesis entitled "**ACCESS, PARTICIPATION AND DIVERSITY AMONG LEARNERS IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS OF KERALA**" is based on the original work done by me under the guidance of **Dr. A. Hameed**, Professor, Department of Education, University of Calicut and has not been included in any other thesis submitted previously for the award of any Degree, Diploma, Title or Recognition before. The contents of the thesis are undergone plagiarism check using iThenticate software at C.H.M.K. Library, University of Calicut, and the similarity index found within the permissible limit. I also declare that the thesis is free from AI generated contents.

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Date: 12.08.2026

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the thesis entitled "**ACCESS, PARTICIPATION AND DIVERSITY AMONG LEARNERS IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS OF KERALA**" is an authentic record of research work carried out by **Mr. Abdunnasar N.**, for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Education of University of Calicut, under my supervision and guidance and that no part thereof has been presented before for any degree, Diploma or Associateship in any other university.

Calicut University
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Abstract of the Thesis

Access, Participation and Diversity among Learners in Primary Schools of Kerala

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Education plays an important role in promoting equality, social justice, and unity in a diverse society like India. Schools are the first formal institutions where children from different socio-cultural, religious, and economic backgrounds come together and learn to live in harmony. In recent years, concerns about increasing private unaided schools and related issues have been raised by many social critics like Soman Kadalur and others, which may lead to cultural compartmentalisation and reduce interaction among students from different socio-cultural and religious backgrounds. Therefore, the present study was undertaken to examine the extent of access, participation, and socio-cultural and religious diversity among learners in different types of schools in Kerala.

Several educational reforms and programmes have been implemented to improve the quality of school facilities in Kerala. The ASER report (2024) shows that enrolment among childrenaged 6-14 remains above 98% in Kerala. But disparities are still reported in infrastructural facilities, curricular and co-curricular opportunities, and inclusion of diverse practices. Since the primary level is an important stage for social development, the study was carried out to understand how far schools in Kerala provide access, encourage participation, and give students opportunities to experience socio-cultural and religious diversity through their practices and programmes. Therefore, a systematic study on access, participation, and diversity in primary schools in Kerala is necessary to understand the existing situation and to suggest measures for improvement.

Objectives:

- To examine the extent of students' access to facilities, programmes, and practices across different types of primary schools in Kerala.
- To explore the extent of students' participation in terms of students' satisfaction in the use of school facilities, engagement in curricular activities, and participation in co-curricular programmes in different types of primary schools in Kerala.
- To explore the nature and extent of socio-cultural and religious diversity in different types of primary schools in Kerala, in terms of physical representation, school practices, and school programmes.

Methodology: The study adopted a mixed-methods research strategy. Aconvergent parallel mixed-method designwas used for Objectives 1 and 2 (students' access and participation), and an embedded multiple-case study design was used for Objective 3 to analyse diversity in selected schools. The study was conducted in two phases. For Objective 1, 838 students; for Objective 2,847 students**;** and 18 teachers were selected using the stratified random sampling technique. For Objective 3 (case study on diversity), five schools from Malappuram and Kozhikode districts were selected, and the participants included 5 headmasters, 10 teachers, 32 students, and 11 parents. Student questionnaires, semi-structured interview schedules, information blank, document analysis schedules, observation schedules, and focus group

discussion guide were used to collect data. Percentage analysis and thematic analysis techniques were used.

Summary of Findings:

- Upper Primary schools in Kerala differ substantially in student access, participation, and socio-cultural and religious diversity practices, and these variations are closely associated with school management types.
- Government schools consistently performed well in infrastructural provision and diversity representation, although they continued to face operational challenges.
- Aided schools consistently underperformed across all domains, except academics, highlighting deep-rooted systemic challenges in infrastructure, pedagogy, management, and inclusivity.
- Unaided schools, despite offering good infrastructure and structured academics, face difficulties in students' access, participation, and diversity.
- Case 3 (Hindu management) and Case 4 (Muslim management) showed less socio-cultural and religious diversity, as most students belonged to the same community, and programmes and practices are exclusively addressing specific communities.
- Case 5 (Christian management) showed comparatively better diversity among students, in programmes and practices.
- In Cases 3 and 4, some school practices and programmes reflected the management culture**,** while in Case 5 the programmes were more inclusive and allowed wider participation.

Educational Implications:

- Schools should consciously promote inclusive and secular school culture by ensuring equal participation of students from different backgrounds in all school activities.
- Government and aided schools should be provided with better infrastructure, learning resources, and programme facilities
- Unaided and religious management schools should adopt more open admission practices and inclusive programmes to improve interaction among students from different communities.
- School activities, celebrations, and clubs should include different cultural, linguistic, and religious elements to help students develop tolerance, cooperation, and social understanding.
- Educational authorities should ensure regular monitoring of access, participation, and diversity in schoolsto maintain equality and social balance in the schooling system

Religion, caste, culture, and other diversity elements are living realities of our country. The presence of diversity alone is not enough; meaningful participation, inclusive programmes, and secular school culture are necessary to create a truly pluralistic school environment. Many schools, while providing strong academic programmes, remain religiously homogeneous and offer limited opportunities for students to interact with diversity. This highlights the need for all schools, especially private institutions, to move beyond academic focus and actively create learning spaces that reflect the inclusive and secular spirit of Kerala's social fabric.

പ്രബന്ധസംഗ്രഹം

കേരളത്തിലെ പ്രൈമറി വിദ്യാലയങ്ങളിലെ വിദ്യാർത്ഥികൾക്ക് ലഭ്യമായ അവസരങ്ങളും പങ്കാളിത്തവും വൈവിധ്യങ്ങളും

അബ്ലു നാസർ എൻ.
ഗവേഷക വിദ്യാർത്ഥി

പ്രൊഫ. (ഡോ.) എ. ഹമീദ്
മാർഗദർശകൻ

ആമുഖം

ഇന്ത്യയുടെ വൈവിധ്യമാർന്ന സമൂഹത്തിൽ സമത്വം, സാമൂഹ്യനീതി, ഐക്യം എന്നിവ പ്രോത്സാഹിപ്പിക്കുന്നതിൽ വിദ്യാഭ്യാസത്തിന്റെ പങ്ക് വളരെ വലുതാണ്. വ്യത്യസ്ത പശ്ചാത്തലങ്ങളിൽ വളർന്ന് വരുന്ന വിദ്യാർത്ഥികൾക്ക് ഇടകലർന്ന് ജീവിക്കാൻ ലഭിക്കുന്ന ആദ്യ ഔപചാരിക അവസരമാണ് പ്രാഥമിക വിദ്യാലയങ്ങൾ. കേരളത്തിൽ വളർന്ന് വരുന്ന സ്വകാര്യ വിദ്യാലയങ്ങളെയും അനുബന്ധ പ്രശ്നങ്ങളെയും സോമൻ കടലൂർ പോലുള്ള നിരീക്ഷകർ ആശങ്കയോടെയാണ് നോക്കികാണുന്നത്. മതകീയവും സാമൂഹികവുമായി ഒറ്റ തിരിഞ്ഞുള്ള പുതിയ വിദ്യാഭ്യാസ പ്രവണത പരസ്പരം ഇടകലർന്ന് ജീവിക്കാനുള്ള വിദ്യാർത്ഥികളുടെ അവസരം നിഷേധിക്കുകയും അതുവഴി പരസ്പരധാരണയില്ലാത്ത ഒരു സമൂഹത്തിന് വഴിവെക്കാനുമുള്ള സാധ്യത കൂടുതലാണ്. ഈ പശ്ചാത്തലത്തിൽ കേരളത്തിലെ പ്രൈമറി വിദ്യാലയങ്ങളിലെ വിദ്യാർത്ഥികൾക്ക് ലഭ്യമായ അവസരങ്ങൾ, പങ്കാളിത്തം, സാമൂഹികവും, സാംസ്കാരികവും, മതപരവുമായ വൈവിധ്യം എന്നിവയുടെ വ്യാപ്തി പരിശോധിക്കുകയാണ് ഈ ഗവേഷണ പഠനത്തിന്റെ പ്രാധാന ലക്ഷ്യം.

ഗവേഷണ പ്രസക്തി

കേരളത്തിലെ വിദ്യാലയങ്ങളുടെ വിദ്യാഭ്യാസ നിലവാരവും സൗകര്യങ്ങളും മെച്ചപ്പെടുത്തുന്നതിനായി നിരവധി പദ്ധതികളും പ്രവർത്തനങ്ങളും നടപ്പാക്കിയിട്ടുണ്ട്. ASER റിപ്പോർട്ട് (2024) പ്രകാരം 6-14 വയസ്സ് പ്രായമുള്ള കുട്ടികളുടെ അഡ്മിഷൻ നിരക്ക് കേരളത്തിൽ 98 ശതമാനത്തിലും കൂടുതലാണ്. എന്നാൽ അടിസ്ഥാന സൗകര്യങ്ങൾ, പാഠ്യ പാഠ്യേതര അവസരങ്ങൾ തുടങ്ങിയ പല മേഖലകളിലും വിവിധതരം വിദ്യാലയങ്ങൾ വ്യത്യസ്തത പുലർത്തുന്നു എന്ന് പഠനങ്ങൾ സൂചിപ്പിക്കുന്നു. പാഠ്യ-പാഠ്യേതര പ്രവർത്തനങ്ങളിലൂടെയും മറ്റും സമൂഹത്തിലെ വൈവിധ്യമാർന്ന മത, സാംസ്കാരിക സാമൂഹിക സത്യങ്ങളെ അനുഭവിച്ചറിയുക എന്നത് വിദ്യാഭ്യാസത്തിന്റെ ഒരു പ്രധാന ലക്ഷ്യമാണ്. ഈ കാഴ്ചപ്പാടിൽ കേരളത്തിലെ പ്രൈമറി വിദ്യാലയങ്ങളിലെ പാഠ്യ-പാഠ്യേതര പ്രവർത്തനങ്ങളെ ആസ്പദമാക്കിയുള്ള സമഗ്രമായ ഈ പഠനം കൂടുതൽ പ്രാധാന്യമർഹിക്കുന്നു.

പഠനലക്ഷ്യങ്ങൾ

കേരളത്തിലെ വിവിധതരം പ്രൈമറി വിദ്യാലയങ്ങളിലെ വിദ്യാർത്ഥികൾക്ക് വ്യത്യസ്ത മത, സാംസ്കാരിക സാമൂഹിക വൈവിധ്യങ്ങളെ പരിചയപ്പെടാൻ സ്കൂളുകളിലെ പാഠ്യ-പാഠ്യേതര പ്രവർത്തനങ്ങളിലൂടെ അവസരമുണ്ടോ എന്ന് പരിശോധിക്കലാണ് ഈ പഠനത്തിന്റെ മുഖ്യ ലക്ഷ്യം. വിദ്യാർത്ഥികൾക്ക് ലഭ്യമായ അവസരങ്ങൾ, വിവിധ പാഠ്യ-പാഠ്യേതര പ്രവർത്തനങ്ങളിലെ വിദ്യാർത്ഥി പങ്കാളിത്തം, പാഠ്യ-പാഠ്യേതര പ്രവർത്തനങ്ങളിലെയും മറ്റും വൈവിധ്യങ്ങളെ പരിചയ പ്പെടാൻ ലഭ്യമായ അവസരങ്ങൾ എന്നിവ അനുബന്ധ ലക്ഷ്യങ്ങളായി ഈ പഠനം പരിഗണിക്കുന്നു.

രീതി ശാസ്ത്രം

മിശ്ര രീതിയിലുള്ള (Mixed method) പഠന രീതിയാണ് ഗവേഷണത്തിനായി ഉപയോഗിച്ചി ട്ടുള്ളത്. 1, 2 ഗവേഷണ ലക്ഷ്യങ്ങൾ പഠന വിധേയമാക്കാനായി യഥാവിധി 838, 847 അപ്പർ പ്രൈമറി വിദ്യാർത്ഥികളിൽ നിന്നും സർവ്വേയിലൂടെ പ്രാഥമിക ദത്തം സ്വീകരിച്ച് വിശകലനം നടത്തി വിദ്യാലയ നിരീക്ഷണത്തിലൂടെയും അധ്യാപകരമായുള്ള അഭിമുഖത്തിലൂടെയും സമാഹരിച്ച വിവരങ്ങൾ അടിസ്ഥാ നപ്പെടുത്തി പ്രാഥമിക ഈ കണ്ടെത്തലുകളെ ഉറപ്പിക്കുകയും ചെയ്തു. ലക്ഷ്യം 3 പഠന വിധേയമാക്കാൻ

വേണ്ടി മലപ്പുറം കോഴിക്കോട് ജില്ലകളിൽ നിന്നും മാനദണ്ഡങ്ങൾക്കു വിധേയമായി തെരഞ്ഞെടുത്ത 5 വിവിധ തരം വിദ്യാലയങ്ങളിലെ അധ്യാപകർ, വിദ്യാർത്ഥികൾ, പ്രധാന അധ്യാപകർ എന്നിവരിൽ നിന്നും ദത്തം സ്വീകരിച്ച് വിഷയാധിഷ്ഠിത വിശകലനം നടത്തി.

പ്രധാന കണ്ടെത്തലുകൾ

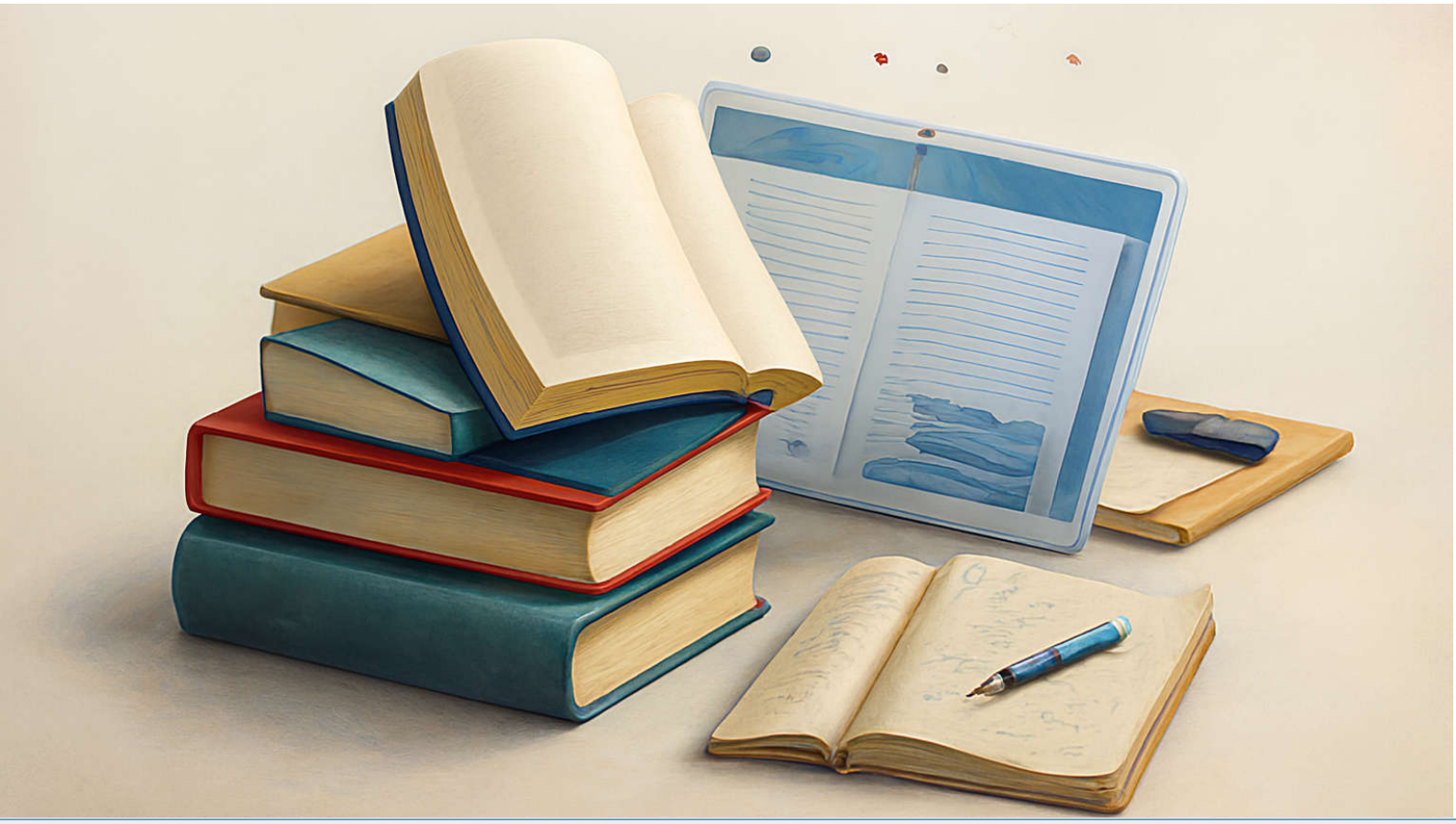
- കേരളത്തിലെ പ്രൈമറി സ്കൂളുകളിലെ വിദ്യാർത്ഥികൾക്ക് ലഭ്യമായ അവസരങ്ങൾ, പങ്കാളിത്തം, മത, സാമൂഹിക, സാംസ്കാരിക വൈവിധ്യങ്ങൾ പരിചയപ്പെടാനുള്ള സാഹചര്യങ്ങൾ എന്നിവയിൽ വിവിധ വിദ്യാലയങ്ങൾക്കിടയിൽ വലിയ വ്യത്യാസങ്ങൾ നില നിൽക്കുന്നു. വിദ്യാലയ മാനേജ്മെന്റ് തരം ഇവയെ ബാധിക്കുന്നതായി ബോധ്യപ്പെടുന്നു.
- സർക്കാർ വിദ്യാലയങ്ങൾ അടിസ്ഥാന സൗകര്യമൊരുക്കുന്നതിലും വൈവിധ്യങ്ങളെ പരിചയ പ്പെടാനുള്ള സാഹചര്യമൊരുക്കുന്നതിലും ഏറെ മുന്നിട്ട് നിൽക്കുമ്പോഴും സാങ്കേതികമായ പല പ്രശ്നങ്ങളും സ്കൂൾ പ്രവർത്തനങ്ങളെ ബാധിക്കുന്നു.
- എയ്ഡഡ് വിദ്യാലയങ്ങളുടെ പ്രവർത്തനങ്ങൾ ഏറെ ആശങ്കാ ജനകമാണ്. പരിമിതമായ അടിസ്ഥാന സൗകര്യങ്ങൾ, അധ്യാപകരുടെ തെറ്റായ സമീപനങ്ങൾ, അനാവശ്യമായ മാനേജ്മെൻറ് ഇടപെടലുകൾ തുടങ്ങി വിവിധ പ്രശ്നങ്ങൾ വിദ്യാർത്ഥകളുടെ പഠന സാഹചര്യങ്ങളെ ദോഷകരമായി ബാധിക്കുന്നു.
- സ്വകാര്യ സ്കൂളുകൾ ഭൗതിക സാഹചര്യങ്ങളിലും അക്കാദമിക സംവിധാനങ്ങളിലും മുന്നിട്ട് നിൽക്കുമ്പോഴും വിവിധ പാഠ്യേതര പ്രവർത്തനങ്ങളിലുള്ള അവസരം, വിദ്യാർത്ഥി പങ്കാളിത്തം, വൈവിധ്യങ്ങൾ പരിചയപ്പെടാനുള്ള സാഹചര്യം എന്നിവ ഒരുക്കുന്നതിൽ ഏറെ പിന്നിട്ടു നിൽക്കുന്നു
- ഹിന്ദു മാനേജ്മെന്റ് (കേസ് 3) മുസ്ലിം മാനേജ്മെന്റ് (കേസ് 4) സ്കൂളുകളിൽ സാമൂഹ്യ സാംസ്കാരിക മതപരമായ വൈവിധ്യങ്ങളെ പരിചയപ്പെടാനുള്ള അവസരങ്ങൾ വളരെ പരിമിതമാണ്. വിദ്യാർത്ഥികൾ ഒരേ വിഭാഗത്തിൽ നിന്നുള്ളവരും പരിപാടികളും പ്രവർത്തനങ്ങളും പ്രത്യേക സാമൂഹ്യ വിഭാഗത്തെ പ്രതിനിധാനം ചെയ്യുന്നതുമാണ്.
- ക്രിസ്ത്യൻ മാനേജ്മെന്റ് സ്കൂൾ (കേസ് 5) താരതമ്യേനെ കൂടുതൽ വൈവിധ്യങ്ങളെ ഉൾക്കൊള്ളുന്നതും, പരിപാടികൾ കൂടുതൽ ബഹുസ്വര സ്വഭാവം പ്രതിഫലിപ്പിക്കുന്നതുമാണ്.

ഉപസംഹാരം

മതം, ജാതി, സംസ്കാരം തുടങ്ങിയ ഘടകങ്ങൾ നമ്മുടെ സമൂഹത്തിൽ നിലനിൽക്കുന്ന യാഥാർഥ്യങ്ങൾ ആണ്. ഈ വൈവിധ്യങ്ങളെ ബഹുമാനിക്കുകയും അംഗീകരിക്കുകയും ചെയ്യുന്ന ഒരു സമൂഹത്തിന്റെ രൂപീകരണം വിദ്യാഭ്യാസത്തിന്റെ പ്രധാന ലക്ഷ്യമാണ്. ഈ വൈവിദ്ധ്യ ഘടകങ്ങളുടെ കേവല സാന്നിധ്യം എന്നതിനപ്പുറം അവയെ അനുഭവിക്കാനും പരിചയപ്പെടാനുമുള്ള വേദിയായി വിദ്യാലയങ്ങളെ പരിഗണിക്കേണ്ടിയിരിക്കുന്നു. പല വിദ്യാലയങ്ങളും ഉയർന്ന അക്കാദമിക നിലവാരവും പ്രവർത്തനങ്ങളും ഉറപ്പ് വരുത്തുമ്പോഴും സാമൂഹികവും സാംസ്കാരികവുമായി ഒറ്റപ്പെട്ട് നിൽക്കുകയും വൈവിധ്യങ്ങളെ പരിചയപ്പെടാനുള്ള അവസരം ഒരുക്കുന്നതിൽ പരാജയപ്പെടുകയും ചെയ്യുന്നു. ഇത് നിലവിലുള്ള കേരളത്തിന്റെ സൗഹാർദ്ദപരമായ സാമൂഹ്യാന്തരീക്ഷത്തെ സംരക്ഷിക്കുന്നതിന് തടസ്സം സൃഷ്ടിക്കുന്നതും ഭാവിയിൽ വലിയ അസഹിഷ്ണുതയിലേക്കു നയിക്കാൻ ഏറെ സാധ്യതയുള്ളതുമാണ്. അറിഞ്ഞോ അറിയാതെയോ രക്ഷിതാക്കളും, അധ്യാപകരും, മാനേജ്മെന്റും അതിന് വഴി ഒരുക്കുന്നു എന്നത് ഏറെ ഗൗരവത്തോടെ തിരിച്ചറിയേണ്ടിയിരിക്കുന്നു. ആയതിനാൽ എല്ലാ വിദ്യാലയങ്ങളും, പ്രത്യേകിച്ച് സ്വകാര്യ സ്ഥാപനങ്ങൾ, ആക്കാദമിക നേട്ടങ്ങളിൽ മാത്രം ശ്രദ്ധ ചെലുത്തുന്നതിനപ്പുറം മതനിരപേക്ഷവും, ബഹുസ്വരവുമായ പഠനാന്തരീക്ഷം സൃഷ്ടിക്കാൻ പ്രത്യേകം ശ്രദ്ധിക്കേണ്ടതുണ്ട്.

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION



- Introduction
- Need and Significance of the Study
- Statement of the Problem
- Definition of Key Terms
- Research Questions
- Objectives of the Study
- Scope of the Study
- Delimitations of the Study
- Structure of the Research Report

Education is an instrument of socialisation that shapes the personality, concepts, and social behaviour of the younger generation. It has an important role in transmitting culture, developing a sense of respect, and creating mutual understanding and thus upholding unity in diversity, the great value our country has perceived for centuries. As Freud (1900) observed, early experiences have more influence on a person's development and personality. Thus, education plays a formative role in shaping the future of young minds of each society.

India is multi-ethnic, multi-linguistic, and multi-religious, where "unity in diversity" is the core social characteristic. Education becomes significant in a country with diversity like India, where the education system has historically been shaped by hierarchical Great leaders like John Dewey observed education as a social process where schools should offer opportunities for children to engage with their communities and function as a microcosm of society. Nelson Mandela (1990) stated, "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world." Indian thinkers Jawaharlal Nehru, Dr S. Radhakrishnan, Mahatma Gandhi, and Swami Vivekananda have also emphasised the role of education in fostering character formation and development. Gandhi observed character building as the ultimate aim of education. Dr S. Radhakrishnan (1927) observed that "the function of education is not only knowledge and skill development, but it is also to help students to live with others."

Structures, with access being restricted along caste and religious lines (Gupta, 2006; Nag, 2014). After independence, various commissions and policies emphasised the need for equitable and inclusive education in India. This commitment is affirmed through the Right to Education Act (2009) and ensures free and compulsory education to all children between 6 and 14 years of age.

Kerala stands as a good model of a well-functioning public education system in India with the highest literacy rates and universal school enrolment. Historically, Kerala's educational transformation can be traced to the efforts of Christian missionaries, social reformers like Sree Narayana Guru and Ayyankali, and progressive public policies post-independence (Nair, 1970; Tharakan, 1984; James, 2004). These developments enabled educational inclusion for marginalised communities and established education as a public good.

Kerala has achieved a high standard in public education among other states, and it stands as a good example of a well-functioning public education system in the country. It has been achieved through long historical processes dating back to the colonial period (Sengupta, 2011). Activities of social reformers and reformation movements in the state emphasised the importance of providing education for all (Tharakan, 1998). However, in recent decades, there has been an increasing trend of schools being established along religious and ideological lines, particularly in the private and unaided sectors. Scholars such as George and Sunaina (2005) and Geetha (2004) observed a growing communal and identity-based orientation in school management and admissions. The mushrooming educational institutions on the basis of religions and the diversity-based division of existing institutions somehow influence our common social system and religious understanding in Kerala and have raised concerns about the weakening of secular and pluralistic values and experiences within educational settings (Geetha, 2004).

The History of Primary Education in Kerala

The development of primary education system in Kerala is attributed to the progressive government policies and the active support and participation of the general populace. Before independence, education was mostly caste-based and

restricted to some segments of society. Education began to become more democratic with the arrival of Christian missionaries in the 19th century and the progressive policies of the princely states, especially Travancore and Cochin. While missionary organisations opened schools to underprivileged people of Kerala, reformers like Sree Narayana Guru and Ayyankali played crucial roles in promoting educational access among oppressed castes and social groups (Tharakan, 1984; Salim & Nair, 2002).

The Kerala public education system witnessed a significant expansion after independence. The Kerala Education Act (1958) and the establishment of the Kerala Education Rules (KER) (1959) laid foundation for quality schooling system in the state. Further, the introduction free and compulsory education for all and implementation of schemes such as mid-day meals, and scholarships for marginalised communities improved enrolment and retention (Census of India, 2011).

In the late 20th century, the District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) and Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) brought activity-based, and child-centred learning into classrooms (DPEP, 2000; SSA, 2001). Kerala was among the first states to adopt a constructivist curriculum in 1997, later refined through KCF 2007. This massive endeavor of all agencies in Kerala, irrespective of their religion, culture, belief, and caste, contributed their part to make education public.

Tharakan (1984) investigated the educational upliftment of lower-caste people in the south, central, and northern regions as well as in Malabar through the work of Christian missionaries such as the London Missionary Society (LMS), the Church Missionary Society (CMS), and the Basal Evangelical Mission (BEM). They not only started schools for everyone but also fought for women's education. Joseph

Mundassery and C. H. Mohammed Koya were two key figures in shaping Kerala's public education system; while Mundassery laid the foundation for equity and state control through the landmark Kerala Education Bill of 1957, Koya played a vital role in expanding educational opportunities for minority communities, particularly in the Malabar region (Tharakan, 1984; Salim & Nair, 2002).

The contributions of community reformers like Narayana Guru, Ayyan Kali, Mannathu Pathmanabhan, and Dr. P. K. Abdul Gafoor helped the educational upliftment of Ezhavas, Pulayas, Nairs, and Muslims communities in Kerala (Salim & Nair, 2002). The collective efforts of all these agencies and leaders helped to make education public and accessible for all in Kerala.

Reforms in Kerala's Primary Education

Kerala's primary education system has undergone significant transformation since the 1990s. It includes many programmes like District Primary Education Programme (DPEP), Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), Introduction of the Constructivist Curriculum in 1997, and Kerala Curriculum Framework (KCF), 2007. These programmes and reforms were aimed not only at improving the quality of education but also at making it more inclusive, and responsive to the needs of a diverse student population.

District Primary Education Programme (DPEP)

District Primary Education Programme (DPEP is a centrally sponsored scheme to promote child-centred and activity-based learning. Introduction of this scheme in 1994 marked a major shift in Kerala's approach to elementary education. This scheme promoted child-centred and activity-based learning, emphasised in-service teacher training, and encouraged community participation in education. The

programme also sought to universalise primary education through a pedagogical shift and improved school support systems. Sofiya (2019) observed that the programme led to significant innovations, including the creation of school support groups, Village Education Committees (VECs), and resource centres at block and cluster levels.

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA)

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) is a programme built upon DPEP's principles and launched in 2000 aiming to extant its scope to cover the entire country. The programme reinforced the goals of universal access, retention, and quality improvement of primary education. The programme promoted the development of inclusive classroom practices, mobilised community involvement, and introduced performance monitoring systems across the state (SSA, 2001; Sofiya, 2019, pp. 10–11). It also empowered local bodies to take active roles in school governance and planning (Rekha, 2006).

Introduction of the Constructivist Curriculum in 1997

A landmark moment in Kerala's educational reform came with the introduction of the constructivist curriculum in 1997, which marked an important shift from rote-based, behaviourist models of learning to experience-based, inquiry-oriented pedagogies. This curriculum revision was inspired by global trends in child-centred education and aligned with the recommendations of the National Policy on Education (1986) and the Yashpal Committee Report (1993) (Parameswaran, 2008; NCERT, 2005). The revised curriculum emphasised social learning, active interaction, critical thinking and creativity, particularly relevant in a socially plural state like Kerala.

Kerala Curriculum Framework (KCF), 2007

The constructivist approach was further consolidated in the Kerala Curriculum Framework (KCF) 2007, which integrated national directives from the NCF 2005 with Kerala's own social and educational priorities. KCF advocated for democratic and inclusive learning spaces, recognising children's cultural backgrounds and promoting their active participation in school life (SCERT Kerala, 2007; NCERT, 2005). It provided space for familiarising and respecting students' diversities and developing positive values among students. These curricular reforms in the state made primary education more accessible and public.

The development of primary education system in Kerala is the result of a long journey shaped by social reform movements, public initiatives, progressive policies, and private agencies. The commitment of the state to quality education, especially in primary level, has made it a model for educational development in India. However, emerging challenges such as increasing private institutions, social and ideological segregation in schooling etc... call for special attention. In this context the present study seeks to examine students' access to school facilities, their participation in school activities and programmes, and the extent of diversity accommodated within different primary schools in Kerala.

Need and Significance of the Study

India is a diverse country with a large population and home to rich ethnic, social, cultural, and religious groups. Unity in diversity is the key feature of this country, which unites different beliefs, cultures, and languages into one. To ensure this unity and friendship, our constitution and governments have taken different strategies and programmes. National leaders realised that education is the focal element in uniting these diverse social elements into one. Education is considered a

vital instrument for promoting national integration, and it is considered the lifeblood of social understanding, secular feelings, and common brotherhood. Among other states, Kerala is considered a good model for educational progress, and it has achieved remarkable success in ensuring access, enrolment, and literacy through its long educational journey. However, beyond these achievements, concerns are emerging in recent years regarding the inclusivity and diversity of school experiences in the state.

Schools are the primary institutions where children experience and learn diversity for the first time. Classrooms play an important role in developing respect for different religions, cultures, and social backgrounds. Schools are expected to uphold inclusive values and a pluralistic nature in their programmes and practices. In Kerala, as studies observe (George & Sunaina, 2005; Geetha, 2004; Rachana, 2023), many concerns were rising related to religious accommodation, social inclusion, and mutual respect in certain educational settings. Social critics like Soman Kadalur (2020) have observed that the recent trend of an increase in religiously and ideologically orientated schools in Kerala is leading to cultural compartmentalisation, limiting opportunities for students to interact across social and cultural boundaries.

These recent concerns in Kerala education raise important questions about whether different types of schools in Kerala are genuinely fostering diversity or promoting indifference among students. Despite the educational excellence, limited empirical research exists on how diversity, access, and participation are actually experienced at the school level in Kerala, particularly in primary schools.

The results of this study are expected to contribute to the ongoing efforts to create a more equitable, inclusive, and socially cohesive education system in Kerala by providing insightful information about whether the current educational

environment reflects growing divisions or upholds the ideals of inclusion and pluralism.

The premises on which the researcher underpins his study are the following:

1. India is a pluralistic nation, and unity in diversity is its key feature.
2. India is a secular, democratic country where all Indians have the right to live, learn, and express their ideology.
3. All Indians can participate and establish educational institutions and programmes irrespective of their socio-cultural and religious differences.
4. Indian classrooms are reflective of the nation's social fabric, serving as microcosms where children from diverse backgrounds come together to learn and interact.
5. The elementary stage of education plays a foundational role in shaping a child's personality, values, and worldview.
6. Educational leaders such as parents, teachers, leading authorities, and managing persons have more roles in socialising students.
7. The institutional climate and school culture directly influence learners' attitudes, perceptions, and interpersonal relationships, thereby affecting their engagement with diversity and democratic values.

Statement of the Problem

The present study is an attempt to explore the present status of the social environment in primary schools in Kerala. The study tries to explore the level of access, participation, and diversity among learners in different types of primary

schools in Kerala managed by government agencies, aided management, and private companies. Institutional philosophy and attitude toward managing authority may also affect participation and diversity in educational settings. So, the present study tries to examine the school environment and students' experiences received from different types of schools in terms of access, participation, and diversity. Hence, the present study is stated as **"Access, Participation, and Diversity among Learners in Primary Schools of Kerala."**

Definition of Key Terms

Researches bring knowledge and this knowledge derives its meaning from the existing contexts. Therefore, it is the duty of the researcher to define the key terms used in the title for better contextual understanding of the study. The key words of this study are explained as follows.

Access

In line with the National Policy on Education (1986) and the Right to Education Act (2009), the term 'access' refers to the equitable provision and availability of educational opportunities, infrastructure, and learning environments to all students, regardless of their socio-cultural, economic, or geographical backgrounds.

In the present study, access refers to the equitable opportunity for students to use school facilities and to engage in curricular and co-curricular activities provided by different types of primary schools in Kerala.

Participation

According to Good (1973), student participation refers to "the involvement of learners in the activities, decisions, and responsibilities of the educational process, including their engagement in learning tasks, classroom interactions, school governance, and extracurricular programmes."

In the present study, participation refers to the extent to which students make use of school facilities and demonstrate involvement and engagement in curricular and co-curricular activities across different types of primary schools in Kerala.

Diversity

Diversity in education refers to the recognition, inclusion, and respectful integration of students' varied social, cultural, linguistic, religious, economic, and cognitive differences within the educational system, ensuring equitable learning opportunities for all, and reflecting India's pluralistic society (NCERT, 2005).

In the present study, diversity refers to the presence and respectful inclusion of students' socio-cultural and religious differences in the school's environment, daily practices, and programmes in different upper primary schools of Kerala.

Learners

Learners refer to students enrolled in Upper Primary classes (Standards V, VI, and VII) in recognised schools in Kerala, including government, aided, and private schools.

Primary Schools

In this study, 'primary schools' refers to upper primary schools in Kerala, including Standards V, VI, and VII, following the state syllabus prescribed by the State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT), Kerala.

Research Questions

The study was focused on the following research questions. The central question this study seeks to examine is 'To what extent do the environment, facilities, and practices of primary schools managed by different agencies support equitable access, meaningful participation, and student exposure to the socio-cultural and religious diversity of our society?'

The study was led by the following related research questions:

1. What is the current status of students' access to quality infrastructure and basic facilities across Government, Aided, and Unaided upper primary schools in Kerala?
2. What are the different curricular facilities and programmes accessible for students across Government, Aided, and Unaided upper primary schools in Kerala?
3. What are the co-curricular facilities and activities accessible for students across Government, Aided, and Private upper primary schools in Kerala?
4. To what extent do students utilise different curricular, co-curricular and school facilities available in different types of upper primary schools in Kerala?
5. What is the nature and level of students' participation in different curricular activities conducted in different types of upper primary schools in Kerala?
6. What is the nature and level of students' participation in different co-curricular activities conducted in different types of upper primary schools?
7. What is the extent of diversity representation in the physical composition of different types of Upper Primary Schools managed by different agencies in Kerala?
8. To what extent do socio-cultural and religious diversity reflect in the programmes and practices conducted in Upper Primary Schools managed by different agencies in Kerala?
9. How do various stakeholders perceive and interpret the presence and significance of socio-cultural and religious diversity in Upper Primary Schools in Kerala?

Objectives of the Study

Major objectives of the study were:

1. To examine the extent of students' access to facilities, programmes, and practices across different types of primary schools in Kerala.
2. To explore the extent of students' participation in terms of students' satisfaction in the use of school facilities, engagement in curricular activities and participation in co-curricular programmes in different types of primary schools in Kerala.
3. To explore the nature and extent of socio-cultural and religious diversity in different types of primary schools in Kerala, in terms of physical representation, school practices, and school programmes.

Scope of the Study

The present study aims to examine the nature and extent of access, participation, and socio-cultural and religious diversity in upper primary schools of Kerala. It focuses on how educational opportunities and school-level practices reflect the pluralistic ideals embedded in the Indian Constitution and the Kerala school curriculum. The study looks into the social environment of the school and explores whether schools are inclusive places where children from different backgrounds can learn together and understand values of mutual respect and social understanding.

The study acknowledges that educational disparity affects not only physical access of students but also their participation and meaningful inclusion in school programmes. In this way, the research considers diversity and participation as experiential realities that are included in management frameworks, educational

practices, and institutional culture. Here, diversity is considered not only by mere physical representation of religious or socio-cultural identity but in terms of educational opportunities, co-curricular participation, and interpersonal interactions that shape the school culture.

This study focuses on how diversity is lived and practised within the school and its day-to-day activities, rather than mere enrolment and attendance. It explores the inclusiveness of the school system in terms of physical representation, participation in school practices and programmes, and the perceptions of key stakeholders, including students, teachers, parents, and the head of the institution. The focus of the study is driven by three types of primary schools in Kerala, namely government, aided and private management schools, recognising their unique influence on access, participation and diversity experiences. The broader socio-cultural and ideological concerns affecting parental and managerial choices are also considered and examined for their impact on school-level programmes and practices and learners' experiences.

Delimitations of the Study

For clarity and precision of the study, the researcher has set come specific boundaries to maintain the focus of the study. While the broader investigation on access and participation encompasses upper primary schools across Kerala as a whole, the case study focusing on diversity (Objective 3) is geographically delimited to selected schools in the Malappuram and Kozhikode districts. The study is limited to school in Kerala following SCRT syllabus prescribed by Kerala General Education Department. The study focuses on school-level experiences, institutional environment, and stakeholder perceptions. It does not aim to evaluate academic outcomes, students' achievements, textbook content, or

broader policy implementation. Accordingly, the study is delimited in the following ways:

Considering the wide scope of educational diversity, the present study is delimited to the aspects of access, participation, and representation of socio-cultural and religious diversity only in the school environment.

- The study was delimited to the upper primary level (Classes V to VII). The lower primary and secondary levels are excluded from the purview of this research.
- The study is delimited to schools following the SCERT Kerala curriculum as prescribed by the General Education Department. Schools affiliated to CBSE, ICSE, and other boards are not included.
- For a comprehensive understanding of access and participation, the study includes a state-level sample of upper primary schools from across Kerala under different management types.
- For exploring diversity in school practices (Objective 3), the study is delimited to case studies conducted in selected schools from Malappuram and Kozhikode districts, chosen based on predetermined criteria.
- The study includes three types of school management: government, aided, and unaided religious management schools. The schools were selected purposefully based on their type of management orientation, which is important in the analysis.
- Examination of institutional environment, student participation, and school-level representation of diversity are the focal areas of the research. It does not focus on academic achievement, curriculum content, or teacher performance.

- Perceptions and experiences of students, teachers, headmasters, and parents are considered as data sources. Experiences and perceptions of others, like old students, resource persons, etc., are not collected.

Structure of the Research Report

The thesis is structured into six distinct chapters, and each chapter addresses the specific aspects of the study.

Chapter I: Introduction

This chapter introduces the study by explaining its background, need, and significance. It states the objectives, defines key terms, explains the methodology adopted, and describes the scope and delimitations of the study.

Chapter II: Review of Related Literature

This chapter presents the theoretical and conceptual foundations of the study and reviews relevant literature at national and international levels. It identifies research gaps and establishes the basis for the present investigation.

Chapter III: Methodology

This chapter details the research design, population, sampling procedures, tools used, and methods of data collection and analysis. It also describes the validation of instruments and the ethical considerations followed during the study.

Chapter IV: Analysis

This chapter presents a detailed analysis and interpretation of data collected, supported by tables and figures. It discusses findings in relation to each objective and links them to the theoretical framework and existing research.

Chapter V: Summary, Findings and Conclusion

This chapter summarises the study, discusses objective-wise findings, and draws conclusions based on the results.

Chapter VI: Recommendations

This chapter highlights the recommendations and educational implications of the study. It provides implications at institutional, curricular, and pedagogical levels, emphasizing ways to enhance access, participation, and diversity in education.

Chapter 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE



- Theoretical Framework of the Study
- Review of Related Studies

The present study aims to explore how students' access to school facilities, participation in curricular and co-curricular activities, and the experience of socio-cultural and religious diversity are structured and practiced in upper primary schools in Kerala. The study focussed on experiences of different stakeholders across government, aided, and private management schools in Kerala to explore the efforts of different types of schools to create an inclusive and pluralistic environment, to get insights into existing research, identify theoretical perspectives, and locate gaps in the field, a review of related literature was carried out that includes scholarly articles, policy documents, curriculum frameworks, books, dissertations, and educational reports related to access, participation, and diversity.

Considering the nature of this study, the review focussed on studies related to educational sociology, curriculum studies, child rights perspectives, and studies on diversity and inclusive education. The theoretical framing of the study was framed based on inclusive and pluralistic educational concepts and sociocultural developmental theories. This chapter is organised under two major sections: (1) Theoretical Framework of the Study and (2) Review of Related Literature, thematically categorised under access, participation, and diversity.

Theoretical Framework of the Study

The study aims to delineate the importance of the school environment and its practices in ensuring a pluralistic nature among primary school children, focussing on access, participation, and diversity in primary schools in Kerala. The review of the literature on student development and developing pluralistic nature among children indicates the importance of early experiences and environmental factors in forming concepts and developing personality perceptions of children. Such studies

demand an interdisciplinary approach to investigating the importance of environment and experiences in child development. Menken and Keestra (2016) observed that an interdisciplinary approach in research is a method of combining information, data, and perspectives from multiple disciplines to address complex problems.

Social Environment and Child Development

The social environment in which a child lives and the social relationships that a child maintains have a vital role in his social and personal development. Teo et al. (2022) found that schools, educational facilities, housing, recreational facilities, and the neighbourhood where children live have high value in developing social skills and positive relationships among children. The concept of the early experience and environment is elicited in different theories of development proposed by great developmental theorists. Psycho-sexual Developmental Theory proposed by Sigmund Freud (1923), Psycho-social Developmental Theory by Erik Erikson (1959), Sociocultural Theory by Lev Vygotsky (1978), and Social Learning Theory by Albert Bandura (1977) map the root of child development to the social context and early experiences.

Social Development

The concept of social development refers to the process of improving the well-being of people in society or the process of children and young people learning how to relate to others (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Environment and living surroundings have potential importance in ensuring the social development of each individual (World Health Organisation, 2003). Schools have a significant role in the academic and social development of children. Roberts (2023) observed that schools help children to develop a strong moral compass, respect for others, and an appreciation

for diversity. Thus, education acts as a key mediator of early experiences and child development. Hicks (1987) observed that education is the key agent of socialisation that enables a child to live with others in peace and harmony.

Theories of Development

Theories of development stress the importance of early experiences in child development. These theories are used to form the theoretical framework of the study, providing a foundation for analysing the factors influencing children's development through their school experiences.

Theory of Psycho-sexual Development. Sigmund Freud's Psychoanalytic Theory provided a unique perspective on child development. Sigmund Freud (1856–1939) observed that early experiences have a significant impact on a person's personality and behaviour. These experiences are retained in the unconscious mind and have an ongoing effect on a person throughout his life. To quote the words of Freud (1933) on the importance of early experiences: "The child is brought up to know its social duties by means of a system of love, rewards and punishments, and in this way, it is taught that its security in life depends on its parents (and, subsequently, other people) loving it and being able to believe in its love for them.

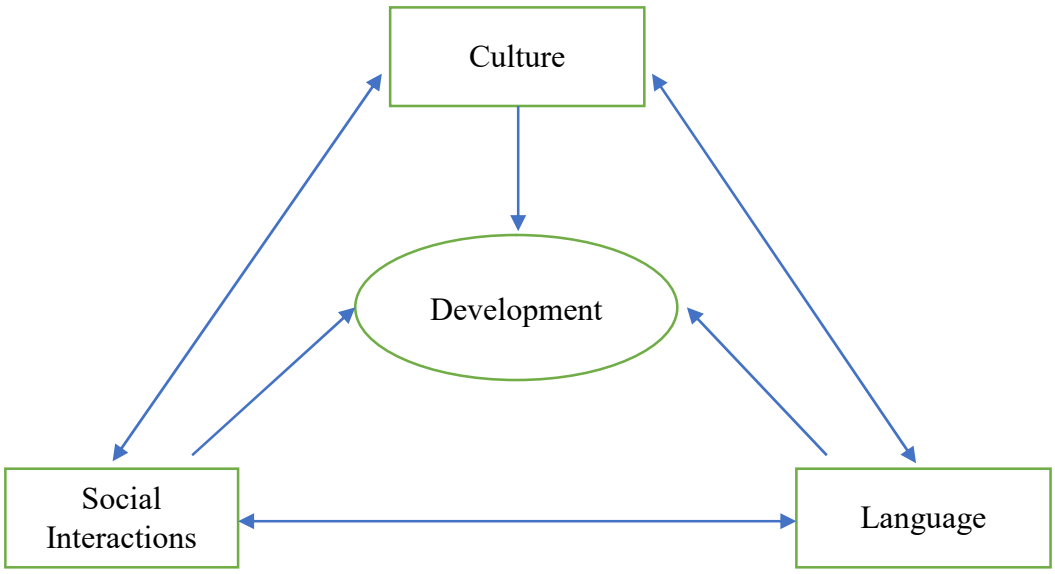
Theory of Psycho-social Development. Psychosocial Theory, introduced by Erik Erikson in 1950, observes development as a product of the interactions between individuals and their social environments. According to the theory, from infancy through late adulthood, a person experiences eight stages of development. Erikson's theory is based on the epigenetic principle, encompassing the notion that human development takes place through an unfolding of our personality in predetermined stages and our environment and surrounding culture influence how we progress

through these stages (Kelcourse, 2015). The theory stresses the importance of early experience in resolving confusion and crises in different developmental stages.

Socio-cultural Theory of Vygotsky. Vygotsky's Socio cultural Theory emphasised that child development is deeply rooted in social and cultural contexts. He argued that learning and cognitive growth originate through social interactions with family, peers, teachers, and the environment, highlighting the foundational role of culture and society in shaping higher developmental processes. The key concept of socio-cultural development according to Vygotsky is portrayed in Figure 1.

Figure 1

Socio-Cultural Theory of Development



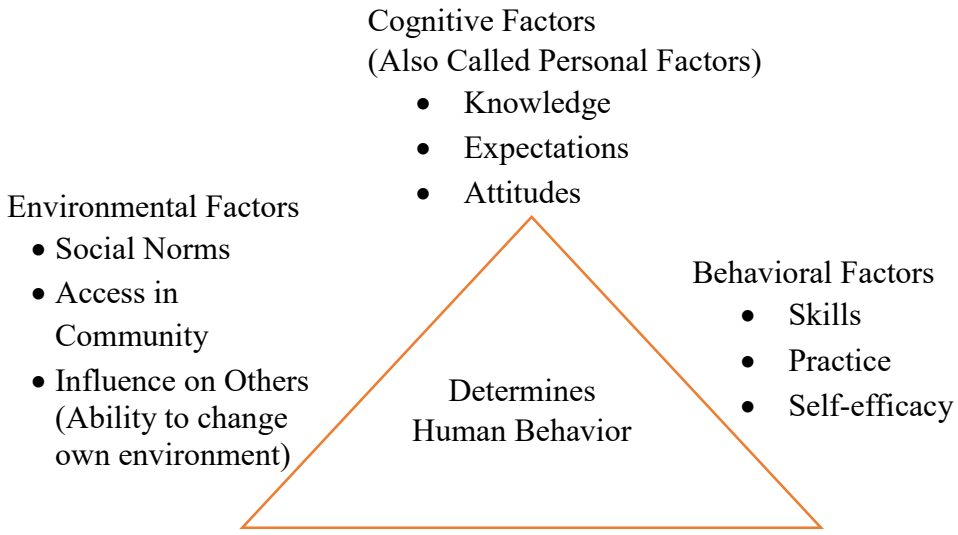
Vygotsky stressed the importance of social context in child development. He observed that students' development has a social origin. The theory observed that development cannot be separated from its social context; learning leads to development, and learning is mediated through interaction with cultural tools and symbol systems. He argued that learning is best when new material is in the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), which is the range of tasks a student can accomplish

with guidance (Vygotsky, 1978). The shift from a mere individualised process of development to a social context considers school and other social environments as inevitable factors that influence student development.

Social Learning Theory. Social Learning Theory by Albert Bandura attempts to explain the process of socialisation broadly, including processes whereby individuals acquire their society's norms of thought and action. Determinants of human behaviour according to Albert Bandura are portrayed in Figure 2.

Figure 2

Determinants of Human Behaviour According to Albert Bandura (1977)



The theory suggests that observation and modelling play a critical role in learning. According to Bandura, imitation involves the actual reproduction of observed motor activities (Bandura 1977). And the theory observes,

- New behaviours can be acquired by observing and imitating others.
- Learning is a social process that takes place in a social context.
- Learning occurs purely through observation or direct instruction.
- Learners learn through modelling and imitation of the behaviours and attitudes of others.

- Reinforcement plays a role in learning but is not entirely responsible for learning.
- The learner is not a passive recipient of information. Environment and behaviour mutually influence each other.

Theories of child development stress the crucial role of early experiences and environmental influences in shaping a child's social, psychological, and behavioural development. School, as a child's first structured social environment, plays a significant role in this process. Research, including that of Sylva (1994) and Parsons (2017), stress the impact of school experiences on a child's development and views schools as key agents of socialisation within society.

Conceptual Framework of the Study

The conceptual framework of the study offers a detailed description of the concept of pluralism and diversity in India, focusing on how it is supported by tradition, the Constitution, and educational practices in Kerala. It also examines the challenges of promoting unity in diversity, especially in the field of education, and reviews related studies.

Concept of Pluralism

The concept of pluralism is rooted in ancient Greece and was later introduced by Christian Wolff (1679-1754) and used in political science by Harold Laski (1893-1950). The great works 'Pluralistic View of the Universe' by William James in 1908 and 'Insight on Value Conflict' by Max Weber in 1918 laid the foundation for modern theories of pluralism. Further, Isaiah Berlin (1909-1997), John Rawls (1921-2002), and Martha Nussbaum (1947-) and others contributed to the theoretical development of pluralism in the 20th century. The concept of pluralism was a central value in the movements of great leaders like Mahatma

Gandhi, Martin Luther King Jr, and Nelson Mandela. Horace Kallen (1915) was a key figure in social discussions of pluralism, and he advocated for the preservation of cultural identity within a democratic society (Gleason, 1980).

Pluralism is not just the presence of diversity but involves active engagement with different cultures, beliefs, and identities (Koppelman, 2015). Galston (1989) defined it as the recognition and acceptance of religious, social, and ideological diversity. According to the Webster Dictionary (2015), pluralism allows cultural groups to maintain their traditions within a shared society. Yumatle (2015) viewed it as a way to interpret social diversity, while Ramadan (2010) emphasized its role in enabling individuals to pursue happiness. Williams (2015) and Eck (2006) highlighted that real pluralism requires deliberate participation and engagement to build a just and inclusive society.

Principles and Features of Pluralism

The principles and features of pluralism were explained by many pluralists.

Diana Eck (2006), the Director of the Pluralism Project at Harvard University, observed four basic features of pluralism:

- **Pluralism is not diversity alone, but the energetic engagement with diversity.** Mere diversity, without real encounters and relationships, will yield increasing tensions in society.
- **Pluralism is not just tolerance, but the active seeking of understanding across lines of difference.** Tolerance is a necessary public virtue, but it does not require to know anything about one another. It does nothing to remove our ignorance of one another and leaves in place the stereotype, the half-truth, and the fears that underlie old patterns of division and violence.

- **Pluralism is not relativism, but the encounter of commitments.** The new paradigm of pluralism does not require us to leave our identities behind, for pluralism is the encounter of commitments and holding the deepest differences in relationship to one another.
- **Pluralism is based on dialogue.** The language of pluralism is dialogue, which means both speaking and listening. Itdoes not mean everyone will agree with one another.

John Kekes (1996), in his theory of pluralism, proposes six elements of pluralism. According to him the key aspects of pluralism are:

- Many values co-exist: All values are not equal and no value is always important enough to override other values.
- Conflict among multiple values is inevitable**:** Judging the relative merit of values is difficult because many values cannot be compared or are incompatible with one another.
- Conflicts can be settled by appealing to the larger shared interest to pursue individual happiness.
- Achieving a good life means having a rich supply of choices.
- Some limits on choices are necessary to achieve happiness.
- Moral progress occurs where social traditions encourage plural

Smith (1990). The dynamic of pluralism as observed by Smith (1990) states that it is possible to pull together the various strands to define the basic features of pluralism which include:

- Pluralism is not the sheer fact of diversity alone but is active engagement with that diversity.

- Pluralism requires more knowledge of diversity than the mere tolerance of differences.
- Pluralism requires more participation and engagement than the mere representation and presence of differences.
- Pluralism is not simply relativism but makes room for real and different religious commitments.
- Pluralism requires nurturing constructive dialogue to reveal both common understandings and real differences.

Types of Pluralism

There are several types of pluralism in the world, and important types of pluralism are:

Cultural Pluralism. The concept was popularized by Horace Kallen in 1915, refers to the recognition and respect of diverse cultural practices and values within a society. It describes a context in which minority groups maintain their distinct identities, which are accepted by the dominant culture (Barth, 2010). Cultural pluralism supports diversity, promotes inclusion and integration, and affirms the cultural identities of different communities (Wintr, 2011).

Religious Pluralism. Religious pluralism is the idea that people of different faiths can live together in peace and respect each other's beliefs. Bader (2003) observed that religious pluralism promotes the coexistence of religious faiths and beliefs within the society with the freedom to practice their beliefs.

Linguistic Pluralism. It is a situation where multiple languages are spoken and valued in a community or region. Woolard (2016) observed that linguistic pluralism refers to a country or part of a country that recognizes many official languages.

Political Pluralism. It is a system where multiple political parties and ideologies coexist. Here the power is distributed among various groups rather than concentrated in a single elite (Young, 1979). Heist (2013) observed that Political diversity, open debate, power sharing, and democratic process are key features of a politically pluralistic society.

Diversity in India

India is a country with different cultures, religions, languages, and ethnic communities. India exemplifies diversity with its rich cultural heritage, multiple religions, languages, and ethnic communities. The country officially recognizes 22 languages and over 122 major languages (Census Report, 2001). Indian society reflects different identities and traditions, and caste system plays a significant role in its social structure (Dasari, 2008).

Types of Diversity in India

India is a land of cultures, languages, religions, andtraditions. Diversity is one of its most defining features, contributing to its rich heritage and unique identity. Chavan (2024) observed that the country is a melting pot of diverse cultures and identities because it is home to many landscapes, languages, religions, cuisines, festivals, and customs. As Dhiman (2024) observes, India as a vibrant example of the beauty and richness of diversity. Sen (2012) observed that India's identity and social fabric are shaped by diversity in its various aspects. There are various forms of diversity in India that make the country beautiful.

Ethnic Diversity. India is a country with significant ethnic diversity, with its own distinct history, language, and cultural practices. The major ethnic groups in India include Indo-Aryans, around 72% of the total population; Dravidians, around 25% of the population; and Mongoloids, around 3% of the population (Bhasin,

2006). Different ethnic groups and communities have contributed much to Indian culture and history to make it rich and diverse. But it also caused too many issues like ethnic conflicts and discrimination (Simpson & Yinger, 2013).

Linguistic Diversity. India is rich in its language varieties. Each region of the country often has its own language or dialect, contributing to its linguistic richness. Mandavilli (2015) observed that there are over 1,600 languages and dialects spoken in India. The Indian Constitution defines 22 languages as official, including Tamil, Telugu, Urdu, Bengali, Bodo, Dogri, Gujarati, Hindi, Kashmiri, Kannada, Konkani, Maithili, Malayalam, Manipuri, Marathi, Nepali, Oriya, Punjabi, Sanskrit, Santhali, Sindhi, and Assamese. After independence, to make administration and communication easier, the government formed states based on languages. Cohen (2015) observed that the decision to form states based on linguistic boundaries created regionalism and conflicts in different parts of the country.

Religious Diversity. India is home to many religions, including Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, Sikhism, Buddhism, Jainism, and Zoroastrianism. Varkey (2017) observed India as multireligious, and various religions have coexisted in this country with peace and harmony for centuries. Hinduism is the largest religion in India, with over 80% of the population with various beliefs, customs, and traditions. Islam ranks as the second largest religion in India, with approximately 14% of the population adhering to its unique customs and traditions. Christianity 2.3% o, Sikhs 2%, Buddhism 0.7% Jainism 0.4% and other believes represents the rest of Indian population. Chopra (2022) has explained India as a land of various beliefs and ideals where Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, Sikhism, Buddhism, Jainism, Judaism, Zoroastrianism, Bahaism, and many other religious and non-religious groups coexist in this country.

Cultural Diversity. India has a rich cultural heritage, with various customs, traditions, and festivals celebrated across the country. India's cultural diversity has

been created over many centuries through migration, trade, and interactions with various civilizations. The cultural diversity of India is reflected in its art, music, dance, festivals, celebrations, languages, literature, cinema, food, clothing, architecture, custom and traditions. Ghosh (2011) observed that each region and social group in India has its unique traditions, customs, and festivals, adding to the country's cultural richness and diversity.

Geographical Diversity. India is home to mountains, deserts, beaches, valleys, and many other stunning landscapes that makes the county geographically diverse. Its landscape is ranging from deserts to jungles and from the world's tallest peaks to low-lying coastal plains. India is divided into 28 states and 8 Union territories, each with its unique culture, language, and identity. The landscape includes diverse regions such as the Himalayan Region, the Indo-Gangetic Plain, the Western Ghats, the Deccan Plateau, the Coastal Plains, and the North-Eastern Region (Gadgil & Guha, 1993). This diverse geography has given rise to a variety of ecosystems, lifestyles, cultures, and traditions.

Caste Related Diversity. Caste is another factor of diversity in Indian society. Deshpande (2010) observed the caste system as a complex social structure that plays a significant role in shaping Indian society. The word “caste” is used to refer to both “varna” and “jati.” Varna classifies the society into four social groups based on karma (work) and dharma (duty): Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas, and Shudras (Banerjee, 2014). Jati is about hereditary groups that marry within themselves and follow a specific traditional job. There are more than 3,000 Jatis in India, which are hereditary endogamous status groups that engage in certain traditional professions (Bhasin, 2006).

Unity in Diversity in India

Unity in diversity is the concept that unites differences in India and fosters a sense of togetherness among diverse people. Jawaharlal Nehru coined this term as

the motto for independent India and believed it was essential for national unity and progress. He described India as “an abiding unity and, at the same time, great diversity”, highlighting the nation's long-standing tradition of coexistence (Nehru, 1946, as cited in Kothari, 2006). He further asserted, “The only future for India and her people is one of tolerance and cooperation which have been the basis of our culture from ages past.”

Mahatma Gandhi promoted religious harmony and mutual respect. He stated, “I’ve advanced from tolerance to equal respect for all religions” (Gandhi, 1981, vol. 93, p. 64), and “I’ve broadened my Hinduism by loving other religions as my own” (Gandhi, 1968, vol. 35, p. 462). Gandhi's idea of pluralism included dissociation of the state from religion and equal opportunities for all faiths.

Rabindranath Tagore advocated for cultural synthesis and the unity of diverse traditions. He wrote, “Let us unite, not in spite of our differences, but through them... in a unity that is living” (Tagore, 1996, p. 712). On education, he believed that, “The highest education is that which does not merely give us information, but makes our life in harmony with all existence.”Nehru further reinforced India's secular vision by declaring, “India is a secular state... it means equal respect for all faiths and equal opportunities for those who profess any faith” (Nehru, 1961).

Indian social leaders and national builders considered unity in diversity as the key feature of Indian society, which unites the different beliefs, cultures, and languages that exist in this country into one. Kohli (2001) observed that diversity in India is a source of strength that has helped the country to grow and prosper in many ways. To ensure this unity and friendship among people, our constitution and governments have taken different steps and strategies after independence.

Diversity and the Indian Constitution

To address the diversity, India took many steps and implemented many programmes after independence. The Constitution of India is a remarkable document that enshrines principles of secularism, equality, and fraternity to foster unity in diversity. It also strives to balance the diverse cultures, religions, and languages of India. The strong constitutional democracy, acknowledged since 1947, is the glue that holds the exceptionally diverse Indian society together (Sharma, 2003). The Indian Constitution establishes India as a secular state, which means that the state treats all religions equally and allows all people freedom of faith and worship. The Constitution of India promotes pluralism by promoting secularism, providing protection for minorities, ensuring freedom of religion, and supporting linguistic diversity through promoting regional languages (Thakur, 2013). Major constitutional provisions that address diversity in India are:

- Article 14: Guarantees equality before the law and equal protection of the laws to all citizens.
- Article 15: Prohibits discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex, or place of birth.
- Article 16: Ensures equality of opportunity in matters of public employment.
- Article 25-28: Guarantees freedom of religion to all citizens.
- Article 29-30: Protects the cultural and educational rights of minorities.
- Article 371: Provides special provisions for certain states and tribal areas to safeguard their unique identities.

Thus, various initiatives were taken by India to promote unity and diversity. However, discriminations and inequalities exist among people, particularly in education, employment, and healthcare (Mander, 2015).

Diversity and Schools

Schools have a pivotal role in nurturing the concept of unity in diversity among students. Schools were considered as an important agent of socialisation by helping children learn about their environment, develop values and social skills, and understand their role in society (Taylor et al., 2004). Loreman et al. (2005) observed that schools can create a vibrant and inclusive learning environment where students can learn from each other, respect and appreciate their differences, and build lasting friendships. Voltz et al. (2010) stress the importance of the school environment and state that "by fostering a welcoming and inclusive environment, schools can equip students with the skills and values needed to thrive in a diverse world. Harrison and Sin (2006) observed that diversity enriches the learning environment and provides opportunities for students to learn from each other and develop a deeper understanding of the world around them.

Promoting Unity in Diversity in Schools. Many Studies have suggested the importance of schools and school environment in promoting unity and friendliness among learners. Rasheed (2015) observed the impotence of schools in ensuring unity among different cultures and diversities and suggested some ways to promote it among learners:

- Ensure an inclusive curriculum that reflects the diversity of the society.
- Teach about different cultures, religions, and historical events.
- Promote students to develop a common perspective and appreciate different cultures.
- Create a respectful environment in school where all students feel safe, valued, and respected.

- Organise events to celebrate diversity in school.
- Peer Mentorship and Pair students from different backgrounds to promote understanding and friendship.
- Equip teachers with the skills and attitude to give a positive response to the needs of diverse learners.
- Encourage students to form and participate in different activities and clubs that celebrate their cultural heritage.
- Organise social service projects that promote justice and empathy.
- Facilitate discussions and debates on topics related to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Haq et al. (2020) conducted study on the diversity and equality perspectives from the national context of India and pointed to the issues of diversity and suggested ways to address diversity in school. They observed some key roles that schools can play in addressing diversity:

- Creating an inclusive curriculum.
- Promoting culturally responsive teaching.
- Providing support for marginalized students.
- Fostering a culture of respect and inclusion.
- Building partnerships with families and communities.

Bhatt (2024) conducted a study on embracing student diversity, encouraging equality and inclusion for vulnerable populations. This study explores the importance of embracing student diversity and promoting equality and inclusion within the Indian education system. The study identifies barriers to equality and inclusion faced by vulnerable populations and proposes a framework for addressing these challenges. The study suggests recognising and valuing diversity,

implementing inclusive policies and practices, and fostering a supportive learning environment that caters to the needs of all students. The study also stresses the role of policies, advocacy, and empirical research in advancing the agenda of diversity, equality, and inclusion in Indian education.

The Supreme Court of India (2022) in Aishath Shifa versus the State of Karnataka and Case regarding the Hijab dispute in Karnataka observed that 'secularity' of India meant 'tolerance to diversity,' and the Hijab ban is a violation of the Fundamental Rights given under Articles 19(1) (a) and 21 of the Constitution of India. The court asked in its verdict that 'if diversity is not accommodated in educational institutions, from where will the younger generation experience diversity?'

Studies have shown that education plays an important role in students' all-round development. While education at all levels contributes to students' development, primary education is particularly more significant in forming students' values and skills. The National Curriculum Framework 2005, observed education as the foundation for the development of social skills necessary to live together in harmony" (NCF, 2005). In this ground, primary education is considered as key in India and various plans and policies were framed to ensure its quality.

Primary Education in India

Primary education in India has been shaped by various philosophies, provisions and policies. The government of Indian recognised primary education as a foundation for building a healthy society (Velaskar, 2010). Various constitutional provisions, Five-Year Plans (since 1951), and Acts were introduced to make primary education as public.

Policies for Primary Education in India

The Five-Year Plans introduced in India prioritised education and focused on expanding access, improving literacy, building infrastructure, training teachers, and addressing disparities, and maintaining quality infrastructure at school level (Tilak & Ghosh, 2018). These initiatives significantly increased primary school enrolment and laid the foundation for a more educated and equitable society.

Constitutional Provisions. Understanding the profound importance of education for individual and national development, the constitution of India made many provisions and recommendations to ensure education is accessible for all. The major constitutional provisions are:

- **Article 21A:** This article, inserted by the 86th Amendment Act, 2002, states that the state shall provide free and compulsory education to all children between the ages of 6 and 14 years.
- **Article 29:** Protects the rights of any section of citizens having a distinct language, script, or culture to conserve the same.
- **Article 30:** Grants minorities the right to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice.
- **Article 45:** This article directs the state to provide free and compulsory education for all children up to fourteen years.
- **Article 41:** This article directs the state to make effective provisions for securing the right to work, to education, and to public assistance in cases of unemployment, old age, sickness, and disablement, and in other cases of undeserved want.

- **Article 46:** This article directs the state to promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people, and, in particular, of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes, and to protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation.

The Indian Constitution guarantees the right to education for all through several provisions. These provisions, along with the Right to Education Act (2009), aim to ensure that every child in India has access to quality education. For this, India planned and implemented many programmes and practices. Recognising the important role of education in empowering individuals and fostering national progress, India has formulated several national education policies over the decades.

National Policies on Education. Educational system of India has faced many changes through different national policies and programmes. The National Policies on Education (1968, 1986, 1992, and 2020) and initiatives like Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) and the Right to Education (RTE) Act, 2009 etc... have collectively shaped the direction of school education in this country.

- NEP 1968 advocating for universal free education up to age 14, and equal opportunities for all , and focus on girls and backward communities.
- NEP 1986 promoted inclusive access to education for SC/ST communities and women. As part of this policy Operation Blackboard programme 1987 implemented and District Institutes of Education and Training (DIETs) were established.
- The District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) implemented in 1994 made primary education more common practice and introduced constructive approaches in learning.
- Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) (2000–01) programme was implemented and it made primary education universal in this state.

- The Right to Education (RTE) Act, 2009, a landmark legislation, made free and compulsory education a fundamental right for children aged 6–14. It laid out minimum infrastructure norms, student-teacher ratios, non-discrimination clauses, and community involvement through School Management Committees.
- The Draft NEP 2016 advocated a lifelong and inclusive learning system, with emphasis on curriculum renewal, ICT integration, and social justice.
- The most recent NEP 2020 introduced a 5+3+3+4 structure and placed a strong emphasis on foundational literacy, experiential learning, mother tongue instruction, holistic development, and vocational integration. It aims to make primary education more child-centred, inclusive, and skills-oriented.

India's educational policies have progressively moved towards greater inclusivity and equity. While policies such as NEP 2020, RTE Act, and SSA have led to improved enrolment, infrastructure, and teacher training, challenges of inequality and exclusion remain. Continued efforts are required to realise the vision of universal, equitable, and quality primary education for every child in India.

Diversity in Kerala

Kerala is one of the southernmost states in India with a high human development index, high literacy rates and a skilled workforce. It's one of the most densely populated states in India with approximately 33.4 million population as of the 2011 census report. Kerala is considered a developed state within India, with a strong emphasis on social development, including high literacy rates, good healthcare, and social welfare programmes (Singh, 2011). According to the 2011 Census of India, Hinduism (54.73%) is the major religion in the state followed by Islam (26.56%),

Christianity (18.38%) and Others (0.33%). Kerala is known for its relative religious harmony, with different religious communities coexisting peacefully. Kerala is a state renowned for its remarkable diversity, encompassing most of the diversity elements like religions, castes, cultures, traditions, languages, social and economic differences. Major features of Kerala society are:

- **Religious Diversity.** Kerala is home to a harmonious blend of religions, with Hinduism, Islam, and Christianity coexisting peacefully. The culture and tradition of the state has been shaped by the religious diversity that exists in the state.
- **Cultural Diversity.** Kerala boasts a rich tapestry of cultures, influenced by its history of trade and interaction with various civilizations. These differences are visible in its art forms, music, dance, and customs.
- **Linguistic Diversity.** Malayalam is the official language and it also has pockets of other languages spoken, including Tamil, Tulu, and Konkani. There are many indigenous tribal communities with its unique languages and these form the state's linguistic diversity.
- **Social Diversity.** Diversity in the social aspect of Kerala is evident in religion, socio-economic statutes, life style, caste, culture and other aspects.

Thus, Kerala is an exceptionally diverse state in India in all its aspects and a mix of these diversities with a relatively less pronounced differences is a notable characteristic of the state, compared to other parts of India (Pandey, 2019).

Primary Education in Kerala

The provision for quality education was a significant factor in social progress of Kerala. Major transformation in education of Kerala began in the 19th century with the contributions of Christian missionaries (Mathew, 1999). Post-independence,

education became central to Kerala's developmental agenda. Legislative reforms like the Kerala Education Bill of 1957 and Programmes like DPEP, SSA enhanced infrastructure facilities, promoted inclusive education (Kumar, 2015). The state government and related agencies continuously try to improve the quality and accessibility of primary education in Kerala through various programmes.

The Department of General Education. This department was established in 1995 to monitor, plan and implement primary education in Karla. It handles curriculum development, teacher recruitment, and maintains school infrastructure. Major responsibilities of the department are:

- Setting curriculum guidelines and standards.
- Providing financial and administrative support to schools.
- Recruiting and training teachers.
- Overseeing school infrastructure development.
- Implementing various educational initiatives like Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan.

State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT). It was established in 1994 to provide a new direction to school education in the state. Abhiyan (2018) observed that SCERT has played a pivotal role in modernising the school curriculum, aligning it with national and state education policies. Major responsibilities of the body are:

- Develop and review the curriculum.
- Conduct teacher training programs.
- Provide support for educational research and innovation.
- Improve the quality of teaching-learning processes.

Kerala Infrastructure and Technology for Education (KITE). It was established under Kerala General Education Department in 2001-02 to promote ICT-enabled education in Kerala. It aimed to integrate Information and Communication

Technology (ICT) into school education. KITE began as the "IT@School Project" and its major responsibilities are:

- Developing and implementing digital learning resources.
- Providing technical support to schools for ICT integration.
- Promoting digital literacy among students and teachers.

KITE has played an important role in equipping schools with modern technology, including computers, laptops, projectors, and internet connectivity. Shankar (2015) observed that KITE has been instrumental in transforming education in Kerala by integrating technology to education.

Local self-governments bodies, NGOs and other private agencies have supported government efforts and they provided supplementary facilities to assisting marginalised children and thy promoted education through active participation community engagement. This approach of different agencies in Kerala ensured a comprehensive and coordinated effort towards improving the quality and accessibility of primary education in Kerala.

Review of Related Studies

The review of related studies is an important part of academic research because it provides an opportunity for synthesizing existing knowledge and for generalizing the present study into a broader context (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). This section of the study focuses on important findings and research gaps and analyzes the research context to guide the present study on access, participation, and diversity among learners in primary schools of Kerala.

Studies Related to Access

School access, educational opportunities, and quality have been central concerns of educational research for years. This section analyzes national and international perspectives of studies related to school access.

Spatial and Infrastructural Access

Spatial and infrastructural access is a basic dimension of access, and a significant numbers of studies focus on this dimension of access to school education.

Sarma (2025) examined the status of school infrastructure: Trends, Interstate Disparities and the Challenge of Viksit Bharat 2047. The study analyses the disparity in access to infrastructure across schools. For their study, national educational data, UDISE+ data from 2013–2025, were used for analyses. Access to seven key school components of electricity, drinking water, separate toilets for boys and girls, libraries, computers, and internet connectivity were analysed using the data. The finding indicated that access to drinking water and toilet facilities has reached near-universal access in most schools, and challenges were reported in digital and academic and educational infrastructure in many schools.

Reddy and Pasupuleti (2024) conducted a study on parental preferences and non-spatial factors influencing home-to-school distance in urban India: insights from Visakhapatnam. The study examined school distance and parental preferences in the area using the survey method. The study revealed that many students are travelling long distances for their schooling even though there are schools near their homes. The study also observes that the parental preferences in child schooling compel students to travel, and this influences educational access.

A nationwide overview of access to physical infrastructure in schools is provided in the UDISE+ Report 2023-24. The report explores the current status of access to infrastructure facilities in schools in India. The report indicates that basic facilities like electricity, drinking water, and gender-segregated toilets are accessed in 90% of Indian schools. As per the report, functional computers are available only in 57.2% of schools, 53.9% have internet connectivity. Ramps and related facilities are very limited in many schools, especially in government-run and rural schools.

The report of the Centre for Socio-Economic and Environmental Studies (2023) observed many issues in school access in Kerala. Low support, limitations, and preferences for others in activities are reported issues by students. The study reported very limited access to facilities in companied institutions. The report also highlighted the issues of aided schools. Despite enrolling a majority of students, aided schools were often excluded from local government infrastructure schemes and financial assistance. The study stresses these inequalities embedded in the Kerala education system, and it observes that this discrimination affected equitable students' access to education in different types of schools in Kerala.

The analysis conducted by Rajan and Francis (2023) based on UDISE Plus data from 1,200 primary schools of Kerala revealed many access-related issues. While the study reports a good average performance of most schools in many aspects, disparities in digital access and infrastructural facilities, especially in government schools of Idukki, Wayanad, and Pathanamthitta districts, were highlighted. This may affect students' access to quality and digitally assisted education of students from economically weaker backgrounds.

Das (2022) conducted a study on the effectiveness of the Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan project on access, equity and quality of secondary education in West Bengal. For the study the investigator used a descriptive survey and data collected from 456 teachers and 1,370 students across 46 secondary schools in five districts of the state. Findings of the study indicated that as a result of the RMSA project, access, equity and quality of secondary school improved. The study also identified many problems in access and equity with school facilities. Facilities for students, like toilet facilities, ICT facilities and medical services, are very few. Rural school students face comparatively more issues n access to these facilities. More than mere implementation, the study suggests close monitoring and management of the resources.

Hurtt (2021) conducted a study on Access and Equity in California Schools. This study comprises three articles on access and equity in California observing school inputs, coursework and local planning efforts that support student learning and progress. The study made use of descriptive analysis and the study examines availability and accessibility of rigorous English courses and it reveals that college-level course enrollment is distributed unevenly across both schools and students. Second part of the study explores how the educational system moves toward recovery in the midst of crisis. The last part of the study examines how schools adapted policies and practices in the early period of the pandemic. Findings of the study indicate that, during a crisis, equity is at the forefront of both policy and planning, threaded through accessibility to instruction as well as academic and socio-emotional supports. The district level plan to meet students' needs often focused on instruction assessment and attendance.

Expanding this discourse, Githaka et al. (2019) conducted a study on Social Amenities and Academic Performance in Primary Schools in Gichugu Constituency of Kenya. This study analyses impact of social amenities on student access and academic performance in primary schools in Gichugu Constituency, Kenya. The study aimed at assessing the status of social amenities and how this sanitation amenities influence pupils' access and performance. The study was based on Social Constructionist Theory and it used descriptive survey research design. 63 school head teachers were randomly selected as sample for the study and Data was analysed using descriptive statistical techniques. The study also established that available social amenity influence the access and academic performance in primary schools. In order to improve student access and academic performance in primary schools of Kenya the study recommended that educational stakeholders should facilitate provisions for improving social amenities in primary schools.

Sukumaran and Mathew (2018) conducted a study on students' access to basic facilities in government and aided schools of Kerala. The study focused on students' access to basic facilities, infrastructure, and teachers' availability. The major findings of the study indicate access is very limited in government schools in tribal and coastal areas. The study observed inadequacy in providing a suitable learning environment for students in different types of schools in Kerala. Poor facilities, low-maintenance classrooms, and inadequate sanitation are noted as major issues affecting students' access.

Aakshi (2017) conducted a study on the assessment of accessibility, equity and infrastructure in elementary schools of Western Uttar Pradesh with reference to RTE norms. The study mainly focused on the development of elementary education and access in western Uttar Pradesh after the RTE Act. The study used a field survey among students and collected their own experiences. The study found that the state of elementary education after RTE implementation is improved. The study identified disparity in access to facilities in school. Effective utilisation of facilities, planning and effective management are suggested for reducing inequality in access.

In a similar context of geographical and community-specific challenges, Migosi et al. (2012) have analysed determinants of primary school access and participation rates in the pastoralist region of Turkana County, Kenya. The purpose of the study was to find out the factors that enhance pupils’ access and participation in primary school education in Turkana County. The study revealed that security provisions for students, establishment of boarding schools, adequate provision of food, school infrastructural development, and availability of teachers and learning materials were the important factors that enhance access and participation in primary school education.

Harmam (2010) conducted a study on school choice for the poor: The limits of marketisation of primary education in rural India. The study used data from Uttar Pradesh to explore how marketisation has affected the provision of primary education and progress towards universal access. The study was primarily based on a thirteen-village survey of 250 households and visits to 26 private and government schools in one rural district of Uttar Pradesh, India. The study revealed that Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) is largely silent on the role of non-government providers of educational services in extending access. The study tries to establish to what extent these private schools meet the educational needs of children from households in different quintiles of wealth. This study reminds us that marketisation and LFP schools provide no simple solution to the problems of extending access to basic education to the poor and ultra-poor.

Juneja (2010) conducted a study on access, diversity, and participation in India's schools. The study reviews the available database at the national level and the findings of different research studies on the progress made by the country in providing access to elementary education. The study focuses on the diversity within state-provided schooling facilities, issues related to equity, and patterns matching certain categories of population to certain types of schooling. This study gives special focus to the increasing demand for education provided by different types of schools, the trends in growth of private and public schools, and enrollment in these schools and discusses issues relating to the diversification of delivery of elementary education, which has tremendous influence on and access to quality education.

Govinda (2008), conducted an analytical study on Access to Elementary Education in India. This study aims to explore trends in educational access and to delineate different groups which are vulnerable to exclusion from educational opportunities at the elementary stage. This study has drawn references from a series

of analytical papers developed on different themes, including regional disparity in education, the problem of drop out, education of the children of migrants, inequity in educational opportunities, social equity in education, health and nutrition, and governance of education. Regional disparities and social inequities, different zones of exclusion, nature and magnitude of the problems of access, transition and equity were addressed in this study.

Access to education was the focus of a case study by Bhat (2007), who conducted a case study on access to education for Gujjars and Bakarwals of Kashmir. The main purpose of the study was to examine the access to education for Gujjars and Bakarwal children in terms of distance of schools and infrastructure facilities in these schools in District Kupwara. The sample for the study was Gujjar and Bakarwal students, teachers and all those in 396 schools of the region. The study concluded that only 60.65% of children of the Gujjar and Bakarwal communities were enrolled in different schools in District Kupwara, and the academic achievement of Gujjar and Bakarwal students was observed to be very low.

Issues of migration-related exclusion were documented by Wadiker and Das (2004), who investigated the educational experiences of seasonal migrant children in Maharashtra. The survey conducted among migrant students and families of the state reveals several major problems facing migrant children in social development and adjustment. From October to the end of the academic year these children are unable to attend the school, and they migrate with their families, and no provision is made for them to continue their schooling near the place where they have moved. The study stresses the importance of special attention and parental care for the development of their children.

Emily (2001) conducted an empirical investigation of access to elementary schools in West Virginia based on school community and spatial equity. The study

was conducted as in-depth case studies in eighty-four schools in three school districts in West Virginia. The study mainly focused on whether the distribution of travel cost from location to school was equitable to the density and socio-economic status of the inmates. For the study, the researcher analysed the data set of distances between eighty-four elementary school locations and students. The study found that spatial inequities in access to school exist and varied by school zone. The study also indicates the negative association between access and achievement in some way. The finding of the study stresses the need for more research on the importance of socioeconomic status in school accessibility.

Kaul (2001) conducted a study in Karnataka on accessing primary education: Going Beyond the Classroom. The purpose of the study was to find out the level of access to primary education and identify the factors which influence elementary school access. This study was conducted in a sample of 93 schools across Karnataka which consisted of students, teachers, headmasters, parents, members of NGOs, etc. Descriptive and inferential statistical techniques were used to analyse the data. The study revealed that caste, class and gender divides of the region highly influence student access in primary schools.

Determinants of School Access

Access to school is not only influenced by facilities, but social, economic, and cultural factors are more important. Many studies have analysed these factors in different settings.

Gopinath et al. (2025) examined major barriers affecting access to higher education institution in India. The study analysed institutional and policy data. The study identified many structural barriers that hinder students' access. Socioeconomic status, distance, and inadequate infrastructure are the identified major barriers to

study. The study revealed that students from different sections face many structural barriers. Students from disadvantaged sections and rural areas are facing many structural and family-related issues in access. The study observed science courses as having the most barriers for those students from economically disadvantaged families.

Similarly, Choudhury (2023) conducted a study on factors effecting school choice for educating children India. The study was based on data from the National Sample Survey (NSS). For analysis of factors affecting school selection, the study used a binary logit model. The study identified many factors affecting parental decisions in school selection. Family income, parental education, nearby school facility, and quality of education are identified as key factors. The study pointed out the family income as the most determining factor of school selection and parental choice.

Kumar et al. (2023) conducted a study on factors leading to school dropout of adolescence in India. The study focused on reasons and circumstances that compel adolescents in India to end their school education. The study was conducted using the survey method, and data were analysed using statistical techniques. The study revealed many factors hindering school access, such as poverty, low parental education, gender gap, early marriage and location. The study recommended strong economic and parental support for students' retention in school.

Nair (2022) conducted an in-depth interview-based study focusing on the influence of religious and linguistic diversity on educational access in primary schools of the Kasarkode district of Kerala. Using qualitative approaches and techniques, the study tried to explore functional exclusion in schools rather than physical barriers. The study pointed out the functional exclusion of Kannada- and

Tulu-speaking students in Malayalam-medium schools. Migrant and tribal students also face some practical limitations in normal classrooms, and it suggests taking the access issue in terms of experiential and functional aspects rather than infrastructural terms.

Joseph and Thomas (2020) conducted a study using 420 students, 60 teachers, and 40 parents from government, aided and private-aided schools to explore barriers in access in lower primary schools in Kerala's Malappuram and Kollam districts. The study analysed many effective policies and programmes that made school enrolment high in Kerala, which is due to many programmes and practices. But the study explored many hidden barriers that hinder students' access to school, such as gendered expectations, lack of transportation in rural areas, and classroom practices.

Dutta (2018) conducted a survey study on access of street children in India to health and education. The study focused on access of low-status students to educational facilities in India. For the research purpose, 100 street children in the age range 6-18 were selected from Mumbai and Kolkata. A convenience sampling technique was used for collecting data. The study used a mixed research approach to collect both qualitative and quantitative data needed for the study. The data indicate that poverty is the primary cause for the increasing numbers of street children, and the study observes a lack of awareness among parents as another important reason for keeping children away from school.

Shareefa (2016) analyzed teacher readiness for inclusive education in schools of Hithadhoo, Addu, Maldives. The study was to analyze whether all students have equal educational opportunities regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, or other conditions. For the study, a mixed design was

used, and 153 teachers were selected for the survey phase and 10 teachers for focus group sessions. The study reveals that teachers had a positive view towards the readiness factors related to inclusive education, and it also points out some challenging factors like lack of knowledge and skills on inclusive education, lack of facilities, lack of awareness among all stakeholders, curriculum difficulties, and time restrictions that affect teachers' perceptions.

Meera (2015) conducted a case study on quality education for all based on government schools in New Delhi. The main purpose of the study was to analyse whether there is access to quality education in India for children from low-income families. The sample selected for the study was a state-run government girls' school in New Delhi. The study revealed that a high teacher-pupil ratio was the major difficulty that resulted from the lack of infrastructure that the teachers experienced. Moreover, the study observed that a high pupil-teacher ratio impacts the quality of education. Hence, the study observed that there is no equal and equitable access for all children from low-income families to quality education in India.

Devi (2014) studied issues of equity and access based on the growth of private schools in Manipur. The study was conducted to examine the teaching inputs in private and government schools. The descriptive survey method was used for the study. 43 private and 59 government schools in the state were selected as samples for the study through stratified random sampling with proportional allocation. The data were analysed using chi-square tests, percentages, bar charts, and other statistical techniques. The study reveals that there is a notable difference in infrastructural facilities, access, and equity between government and private schools in Manipur. The study also observed the influence of socioeconomic status on student access and opportunity in primary schools in Manipur.

Mudasir and Ganai (2012) conducted a case study on the enrolment, infrastructure, and status of teachers at the primary level of the Batamaloo Zone of Srinagar District. The study was conducted among students aged 6 to 14. The study found that 49.89% of the total students enrolled in school were male and 50.11% were female. The study observed that physical and teaching facilities included in the zone are limited and access to such facilities is very limited.

Moala and Deletions (2010), as part of the CREATE project by the University of Sussex, analysed educational access in South Africa to examine patterns of access to education in South Africa. The study analyses the educational access and exclusion based on case studies carried out in eight schools in the Ekurhuleni South district of Gauteng and six schools in the Dutywa district of the Eastern Cape. The study reveals that causes of educational exclusion in South Africa are poverty, the poor state of school infrastructure, the absence of state services to support schools in terms of social and psychological issues, and negative perceptions. According to the study, the pattern of educational exclusion in South Africa is in five specific areas of out-of-school children: repetition and dropout, overage enrollment, poor-quality learning, and poor-quality teaching.

Retnakumar and Arokiasamy (2006) analyzed school enrolment trends in Kerala based on data available in government portals, studies, and public surveys. The study observed that all studies dealing with demographic transition and falling school enrolment in Kerala focus on fertility decline as the sole reason. This study finds that aside from fertility decline, the poor quality of teaching in government schools and the quality maintained by private unaided English-medium schools lead to a decline in enrolments in public government schools. The study reveals that only by improving the quality of school education can the retention of students in government schools be sustained.

Lloyd et al. (2005) studied the effect of gender differences in primary school access, type, and quality on the decision to enrol in rural Pakistan. The study explores the effect of primary school access, type (public vs. private), and quality on parents' decision to enrol their children in rural Pakistan. The quality of the girls' school is also a significant factor influencing parents' decision to enrol their girls. Boys' overall levels of enrolment are unaffected by access and quality; parents, however, are more likely to select private schooling for their boys and girls when a private school is locally available.

Collectively these studies indicate many issues in school access. Socio-cultural background, gender, parental expectations, language, and school-level inclusivity are major determinants of access that determine the students' access. To address these complex factors, policy-level interventions are required.

Factors Effecting School Access

School access is also influenced by governance structure, school management type, and policy visionaries. Many studies have addressed this and examined the influence of school nature and management philosophy and its influence on students' access.

Meena (2025) analysed factors affecting students' participation and enrolment in government schools in India. For the analysis, the study used data from UDISE+ and ASER reports. Through this study, the investigator explored different factors affecting school access and enrolment across the country. The study identified many issues that lead to students' access to government schools. Low infrastructure, low performance, parental perception, and availability of quality private institutions are the influencing factors of access. Teachers' attitudes and their shortage are also identified as a reason for shifting students to private institutions.

The study suggests strong authority support and infrastructural development in government schools in India.

The ASER report (2024) examined school access and related factors in rural India. The report was made using a survey across many districts in India. The study focussed on enrolment, students' attendance and their learning outcome in rural areas. The study noted students' enrolment rate as high even in rural areas. But many subfactors like infrastructural deficiency, absence of usable toilets, playgrounds, proper drinking water facilities and learning resources were identified as barriers to students' participation.

Alam (2021) conducted a qualitative analysis of contributions of Muslim community organisations like MES to educational development in Kerala. For the study, historic records and available data were used. The study focussed on the contributions of Muslim community organisations to educational development in Kerala. The study found that the increased level of educational access for Muslims in Kerala is a result of active contributions of many voluntary, non-political groups. The study found that MES and other organisations mobilised local communities and created awareness about the importance of education. Grassroots efforts that strengthened the educational aspiration of the region are well explored in this study Alam (2021) conducted a qualitative analysis of contributions of Muslim community organisations like MES to educational development in Kerala. For the study, historic records and available data were used. The study focussed on the contributions of Muslim community organisations to educational development in Kerala. The study found that the increased level of educational access for Muslims in Kerala is a result of active contributions of many voluntary, non-political groups. The study found that MES and other organisations mobilised local communities and created awareness about

the importance of education. Grassroots efforts that strengthened the educational aspiration of the region are well explored in this study.

Bharti (2016) conducted a study on the educational status of Dalit women and the challenges in attaining and accessing education. It was conducted based on Pierre Bourdieu's theories of cultural reproduction and social reproduction. The study observes its findings on two debates on education: one is whether educational institutions lead to equality and justice for all and provide the same facilities and knowledge to all, irrespective of their caste, gender, and class. The study reveals that there is no equal access, opportunity, or consideration for Dalits. The second discussion was on whether educational institutions are leading to social exclusion and discrimination. The findings indicate that issues and challenges faced by Dalits, especially girls, exist in India as they are or are in worse conditions.

Ahuja (2011) conducted a qualitative study for understanding equality and inclusion in diverse school cultures. The case study method was used as the key method of study, and the researcher selected a private school situated in an urban context. This study also focuses on language of instruction and how it creates a culture of greater inclusion and participation of students in the learning process. For the research purpose, the researcher conducted focus group discussions with students and semi-structured interviews of teachers and the principal. This study shows that social beliefs and understandings of the children interface with the culture of school and that strengthen or weaken the school culture through its natural process. This study also observes inclusive school culture with heterogeneous mixed groups of students helps in nurturing greater sensitivity among students.

Govinda and Madhumita (2008) conducted a study on social exclusion and school participation in India: Expanding access with equity. This study tries to explore the dimensions and issues related to exclusion from education, and it

discusses different policies to ensure social inclusion in school and actions required to make educational expansion more equitable, which would contribute to pluralism and harmony and promote greater social cohesion. The study found four clusters of factors that significantly influence the patterns of exclusion. The first cluster relates to gender; the second cluster of factors concerns the less than satisfactory outcomes from policy, legal, strategy, and operational measures taken to address the various dimensions of exclusion; the third cluster focuses on forces that keep children out of school, particularly girls, and revolves around location; and the fourth factor is poverty that prevents children from schooling.

These studies suggest that the type of school governance and the nature of educational policy implementation play a decisive role in students' access and enrolment.

Studies Related to Participation

Participation in education extends to students' active involvement in school activities and curricular programs. So, examining the pattern of students' participation in different school activities is important. This section examines studies that address patterns of students' participation in school.

Community and Parental Participation

Gaur and Parkash (2025) analysed the role of parents and community based on insights from NEP 2020. The study analysed the role of family and community in child education in the new Indian context. The study was conducted as a review based on existing documents. The study stresses the role of family in ensuring students' attendance and developing students' motivation in the new Indian context. The role of community was also stressed in this study, and it suggested a

collaborative attempt of family, community and school to improve quality of education and students' access.

Nisha and Verma (2024) conducted an analysis of the influence of parental support on academic achievement. For the study, the investigator collected data from 450 students from Haryana. The data for the study were collected by using a semi-structured questionnaire. The findings of the study indicated that family support is highly influencing students' achievement, and it influences their participation in classroom activities. The study indicated a marginal difference in parental support for those from low economic backgrounds and structured backgrounds. The study also identified socio-economic status as a key factor influencing students' learning.

Kumar (2021) conducted a field study on community participation in schools in West Bengal. The study analysed the participation of the community in various functions of the schools, and it is reflected in school development. The main focus of the study was on the participation of the rural community in education in the context of SBM. The study used a mixed method and employed phenomenological design for satisfying the objectives. The study reveals that the community members in most of the village initiated an enrolment drive in the neighbouring area. SMDC effectively instructs the community in enrolling their children in school at the earliest. The study also found that the participation of the community in the management and administration of the school ultimately leads to the improvement of the school and educational quality.

Reddy and Uma (2015) conducted a case study in Andhra Pradesh on community participation in improving enrolment, retention, and quality of elementary education. The main objective of the study was to understand the extent of community

participation in enrolling children in elementary school programmes. The study made use of a qualitative research design and was conducted among a sample of 300 head teachers, 900 academicians, and 600 community members. The study found that community participation in making physical facilities in schools is satisfactory, whereas their participation in enrolling socially disadvantaged children is very low.

Nayak and Mohan (2014) conducted a study on community participation in the universalisation of primary education: a sociological study of Balasore and Keonjher districts in Orissa. The study was an attempt to develop an understanding of the role of communities in the universalisation of primary education. The study used both quantitative and qualitative research techniques, and the data for the study were obtained from primary as well as secondary sources. The study observes that the number of educational institutions, the enrolment ratio, and the teacher-pupil ratio have increased over the years. The study focuses on the processes and practices of community participation and understands the interplay of caste, class, and gender in community participation to achieve the goals of universal primary education through the School Management Committee. Aspects of this study have some relevance in facilitating the greater participation of rural communities in educational planning and management.

Rao (2008) conducted a study on primary education in tribal areas: a study of community participation in Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan. The study was aimed at studying the community participation in education-related activities during the implementation of the first phase of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan. The study was conducted using a survey method among 345 samples selected by a simple random sampling method. Based on the data collected from SEMC and PTA members, the study indicates that the levels of participation and involvement in the school-related activities are very low. The findings

of the study reveal that the policy provisions and constitutional guarantees are not successfully implemented at the grassroots level to ensure community participation and involvement in primary education in India.

Khan (2006) conducted a study on the role of the school management committee in strengthening relationships between the school and local community in a community-based school in Pakistan. The study was conducted to understand the role of the school management committee in strengthening relationships between the school and the local community. The study observed that active participation of SMC members will increase school quality and achievement. The study found that faith-based community participation could bring about positive changes in schools. And the study also observes that the poor socio-economic status of parents, low retention of teachers and unfavourable outside school environments might cause low retention and participation of all the community in school activities.

Ramachandran (2001) analysed innovations in community participation in primary education in Rajasthan. The study focuses on innovative programmes for primary and community participation in Rajasthan. The study highlights two important initiative programmes in Rajasthan: the Shiksha Karmi Project (SKP) and the Rajasthan Lok Jumbish. The SKP project was implemented in 1987 to improve basic access to education in remote areas where schools face issues related to teacher absenteeism, non-functioning schools, and community despair and cynicism. The study observed that these two projects play a greater role in increasing primary school participation in Rajasthan.

Wilson (1997) conducted a case study on participatory management schools in tribal areas of Visakhapatnam District. The study focused on the impact of

participation of the tribal community in the growth and development of school management in the tribal areas of Visakhapatnam District. The study was conducted among 70 tribals who were drawn from two tribal villages, namely Mangabanda and EGUA, Pedapalli, of Visakhapatnam District. Findings of the study reveal that the people's participation to establish the Maa Bad' School was successful in both villages, and basic infrastructure, teaching aids and teaching procedures were satisfactory in both the villages. The study observed that the tribal people's participation in the management of Maa Badi School was highly satisfactory.

These studies indicate different patterns of school participation and it suggest community and parental participation for improved students' participation in school. It suggests for cultural sensitivity, community capacity-building, and mutual accountability for effective participation.

Factors Promoting Participation

Institutional structure also influences student participation in schools. Facilities such as school meals, hostel accommodations, scholarship schemes, flexible learning systems, and child-friendly school environments significantly influence the students' participation in school.

Sabu and Deepa (2025) conducted a study on factors affecting student participation in secondary schools in Kerala. For the study the investigator collected data from 584 students from government, aided and private schools in Kerala. Based on statistical analysis of the data collected, the study made some conclusions. The study found that education of family, social status, and type of school were student factors that strongly influenced student participation in school and its programmes and practices.

Moupiya et al. (2024) conducted a survey in India among secondary school students to explore students' participation in learning activities. The study was conducted among 2000 students, and data were collected using a structured questionnaire. The result indicated that students' interest and participation are different. More than the students' interest, access to resources, faculties, and family support are important in ensuring student participation in learning programmes. The study found that those students from supportive backgrounds perform well in learning activities. The study suggested providing curriculum support, effective learning resources and teacher training to ensure maximum student participation in learning activities.

.Jackson et al. (2018) analysed the impact of free primary education in Kenya on the enrolment of primary school students. The purpose of the study was to determine the impact of the free primary education policy implemented in Kenya on students' enrolment. The study was conducted among 384 teachers and 128 primary schools that were selected using random and purposeful techniques. Questionnaires and interview schedules were employed for collecting data from a selected sample. The study stressed the impact of the free education programme being implemented in Kenya.

Adekunle et al. (2016) conducted a study on the effect of a school feeding programme on the enrolment and performance of elementary school students of Nigeria. The purpose of this study was to find out the impact of school feeding programmes on the enrolment of elementary school students. The study was conducted among students from 10 public schools selected through a random sampling technique from Osun State of Nigeria, and the study was administered in a mixed research design. The study found that the school feeding programme has positively impacted the enrolment of elementary school students in Nigeria.

Dinesh and Chandrashekar (2015) assessed the attitude and perception of parents towards the education and schooling of their children in Karnataka. The main purpose of the study was to examine the attitude of both tribal and non-tribal parents towards their children's schooling. For the study, data from 145 samples from Channageri Taluka and Santhebenour Panchayat of Davanagree District were collected using a questionnaire. The result indicated that the attitude of parents towards primary education efforts was not favourable. Many of the parents consider the education a wastage of time. The study observed that tribal parents were more concentrated on basic literacy while non-tribal parents were on quality of education.

Mukherjee (2014) analysed elementary education in India based on enrolment, retention and quality. The major objective of the study was to explore the existing interrelationship between enrolment, retention and quality. The study explores the interrelationship in elementary schools in fifteen major states and analysed school environments based on four dimensions, viz., access, physical infrastructure, learning time and human infrastructure. The study revealed that the states have achieved high primary school enrolment but have failed in terms of ensuring physical and human infrastructural facilities. The study suggests that the government has many programmes to raise the enrolment in schools, but certain specific programmes must be designed to raise the quality of primary education.

Namukwaya and Kibirige (2014) studied factors affecting primary school enrolment and retention of pupils in Kotido District, Uganda. This study focuses on factors that affect enrolment and retention of pupils from the primary first standard to the seventh, and the study is inclined towards an interpretive paradigm. The study reveals many factors contributing to the problem, and the majority of these factors are culture-related: pastoral lifestyle, strong cultural values, a negative attitude towards education, and engagement in domestic work. The study suggested some

future strategies to improve enrolment and retention in schools should be broad-based to address Karimojong people's culture as well as socio-economic characteristics.

Gautam and Vejoya (2013) conducted a study on the effect of early childhood developmental programmes on attendance and school participation in rural North India. The study was done among students of selected schools from North India. The study revealed that effective use of early childhood development programmes influences the student participation and retention in later stages.

Surendran (2013) conducted a study on school enrolment and its determinants among children with cerebral palsy in elementary schools of Thiruvananthapuram District in Kerala. The study focused on the proportion of children with cerebral palsy enrolled in formal education institutions. A cross-sectional study was done among children between 3 and 12 years of age with cerebral palsy in the Thiruvananthapuram district, who were selected as the sample for the study. The study found that 60.5% of children with cerebral palsy were undergoing some kind of formal education. The study also observed that early development in physical, cognitive and language abilities is important in determining school enrolment of these children.

Migosi et al. (2012) analysed determinants of primary school access and participation rates in the pastoralist Turkana County, Kenya. This study was focused on factors that could enhance pupils' access and participation in primary school education in Kakuma and Lokichoggio divisions of Turkana County in northwestern Kenya. The study revealed that security provisions for students, establishment of boarding schools, adequate provision of food, school infrastructural development, availability of teachers and learning materials were the important factors that

enhanced access and participation in primary school education. This study recommends establishing more boarding schools and an adequate supply of food to all schools in the very interior nomadic pastoralist areas will enhance access and participation to primary education of the country.

Dipankar et al. (2010) conducted an evaluative study on the school Mid-Day Meal programme in India in the context of Tripura. It focused on the background and the history of the midday meal programme implemented in different states of India during the pre- and post-independence periods. It also discussed recommendations made by different education policies and educational committees to ensure the health and nutrition of the students that may help for a sustainable development of our future generation. The study reveals that the midday meal programme was a crucial programme implemented by different governments and other authorities in ensuring and encouraging massive enrolment and student participation in primary schools of India.

These studies stress importance of structural and programmatic supports in promoting student participation especially for students from socially disadvantaged categories.

Studies Related to Diversity

Diversity in education includes differences in culture, language, religion, gender, and socio-economic background that influence the learning environment. This section reviews studies related to different types of diversity present in school.

Pai (2025) conducted a qualitative analysis of the teachers' experiences of implementing culturally responsive and inclusive education in schools in New York. The study was conducted by using interviews with teachers and field observation conducted in selected primary schools. The study noted a trend among teachers for

promoting dominant culture and identity in classroom practices and discussions. The study suggested promoting culturally inclusive and responsive classroom practices in school based on inclusive policies.

Rao and Devi (2023) analysed the status of accommodation of diversity in Indian classrooms. The study was conducted in a qualitative structure, and data were collected from teachers through semi-structured interviews. The study observed many inadequacies integrating diversity in Indian classrooms. Even if policy is strongly supporting teachers' attitudes and preparedness, there exists a strong barrier in schools. Limited facilities, low technology integration in classrooms, and insufficient teacher training were listed as barriers to diversity integration. The study recommended high infrastructural support, proper teachers' training and proper resource allocation for integrating diversity in classrooms.

Nazish (2019) tried to conceptualise the perspectives of different stakeholders on the implementation and impact of government plans and programmes for primary school children in Gujarat. The study was conducted in a descriptive design among teachers and parents of selected schools that were selected using a purposive sampling technique from Banaskantha, the Dangs, Surat, and Vadodara districts of Gujarat. Findings of the study indicated that the participation of community members was negligible in the implementation of government plans and programmes at the school level. The study observes that community participation, a severe shortage of teachers, poor quality of institutional support for teachers' professional development, and a lack of focus on quality education are the biggest challenges to community participation in primary schools.

Joseph et al. (2016) conducted a study on diversity and inclusion in higher education based on some selected institutions in Kerala. The study was conducted

under the Centre for Policy Research in Higher Education (CPRHE) and funded by the ICSSR. The study analysed the nature and issues of students' diversity and discrimination on campuses. This research report is based on the analysis of the empirical evidence generated from all the institutions selected for case studies in Kerala. In order to satisfy the objectives, both qualitative and quantitative methods were used for the study. The study indicates higher participation of females in higher education in Kerala and gender equality in student participation. At the same time, the inferences of the study indicate that reflections of the elements of patriarchal culture existing in Kerala society are also highly reflected on the campus.

Subrahmanian and Unies (2002) reviewed issues of social policy based on gender and education. The study highlighted the issues of gender inequity in education. According to the study, access, retention, and achievement are the pressing issues of equity in education. The study highlights the need for developing diverse local systems within a specific school or community that are sensitive to the local cultures and histories. The study observes that gender equity in education can be achieved only by micro-level intervention of the cultural and social norms that inflict gender discrimination.

Diversity in Classroom and Practices

Classroom environments are important in experiencing diversity and transferring values. Classroom practices and management can help to transfer these and thus can make the school more inclusive. Many studies are addressing this both in Indian and international contexts.

Daniel (2026) analysed inclusive classroom and teachers' preparedness in India. The study was conducted using field observation and semi-structured interviews with teachers, and the data were thematically analysed. The study

identified many issues in setting inclusive classrooms in India, like inadequate classrooms, lack of training for teachers, cultural and linguistic barriers, and ability-based diversity in classrooms. The study indicated the importance of teacher preparedness, a strong supportive system and reflective practices in setting a positive learning environment in schools. The study recommends revision in the teachers' training programme and instigating inclusive pedagogy in curricula.

Tripathi (2025) conducted a study on inclusive practices in private schools in India. The study was conducted based on inclusive policy in India based on the Right to Education Act. For the analysis and data collection study, a qualitative approach and thematic analysis were used. The study has identified many issues in implementing inclusive policy in private schools in India. Difficulties for teachers, absence of adaptive methods and facilities, and lack of proper training were identified as major issues. The study suggested many practical methods to address diversity in the classroom. Appointing trained teachers, ensuring adequate facilities, and accepting adaptive methods were suggested to address diversity in the classroom.

Jackson (2022) examined educational changes and improved diversity. The study analyses the causes of low diversity in school settings and the importance of creating an inclusive environment in a school setting. The study reveals the environmental reality of working in schools based on the experiences shared by selected teachers. The study observes that there are many challenges that hinder the formation of an equitable and friendly social atmosphere in the school, and society as a whole has to work hard to ensure diversity and inclusion in the school system, and thus diversity and inclusivity should work in a synchronous fashion

Birtel et al. (2020) conducted a study on the change in school ethnic diversity and intergroup relations: the transition from segregated elementary to mixed secondary schools for majority and minority students. This study examines the

impact of changes in school diversity on intergroup relations. A longitudinal survey among 551 white British and Asian British students who transited from elementary to secondary school was conducted for the study. The analysis revealed that the transition from segregated elementary to mixed secondary schools was a factor in the positive intergroup relationship in Asian British schools. The study points out diversity exposure in the early developmental stages and the impact of changing diversity levels on student relationships.

Nazish (2019) tried to conceptualise the perspectives of different stakeholders on the implementation and impact of government plans and programmes for primary school children in Gujarat. The study was conducted in a descriptive design among teachers and parents of selected schools that were selected using a purposive sampling technique from Banaskantha, the Dangs, Surat, and Vadodara districts of Gujarat. Findings of the study indicated that the participation of community members was negligible in the implementation of government plans and programmes at the school level. The study observes that community participation, a severe shortage of teachers, poor quality of institutional support for teachers' professional development, and a lack of focus on quality education are the biggest challenges to community participation in primary schools.

Kumar and Jaison (2017) examined inclusive classroom practices in different government schools in Kerala. Based on data collected from 25 teachers and field observations, the study found many limitations for inclusive practices in school. A high enrollment rate and quality facilities are reported in schools in Kerala, but the inclusive practices remain superficial. The interview with teachers revealed positive attitudes of teachers towards diversity, but they shared their limitations due to the absence of concrete methods and practical solutions to include children with disabilities, linguistic minorities, or those from migrant families.

Faas et al. (2016) theoretically analysed religious diversity in primary schools based on reflections from the Republic of Ireland. Religious diversity and secular issues are recent challenges in schools in Ireland due to the increased number of migrants in the country. To address the issue of diversity, the Irish Ministry established a Forum on Patronage and Pluralism in the Primary Sector aimed at reducing the number of Catholic primary schools in favour of more multi-denominational schools to meet societal changes and demands. The study observes that religious education in schools has the potential to promote tolerance. The study suggests that religious and moral education should be seen as an opportunity to help younger people understand and respect the diverse world and communities around them.

Schachner et al. (2016) analysed the cultural diversity climate at school and how it relates to the acculturation and school adjustment of early adolescent immigrants in Germany. The study analysed the school climate based on the existing state of equality, inclusion, and cultural pluralism in schools. The study was conducted among 386 early-adolescent immigrant students in 44 ethnically heterogeneous classrooms in Germany. The findings of the study indicated that manifestations of both inclusive and cultural pluralism in policies promote psychological school adjustment among students and promote cultural assimilation.

Chakraborthy (2005) conducted a comparative study on classroom climates in secondary schools in West Bengal under different types of management. 82 schools from rural and urban parts of West Bengal were selected as a sample, and data was collected from 145 male and 145 female teachers in the selected schools. The study observed that students coming from schools under different types of management differ in their perceptions and proficiency in education, and the environment they experience in school and in the classroom

highly influences their common perception and understanding. The study also observed that the diversity in the physical, social, and psychological climate or environment of schools and classrooms could not be more complex in pluralistic societies like West Bengal.

These studies indicate the principles of inclusion can be transferred to students through daily practices and institutional support. Diversity should be addressed through school practices as an educational aim.

Curriculum and Diversity

Curriculum plays a key role in shaping students' worldviews and determining their identities. A curriculum that is not addressing diversity can contribute to exclusion. Several studies have examined the extent to which school curricula represent diversity.

Nisha and Menon (2022) studied diversity in school practice and textbooks of Kerala upper primary schools. It analysed 16 Malayalam and social science textbooks of the SCERT syllabus and conducted interviews with teachers. The study highlighted a major gap in representation and meaningful inclusion of tribal communities and religious diversities. While textbook content addressed diversity to an extent, these themes were rarely transferred to classroom practices. Inclusive and diversity-focused teacher training and classroom practices are suggested for effective transmission of diversity themes to the younger generation.

Jhansi (2019) conducted a content analysis of the curriculum of different elementary schools in Odessa and some other schools, such as Saraswati Sishu Mandir and Sri Aurobindo Integral School, which place special focus on value inculcation. A mixed approach of qualitative and quantitative techniques was employed for the study. The study was conducted on 284 students, out of whom 151 are from Class V, 133 are from Class VII, and 30 are headmasters. The study found

that global values, aesthetic values, humanistic values, and national and social values are adequately incorporated into the curriculum of primary classes. Certain values like ethics, fraternity, the concept of the world family, empathy, charity, humanity, a secular outlook, and internationalism need to be incorporated into the school curriculum.

Nekha (2002) conducted a socio-cultural study of cultural content in school education in Nagaland. The study was to examine the problems related to the presentation of cultural content in school curricula. Through the purposive sampling technique, 24 schools were selected from four districts of Nagaland, and data was collected from 24 headmasters, 111 teachers, 646 students, 10 experts, 20 intellectuals, and 10 community elders. The study found that the present status of culture in the school curriculum is not satisfactory. Important problems of cultural inclusion, as revealed by the study, were a lack of written materials, a lack of culture-orientated teachers for the subject, and the absence of physical facilities and time.

These studies explore inclusive curriculum design, which is not merely about adding diverse names or stories in the curriculum. The curriculum should represent all identities and social realities in the classroom.

Teachers and Institutional Culture

Teachers play a central role in mediating diversity within classrooms. The institutional culture values norms, and school practices are affecting factors of the school environment. A number of studies explored how these factors shape the space for inclusion and recognition of diversity in school.

Jyoti and Devi (2026) examined the factors influencing inclusive education across global contexts. The study analysed the impact of teacher attitudes, parental

viewpoints, and school leadership on inclusive practices. The study analysed the importance of teachers' attitudes, parental perspectives, and the importance of school leadership in promoting an inclusive culture in school. The study identified teachers' attitudes as a major factor in setting an inclusive environment, and the study also indicated a need for inclusive training and professional development for teachers. The study highlighted the strong parental support and inclusive education and their eagerness for equal opportunities for their children. The study identified school leadership as the critical factor in promoting and demotivating inclusive culture in a school. The study also identified some common challenges in inclusive education such as inadequate training, limited resources, and social discrimination.

Deepti (2025) conducted a study on teacher preparedness and attitudes toward inclusive classrooms. Using PRISMA guidelines, the study reviewed much literature from research articles and identified many themes to include diversity in the classroom. Teachers' attitudes toward inclusive education, teacher self-efficacy and beliefs in implementing inclusive strategies in the classroom, gaps in both pre-service teacher education and in-service training, contextual barriers, and absence of strategies to build preparedness were the major themes. The study suggests many strategies to improve inclusive practice in school. A comprehensive approach addressing teacher training, professional development, and support and collaboration among teachers, administrators, and policymakers was suggested to create an effective and equitable learning environment in school.

Siema et al. (2025) conducted a review of teachers' attitudes towards equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) in higher education. A comprehensive bibliographic review of studies from databases Eric (Ebsco), APA PsycINFO, Web of Science Core Collection, and Scopus. Among these, a majority of studies had focused on teachers' attitudes towards the inclusion of students from minority groups.

Openness/Resistance, Comfort/Discomfort, and Willingness/Reluctance are the three dimensions identified among teachers. The study observed that factors like gender, training, exposure to diversity, and institutional support influence the attitude of teachers. The study suggested many strategies for improving the inclusive culture of the school, like institutional support, teacher training, and attitude building.

In a similar way, Manjrekar (2020) studied the influence of gender, caste and social diversity on school culture in India. The research found that institutional practices strongly influence teacher attitudes and behaviour toward students. The study analyses the school culture, curriculum, classroom and learning practices. Teacher attitudes and behaviours strongly influence teacher attitudes and behaviours, and that leads to lower expectations and unequal opportunities for marginalised students in school. To improve positive school culture, the study suggested many practices, like setting a supportive school environment and creating a positive attitude for teachers, setting gender-sensitive teacher training, forming inclusive curricula, and implementing institutional reforms.

The High Court of Kerala (2020) made an important ruling in a case regarding restricted admissions and faith-based instruction exclusive to a single group. The court observed that these kinds of practices are against constitutional principles, especially for institutions seeking state recognition or affiliation. The ruling made by the court stressed all recognized institutions' upholding inclusivity and pluralism in their school culture.

Pillai and Joseph (2017) conducted a content analysis of SCERT-prescribed social science and language textbooks in Kerala to explore representation of religious, caste and gender diversity. The study focussed on identifying the study. It

analysed textbooks of classes V to VII. The study observed limited representation of minority and marginalised communities. Visual content and textbooks are comparatively more inclusive than narratives. Inclusive ideals were present in text books, it fails in providing these in a livid and effective manner.

Nambiar (2015) conducted an interview-based study to explore the exclusion in unaided schools of Kozhikode district. The study revealed many implicit activities that discriminate against students in admission. Data from 40 parents and 15 teachers were collected. The study findings indicated that many covert mechanisms are working in unaided schools. Behavioural expectations, language requirements, life standards, socio-economic status and admission screening were noted as criteria in admission in these schools. The study observed that these screening processes automatically exclude students from marginalised socio-economic and caste backgrounds.

Rhodes (2014) discussed how the school and surrounding community respond to the demographic changes that occurred in society. Teachers, staff members, administrative personnel, and selected members from the surrounding community were selected for the study. The study found that from 1995 to 2004, there was a 55% increase in minority students in the rural schools of the United States of America. The study implies that the school system serves as the centre of social development, especially in rural areas.

Fazal (2012) analysed the readiness of school administrators for inclusion in Pakistani schools. The study attempts to explore the awareness and attitude of primary school principals or administrators in Karachi towards mainstreaming disabled children. Major findings of the study indicate that the majority of the administrators had a lack of awareness of specific disabilities and the special needs of disabled children and require proper training; they face problems in handling

disabled children in normal classrooms. And there are no special strategies to accommodate disabled children in mainstream classrooms.

Conclusion

The present review of related literature covered studies from both India and abroad. This review of studies focused on three core dimensions of access, participation, and diversity in school education. The review related to access offered valuable insights into student enrolment patterns, infrastructural quality, curriculum reforms, and inclusive practices. But a significant gap is noted in evaluating how these faculties are transformed to shape students' live school experiences.

A considerable number of studies have addressed the availability of infrastructure and learning resources in schools. But most of these studies have focused on student enrollment, academic programs, and observable school facilities. But they failed to examine whether students actually access and meaningfully engage with these curricular and co-curricular facilities, as explored in Objective 1 of the present study.

Most of the studies related to school participation highlighted the community participation and general involvement in academic and extracurricular activities. But those studies were not concentrated on students' freedom, inclusion, and participation in school programs and practices. Objective 2 of this study addresses this study gap of students' participation in school programs and practices.

The analysis of the studies related to diversity has largely focused on pluralism in curriculum, different strategies in teaching, diversity in classroom practices, and different school structures. A few of these studies examine whether schools create an atmosphere where children can experience and internalize diversity. Objective 3 of this study gives more focus on this dimension and tries to systematically analyze it based on inferences collected from the schools.

The majority of studies adopt a peripheral and policy-focused approach, focusing on systemic outcomes such as enrolment, infrastructure, and facilities. Some studies have examined Kerala's SCERT textbooks for analysing diversity in its content and themes. But students' actual access to facilities, their participation in school activities, and exposure to socio-cultural and religious diversity still remain unexplored.

While reports and studies often affirm the high standards and inclusivity of primary education in Kerala, this study takes a grounded, school-level perspective and moves beyond a policy-focused and curriculum-based approach. The study draws its exposure directly from student voices, teacher interviews, document analysis, and observations. By focusing on the interrelated dimensions of access, participation, and diversity, the study tries to explore the realities within government-aided and unaided primary schools in Kerala.

This study tried to explore the dimensions of the study through field-based insights, institutional practices, student experiences, and analysis of school programs. Thus, the present study tries to fill a critical gap in educational research by exploring how access, participation, and diversity are addressed in primary schools based on different stakeholders' lived experiences.

Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY



- Research Method
- Research Design
- Methods Used for the Study
- Participants in the Study
- Tools and Techniques Used in the Study
- Data Collection and Analysis
- Overview of the Design

This chapter provides a detailed account of the methodology used for the study. It begins by outlining the overall research strategy and design. Then, an overview of the methods and techniques used for the study is explained, followed by a description of the context of the study. This is followed by a comprehensive explanation of the sampling strategy, including the sample selection and sampling techniques used. The tools and techniques for data collection are then elaborated, along with the procedures followed for data collection and the methods used for data analysis. At the end of the chapter, an overview of the entire research design is presented, and the reliability of the study is assured.

The study tries to explore access, participation and diversity among learners in primary schools of Kerala. Many developmental changes, like the implementation of new forms of curriculum, infrastructural development, and new methods adopted for the teaching and learning process, as well as the accessibility of infrastructural and digital facilities, have been marked in the primary education of Kerala over the last decades. The study tries to explore access, participation, and diversity among learners in primary schools of Kerala.

This is an inquiry-based study based on data from different samples collected through different techniques and combined meaningfully to get a correct insight into the social reality of primary schools in Kerala. For collecting data, different techniques like field surveys, field notes, field observation, semi-structured interviews, document analysis, and focus group discussions were used.

Research Method

For the smooth conduct of the study, a multifaceted mixed-methods research strategy integrating both quantitative and qualitative approaches was adopted. This strategy was considered most suitable for this study due to the complex and interrelated

nature of the core areas under investigation, namely access, participation, and the socio-cultural and religious diversity schools. By adopting this method, the study sought to achieve both breadth and depth in understanding the educational realities across various types of schools. Creswell and Plano Clark (2018) observed that a multifaceted mixed methods strategy uses multiple tools, data sources, and perspectives to explore the research problem from different angles. Thus, it provides an opportunity for the investigator for a holistic and comprehensive analysis. Johnson, Onwuegbuzie, and Turner's (2007) definition of mixed methods research is aligned with this, and thus it enhances understanding and enables corroboration.

Research Design

'Research designs are those systematic procedures that include data collection, data analysis and report writing' (Creswell, 2015). As the study tries to explore the access, participation and diversity among learners in primary schools of Kerala, it requires understanding the school environment and nature of school programmes and practices. So, the study requires an in-depth inquiry into the school environment and the experiences and perceptions of different stakeholders. Therefore, the study follows the convergent parallel mixed research design for objectives 1 and 2 and an embedded multiple-case study design for objective 3.

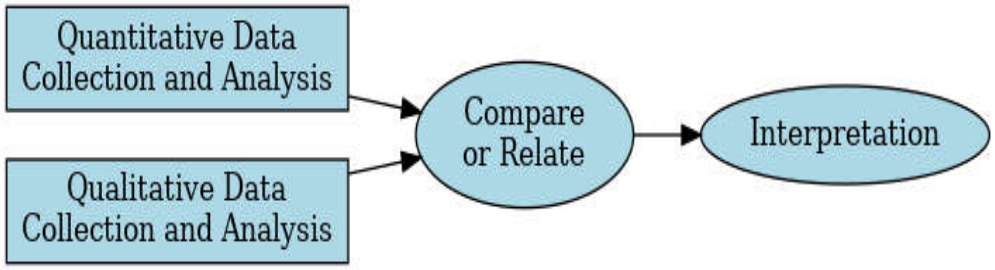
Convergent Parallel Mixed Method Design

A convergent parallel mixed methods design is a design used in mixed research in which both quantitative and qualitative data are used to understand a research problem. 'The purpose of a convergent parallel mixed method design is to simultaneously collect both quantitative and qualitative data, merge the data, and use the results to understand a research problem' (Creswell, 2015). Clark (2018) explained that 'In a convergent parallel mixed methods design, both quantitative and qualitative data are collected and analysed separately but concurrently, with the

results later integrated to provide a comprehensive understanding of the research problem.' This design is more appropriate for Objectives 1 and 2. The overall pattern of the design is depicted in Figure 3.

Figure 3

Convergent Parallel Design



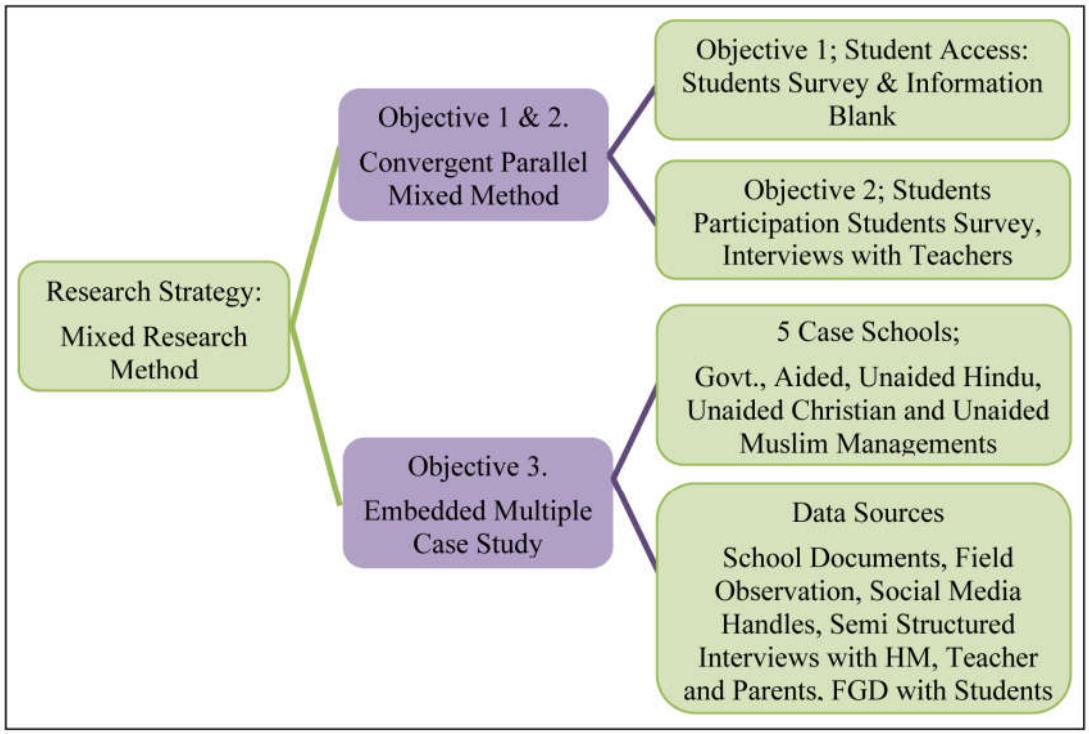
Embedded Multiple Case Study Design

The study adopted an embedded multiple case study design to explore the socio-cultural and religious diversity in primary schools (Objective 3). Embedded case study design involves the in-depth study of multiple cases within which different subunits, such as documents, programmes and practices, and stakeholder perspectives were carefully examined (Yin, 2014). In this study school systems were considered as cases, and diversity is analysed in terms of physical representation and school programmes and practices. Document analysis, field observation, semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions were used for collecting data from different subunits.

For the methodological coherence, the findings of objective 3 were integrated with the findings of objectives 1 and 2. This ensured integrated overall analysis by linking patterns of access and participation with contextual understandings of diversity. The overall outline of the design is depicted in Figure 4.

Figure 4

Overall Research Design



The Rationale for Selecting the Design

Based on the nature of the objectives, the present study followed a two-phase research approach. The convergent parallel mixed methods design is used for objectives 1 and 2 (Students' Access and Participation), and the embedded multiple case study method is used for objective 3 (Diversity).

To examine access and participation, the convergent parallel mixed methods design is used. This design utilises the advantages of both quantitative and qualitative dimensions of data collection and analysis. And thus, it provides more verifiable results. The rationale for selecting the design is mainly rooted in its flexibility and comprehensive nature. This design allows simultaneous data collection and enables comparison and integration of different types of data for a more comprehensive understanding.

The nature of the third objective requires in-depth analysis of diversity in physical representation, school programmes, and practices. It requires the multiple case study method by enabling in-depth exploration using multiple data sources and integrating varied perspectives. The method permits both within-case and cross-case analyses, and thus it opens all possibilities of studying diversity across different school management types. Thus, the selected design helps the investigator for a deeper and more contextually grounded investigation of core themes and research questions.

Methods Used for the Study

Research methods are those plans, processes, or strategies used in data collection and subsequent analysis to find new information for a deeper comprehension of the research subject. The study was conducted using a descriptive approach using qualitative and quantitative methods of descriptive survey and multiple case studies. The researcher utilised the survey approach to study student access and participation in primary schools and the multiple case study method to look at learner diversity. Questionnaires, semi-structured interview schedules, information blanks, focus group discussions, field observations and field notes are used as research instruments for the study.

Field Survey

Since the study deals with the present status of access, participation and diversity among learners of primary schools in Kerala, the Normative Survey Method was used for gathering information. A survey is an organised process that uses various data collection tools to systematically obtain information from a population or samples of the population in the form of opinions, attitudes, proposals, etc. This approach necessitates meticulous planning, meticulous data collection and interpretation, and logical and skilful reporting of the results. In addition to preparing a rigorous examination and interpretation of the data and a logical reporting of the findings,

surveys deal with clearly defined problems and objectives. As per the objectives, a normative survey is the most appropriate method for studying students' access and participation in primary schools. While selecting the survey for the first stage of data collection, the investigator made the field familiar, discussed with the experts the strategies to be adopted, and ensured the cooperation of the participants.

Case Study

To study the diversity, the Multiple Case Study Method was adopted. This method is helpful to the researcher to generate an in-depth, multi-faceted understanding of a complex issue in its real-life context, and it is an established research design that is used extensively in a wide variety of disciplines, particularly in the social sciences (Creswell, 2013). Case studies can be used to explain, describe or explore events or phenomena in the everyday contexts in which they occur (Yin, 2009). Case study research is a qualitative approach in which the investigator explores a real life, contemporary bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information (e.g., observations, interviews, audio-visual materials and documents and reports) and reports a case description and case themes (Creswell, 2013).

Expert Consultation

For a basic understanding and initial insight into the issues raised at the beginning, the investigator contacted a well-experienced person who participated in educational planning and evaluation in the state and also worked as Deputy Director of Education (DDE) in Malappuram district, Kerala. He had rich experiences as a teacher, educational planning board member, and DDE of Malappuram district under the General Education Department of Kerala. When the purpose of the study was conveyed, the expert explained the variety of experiences he had regarding the research issues the investigator put forth and gave a clear picture and plan for

carrying out the proposed research work. Also, the expert introduced the investigator to many other experts in the field and helped to collect many crucial documents that were later very useful for the conduct of research work in many ways. And also, the expert helped in fixing the criteria for selecting the schools as cases for the study.

Participants in the Study

The description of the participants and their selection criteria gives a rationale for identifying participants and finalising the context of the study. In a mixed research approach, participants may be selected according to the objectives and nature of the study. In the present study, data collection and sample selection were done in two stages. The first phase of the study was conducted using the field survey method, and the latter one using the case study method.

Population of the Study

A population can be defined as a group of individuals with similar characteristics of the sample. 'A population is the set of all elements. It is the large group to which a researcher wants to generalise his or her sample results (Johnson & Christensen, 2012). The population of the present study includes all primary school students of Kerala who are studying in classes one to seven. The total number of primary schools and enrolled students in Kerala for the academic year 2023–2024 is presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Total Number of Students in Primary Schools of Kerala (2023–2024)

School Level	Government	Aided	Unaided	Total
Lower Primary	241887	443257	61816	746960
Upper Primary	232240	597464	62347	892051
Total	474127	1040721	124163	1639011

Note. Data retrieved from the Sametham Portal, General Education Department, Govt. of Kerala (2023-2024)

The details of primary schools in Kerala under Public Education Department (2023–2024) is given in Table 2.

Table 2

Total Number of Primary Schools in Kerala under Public Education Department (2023–2024)

School level	Government	Aided	Unaided	Total
Lower Primary	2749	3919	367	7035
Upper Primary	867	1873	271	3011
Total	3616	5792	638	10046

Note. Data retrieved from the Sametham Portal, General Education Department, Govt. of Kerala (2023-2024)

For feasibility, effective response, and richer school experiences, the study was delimited to upper primary schools, as this stage offers a more mature student population capable of articulating views, participating actively in interviews and FGDs, and reflecting on diverse school practices and programmes.

Table 3 presents stratified details of students and schools at the upper primary level for the 2023 – 2024 academic year, based on the delimited population.

Table 3

Details of Upper Primary School Students by Management Type (2023–2024)

Particulars	Government		Aided		Un Aided	
Upper Primary schools	No. of Students	No. of Schools	No. of Students	No. of Schools	No. of Students	No. of Schools
	232240	867	597464	1873	62347	271

Note. Data retrieved from the Sametham Portal, General Education Department, Govt. of Kerala (2023-2024)

Sampling Technique Used for the Study

The present study used both probability and non-probability sampling techniques to suit the mixed-method research design. Stratified Random Sampling Technique was used for objective 1 and 2. This technique ensures proportionate

representation of different samples. Purposive sampling was used to select schools and participants for Objective 3.

Stratified Random Sampling. Stratified Random Sampling. In this study stratified random sampling technique was used to examine students' access (objective 1) and students' participation (objective 2). This is a probability sampling technique in which the population is divided into subgroups based on homogeneity. Government, aided, and unaided upper primary schools were the three strata fixed for the study. From each stratum, samples are randomly selected to ensure fair representation of the population.

Purposive Sampling. To explore diversity (objective 3), a purposive sampling technique was used. This is a non-probability sampling method where participants are deliberately selected based on specific, predetermined criteria relevant to the research purpose. Schools were selected using this technique for an embedded case study. This technique provides an opportunity for in-depth understanding of the cases (Oliver, 2006; Campbell et al., 2020).

Description of Participants in the Study

The study has been conducted in two phases. For studying the first and second objectives, the investigator used a field survey among primary school students, and for studying diversity, the multiple case study method was used. For objectives one and two, the following criteria were used for the selection of the participants:

- Students should have a minimum of one year of school experience in the same school.
- Teachers should have a minimum of three years of teaching experience in the same school.

An overview of the participants in the first objective is given in Table 4.

Table 4

Participants in the First Objective (Students' Access)

School Type	Government	Aided	Unaided	Total
Number of Students	318	315	205	838
Number of Schools	10	13	9	32

An overview of the participants in the second objective is given in Table 5.

Table 5

Participants in the Second Objective (Students' Participation)

School Type	Government	Aided	Unaided	Total
Number of Students	316	314	217	847
Number of Teachers	6	7	5	18

Participants in the Case Study

To study diversity in primary schools of Kerala, the selected primary schools were considered as an embedded system that includes teachers, headmasters, students, parents, and other personalities related to primary schools. Documents such as the admission register, teachers register, magazines, advertisements and news reports, school facilities, school calendar, curricular activity report, co-curricular activity report and school social media handles were considered as part of this embedded system to collect data. An overview of the embedded case study design is given in Table 6.

Table 6

Overview of the Embedded Case Study Design

Case Study Method		
Cases	Different Types of School Systems	
Sub systems	• Head of the school • Teachers • Students • Parents	• Admission register • Teachers Register • Magazines • Advertisements and news reports • School facilities • School calendar • Curricular activity report • Co-curricular activity report. • School social media handles.

Profile of Schools Selected as Cases

To study diversity in primary schools in Kerala, five exemplar cases were selected from the Malappuram and Kozhikode districts of Kerala. One government, one aided, and three unaided upper primary schools were selected. Criteria for selecting the schools were:

- Schools must have a minimum of 10 years of operational history.
- Schools should have a composite structure or a large student population (minimum 200 students).
- Schools should follow the Kerala (SCERT) syllabus.
- Schools may be government, aided, or unaided; unaided schools should be under religious managements (Hindu, Christian, and Muslim).
- Schools should not be boarding-type or exclusively for culturally specific groups like tribal students.

The details of the selected case schools are given in Table 7.

Table 7

Schools Selected as Cases

Sl. No.	Management Type	District	Medium
1.	Government	Malappuram	Malayalam
2.	Aided	Malappuram	Malayalam
3.	Unaided Hindu Management	Malappuram	English
4.	Unaided Muslim Management	Malappuram	English
5.	Unaided Christian Management	Kozhikode	English

Description of the Schools Selected as Cases

To ensure ethical compliance and protect the confidentiality of sample institutions, the identities of the selected schools were anonymised, as disclosure of school names, locations, or distinctive features could lead to identification and potential bias. For the study, Five Upper Primary schools representing different management types from Malappuram and Kozhikode districts were selected as case schools. These are referred to as Case School A to Case School E.

- **Case School A** is a government-managed Upper Primary school in Malappuram district, offering classes from Grades 1 to 7, following the Kerala State Syllabus with Malayalam as the medium of instruction, and serving a socially diverse community.
- **Case School B** is an aided Upper Primary school located in a rural area of Malappuram district. It follows the Kerala State Syllabus with Malayalam as the medium of instruction and caters mainly to students from the local community.
- **Case School C** is an unaided Upper Primary school under Hindu management in Kozhikode district. It follows the Kerala State Syllabus with

Malayalam as the medium of instruction and emphasises holistic development through curricular and co-curricular practices.

- **Case School D** is a private, unaided Upper Primary school under Muslim management in Malappuram district. The school follows the Kerala State Syllabus with English as the medium of instruction and integrates value-based education with formal schooling.

- **Case School E** is an unaided Upper Primary school under Christian management, located near the Malappuram- Kozhikode district border. It offers education up to Grade 7, follows the Kerala State Syllabus with English as the medium of instruction.

Participants of the Schools Selected as Cases

Five schools were selected from Kozhikode and Malappuram districts of Kerala as cases, including the head of the institution, teachers, students and parents are chosen as the participants of the study. The head of the institutions, teachers, parents and students of the selected schools were selected for in-depth interviews and focus group discussions, and they were considered as basic data sources. The following criteria were used for selecting the participants in the study:

- All participants should have direct involvement and participation in the primary education programme.

- Selected teachers should have a minimum of 3 years of teaching experience, of which 2 years should be in the selected school itself.

- Children selected for focus group discussion should be learning in the school for a minimum of 1 year.

An overview of the participants in the third objective is given in Table 8.

Table 8

Overview of Participants in Case Study

Participants	HM	Teachers	Students	Parents
Case 1 - Government	1	2	6	3
Case 2 - Aided	1	2	7	2
Case 3 – Unaided Hindu Management School	1	2	6	2
Case 4 - Unaided Muslim Management School	1	2	6	2
Case 4 Unaided Christian Management School	1	2	7	2
Total	5	10	32	11

Tools and Techniques Used in the Study

The present study used different techniques and approaches in which multiple perspectives of the phenomena have been integrated using multiple data sources and different data collection techniques. Field survey and multiple case study methods were used as key methods in the study. Multiple case studies facilitate the exploration of a larger range of theoretical developments and research topics, with recommendations that are more deeply rooted in various empirical data. Additionally, this kind of case study yields more persuasive research findings (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007).

Questionnaires, information blanks, semi-structured interview schedules, Focus Group Discussion (FGD) guide and observation, and field note schedules were used as tools for the study. Field survey, semi-structured interview, Focus Group Discussion (FGD), document analysis and observation were used as techniques for the study.

Description of the Tools used for the Study

In order to fulfill the specified objectives of the study, the researcher developed different tools and instruments for the study.

Tools for Objective 1 (Student Access)

Questionnaire Student Access in Primary Schools in Kerala. The questionnaire included both open-ended and closed-ended questions on student access to infrastructural and physical facilities, curricular materials and activities, and co-curricular materials and activities. The final version of the questionnaire comprised 29 items, organised into three sections:

Section A – Access to infrastructural facilities

Section B – Access to curricular materials and activities.

Section C – Access to co-curricular facilities and programmes.

Information Blank on Student Access. The information blank was developed for on-site observation of school premises and facilities, along with casual discussions with teachers to contextualise the data collected through questionnaires on students' access. It consisted of 24 items addressing the availability and condition of school resources, including: Classroom and infrastructural facilities, Curricular activities and facilities. Co-curricular facilities and programmes.

Validity of the Tools. The validity of the questionnaire and information blank were established through content and face validity procedure. The preliminary drafts of the tools were submitted to a panel of subject experts, experienced teachers, and research scholars, who examined each item for clarity, relevance, and alignment with the respective study objectives. Based on expert feedback and discussions, the validity of the final versions of tools were ensured.

Tools for Objective 2 (Student Participant)

Questionnaire on Student Participation. The questionnaire included both open-ended and closed-ended items (see Appendices 3 and 4). The preliminary draft of the questionnaire was prepared with reference to the facilities, curricular activities, and co-curricular programmes suggested by the Department of Public Education, Government of Kerala. The final version of the questionnaire consisted of 28 items, organised into three sections: Section A – students' satisfaction in infrastructural facilities, Section B- Students' use of curricular facilities and participation in curricular activities and Section C- students' use of co-curricular facilities and participation in co-curricular activities.

Semi Structured Interview Schedule for Teachers. The semi-structured interview schedule was developed to elicit teachers' experiences, perceptions, and observations regarding students' utilisation of school facilities and participation in curricular and co-curricular activities. 10 questions were included in this schedule (see Appendices 6 and 7), and the schedule was organized under three major themes:

a) Adequacy and use of infrastructural and learning facilities by students
b) Engagement in classroom learning and curricular practice
c) Students' participation in co-curricular activities

Validity of the Tools. The validity of the questionnaire and interview schedule were established through content and face validity. The drafts of the tools were subjected to the discussion of a panel of subject experts, experienced teachers, and research scholars. Based on expert feedback and discussions with the supervising teacher and insight from the pilot study, ambiguous items were revised and necessary additions were made to ensure comprehensive coverage of each construct and thus the validity of the tools were ensured.

Tools for Objective 3 (Student Diversity)

Schedule for Field Observation. An observation schedule was developed to systematically record data on the material and visual indicators of socio-cultural and religious diversity in the selected schools. The tool was designed to capture objective evidence from the school environment that reflects diversity in its physical representation. It consisted of structured items to be observed and documented by the investigator during school visits. The observation schedule included categories such as: Emblems and quotations, Displays and portraits, Prayer rooms and religious artefacts, Decorations for events, Dress code and patterns and Library resources reflecting diversity

Schedule for Document Analysis. A document analysis schedule was developed to systematically collect demographic information on both students and teachers from official school records in the selected upper primary schools. The schedule was designed to extract data from admission registers, staff registers, and other institutional documents across schools. Themes focused in the document analysis schedule are, General information, Religion-based details and Caste-based details of school participants.

Schedule for Field Note. A field note schedule was developed to systematically document observations on regular school practices that reflect socio-cultural and religious diversity in the selected schools. The schedule was designed to capture both descriptive details and analytical notes on everyday activities and routines within the school environment. It consisted of structured items to be observed and recorded by the investigator. The field note schedule included categories such as: Morning prayer (nature of prayer and participation), Morning assembly (nature of messages, representation of students and duties), adjustment for religious needs (dress and uniform, provision for prayer and religious attire) and Value education and moral lessons (themes and specifications)

For each item, space was provided to describe the observed practice, record detailed notes, and indicate whether the practice was inclusive or exclusive. The schedule was filled by the investigator through direct observation within the school premises, enabling systematic documentation of diversity-related aspects of regular school practices.

Document Analysis Schedule for School Programmes. This schedule was developed to systematically record information on school programmes that reflect socio-cultural and religious diversity in the selected schools. The tool was designed to capture details from school records, reports, and other documentary sources related to events and activities. It consisted of structured categories to be examined and included the following areas: Celebrations of social events, Cultural celebrations, Religion-based celebrations, Arts and cultural programmes and Clubs and activities (active clubs, programmes conducted, and event details)

Semi-Structured Interview Schedule for Head of the Institution. This Semi-Structured Interview Schedule was developed to collect in-depth information from the heads of institutions regarding school policies, practices, and perspectives on socio-cultural and religious diversity. The tool was designed to elicit detailed responses while allowing flexibility for probing. It consisted of 13 main questions under four broad thematic areas: school establishment and vision, admission policy, process and practices, staff recruitment policies and preferences and material and visual representation (rationale behind the selection of logos, quotes, portraits, symbols, decorations, and festival displays).

Semi-Structured Interview Schedule for Teachers. This interview schedule was developed to gather teachers' view on regular school practices and programmes with regard to socio-cultural and religious diversity. The schedule consisted of 22 questions, organized under *School Practices and School Programmes. The questions focused on* morning prayer and assembly, religious

accommodation, classroom seating arrangements, value education and moral lessons, celebrations, arts and cultural programmes, clubs and activities.

Focus Group Discussion (FGD) Guide. The FGD Guide was developed to explore students' perceptions and experiences related to school practices and programmes with regard to socio-cultural and religious diversity. The tool was designed to facilitate group discussion while ensuring coverage of key themes. It consisted of two sections and nine sub-sections, with guiding prompts under each section.

- ***School Practices***. Morning Prayer and assembly, religious accommodation, classroom seating arrangements, student interaction in public spaces and moral lessons.
- ***School Programmes***. School celebrations, arts and cultural programmes, clubs and activities, suggestions and reflections.

Semi-Structured Interview Schedule for Parents. The semi-structured interview schedule was developed to explore parental perspectives regarding their children's schooling experiences. The tool was designed to capture in-depth qualitative data on parents' reasons for school choice, levels of involvement in their child's education, satisfaction with school programmes and activities, and perceptions of inclusivity and representation of diversity. The tool consists of nine open-ended questions that explore parents'

- Preferences in the school selection and the reason
- Involvement in school programmes and activities
- Opinions on school activities and suggestions

Validity of the Tools. The validity of the tools for objective three were established through content validity and face validity. The preliminary drafts of the tools were submitted to a panel of subject experts, and experienced teachers, who

examined each item for clarity, relevance, and alignment with the respective study objectives. Unclear and irrelevant items were revised or removed, and necessary additions were made based on expert feedback and discussions. Thus, face and content validity of the tool were ensured.

Pilot Study

A pilot study was carried out to evaluate the usefulness of research tools and their applicability for research endeavours. A well-structured pilot study has the ability to improve the quality of the research, and a thorough examination of the methods and findings of the study makes it easier to see if there are any flaws that could be fixed in the primary investigation (Leon et al., 2011). The pilot study helped the researcher to understand various issues and aspects necessary to prepare the tools for the final research work. For the purpose of conducting a pilot study, the researcher visited two primary schools in Malappuram district, one from the government sector and another from the unaided sector, in July 2023. The study was aimed at assessing the practicability of administering tools prepared for the study among students and observing the primary school premises and their functioning. The researcher observed the school atmosphere and daily activities going on in the selected schools. The researcher also conducted a discussion with the head of the institution and some teachers about the programmes and practices conducted in the school. The insights received from the field visit and discussion helped the researcher to develop tools for the final study.

Description of the Data Collection Techniques Used in the Study

Field survey, semi-structured interview, field observation, document analysis and focus group discussion are the five major data collection techniques used for the study.

Field Survey

Since the study deals with the present status of access participation and diversity among learners of primary schools in Kerala, A field survey was used as the primary technique to collect quantitative data from students. The survey was conducted among sample students from upper primary school across government, aided, and private management schools in Kerala. This approach necessitates meticulous planning, data collection and interpretation, and logical and skillful reporting of the results.

Semi-Structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were another important technique used in the study to obtain in-depth perspectives on school practices, programmes, and patterns. This Semi-structured were conducted with different stakeholders like selected teachers head teachers and parents, using semi-structured interview schedules developed with the expert guidance. With the consent of participants, Interviews were audio-recorded with consent, and it provided rich qualitative data to complement other sources.

Field Observation

Observation was another technique employed to systematically record visual and material indicators of diversity in different schools. A structured observation schedule provides an opportunity for the investigator to observe actual practices being conducted in school. By observing the natural setting of the school life during class hours and other special occasions, the investigator prepared detailed field notes supported by relevant photographs.

Document Analysis

Document analysis technique is more effective in collecting official data from school records and registries. To understand the formal structures and programmes reflecting diversity, this technique was used. School records, activity

reports, event photographs, notices, school magazines, and other relevant materials were analysed. Thematically for the study, this method allowed the triangulation of self-reported data with documentary evidence

Focus Group Discussion (FGD)

Focus group discussions (FGD) is another technique used for the study, and this was conducted with groups of upper primary students from selected schools. This explored students' shared experiences of school life, and it provided more open exposure to the research. Each FGD consisted of 5-8 students, and a discussion guide was used to ensure focus of the discussions while allowing free expression and opinion. This provided rich narrative data to supplement the survey and interviews.

Data Collection and Analysis

Data for the study were collected using different methods. It includes student surveys, semi-structured interviews, field observation, document analysis, and focus group discussions. And data were collected from multiple sources. It includes students, teachers, headmasters, and school documents.

Data Collection

Using multiple methods within a mixed frame work the data for this study were collected. A field survey was used for Objectives 1 and 2, and an embedded multiple case study was used for Objective 3. Quantitative data were collected from students using structured questionnaires. The qualitative data were collected by using different techniques like interviews, FGDs, document analysis and field observation with different stake holders in selected schools

For objective 3, selected schools were considered as embedded systems. Physical and visual representations, school practices, programs, and stakeholder perspectives were considered as subsystems. Data for this objective were collected

from school records such as admission registers, staff registers, activity reports, magazines, and official social media handles. Field observations were conducted using structured schedules and collected notes and contextual details.

Data Analysis

Keeping in view of the nature of the present study; both quantitative and qualitative techniques were used for data analysis. Based on the nature of the objectives of the study, the selection of these techniques was more suitable for comprehensive interpretation of the findings.

Quantitative Analysis

Percentage analysis was used as the principal statistical technique. For analyzing the data collected through student questionnaires in Objectives 1 and 2. This method was selected due to its suitability for comparing patterns of access and participation in curricular and co-curricular activities across various school management types. For comparing results of different types of schools Percentage values were calculated for each item separately using following percentage analysis formula.

$$\text{Percentage } (\%) = (f/n) \times 100$$

Where, f = Frequency (number of responses)

N = Total number of respondents

Qualitative Analysis

The qualitative data related to Objectives 1, 2, and 3 were analysed using six phased thematic analysis method proposed by following Braun and Clarke's (2006). This six phased analysis process involved:

- Familiarizing data through repeated reading of transcripts and field notes.
- Generating initial codes to capture recurring ideas related to the research topic.
- Searching for themes and clustering codes into broader concepts.
- Reviewing themes to ensure internal consistency and distinctiveness.
- Defining and naming themes related to research questions and conceptual framework of the study.
- Producing the final report by integrating narrative descriptions with quantitative responses from participants.

Data Triangulation

Data triangulation is a research strategy that uses a variety of data sources and data sets in a study. It can help a researcher enhance the validity and credibility of findings. 'The term "triangulation" refers to the practice of using multiple sources of data or multiple approaches to ensure the credibility of a research study' (Salkind, 2010). Creswell (2015) also observed that triangulation refers to the process of verifying descriptions and themes with evidence from several sources, including different people, kinds of data, and data gathering that ensures the accuracy of the study and enables the researcher to produce a reliable and credible report. In the study, the researcher collected the qualitative and quantitative data for the study. The quantitative data and qualitative data are triangulated by integrating the qualitative information, observations, and dialogues with the quantitative data collected from student questionnaires. Observations and FGD were used to contextualise the statistical patterns, while the quantitative data provided a measurable ground for the qualitative narratives. This integration of trends across schools and lived experiences, ensured the validity and interpretive richness of the study.

Overview of the Design

An overview of the design is presented in Table 9.

Table 9

Overview of the Method

Objectives	Research Questions	Tools	Type of Data	Analysis
Objective 1: To examine the extent of students' access to facilities, programmes, and practices across different types of primary schools in Kerala.	1. What is the current status of students' access to quality infrastructure and school facilities in upper primary schools across different management types (government, aided, and private) in Kerala? 2. What are the different curricular facilities and programmes accessible for primary school students across government, aided, and private upper primary schools in Kerala? 3. What are the different co-curricular facilities and activities accessible for upper primary school students across government, aided, and private primary schools in Kerala?	Questionnaire on student access. Information Blank	Quantitative Qualitative data	Percentage analysis Thematic analysis
Objective 2: To explore the extent of students' participation in terms of students' satisfaction in the use of school facilities, engagement in curricular activities and participation in co-curricular programmes in different types of primary schools in Kerala.	4. To what extent do students utilise available school facilities, such as libraries, computer labs, playgrounds, and other learning resources, in upper primary schools across Kerala? 5. How actively are students involved in classroom activities and curricular practices across different types of primary schools in Kerala? 6. What is the nature and level of student participation in different co-curricular activities conducted in different types of upper primary schools? 7. Are there significant differences in student participation in school facilities, curricular, and co-curricular activities among government, aided, and private upper primary schools in Kerala?	Questionnaire on student participation. Semi-structured interview schedule for teachers	Quantitative Qualitative data	Percentage analysis Thematic analysis

Objectives	Research Questions	Tools	Type of Data	Analysis
Objective 3: To explore the nature and extent of socio-cultural and religious diversity in different types of primary schools in Kerala, in terms of physical representation, school practices, and school programmes.	8. What is the extent of diversity representation in the physical composition of different types of upper primary schools managed by different agencies in Kerala? 9. To what extent is socio-cultural and religious diversity reflected in the programmes and practices of upper primary schools managed by different agencies in Kerala? 10. How do various stakeholders perceive and interpret the presence and significance of socio-cultural and religious diversity in upper primary schools in Kerala?	Schedule for Field Observation Schedule for Document Analysis Schedule for Field Note Semi-Structured Interview Schedule for HM Semi-Structured Interview Schedule for Teachers Focus Group Discussion (FGD) Guide Semi-Structured Interview Schedule for Parents	Qualitative Data	Thematic analysis

Chapter 4

ANALYSIS



- Analysis of Students' Access to Primary Schools (Objective 1)
- Analysis of Students' Participation in Primary Schools (Objective 2)
- Analysis of Diversity in Primary Schools (Objective 3)

Education is a fundamental right and a key driver of social transformation, particularly in Kerala, a state known for its remarkable achievements in literacy and schooling. However, ensuring equitable access, meaningful participation, and an inclusive learning environment remains a challenge. This chapter presents a detailed analysis of the data collected to examine the extent of access, participation, and diversity among primary school students in Kerala. As per the three pre-set objectives of the study, the analysis is structured around three core dimensions of students' access, participation and diversity by applying both qualitative and quantitative research methods.

The first objective of this study is to explore the extent of students' access to facilities and programmes and practices conducted in different types of primary schools in Kerala. This is focusing on students' access to infrastructural facilities and on curricular and co-curricular programmes. Data for this objective is collected from the responses of students and information blank filled by the investigator by field observation.

The second objective was to explore the status of students' participation in terms of students' use of school facilities, involvement in curricular activities, and participation in co-curricular programmes of different types of primary schools in Kerala, based on the responses of primary school students and teachers. For this, the investigator collected data from 834 primary school students using a questionnaire. The investigator also collected data from 26 primary school teachers using a semi-structured interview schedule from different parts of Kerala.

The third objective was to explore the social diversity in different types of primary schools in Kerala in terms of physical representation, curricular activities

and co-curricular programmes. The third objective is studied using the case study method by selecting primary schools as cases based on some predetermined criteria. For this, the investigator analysed data collected from the responses of students, teachers, heads of the institution and parents using semi-structured interviews and FGDs, apart from analysing the school documents, school registers, programme schedules, school social media handles, day celebration book, students' club reports and other external agencies.

Based on the nature of the data collected, the study employs percentage analysis and thematic content analysis to derive observations and conclusions.

Analysis of Students' Access to Primary Schools (Objective 1)

The first objective of the study was to examine the extent of students' access to facilities, programmes, and practices across different types of primary schools in Kerala

The data on students' access to primary schools are derived from the following research questions.

1. What is the current status of students' access to quality infrastructure and school facilities in primary schools across different management types (Government, Aided, and Private) in Kerala?
2. What are the curricular facilities and programmes accessible to primary school students across government, aided, and private primary schools in Kerala?
3. What are the co-curricular facilities and activities accessible to primary school students across government, aided, and private primary schools in Kerala?

Data Sources of Students' Access to Primary School (Objective 1)

The data for the first objective is derived from two kinds of data sources:

1. Responses from 838 Upper Primary school Students using a questionnaire to assess their access to infrastructural facilities, programmes, and practices in primary schools.
2. Data collected by the researcher using information blanks based on field observations and inquiries.

The data for the first objective is presented under three main themes and related sub-themes

- Theme 1: Infrastructural facilities
  - Classroom and basic facilities
  - Transportation facilities
  - Drinking water facilities
  - Other school facilities
- Theme 2: Curricular facilities and programmes
  - Curricular materials and facilities.
  - Curricular resources and faculties.
  - Library and facilities
  - Curricular Activities
- Theme 3: Co-curricular facilities and activities
  - Co-curricular facilities
  - Co-curricular activities and support.
  - Clubs and activities

Theme 1: Infrastructural Facilities

Access to proper infrastructure in schools is essential for students' academic success and well-being. Quality infrastructure in schools has a direct impact on student learning and academic performance. Well-maintained classrooms, proper lighting, ventilation, access to technology, clean sanitation facilities, and safe learning spaces create an environment where students can focus, feel safe, and stay motivated. Such conditions reduce distractions, improve attendance, and support better teacher-student interaction. Quality classrooms, clean water, sanitation facilities, and access to curricular and co-curricular facilities and programmes create a safe and supportive learning environment in school. When students have access to quality infrastructure, they are more likely to engage actively in the classroom, perform better in activities, and develop skills essential for their future success.

Classroom and Basic Facilities

Classroom facilities play a vital role in enhancing students' learning experiences and outcomes. A well-equipped and comfortable classroom, with adequate lighting, ventilation, seating, and space, helps students stay focused, reduces fatigue, and encourages active participation. To better understand the current state of classroom infrastructure from the students' point of view, a survey was conducted to collect their feedback, and the results are presented in Table 10.

Table 10

Students' Access to Classroom Facilities

Particulars	Government	Aided	Private	Total
Comfortable classroom	95.52	73.66	77.90	82.36
Seating facility	100.00	98.20	99.07	99.05
Black board	99.31	99.32	97.66	98.77
Light and ventilation	77.44	95.58	57.81	76.94
Clock	28.91	13.98	1.40	16.35
Book shelf	86.05	19.49	41.05	50.00
Notice board	21.01	51.92	23.55	32.82
Table and chair for the teacher	98.28	96.78	91.71	95.59
Podium	23.77	22.60	11.01	19.13

The analysis of data related to primary students' access to classroom facilities across government, aided, and private schools reveals significant disparities in infrastructural provision and classroom quality. Core instructional elements such as seating facility (99.05%), blackboards (98.77%), and tables and chairs for teachers (95.59%) exhibit high levels of availability across all school categories, indicating the presence of basic infrastructure.

Government primary schools exhibit a relatively strong infrastructural profile, particularly in terms of basic facilities. The availability of seating arrangements (100%), blackboards (99.31%), and tables and chairs for teachers (98.28%) suggests that core instructional needs are consistently met across these institutions. Notably, 95.52% of students reported access to comfortable classrooms, and 86.05% noted the presence of bookshelves, indicating a greater emphasis on creating a supportive and resource-rich learning environment. However, government schools lag in providing classroom management and supplementary teaching aids, with only 28.91% of classrooms equipped with clocks, 21.01% with notice boards, and 23.77% with podium. These deficiencies

highlight the need for targeted interventions to enhance the functionality and instructional efficiency of classrooms.

Aided schools demonstrate strong performance in several infrastructural aspects, particularly with respect to instructional support facilities. Nearly all classrooms in Aided schools have blackboards (99.32%) and student seating (98.20%), and 95.58% of classrooms are equipped with lighting and ventilation. Access to facilities for teachers like table and chair is also high (96.78%). However, aided schools report the lowest level of access to bookshelves (19.49%) and clocks (13.98%). Interestingly, aided schools provide better access in notice board (51.92%), which may support better student-teacher communication and visibility of educational content.

Unaided primary schools exhibit a more inconsistent infrastructural profile. While basic educational facilities such as seating (99.07%) and blackboards (97.66%) are widely available, other critical aspects show considerable deficiencies. Only 77.90% of students reported having comfortable classrooms, and just 57.81% had access to proper lighting and fans, which may hinder learning in adverse weather or in poorly lit environments. The availability of supplementary facilities is especially limited, and only 1.40% of classrooms have clocks, 11.01% have podium, and 23.55% have notice boards. Although private schools meet the minimum instructional requirements, a substantial gap remains in the provision of facilities that contribute to a holistic and interactive learning environment.

Analysis of Data from the Information Blank. To verify the current state of students' access to infrastructural resources within classrooms, an information blank was used. The data collected using the information blank highlighted that:

Students' Access to Infrastructural Resources in Government Primary Schools.

- Government primary schools have showcased comparatively better infrastructure and learning environments.
- Classrooms are structurally sound and are well-painted, fully walled, tiled, and often decorated with educational drawings, creating an inviting and stimulating space for learners. Seating facilities are reported as sufficient and satisfactory.
- Functional blackboards are available in almost all classrooms, although maintenance issues are noted in a few.
- Lighting and fans are present; however, many are non-functional due to electrical and maintenance-related issues, as reported by teachers.
- Availability of clocks is better in government schools compared to other types, though still below expected standards.
- Most classrooms are equipped with book storage in the form of shelves or racks.
- Teacher tables and chairs are generally available, supporting teaching practices. Podium, however, remain limited in number.

Overall, government schools provide a relatively well-resourced learning environment.

Students' Access to Infrastructural Resources in Aided Primary Schools.

- Classroom conditions in aided primary schools are less favourable in terms of physical infrastructure.
- Many classrooms are old, not well-maintained, and, in some cases, only half-walled or divided by temporary partitions.

- Flooring is basic, and the overall appearance lacks cleanliness and aesthetic quality. Despite this, student seating is largely adequate and functional.
- Blackboards are available and usable, though, like other school types, minor maintenance problems are present.
- Aided schools stand out for their excellent maintenance of lighting and ventilation facilities, with 95% of classrooms having functional lights and fans. However, clocks are rarely seen.
- Book storage is notably poor - most classrooms lack shelves, forcing students to place their bags on the floor or benches.
- Teacher tables and chairs are mostly available and used. Podium remain scarce, limiting options for instructional display.

Aided schools reflect a contrast between strong lighting provision and weak structural and storage support.

Students' Access to Infrastructural Resources in Private Primary Schools.

- Private schools present a mixed picture. While classrooms are generally walled and structurally sound, they are often not well-maintained.
- Floors are ordinary and lack enhancement.
- Seating facilities meet the basic requirements and are rated as satisfactory.
- Blackboards are functional and readable, though, as with other types, maintenance inconsistencies exist.
- Lighting and fan facilities are suboptimal and poorly maintained, which affects classroom comfort.
- Clock availability is extremely low, making time management a challenge in many classrooms.

- Book storage is provided in some schools but is typically insufficient.
- Teacher tables and chairs are inconsistently available; in some schools, teachers report being instructed not to use them in the classroom, and podium are rarely present.
- While private schools fulfil basic instructional needs, there are notable shortcomings in maintenance, supplementary resources, and teacher support tools.

Summary. This study explores the present state of student access to classroom facilities across government, aided, and private primary schools based on data from student feedback and information blanks. Key instructional facilities, including seating, blackboards, and teacher furniture, are widely present in all school types. Government schools generally offer better structural quality and more supportive learning environments, but lack sufficient supportive facilities such as clocks and notice boards. Aided schools maintain good lighting and ventilation, but often have poor classroom conditions and limited storage facilities. Private schools meet basic facility requirements but fall short in classroom comfort, lighting, and supplementary resources, with inconsistent maintenance. Essential classroom infrastructure exists across all school types, yet significant disparities exist in quality, maintenance, and availability of supplementary resources.

Transportation Facilities

Access to reliable transportation is a foundational element in facilitating consistent school attendance and educational equity, particularly at the primary level. It enables students to attend school regularly and participate fully in academic activities. Reliable transportation also plays a crucial role in bridging the gap between home and school environments. For young children, who are

often dependent on adult assistance for commuting, the availability of school-provided transport can significantly influence enrolment decisions, attendance patterns, and overall learning outcomes (UNESCO, 2020). The Table 11 reveals the students' access to transportation facilities in different types of primary schools in Kerala.

Table 11

Students' Access to Transportation Facilities

Particulars	Government	Aided	Private	Total
Availability of Transportation Facilities	88.33	94.93	98.23	93.83

The table indicates that 88.33% of government school students have access to transportation facilities to reach schools. Aided schools demonstrate a comparatively higher rate of transportation availability, with 94.93%. Private schools report the highest availability of transportation facilities, with 98.23% of institutions ensuring such access. The strong infrastructure observed in private institutions serves as a benchmark for other school types.

Data from the Information Blank. The data regarding students' access to transportation facilities in government, aided and private primary schools in Kerala were collected by the investigator using an information blank. The findings reveal that although transportation facilities exist across all school types, significant disparities in access and management are evident. Private schools generally maintain their transportation infrastructure more effectively and independently. In government schools, many students face transportation challenges due to geographic remoteness and financial constraints, resulting in a reliance on walking or public transport, which may not always be reliable. Aided schools provide limited bus services, which are efficiently managed through shift systems; however, a considerable number of students still travel on foot, with financial difficulties also

reported. These variations highlight the influence of institutional capacity, socioeconomic factors, and location on transportation access.

The synthesis of data from student questionnaires and information blanks shows that 88.33% of government school students have access to transportation facilities, reflecting significant challenges related to geographic remoteness and financial constraints, which often force many students to rely on walking or unreliable public transport. Aided schools show higher access at 94.93%, with limited bus services managed through shift service system. Private schools exhibit the highest availability at 98.23%, maintaining transportation infrastructure effectively and independently, aligning with parental expectations, and setting a benchmark for other sectors. Government and aided schools face structural and system related barriers, especially in remote areas, which may affect student attendance and participation.

Access to Drinking Water

Access to clean drinking water in primary schools is vital for safeguarding students' health, promoting hygiene, and supporting their cognitive and physical development. Educational commissions globally emphasise that safe water availability directly impacts attendance and learning outcomes. In Kerala, the government has issued clear directives to school managements mandating the provision and regular maintenance of hygienic drinking water facilities in all primary schools. *School Infrastructure Standards Samagra Shiksha Kerala* (2023) insists every school to have properly designed and maintained drinking water facilities that meet Indian quality standards. This includes new constructions, repairs, and renovations, supported by ongoing funding and documentation mechanisms (pp. 13–16). The result of survey on student access to drinking water facilities in Upper Primary schools is presented in Table 12.

Table 12

Students' Access to Hygienic Drinking Water Facilities in School

Particulars	Government			Aided			Private			Total
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Gils	Total	
Drinking Water Facility in the School	80.69	89.02	84.85	70.27	76.65	73.46	87.76	97.20	92.48	83.60

Table 12 reveals notable differences in access to drinking water facilities based on school management type and gender. Overall, 83.60% of students reported having access to drinking water in their schools. Private schools showed the highest access rates, with 87.76% of boys and 97.20% of girls reporting availability, leading to an impressive total of 92.48%. Government schools followed, where 80.69% of boys and 89.02% of girls confirmed access, averaging 84.85%. Aided schools lagged behind, with only 70.27% of boys and 76.65% of girls reporting access, resulting in a total of 73.46%. Girls consistently reported better access than boys across all school types, reflecting possible efforts toward gender-inclusive infrastructure.

Analysis of Qualitative Data. Data collected through information blanks filled by the investigator provides valuable insights into the status of drinking water facilities across different types of primary schools in Kerala. The analysis reveals significant disparities in the availability and maintenance of drinking water amenities among government, aided, and private schools.

In aided schools, the presence of drinking water facilities such as water purifiers and coolers is limited. While some schools have installed these amenities, their overall availability remains insufficient to meet the needs of the student population adequately. Moreover, the quality and functionality of these facilities are inconsistent, with many requiring regular maintenances to remain operational.

The situation in government schools is more concerning. The data indicates that existing drinking water facilities are often damaged, non-functional, or not

public. Water purifiers and coolers, when installed, tend to be poorly maintained, rendering them ineffective. The lack of proper maintenance and timely repairs highlights systemic challenges in infrastructure management and funding within government-run schools.

In contrast, Unaided schools demonstrate a comparatively better scenario. The majority of private institutions maintain adequate and functional drinking water facilities. Water purifiers and coolers are generally well-maintained, ensuring consistent access to safe drinking water for students. This reflects better resource availability and good administrative emphasis on student health and welfare within private school settings.

Student access to clean drinking water in Upper Primary schools is relatively high, but varies by management type and gender. Qualitative data support the quantitative findings. Unaided schools maintain functional, well-kept purifiers and coolers; government schools often have damaged or poorly maintained facilities; and aided schools face limited availability and inconsistent maintenance.

Other School Facilities

Access to Playground. Playgrounds play a crucial role in the holistic development of children, especially in Upper Primary schools where physical, social, and cognitive growth accelerates. Availability of playgrounds in schools not only promotes physical health and motor skills but also fosters social interaction, teamwork, and emotional well-being (Singh & Kaur, 2018). Recognising these benefits, governments worldwide, including India, have integrated playground provision into educational policies to ensure students receive a balanced education encompassing physical activities alongside academics. The Right to Education (RTE) Act of 2009 in India mandates that schools provide adequate infrastructure,

including safe and accessible playgrounds, to encourage physical activity among students. Kerala, recognised for its progressive education system, aligns with this mandate through state-level policies that prioritise playground availability. The Right to Education (RTE) Act of 2009 in India mandates that schools provide adequate infrastructure, including safe and accessible playgrounds, to encourage physical activity among students (Ministry of Education, 2009). The result of data on students' access to playgrounds in different types of Upper Primary schools in Kerala is presented in Table 13.

Table 13

Result of Students' Access to Playground Facilities in Upper Primary Schools of Kerala

Particulars	Government	Aided	Private	Total
Availability of Adequate Playground	90.22	70.33	95.54	85.36

The table indicates the result of students' access to playground facilities across different types of upper primary schools in Kerala. The result reveals significant variation in students access with government and private schools exhibiting higher percentage of 90.22% and 95.54%, respectively. In contrast, aided schools demonstrate substantially lower access at 70.33%, indicating a considerable infrastructural disparity within this category. The aggregate access across all schools stands at 85.36%, indicating that a majority of students have access to adequate playground facilities.

Analysis of Qualitative Data. Based on field data collected through structured information blanks and on-site verification, the following analysis explores the availability and accessibility of playgrounds for Upper Primary students across government, aided, and private schools in Kerala.

Playground facilities are observed to be available in all government schools included in the study, indicating adherence to state infrastructure norms. However, in compound institutions, where multiple institutions share the same playgrounds, the students' access sometimes restricted due to limited scheduled physical activity sessions.

In aided schools, the availability of playgrounds is observed in the majority of institutions, yet several contextual challenges were noted. Recent expansions in building infrastructure - such as the construction of additional classrooms or auditoriums - have led to the encroachment of previously open areas. Consequently, some schools have had to repurpose available spaces for parking buses and other activities, thereby compromising the intended recreational function. Furthermore, in a few cases, the playground is situated at a distance from the main school building, sometimes across public roads, raising safety and accessibility concerns, especially for younger students.

Most Private schools included in this study possess dedicated play areas that are relatively well-kept. Nevertheless, in combined or multi-school campuses, the playgrounds are occasionally shared among several institutions, and in some instances, they are located slightly away from the primary academic blocks. Teachers indicated that, in such cases, students are accompanied by faculty members to ensure safe and supervised access. This practice reflects a proactive institutional approach to facilitating physical activity despite spatial constraints.

The combined analysis of quantitative data and field observations highlights disparities in playground access across different types of Upper Primary schools in Kerala. Unaided schools report the highest access, government schools moderate and aided schools the lowest. While government schools possess playgrounds, shared use

within compound institutions may constrain access. In aided schools, functional use is often undermined by encroachment, non-recreational use, and unsafe or distant locations. Private schools generally maintain well-equipped, dedicated facilities, with potential access limitations mitigated through active supervision.

Access to Restroom Facilities. Access to clean restrooms, where students can rest temporarily during health-related emergencies, in Upper Primary schools is essential for ensuring the welfare, safety, and overall well-being of students. Research indicates that the availability of adequate resting facilities and prompt medical care significantly reduces student tension, enhances student well-being, and fosters a supportive learning environment (Jasper et al., 2012; WHO, 2018). The general education department of Kerala has implemented detailed policy directives aimed at strengthening school infrastructure and emergency preparedness. As per recent guidelines issued by the General Education Department of Kerala (2025), all schools must establish comprehensive child emergency medical response plans, coordinate with local health canters, and conduct regular safety drills to mitigate health risks and ensure rapid medical intervention when needed (Kerala Education Department, 2025). The data regarding the student access to resting and medical room facilities in Upper Primary schools is as follows in Table 14.

Table 14

Students' Access to Rest Room Facilities

Particulars	Government	Aided	Private	Total
Access to Restroom	0.69	2.70	71.57	24.99

Table 14 indicates a substantial disparity among different school types in students' access to rest rooms, designated spaces within schools. Overall, only 24.99% of students across Upper Primary schools reported access to such facilities.

A closer examination of the data shows that government schools provide minimal access, with only 0.69% of students reporting the availability of restrooms. Aided schools also reflect a similar inadequacy, with just 2.70% reporting access. In contrast, private schools appear significantly better equipped, with 71.57% of students confirming the presence of restrooms. This gap also reflects a broader issue of unequal infrastructural provisioning between public and private sectors.

Analysis of Qualitative Data. The analysis of data collected through information blanks reveals a significant disparity in the provision of emergency rest facilities between government, aided, and private schools. In majority of government schools, no separate space exists for students to rest during emergencies, despite the availability of unused classrooms that could be repurposed for this need. Instead, verandas and staff rooms are informally utilised for such purposes, which compromises student privacy and comfort. Students themselves reported that they often rest on back benches when feeling unwell, indicating a lack of institutional support for their physical well-being.

Aided schools exhibit similar trends, with minimal or no provision of separate rest areas and also relying on shared spaces. In contrast, private schools demonstrate relatively better preparedness, with approximately 70% of them having designated rest and first aid rooms. Some of these schools, especially those including lower primary divisions, have gone further by appointing nurses to manage health-related emergencies.

Triangulation of student data with field data exposes the inadequacies: government and aided schools lack formal restrooms altogether, despite the presence of unused classrooms that could be repurposed. Instead, verandas and staff rooms are informally used, and students often rest on back benches for emergencies,

highlighting a lack of institutional mechanisms for student health support. In contrast, approximately 70% of private schools not only provide rest and first aid rooms but some also appoint nurses, especially in institutions with lower divisions. This stark contrast reflects a systemic infrastructural divide between public and private educational sectors, where government and aided schools are underprepared to meet basic student welfare needs.

Conclusion of Theme One

The analysis of students' access to Infrastructural Facilities across different types of Upper Primary schools in Kerala reveals that, while basic infrastructure is generally available, significant disparities persist in quality, functionality, and equity of access. Government schools possess relatively strong physical infrastructure access but face maintenance challenges and lack certain supplementary amenities. Aided schools demonstrate strengths in sanitation yet struggle with space constraints, maintenances, and provision of key facilities. Across facilities such as drinking water, playgrounds, and emergency rest spaced, private schools tend to outperform in availability and maintenance, where as aided schools often register the lowest access. Government schools occupy a middle ground, with solid core structures but irregular functionality.

Theme 2: Curricular Facilities and Programmes

Access to curricular facilities and programmes is critically linked to students' academic achievement and holistic development, as they provide essential support for effective learning, subject mastery, and the integration of co-curricular learning experiences. In the context of Kerala's Upper Primary schools, such access plays a key role in reducing educational disparities and ensuring inclusive quality education, in line with the objectives of the Right to Education Act (2009) and NEP

2020. Many factors associated with students' access to curricular facilities and programmes are identified. They are as follows.

Curricular Materials and Facilities for Curricular Transaction

The availability of adequate and satisfactory learning materials constitutes a fundamental factor influencing the educational outcomes and experience of Upper Primary school students. As learners progress from elementary to more advanced cognitive stages, the provision of quality textbooks, supplementary educational resources, and instructional aids is imperative to facilitate effective comprehension and the development of critical skills (NCERT, 2019). Kerala's longstanding emphasis on universal education and its notably high literacy rates highlight the critical importance of equitable access to learning materials across diverse socio-economic groups (Government of Kerala, 2020). Such access not only ensures the effective delivery of the prescribed curriculum and enhances academic performance but also promotes learner autonomy and accommodates varied learning needs and experiences (ASER, 2021). Therefore, a systematic investigation into the availability and utilisation of learning materials within Upper Primary schools in Kerala is essential to inform strategies aimed at improving educational quality and fostering equity and learning experience within the state's schooling system (UNICEF, 2018).

To assess the students' access to sufficient learning materials, a survey was conducted among the learners and to verify the data, the investigator filled information blank by field inquiry and observation. The details are given as follows:

Access to Basic Learning Materials. Access to Basic Learning Material is a foundational requirement for effective teaching-learning process. Data obtained from the student survey regarding current status of students is presented in Table 15.

Table 15

Students' Access to Basic Learning Materials

Particulars	Government			Aided			Private		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Gils	Total
Text book	100.00	100.00	100.00	96.62	100.00	98.31	94.90	91.59	93.24
Notebooks for all subjects	55.20	18.50	35.11	49.32	61.08	55.20	88.78	90.65	89.71
Pen and pencil	42.76	18.50	30.63	50.68	53.89	52.28	91.84	94.39	93.11
Others	31.03	17.92	24.48	47.30	52.10	49.70	85.71	94.39	90.05

Table 15 indicates the result of students' access to basic learning materials in Upper Primary schools across Kerala. The analysis reveals distinct disparities among government-aided and private schools in students' access to basic learning materials. The data reveals that government schools provide universal access to textbooks, with 100% of both boys and girls reporting availability. However, access to other essential materials, such as notebooks, pens, pencils, and supplementary items, is considerably lower, especially among girls, where only 18.50% have notebooks and 17.92% have other materials. Aided schools show moderate access to these materials, with overall percentages around 50% and relatively smaller gender gaps. Private schools demonstrate the highest and most equitable access to all learning materials, with over 90% of both boys and girls reporting availability of notebooks, writing tools, and other supplementary items. These findings underscore the effectiveness of government programmes in textbook distribution but highlight significant gaps in the provision of other learning resources in public schools, particularly for female students.

Analysis of Qualitative Data. Based on the data collected through field inquiry, it was observed that there are significant variations in the availability and accessibility of curricular materials across government, aided, and private schools.

In government schools, while textbooks are uniformly provided by the government, ensuring access for all students, there is a notable shortage of notebooks, with many students using a single notebook for multiple subjects. Supplementary learning materials are also extremely limited, which may hinder comprehensive learning. Additionally, some girl students in government schools expressed difficulty in accessing or obtaining the required materials, highlighting gender-based or socio-economic barriers that may further affect equitable resource distribution.

Aided schools demonstrate comparatively better conditions, with sufficient availability of textbooks and improved access to notebooks and supplementary materials, likely due to additional support from private or community sources alongside government provisions. In contrast, private schools, despite having relatively better access to general learning resources, face challenges in textbook availability. Teachers reported difficulties in obtaining books from the department, leading some students to rely on photocopied versions, which may affect content quality and standardisation. While notebooks are generally available for core subjects in private schools, certain supplementary subjects lack dedicated materials. These findings indicate disparities in resource allocation and equitable access to curricular materials across different types of schools.

Evaluation. An integrated analysis of student survey data and qualitative field inquiry reveals significant disparities in access to basic learning materials across government, aided, and private Upper Primary schools in Kerala. Quantitative findings indicate that while government schools provide universal access to textbooks, access to other essential materials, such as notebooks, writing tools, and supplementary resources, is substantially lower, particularly among girls, reflecting underlying socio-economic and gender-based inequities. Aided schools demonstrate moderate access, with about half of the students reporting availability

of key materials. Private schools show the highest and most equitable access, with over 90% of students having necessary resources, though some challenges remain in textbook procurement.

Qualitative insights from field inquiry reinforce these patterns, revealing that students in government schools often use a single notebook for multiple subjects, and that girls face additional barriers to access materials due to financial and social constraints. In aided schools, improved access appears to be supported by community or private contributions, while private schools, despite better access to most materials, sometimes rely on photocopied textbooks due to departmental delays. Together, these findings highlight the need for targeted, equity-focused policy interventions to ensure comprehensive and inclusive access to learning resources across all school types, with particular attention to gender-sensitive and socio-economically responsive distribution strategies.

Curricular Facilities and Faculties

Curricular facilities and faculty play a pivotal role in Upper Primary education by providing the essential infrastructure and pedagogical expertise required for effective curriculum delivery. These elements collectively ensure that students in grades 5 to 7 receive quality instruction and access to diverse learning resources, which are critical for cognitive and social development (Smith, 2018). The current state of student access to curricular facilities and faculties is discussed under some related subthemes as follows:

Systematic Running of Curricular Programmes. Data regarding students' access to a systematic, running curricular programme in Upper Primary schools is discussed in Table 16.

Table 16

Students' Access to Systematic Curricular Programmes in School

Particulars	Government	Aided	Private	Total
Systematic Daily Working Structure	87.49	82.53	89.03	86.35
Availability of the Timetable	92.93	84.92	94.14	90.66
Following the Timetable	89.65	83.32	89.03	87.33
Teacher Assessment of Students' Work	87.97	91.55	97.58	92.36
Consideration in the Classroom	84.36	69.74	93.11	82.41

Table 16 shows the result of the analysis of student responses to a questionnaire regarding access to the systematic running of curricular programs in schools. From the analysis, it is evident that variations exist across different types of schools, namely, government, aided, and private institutions. The data indicates that private schools demonstrate the highest degree of systematic functioning, with consistently high percentages across all measured parameters, including availability and adherence to timetables, structured daily routines, and teacher assessment of student work. Particularly, private schools excel in teacher engagement and classroom consideration, suggesting a more individualised and organised approach to curriculum implementation.

Government schools also exhibit a relatively strong performance, particularly in operational aspects such as timetable availability (92.93%) and adherence (89.65%). However, they show slightly lower scores in areas reflecting student-centred pedagogy, such as classroom consideration (84.36%) and teacher assessment (87.97%), implying a need to enhance instructional responsiveness and engagement. In contrast, aided schools report the lowest levels of systematic curriculum delivery across almost all indicators. Of particular concern is the low percentage of students in aided schools who feel considered in the classroom

environment (69.74%), which may reflect deficiencies in inclusive teaching practices and classroom management. The overall average across all school types remains moderately high, indicating a general adherence to structured curricular practices.

Analysis of Qualitative Data. The data collected through the information blanks indicate that students across government, aided, and private schools have varied levels of access to the systematic implementation of curricular programmes.

- In government schools, a structured timetable is universally available, and the daily routine typically begins with a prayer and concludes with the national anthem, with adequate breaks integrated throughout the day. Teachers in these institutions reported providing consistent attention to students and engaging in regular evaluation of their academic work.
- Aided schools also maintain a timetable; however, some operate on a shift basis due to transportation constraints, with the first shift starting and ending 30 minutes earlier than the standard schedule. Teachers in aided schools expressed a strong commitment to student engagement and were observed to evaluate student work, such as notebooks and workbooks, more frequently than their counterparts in government schools. In addition, both aided and private schools reported conducting comparatively more class tests as part of their ongoing assessment practices.
- In private schools, a highly systematic daily routine is maintained, often including activities like the morning pledge and news reading. Consideration for students in the classroom and academic evaluation was reported to be satisfactory, reflecting a generally well-organised approach to the delivery of curricular programmes.

This analysis suggests that while all three types of schools make efforts to implement curricular programmes systematically, the extent and consistency of these efforts vary depending on institutional type and contextual factors such as resources, infrastructure, and school management practices.

The analysis of both qualitative and quantitative data reveals considerable variability in the systematic implementation of curricular programmes across government, aided, and private schools. Private schools consistently demonstrate the highest levels of structured curriculum delivery, as evidenced by superior performance in timetable adherence, daily routines, teacher assessment, and classroom consideration, reflecting a well-organised and individualised pedagogical framework underpinned by adequate institutional resources. Government schools exhibit strong structural coherence, particularly in operational domains such as timetable availability and adherence; however, these institutions show comparatively lower scores on student-centred dimensions, indicating a need for enhanced instructional responsiveness and classroom engagement.

Conversely, aided schools display the greatest inconsistency in systematic curriculum delivery, which may be attributable, in part, to infrastructural and logistical constraints, most notably the implementation of shift-based schedules. The shift system, characterized by staggered start and end times and compressed instructional periods, likely disrupts continuity in teaching and learning processes, thereby diminishing students' perceptions of a coherent and systematic curricular structure. This structural limitation plausibly contributes to the notably lower percentage of students reporting classroom consideration and systematic functioning within aided schools. These findings underscore the critical impact of institutional scheduling and resource allocation on the quality of curriculum implementation and highlight the necessity for targeted structural interventions to promote equitable and systematic curricular delivery in aided school contexts.

Faculties and Curricular Resources. Curricular facilities and faculty play a pivotal role in Upper Primary education by providing the essential infrastructure and pedagogical expertise required for effective curriculum delivery. These elements collectively ensure that students receive quality instruction and access to diverse learning resources, which are critical for cognitive and social development (Smith, 2018). The current state of student access to curricular facilities and faculties is discussed under some related subthemes as follows.

Availability of Faculties for Curricular Transaction. The availability of qualified faculty is a critical factor influencing the effective implementation of curricular programmes, particularly at the Upper Primary school level. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 emphasises the need to improve the pupil-teacher ratio and ensure equitable distribution of teachers to enhance learning outcomes. Kerala, known for its progressive educational indicators, reports a favourable pupil-teacher ratio (Education for All in India, 2023). Therefore, analysing student access to faculty in the real field is essential for understanding its direct impact on access to and engagement with curricular programmes in Upper Primary education. The result is discussed as follows:

Table 17

Students' Access to Faculties for Curricular Programmes

Particulars	Government	Aided	Private	Total
Availability of teachers for all subjects	89.32	87.49	92.48	89.76

Table 17 shows the students' responses regarding access to subject-specific teaching faculty for all curricular subjects. The findings highlight significant variations across different types of Upper Primary schools. Private schools report the highest teacher availability at 92.48%, followed by government schools at 89.32%, while aided schools lag behind at 87.49%. The overall average of 89.76%

indicates that, on the whole, students have relatively good access to teachers for all subjects. However, the gap between private and aided schools underscores persistent inequities in the distribution and management of teaching resources.

Analysis of Qualitative Data. The analysis of data collected through field enquiries concerning teacher availability for curricular transactions in Upper Primary schools reveals several key challenges. In government schools, teacher shortages caused by transfers, retirements, and unfilled vacancies disrupt teaching continuity. This forces the remaining teachers to take on extra work and leads some schools to hire guest teachers, which creates inconsistency. Aided schools generally have enough permanent teachers, but new teachers often feel uncertain about their appointment status. Additionally, overcrowded classrooms and poor infrastructure make teaching difficult, and extra non-teaching duties reduce teachers' classroom presence. Private schools usually report having enough teachers and good management of attendance and activities, but some employ unqualified staff, which may harm teaching quality. Overall, while private schools manage staffing numbers well, government and aided schools need to ensure the availability of faculties in classrooms to ensure effective curriculum transaction.

The availability of subject-specific teaching faculty constitutes a fundamental prerequisite for effective curricular transaction in Upper Primary education. Quantitative data indicates that, on average, 89.76% of students report access to faculty for all curricular subjects, with private schools exhibiting the highest access rate (92.48%) compared to government (89.32%) and aided schools (87.49%). The qualitative findings contextualise these figures by revealing operational challenges. In government schools, frequent teacher shortages arising from transfers, retirements, and unfilled vacancies precipitate discontinuities in instruction and necessitate the engagement of temporary guest teachers, thereby

compromising curricular coherence. Aided schools, while maintaining adequate staffing levels, contend with issues related to teacher appointment insecurity, infrastructural inadequacies, overcrowding, and non-teaching duties, all of which affect regular classroom engagements. Private schools generally maintain better faculty management and engagement, facilitating more stable curricular transactions, although the employment of unqualified personnel poses risks to instructional quality.

Students Access to Curricular Facilities.

Access to Proper Audio-visual Aids. Access to appropriate audio-visual aids during curricular transactions plays a critical role in enhancing student engagement and understanding by catering to diverse learning styles and bridging theoretical and practical knowledge. Empirical evidence and policy recommendations from the Educational Commission and the Department of Education, Kerala, underscore the significance of integrating audio-visual resources in classrooms to improve educational outcomes and ensure effective curriculum implementation and student experiences (Kumar, 2020; Department of Education, Kerala, 2019; Educational Commission Report, 2018). The present status of student access to audio-visual aids for their learning is analysed based on the data collected from Upper Primary students, and the result is presented in Table 18.

Table 18

Students' Access to Audio-visual Aids in Classroom

Particulars	Government	Aided	Private	Total
Access to audio-visual aids for learning	51.58	52.34	31.66	45.19

Table 18 shows the result of the data collected from Upper Primary school students in Kerala regarding access to audio-visual (AV) aids during curriculum

transactions. The result reveals notable disparities across different types of Upper Primary schools in Kerala. While aided schools report the highest access at 52.34%, closely followed by government schools at 51.58%, private schools lag significantly behind, with only 31.66% of students having access to AV tools. This is particularly surprising given the perception that private institutions are typically better resourced. The overall average stands at just 45.19%, indicating that less than half of the students have access to AV aids, which are essential for enhancing student engagement and providing better learning experiences for younger minds. The relatively low AV aid integration in private institutions is indicative of infrastructural and resource limitations among unaided private schools. The data underscores the necessity for targeted interventions in the form of policy reinforcement, infrastructure augmentation, and sustained teacher professional development.

Analysis of Qualitative Data. Based on the data collected through investigator-filled information blanks, it was found that government schools are generally well-equipped with a rich variety of audio-visual (AV) aids, with basic amenities readily available to teachers and a designated faculty in charge who is responsible for maintaining these facilities. This structured approach facilitates regular use of AV aids in classrooms. In contrast, aided schools have limited AV resources, which are not available in all classrooms; teachers reported sharing portable facilities as needed, indicating inconsistent access and potential disruptions in teaching. Similarly, private schools also exhibit limited AV facilities, with both teachers and authorities confirming the use of portable aids only when required. Despite being privately managed, these schools do not show significant advantages in AV infrastructure over aided schools. Overall, the analysis highlights a clear disparity, with government schools leading in AV resource availability and utilisation, while aided and private schools face constraints that hinder consistent and effective use of AV aids in education**.**

Evaluation. The triangulation of quantitative and qualitative data reveals a significant discrepancy between reported audio-visual (AV) infrastructure and its actual use in classrooms, particularly within government schools. While school authorities and teachers report that these institutions are well-equipped with AV aids and follow a structured approach to their integration, student feedback presents a contrasting perspective. According to student responses, only 51.58% of learners reported actual access to AV aids in their classrooms. This indicates a substantial gap between the availability of AV resources and their effective utilisation from the students' point of view. It suggests that although resources exist, their integration may not be uniform across different subjects, classrooms, or teachers. The mere presence of AV tools does not guarantee their consistent or meaningful use in everyday teaching.

Access to ICT Resources. Student Access to ICT resources in Upper Primary classrooms is essential to support effective learning and prepare students for the digital world. With technology becoming a key part of everyday life, students need to develop digital skills early. The government recommends integrating ICT in schools to improve teaching quality, enhance student engagement, and bridge the digital divide. Providing access to computers, internet, and related facilities in Upper Primary schools helps build a strong foundation for future education and career opportunities (Ministry of Education, 2020). The result of the enquiry on students' access to ICT resources in different types of Upper Primary schools is given in Table 19.

Table 19

Students' Access to ICT Resources

Particulars	Government	Aided	Private	Total
Laptop / Computers	23.78	21.31	8.42	17.84
Projectors	53.18	23.09	1.02	25.76
Internet Connectivity	15.72	8.09	0.00	7.94
Smart board	13.11	9.27	4.08	8.82

Data in the Table 19 regarding students' access to ICT resources for classroom practices reveals notable disparities across different types of primary schools in Kerala. Government schools demonstrate relatively higher levels of access to key ICT tools. Specifically, 23.78% of students in government schools reported access to laptops or computers, compared to 21.31% in aided schools and only 8.42% in private schools.

Access to projectors is particularly concentrated in government schools, with 53.18% of students reporting availability, while aided and private schools reported significantly lower access at 23.09% and 1.02%, respectively. Internet connectivity is generally inadequate across all school types, with only 15.72% of government school students and 8.09% of aided school students reporting access. Notably, private school students reported no access to internet connectivity (0.00%), indicating a critical gap in digital infrastructure. Access to smart boards is also limited overall, though government schools again lead at 13.11%, followed by aided schools at 9.27% and private schools at 4.08%.The data suggests that government schools are better equipped with ICT resources than aided and private schools. However, the overall percentages across all categories remain low, indicating widespread limitations in ICT integration for classroom practices

Analysis of Qualitative Data. The qualitative data reveal significant disparities in the availability and utilisation of ICT infrastructure across government, aided, and private schools.

- Government schools possess limited ICT facilities, with computers typically confined to a few smart classrooms available only in select institutions. Regular classrooms largely lack such provisions, with only two to three classrooms per school equipped with projectors or televisions. Internet connectivity is scarce, and digital access during instruction is often enabled

through teachers' personal mobile data. Smart boards are almost entirely absent in common classrooms, and student exposure to smart classrooms is occasional.

- Aided schools face similar infrastructural constraints, with even fewer projectors and rare instances of smart board usage. Internet access is limited to a small number of classrooms, and as in government schools, instructional use of ICT is frequently dependent on teachers' personal devices and data.
- Private schools, particularly those with limited financial resources, exhibit the weakest ICT infrastructure, with very rare access to digital tools. In some instances, office laptops are repurposed for instructional use, but projectors, televisions, and internet connectivity are largely unavailable.

Across all school types, there is a common reliance on teachers' personal ICT resources, highlighting systemic inadequacies in institutional support. These findings indicate the urgent need for targeted investment in ICT infrastructure, equitable distribution of resources, and comprehensive support mechanisms to enable the effective integration of digital tools into everyday teaching practices.

The combined analysis of the quantitative and qualitative data on student access to ICT resources in primary schools across Kerala shows clear differences between school types and highlights major shortcomings in digital infrastructure. The survey data suggests that government schools are somewhat better equipped than aided and private schools. However, the qualitative data provides important context that helps explain these numbers. It shows that even in government schools, ICT resources are limited to a small number of smart classrooms, usually just two or three per school. Most regular classrooms have no access to projectors, computers, or smart boards. Internet connectivity is often poor, and many teachers rely on their personal mobile data to use digital tools during lessons. Aided

schools face even greater challenges, with fewer projectors, almost no smart boards, and limited internet access. This triangulation highlights not only inter-school disparities but also intra-school inconsistencies and a systemic dependence on teachers' personal devices, indicating a lack of institutional support for effective digital integration.

Curriculum Labs and Facilities. The effective transaction of curriculum in Upper Primary schools requires well-equipped, experiential learning environments that support the transition from rote learning to experience. "Curriculum transaction at the Upper Primary level is most effective when supported by structured, hands-on learning environments that translate abstract concepts into tangible experiences" (NCERT, 2021). As learners at this stage encounter more complex academic content, the presence of such facilities becomes essential to bridge theory and practice (National Policy on Education, 2020). In Kerala, educational policy initiatives have underscored the importance of strengthening school infrastructure, including the establishment of subject-specific labs, to ensure quality curriculum delivery and improved learning outcomes (Kerala Education Department, 2021). The status of students' access to curricular lab facilities in Upper Primary schools in Kerala is investigated, and the result is discussed in Table 20.

Table 20

Students' Access to Curricular Lab Facilities

Particulars	Government	Aided	Private	Total
Science lab	63.51	91.80	34.64	63.31
Language lab	22.87	34.92	11.30	23.03
Mathematics lab	23.62	40.78	1.02	21.81
IT lab	98.97	99.70	81.17	93.28
Social science lab	48.85	56.22	2.55	35.87

Table 20 shows the result of students' access to laboratory facilities in Upper Primary schools in Kerala. The analysis shows clear differences based on the type of school management. Aided school students have the highest access to most labs, especially science (91.80%), Mathematics (40.78%), and social science (56.22%) labs. Government schools have moderate access, with strong availability in IT labs (98.97%) and science labs (63.51%). In contrast, private schools report much lower access to most labs, particularly in Mathematics (1.02%) and social science (2.55%) labs. While access to IT labs is high, overall, private schools still lag behind aided and government schools (81.17%). These results highlight the need for focused efforts to improve laboratory access, especially in private schools and for labs such as language and mathematics, to ensure more equal learning opportunities for all students.

Analysis of Qualitative Data. The qualitative analysis of the data collected through a structured information blank indicates the real picture of lab facilities available in different types of Upper Primary schools in Kerala. The study examined facilities in government, aided, and private schools with a focus on five key types of laboratories: science, language, social science, Mathematics, and information technology (IT). The purpose of the investigation was to assess the current status of lab infrastructure available for students learning in these three types of schools. The key findings are:

- *Science Laboratory***.** Science laboratories were found to be present in all government and aided schools. However, the facilities were typically under-equipped and inadequately organised. In most cases, science lab materials were stored in shared spaces, such as multi-purpose rooms or on common shelves, limiting their accessibility and practical utility. In private schools, the situation was less favourable, with many institutions lacking a dedicated

science laboratory altogether. Where materials were available, they were often kept in staff or administrative rooms, suggesting that science practical are not prioritised in daily teaching practices.

- *Language Laboratory.* The absence of dedicated language laboratories was a consistent finding across all three school types. In some government and aided schools, existing IT labs were informally labelled as language labs. However, this reclassification was nominal, as no specialised equipment, software, or structured programmes for language learning were present. Private schools also did not report any specific infrastructure to support language lab activities. The overall findings indicate a significant gap in facilities designed to enhance language proficiency, particularly for second and third languages.

- *Social Science Laboratory.* Basic materials related to social science education, such as globes, charts, and maps, were found in most schools. However, their utilisation was limited. The majority of schools, regardless of type, did not have a dedicated space for a social science laboratory. Aided schools showed slightly better management practices, with some institutions maintaining inventories and assigning a teacher in charge of lab materials. Nonetheless, the lack of integration of these resources into instructional processes was evident across the schools.

- *Mathematics Laboratory***.** Mathematics laboratories were also found to be underdeveloped in all school categories. While some materials were available, they were generally stored in non-dedicated areas such as staff rooms or shared lab spaces. In many private schools, a lack of awareness among teachers regarding the existence or purpose of a mathematics lab was reported.

- *Information Technology Laboratory***.** IT labs were the most consistently available and operational among the five categories of labs studied. Government schools typically had dedicated IT labs with multiple computers, although not all systems were functional. Aided schools showed better maintenance, with most IT facilities in working condition. Private schools generally had fewer devices, but the available infrastructure was usually well-maintained and actively used. The presence and usability of IT labs across schools reflect a relatively higher institutional priority on digital literacy.

The findings from the data collected through the information blank highlight critical disparities in the availability, functionality, and pedagogical integration of laboratory facilities in Upper Primary schools, while IT labs show comparatively better presence and usage.

Evaluation. The triangulated analysis of laboratory facilities in Upper Primary schools in Kerala reveals significant disparities in access, quality, and usage across government, aided, and private schools.

- While the quantitative data shows that aided schools have the highest access to science labs, the qualitative findings reveal that even where labs exist, they are often under-equipped, poorly maintained, or not pedagogically integrated.

- Government schools show strong access to IT labs and moderate access to other labs, but qualitative data indicates that science and math materials are frequently stored in multi-purpose areas, limiting their instructional use.

- Private schools consistently report lower access, particularly in mathematics and social science labs, and qualitative observations

confirm a lack of dedicated lab spaces and low teacher awareness of lab-based learning practices.

- Language laboratories are notably absent across all school types, often substituted nominally by IT labs without appropriate resources.
- IT labs emerge as the most consistently available and functional, though equipment quality and usage vary.

The result highlights that while physical access to labs is better in aided and government schools, effective utilisation remains limited. There is a pressing need for improved infrastructure, dedicated lab spaces, and teacher training, especially in private schools, to ensure students' access to equitable and meaningful learning experiences through laboratory education.

Access to School Library

Access to school libraries is a critical component for Upper Primary school students for enhancing their literacy skills and knowledge acquisition and fostering intrinsic motivation toward learning. School libraries provide students with access to different learning resources beyond textbooks, which supports deeper understanding and encourages self-directed learning (Krishnan, 2019). Research shows that school libraries enhance literacy skills, promote reading habits, and improve academic achievement by offering diverse materials aligned with the curriculum (Singh & Pillai, 2021). The Kerala Government's Education Policy (2021) explicitly advocates for the integration of accessible library facilities within schools to support inclusive education and holistic student development. To analyse the present status of students' access to school libraries and related facilities in Upper Primary schools in Kerala, the study collected data from different types of primary schools. The results are presented in Table 21.

Table 21

Students' Access to School Library

Particulars	Government	Aided	Private	Total
Library facility for students	90.34	88.67	56.23	78.40

Data in Table 21 shows the result of students' access to school across different types of Upper Primary schools in Kerala. Government and aided schools exhibit high levels of provision, with 90.34% and 88.67% of institutions, respectively, offering library access to students. In contrast, private schools lag significantly behind, with only 56.23% providing such facilities. This discrepancy lowers the overall state average to 78.40%, suggesting that while public sector schools in Kerala have largely succeeded in meeting infrastructural norms related to library access for students, the private sector falls short.

Students' Access to Facilities Available in Library. The result of student access to basic facilities in the school library is presented in the Table 22.

Table 22

Students' Access to Facilities in School Library

Particulars	Government	Aided	Private	Total
Librarian in charge	70.75	88.30	74.63	77.92
Availability of catalogue	62.67	46.08	45.52	52.74
Proper Seating facility	89.50	88.99	24.57	73.15
Time schedule for library use	61.57	30.51	34.77	43.44

Table 22 describes the result of student responses regarding school library facilities, and reveals notable disparities across government, aided, and private institutions. Government schools demonstrate comparatively better provision in key areas such as the presence of a librarian (70.75%), availability of a catalogue (62.67%), proper seating arrangements (89.50%), and scheduled time for library use

(61.57%), indicating a relatively well-structured library environment. Aided schools report the highest presence of librarians (88.30%) and adequate seating (88.99%), yet lag significantly in catalogue availability (46.08%) and library usage scheduling (30.51%). In contrast, private schools show moderate librarian presence (74.63%) but perform poorly in seating (24.57%), catalogue availability (45.52%), and time scheduling (34.77%), suggesting limited infrastructural support and organisational structure. The overall values reflect that while some basic facilities are in place, there is a critical need, particularly in private and aided schools, to enhance catalogue systems, physical infrastructure, and structured access to library resources to ensure equitable learning environments.

Analysis of Qualitative Data. Based on the qualitative data collected, notable differences were observed among government, aided, and private schools in terms of infrastructure, book availability, and library practices.

Government schools generally have basic library facilities with a reasonable variety of books and a designated teacher in charge; however, many suffer from inadequate seating arrangements and irregular student access, which limits effective use. In aided schools, libraries are relatively better maintained with a richer collection of books, and several schools have set up reading corners or small spaces for library-related activities such as newspaper reading. Teachers in these schools are often seen engaging with students in reading corners, helping to cultivate a reading culture. Despite this, many aided schools do not share the catalogue of available books with students, even though such records are maintained.

Private schools, on the other hand, tend to have the least developed library infrastructure. Though most private schools have libraries, they are often located

adjacent to staff rooms, with limited space, few books, and minimal seating arrangements. Reading corners are rare, and access to the library is often restricted. Students from private schools reported receiving very limited opportunities to use the library, and catalogues are provided only in a few cases.

Evaluation. The triangulation of quantitative and qualitative data highlights that government schools show comparatively better performance in key indicators. However, qualitative insights complicate this narrative. While government schools generally maintain basic library facility and have a designated teacher in charge, many are reported to suffer from poor seating infrastructure and irregular student access. This suggests a disconnect between reported infrastructure and the functional usability of these facilities, pointing to limitations in translating availability into effective educational utility.

In the case of aided schools, the quantitative data suggests a highly favourable profile in terms of librarian and seating arrangements, yet lower performance in areas such as catalogue availability and scheduled usage time. The qualitative findings support the view that aided schools tend to have better-maintained libraries, often with richer collections and reading corners established to foster a reading culture.

Unaided schools, on the other hand, consistently exhibit underdeveloped library systems across both data sources. The qualitative data reinforces these deficits, indicating that libraries in private schools are often small, under-resourced, and situated in spaces not conducive to student engagement, such as adjacent to staff rooms. There is a notable lack of reading corners or separate reading spaces, and access is often restricted, with students reporting minimal opportunities to use library facilities.

Access to Different Curricular Activities

Student Access to diverse curricular activities is a fundamental component of holistic education at the Upper Primary level, where students begin to shape their interests, skills, and identities. The students' access to different forms of curricular activities was studied, and the result is presented in Table 23.

Table 23

Access to Different Types of Curricular Activities

Particulars	Government	Aided	Private	Total
Group discussions	84.32	82.67	94.52	87.17
Role play	33.86	46.14	53.34	44.45
Filed work	24.50	45.81	49.72	40.01
Field visit	62.11	46.94	49.47	52.84
Group project	68.02	68.02	62.55	59.19
Video presentation	73.97	78.48	49.93	67.46
Experiment and exhibition	73.48	58.77	53.34	61.86

Table 23 describes the result of student access to curricular activities in Upper Primary schools across Kerala, based on student surveys. The data reveals differentiated patterns of exposure based on different types of Upper Primary schools. Group discussions emerged as the most widely used activity, with reported participation exceeding 80% across all school types. Private school students recorded the highest access (94.52%), and government and aided schools followed closely, suggesting that this pedagogical strategy is broadly institutionalised across educational sectors.

Student access to role-play activities was markedly lower, particularly in government schools (33.86%), as compared to aided (46.14%) and private schools (53.34%). This disparity underscores potential limitations in the incorporation of performance-based and student-centred instructional approaches within government

classrooms. The data also indicate significant inequity in student opportunities for fieldwork, with only 24.5% of students in government schools reporting access, in contrast to 45.81% and 49.72% in aided and private schools, respectively.

Government school students reported the highest access to field visits-related learning activities (62.11%). Group project access was relatively uniform across government and aided schools (68.02%), with slightly lower access in private institutions (62.55%). This suggests a shared emphasis on cooperative academic tasks among public-sector schools. The data reveal that access to video-based instructional strategies was highest in aided schools (78.48%), followed by government schools (73.97%), while private schools reported the lowest access (49.93%). Government school students mark a higher access to experiments and exhibitions (73.48%) than aided (58.77%) and private (53.34%) schools, indicating a stronger institutional emphasis on practical, hands-on learning experiences within the public education system.

Analysis of Qualitative Data. The analysis of the qualitative data reveals distinct patterns in the access and implementation of curricular activities. Teachers in government schools indicated that they incorporate a range of active learning strategies, such as group discussions, fieldwork, and practical assignments, within their instructional practices. However, they also reported significant challenges that hinder the consistent and effective implementation of such approaches. Overcrowded classrooms and time constraints, which limit individualised attention and experiential engagement, and inadequacy of facilities and instructional materials are key challenges reported by the teachers in the execution of diverse curricular activities.

In the case of aided schools, teachers reported a varied use of activity-based methods, often influenced by individual interest and pedagogical autonomy. Some

teachers expressed interest in activities like field-based and library-supported learning experiences. While systemic limitations were less emphasised than in government schools, the data suggest that the presence and quality of curricular activities are inconsistent and heavily dependent on the initiative of individual educators.

Private schools presented a more proactive and structured engagement with curricular activities. Teachers in these settings emphasised their commitment to field-based learning, supported by self-initiated efforts to design and facilitate diverse activities. Moreover, there was evidence of collaborative learning environments where students contributed to the creation of materials and equipment used in these activities. This suggests a more resource-rich and flexible instructional setting, where both teachers and learners are actively involved in the teaching-learning process. The emphasis on student agency and teacher innovation in private schools points to a more enabling environment for implementing activity-based education. The analysis of data reflects a hierarchy in access to and quality of curricular activities, with private schools demonstrating the highest levels of implementation, followed by aided schools and then government schools.

Evaluation. Drawing on student survey data and qualitative inputs, the findings highlight significant patterns and disparities in the implementation of activity-based pedagogies across government, aided, and private schools. Based on the quantitative data; group discussion was the most accessible curricular activity across all school types, with private schools showing the highest participation and Government schools had the lowest participation in role-play and fieldwork while private schools had better access to both. The qualitative findings complement the survey data by providing context to these trends. Qualitative insights revealed that although government schools employed various active learning strategies, they

faced challenges such as overcrowding, limited time, and inadequate facilities, affecting consistent activity delivery.

The analysis of both qualitative and quantitative data reveals a distinct hierarchy in the implementation of curricular activities across school types. Private schools demonstrated the most consistent and diverse use of activity-based pedagogies. Aided schools occupied a middle ground, where teacher autonomy largely influenced practice, leading to variability. Government schools, while constrained by systemic challenges, showed notable strengths in certain domains such as practical learning and group projects.

Summary of Analysis of the Theme 2

The analysis of theme 2 investigates student access to curricular facilities and programmes across government, aided, and private Upper Primary schools in Kerala, using a triangulated data approach combining student surveys and qualitative field observations. The findings reveal notable disparities in resource provision, utilisation, and pedagogical implementation across different school types.

Access to basic learning materials shows a clear institutional divide. While textbooks are universally distributed in government schools, access to supplementary materials such as notebooks and stationery is limited, particularly among female students. Aided schools present moderate access with minor gender disparities, where as private schools exhibit the highest and most equitable access, with over 90% of students reporting adequate provision.

Private schools lead in systematic curricular implementation, offering structured timetables and consistent teacher evaluations. Government schools follow with moderate organisational strengths but are less effective in promoting student-

centred pedagogy. Aided schools report the lowest implementation levels, often hindered by shift-based schedules that disrupt curricular continuity.

Faculty availability, although broadly aligned with Kerala's inclusive education goals, reveals systemic challenges. Government schools face teacher shortages, administrative gaps, and dependency on guest faculty. Aided schools, while better staffed, struggle with infrastructure and workload. Private schools are comparatively better organised but sometimes employ underqualified personnel.

Access to audio-visual (AV) aids is reported to be relatively high in government and aided schools, yet regular usage by students remains limited, suggesting gaps in pedagogical integration. Despite superior infrastructure perceptions, private schools demonstrate lower AV resource utilisation, potentially due to underinvestment or neglect.

ICT resources reveal a pronounced digital divide. Government schools report better access to digital tools, albeit unevenly distributed and reliant on teachers' personal data. Aided and private schools lag, with private institutions particularly weak in internet connectivity and smart classroom infrastructure, undermining effective digital pedagogy.

Laboratory infrastructure is inconsistent. Aided schools show the highest access to science and subject-specific labs, while government schools often repurpose multipurpose rooms, affecting hands-on learning. Private schools lack dedicated labs, especially in mathematics and social science. Language laboratories are absent in all school types.

Library access exceeds 88% in government and aided schools but often lacks effective utilisation. Government school libraries face limitations in space and scheduling, while aided schools report better collections and teacher involvement. Private school libraries are frequently under-resourced and marginalised.

Curricular activities are most vibrant in private schools, especially for group discussions. Government schools participate more in field visits and experiments but lag in performance-based activities due to infrastructural constraints. Aided schools show variable implementation, depending heavily on teacher motivation.

The analysis reveals a stratified curricular landscape in Kerala. Private schools are better resourced and structured; aided schools perform moderately with teacher-led variation, and government schools, despite strengths, remain hindered by systemic and socio-economic barriers.

Theme III: Factors Related to Co-curricular Facilities and Activities

The integration of co-curricular facilities and activities within the school environment plays a pivotal role in fostering holistic student development. Access to such opportunities is essential not only for enhancing academic performance but also for promoting emotional well-being, physical health, and essential life skills such as leadership, teamwork, and civic responsibility. National and international policy frameworks, including India's National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 and the Right to Education (RTE) Act 2009, emphasise the significance of equitable access to these resources to ensure inclusive and comprehensive education. At the state level, the Kerala State Curriculum Framework (KSCF) 2007 and the revised draft of the Kerala Curriculum Framework 2023 explicitly recommend the integration of co-curricular activities within the curriculum structure. These frameworks stress the importance of providing equitable access to arts, sports, and work education as a means to promote experiential learning, cultural literacy, and democratic participation. The General Education Protection Mission (Samagra Shiksha Kerala) also includes provisions for strengthening infrastructure and training teachers to facilitate meaningful co-curricular engagement across all school types. Therefore,

examining the extent and nature of student access to co-curricular facilities becomes critical in understanding broader patterns of educational equity and quality, especially in a progressive educational context.

The study attempts to explore the co-curricular facilities and activities accessible for Upper Primary school students across government, aided, and private primary schools in Kerala. The result of the data collected through structured questionnaire and information blank discussed under many subthemes as follows:

Co-curricular Facilities

Access to co-curricular facilities in schools is a critical dimension of holistic education, contributing significantly to students' cognitive, emotional, social, and physical development. Analysing students' access to these facilities enables a deeper understanding of how schools support well-rounded development and equitable learning opportunities. This analysis becomes particularly relevant in the context of policy goals such as those outlined in India's National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, which emphasises the integration of co-curricular and academic domains to nurture competent and confident individuals. The detailed analysis of the facilities accessed by Upper Primary students in Kerala are as follows.

Facilities for Physical Recreations. Analysis of the result related to sports and related facilities are analysed and data regarding students access to equipments for sports and games is presented in Table 24.

Table 24

Students' Access to Sports Equipments

Particulars	Government	Aided	Private	Total
Satisfactory Sports equipment	93.50	76.20	94.01	87.90

Data presented in Table 24 shows the result of the students' access to satisfactory basic sports equipment in different types of Upper Primary schools in Kerala. The data reveals important trends across different school types. Government and private schools report very high levels of student access, with 93.5% and 94.01% of students, respectively, indicating access to sports equipment. This suggests that both sectors have been successful in either the provision or maintenance of sports resources. In contrast, aided schools show a significantly lower access rate at 76.2%, highlighting a potential gap in resource availability or infrastructure management within this category. The overall average stands at a commendable 87.9%, reflecting a generally positive scenario for primary school sports infrastructure in Kerala.

Analysis of Qualitative Data. Based on the field observations recorded through structured information blanks, a comparative analysis of sports and games equipment across government, aided, and unaided schools reveals notable variations in availability, maintenance, and gender inclusivity. Government schools generally possess the necessary facilities and a diverse range of equipment available to both boys and girls. However, the absence of a designated storage area for this equipment may lead to issues related to organization, security, and longevity of use. Aided schools appear to be significantly under-resourced in comparison, both in terms of quantity and quality of equipment and infrastructure.

Evaluation. An integrated analysis of quantitative data and field observations presents a clear picture of students access to sports infrastructure across government, aided, and unaided (private) Upper Primary schools in Kerala. Student survey data reveals high levels of student access to basic sports equipment in both Government and unaided schools and Aided schools lag significantly behind. This discrepancy suggests systemic disparities in resource allocation or

management practices among school types. The qualitative data provides insights into well-equipped and gender-inclusive facilities in government schools but lacks proper storage, affecting organisation and equipment durability. In aided schools, facilities are poor in both quality and quantity of sports infrastructure, with notable gender disparities limiting girls' access. While quantitative data highlights high access levels in government and unaided schools, field observations reveal deeper qualitative differences. Government schools excel in equipment range but face logistical challenges. Aided schools face both quantitative and qualitative shortcomings and Unaided schools, despite fewer resources, display efficient management and equitable usage.

Access to First Aid Facilities. Access to first aid facilities is an essential component of co-curricular infrastructure in Upper Primary schools, as it ensures immediate medical support and promotes a safe environment for students to actively participate in physical, cultural, and other extracurricular activities (UNESCO, 2020).Result of student access to first aid facility in different types of Upper Primary school is presented in Table 25.

Table 25

Students' Access to First Aid Facilities

Particulars	Government	Aided	Private	Total
Student Access to First Aid Facility	38.36	52.69	85.36	58.80

The data presented in Table 25 reflects the proportion of Upper Primary school students in Kerala with access to first aid facilities across Government, Aided, and Private schools. The data indicate significant disparities in the availability of these essential first aid facilities. In particular, only 38.36% of students in government schools report having access to first aid facilities, which is markedly lower than their counterparts in aided schools (52.69%) and significantly

lower than in private schools (85.36%). When aggregated, the overall access rate across all school types stands at 58.80%, suggesting that more than 40% of students in Upper Primary schools lack access to immediate medical assistance.

Analysis of Qualitative Data. The qualitative data related to the availability of first aid facilities in different types of primary schools across Kerala reveals distinct patterns. Government schools show a wide disparity in the availability and quality of first aid services. While a few schools maintain reasonably good facilities under the supervision of physical education teachers or designated staff, the majority lack adequate infrastructure and emergency medical provisions. Aided schools generally offer basic first aid amenities, although these are often limited in facility. Notably, some aided schools demonstrate better preparedness by maintaining emergency arrangements through active collaboration with Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs), indicating community involvement in health-related support. Private schools report comparatively better standards in first aid preparedness. Many private institutions have dedicated medical facilities with a well-stocked inventory of first aid supplies, and some even employ nursing assistants to manage medical needs. Only a minority of private schools reported subpar facilities, suggesting a relatively higher baseline of health infrastructure in this sector.

Evaluation. The analysis of access to first aid facilities in Upper Primary schools reveals significant disparities when examined through both quantitative and qualitative lenses. When analysing the quantitative and qualitative data, a clear pattern emerges that associates school management type with the level of health service provision. Private schools consistently offer better access and higher quality first aid facilities, likely due to better resource availability, institutional autonomy, and financial flexibility. Aided schools show moderate performance, influenced by

both institutional policy and external support mechanisms such as PTA engagement. Government schools remain the most under-resourced**,** hindered by systemic challenges, limited funding, and administrative difficulties.

Facilities for Art and Work Experience. Art and Work experience form an essential component of the holistic education system in Upper Primary schools in Kerala. By engaging students in activities like clay modelling, needlework, papercraft, gardening, and simple repair work, etc., schools foster self-reliance and motivation for labour. These activities are designed to bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and real-life applications, nurturing not only technical and aesthetic skills but also values like cooperation, patience, and respect for traditional arts and crafts. To effectively implement work experience and craft programs, the Department of Public Education in Kerala recommends that schools be equipped with basic facilities such as a separate craft room or workshop space and sufficient tools and materials relevant to various crafts (Department of Public Education, Kerala, 2020).The students' access to such facilities in the current working atmosphere of the different primary schools in Kerala is highly important. The data related to students' access to these facilities were collected, and the result is presented in Table 26.

Table 26

Students' Access to Art and Work Experience Facilities

Particulars	Government	Aided	Private	Total
Art and Work Experience Facilities	31.69	8.32	2.55	14.19

Table 26 presents the data on students' access to art and work experience facilities in different types of primary schools in Kerala and reveals significant disparities. Government schools show the highest provision, with 31.69% of students having access to such facilities. Aided schools lag behind significantly at

8.32%, indicating limited emphasis or resource allocation for creative and experiential learning in these institutions. Private schools fare the worst, with only 2.55% access, possibly because the primary focus in many private institutions remains on academic performance, often at the expense of non-academic development. The overall average across all school types stands at 14.19%, highlighting that while there are efforts in place, access to art and work experience facilities is still limited to the students across all types of schools.

Analysis of Qualitative Data. Based on the data collected by the investigator, it is evident that the availability of facilities and infrastructure for art and work experience across different types of schools is significantly limited and inconsistent.

In government schools, while some small-scale provisions exist, only two schools were found to have dedicated art and craft centres or rooms during the investigation. The majority of institutions lack proper infrastructure, and students reported that craft and work experience activities are largely confined to school-level competitions rather than being part of regular instructional practice. This suggests a lack of systematic integration of practical and creative education into the mainstream curriculum.

In aided schools, the situation appears similarly constrained. There are no schools with established art and craft centres, and faculty for these subjects are available in only a few institutions. The limited availability of both physical infrastructure and human resources reflects a broader issue of under-prioritisation of vocational and skill-based education within this category of schools. The absence of structured programs further impedes students' opportunities to develop hands-on skills essential for holistic education.

Private schools show the most significant gaps in this area. The investigation found no evidence of dedicated facilities or specialised faculty for craft and work experience education in any of the private institutions surveyed. Moreover, there were no observable efforts or initiatives aimed at incorporating such practices into the school environment. The analysis indicates a pervasive lack of emphasis on art and work experience education across all types of schools. The scarcity of facilities and qualified faculty, along with the absence of regular and meaningful engagement with these activities, underscores a critical gap in the current educational framework.

***Evaluation*.** Both the quantitative and qualitative findings illustrate a critical gap in the educational framework regarding art and work experience education. While government schools demonstrate somewhat better access numerically, the lack of meaningful integration and adequate infrastructure limits the effectiveness of such provisions. Aided and private schools face even greater challenges, with limited resources and minimal emphasis on skill-based education. The analysis points out that the students' access to art and work experience facilities in Kerala's primary schools remains limited and uneven, with significant deficiencies in infrastructure, human resources, and curricular emphasis.

Multi-purpose Hall. Recognising the significance of multi-purpose halls in Upper Primary schools, various government education bodies have recommended the inclusion of such facilities to support diverse learning and extracurricular activities. Government policies like the Right to Education (RTE) Act, the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, and state infrastructure guidelines emphasise the need for adequate school facilities. They recommend multi-purpose halls to support co-curricular activities, physical education, cultural events, and community engagement in schools. The inquiry into the students' access to the multipurpose

halls in different types of Upper Primary schools in Kerala reveals the current status of students 'access to these facilities. The research result is presented in Table 27.

Table 27

Students Access to Multi-purpose Hall

Particulars	Government	Aided	Private	Total
Access to Multipurpose Hall	80.00	85.84	49.72	71.85

Table 27 reveals the result of student responses regarding access to multipurpose halls in different types of Upper Primary schools in Kerala. The analysis reveals significant variation across different types of schools. Aided schools report the highest access rate, with 85.84% of students accessing, followed closely by government schools at 80.00%. This suggests that public sector institutions, particularly aided schools, have made substantial investments in infrastructure that supports co-curricular and extracurricular activities. In contrast, only 49.72% of students in private schools report having access to a multipurpose hall, highlighting a considerable gap. The overall access rate of 71.85% indicates moderate infrastructural provision across the system.

Analysis of Qualitative Data. The qualitative data collected regarding multi-purpose hall facilities in Upper Primary schools reveal notable differences across government, aided, and private institutions. In government schools, a multi-purpose space is available in most cases, typically taking the form of open auditoriums or roofed courtyards. These spaces, though not specifically designed or equipped for varied functions, are consistently present and serve multiple purposes, such as school assemblies, cultural events, and extracurricular activities.

Aided schools tend to have comparatively limited facilities for formal multi-purpose hall facilities. The data indicate that these schools commonly rely on open-staged courtyards or un-walled classrooms to conduct activities that would

otherwise require a dedicated space. Private schools exhibit a high degree of variability in the provision and quality of multi-purpose hall facilities. While some private institutions are equipped with well-designed halls that include seating arrangements, sound systems, and projection equipment, others lack such spaces entirely. This inconsistency reflects disparities in funding and management priorities within the private sector.

The data suggest a significant disparity in access to and quality of multi-purpose hall facilities among different types of school management. Government schools ensure functional but basic facilities, aided schools struggle with minimal and often inadequate provisions, and private schools show a broad spectrum of availability and quality.

Evaluation. An analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data on students' access to multi-purpose hall facilities in Upper Primary schools across Kerala reveals clear disparities among government, aided, and private institutions. In the analysis of both data sources, the disparities become even more evident. Aided schools illustrate a clear mismatch: the high access reported quantitatively does not align with the poor quality and limited functionality described qualitatively. This reveals a potential overestimation of meaningful access. Government schools, by contrast, show consistency between the two data sets; while the facilities are modest, they are consistently present and serve their intended purposes well. In private schools, the low average access rate masks a wide internal variation, highlighting significant inequity in infrastructure even within the same school category. While 71.85% of students appear to have access to multi-purpose halls, the qualitative data underscores that access does not necessarily equate to adequacy. The disparities in quality, usability, and consistency are most pronounced in aided and private schools.

Teachers' Support and Access to Special Faculties. Teachers' support and faculty availability are vital for ensuring student access to co-curricular activities in Upper Primary schools. The Kerala Education Rules (1959) emphasise teacher involvement in extra-curricular programmes such as Scouts, arts, and science clubs, highlighting their integral role beyond academics (Kerala Education Rules, 1959). Observation of effective support promotes students' involvement in different co-curricular activities, making faculty support crucial for the successful delivery of these activities. The current status of teacher support and special faculty availability is studied, and the result is presented in the following.

The result of student response regarding the teacher support for different co-curricular activities is presented in Table 28.

Table 28

Faculty Support in Co-curricular Activities

Particulars	Government	Aided	Private	Total
Teacher support for different co-curricular activities	73.45	77.39	60.73	70.52

Data in Table 28 reveals that the status of teacher support in co-curricular activities across different types of Upper Primary schools. Students from Aided schools report the highest level of support, with 77.39% of students indicating that teachers actively engage in co-curricular domains. This suggests that aided schools may have a stronger institutional emphasis on holistic development, possibly supported by policies or practices that encourage teacher participation beyond core academics. Government schools show a moderate level of support, with 73.45% of students affirming teacher involvement in co-curricular activities. In contrast, private schools report the lowest level of teacher support at 60.73%, significantly below the overall average. This disparity may be attributed to a stronger focus on

academic performance in private institutions, potentially limiting the time and resources available for co-curricular engagement.

Analysis of Qualitative Data. Based on the data collected through the information blank, teachers from government, aided, and private schools reported maximum support and engagement with students in co-curricular activities. The responses indicate that teachers across all three types of institutions are actively involved in encouraging and guiding students in co-curricular activities. The consistency in reporting high levels of support suggests that co-curricular involvement is a common practice among teachers, irrespective of the school type.

Evaluation. The analysis of quantitative student perceptions and qualitative teacher self-reports reveals both alignment and mismatches. According to student-reported data, aided schools have the highest level of perceived teacher support. Government schools show a moderate level and unaided schools report the lowest support. These figures suggest varying degrees of institutional emphasis on co-curricular activities, with private schools possibly prioritising academic performance over holistic development. Qualitative data collected from teachers in all three school types consistently report high levels of teacher support in co-curricular activities. Teachers express a strong professional commitment to guiding and supporting students beyond academics, suggesting that from their perspective, co-curricular engagement is a shared priority regardless of school type. The triangulated analysis reveals that while teachers across all school types report valuing and supporting co-curricular activities, student perceptions vary, highlighting inconsistencies, particularly in government and private schools.

Availability of Special Faculties. Based on students' response, the students access to faculties for different co-curricular activities is presented in Table 29.

Table 29

Students' Access to Special Faculties

Particulars	Government	Aided	Private	Total
Physical education teacher	55.45	76.35	66.81	66.21
Music teacher	5.87	6.86	1.02	4.59
Art and craft	44.38	46.60	1.02	42.40

Data presented in Table 29 shows the result of students' responses regarding the availability of special teachers for co-curricular activities in different types of primary schools in Kerala. The result reveals significant disparities across government, aided, and private schools. Physical education is the most well-supported area, with an overall availability of 66.21%. Aided schools lead in this category with 76.35%, followed by private schools at 66.81%, while government schools trail behind at 55.45%. This suggests that while physical education is generally prioritised, government institutions may face challenges in providing dedicated physical education staff.

Availability of faculty for music education shows the lowest availability, with only 4.59% of students overall reporting the presence of music teachers. All three types of schools reflect this trend, but private schools report the least (1.02%), followed closely by government (5.87%) and aided schools (6.86%). This indicates that music is severely under-represented in the school system, likely due to low prioritisation or a shortage of trained educators in this field.

Art and craft education shows a mixed pattern. Government and aided schools report moderate availability (44.38% and 46.60%, respectively), suggesting some level of institutional support. However, private schools again report a surprisingly low figure of just 1.02%. The analysis highlights a need for improved access to qualified special teachers, particularly in music and art education. It also

reveals that private schools, despite their reputation for broader extracurricular offerings, may not be adequately staffed in these areas, while government schools lag in physical education resources.

Analysis of Qualitative Data. The qualitative data collected through investigator-filled information blanks during field inquiry reveals varying patterns in the availability of faculty for co-curricular activities in Upper Primary schools across Kerala. In government schools, faculty presence is only partially adequate and appears to be less than what students perceive. Students tend to consider general teachers and teacher trainees, who actively participate in co-curricular activities, as specialised faculty, indicating a possible overlap in roles rather than distinct specialisation. Aided schools show relatively better faculty availability for physical education and art and craft; however, the presence of music teachers is notably limited in most schools surveyed.

In unaided schools, physical education teachers are generally available and often cater not only to Upper Primary but also to lower and higher grade levels. Conversely, faculty for music and art are infrequent and mostly engaged as guest instructors during special events such as annual day functions, as reported by students. The qualitative insights derived from field enquiries highlight that while physical education faculty are more commonly accessible across school types, specialised faculty for music and art remain scarce, especially in government and private institutions. This disparity points to a need for strengthening co-curricular faculty availability to ensure a more comprehensive educational experience for Upper Primary students in Kerala.

Evaluation. The analysis of data on the availability of special teachers for co-curricular activities in Upper Primary schools in Kerala reveals notable disparities across government, aided, and private schools. Quantitative data

indicates physical education emerges as the most supported area followed by private schools. Qualitative insights confirm this trend, showing that physical education teachers are generally present, especially in private schools where they often serve multiple grade levels. However, in government schools, the presence of specialised staff is only partially adequate, with students sometimes perceiving general teachers or trainees as specialists, indicating role overlaps and possible shortages of dedicated faculty.

Music education, on the other hand, is severely under-represented and Art and craft education shows a mixed pattern: government and aided schools report moderate availability, where as private schools report a surprisingly low figure. Field observations reveal that private schools largely depend on guest instructors for art, contrasting with the more consistent staffing seen in government and aided schools.

Together, these findings illustrate that while physical education is relatively well-supported, especially in aided and private schools, government schools face challenges in this area. Meanwhile, music and art education suffer from inadequate staffing across all school types, with private schools particularly lacking in these domains despite their broader extracurricular reputation.

Co-curricular Activities

Co-curricular activities play a crucial role in the development of students, especially at the Upper Primary level where children begin to form stronger social identities and cognitive skills. Research highlights that participation in such activities enhances students' academic performance, self-esteem, and social competencies (Eccles & Barber, 1999). Student access to different co-curricular

activities in school is very essential to encourage their participation and engagement in such activities. The result of data regarding student access to such activities is studied, and the result is presented in Table 30.

Table 30

Students' Access to Different Co-curricular Activities

Particulars	Government	Aided	Private	Total
Annual Sports meet	97.59	95.92	88.70	94.07
Arts fest	98.97	96.81	94.77	96.85
Study tour	95.56	91.64	97.20	94.80
Onam celebration	95.20	95.85	58.27	83.11
Independence Day celebration	93.17	97.24	83.13	91.18
Republic day celebration	90.88	94.92	82.92	89.57
Vishu celebration	14.85	30.30	4.59	16.58
Christmas celebration	84.90	93.17	23.84	67.30
Eid celebration	41.68	70.82	40.33	50.94
Annual day	94.83	81.31	90.05	88.73
Others	52.35	16.98	76.71	48.68

The data presented in Table 30 provides a comparative analysis of student access to different co-curricular activities. In students' access to the Annual Sports Meet, government schools reported the highest student access at 97.59%, followed by aided (95.92%) and private (88.70%) schools, indicating strong support for physical education in public institutions. Similarly, for the Arts Fest, access remained high across all categories, with government schools again leading at 98.97%, aided at 96.81%, and private at 94.77%, suggesting uniform importance given to cultural activities.

Study tours showed a slightly different trend, with private schools providing the highest access at 97.20%, possibly due to greater resource availability, while government and aided schools followed at 95.56% and 91.64%, respectively.

The Onam celebration, a major regional festival, witnessed high access in government (95.20%) and aided (95.85%) schools, but only 58.27% in private schools, indicating a notable disparity in cultural inclusion. In the case of Independence Day and Republic Day celebrations, aided schools reported the highest access (97.24% and 94.92%, respectively), while private schools reported lower access (83.13% and 82.92%), suggesting stronger emphasis on national observances in publicly funded schools.

A significant gap is observed in the Vishu celebration, with very low access across all school types – Government (14.85%), Aided (30.30%), and Private (4.59%) – indicating limited institutional engagement with this regional festival. Christmas celebrations reveal stark contrasts: aided schools reported 93.17% access, government 84.90%, and private schools just 23.84%, potentially pointing to differences in religious diversity or inclusivity. Eid celebrations also show disparities, with aided schools at 70.82%, while both government and private schools were below 42%, reflecting varying degrees of religious accommodation.

Annual Day celebrations were widely accessible, with government schools reporting 94.83%, private schools 90.05%, and aided schools lower at 81.31%, possibly due to resource constraints. Lastly, under 'Other' activities, private schools showed significantly higher access (76.71%) compared to government (52.35%) and especially aided schools (16.98%), suggesting greater flexibility or innovation in private school programming.

The data highlights that while government and aided schools offer broad and inclusive access to state and cultural programmes, private schools excel in select areas but lag behind in many celebrations.

Analysis of Qualitative Data. The qualitative data collected through information blanks filled by investigators from various Upper Primary schools in Kerala provides valuable insights into the implementation of co-curricular activities across different school management types. Government schools predominantly celebrate common and widely recognised events, with a notable emphasis on community participation and support, particularly in programmes related to sports, arts, and other extracurricular domains. This reflects an inclusive approach aimed at fostering community engagement. Aided schools exhibit a more comprehensive and structured involvement, with most activities being celebrated and special efforts made to organise diverse celebrations, including day-specific commemorations and related events. The qualitative responses indicate that aided schools place greater importance on variety and frequency in their co-curricular offerings. Private schools tend to celebrate common activities but also focus on promoting specific culture-based programmes, suggesting a selective approach tailored to cultural identity and targeted student interests.

Evaluation. The quantitative data on student access to co-curricular activities across government, aided, and private Upper Primary schools in Kerala reveals distinct patterns of participation and emphasis among the different school management types. Government schools demonstrate the highest access rates in major events such as the Annual Sports Meet and Arts Fest, reflecting a strong institutional commitment to physical education and cultural engagement with a broad-based, inclusive approach. Aided schools show consistently high access across most activities, especially in national celebrations like Independence Day and Republic Day, highlighting their structured and comprehensive implementation of diverse co-curricular programmes. Private schools, while excelling in resource-intensive activities such as study tours and certain 'Other' activities, exhibit lower access in culturally significant regional festivals such as Onam and Vishu, as well as

in religious celebrations like Christmas and Eid, suggesting a more selective and culturally targeted focus.

Qualitative insights from investigator reports complement these findings by revealing the underlying organisational approaches in these schools. Government schools prioritise community participation and inclusivity, emphasising widely recognised events to foster collective engagement. Aided schools adopt a more systematic and varied approach, ensuring frequent and diverse celebrations, which aligns with their higher access rates across multiple activities. Private schools, on the other hand, appear to strategically emphasise culture-specific programmes that resonate with their student demographics, thereby adopting a more selective co-curricular profile.

The quantitative and qualitative data suggest that while government and aided schools emphasise access to a broad variety of co-curricular activities, private schools focus more narrowly on culturally specific initiatives and resource-driven programmes

Clubs and Related Activities

Clubs and related activities in Upper Primary schools play a vital role in complementing academic learning by providing students with essential opportunities for holistic development. These activities are needed to nurture creativity, teamwork, leadership skills, social skills and emotional well-being, helping students build a well-rounded foundation for future growth both inside and outside the classroom. Student access to these facilities is seriously studied and the result is presented in Table 31.

Table 31

Students' Access to Different Clubs and Related Activities

Particulars	Government	Aided	Private	Total
Language Club	79.14	86.30	40.67	68.70
Science Club	80.56	91.79	47.26	73.21
Maths Club	68.17	78.66	42.08	62.97
Natural Club	54.62	61.05	6.42	40.70
Social science Club	77.98	40.65	18.15	45.59
Sports club	57.71	83.36	63.54	68.20
SPC, Junior Red Cross (JRC), etc.	61.97	7.19	4.46	24.54
Literary club	67.62	50.49	11.61	43.24

The data in Table 31 presents students' access to various clubs and related activities across government, aided, and private Upper Primary schools in Kerala. The result indicates t that, overall, aided schools show the highest levels of students' access to most clubs, with percentages consistently higher than government and private schools. For example, the Science Club access is highest in aided schools (91.79%), followed by government (80.56%) and private schools (47.26%). Similarly, the Language Club and Maths Club follow this pattern, where aided schools have notably higher access rates (86.30% and 78.66%, respectively) compared to government and private schools. Government schools generally have moderate access levels, while private schools report the lowest access across nearly all clubs. The Natural Club and Social Science Club display the most significant disparities, with private schools reporting extremely low access (6.42% and 18.15%, respectively). Students' access to the physical education club shows relatively high access across all categories, with private schools outperforming government schools (63.54% vs. 57.71%), although aided schools remain the highest at 83.36%. Clubs such as SPC and Junior Red Cross show very limited access overall, especially in aided (7.19%) and private schools (4.46%), while government schools report higher

access (61.97%). The Literary Club access is moderate but similarly skewed, favouring government and aided schools over private ones.

Analysis of Qualitative Data. The data collected through information blanks from various Upper Primary schools reveal notable differences in the availability and functioning of clubs across government, aided, and private institutions. In government schools, the majority reported the presence of multiple curricular clubs with regular activities being conducted under the supervision of teachers. These schools actively promote student service programmes, and teacher involvement in monitoring club activities is consistently observed, indicating a structured and supportive environment for co-curricular development.

Aided schools also demonstrated a well-organised approach to club activities. Events and celebrations are conducted through different clubs in a systematic manner, with teachers providing close monitoring. Notably, community participation in club activities is evident in these schools, reflecting a broader engagement beyond the school context. However, the presence of social service programs, such as the Junior Red Cross and SPC, is reported to be rare, suggesting a potential area for further development. The situation in private schools appears less favourable. Although some clubs have been formed, many are reported as inactive, with no regular programmes being implemented. A lack of commitment from certain teachers in charge of these clubs has also been noted, as evidenced by their uncooperative responses during data collection. This indicates a general lack of institutional support and accountability in fostering co-curricular engagement within private Upper Primary schools.

Evaluation. An integrated analysis of quantitative and qualitative data reveals significant disparities in students' access to and participation in club activities across government, aided, and private Upper Primary schools in Kerala.

Quantitative findings indicate that aided schools demonstrate the highest level of access to various student clubs. Triangulating these findings with qualitative data collected through structured information blanks further contextualises these patterns. Government schools consistently report the existence of multiple co-curricular clubs with regular, structured activities under the active supervision of teachers. These institutions also demonstrate a strong commitment to student service programmes and teacher-led monitoring, indicating a supportive and organised approach to co-curricular education. Aided schools similarly exhibit structured club functioning, often involving systematic planning of events and celebrations. Importantly, these schools also benefit from community involvement, which enhances the visibility and impact of club activities. However, a notable gap remains in the implementation of social service-orientated programmes such as the Junior Red Cross and SPC in aided schools, highlighting an area for potential policy attention. In contrast, private schools reveal substantial deficiencies in the functioning and oversight of student clubs. While some clubs are formally established, many are reportedly inactive, lacking regular programming or meaningful engagement. Teacher involvement in these institutions is often minimal, with data collection suggesting instances of negative attitudes and institutional apathy. This points to systemic issues in promoting co-curricular activities in private schools, including a lack of accountability and institutional support.

The analysis indicates significant differences in the availability, implementation, and quality of club activities across school management types. While government and aided schools provide relatively structured and inclusive environments for co-curricular engagement, private schools exhibit limited access and functionality, requiring strong measures to strengthen institutional commitment and teacher participation in club-based learning.

Summary of Analysis of the Theme III

The analysis of co-curricular facilities and activities in Upper Primary schools across Kerala reveals significant disparities in access and quality among government, aided, and private institutions. The study, guided by both quantitative and qualitative data, aimed to assess how well different school types support students' holistic development through physical, creative, cultural, and social opportunities.

Government and private schools show relatively high access to basic sports equipment, with 93.5% and 94.01% of students, respectively, reporting availability. Aided schools lag behind at 76.2%, reflecting infrastructural and resource constraints. Similarly, playground access is strong in private (95.54%) and government (90.22%) schools, while only 70.33% of students in aided schools report sufficient facilities. Field observations indicate that while government schools tend to be inclusive, logistical issues like shared spaces and limited scheduling affect usage. Private schools, though resourceful, show variation in quality, while aided schools face both infrastructural and gender-based access challenges.

Access to essential health infrastructure, such as first aid facilities, also varies significantly. Private schools demonstrate superior provision (85.36%), where as government schools report critically low access (38.36%). Aided schools offer limited support (52.69%), often supplemented by community or PTA involvement. In terms of creative and vocational learning, access to art and work experience facilities is overall poor (14.19%), with government schools slightly ahead (31.69%). Aided and private schools show minimal engagement in this domain, indicating a general under-prioritisation of non-academic learning experiences.

Access to Multipurpose hall is highest in aided schools (85.84%), followed by government schools (80.00%). However, qualitative data reveal that these figures

may overstate functional adequacy, especially in aided schools where spaces are often improvised or poorly equipped. Private schools show the lowest access (49.72%), with marked disparities in infrastructure quality.

Teacher support for co-curricular engagement is moderately high in government (73.45%) and aided (77.39%) schools but significantly lower in private schools (60.73%). Although teachers across all sectors report strong involvement, student perceptions suggest gaps in visibility and effectiveness, particularly in private settings. Furthermore, the availability of specialised faculty (physical education, music, arts) remains inconsistent. Physical education teachers are more common, especially in aided schools, but music and art instructors are scarce across all types, especially in private schools, where such roles are often filled temporarily or during events.

Participation in co-curricular activities such as sports meets, arts festivals, national day celebrations, and study tours is generally high across school types. Government and aided schools demonstrate strong engagement in public and cultural events, while private schools excel in resource-intensive activities like study tours but lag in regional and religious celebrations. This reflects a selective institutional focus that may marginalise broader cultural inclusion.

Finally, student access to clubs such as science, language, mathematics, and social service organisations reveals a similar pattern. Aided schools offer the most comprehensive access, followed by government schools. Private schools exhibit the lowest access and engagement, with many clubs inactive and poorly supported. This suggests a systemic issue in co-curricular implementation within private institutions.

The analysis highlights critical inequities in co-curricular provision across different types of school in Kerala. While government and aided schools show stronger institutional commitment to holistic development, both face challenges in infrastructure, staffing, and consistency. Private schools, despite better funding in

some areas, show gaps in inclusivity, faculty provision, and programme diversity. These findings underscore the need for policy interventions aimed at strengthening infrastructure, enhancing faculty availability, and ensuring equitable co-curricular access for all students.

Conclusion of the Analysis of Students' Access in Primary Schools (Objective 1)

The analysis of students' access, which aimed to examine Upper Primary students' access to facilities, programmes, and practices across government, aided, and private primary schools in Kerala, revealed significant inter-school differences. With respect to infrastructure and school facilities, government schools showed strength in overall classroom structure and access to playgrounds, offering well-built and spacious learning environments. Private schools performed best in transportation access, with nearly universal provision, while aided schools led in toilet facility access- achieving near-universal availability, especially for girls. In contrast, emergency restroom access was lowest in government and aided schools, where as private schools provided the highest access.

In terms of curricular facilities and programmes, government schools ensured universal textbook availability, while private schools performed best in access to learning materials such as notebooks, pens, and supplementary resources. Private schools also maintained the most systematic curricular implementation, marked by routine adherence to timetables, structured assessments, and classroom engagement. Aided schools excelled in science and social science lab access, while government schools led in access to ICT tools like projectors and smart boards, although usage remained inconsistent. Regarding library facilities, government schools reported the highest access (90.34%), compared to aided and especially private schools.

Access to co-curricular facilities and programmes varied notably. Government schools provided better access to audio-visual aids, though integration

into classroom instruction was uneven. Private schools, on the other hand, demonstrated higher student participation in co-curricular clubs and structured activities. Aided schools showed limited access and engagement in co-curricular domains, despite maintaining some related infrastructure.

The findings illustrate that each school type holds specific strengths. Government schools excel in physical infrastructure and ICT availability but face maintenance and health-service gaps. Aided schools are strong in sanitation and lab access but are constrained by infrastructure limitations and shift-based operations. Private schools perform well in transport, curricular delivery, and co-curricular engagement but require improvements in sanitation, gender-sensitive facilities, and ICT integration. These results underscore the need for targeted policy actions and equitable investments to bridge infrastructural, curricular, and programmatic gaps, ensuring inclusive and quality education for all students in Kerala's primary schools.

Analysis of Students' Participation in Primary Schools (Objective 2)

The second objective of the study was:

- To explore the extent of students' participation in terms of students' satisfaction in the use of school facilities, engagement in curricular activities, and participation in co-curricular programmes in different types of primary schools in Kerala.

Exploring the extent of students' participation in school through their use of available facilities, engagement in curricular activities, and involvement in co-curricular programmes is vital to understanding the true quality of primary education. In a state like Kerala, renowned for its educational achievements, such a study holds significant value. It sheds light on how different types of schools, government, aided, and private, nurture the all-round development of young learners. Meaningful

participation in school activities not only enriches academic learning but also cultivates creativity, confidence, teamwork, and a sense of belonging among students. These form the second objective of the study, which was to explore the extent of student participation in programmes and practices of primary schools in Kerala.

The data for Objective II are derived from the following research questions.

1. To what extent do students in primary schools utilize available school facilities, such as libraries, computer labs, playgrounds, and other learning resources?
2. How actively are students involved in classroom activities and learning practices across different types of primary schools?
3. What is the nature and level of student participation in co-curricular activities, including arts, sports, cultural programmes, and school clubs?
4. Are there notable differences in student participation in school facilities, curricular, and co-curricular activities among government, aided, and unaided primary schools in Kerala?

Data Sources of Students' Participation (Objective 2)

The result for the second objective is derived from two Primary Data Sources of students' survey and semi-structured interviews. Details are as follows:

1. **Student Survey**. Responses from 847 upper Primary school Students were collected about their utilisation of school facilities, involvement in curricular programmes and learning activities, and participation in co-curricular activities.

2. **Semi-structured Interviews**. Conducted interviews with 18 teachers to obtain teachers' perspectives on student use of school resources,

participation in curricular activities and participation in co-curricular activities.

The data collected for the second objective is presented under three main themes and related sub-themes, as follows:

Theme I. Utilisation of School Facilities and Infrastructure

Student Utilisation of school facilities and infrastructure is explored in terms of student satisfaction with the facilities accessible in different types of primary schools in Kerala. The analysis of this theme is presented under many subthemes, such as:

- Classroom facilities
- Common school facilities
- Curricular facilities.
- Co-curricular facilities

Theme II. Involvement in Curricular Activities

Theme II included the following subthemes:

- Regularity and Interest
- Use of Learning Resources
- Engagement in Different Curricular Activities
- Students' Engagement with Curricular Resources
- Teachers' Support and Peer Collaboration

Theme III. Participation in Co-curricular Programmes

Theme III is presented under the following subthemes:

- Student Interest
- Participation in Sports and Games

- Participation in Arts and Cultural programmes
- Participation in School Celebrations
- Participation in Club Activities

Theme I. Utilisation of School Facilities and Infrastructure

The effective use of school facilities by students is critical and affects their academic success and overall development. Beyond serving as the backdrop for instruction, school environments, including curricular and co-curricular facilities, provide students with vital spaces for studying, collaboration, exploration, and physical activity. The extent to which students utilize these resources has a direct influence on their learning experiences and educational outcomes. Studies show that when students actively engage with well-designed school environments, their performance and well-being improve significantly. Kumar and Tripathi (2024) observed that 'Educational infrastructure, including classrooms, toilets, libraries, science and computer labs, and sports facilities, not only affects the academic environment but also influences attendance, engagement, health, and holistic development.'

Studies support the idea that student engagement with school facilities correlates with higher academic performance and improved well-being. A study conducted by the University of Salford in the UK revealed that well-utilized, flexible, and well-lit learning environments can enhance student academic performance by up to 25% over the course of an academic year (Barrett et al., 2013). Similarly, findings from the Texas Association of School Boards (TASB) indicate that students who learn in classrooms with ample facilities tend to develop rapidly in both academics and social skills. These insights emphasize that beyond the physical quality and availability of educational infrastructure, the frequency and opportunity of student use of school facilities play a pivotal role in promoting academic success and student development and well-being.

Student Utilization of school facilities and infrastructure is explored in terms of student satisfaction in the use of different facilities accessible in different types of primary schools in Kerala. The analysis of this theme is present under many subthemes

Classroom Facilities

The effectiveness of classroom facilities is not just dependent on their quality and availability but also on how actively students use them. Active student use of classroom facilities is essential for meaningful learning and skill development. NEP 2020 emphasizes the creation of engaging, learner-centric classrooms that promote experiential learning, creativity, and collaboration. The value of classroom infrastructure lies not just in its presence, but in how actively and purposefully students use it to improve learning outcomes. To study the current state of student satisfaction in the effective use of classroom facilities, a survey was conducted among upper primary students, and the result is presented in Table 32.

Table 32

Students' Satisfaction with the Basic Classroom Facilities

Particulars	Government	Aided	Private	Total
Seating facility	98.39	96.99	98.15	97.87
Black board	93.99	93.64	92.69	93.39
Light and ventilation	50.07	37.31	25.60	37.66
Book shelf facilities	95.86	19.86	50.26	61.96
Other facilities	65.74	22.62	8.85	35.30

Table 32 reveals the result of student satisfaction in engagement with key classroom facilities in government-aided and private upper primary schools in Kerala. The findings reveal that seating facilities received consistently high satisfaction across all school types - government (98.39%), aided (96.99%), and

private (98.15%) - indicating that basic physical infrastructure is largely adequate and supports student comfort and participation. Blackboard usage also reflected strong satisfaction levels – Government (93.99%), Aided (93.64%), and Private (92.69%) – suggesting uniform use of this core teaching tool across institutions. In contrast, student satisfaction in lighting and ventilation emerged as a concern, particularly in private (25.60%) and aided (37.31%) schools, with government schools performing moderately better (50.07%). These findings highlight deficiencies in the physical learning environment, which may adversely affect student attention and well-being.

Satisfaction with bookshelf facilities varied significantly, where government schools reported a high 95.86%, compared to 50.26% in private and only 19.86% in aided schools. This suggests that government schools are better equipped in providing access to supplementary learning materials for students among the three categories. Other classroom facilities, including display boards, learning corners, and storage, received lower satisfaction ratings overall, with government schools again leading at 65.74%, followed by aided (22.62%) and private (8.85%) schools.

The analysis underscores that government schools report higher levels of student satisfaction in most categories of classroom facilities, particularly in areas that enhance the overall learning environment. While private and aided schools show comparable performance in core infrastructure, they lag significantly in environmental and auxiliary supports.

Common School Facilities

Transportation Facilities. Students' use of reliable transportation facilities plays a critical role in ensuring regular and equitable attendance of students in upper

primary schools. The satisfaction of upper primary school students in the available transportation facilities is studied, and the result is presented in Table 33.

Table 33

Students' Satisfaction in Transportation Facilities

Particulars	Government	Aided	Private	Total
Satisfaction with the Transportation facility	58.08	46.67	92.38	65.71238

The data on students' satisfaction with transportation facilities across different school types reveals notable disparities. Private schools report the highest satisfaction level at 92.38%, suggesting the availability of well-organised and reliable transportation services. In contrast, government schools show a moderate satisfaction rate of 58.08%, while aided schools lag behind at 46.67%, indicating potential issues such as limited transport availability, poor vehicle condition, or irregular services. The overall satisfaction rate stands at 65.71%, highlighting a moderate level of effectiveness in transportation facilities across the board. These findings suggest that students in private schools are more likely to benefit from consistent and convenient transportation options, whereas those in government and aided schools may face barriers that could impact regular attendance and punctuality.

Students' Satisfaction with the Toilet Facilities. Toilet facilities are a basic part of school infrastructure, and their cleanliness and usability directly affect students' comfort and attendance. For upper primary students, the regular use of toilets depends not just on their presence but also on their accessibility, maintenance, and hygiene standards. The results of student satisfaction with the usability of toilet facilities available in government-aided and private upper primary schools in Kerala are presented in table 34.

Table 34

Students' Satisfaction with the Usability of Toilet Facilities

Particulars	Government			Aided			Private			Total
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Gils	Total	
Satisfaction with the Toilet Facility	62.59	34.32	48.45	24.14	14.79	19.47	33.65	28.32	30.99	32.70

The table 34 presents the data regarding students' satisfaction with the available toilet facilities across government, aided, and private upper primary schools in Kerala. Government schools report a moderate satisfaction rate, with 62.59% of boys and 34.32% of girls expressing satisfaction, resulting in an overall average of 48.45%. This suggests that while boys in government schools have relatively better access to acceptable toilet facilities, a significant gender disparity exists, highlighting a potential area of concern regarding girls' sanitation needs. In aided schools, satisfaction levels are notably lower, with only 24.14% of boys and 14.79% of girls reporting satisfaction. The combined total of 19.47% points to critically poor sanitation infrastructure in aided institutions, posing a potential risk to student hygiene, health, and attendance-particularly for female students. Private schools perform somewhat better than aided institutions but still fall short of acceptable standards. Here, 33.65% of boys and 28.32% of girls report satisfaction, leading to a total of 30.99%. While gender disparity is slightly narrower in private schools, the overall satisfaction rate indicates room for significant improvement.

The overall satisfaction rate with toilet facilities across all school types is relatively low, with a total average of 32.70%, indicating a general inadequacy in meeting students' basic sanitation needs. A closer examination reveals considerable variation across school types and between genders.

Students' Use of Drinking Water Facilities. Clean and safe drinking water in schools is basic and directly contributes to students' comfort and overall school experience. Table 35 presents the results of students' satisfaction with the drinking water facilities available in government, aided, and private upper primary schools in Kerala.

Table 35

Students' Satisfaction with the Drinking Water Facilities

Particulars	Government	Aided	Private	Total
Drinking Water Facility	77.07	61.45	88.44	73.55

Table 35 presents the result of the level of student satisfaction associated with the use of drinking water facilities in government, aided, and private upper primary schools across Kerala. The data is based on students' responses regarding their actual use of school-provided drinking water and reflects the perceived adequacy, cleanliness, and reliability of these facilities. 73.55% of students across all school types reported using the drinking water facilities available in their schools, which indicates a moderate level of satisfaction. Among the different management types, private schools recorded the highest satisfaction-linked use, with 88.44% of students using the facility.

This suggests that drinking water systems in private institutions are well-maintained, easily accessible, and meet student expectations for quality and hygiene. In government schools, 77.07% of students reported using the drinking water facility, reflecting a satisfactory level of usage. Aided schools lag behind, with only 61.45% student usage, which may be indicative of dissatisfaction related to water quality, insufficient supply, or poor upkeep. These results highlight disparities in infrastructure use, emphasising the need for interventions in aided schools to upgrade water facilities and encourage student usage.

Use of Restroom Facilities. Restroom facilities are an essential part of creating a safe and healthy school environment for students. The usability, cleanliness, and maintenance of restrooms play a key role in ensuring students' comfort and regular attendance. Table 36 presents the results of students' satisfaction with the use of restroom facilities in government, aided, and private upper primary schools in Kerala.

Table 36

Students' Satisfaction with the Use of Restroom Facilities

Particulars	Government			Aided			Private		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Gils	Total
Restroom	3.40	3.55	3.48	7.59	1.78	4.68	4.81	46.02	25.41

The analysis of data in Table 36 regarding the students' use of restroom facilities in upper primary schools across Kerala reveals significant disparities in satisfaction levels among government, aided, and private institutions. Government schools recorded the lowest overall satisfaction (3.48%), with minimal differences between boys (3.40%) and girls (3.55%), indicating widespread inadequacy and limited usability of restroom facilities. Aided schools showed slightly higher overall satisfaction at 4.68%, with a noticeable gender gap. In contrast, private schools reported a substantially higher combined satisfaction level of 25.41%, driven largely by a high response from girls (46.02%), while boys reported a significantly lower satisfaction (4.81%). The data points to a pressing need for targeted infrastructural improvements and gender-sensitive approaches in all three types of schools.

Playground. Playground facilities are essential not only for promoting physical development but also for fostering social interaction and well-being among students. In the context of upper primary schools, student satisfaction with playgrounds is a critical indicator of functional use of the facilities. The result of the

current status of students' regular use of the playground is analysed based on student satisfaction, and the result is presented in Table 37.

Table 37

Students' Regular Use of the Playground

Particulars	Government	Aided	Private	Total
School Playground	96.36	72.15	92.38	86.96

The data in table 37 reveal that a substantial majority of students in government (96.36%) and private (92.38%) schools expressed high levels of satisfaction with playground facilities. This suggests that these facilities are not only present but are actively utilised and valued by students for daily recreation and physical activity. The high satisfaction rates reflect regular student engagement with the available infrastructure, indicating that the playgrounds meet usability expectations. In aided schools, the satisfaction level drops to 72.15%, suggesting that their usability is limited due to limited space, poor maintenance, or inadequate supervision. The overall satisfaction level across all schools is 86.96%, affirming that playgrounds are a widely used and appreciated component of the school environment.

Student Satisfaction in the Use of Curricular Facilities and Support

Curricular facilities and academic support systems are essential for improving students' learning experiences and academic performance in schools. The availability and effective use of learning resources, audio-visual aids, laboratories, libraries, and supportive teaching practices directly influence students' satisfaction and engagement in classroom activities. Table 38 presents the results of student satisfaction with the use of curricular facilities and support services in government, aided, and private upper primary schools in Kerala.

Table 38

Students' Satisfaction with the Use of Curricular Facilities and Support Services

Particulars	Government	Aided	Private	Total
Overall Learning Facilities	75.66	46.97	71.07	63.52
Audiovisual Aids	89.19	81.57	41.07	74.14
ICT Facilities	65.74	22.62	8.85	35.30
Lab Facilities	76.33	59.59	59.05	65.41
Library Facilities	60.81	30.70	21.45	39.79
Faculties and Support	74.56	52.15	73.84	66.85
Parental Support	57.23	72.73	95.28	75.08

The analysis of data regarding the use of curricular facilities in upper primary schools presented in table 38 reveals significant disparities in students' satisfaction levels across government, aided, and private institutions. The data reflects the extent to which essential learning resources and support systems meet the expectations and needs of students in different school types. Government schools reported the highest level of satisfaction with overall learning facilities (75.66%), closely followed by private schools (71.07%), while aided schools registered substantially lower satisfaction (46.97%). This indicates that students in government and private institutions generally report the infrastructural and instructional environment to be more supportive of their learning.

In terms of specific resources, audio-visual aids were most positively rated in government (89.19%) and aided schools (81.57%). On the other hand, private schools had a much lower satisfaction rate of 41.07% for these tools, which may point to issues with how available, well-kept, or effectively used audio-visual resources are in private institutions.

ICT facilities present a critical area of disparity. Government schools again led with 65.74% satisfaction, while aided (22.62%) and private (8.85%) schools

showed significantly lower levels. This data highlights a concerning lack of digital infrastructure and usage in non-governmental schools, potentially impacting students' exposure to technology-enhanced learning.

Laboratory facilities received generally favourable feedback across all categories, with government schools at 76.33%, followed by aided (59.59%) and private (59.05%) schools. Similarly, satisfaction with library facilities was highest in government schools (60.81%), while aided and private schools showed relatively limited student satisfaction at 30.70% and 21.45%, respectively. These findings indicate that foundational academic resources remain unevenly distributed, particularly disadvantaging students in private and aided schools.

Faculty and academic support were perceived as adequate in both government (74.56%) and private (73.84%) schools, but were rated significantly lower in aided schools (52.15%). This may reflect differences in teacher availability or student-teacher interaction across institutional types.

Parental support emerged as a key strength in private schools, with a very high satisfaction rate of 95.28%, compared to aided (72.73%) and government (57.23%) schools. This suggests that private schools may benefit from stronger parental engagement, which can positively influence the learning climate and reinforce student motivation.

The data reflects a complex pattern in student satisfaction with curricular facilities. While government schools appear to provide stronger infrastructural and academic support, private institutions show strengths in home-based support through parental involvement. Aided schools consistently lag behind across most indicators.

Co-curricular Facilities and Support

Co-curricular facilities and support systems play an important role in promoting students' physical, social, and creative development alongside academic learning. The availability of playgrounds, sports equipment, arts spaces, and active teacher support encourages students to participate in a variety of activities beyond the classroom. Table 39 presents the results of student satisfaction with co-curricular facilities and support services in government, aided, and private upper primary schools in Kerala.

Table 39

Students' Satisfaction with Co-curricular Facilities and Support Services

Particulars	Government	Aided	Private	Total
Sports and Physical Activities	92.29	49.92	93.38	76.62
Arts and Cultural Facilities	34.15	29.72	10.39	26.68
Clubs and activities	77.81	43.13	63.45	61.16
Faculty Support	66.66	53.48	38.85	53.00

Table 39 provides insight into students' satisfaction with co-curricular facilities across government, aided, and private upper primary schools. Sports and physical activities show the highest levels of satisfaction in government (92.29%) and private schools (93.38%), indicating regular and active student participation. Aided schools, with a much lower satisfaction rate (49.92%), suggest that either the facilities are less frequently available, underutilised, or inadequately maintained, resulting in reduced student engagement and satisfaction.

Arts and cultural facilities reflect the lowest overall satisfaction (26.68%). This implies limited opportunities for regular student involvement in artistic or cultural programmes, particularly in private schools with 10.39%.

Clubs and activities receive relatively higher satisfaction scores in government (77.81%) and private schools (63.45%) compared to aided schools (43.13%). This trend is aligned with the likelihood that students in government and private institutions are provided with more structured, accessible platforms for participation in club-based activities.

Support systems for co-curricular engagement also show varied satisfaction– highest in government schools (66.66%), followed by aided (53.48%), and lowest in private schools (38.85%). The satisfaction here is analysed as a reflection of how students perceive the encouragement and facilitation of their participation in co-curricular activities.

The analysis indicates that student satisfaction with co-curricular facilities is strongly tied to the extent of their actual use. Where schools provide ample, inclusive, and consistent opportunities for participation, satisfaction is notably higher. Conversely, limited or irregular use correlates with diminished student satisfaction.

Analysis of Qualitative Data. To complement the quantitative data gathered from students, qualitative data were obtained through a series of semi-structured interviews conducted with 18 selected teachers from government, aided, and unaided upper primary schools in Kerala. The primary objective of these interviews was to elicit teachers' perspectives regarding the adequacy and utilisation of school facilities, the nature of student engagement in curricular activities, and the extent of participation in co-curricular programmes. The qualitative data obtained through these interviews were thematically analysed, and the findings are organised and presented under the following three core themes.

Utilisation of School Facilities

The analysis of teacher interviews revealed considerable variation in the adequacy, usability, and maintenance of school facilities across different school types.

Basic School Facilities. In government schools, teachers reported that most basic infrastructural facilities such as classrooms, playgrounds, and information technology (IT) laboratories were available. However, their maintenance posed significant challenges due to financial constraints and a lack of support staff. One teacher noted, “Most facilities are here; classrooms are sufficient, but maintenance is difficult due to funds and unavailability of labour”. A recurrent issue was the inadequacy of toilet facilities, with several toilets often remaining closed because of cleaning and maintenance problems.

In aided schools, infrastructural provisions were described as markedly limited. Teachers characterised facilities as outdated and insufficient, with poorly maintained toilets, ageing school buildings, and inadequately stocked libraries. As one respondent remarked, “Old buildings, poor toilets, limited library -we try to provide maximum with what we have”. Despite these limitations, teachers made active efforts to make the best use of available resources.

In private schools, infrastructural provisions were comparatively better. However, limitations persisted in areas such as laboratory equipment and information and communication technology (ICT) infrastructure. One teacher commented, “Satisfactory facilities are provided, but lab resources and ICT remain limited”. Teachers expressed a need for further investment, especially in sanitation and technology-enhanced facilities.

Use of Curricular Facilities. Across all school types, IT laboratories and libraries were functional, but teachers reported limited student utilisation, particularly with library resources. Students were noted to have weak reading habits, prompting schools to organise special reading initiatives like “Ente Pusthakam, Ente Kurippu, Ente Ezhuthupetti” to encourage library use. Teachers in government and aided schools cited challenges in regularly updating curricular resources, while private schools, despite having better overall infrastructure, also struggled to fully utilise available ICT and laboratory facilities for academic enrichment.

Use of Co-curricular Facilities. In the area of co-curricular facilities, teachers in all school types acknowledged varied levels of provision and usage. Government schools offered playgrounds and open spaces but faced maintenance issues. Aided schools had limited space and fewer organised programmes, often due to financial and staffing constraints. Private schools had comparatively better co-curricular infrastructure but lacked sufficient investment in arts, cultural spaces, and ICT-supported activity areas. Teachers across schools emphasised the importance of enhancing co-curricular provisions to improve student participation and holistic development.

Teachers from all school types identified several challenges affecting the effective use of facilities. These included financial limitations, inadequate cleaning and maintenance staff, overcrowding, seasonal water shortages, and limited support from school management or local communities - particularly in government and aided schools.

Data Triangulation

Triangulated analysis of data collected from both students and teachers regarding the utilisation of infrastructural, curricular, and co-curricular facilities in

upper primary schools across Kerala gives a clear picture of effective use of facilities for student purposes. By integrating quantitative student responses with qualitative teacher insights, the study aimed to identify consistencies as well as perceptual mismatches in the availability and use of school resources.

The findings revealed notable areas of convergence in school facilities. Both students and teachers consistently acknowledged that government schools provide comparatively better infrastructure in terms of classroom seating, playgrounds, laboratory facilities, and audio-visual aids than aided and private schools. Students expressed high satisfaction with these facilities, particularly seating arrangements and playgrounds, which were confirmed by teachers who noted that, despite maintenance challenges, these basic infrastructural provisions were generally adequate and regularly used by students. Facilities related to sanitation presented further converging evidence of inadequacy, as students expressed dissatisfaction and teachers confirmed operational and maintenance issues, especially in aided and government schools.

In terms of use of curricular facilities, students reported high satisfaction with audio-visual aids, laboratory facilities, and overall learning resources in government schools, followed by private schools. Aided schools consistently lagged behind across all parameters. Teachers corroborated the general adequacy of infrastructure in government schools, though they frequently emphasised problems related to facility maintenance, financial constraints, and staffing shortages. However, a key mismatch was evident in the use of ICT and audio-visual facilities. While students reported satisfaction with their presence and occasional use, teachers across all schools highlighted that these facilities were limited and not adequate for regular academic purposes.

On closer examination, these differences can be attributed to the fact that many teachers, especially in government schools, reported using ICT resources obtained from outside sources. In such cases teachers use personal devices and equipment borrowed from local resource centres, to supplement classroom instruction. Consequently, students' positive experiences and satisfaction levels likely reflect these enriched instructional encounters rather than the actual status of school-owned facilities. As Creswell and Plano Clark (2011) recommend, when interpreting perceptual mismatches in mixed-method studies, it is essential to distinguish between 'institutional availability' and 'classroom experience' as perceived by students (p. 218). Patton (2002) further argues that perception data should be contextualised within operational realities to avoid overestimating system-level adequacy based on individual effort (p. 246). This distinction is critical, as it implies that positive student feedback on ICT use does not necessarily equate to institutional adequacy, but somehow, teachers are trying to provide such experiences to students by their own personal efforts.

Library facilities presented a similar imbalance. Student responses, particularly in government schools, indicated moderate satisfaction with the use of library resources. Yet, teachers widely reported poor reading habits among students and minimal active use of library services. As Creswell and Plano Clark (2011) emphasise, when self-report measures contradict observational or qualitative data, it is methodologically sound to prioritise observational findings and programme records for functional assessment while treating quantitative perception data as reflective of facility climate rather than actual use (p. 215). This points to a perception gap where students associate satisfaction with facility availability rather than regular and meaningful use.

Regarding the use of co-curricular facilities, both students and teachers acknowledged high engagement with playgrounds and sports facilities in government and private schools, while aided schools fell behind due to limited space and poor maintenance. Another partial mismatch emerged in private schools. Students reported high satisfaction with sports facilities, but teachers noted that while infrastructure for sports existed, the systematic use of clubs, arts, and cultural spaces remained limited due to an academically oriented institutional culture. Based on Patton's (2002) recommendation, in cases where social desirability bias may affect student reports, qualitative observations from teachers and activity records should be given interpretative precedence in determining actual engagement (p. 248). So, while students appreciate the availability of playgrounds and opportunities for informal recreation, teachers recognised a lack of structured, organised programmes in co-curricular areas.

The triangulated analysis reveals that while government schools maintain a relative advantage in the provision and use of curricular and co-curricular facilities, aided schools struggle with infrastructural deficits and limited use of facilities, and private schools, despite good physical infrastructure, underutilise key facilities like ICT labs, libraries, and co-curricular spaces. The mismatches between student and teacher perceptions, particularly concerning the use of ICT, library services, and co-curricular facilities in private schools, suggest that students often equate satisfaction with the presence or occasional exposure to a facility, whereas teachers assess based on regular, purposeful, and integrated use. This triangulated evaluation thus highlights not only infrastructural disparities but also the significant difference between facility availability and its functional, impactful use in enriching student learning experiences.

Theme II. Engagement in Curricular Activities

Student engagement in curricular activities is a critical construct in educational research, widely acknowledged for its direct influence on academic performance, retention, and holistic development. It encompasses three interrelated dimensions: behavioural, emotional, and cognitive engagement (Fredricks et al., 2004). Among upper primary school students, regular attendance serves as a key indicator of behavioural engagement, while interest in learning activities reflects emotional investment in the schooling process (Appleton, Christenson, & Furlong, 2008). Beyond these, cognitive engagement is fostered through meaningful interaction with instructional resources such as learning materials, laboratories, and library facilities, which provide avenues for inquiry, exploration, and knowledge construction (Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000; Singh, 2015).

In the context of Kerala's upper primary education system, comprising government, aided, and private management types, it becomes essential to explore how these dimensions of engagement are manifested and supported across institutional settings. This analysis focuses on students' reported levels of attendance and interest in learning while situating these indicators within the broader framework of participation in curricular activities. Understanding these patterns offers critical insight into the strengths and disparities in student engagement and informs efforts toward equity and quality in school education.

Regularity and Interest

Regular attendance and interest in learning activities are critical for evaluating student engagement and the curricular activities in different types of schools. The result of student response is presented in Table 40.

Table 40

Students Attendance and Interest in Curricular Activities

Particulars	Government	Aided	Private	Total
Regular attendance in school	88.39	86.60	91.42	88.67
Interest in learning activities	85.95	67.13	51.65	70.72

The data in Table 40 reflect student responses regarding their regular attendance and interest in learning activities within government-aided and private upper primary schools. These indicators are critical for evaluating student engagement and the effectiveness of curricular delivery in different types of schools.

Student Regularity. The overall level of regular attendance among students stands at 88.67%, indicating a generally high rate of participation across all institutional types. Private schools exhibit the highest attendance rate at 91.42%, followed by government schools at 88.39% and aided schools at 86.60%. This pattern suggests that attendance is consistently maintained. And the minimal variation across school types highlights a uniformity in participation, which is essential for sustained learning outcomes.

Student Interest. In contrast to attendance, students' reported interest in learning activities presents a more varied and concerning trend. While government school students reported a high interest level of 85.95%, aided and private school students reported significantly lower levels, at 67.13% and 51.65%, respectively. The aggregate level of interest across all schools is 70.72%, suggesting a moderate but uneven pattern of engagement. The notably lower interest in private schools, despite their high attendance rates, may indicate a disconnect between instructional practices and student motivation or satisfaction. This points to potential issues such as excessive academic pressure, lack of interactive teaching methodologies, or limited student agency in learning processes.

Use of Learning Materials

The regular use of learning materials is a fundamental indicator of student engagement within the school environment. This analysis seeks to examine the consistency with which students bring essential educational materials like textbooks, notebooks, and other learning aids to school and how this practice reflects their participation in curricular programmes across different types of school management. The data collected in this regard is presented in Table 41.

Table 41

Students' use of Basic Learning Materials

Particulars	Government	Aided	Private	Total
Text book	99.41	96.16	95.79	97.28
Notebook	47.96	47.68	96.27	63.97
Others	67.91	32.14	20.89	42.03

Table 41 indicates a consistently high percentage of students bringing textbooks to school across all management types, with government schools reporting the highest compliance (99.41%), followed by aided (96.16%) and private (95.79%) schools. This suggests that textbooks remain the primary instructional material through which curriculum content is delivered, ensuring a foundational level of engagement with prescribed academic programmes. In contrast, the regular use of notebooks exhibits significant variation. Private school students reported notably higher rates (96.27%) of bringing notebooks, in comparison to students in government (47.96%) and aided schools (47.68%). This discrepancy implies a differential in instructional practices and student engagement strategies, with private schools potentially placing greater emphasis on continuous note-taking, practice exercises, and written assignments – all of which are integral components of active academic engagement. The category of 'Other Materials', which includes

workbooks, drawing books, activity kits, and supplementary aids, showed the highest regular use in government schools (67.91%), while aided (32.14%) and private (20.89%) schools lagged behind.

The high prevalence of textbook usage signifies a baseline engagement with curriculum content delivery, while differences in notebook and supplementary material use suggest varied opportunities for active engagement in curricular programmes.

Engagement in Different Curricular Activities

Student engagement in curricular activities plays a pivotal role in shaping the educational experiences and academic outcomes of learners. It refers to the active participation of learners in academic tasks and instructional processes: classroom discussions, project work, experiments, reading assignments, assessments, and other classroom-based academic exercises within the formal educational curriculum. The degree to which students involve themselves in these activities directly impacts their academic performance, cognitive development, and overall educational experience. The present study seeks to examine the extent of students' participation in various curricular activities across different types of schools in Kerala and the key findings are presented in Table 42.

Table 42

Students' Participation in Various Curricular Activities

Particulars	Government	Aided	Private	Total
Discussion	80.69	80.58	93.81	85.03
Role play	45.11	25.97	46.26	38.72
Field work	50.94	27.06	21.52	34.59
Field visit	36.97	41.71	24.93	35.77
Debate	69.62	41.15	59.70	56.67
Experiment and exhibition	70.06	50.32	49.53	57.50

The data presented in Table 42 reveal significant variations in student engagement in various curricular activities across different categories of upper primary schools in Kerala. Based on the data, it is observed that discussion-based activities register the highest participation rates among students in all school types, with private schools leading at 93.81%, followed closely by government and aided schools at 80.69% and 80.58%, respectively. This indicates that discussions are a universally preferred pedagogical strategy across upper primary schools. In contrast, participation in role-play activities is moderate, with government schools (45.11%) and private schools (46.26%) reporting higher involvement than aided schools (25.97%).

A noticeable disparity is evident in the case of fieldwork, where government schools report the highest student engagement at 50.94%, while aided and private schools lag behind with 27.06% and 21.52%, respectively. This suggests that experiential, outdoor learning opportunities are more frequently provided and encouraged in government schools. Similarly, for field visits, aided schools record a slightly higher participation rate (41.71%) than government schools (36.97%), whereas private schools report the lowest (24.93%), indicating inconsistencies in organising exposure visits across institutions.

Debates also witness substantial engagement in government schools (69.62%) and private schools (59.70%), while aided schools once again record a lower percentage (41.15%). Notably, experiments and exhibitions record high participation in government schools (70.06%), moderate levels in aided (50.32%) and private schools (49.53%), emphasising the stronger emphasis on practical activities in the government sector.

The data suggest that government schools consistently demonstrate higher participation rates in most curricular activities, reflecting a broader integration of

interactive and participatory learning strategies. Private schools show strong engagement in discussions but limited involvement in field-based and experiential activities, while aided schools tend to report lower participation across nearly all activities. These findings highlight the need for planned implementation of diverse curricular activities, particularly in private and aided schools, to ensure equitable and holistic educational experiences for students at the upper primary level.

Students' Engagement with Curricular Resources

Use of School Library Facilities. The regular use of school library facilities is a significant indicator of students' academic engagement and active participation in curricular activities. In the present study, data was collected to assess the extent of regular library use among students in different types of upper primary schools. The result is presented in Table 43.

Table 43

Regular Use of School Library

Particulars	Government	Aided	Private	Total
Regular use of the school library	66.73	21.19	17.87	36.84

Table 43 reveals marked differences across the three types of schools. Among government school students, 66.73% reported the regular use of library resources. In contrast, only 21.19% of students in aided schools and 17.87% in private schools engaged in regular library use. When considering the total across all schools, the percentage of students regularly using the library was 36.84%.

This trend indicates that government schools are comparatively more successful in integrating library facilities into students' learning practices, thereby supporting broader participation in curricular activities. The notably lower percentages in aided and private schools suggest possible limitations in library

engagement. The observed disparities highlight the need for concerted efforts to improve library engagement practices, especially in aided and private institutions, to develop the overall quality of curricular participation and learning experiences.

Engagement in Laboratory-based Activities. Student engagement in laboratory-based activities constitutes a critical dimension of effective curricular practice at the upper primary level. According to the National Education Policy (2020), this stage of education should prioritise experiential, activity-based, and inquiry-driven learning experiences to foster deeper understanding and skill acquisition (Government of India, 2020). The present analysis seeks to examine the extent of student engagement in laboratory-based curricular activities across different types of upper primary schools and the result is presented in Table 44.

Table 44

Students' Engagement in Different Laboratory-based Activities

Particulars	Government	Aided	Private	Total
Science Lab	59.99	61.71	17.31	46.34
Language Lab	16.45	15.28	3.10	11.61
IT Lab	94.59	89.11	78.48	87.39
Social Science lab	19.36	31.29	1.85	17.50

The data in table 44 data regarding students' regular engagement in various laboratory facilities as part of their curricular activities highlights significant variations across different types of upper primary schools.

Science laboratories are accessed by 59.99% of students in government schools and 61.71% in aided schools, while only 17.31% of private school students report regular participation, resulting in a total engagement of 46.34%. This pattern suggests that government and aided schools provide comparatively better opportunities for practical science-based learning. In the case of language

laboratories, the overall utilisation is relatively low, with 16.45% participation in government schools, 15.28% in aided schools, and a marginal 3.10% in private schools, averaging just 11.61%. On the other hand, IT laboratories show consistently high engagement across all school types, with 94.59% in government, 89.11% in aided, and 78.48% in private schools, leading to an overall participation rate of 87.39%. This reflects a growing emphasis on digital literacy within the curricular framework. Social science laboratory participation remains limited, with 19.36% of students in government schools, 31.29% in aided schools, and only 1.85% in private schools regularly using these facilities, accounting for a total of 17.50%.

These findings indicate that while digital infrastructure is increasingly integrated into school education, there remains a notable gap in the utilisation of subject-specific laboratories, particularly in private institutions.

Teachers' Support and Peer Collaboration

Active participation in curricular activities is strongly influenced by the support provided by teachers and the collaboration among peers. Teachers act as facilitators and motivators, creating a learning environment where students feel encouraged to actively engage in various activities (Slavin, 1995). At the same time, peer collaboration fosters interpersonal skills, shared learning, and mutual support, which are crucial for meaningful participation (Vygotsky, 1978). Socio-cultural learning theory emphasises that learning is not an isolated activity but a social process, shaped by the support and collaboration with teachers and classmates. Therefore, examining the role of teacher support and peer collaboration is essential to understand how these factors contribute to students' active involvement and the overall success of curricular programmes in schools. In this context, the present

study aims to assess the extent of teachers' support and peer collaboration in upper primary schools, and the results are presented in Table 45.

Table 45

Teachers' Support and Peer Collaboration in Curricular Activities

Particulars	Government	Aided	Private	Total
Teachers' attendance in the classroom	74.56	52.15	73.26	66.65
Teacher support for students work	87.97	91.55	97.58	92.36
Teacher consideration in classroom	84.36	69.74	93.11	82.41
Peer support	93.85	84.28	91.42	89.85
Sharing learning materials with peers	98.73	93.79	94.79	95.99

The data presented in the Table 45 highlights significant patterns in the extent of teachers' support and peer collaboration in upper primary schools across different management types. Regarding teachers' attendance in the classroom, government and private schools show relatively similar and higher attendance rates (74.56% and 73.26%, respectively), while aided schools lag considerably behind at 52.15%. This indicates a concerning inconsistency in teacher presence within aided institutions, potentially affecting instructional continuity.

In terms of teacher support for students' work, private schools lead with 97.58%, followed by aided schools at 91.55% and government schools at 87.97%. This trend suggests that students in private schools receive more consistent academic assistance and encouragement from teachers, which could positively influence learning outcomes. Similarly, for teacher consideration in the classroom, which involves teachers' sensitivity to students' needs, feedback, and classroom interactions, private schools again report the highest at 93.11%, with government schools at 84.36% and aided schools at a lower 69.74%.

Examining peer collaboration, the findings reveal an encouraging overall trend. Peer learning support is widely practised, with government schools at

93.85%, private at 91.42%, and aided at 84.28%, averaging 89.85%. This indicates a generally strong culture of peer-assisted learning in upper primary schools. Furthermore, the practice of sharing learning materials with peers is exceptionally high across all categories, with government schools at 98.73%, aided schools at 93.79%, and private schools at 94.79%, resulting in a total average of 95.99%. This high level of material sharing reflects a cooperative and inclusive classroom environment supportive of collective learning.

The analysis suggests that while peer collaboration practices are high across all school types, disparities exist in areas of teacher attendance, support and consideration – particularly within aided schools. These findings emphasise the need for interventions to strengthen teacher engagement in aided schools, alongside the promotion of collaborative learning practices.

Teachers' Perception of Student Engagement in Curricular Activities

The analysis of qualitative data from teacher interviews regarding student participation in curricular activities revealed distinct patterns across government, aided, and private schools. The findings are presented under four subthemes:

Student Regularity. Teachers across all school types reported that student attendance was generally consistent. In government schools, while most students were regular, their engagement in classroom learning activities was often minimal and largely driven by compulsion rather than intrinsic motivation. One teacher commented, "Most students are regular, but their involvement in learning activities is often out of compulsion". In aided schools, attendance was similarly steady, though students' active interest in curricular participation remained comparatively low. In private schools, teachers observed both regular attendance and better classroom involvement, particularly when teaching incorporated activity-based

methods. A teacher remarked, “Students are regular and active in classroom sessions, though some are hesitant”.

Active Participation in Curricular Activities. Variations were evident in the degree of active participation in learning tasks. In government schools, teachers noted that routine participation was limited, but students showed greater enthusiasm when exposed to activity-based learning experiences such as experiments, projects, and audio-visual lessons. In aided schools, participation in interactive activities like discussions, debates, and role-plays was minimal. Teachers attributed this to personal or family issues affecting students’ focus and motivation, as well as to the limited availability of learning materials. By contrast, private schools demonstrated comparatively higher student involvement, especially in interactive and participatory classroom sessions, facilitated by improved resource availability and supportive school management practices.

Availability and Use of Learning Materials. The provision and use of learning materials emerged as a key factor influencing participation. In government schools, while essential resources such as textbooks and notebooks were available, supplementary materials for activity-based learning were inconsistent, limiting opportunities for experiential engagement. Aided schools faced greater constraints, with teachers highlighting the irregular availability of notebooks and additional learning aids, which adversely affected student preparedness and participation. Private schools, on the other hand, maintained satisfactory access to learning materials, supported by active parental involvement and proactive school management initiatives, contributing to improved student engagement.

Peer Collaboration and Influence. Across all school types, peer collaboration was generally positive. Teachers reported that students often shared learning materials and supported each other with academic tasks, fostering a cooperative classroom environment. However, occasional instances of negative peer influence were also noted. Some teachers recounted incidents where students deliberately concealed their completed assignments to help friends avoid teacher scrutiny. While such occurrences were limited, they highlighted the complex peer dynamics that could both support and hinder academic engagement.

The analysis of qualitative data reveals consistent student attendance across all school types, but varying levels of active participation. In government and aided schools, involvement was often driven by compulsion or affected by personal and resource-related constraints, whereas private schools recorded comparatively higher engagement, especially in activity-based lessons. The availability of learning materials emerged as a significant factor influencing participation, with private schools better equipped than their government and aided counterparts. Peer collaboration was generally positive, though minor instances of negative influence highlighted the complex social dynamics within classrooms.

Data Triangulation and Interpretation

Student engagement in curricular activities is studied through student questionnaires administered among upper primary school students and qualitative insights derived from semi-structured interviews with 18 upper primary school teachers across government, aided, and private schools in Kerala. Both these data were triangulated to corroborate, compare, and contextualise patterns of student engagement in curricular activities from both student-reported experiences and teacher observations. The interpretation and triangulated result are as follows:

Student Regularity. Quantitative data indicated consistently high student attendance across all school types, with an overall attendance rate of 88.67%, highest in private schools (91.42%), followed by government (88.39%) and aided schools (86.60%). Teacher interviews substantiated this pattern, confirming generally regular attendance across institutions. Qualitative findings highlighted that mere physical presence in classrooms did not always translate to active learning. This was more evident in government schools, where students' participation often seemed driven by teacher-made pressure rather than genuine enthusiasm."

Student Interest. Quantitative data showed the highest self-reported interest in learning activities among government school students (85.95%), compared to aided (67.13%) and private schools (51.65%). This finding contrasted with qualitative data, which suggested that private school students exhibited greater engagement during interactive, activity-based sessions, though some hesitation persisted. In aided schools, teachers reported low student interest, attributing it to personal and familial challenges, as well as inadequate access to learning resources.

These disparities align with Fredricks et al.'s (2004) multidimensional model of engagement, which observes self-reported data often reflects emotional engagement (how students feel about learning), whereas teacher observations primarily capture behavioural engagement (how students act in learning situations). This theoretical distinction accounts for the mismatch observed here, where students may report high interest due to optimism bias or social desirability (Appleton et al., 2008), even if such interest does not consistently translate into active classroom participation. Based on this observation, the qualitative insights that emerged from teachers' interviews were prioritised over student-reported self-interest.

Engagement in Curricular Activities

Quantitative results showed that discussion-based activities recorded the highest participation rates across all schools, particularly in private institutions (93.81%). This was corroborated by qualitative data, where teachers acknowledged that students responded positively to participatory methods such as classroom discussions and audio-visual lessons. However, participation in activities such as role-plays, fieldwork, and debates varied notably by school type. Quantitative data indicated relatively higher engagement in government schools for fieldwork (50.94%), debates (69.62%), and experiments (70.06%). Qualitative findings affirmed this, with teachers reporting that government schools offered more frequent opportunities for experiential and practical learning. Aided schools consistently underperformed in both data sources, with teachers citing limited facilities and external constraints as contributing factors.

Use of Learning Materials and Facilities

Quantitative data revealed near-universal textbook usage across schools, though notable discrepancies existed in the use of notebooks and supplementary learning materials. Students in Private schools reported the highest notebook usage (96.27%), consistent with qualitative accounts of structured, note-based instructional practices. Government schools demonstrated higher use of supplementary materials (67.91%), supported by teacher reports of integrating activity kits and workbooks to promote active learning.

Library use was reported to be highest in government schools (66.73%), a finding attributed by teachers to the regular scheduling of library periods within the academic timetable. Both data sources confirmed consistently high IT lab usage across all school types, while the utilisation of science and social science laboratories remained limited, particularly in private schools.

Teacher Support and Peer Collaboration

Both quantitative and qualitative findings highlight the pivotal role of teacher support and peer collaboration in ensuring student engagement in curricular activities. Quantitative data reflected high rates of peer learning support and material sharing across all schools. This was substantiated by qualitative accounts highlighting students' cooperative behaviours, though occasional incidents of negative peer influence, such as concealing completed assignments to protect friends, were also reported.

Disparities in teacher presence and involvement emerged prominently in the triangulated data. Quantitative findings from student questionnaires revealed that in aided schools, only 52.15% of students reported regular teacher attendance and support in the classroom. In contrast, qualitative data from teacher interviews presented a markedly different perspective, with teachers in aided schools asserting consistent attendance and maximum classroom support.

This analysis highlights a perceptual gap between students and teachers in aided schools regarding classroom support and presence. Student-reported data, which directly captures learner experience, indicates limited teacher presence, while teacher-reported data suggests consistent attendance and maximum classroom support. As Creswell and Clark (2018) advise, when investigating variables rooted in individual experiences, such as classroom engagement and teacher support, the perceptions of the direct recipients- in this case, students - carry primary interpretive weight. Hence, student-reported data is prioritized in assessing the effective presence and support of teachers in aided schools. Here, teachers may be present and active in school, as they argue by themselves. Factors such as multiple responsibilities, administrative duties, and limited infrastructure, as shared by some teachers, might affect the quality of

teacher-student interactions. It highlights the importance of not solely relying on self-reported professional accounts but integrating learner perspectives to obtain a holistic understanding of classroom dynamics.

Regarding the peer collaboration in learning, while quantitative data indicated high peer collaboration rates (above 90% in most schools), qualitative insights exposed the dual nature of peer interactions. Wentzel (1998) notes that while positive peer collaboration enhances engagement, peer dynamics can also undermine learning through counterproductive behaviours, as seen in the few instances of negative peer influence reported here.

The triangulation of quantitative and qualitative data on student engagement in curricular activities reveals both convergences and discrepancies across school types in Kerala. While student attendance remains consistently high, meaningful engagement and active participation vary considerably. Government schools demonstrate relatively stronger participation in activity-based learning; aided schools face significant challenges regarding student interest and teacher involvement; and private schools, despite structured environments and higher attendance, report lower student-reported interest and limited experiential learning opportunities.

Theme 3. Participation in Co-curricular Activities

Student participation in co-curricular activities is widely recognised as a crucial component of holistic education, particularly at the upper primary level, where children undergo significant social, emotional, and intellectual development (Singh & Sharma, 2020). Activities such as sports, arts, day celebrations, and club initiatives are not mere supplementary engagements but serve as key indicators of students' personal growth, social skills, and school engagement (Kumar, 2019). Bandyopadhyay (2020) further highlights that participation in co-curricular

programmes positively influences students' academic motivation, social interaction, and emotional growth. Interest and involvement in these areas contribute to the development of essential life skills such as creativity, teamwork, leadership, and emotional resilience (National Education Policy, 2020). In this context, examining the extent of student interest and participation in co-curricular activities provides valuable insights into the educational environment and institutional practices of upper primary schools. The present study attempts to assess these aspects in upper primary schools, and the results of this investigation are presented in the following sections.

Students' Interest

Students' interest is an important factor in ensuring active participation in co-curricular activities conducted in schools. Acknowledging interest as an essential factor of participation, the present study tries to examine the extent of students' interest in engaging with co-curricular initiatives at the upper primary level and the result is presented in Table 46.

Table 46

Students' Interest in Co-curricular Activities

Particulars	Government	Aided	Private	Total
Arts and Cultural Programme	94.71	83.53	95.28	90.71
Sports and Games	94.82	93.64	86.44	91.63
Celebrations	98.39	96.99	98.15	97.87
Club-related Activities	70.06	50.32	49.53	57.50

The data presented in Table 46 reveal notable trends in students' interest across various co-curricular activities conducted in upper primary schools in Kerala. Celebration such as festivals and events attract the highest interest among students, with participation rates exceeding 96% in all school types, culminating in a total of

97.87%. Similarly, sports and games enjoy significant popularity, with over 90% overall participation, indicating that physical activities remain a preferred engagement for students, particularly in government (94.82%) and aided (93.64%) schools. Arts and cultural programmes also register strong student interest, with an overall participation of 90.71%. Private schools lead slightly at 95.28%, followed closely by government schools (94.71%), while aided schools record a relatively lower interest at 83.53%. However, a noticeable decline is observed in club-related activities, which show comparatively lower participation interest, particularly in aided (50.32%) and private (49.53%) schools, bringing the overall total to 57.50%. This suggests the need for better structuring and promotion of club activities to ensure student engagement in club-related activities.

Participation in Co-Curricular Activities

Student participation in co-curricular activities forms an integral part of education, fostering comprehensive development beyond the academic curriculum. These activities include diverse programmes such as sports and physical activities, arts and cultural events, celebrations and festivals, and club-based initiatives. Recognising their significance in students' development, the present study investigates the extent of student participation in these key areas at the upper primary school.

Engagement in Sports and Physical Activities

Student engagement in sports and physical activities is recognised as a vital element of holistic education, contributing significantly to students' physical, mental, and social development. In light of this, the present study focuses on three key dimensions of physical education: regular participation in physical activities, effective use of designated sports hours, and involvement in school sports events. These dimensions serve as indicators of how well physical education is integrated

into the school experience. The results of the study, based on student responses, are presented in Table 47.

Table 47

Students' Participation in Sports and Physical Activities

Particulars	Government	Aided	Private	Total
Regular engagement in games and physical activities	90.92	84.62	78.48	84.673
Use of Sports hour for physical activities	92.29	49.92	93.38	76.62
Participation in school sports meet	40.18	35.03	83.41	52.87

Table 47 indicates the result of the analysis of students' responses regarding engagement in sports and physical activities across government, aided, and private schools reveals distinct patterns in different schools. Government schools demonstrate the highest level of regular engagement in physical activities, with 90.92% of students reporting consistent participation. This suggests a structured emphasis on regular physical activity within the government school framework. Aided and private schools follow with 84.62% and 78.48%, respectively, indicating comparatively lower levels of regular engagement.

In terms of the utilisation of the designated sports hour for physical activities, private (93.38%) and government schools (92.29%) show high student engagement, reflecting effective implementation of scheduled physical education periods. However, aided schools report significantly lower utilisation at 49.92%, highlighting a potential area of concern.

Participation in school-level sports meets presents a contrasting trend. Private schools report the highest participation rate at 83.41%, whereas government and aided schools lag considerably behind at 40.18% and 35.03%, respectively.

The data indicates that while government schools are more effective in promoting routine physical activity, private schools excel in fostering competitive participation through sports meets. Aided schools, on the other hand, consistently underperform across all indicators, suggesting the need for targeted interventions to improve student participation related to physical education and sports.

Engagement in Arts and Cultural Programmes

Students' participation in school arts festivals and cultural programmes is essential for fostering creativity, cultural understanding, and social skills. This study focuses on analysing student participation levels in arts and cultural programmes in government, aided, and private schools to better understand the level of student participation, and the result is summarised below in Table 48.

Table 48

Students' Participation in Arts Festivals and Cultural Programmes

Particulars	Government	Aided	Private	Total
School Arts fest	54.43	63.63	66.23	61.43
Cultural programmes	9.81	7.96	7.83	8.53

Table 48 summarises the results of students' engagement in school arts and cultural programmes across government, aided, and private educational institutions. The results reveals that private schools demonstrate the highest level of student involvement (66.23%), followed by aided schools (63.63%), with government schools exhibiting the lowest engagement (54.43%). In contrast, student engagement in cultural programmes is markedly lower across all school types, with government schools reporting a slightly higher participation rate (9.81%) relative to aided (7.96%) and private schools (7.83%). The uniformly low levels of involvement in cultural activities indicate potential limitations in programmes. The data collectively indicate a pronounced imbalance in student engagement between

arts festivals and cultural programmes, with higher participation concentrated in the former, particularly within private and aided schools.

Participation in Common Celebrations and Festivals

The extent of students' participation in school-based celebrations provides meaningful insights into the cultural inclusivity and institutional priorities of schools. An analysis of student responses across government, aided, and private upper primary schools was done, and the results are presented in Table 49.

Table 49

Students' Participation in School-based Celebrations

Particulars	Government	Aided	Private	Total
Independence Day	92.88	91.77	88.17	90.94
Onam	97.80	89.85	51.45	82.88
Christmas Celebration	85.37	86.84	20.01	64.07453
Eid Celebration	53.78	61.02	45.89	54.90
Day Celebrations	36.07	33.12	19.81	29.67
School Annual Day Celebration	82.91	52.22	91.70	75.61
Others	36.39	31.52	63.13	46.68

Table 49 presents data on students' participation in school-based festivals and celebrations across government, aided, and private upper primary schools. The findings highlight important dimensions of student engagement, particularly in terms of behavioural and emotional involvement in school activities.

Participation in nationally significant events such as Independence Day is consistently high across all school types: 92.88% in government, 91.77% in aided, and 88.17% in private, reflecting strong student engagement and shared institutional emphasis on civic values. Similarly, the high participation in the regional festival Onam, particularly in government (97.80%) and aided schools (89.85%),

demonstrates culturally embedded engagement practices. The notably lower participation in private schools (51.45%) may reflect weaker institutional integration of local cultural identity.

Religious celebrations such as Christmas and Eid also show patterns relevant to student engagement. While Christmas participation is high in government (85.37%) and aided schools (86.84%), it drops significantly in private schools (20.01%). A similar trend is observed for Eid, with participation highest in aided (61.02%) and lowest in private schools (45.89%).

School Annual Day participation is another strong indicator of institutional engagement, with private schools showing the highest involvement (91.70%), followed by government (82.91%) and aided schools (52.22%). In contrast, Day Celebrations recorded lower engagement across all school types, especially in private institutions (19.81%), possibly indicating gaps in fostering collective school identity. Participation in other celebrations is highest in private schools (63.13%), indicating diverse engagement opportunities beyond formal curricula.

The data reveal that student participation in school celebrations varies notably across government, aided, and private upper primary schools. While national events show consistently high engagement, participation in cultural and religious celebrations is significantly lower in private schools. These patterns suggest that school type and institutional priorities play a key role in shaping student engagement through celebratory practices.

Involvement in Club Related Activities

The extent of student engagement in club-related activities presents valuable insights into the co-curricular culture across different types of schools in Kerala. This study examines student participation in club-related activities as a key

dimension of co-curricular engagement in upper primary schools. Participation in such clubs enhances students' personal, social, and academic development by fostering skills like leadership, teamwork, and critical thinking. The following section presents the data and detailed analysis of student participation in various clubs, highlighting trends and disparities across different types of upper primary schools in Kerala. The result is presented in Table 50.

Table 50

Students' Participation in Club-related Activities

Particulars	Government	Aided	Private	Total
Science Club	51.13	43.81	37.60	44.63
Maths Club	34.77	39.82	11.85	30.46
Natural Club	42.00	11.88	0.96	19.48
Social Science Club	39.79	39.52	6.54	30.81
Sports Club	44.46	27.20	36.81	35.30
Language Club	42.17	52.44	20.01	40.26
SPC, Junior Red Cross (JRC), etc.	16.12	30.95	17.21	22.08

Table 50 illustrates the distribution of students' participation in various club-related activities across government, aided, and private upper primary schools, and the analysis of the data reveals significant disparities in student involvement in club-related activities in different types of upper primary schools.

Student involvement in Science Clubs-related activities reports the highest overall participation, with 44.63% of students engaged. Government schools lead in this domain with a 51.13% participation rate, followed by aided schools at 43.81%, while private schools record a lower rate of 37.60%. This suggests that public-sector institutions are more proactive in promoting science-related extracurricular activities.

Student participation in Mathematics Club-related activities stands at 30.46% overall. Aided schools show the highest level of student engagement

(39.82%), followed by government schools (34.77%). Private schools, however, report a notably lower engagement rate (11.85%), pointing toward a potential gap in the emphasis on mathematics-based enrichment activities within private institutions.

A clear difference is evident in Natural Club activities, where overall student participation is low (19.48%). Government schools again show significantly higher involvement (42.00%), while aided schools report a sharp drop (11.88%) and private schools fall to a negligible 0.96%.

This data highlights the limited student engagement in nature-related activities in upper primary institutions, especially in private and aided ones. Student engagement in Social Science Club-related activities also presents a similar pattern. Government (39.79%) and aided (39.52%) school students report nearly identical participation levels, indicating consistent support for social awareness programmes in the public education system. However, private school students' participation is critically low (6.54%).

Participation in sports clubs is more evenly distributed across school types, though variations still exist. Government schools lead with 44.46%, followed by private schools at 36.81% and aided schools at 27.20%. The overall participation rate stands at 35.30%, reflecting relatively widespread involvement in physical and athletic activities.

Language clubs show a unique trend where aided schools lead with a participation rate of 52.44%, surpassing government schools (42.17%) and private schools (20.01%). This pattern may reflect strong curricular and co-curricular integration of language development programmes, especially in aided institutions.

In contrast, student participation in SPC (Student Police Cadet), Junior Red Cross (JRC), and similar civic service groups records the lowest overall

participation (22.08%). Aided schools again show higher engagement (30.95%), while both government (16.12%) and private schools (17.21%) show limited student involvement. These programmes often require external collaboration and institutional commitment, which may vary across school types.

The analysis of the data reveals significant disparities in student participation in club-related activities across government, aided, and private upper primary schools. Government schools consistently show higher involvement in science, nature, social science, and sports clubs, while aided schools lead in language and civic service programmes. Private schools generally report lower participation across most activities, highlighting a potential gap in extracurricular engagement.

Teachers' Perception of Students' Participation in Co-curricular Activities

The thematic analysis of teacher interviews has highlighted consistent patterns in student participation in co-curricular activities across school types, with sports and games being the most preferred area of engagement.

In government schools, while sports and games attracted high levels of student participation, involvement in arts, cultural events, and club activities remained relatively limited. Teachers attributed this to student disinterest and the compulsory nature of participating in certain programmes. One teacher explained,

"*Sports are preferred, but club activities aren't attended by many"*.

Participation in celebrations and events was largely driven by teacher pressure rather than intrinsic motivation.

Similarly, in aided schools, students displayed interest in sports and arts programmes but exhibited limited participation in club-related activities. Despite infrastructural and financial limitations, teachers made active efforts to motivate students and manage co-curricular programmes. Constraints such as poor

infrastructure, limited financial resources, and a shortage of faculty dedicated to co-curricular activities were identified as major barriers.

In private schools, participation rates in sports and arts activities were higher relative to government and aided schools. Teachers organise a variety of programmes and ensure active parental involvement. One respondent remarked, "Even different curricular programmes are conducted in the school; students are more interested in arts and sports". However, club activity participation remained selective, with teachers emphasising the need for enhanced ICT and laboratory resources to support co-curricular learning.

Support from teachers and management was actively extended in all school types, with teachers playing pivotal roles in motivating students, organising events, and collaborating with Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs) and community organisations to enhance participation. However, several challenges affecting student involvement were consistently identified, including student hesitation, low interest, overburdened academic schedules, infrastructural deficiencies, and specialised faculty.

Suggestions for improvement put forth by teachers across all schools included infrastructural development, recruitment of specialist faculty for co-curricular areas, enhancement of ICT and laboratory facilities, integration of diverse, student-centred learning experiences, and increased parental and community engagement. A teacher aptly summarised, "Motivation and support from teachers and schools, maintaining and increasing infrastructure, and preferring student interest in activities are essential for improvement".

The thematic analysis of teacher interviews offers valuable qualitative insights into the differential patterns of student use of infrastructure and student

engagement in curricular and co-curricular activities across government, aided, and private upper primary schools in Kerala. The findings reflect both the persistent infrastructural and resource-related challenges in government and aided schools and the relatively better provisions in private schools. Despite systemic limitations, teachers across all school types exhibited commendable dedication in optimising available resources, encouraging student participation, and sustaining co-curricular activities. The analysis highlights the need for focused infrastructural investments, enhanced co-curricular support, and student-centred pedagogical approaches to foster effective student participation in upper primary schools in Kerala.

Data Triangulation

The integrated analysis of quantitative and qualitative data regarding student participation in co-curricular activities across government, aided, and private upper primary schools in Kerala shows different patterns of student engagement.

Sports and Physical Activities. Data regarding students' participation in sports and related activities revealed high levels of regular student engagement in physical activities, particularly in government (90.92%) and private (78.48%) schools, while aided schools showed 84.62%. Designated sports hour utilisation was notably high in private (93.38%) and government (92.29%) schools, with aided schools lagging at 49.92%. Participation in school-level sports meets was highest in private schools (83.41%) and considerably lower in government (40.18%) and aided (35.03%) schools. Qualitative data from teacher interviews consistently confirmed that sports and games remained the most preferred co-curricular activity among students. Teachers in all school types observed high levels of participation, although in government and aided schools, this was often driven by teacher direction rather than student initiative. A teacher from a government school remarked, "Sports are preferred, but club activities aren't attended by many".

As both data sets corroborated high participation levels in sports, quantitative data were prioritised for reporting prevalence, while qualitative data provided valuable insights into the motivations underlying this engagement.

Participation in Arts and Cultural Programmes. Quantitative findings indicated higher participation in school arts festivals among private (66.23%) and aided (63.63%) schools, while government schools reported 54.43%. Conversely, participation in cultural programmes remained low across all school categories (8.53% overall). Qualitative evidence from teachers supported these trends. Teachers in private schools reported greater student interest in arts activities, facilitated by parental involvement and diverse programme offerings. Government school teachers attributed lower student engagement to logistical limitations and student disinterest.

Quantitative data on participation rates were used as primary evidence, with qualitative data offering critical explanatory context regarding institutional and motivational factors. This triangulation strategy follows Creswell's (2018) guideline to prefer student-reported quantitative data for learner experience and use qualitative insights to explain operational limitations and discrepancies.

Participation in Celebrations and Festivals. Quantitative analysis showed high student participation in national events like Independence Day across all school types (above 90%). Onam and Christmas celebrations saw significantly lower participation in private schools (51.45% and 20.01%, respectively) compared to government and aided schools. Participation in school annual day celebrations was highest in private schools (91.70%). Teachers reported that while attendance during such events was high, especially in government schools, much of this participation was orchestrated by teacher insistence rather than intrinsic motivation. One teacher

noted that students often hesitated to participate voluntarily, and involvement was largely driven by staff pressure.

Quantitative data provided reliable measures of participation rates. However, qualitative findings highlighted a qualitative mismatch between high attendance and genuine engagement, especially in government schools. In such cases, as recommended by Patton (2002), quantitative findings were maintained for reporting participation levels, while qualitative narratives qualified the nature and depth of participation.

Participation in Club-Related Activities. Quantitative analysis showed the lowest participation rates in club-related activities among all co-curricular areas. Government schools reported relatively better engagement in Science (51.13%) and Nature (42%) clubs. Private schools consistently reported low participation, particularly in Nature Clubs (0.96%). Teachers across all school types confirmed poor participation in club activities, attributing it to infrastructural deficiencies, academic workloads, and a lack of student interest. Private school teachers, in particular, identified the need for improved ICT and laboratory facilities to facilitate curricular engagement.

Both data sets were consistent in reporting low engagement in club-related activities. Quantitative data established the prevalence of this issue, while qualitative evidence contextualised contributing factors.

The triangulated analysis revealed notable disparities in student participation across different co-curricular activities and school types in Kerala. High participation rates were recorded in sports and national celebrations, while club activities consistently registered low engagement. Private schools demonstrated stronger involvement in arts and cultural programmes, while government schools outperformed others in regular physical activities.

Conclusion of the Analysis of Objective 2

The second objective of the study aimed to assess how effectively students in upper primary schools across Kerala participate in school life beyond mere attendance, through their use of infrastructural facilities, engagement in curricular learning processes and co-curricular activities. Data were collected through a mixed-method approach involving questionnaires from 847 students and semi-structured interviews with 18 teachers. The findings were triangulated to compare, corroborate, and contextualise quantitative patterns with qualitative insights.

The data analysis focused on understanding how different types of upper primary schools nurture or constrain comprehensive student development through effective use of facilities and engagement in curricular and co-curricular activities. The analysis was organised under three thematic areas:

Utilisation of School Facilities

Quantitative data revealed relatively higher levels of student satisfaction with classroom infrastructure, playgrounds, laboratory facilities, and audio-visual aids in government schools. Private schools performed better in transportation and drinking water facilities, while aided schools consistently lagged behind across most infrastructure parameters. Sanitation facilities, particularly toilets and restrooms for girls, remained inadequate in all school types.

Triangulated qualitative data from teacher interviews confirmed these trends, highlighting operational challenges such as poor maintenance, financial limitations, and staffing shortages in government and aided schools. In private schools, while infrastructure was satisfactory, certain facilities like ICT labs remained underutilised for regular academic purposes. Notably, discrepancies were observed between

student-reported satisfaction with ICT and library facilities and teachers' accounts of limited institutional provisions. This indicates that students' satisfaction often reflected sporadic, externally supplemented experiences rather than consistent institutional provision.

Engagement in Curricular Activities

Student attendance rates were uniformly high across all school types. However, disparities emerged in interest levels and participation in academic activities. Government schools reported the highest student interest in learning, followed by aided and private schools. Private schools, though maintaining better attendance, demonstrated limited student-reported enthusiasm for learning activities.

Involvement in classroom discussions, debates, experiments, and fieldwork was strongest in government schools. Private schools favoured discussions but underperformed in field-based and practical activities.

Aided schools reported consistently lower participation rates across activities. Engagement with learning materials was high for textbooks but varied for notebooks and supplementary materials. ICT lab usage was widespread in all schools, while library and laboratory usage were highest in government schools. Peer collaboration remained strong across all types of institutions, although aided schools reflected lower teacher attendance and classroom support. Teachers in aided schools, however, self-reported high classroom involvement, revealing a perceptual gap.

Participation in Co-curricular Activities

Participation in sports and games emerged as the most preferred co-curricular activity, with government and private schools reporting the highest engagement. National celebrations like Independence Day and Onam saw high

participation across all schools, while club-related activities consistently recorded low involvement, especially in private and aided schools. Private schools showed relatively higher participation in arts and cultural events, while government schools performed better in physical activities and club-related engagements. Teacher interviews corroborated these patterns, with educators identifying institutional priorities, parental involvement, infrastructure, and academic workloads as key factors influencing co-curricular participation. Teachers across all school types acknowledged challenges in student motivation and resource availability, particularly for club-based and arts activities.

The triangulated analysis of Objective II provides important insights into student participation patterns in different types of upper primary schools in Kerala:

- Government schools demonstrated stronger student participation in infrastructural utilisation, curricular engagement, and physical activities, despite operational constraints.
- Aided schools faced the most significant challenges, marked by poor infrastructure, inconsistent teacher support, and lower student interest and engagement levels.
- Private schools, while offering better physical infrastructure and structured classroom environments, tended to underutilise facilities for holistic, experiential learning and co-curricular participation.
- The analysis points out that high student attendance did not necessarily translate to meaningful academic and co-curricular engagement in many schools. And active student participation is high where schools integrate supportive infrastructure with participatory pedagogies and student-centred activities.

Based on the analysis of data regarding student participation, government schools performed best overall, showing higher engagement in activity-based learning, sports, and use of facilities despite infrastructural challenges. Private schools, while better equipped, underutilised their resources for experiential and co-curricular activities, limiting broader student participation. Aided schools consistently ranked lowest in participation and engagement across almost all areas, highlighting the need for urgent infrastructural and pedagogical improvements.

Analysis of Diversity in Primary Schools (Objective 3)

The third objective of the study was to explore the socio-cultural and religious diversity in different types of primary schools in Kerala, with a specific focus on three dimensions: physical representation, school programmes, and practices. This objective was addressed using an embedded case study method, wherein schools were selected as cases based on predetermined criteria. Data were collected from school documents and multiple stakeholders, including students, teachers, heads of institutions, and parents, through field observation, document analysis, semi-structured interviews, and Focus Group Discussions.

Particular emphasis was given to capturing students' perceptions of diversity, the nature of their friendships, their participation in cultural and religious celebrations, and their overall experiences of inclusivity within the school environment. Additionally, parental perceptions and preferences in school selection were examined to understand the extent to which socio-cultural and religious factors influence their choices. The study also explored how school priorities in organising programmes and staff recruitment practices reflect, promote, or shape diversity and inclusion within the school context.

The data for objective III is derived from the following research questions.

1. What is the extent of diversity representation in the physical composition of different types of upper primary schools in Kerala?
2. What is the extent of diversity reflected in the programmes and practices of upper primary schools in Kerala managed by different agencies?
3. How is diversity perceived by different stakeholders, including students, teachers, heads of institutions, and parents, in primary schools of Kerala?

Data Sources of Diversity in Primary Schools (Objective 3)

The result for the third objective is derived from the data collected from document analysis, semi-structured interviews, and Focus Group Discussions. They are as follows:

- Document analysis: School admission documents, students' attendance registers, programme schedules, school social media handles, school celebration reports, students' club reports, and other external sources.
- Semi-structured interviews with the head of the school
- Semi-structured interviews with school teachers.
- Focus Group Discussion (FGD) with students.
- Semi-structured interview with parents.

The data collected from varied sources are presented under three major themes and their related sub-themes, as follows:

Theme I. Diversity in terms of physical representation and enrolment

- Student representation
- Staff representation
- Material and Visual Representations

Theme II. Diversity in school practices.

- Morning Prayer
- School Assembly
- Religious Accommodation
- Classroom Seating Arrangements
- Value Education and Moral Lessons

Theme III: Diversity in School Programmes.

- Diversity in School Celebrations
- Diversity in School Arts Festivals and Cultural Programmes.
- Diversity in Clubs and Related Activities
- Parental perceptions and preferences.

The findings from these multiple sources are thematically presented in the following subsections.

Theme 1. Diversity in Terms of Physical Representation

In a socially, culturally, and religiously diverse state like Kerala, schools are expected not only to offer quality education but also to serve as inclusive spaces where children can experience the diversity of the society they live in. The physical environment of a school, including the composition of its students and staff and the visual and material elements displayed within its premises, plays an important role in shaping children's attitudes towards differences in our society. National and state policies such as the Right to Education Act (2009) and the Kerala Education Rules (2022) emphasise the importance of equitable and inclusive practices in school admissions, staffing, and campus environment. Prior

research suggests that visible representations of cultural, religious, and social diversity in schools foster mutual respect, social cohesion, and democratic values among children (Nambissan, 2010). The present study examines whether the physical elements of different types of upper primary schools in Kerala reflect the diversity of our society and provide opportunities for students to engage with and experience this diversity meaningfully. The data for analysing the reality is collected through document analysis, systematic observation, and semi-structured interviews with head teachers in selected case schools. The analysis is structured under three dimensions:

- Student representation
- Staff representation
- Visual and material representation

The findings are as follows.

Diversity in Student Representation

Student representation in schools is a vital indicator of how well educational spaces reflect the socio-cultural and religious diversity of the wider community. An inclusive student composition enables children to interact with peers from diverse backgrounds. This section examines the patterns of diversity in student representation across different types of upper primary schools in Kerala, based on enrolment data from five case schools and semi structured interview with head of the institution. The summary of data collected through document analysis is presented in Table 51.

Table 51

Students' Representation in Schools Selected as Cases

Particular	Case 1 Government			Case 2 Aided			Case 3 Unaided Hindu management			Case 4. Unaided Muslim management			Case 5 Unaided Christian management		
Class	5	6.	7	5	6.	7	5	6.	7	5	6.	7	5	6.	7
Boys	26	25	29	128	122	78	14	11	08	52	89	64	16	17	15
Girls	25	33	22	136	121	106	12	14	10	35	34	51	16	13	10
Hindu	10	18	23	57	55	29	26	25	18	0	0	0	20	18	10
Muslim	41	39	28	207	186	155	0	0	0	87	123	115	06	05	09
Christian	0	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	06	07	06
Sc/ ST	10	10	13	34	38	19	-	-		0	0	0	0	0	0
OBC	41	45	38	210	192	158	-	-	-	87	123	115	22	20	15
Total	51	58	51	264	243	184	26	25	18	87	123	115	32	30	25

The data in Table 51 reveal distinct patterns of students' representation across different types of upper primary schools in Kerala. Government School (Case 1) exhibited a visibly mixed and inclusive enrolment pattern, with both Hindu (51%) and Muslim (43%) students fairly represented, alongside a minimal Christian presence (1%). The school showed the highest SC/ST representation (approximately 20%) among all cases, reflecting its public and non-selective admission policy. Gender representation was balanced across classes.

Aided School (Case 2), managed by a religious trust, had a predominantly Muslim enrolment (over 80%), with a smaller proportion of Hindu (around 18%) students and a negligible Christian presence. SC/ST students formed around 14% of the enrolment, showing some degree of social inclusivity, though religious diversity was limited. Gender parity was reasonably maintained. Unaided Hindu Management School (Case 3) enrolled only Hindu students, indicating complete religious homogeneity. There was no SC/ST representation and no students from Muslim or

Christian communities. Though gender numbers were balanced, the absence of social and religious diversity was notable. Unaided Muslim Management School (Case 4) admitted only Muslim students, with no representation from Hindu, Christian, or SC/ST communities. Gender representation was balanced, but religious and social diversity were entirely absent.

Unaided Christian Management School (Case 5) reflected a more diverse composition, with Hindu students forming the majority (around 56%), followed by Muslims (32%) and Christians (12%). SC/ST representation was absent, but OBC students were reasonably present.

Government and aided schools demonstrated greater diversity in student composition, particularly in terms of caste and gender, while unaided schools, especially the Hindu and Muslim management schools, tend to reflect the socio-religious profile of their respective management bodies, with limited or no religious and social category diversity. Notably, the unaided Christian management school (Case 5) showed a relatively mixed religious composition, enrolling Hindu, Muslim, and Christian students.

School Policies and Students' Representation. The thematic analysis of semi-structured interviews conducted with the headmasters of the selected five schools offered valuable insights into the institutional philosophy, admission policies, and initiatives towards student diversity and inclusion. The findings are presented below under key sub-themes.

Vision and Mission of the Schools. The heads of the case schools articulated diverse visions and missions for their institutions, closely reflecting their management identities and priorities. The Government School (Case 1) aimed to provide free, inclusive education to all children in the locality, ensuring equal

opportunities for students from diverse socio-cultural and religious backgrounds. The Aided School (Case 2) shared a similar mission of offering accessible, quality education to the local community, actively welcoming all students and promoting equal participation through curricular and co-curricular activities. The Unaided Hindu Management School (Case 3) was established to preserve Hindu cultural traditions. Although officially open to all, the head teacher acknowledged that the emphasis on Hindu values and Sanskrit learning naturally limited enrolment from other communities. The Unaided Muslim Management School (Case 4) prioritised providing morally supported, quality education within an Islamic framework. While admissions were open in principle, the religious environment discouraged enrolment from other backgrounds. The Unaided Christian Management School (Case 5) was founded to serve the multi-religious local community. Its mission focused on providing good education to all children in the locale, nurturing responsible citizens, and fostering inclusivity through its educational practices.

Admission Policies and Preferences. When asked about student admission policies, all five headmasters officially denied having restrictive admission policies. The Government School (Case 1) headmaster affirmed that admissions were open to all students and not any form of preference was practised. The Aided School (Case 2) head teacher shared a similar opinion, stating that the school invited applications from all communities. She added that the school conducted annual admission campaigns to reach a wider section of the local population in the school.

In the case of the Unaided schools, the head teacher from the Hindu Management School (Case 3) explained that while no formal preferences existed, students from other religious backgrounds generally did not apply. He

acknowledged that the school's focus on Hindu cultural practices and Sanskrit language education likely influenced community choices. The Unaided Muslim Management School (Case 4) headmaster indicated that admissions were officially open to all, but in practice, only Muslim students sought admission. The Unaided Christian Management School (Case 5) head teacher asserted that no preferences were made during admissions and the school actively encourage students from all religious and social backgrounds to enrol. He stated that the school was open to welcoming students of any faith and cultures without restrictions.

Initiatives to Support Under-represented and Disadvantaged Students. Regarding efforts to attract students from disadvantaged or under-represented groups such as SC/ST, minorities, or girls, responses varied across the schools. The Government School (Case 1) headmaster mentioned that the institution provided free education to all students and extended additional material support to economically disadvantaged students through the Parent-Teacher Association. The Aided School (Case 2) headmaster described that the school offered free transportation and study materials to economically weaker students and organised annual campaigns to attract students from all socio-economic backgrounds. The Unaided Hindu Management School (Case 3) head teacher pointed out that the admission campaign and related activities were conducted for attracting students and made transportation facilities available for faraway students too. Unaided Muslim Management School (Case 4) headmasters noted fee concessions for weaker students and free education for orphans. The Unaided Christian Management School (Case 5) head teacher highlighted that the school extended fee relaxations to orphans and economically weaker students. She added that proactive efforts were made to personally approach and encourage families from diverse socio-cultural backgrounds in the locale to enrol their children in the school.

The interview data revealed significant variations in school vision, admission practices, and initiatives for student inclusivity, closely reflecting the respective institutional priorities. While government and aided schools maintained inclusive admission policies and organised outreach initiatives, unaided religious management schools largely operated within community-centred frameworks, with limited structured initiatives for promoting diversity. Among the unaided institutions, the Christian management school demonstrated a relatively inclusive vision and proactive strategies for attracting students from diverse backgrounds.

Summary. The analysis of student representation across the five upper primary case schools in Kerala, based on document analysis and semi-structured interviews with heads of the schools, revealed distinct patterns shaped by school type and management priorities. Government and aided schools demonstrated relatively inclusive student compositions, with balanced representation of Hindu, Muslim, and SC/ST students. These schools reflected their open admission policies and community outreach initiatives aimed at ensuring access for all socio-cultural groups. In contrast, unaided Hindu and Muslim management schools exhibited complete religious homogeneity, enrolling only students from their respective communities, with no representation from other religious or caste groups. Though these institutions claimed open admissions, headmasters acknowledged that school practices naturally restricted enrolment. The unaided Christian management school displayed a comparatively mixed religious composition, supported by a stated commitment to inclusivity and proactive efforts to attract students from varied backgrounds. The findings highlight that student representation in schools is not merely shaped by formal admission policies but is closely tied to the institutional vision and specific inclusion initiatives of each school type.

Staff Representation

Staff representation within schools is also another important indicator of inclusivity and plays an important role in shaping the social environment experienced by students. The presence of teachers and non-teaching staff from diverse genders, religious, and social backgrounds provides opportunities for children to engage with a variety of identities, fostering mutual respect and understanding. The diversity patterns of staff representation across different types of upper primary schools in Kerala, based on the composition of teaching and non-teaching staff in the five case schools, are presented in Table 52.

Table 52

Staff Representation in Schools Selected as Cases

Staff Details	Categories	Case 1 Government	Case 2 Aided	Case 3 Unaided Hindu management	Case 4 Unaided Muslim management	Case 5 Unaided Christian management
Teaching staff	Male	03	15	05	06	01
	Female	13	14	18	27	15
	Hindu	07	20	23	16	08
	Muslim	07	07	0	17	0
	Christian	02	02	0	0	05
	Sc/ ST	03	0	0	02	02
	OBC	10	18	14	24	11
	Others	03	11			
	Total	16	29	23	33	16
Non-teaching staff	Male	01	01	04	01	
	Female	01	02	02	03	03
	Hindu	02	03	06	0	03
	Muslim	0	-	0	04	0
	Christian	0	-	0	0	
	Sc/ ST	02	-	0	0	-
	OBC	-	02	3	04	03
	Others	-	01	-		-
	Total	02	03	06	04	03

The analysis of data presented in Table 52 reveals notable differences in religious and social category representation among the teaching and non-teaching staff. Religious representation showed clear patterns linked to the type of school management. The Government School (Case 1) had a reasonably balanced mix of Hindu (7), Muslim (7), and Christian (2) teachers, though its non-teaching staff were entirely Hindu. The majority, the Aided School (Case 2) was predominantly Hindu, with 20 Hindu teachers, seven Muslims, and two Christians, and its non-teaching staff also primarily Hindu. The Unaided Hindu Management School (Case 3) exhibited complete religious homogeneity, with only Hindu teachers and staff. In contrast, the Unaided Muslim Management School (Case 4) had a majority of Muslim teachers (17), alongside 16 Hindus, while its non-teaching staff were entirely Muslim. The Unaided Christian Management School (Case 5) maintained a relatively diverse teaching staff, with eight Hindus and five Christians, though no Muslim teachers were employed, and its non-teaching staff remained exclusively Hindu.

In terms of caste and social category representation, SC/ST teaching staff were present only in the government, unaided Muslim management, and Christian management schools (Cases 1, 4, and 5), while aided and Hindu management schools had none. OBC representation was widespread across all schools, though highest in Case 4 (24 teachers) and Case 2 (18 teachers). Government and aided schools demonstrated comparatively more inclusive caste representation, particularly in non-teaching staff, than unaided management schools.

Government and aided schools exhibited greater staff diversity across religion, caste, and gender, reflecting broader public and semi-public recruitment practices. Unaided schools, particularly under Hindu management, tended to align closely with the religious and social profile of their management bodies, displaying zero religious

and caste diversity. The unaided Muslim management followed a mixed pattern of appointing teachers from different religious back ground. However, gender parity among teaching staff was reasonably favourable across all school types, though diversity among non-teaching staff remained constrained in most cases.

School Perspectives on Staff Representation. Semi-structured interviews conducted with the headmasters of the five case schools provided valuable insights into the recruitment procedures, priorities, and approaches to staff representation within their institutions. The analysis of the interview data revealed the following key themes.

Staff Recruitment Procedures and Authority. The headmaster of the Government School (Case 1) stated that all teaching and non-teaching staff appointments were carried out through official government recruitment processes, leaving no scope for institutional involvement in selection. In the Aided School (Case 2), the headmaster explained that staff were appointed by the school management. However, in recent years, recruitment decisions had shifted towards prioritising merit and teaching performance in interviews, owing to increasing academic competition.

In the case of unaided schools, recruitment was conducted directly by the respective managements through interviews. The headmaster of the Unaided Hindu Management School (Case 3) noted that interview notifications were published on the school's website, and appointments were made based on subject expertise and teaching skill. The Unaided Muslim Management School (Case 4) similarly followed an interview-based process, with the headmaster firmly asserting that no religious or social preference existed in recruitment decisions. He added that teachers from different backgrounds were already working at the school and rhetorically questioned the feasibility of expecting all teachers to belong to the same

community. At the Unaided Christian Management School (Case 5), recruitment was also based on interviews, with most appointments made from the local community. The headmaster noted that new staff appointments were rare due to the long service of existing teachers.

Priority Considerations in Recruitment. Across the five case schools, headmasters consistently stated that teaching skill, subject expertise, and interview performance were the primary criteria guiding recruitment decisions. In the Government School (Case 1), no preferences or priorities were entertained, as appointments were strictly through government selection. The headmaster of the Aided School (Case 2) emphasised that efficient, skilled teachers were preferred, with interview merit being the decisive factor. Similarly, the Unaided Hindu Management School (Case 3) headmaster reported that skilled teachers in each subject were prioritised, and selection was conducted through transparent interview procedures. The headmaster of the Unaided Muslim Management School (Case 4) stated that no special preference was extended to any religious or social group and that selection was based on merit. He also reaffirmed the necessity of appointing qualified teachers from available applicants, regardless of their background. At the Unaided Christian Management School (Case 5), interview performance and teaching competence were the primary considerations, with the headmaster highlighting that most appointments were from the local community due to demographic factors and limited new vacancies.

The interview data revealed that while all school headmasters claimed to follow merit-based, interview-driven recruitment practices, the nature of recruitment procedures varied by school type. Government and aided schools maintained formal, structured recruitment systems, while unaided schools operated independent, management-led processes. Across all cases, headmasters consistently

prioritised teaching competence and subject expertise over religious or social identity. Notably, the headmaster of the Unaided Muslim Management School explicitly rejected the idea of religiously exclusive recruitment and affirmed the presence of teachers from diverse backgrounds within the school.

Summary of Triangulated Findings. The analysis of data collected through document analysis and semi-structured interviews regarding diversity in staff representation across the five case schools revealed clear patterns linked to school type, with important variations in socio-cultural and religious diversity.

Document analysis indicated that government and aided schools maintained relatively inclusive staff compositions. The Government School (Case 1) employed Hindu, Muslim, and Christian teachers with representation from SC/ST and OBC categories, though its non-teaching staff were entirely Hindu. The Aided School (Case 2) showed a Hindu majority with a few Muslim and Christian teachers and limited caste diversity. The Unaided Hindu Management School (Case 3) exhibited complete religious homogeneity, with only Hindu staff across both teaching and non-teaching positions. In contrast, the Unaided Muslim Management School (Case 4) followed a mixed recruitment pattern by employing a substantial number of both Muslim and Hindu teachers, although its non-teaching staff remained exclusively Muslim. The Unaided Christian Management School (Case 5) employed both Hindu and Christian teachers but had no Muslim teachers, with limited caste diversity.

Interview data supported these patterns while clarifying recruitment procedures. Government school appointments were handled through public service selection, ensuring open and merit-based recruitment. The Aided School conducted management-led interviews, now placing emphasis on teaching skill and performance.

In unaided schools, appointments were made through management-conducted interviews. The headmaster of the Hindu Management School (Case 3) acknowledged that applicants came from the Hindu community and that may be due to the school's cultural focus. Notably, the headmaster of the Muslim Management School (Case 4) explicitly denied any religious preference in recruitment, affirming that teachers from various backgrounds were already part of the staff and rejecting the idea of restricting appointments to a single community. He emphasised the practical need to appoint qualified teachers irrespective of religion. The Christian Management School (Case 5) headmaster reported that recruitment was merit-based and locally driven, though staff turnover was minimal, limiting opportunities for wider diversification.

The analysis highlighted that, while schools officially promoted merit-based open recruitment, actual staff representation closely reflected the religious and social identity of their management. Government and aided schools demonstrated broader inclusivity. The Unaided Hindu Management School remained homogeneous, while the Unaided Muslim Management School notably maintained a mixed teaching staff despite mono-religious student enrolment and religious management, illustrating a more inclusive recruitment approach. The Christian Management School maintained moderate diversity among teaching staff but showed limitations in religious inclusion. These findings highlight how institutional philosophy, local recruitment contexts, and management priorities collectively shape staff diversity in schools.

Visual and Material Representation

The physical and symbolic environment of a school conveys powerful messages about its inclusivity, values, and the cultural experiences it offers to students. Visual and material elements such as emblems, portraits, religious symbols, festival decorations, and library resources shape how children encounter and experience diversity within the school campus. This section presents a thematic analysis of the

visual and material representation of socio-cultural and religious diversity across different types of upper primary schools in Kerala, based on systematic field observation. The details of these observations are summarised in Table 53.

Table 53

Diversity in Visual and Material Representation

Aspect Observed	Case 1- Government	Case 2 Aided	Case 3 Unaided Hindu	Case 4 Unaided Muslim	Case 5 Unaided Christian
Emblems and Educational Quotes	Education-related quotes	Education-related quotes and school emblem	School emblem and quotes	Quranic quotes and emblem of the trust	School emblem reflecting Christian identity; no quotes
Displays and Portraits	Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, B. R. Ambedkar	Mahatma Gandhi, B. R. Ambedkar, APJ Abdul Kalam, animal models	Mahatma Gandhi, Swami Vivekananda, M. S. Golwalkar, K. B. Hedgewar	No portraits displayed	Portrait of Jesus Christ only
Religious Artefacts and Symbols	None visible; mosque nearby; girls' prayer room; students in religious dress	None visible; some students in religious dress	Puja thali, lamp, and Hindu-themed wall paintings.	Mosque nearby; boys wearing Muslim caps; Islamic religious teachers present	Church and Christian convent nearby; Christian sisters present
Festival Greetings and Posters	Onam, Christmas, Eid, Vishu, Republic Day, Easter	Vishu, Eid, Ramadan, Christmas, New Year, Republic Day	Onam, Vishu, Sreekrishna Jayanthi, Ramayana celebration, Malayalam New Year	Eid, Nabi Dinam, Muharram, New Year, Republic Day	Christmas, Onam, Eid, student birthday wishes during assembly
Decorations for Events	General, nature-related and government themes	General, programme related designs	Hindu cultural backdrops, artefacts, programme names	General and Islamic-themed decorations; Arabic-toned programme names	Mostly general decorations without religious motifs
Library Resources	General books(stories, novels); well-arranged; portraits of Malayalam	General novels and books; separate reading area	General novels, Sanskrit books, Hindu culture-related texts	Limited resources; mostly general books	General reading materials; no religious texts

The data presented in Table 53 indicate there were clear variations in the visual and material representation of socio-cultural and religious diversity across the five case schools.

Emblems and Educational Quotes. The analysis of emblems and educational quotes revealed considerable variation across school types. The Government School (Case 1) prominently displayed education-related motivational quotes. Similarly, the Aided School (Case 2) maintained secular emblems and education-related displays. In contrast, the Unaided Hindu Management School (Case 3) displayed only the school emblem, with some educational quotes. The Unaided Muslim Management School (Case 4) incorporated Quranic verses alongside its trust's emblem, while the Unaided Christian Management School (Case 5) displayed a school emblem reflecting Christian symbolism, with no quotes visible. These patterns suggest that while government and aided schools project neutral, education-focused values through their emblems and quotes, unaided schools tend to reflect the cultural-religious orientation of their management.

Displays and Portraits. Displays and portraits of national leaders and cultural icons varied markedly among the case schools. The Government School (Case 1) displayed images of Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, and B. R. Ambedkar, reflecting secular national figures. The Aided School (Case 2) included portraits of Gandhi, Ambedkar, and APJ Abdul Kalam, complemented by animal models, offering a balanced cultural representation. The Unaided Hindu Management School (Case 3) displayed portraits of Mahatma Gandhi alongside Hindu religious and ideological figures such as Swami Vivekananda, M. S. Golwalkar, and K. B. Hedgewar. Notably, the Unaided Muslim Management School (Case 4) had no portraits or caricatures displayed within its premises. The Unaided Christian Management School (Case 5) displayed a portrait of Jesus Christ, with no other

secular or religious leaders. These patterns reflect a visible alignment of display practices with school management identity, where government and aided schools present secular icons, and unaided religious schools project religiously aligned visual representations.

Religious Artefacts and Symbols. Observations of religious artefacts and symbols within the school premises revealed contrasting practices. The Government School (Case 1) and Aided School (Case 2) maintained a religiously neutral environment, with no specific artefacts visible, although some students wore religious dress. The Unaided Hindu Management School (Case 3) displayed Puja thalis, lamps, and wall paintings related to Hindu culture. The Unaided Muslim Management School (Case 4), while not displaying artefacts inside, had a mosque nearby, Islamic religious teachers, and many boys wearing traditional Muslim caps. The Unaided Christian Management School (Case 5) was situated near a church and Christian convent, with the presence of Christian sisters, reflecting Christian religious affiliation. This theme highlights that unaided managed schools visibly reflect their faith-based identity through artefacts, proximity to religious institutions, and religious personnel on campus, while government and aided schools maintain religious neutrality.

Festival Greetings and Posters. A review of festival greetings, posters, and public messages revealed differences in the inclusivity of cultural acknowledgements. The Government School (Case 1) displayed greetings for Onam, Eid, Christmas, Vishu, and Republic Day, reflecting religious and national inclusivity. The Aided School (Case 2) acknowledged similar festivals, covering Hindu, Muslim, and Christian occasions alongside national events. The Unaided Hindu Management School (Case 3) displayed only Hindu festival greetings such as Onam, Vishu,

Sreekrishna Jayanthi, Ramayana celebrations, and Malayalam New Year (*Chingam month*) wishes. The Unaided Muslim Management School (Case 4) displayed greetings for Muslim festivals like Eid, Milad-e-Sherif, and Muharram, as well as Republic Day. Interestingly, the Unaided Christian Management School (Case 5) acknowledged Christmas and Eid and Onam and even included student birthday wishes during assemblies. These patterns confirm that while government and aided schools promote diverse festival representations, unaided religious schools tend to prioritise religiously affiliated celebrations, with Case 5 offering comparatively wider inclusivity.

Decorations for Events. The thematic analysis of event decorations revealed a similar trend of alignment with management identity. The Government School (Case 1) and Aided School (Case 2) used general themes and government-prescribed designs for event backdrops and programme sets. The Unaided Hindu Management School (Case 3) employed Hindu cultural decorations, including religious artefacts and Hindu-themed programme names. The Unaided Muslim Management School (Case 4) combined general designs with Islamic symbols, Arabic-titled programmes, and culturally themed decorations. The Unaided Christian Management School (Case 5) used general decorations without overt religious motifs, indicating a more neutral stance in event aesthetics.

Library Resources and Displays. Observations of library resources and display materials further confirmed variations in diversity representation. The Government School (Case 1) maintained a wide range of general reading materials, including storybooks and novels, and displayed pictures of prominent Malayalam writers. The Aided School (Case 2) provided similarly diverse reading materials, with separate reading areas. The Unaided Hindu Management School (Case 3)

stocked Sanskrit texts and Hindu culture-related books alongside general novels, reflecting management identity. The Unaided Muslim Management School (Case 4) had limited library resources, mostly general books with little visible cultural diversity. The Unaided Christian Management School (Case 5) stocked general reading materials without explicit religious texts, maintaining a neutral collection. However, compared to government and aided schools, which included a wider range of resources and cultural displays such as pictures of prominent Malayalam writers, the literary exposure in unaided schools remained comparatively limited in diversity and richness.

The analysis reveals that government and aided schools displayed greater visual and material inclusivity, reflecting secular and pluralistic values through their emblems, portraits, festival posters, and literary resources. In contrast, unaided schools under religious management (particularly Cases 3 and 4) visibly reinforced the cultural and religious identity of their management in both symbolic displays and festival celebrations. The Unaided Christian Management School (Case 5), while maintaining a Christian cultural orientation, demonstrated relatively broader inclusivity through its event posters, greetings, and general library resources. These patterns highlight how school management type influences the visual and material representation of diversity in upper primary schools in Kerala.

Perspectives on Visual and Material Representations in Schools

Semi-structured interviews conducted with the headmasters of the five schools provided valuable insights into the visual and material representations displayed within the school premises. The analysis of the interview data revealed the following key themes. The enquiry focused on emblems, quotes, portraits, symbols, and festival-related decorations, as well as the processes and principles

guiding their selection. The analysis of the interview data revealed three major sub-themes:

Decision-Making Authority and Autonomy. A clear pattern emerged across all cases regarding the decision-making authority on visual and material representations within schools. In the Government School (Case 1), the head teacher reported that all such decisions were made in accordance with government rules, departmental instructions, and the national and state ideologies. The school followed official norms, with little room for independent decision-making at the school level.

In the Aided School (Case 2) and the Private Management Schools (Cases 3, 4, and 5), the head teachers uniformly stated that these decisions rested entirely with the school management authorities. The management determined the nature and content of the visual displays, and head teachers played only an implementing or supervisory role. In these schools, the physical and visual environment was closely aligned with the cultural, ideological, or religious priorities of the respective managements.

Philosophical and Ideological Basis of Visual Representations. The data also highlighted the underlying principles behind the selection of visual and material representations. In the Government and Aided schools (Cases 1 and 2), the head teachers explained that visual displays, including portraits, quotes, and symbols, were selected based on national identity, Indian cultural values, and state educational policies. These typically included motivational quotes, images of national leaders, and symbols of national and cultural heritage.

The Private Management Schools (Cases 3, 4, and 5) displayed visuals and symbols reflecting the management's religious and cultural philosophy. The Private

Hindu Management School (Case 3) and Private Muslim Management School (Case 4) incorporated visuals symbolizing Indian cultural traditions and Islamic values, respectively. In the Private Christian Management School (Case 5), the head teacher mentioned that Christian religious symbols, particularly the image of Jesus Christ, were prominently displayed as the spiritual and moral face of the institution.

Community Involvement and Feedback Patterns. A striking observation from all five head teacher interviews was the absence of parental, student, or staff feedback or requests regarding the school's visual and material representations. All head teachers confirmed that no concerns, suggestions, or objections had ever been raised by the school community in this regard. Decisions on these matters were handled internally without formal consultation with parents or the wider community.

The analysis revealed a centralized, top-down approach to visual and material representations in schools. While Government and Aided schools strictly adhered to official norms rooted in national and cultural ideologies, Private Management Schools designed their school environment to reflect their religious and cultural identities, as determined by their respective managements. Across all schools, there was a notable absence of community participation or feedback in deciding what symbols and representations were displayed within the school premises, reflecting a managerial and authority-driven visual representational culture.

Summary. The triangulated analysis of both observation and interview data revealed that visual and material representations in the five case schools were closely tied to the type of school management. In all schools, decision-making regarding these representations was authority-driven, with government and aided schools (Cases 1 and 2) adhering to government rules, departmental instructions, and national ideologies, while private management schools (Cases 3, 4, and 5)

followed the decisions of their respective management authorities. Both data sources confirmed that no participatory decision-making involving teachers, students, or parents was present in any of the schools.

In terms of representational content, government and aided schools consistently reflected secular, national, and educational values through portraits of national leaders, motivational quotes, and inclusive festival greetings. In contrast, the unaided Hindu and Muslim management schools prominently reinforced their respective religious and cultural identities through religious artefacts, faith-specific festival displays, and programme decorations aligned with their traditions. The Christian Management School projected its religious identity while displaying comparatively broader inclusivity by acknowledging multiple festivals and avoiding visible religious motifs in event decorations.

A clear distinction was noted in the presence of religious artefacts and symbols within the school premises. Government and aided schools maintained visibly secular environments, while private religious management schools incorporated artefacts, religious dress, proximity to religious institutions, and the presence of religious personnel in ways that reflected their religious affiliations. Library resources followed a similar pattern, with government and aided schools offering diverse, secular reading collections, while Hindu and Muslim management schools included texts reflective of their religious and cultural traditions. The Christian Management School maintained a general, neutral library collection without overtly religious texts.

Across all five cases, both field observations and interview data consistently confirmed the absence of community involvement or feedback mechanisms in decisions about visual and material displays. These findings indicate that school

governance structures play a decisive role in shaping the symbolic and visual environment of upper primary schools in Kerala, ultimately determining how socio-cultural and religious diversity is visually represented within educational spaces.

Theme II- Diversity in School Practices

School practices play a vital role in shaping children's everyday experiences of diversity, inclusion, and social interaction. While curriculum and formal programmes contribute to promoting values of equality and respect, it is often through daily routines and informal practices that students learn to engage with differences in religion, culture, caste, and gender (Banks, 2015). Practices such as morning prayer, assemblies, classroom seating, and peer interactions in public spaces subtly communicate institutional values and expectations about diversity and coexistence (Sriprakash, 2012). These routine activities influence how students perceive one another, form friendships, and develop attitudes towards those from different backgrounds. In the Indian school context, where social divisions based on caste and religion are historically rooted, understanding how school practices include or exclude certain groups becomes particularly significant (Nambissan, 2010).

Recognising the importance of these daily practices in shaping the socio-cultural environment of schools, this study examined the management and reflection of diversity in upper primary schools through six key sub-themes. These sub-themes were carefully identified based on literature review, field observations, and expert consultation as essential indicators of how diversity is addressed within routine school activities. They are as follows:

- Morning Prayer
- School Assembly
- Religious Accommodation

- Classroom Seating Arrangements
- Value Education and Moral Lessons

The following sections present a detailed analysis of each of these sub-themes, drawing on data collected through observations, semi-structured interviews, and Focus Group Discussions conducted across government, aided, and unaided schools in Kerala.

Morning Prayer

Morning prayer is one of the most regular, visible, and shared practices in schools where students gather together daily before classes begin. It offers an important opportunity for schools to promote inclusivity, secular values, and respect for religious diversity. This section examines how morning prayer is conducted in the selected upper primary schools, focusing on its content, participation patterns, and inclusivity practices. The data is presented in Table 54.

Table 54

Nature of Morning Prayer and Participation Pattern in Case Schools

Sl. No.	Case details	Nature of the prayer	Participation pattern
1	Case 1 (Government)	Secular, neutral, not addressing any religion or culture; focused on social values	Different student groups are assigned for different days
2	Case 2- (Aided)	Multiple prayers on different days in multiple languages; neutral with occasional religious references	Fixed student groups
3	Case 3 – Unaided Hindu management	Single prayer every day based on Hindu religious themes	Multiple student teams participate
4	Case 4- Unaided Muslim management	Multiple prayers and in multiple languages, all Islamic-themed	Multiple student teams participate
5	Case 5- unaided Christian	Single daily prayer in English with Christian religious themes	Fixed school prayer team

The data presented in Table 54 reveal distinct patterns in the nature of morning prayers and demonstrates how the religious or secular orientation of school

management directly influences both the content of morning prayers and the engagement of students in these daily rituals.

In the Government School (Case 1), the morning prayer maintained a secular and neutral character, consciously avoiding religious references. The participation pattern was inclusive, with different student groups assigned the responsibility for leading the prayer on different days. This rotational approach promotes shared opportunity among students, reflecting the school's commitment to maintaining a socially cohesive environment.

The Aided School (Case 2) adopted a mixed approach, with prayers conducted in multiple languages on different days. While largely neutral in content, occasional religious references were observed. The participation pattern in this case was organised through fixed student groups, offering limited rotation and thereby potentially restricting broader leadership opportunities for students.

The Unaided Hindu Management School (Case 3) conducted a single daily prayer strictly based on Hindu religious themes. Although multiple student teams participated in leading the prayer, the thematic content remained religiously exclusive, closely reflecting the religious identity and ethos of the school management.

A similar pattern was evident in the Unaided Muslim Management school (Case 4), where multiple prayers were conducted in different languages, but they centred around Islamic themes. Participation was broader, involving multiple student groups, indicating both religious homogeneity within the school community and active student involvement in prayer practices.

The Unaided Christian Management school (Case 5) followed a uniform daily prayer in English, consistently based on Christian religious themes. The participation structure was fixed, with a designated school prayer team

responsible for conducting the session, limiting opportunities for wider student involvement.

The analysis of field observations on morning prayer practices has revealed clear patterns in both the nature of the prayers conducted and the participation structures adopted by the case schools. These patterns appear closely connected to the type and religious orientation of the school management, with government and aided schools reflecting more neutral and inclusive practices, and unaided religious management schools aligning their practices with their respective faith traditions.

While these findings offer valuable insights into institutional approaches to diversity within daily routines, it is important to understand how these practices are perceived by students and teachers themselves. To develop a deeper, more contextualised understanding of the implications of morning prayer practices on students' experiences of inclusion, participation, and diversity management within the school environment, the subsequent sections analyse data from semi-structured interviews with teachers and Focus Group Discussions with students.

School Assembly

The school assembly is a vital daily routine where institutional values, cultural messages, and communal unity are reinforced. An analysis across the five case schools highlights clear variations in both the structure of the assembly and the extent to which diversity is reflected and accommodated. The result is presented in Table 55.

Table 55

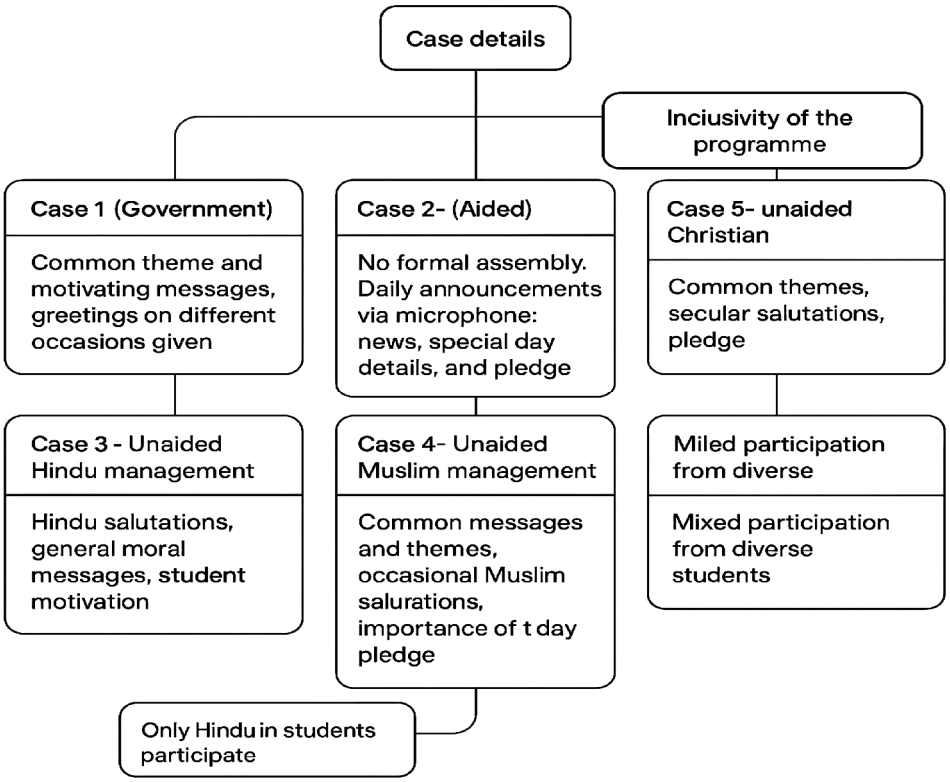
Nature of School Assembly and Participation Pattern in Case Schools

Sl. No.	Case Details	Inclusivity of the Programme	Student Representation
1	Case 1 (Government)	Common theme and motivating messages, greetings on different occasions given	Students from all communities occasionally participated
2	Case 2- (Aided)	No formal assembly. Daily announcements via microphone: news, special day details, and pledge	No fixed group; participation through rotation and class-based selection- participation of different communities
3	Case 3 – Unaided Hindu Management	Hindu salutations, general moral messages, and student motivation.	Only Hindu students participate.
4	Case 4 - Unaided Muslim Management	Common messages and themes, occasional Muslim salutations, importance of the day, and pledge.	Only Muslim students participate.
5	Case 5- Unaided Christian Management	Common themes, secular salutations, and pledge.	Mixed participation from diverse students.

Table 55 presents a comparative overview of the inclusivity of school assembly programmes and the nature of student representation across different types of schools. It highlights variations in assembly practices, ranging from common and secular themes in government and unaided Christian management schools to religiously specific practices in unaided Hindu and Muslim management schools. The data also indicates differences in student participation, with some schools ensuring mixed representation while others restrict participation to students of a particular community. This structured comparison aids in identifying patterns of inclusivity and diversity accommodation within the school practices studied. The pattern is presented in Figure 5.

Figure 5

Concept Map of Nature and Pattern of School Assembly in Selected Cases



The data shows that Government schools attempt to maintain an inclusive tone by integrating motivational messages and greetings related to different occasions. Importantly, students from various backgrounds participate in the conduct of the assembly, contributing to a pluralistic and participatory environment. The use of common themes rather than religiously specific content further adds to the inclusive character.

In aided schools, the format is adapted; instead of a conventional assembly, announcements through a microphone system serve a similar purpose. Despite this structural difference, the practice remains inclusive, as students are selected through rotation, class-based achievements, or competitions. Daily readings include news updates and descriptions of significant days, reflecting a commitment to broad awareness and representation of multiple cultures.

Unaided Hindu and Muslim management schools demonstrate mixed levels of inclusivity. While their assemblies often include common humanistic messages, the religious salutation specific to the respective management's faith is integrated. Participation is generally limited to students from the same religious community, which narrows the scope for broader representation and may unintentionally reinforce monocultural patterns in practice.

In contrast, the unaided Christian management school maintained common themes and salutations during the assembly, ensuring it does not alienate students from other faiths. Importantly, students from diverse religious and socio-cultural backgrounds are visibly included, indicating a commitment to fostering an environment of shared values and inclusive practice.

The data reveal that school type and management ideology influence the degree of religious and cultural accommodation in assembly practices. Government and Christian unaided schools demonstrate clear efforts to promote inclusivity, while religious unaided schools tend to prioritize intra-community participation under generally inclusive themes.

Teachers' Perception of Morning Prayer and Assembly

The data obtained through semi-structured interviews with teachers across the five case schools revealed notable variations in the organisation, inclusivity, and student participation mechanisms in morning prayer and assembly practices. A thematic analysis of these interview responses identified four key themes: (1) Organisation and Structure of Assembly Practices, (2) Inclusivity in Assembly Content and Practices, (3) Student Participation Mechanisms, and (4) Role of Management and Teachers in Shaping Assembly Practices.

Organisation and Structure of Assembly Practices. Teachers' accounts demonstrated varied approaches to structuring morning assemblies across the schools: Case 1 (Government School) and Case 2 (Aided School) reported flexible models adapted to logistical limitations. Regular common prayers were conducted via the school's Public address System, while large gatherings were organised only on significant occasions. Responsibilities for assembly activities were distributed collectively in staff meetings at the beginning of the academic year, ensuring joint planning and coordination. Case 3 (Unaided Hindu Management School) and Case 4 (Unaided Muslim Management School) followed traditional, management-directed assembly structures. The school authorities predetermined the prayers and routines, and teachers implemented these without scope for adaptation. Case 5 (Unaided Christian Management School) exhibited a structured and punctual routine, supervised directly by the principal. Regular assemblies were conducted with fixed components, including prayers, secular messages, and moral teachings.

Government, aided, and Unaided Christian Management schools reflected institutional flexibility and shared decision-making, whereas unaided Hindu and Muslim schools adhered to management-fixed, traditional structures.

Inclusivity in Assembly Content and Practices. Teachers' narratives revealed variations in the inclusivity of assembly content. In Case 1 and Case 2, assemblies were consciously designed to deliver secular messages promoting nationalism, moral values, and mutual respect. Teachers made efforts to avoid religious bias and foster an inclusive environment. Case 5 (Christian Management School) maintained a secular approach in assembly content, complemented by moral teachings and public recognition of student achievements. Case 3 (Hindu Management School) and Case 4 (Muslim Management School) predominantly reinforced community-specific religious practices. In Case 3, while moral and

motivational messages were delivered, they were rooted in traditional Hindu ethos. Case 4 incorporated Muslim greetings and religious prayers without structured efforts to include diverse cultural or religious perspectives.

Government, aided, and Unaided Christian management schools prioritised inclusive, secular assembly content, while Unaided Hindu and Muslim management schools-maintained mono-religious assembly practices.

Mechanisms for Assigning Assembly Responsibilities for Students. Mechanisms for assigning assembly responsibilities for students varied across different case schools. Cases 1, 2, and 5 (Government, Aided and Unaided Christian management schools) adopted a merit-cum-rotation approach, selecting students based on their performance in the classroom and extracurricular activities. Teachers ensured fair representation of students from different socio-cultural backgrounds. In Case 3 and Case 4, student participation was controlled by teachers or management, with limited structured rotation or inclusivity strategies. While Case 4 attempted an informal rotation of duties, it lacked a systematic mechanism to ensure equal opportunities for all students.

Government, aided, and Christian schools demonstrated inclusive, performance-based participation systems, while Hindu and Muslim management schools exhibited selective, less inclusive practices.

Role of Management and Teachers in Shaping Assembly Practices. The interviews reveal differences in the degree of teacher engagement and management control in shaping assembly practices. In Cases 1, 2, and 5, teachers actively participated in the planning, organisation, and content creation for assemblies. Institutional frameworks encouraged teacher involvement and fostered inclusive practices. Cases 3 and 4 followed top-down decision-making processes, where

school authorities predetermined assembly practices and prayers, limiting teachers' roles to implementation. This restricted the scope for introducing inclusive or contextually adapted practices.

Higher teacher agency and collaborative leadership were observed in government, aided, and Christian management schools, while unaided Hindu and Muslim schools remained management-driven.

Summary. The thematic analysis of teachers' perceptions revealed significant institutional differences in the organisation and inclusivity of morning prayer and assembly practices. Government, aided, and unaided Christian management schools demonstrated conscious efforts to foster inclusivity, student participation, and secular values within their logistical constraints. In contrast, unaided Hindu and Muslim management schools predominantly upheld mono-religious practices with limited space for diversity engagement

Students' Perception of Morning Prayer and Assembly

An analysis of data collected through Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) conducted with students in upper primary schools explored students' perceptions of morning prayer and assembly practices in their schools. The analysis highlights how these daily routines reflect or neglect socio-cultural and religious diversity in different school settings.

The analysis of student FGDs revealed five key themes regarding their perceptions of morning prayer and assembly practices in their respective schools.

Lack of Variety in Morning Prayers. Students from several cases expressed dissatisfaction with the repetitive and unchanging nature of school prayers. In the Government School (Case 1), a student commented,

"Prayer is common every day, we just stand as a rotten for it."

Another student remarked,

"No variety, old and not interesting."

Similar sentiments were expressed in the Unaided Christian School, where one student stated,

"*Every day same prayer."*

Interpretation. The repetition and lack of diverse content in morning prayers led to student disengagement. The practice failed to reflect the varied religious and cultural backgrounds of students, missing an opportunity to foster inclusivity and cultural awareness.

Limited Student Participation and Teacher-Driven Selection. Across cases, it was evident that student participation in prayer and assembly activities was largely controlled by teachers. In the Aided School (Case 2), a student noted,

"*Teachers select prayer team."*

This was echoed in the Unaided Hindu Management School (Case 3) where a student said,

"*Teachers select students for prayer."*

In the Unaided Muslim Management School (Case 4), a fixed team structure further restricted opportunities for broader student involvement, as shared by a participant:

"*Fixed teams are there for prayer and teachers don't mind students like us."*

Such practices reflect a lack of inclusive approaches where opportunities for equal and voluntary participation from students of different religious and cultural

backgrounds are not adequately promoted. This system limits diverse representation and undermines the principles of equitable participation.

Use of Public Address System Instead of Assembly Gathering. Several schools, particularly those with large student populations or space constraints, conducted assemblies through public address systems rather than organizing common gatherings. In the Aided School, a student explained,

> *"Assembly is not conducted in ground… every day morning a message, pledge, and other are taken using public sound system*."

Similarly, in the Unaided Muslim School, students mentioned,

> *"Common assembly is rare and messages are shared in public system every day morning."*

While practical, this arrangement limits opportunities for collective school-wide engagement and reduces the potential for fostering unity and shared experiences of diversity.

Inclusion of Special Messages and Moral Teachings. In certain cases, schools incorporated moral lessons and religious teachings as part of the morning assembly routine. In the Unaided Muslim School, a student shared,

> *"We recite some days Quranic verses as prayer. Our moral teachers are managing many programmes here."*

In the Unaided Christian School, a student remarked,

> *"Teachers give common messages related to human respect, parental respect in assemblies.*

These practices demonstrate conscious efforts towards value education and moral sensitisation. However, the focus often remained within specific religious or moral frameworks rather than adopting an inclusive, multicultural approach.

Assembly as a Break from Routine. In the Government School (Case 1), some students expressed a positive perception of assemblies as an opportunity to spend time away from classroom activities. One student stated,

> *"Assembly is good because we can spend one or two periods outside."*

One student opined that

> *"Assembly days are days for relaxation and it is a programme of comedy and many of us not hearing what teachers say"*

This indicates that students may value assemblies more as a relief from academic routines than as meaningful platforms for shared learning and cultural exchange. This perception also suggests a missed opportunity for schools to make assemblies more engaging, participatory, and diversity-focused.

The findings from student FGDs reveal that morning prayer and assembly practices in most schools lack systematic efforts to reflect socio-cultural and religious diversity. Participation is often restricted by teacher selection or fixed teams, and assemblies rarely offer opportunities for students from diverse backgrounds to share their cultural and religious identities. While some moral and value-based messages are included, these tend to remain within narrow cultural frames. The study suggests that schools could improve inclusivity by rotating assembly leadership among students from different communities, integrating interfaith and multicultural content, and creating space for voluntary and meaningful student participation in assembly programmes.

Interpretation. The analysis of morning prayer and school assembly practices, drawn from field observations, semi-structured teacher interviews, and student Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), reveals notable patterns and disparities in how diversity and inclusivity are addressed across different school types. Field observations indicated that while government and aided schools attempted to maintain secular or neutral prayer content, unaided religious management schools predominantly followed prayers rooted in their respective religious traditions. Teachers in government and unaided Christian schools reported deliberate efforts to include moral and motivational messages while ensuring participatory opportunities through student rotations. In contrast, teachers in unaided Hindu and Muslim management schools acknowledged following long-standing religious routines, with limited efforts to integrate broader socio-cultural perspectives.

Students' accounts, however, exposed gaps between institutional practices and student experiences. Many students expressed dissatisfaction with the repetitive and unvaried nature of morning prayers, perceiving them as monotonous and disconnected from the cultural diversity of the school community. Participation in assemblies and prayer activities was largely teacher-driven across most schools, with fixed teams and selective representation restricting opportunities for students from diverse backgrounds to actively engage. This perception was particularly strong in religiously managed unaided schools, where students noted that leadership in prayer and assembly activities was largely confined to members of the management's religious community.

Furthermore, while teachers justified the use of public address systems for daily assemblies due to space and logistical constraints, students consistently reported that this practice diminished opportunities for communal engagement, reducing assemblies to a passive and perfunctory exercise. Moral teachings and value-based

messages were regularly incorporated, but these often reflected narrow religious or nationalistic frameworks rather than embracing a multicultural or inclusive approach. Interestingly, students valued assemblies more as a diversion from academic routines than as meaningful platforms for cultural learning or moral reflection.

Summary. The triangulated findings reveal a consistent gap between institutional intentions and students' lived experiences in the management of morning prayer and assembly practices. While certain schools, particularly government and unaided Christian management institutions, demonstrate visible efforts toward inclusive practices, these often remain superficial, repetitive, and inadequately engaging from the students' perspective. In contrast, unaided religiously managed schools predominantly reinforce mono-cultural patterns, conducting prayers and assemblies that reflect the management's religious identity while limiting students' exposure to diverse cultural and religious experiences. Both teacher-driven participation mechanisms and logistical constraints such as reliance on public address systems further restrict opportunities for meaningful student involvement and collective school-wide interaction.

Religious Accommodation

Based on the qualitative data obtained through field observations and investigator notes, three major themes were identified in relation to religious accommodation practices in upper primary schools in Kerala. These themes represent key areas through which schools engage with or regulate religious diversity within their institutional environment. The three major themes are:

- Dress and Attire Accommodation
- Provision for Prayer
- Adjustment for Religious Needs

Table 56 describes the variations in practice across the five case schools for each of these themes.

Table 56

Summary of Religious Accommodation Practices Across Themes and Case

Sl. No.	Case details	Dress & Attire Accommodation	Provision for Prayer	Adjustment for Religious Need
1.	Case 1 (Government)	Religious symbols observed (e.g., headscarves, bangles)	No designated space; students permitted to use open areas informally	Flexible for Religious Needs
2.	Case 2- (Aided)	Religious attire like hijabs, crosses, forehead marks allowed	Occasional use of empty classrooms	Flexible for religious needs
3.	Case 3 – Unaided Hindu management	Only Hindu religious symbols are observed. No other attire seen among students and teachers	Hindu rituals (lamp lighting) in assembly; no provision for others	Flexible for Hindu celebrations and rituals
4.	Case4- Unaided Muslim management	Muslim cap and hijab compulsory for all students	Mosque and separate prayer hall for girls'	Flexible schedule and leave patterns for Muslim celebrations
5.	Case 5- unaided Christian	Inclusive of religious attire (hijab, crosses, forehead marks)	Church, mosque nearby, and a girls' room for prayer r	Flexible adjustments for students of all religious communities

Dress and Attire Accommodation. The regulation and accommodation of religious dress within schools varied according to management type. In Case 1 (Government School), minor religious symbols such as headscarves, bangles, and religious lockets were permitted within the framework of a fixed uniform, reflecting a moderately inclusive environment. Case 2 (Aided School) also allowed religious attire including hijabs, crosses, and forehead marks, though practices were informal and not codified in policy. In contrast, Case 3 (Unaided Hindu Management School) permitted only Hindu cultural symbols. The school exclusively admitted Hindu students, and no provision was made for the religious attire of students from other

faiths. Case 4 (Unaided Muslim Management School) followed a strict religious dress code, mandating the Muslim cap and hijab for all students, regardless of individual faith background, reflecting a mono-religious policy. Case 5 (Unaided Christian Management School) adopted an inclusive approach, permitting hijabs for Muslim students, crosses for Christians, and forehead marks for Hindus, demonstrating respect for religious diversity within a standard uniform framework.

Provision for Prayer. Schools differed in the availability of dedicated prayer facilities and the flexibility of their religious practices. Case 1 (Government School) did not have a formal prayer space but allowed students to use open areas informally for religious observances. Case 2 (Aided School) likewise lacked designated facilities but occasionally provided empty classrooms for students to pray during special religious occasions. Case 3 (Unaided Hindu Management School) institutionalised Hindu rituals, such as lamp lighting and devotional prayers during morning assembly, but made no provisions for students from other religions. In contrast, Case 4 (Unaided Muslim Management School) maintained comprehensive prayer facilities, including an on-campus mosque and a separate prayer hall for girls, highlighting structured mono-religious provision. Case 5 (Unaided Christian Management School) demonstrated religious inclusivity by offering a church on campus, a mosque nearby, and a separate prayer room for girls, accommodating religious diversity within the school environment.

Adjustment for Religious Needs. Flexibility in adjusting school routines for students observing religious fasting or other faith-based practices also varied. Case 1 (Government School) demonstrated moderate flexibility by excusing fasting students from physical education and adjusting lunch breaks as needed. Case 2 (Aided School) made similar informal adjustments during religious observances such as Ramadan and

other fasting days, though without formal guidelines. Case 3 (Unaided Hindu Management School) made no accommodations for fasting students, given its exclusively Hindu student population and structured Hindu religious practices. Case 4 (Unaided Muslim Management School) provided structured allowances during Ramadan, such as schedule adjustments and exemptions from strenuous activities for fasting students. Case 5 (Unaided Christian Management School) adopted an inclusive policy, offering flexible adjustments for fasting students from all religious backgrounds, including rescheduled activities, modified lunch timings, and physical activity exemptions.

Summary. The thematic analysis revealed significant differences in religious accommodation practices across the five case schools, closely linked to their management types. Government and aided schools demonstrated moderately inclusive and situationally flexible practices, whereas unaided Christian management schools adopted structured and deliberate accommodations for religious diversity. In contrast, unaided Hindu and Muslim management schools primarily catered to mono-religious practices, with institutional provisions tailored exclusively to their respective faith traditions. The analysis also highlights that religious accommodation in upper primary schools extends beyond institutional policy into daily practices such as dress, prayer, and fasting, shaping students' lived experiences of inclusion or exclusion within the school environment. These patterns underscore the critical influence of management type, institutional orientation, and community composition in determining the nature and extent of religious accommodation within Kerala's schooling context.

Teachers' Perception of Religious Accommodation. In order to gain deeper insights into how schools address students' religious needs, including Friday prayers, fasting during Ramzan, and religious attire, semi-structured interviews were

conducted with teachers from five upper primary schools in Kerala. The teachers were asked to describe their institutional practices, recall specific situations that required religious accommodations, and reflect on how these were managed. The analysis of the responses revealed three major sub-themes:

- Availability of Facilities for Religious Practices
- Institutional Sensitivity and Problem Reporting
- Religious Homogeneity and Selective Provisioning

Availability of Facilities for Religious Practices. The majority of teachers across schools acknowledged the presence of religious accommodation facilities either within the school campus or in nearby locations. In Case 1 (Government School) and Case 2 (Aided School), teachers reported that students from diverse religious backgrounds attended the school and that spaces for prayer were either made available on school grounds or accessible in the vicinity. One teacher remarked:

"Facilities are nearby and a separate space for girls is available in school."

Teachers from Case 5 (Unaided Christian Management School) described similar provisions, adding that extra time was allotted on Fridays for Muslim students to attend prayers. However, they also highlighted the need for further improvements, particularly in enhancing prayer facilities for Muslim girls.

"Facilities for prayer are available and extra time is allotted on Fridays. No issues reported, but we need to improve facilities for Muslim girls to pray."

Institutional Sensitivity and Problem Reporting. A recurring observation among teachers was the absence of religious conflicts or issues within their schools. Teachers in Case 1 (Government School), Case 2 (Aided School), and Case 5

(Unaided Christian Management School) stated that no incidents requiring special religious arrangements had been reported. They attributed this to a conscious awareness maintained by school management and Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs) to anticipate and address such needs proactively. As one teacher from an aided school explained:

> *"Many students from religious backgrounds with their specific dress code are attending the school. No issues so far, and our PTAs and management are very careful in such facilities."*

This proactive approach towards inclusivity was consistently observed in Christian management schools as well, where teachers highlighted the importance of equitable treatment for students of all religious backgrounds.

Religious Homogeneity and Selective Provisioning. In schools with predominantly mono-religious student populations, accommodations were primarily aligned with the needs of the dominant religious group. In Case 3 (Unaided Hindu Management School), teachers indicated that the school predominantly served Hindu students and integrated Hindu rituals such as daily lamp lighting. No specific provisions were made for other religious groups, although no issues had been reported. A teacher noted:

> *"Here, most students are Hindus. Facilities for their prayers and rituals are here. No issues so far reported."*

Similarly, in Case 4 (Unaided Muslim Management School), teachers reported that most of the students belonged to the Muslim community, and the institution provided appropriate facilities such as a mosque and prayer halls. Teachers from this case also indicated that no discrimination had been experienced by staff members from other religious backgrounds.

> *"Students are from the Muslim community, and other students are not attending this school. In my experience, we have many teachers from other communities and such discrimination, so far, we have not experienced."* (A teacher from Case 4)

The analysis of teachers' perceptions revealed that most upper primary schools in the study demonstrated sensitivity towards students' religious practices, particularly in schools with mixed religious populations. Government, aided, and unaided Christian management schools generally provided reasonable facilities for prayer, admitted students' religious identities, and made informal adjustments for fasting and other religious needs. In schools with predominantly mono-religious student populations, such as Hindu and Muslim management schools, religious accommodations were primarily designed to serve the dominant faith community, with little provision for religious diversity. Importantly, teachers across all cases consistently reported the absence of religious conflicts or grievances, attributing this to proactive oversight by school management and PTAs. These findings reflect varied patterns of religious accommodation shaped by school type and community composition, and indicate areas where more inclusive practices - such as additional prayer facilities for Muslim girls - could further strengthen institutional inclusivity.

Students' Experiences of Religious Accommodation. To complement the insights gathered from observations and teacher interviews, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were conducted with students across the five case schools. The discussions aimed to capture students' experiences regarding religious accommodation in areas such as prayer, fasting, religious dress, and related school practices. The analysis of these discussions identified three major sub themes:

- Access to Prayer Facilities
- Accommodation of Religious Dress and Ritual Practices
- Support from Teachers and School Management

Access to Prayer Facilities. Across the cases, students' accounts confirmed the varied availability and nature of prayer spaces in their schools. In Case 1 (Government School), students reported that although there was no formal prayer hall, they used nearby mosques or classrooms for prayer, particularly for Muslim girls. Students expressed that they did not face any restrictions in doing so. In Case 2 (Aided School), students similarly reported using nearby religious facilities and some classrooms for prayer when required. One student noted:

"Mosque is nearby. We use some classrooms for prayer-especially for girls."

In Case 3 (Unaided Hindu Management School), students confirmed that religious practices and rituals were Hindu culture related and Students from other communities were not enrolled. In Case 4 (Unaided Muslim Management School), students described well-established facilities for prayer, including a mosque on campus and a separate prayer room for girls. It was noted that caps and scarves were compulsory for all students and no students from other religious backgrounds were admitted.

Case 5 (Unaided Christian Management School) reflected relatively inclusive practices, with students from multiple religious backgrounds studying together. Muslim students reported limited access to prayer spaces and often performed prayers inside classrooms. Christian facilities such as a church existed on campus, but students stated that daily prayers were not conducted for all.

"Prayer room facility is limited, so we are performing in the classroom." (Muslim girl, Case 5)

Accommodation of Religious Dress and Ritual Practices. Students across the cases consistently noted that, apart from a compulsory uniform, schools did not object to religious attire like headscarves, caps, or other symbols. In Case 1 and Case 2, Muslim students mentioned wearing scarves and caps freely. One student remarked:

> *"No problems in dressing and others - we are allowed to wear scarf, cap, and others."*

In Case 3, students, all belonging to the Hindu faith, participated in Hindu rituals, including morning assemblies with devotional practices, and indicated no restrictions or religious tensions. Case 4 enforced religious attire norms aligned with Islamic traditions, requiring all students to wear caps and scarves, as confirmed by student participants. Case 5 demonstrated flexibility in permitting religious attire and symbols alongside the prescribed uniform. Students appreciated this acceptance and noted supportive attitudes from teachers and peers.

Support from Teachers and School Management. Students' perceptions of institutional support largely mirrored the patterns reported by teachers. Across Cases 1, 2, and 5 (Government, Aided and Christian management schools) students stated that teachers were cooperative and supportive in addressing religious practices such as fasting, prayer, and attire. A student in Case 5 shared:

> "*Teachers support us in all practices. No issues faced so far."*

Students in Cases 3 and 4, (unaided Hindu and Christian management schools) not shared any discrimination, though accommodations were naturally focused on the majority religious group.

The Focus Group Discussions with students corroborated the patterns identified through observations and teacher interviews, while adding experiential

details. Students in government, aided, and Christian management schools generally reported inclusive and tolerant environments, with adequate freedom to observe religious practices and wear religious attire. However, infrastructural limitations were noted, particularly concerning prayer spaces for Muslim girls. In religiously homogeneous schools, religious accommodations exclusively catered to the dominant faith group, and students reported no conflict due to the absence of religious diversity. Importantly, across all cases, students indicated positive relationships with teachers and school authorities in matters of religious accommodation, confirming institutional sensitivity in diverse contexts.

Data Triangulation. The triangulated analysis of religious accommodation practices in upper primary schools in Kerala, based on data from field observations, teacher interviews, and student Focus Group Discussions, revealed significant patterns and clear variations shaped by the type of school management and religious composition of the student body. Three general themes (Dress and Attire Accommodation, Provision for Prayer, and Adjustment for Religious Needs) emerged consistently across all data sources, enabling a comprehensive comparison and synthesis of practices within the case schools.

Dress and Symbols. Across the cases, the findings on accommodation of Dress and symbols demonstrated that government and aided schools adopted moderately inclusive approaches, permitting minor religious symbols such as headscarves, crosses, bangles, and forehead marks within the boundaries of a fixed uniform. Both teachers and students confirmed this tolerance, reporting no instances of restrictions or conflicts. Observational data corroborated these accounts, noting the visible presence of religious attire without institutional objections. In contrast, unaided Hindu and Muslim management schools maintained strict dress codes aligned with their respective religious traditions. In the Hindu management school,

only Hindu cultural symbols were permitted, while the Muslim management school mandated the hijab and cap for all students and the unaided Christian management school displayed comparatively the high inclusivity among unaided management schools.

Provision for Prayer. The theme of Provision for Prayer similarly revealed significant diversity in institutional arrangements. Government and aided schools, while lacking formal prayer spaces, allowed students to utilise nearby mosques or classrooms for religious observances. Teachers reported their support and students confirmed that no restrictions were faced when seeking prayer spaces. In the unaided Hindu management school, religious accommodation was mono-religious, with daily Hindu rituals institutionalised during assemblies and no provisions for other religious groups. Conversely, the Muslim management school offered structured, faith-specific facilities, including an on-campus mosque and a separate prayer room for girls, a pattern unanimously confirmed through observation, interviews, and student accounts. The Christian management school maintained relatively inclusive provisions, offering a church on campus, a mosque nearby, and a designated prayer room for girls, though students pointed out infrastructural limitations for minority religious groups, particularly Muslim girls.

Addressing Students' Religious Needs. Government, aided, and unaided Christian management schools demonstrated flexible, situationally responsive practices for addressing students' religious needs, such as excusing fasting students from physical education and adjusting lunch breaks during religious observances. Both teachers and students described these arrangements as supportive and free from conflict, a finding substantiated through observational data. The unaided Hindu management school, catering exclusively to Hindu students, made no such adjustments beyond Hindu festivals and rituals, while the unaided Muslim

management school offered structured allowances during Ramadan, including adjusted schedules and activity exemptions for fasting students. Notably, both mono-religious schools reported no issues or religious tensions, a reflection of the homogeneity of their student populations.

This triangulated theme-wise comparative analysis highlights that religious accommodation in Kerala's Upper Primary schools is closely tied to school management type and religious composition. Government and aided schools offered situational flexibility without formal policies, while Christian management schools demonstrated structured, inclusive practices. In contrast, unaided Hindu and Muslim management schools maintained mono-religious accommodation frameworks, with no provision or need for inter-religious accommodations. These findings validate the critical role of management ethos and community demographics in shaping religious accommodation within schools.

Classroom Seating Arrangements

To explore the patterns of socio-religious inclusivity within classroom environments, data were collected through field observations, semi-structured interviews with teachers, and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with students in selected case schools. Field observations documented actual observed seating arrangements and spatial patterns within classrooms, while teacher interviews provided insights into institutional policies and informal practices related to seating. Student FGDs captured students' perspectives and experiences of classroom seating, including whether arrangements promoted interaction across religious and cultural lines.

Field Observation. Classroom seating arrangements play an important role in reflecting and reinforcing socio-cultural inclusivity within educational spaces. As

part of this inquiry, classroom seating practices were systematically observed across five upper primary schools in Kerala, focusing on the presence or absence of diversity mixing, and seating policies. Thematic analysis of the observations identified three key sub-themes:

- Inclusive and Mixed Seating Practices
- Semi-Inclusive and Partially Grouped Seating
- Homogeneous Seating in Mono-Religious Schools

These themes reflect the varying degrees of inclusivity in classroom arrangements, closely tied to school management type and student demographic composition. The outline of the data is presented in Table 57.

Table 57

Summary of Classroom Seating Practices Observed Across Case Schools

Sl. No.	Case details	Type of Seating Arrangement	Natural Grouping Tendencies
1.	Case 1 (Government)	Mixed seating among students of different religious and socio-cultural backgrounds	Inclusive and Mixed
2.	Case 2 (Aided)	Mostly mixed seating; partial grouping based on second language subject chosen like (Arabic and Malayalam)	"Semi-inclusive (Mixed & Partially Separated)
3.	Case 3 (Unaided Hindu Management)	Only Hindu students present; no religious diversity in seating	Homogeneous (Only Hindu Students)
4.	Case4- Unaided Muslim management	Only Muslim students present; no religious diversity in seating	Homogeneous (Only Muslim Students)
5.	Case 5- unaided Christian	Mixed seating among students of different religious backgrounds	Inclusive and mixed

Table 57 shows the pattern of students' classroom seating in different case schools, and the details are presented under the following sub-themes:

Inclusive and Mixed Seating Practices. In Case 1 (Government School) and Case 5 (Unaided Christian Management School), classroom seating was observed to be inclusive and mixed. Students from different religious and socio-cultural backgrounds were seated together, with no visible segregation based on religion or other identity markers. Seating arrangements were largely determined by student friendships, convenience, and teachers' academic grouping preferences. Case 1 demonstrated a natural, unstructured inclusivity within classrooms, while Case 5 reflected a consciously encouraged inclusive practice. Teachers in the Christian management school actively promoted mixed seating as part of the school's policy to foster social harmony and religious understanding among students.

Semi-Inclusive and Partially Grouped Seating. In Case 2 (Aided School), a semi-inclusive seating pattern was observed. While most classrooms had mixed seating arrangements, certain incidental groupings occurred based on the students' second language subject choices (such as Arabic, Sanskrit, or Malayalam). As these language selections sometimes aligned with students' religious affiliations, partial grouping by religious background was unintentionally created in some classes. Teachers confirmed that these seating patterns were not formally enforced but occurred naturally due to the scheduling of language periods and student preferences. Importantly, students from different religious backgrounds still interacted freely during group activities and other classes, indicating a partially inclusive classroom environment.

Homogeneous Seating in Mono-Religious Schools. In Case 3 (Unaided Hindu Management School) and Case 4 (Unaided Muslim Management School), religious homogeneity in student enrolment naturally resulted in homogeneous classroom seating arrangements. Since all students in these schools belonged to a single religious community, there were no seating arrangements based on religious

diversity. In Case 3, seating reflected the uniformity of the Hindu student population, with all students participating in Hindu cultural practices. Similarly, in Case 4, all students were Muslim, and classroom seating did not require any diversity considerations. Both schools institutionalised religious homogeneity through their enrolment policies, thereby eliminating the need for inclusive seating strategies.

Summary. The thematic analysis of data from field observation regarding classroom seating practices revealed a clear relationship between school management type, student religious composition, and the nature of classroom seating arrangements. Government and unaided Christian management schools consistently maintained inclusive seating practices, integrating students from various religious backgrounds. Aided schools exhibited semi-inclusive patterns, with mixed seating in most areas but occasional incidental groupings based on second language preferences that sometimes-reflected religious identity. In contrast, unaided Hindu and Muslim management schools, due to their religiously homogeneous enrolment, operated with uniform classroom seating arrangements reflective of their mono-faith student populations.

Teachers' Perception of Classroom Seating Arrangements. To gain a deeper understanding of how classroom seating arrangements are managed and whether schools consciously promote mixed seating to encourage socio-religious inclusivity, semi-structured interviews were conducted with teachers in five upper primary schools in Kerala. The interviews explored whether seating practices followed formal guidelines, the presence of natural grouping tendencies among students, and how teachers responded to such tendencies in daily classroom management. Thematic analysis of these responses revealed three key sub-themes, with notable variations across different school types.

Naturally Mixed and Flexible Seating. Most teachers described naturally mixed seating practices in classrooms, with students choosing their seats informally based on convenience or friendship. In Case 1 (Government School) and Case 5 (Unaided Christian Management School), teachers confirmed that no segregation existed and students of all religious and socio-cultural backgrounds sat together.

"*No segregation felt-all students sit in mixed form."*

In Case 2 (Aided School), teachers similarly reported mixed seating but acknowledged occasional grouping by second language option (like Sanskrit, Arabic, or Malayalam), which indirectly resulted in students from similar religious backgrounds sitting together in some cases. However, teachers emphasized that this was not institutionally enforced and did not result in discrimination.

In Case 3 (Unaided Hindu Management School) and Case 4 (Unaided Muslim Management School), given their mono-religious student populations, all teachers noted that seating arrangements were naturally homogeneous, with no diversity to manage. In both cases, teachers stated that seating was arranged casually without any segregation concerns.

Seating Adjustments for Classroom Management. Across all schools, teachers commonly used seating adjustments as a classroom management tool. In Cases 1, 2, and 5 (Government, Aided and Unaided Christian Management schools) teachers explained that while students usually sat where they wished, adjustments were occasionally made to control discipline, manage peer conflicts, or promote academic focus. In Cases 3 and 4, although the seating remained homogeneous, teachers reported occasionally rotating seating positions or making adjustments for discipline reasons, not based on religious or social background as no diversity was present.

Absence of Formal Guidelines but Informal Inclusivity. A shared theme across all schools was the absence of formal written guidelines on seating practices, but a tacit understanding of inclusivity prevailed where relevant. In Cases 1, 2, and 5, teachers confirmed that no official policy directed seating based on religion or caste, and no preferential seating was allowed as a teacher from Case 1 commented:

"No preferences, no compulsion. Normal and natural seating is followed."

In Cases 3 and 4, where religious homogeneity prevailed, teachers reiterated that there was no need for inclusivity policies, as all students belonged to the same religious community.

The thematic analysis of teacher interviews revealed that classroom seating arrangements in government, aided, and unaided Christian management schools were generally inclusive and informally managed, with no segregation reported. In aided schools, a semi-inclusive pattern emerged due to occasional grouping based on second language preferences, which sometimes corresponded to religious identity. Teachers described these patterns as unintentional and unrelated to institutional policy. In unaided Hindu and Muslim management schools, religious homogeneity in student enrolment naturally resulted in homogeneous seating arrangements, with no reported incidents of discrimination. Across all cases, seating adjustments were made solely for maintaining classroom order and discipline, unrelated to religion or socio-cultural identity.

Students' Perception of Classroom Seating Arrangements. To complement classroom observations and teacher interviews, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were conducted with students from five Upper Primary schools in Kerala. The discussions aimed to explore how students perceived classroom seating arrangements, whether they experienced any discrimination or preferential

treatment, and how teachers handled classroom management in relation to seating. Thematic analysis of these responses revealed three important sub-themes across cases.

Positive, Mixed Seating and Inclusive Environment. In Case 1 (Government School), students unanimously described a positive, mixed seating arrangement without religious, caste, or socio-cultural segregation as one student observed:

> *"Good school environment and teachers support. Different students are together learning. No discrimination felt in terms of religion, culture etc."*

A similar perception emerged in Case 2 (Aided School), although a few students mentioned occasional classroom adjustments for management reasons, but not based on identity. One students mentioned that

> *"Normal and mixed seating arrangement made by students. No adjustment issues other than what's common everywhere."*

In Case 5 (Unaided Christian Management School), students expressed satisfaction with mixed seating and mutual respect among classmates as one observed that *"Supportive and good school. Teachers are very good. We get due consideration in the classroom and outside."*

In Case 3 (Unaided Hindu Management School) and Case 4 (Unaided Muslim Management School), students indicated that since there was no religious diversity, seating was naturally homogeneous, but no complaints or feelings of discrimination were reported.

> "*Good atmosphere and good learning environment, no more diverse students."*

> "*No discrimination from teachers and management, and we are getting support."*

Teacher-controlled Seating Adjustments for Classroom Management. Across Cases 1, 2, and 5, students acknowledged that teachers occasionally adjusted seating arrangements to manage classroom discipline or improve academic focus. These adjustments were accepted as normal classroom management practices. As some students observed:

"*Seating arrangements are made by teachers when needed, just to keep the class normal and smooth."*

"*Some teachers have extra love and care towards some students, but no discrimination so far felt."*

In Case 2, students noted occasional adjustments for academically high-performing students ("padipiees"):

"*Teachers give extra focus to padipiees, but not because of religion or caste."*

In Cases 3 and 4, as classrooms were mono-religious and culturally homogenous, students reported that seating changes, when made, were only for classroom management as one student observed:

"*We are all sitting together, no issues like separation."*

Absence of Discrimination in Classroom Seating. In Case 1, students explicitly stated they had never felt discrimination in classroom seating arrangements:

"No problems, and teachers consider us equal and provide all types of help."

Case 5 students also expressed positive experiences:

"No discrimination felt, supportive and motivating environment. Everyone is dealt with equally in the classroom and outside."

In Case 2, while noting that teachers occasionally focused more on academically stronger students, no discrimination based on religion or background was perceived.

> *"Some teachers give more care for high performing (padipiees), but no one faces discrimination."*

In Cases 3 and 4, students noted that while celebrations and activities were limited, the classroom environment was friendly and equal. *"Good school, teachers are good, no discrimination, but no diversity here."*

Summary. The thematic comparative analysis of student Focus Group Discussions revealed that classroom seating arrangements were generally inclusive and free from discrimination in government, aided, and Christian management schools. Students in these schools consistently reported mixed seating patterns and supportive classroom environments, with teacher-led seating adjustments made only for discipline or academic reasons. While aided schools displayed some preferential academic grouping, students did not perceive this as discriminatory. In unaided Hindu and Muslim management schools, seating arrangements naturally reflected religious homogeneity, and students reported no discrimination or issues related to seating, confirming alignment with their institutional settings.

Triangulated Analysis of Classroom Seating Arrangements. To comprehensively examine how classroom seating arrangements reflect socio-cultural inclusivity and religious accommodation in upper primary schools, data were collected through field observations, semi-structured interviews with teachers, and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with students. The triangulated analysis of data collected through field observations, semi-structured interviews with teachers, and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with students allowed for a holistic understanding of how seating practices are organized, managed, and experienced

across schools of different management types. The findings consistently highlighted three key thematic areas, while also revealing minor interpretive differences and mismatches in perception between data sources.

In government and unaided Christian management schools (Cases 1 and 5), all three data sources confirmed that seating arrangements were inclusive and mixed, with students from diverse religious and socio-cultural backgrounds sitting together. Seating adjustments, when made, were reported by both teachers and students as intended for classroom management or academic grouping, with no relation to religious, caste, or socio-cultural identity. Field observations supported this, noting no visible segregation and an informal, flexible seating culture in these schools.

In aided schools (Case 2), the triangulated findings revealed a semi-inclusive pattern. While seating was generally mixed, occasional incidental grouping based on second language subject selection was identified by observers and acknowledged by teachers. This sometimes aligned with religious background, though students did not perceive it as discriminatory. All three data sources agreed that these groupings were functional and academic in nature, rather than intentional religious segregation. The overall classroom environment was described as inclusive and cooperative.

In unaided Hindu and Muslim management schools (Cases 3 and 4), classroom seating consistently reflected religious homogeneity due to the mono-religious composition of the student body. Observations, teacher reports, and student accounts all confirmed that seating arrangements were naturally uniform. Adjustments, when made, were strictly for classroom management reasons and unrelated to socio-cultural identity, given the absence of religious diversity.

Across all schools, the triangulated findings confirmed that seating adjustments were employed solely as classroom management strategies, such as

maintaining discipline, improving focus, or promoting fairness through rotation. No formal written guidelines existed in any of the schools regarding seating based on religion or background, but an informal culture of inclusivity prevailed where diversity was present.

Summary. The triangulated analysis of data collected through field observations, semi-structured interviews with teachers, and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) confirmed that classroom seating practices in Kerala's Upper Primary Schools are largely inclusive in schools with religiously diverse student populations, while naturally homogeneous in mono-religious institutions. Government and unaided Christian management schools demonstrated consistently inclusive seating practices, while aided schools displayed a semi-inclusive pattern due to occasional functional academic groupings. Unaided Hindu and Muslim management schools reflected religious homogeneity in seating arrangements, with no instances of religious segregation or discrimination reported.

Across all cases, the findings from observations, teacher interviews, and student discussions aligned closely, reaffirming that seating practices in these schools generally promote inclusivity where religious diversity exists, while maintaining equitable management-based adjustments in mono-religious contexts. Minor relational variations in teacher-student interactions were noted in a few cases but did not affect the fundamentally inclusive nature of seating practices in diverse classrooms.

Students' Mixing in Public Spaces

The way students interact and group themselves in informal school spaces such as playgrounds, lunch areas, and open grounds offers meaningful insight into the school's socio-cultural and religious inclusivity beyond formal classroom settings. While institutional practices can regulate inclusion within classrooms, it is

often in these unstructured public spaces that students' natural tendencies for association, acceptance, or exclusion emerge. Understanding these patterns is essential for assessing the effectiveness of a school's inclusive ethos and its impact on student socialisation across religious and cultural lines. Data about this aspect were systematically collected through field observations, semi-structured interviews with teachers, and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with students, enabling a triangulated analysis of both observed behaviours and the perceptions of key stakeholders regarding the nature of peer group formation and interaction in informal school settings. The results are discussed in the following section.

Field Observation. Field observations were conducted in five upper primary schools in Kerala to examine how students naturally group and interact in informal public spaces such as playgrounds and lunch areas. The aim was to identify patterns of mixing or informal exclusion based on religious or socio-cultural background during unstructured school activities. The observations made in each case school are summarised in Table 58.

Table 58

Students' Grouping Patterns in Public Spaces

Sl. No.	Case details	Grouping Pattern During Lunch/Playtime	Signs of Informal Exclusion
1.	Case 1 (Government)	Mostly mixed groups; friendships based on personal closeness	Rare, occasional exclusion by individual choice
2.	Case 2- (Aided)	Mixed groups with some segregated patterns, particularly among boys at lunch and prayer time	Occasional informal grouping, not institutionalised
3.	Case 3 – Unaided Hindu management	Only Hindu students mix with themselves	Not applicable (no religious diversity)
4.	Case4- Unaided Muslim management	Only Muslim students; informal interaction with teachers from other faiths	Not applicable (no religious diversity
5.	Case 5- unaided Christian	Mostly mixed groups; occasional segregated clustering by personal preference	Minor, incidental grouping by student choice

The Table 58 reflects distinct tendencies in student grouping and informal social mixing, which are subsequently analysed under the following three sub-themes:

Inclusive and Mixed Interaction Patterns. In Case 1 (Government School), field observations confirmed inclusive and mixed group patterns during lunch, in dining areas, playgrounds, and other public spaces. Students of different religious and socio-cultural backgrounds were seen freely interacting and playing together. Both teachers and students corroborated this, noting no signs of exclusion and describing an open and cooperative environment where groupings formed primarily based on friendship, not identity. Similarly, in Case 5 (Unaided Christian Management School), mixed interaction was generally observed, though with occasional incidental grouping based on personal friendships or shared interests. Teachers confirmed the school's encouragement of inclusive participation in public spaces, and students largely described a positive, supportive environment.

Mixed and Segregated Interaction Patterns. In Case 2 (Aided School), data sources reflected a mixed pattern with occasional informal segregation. While most students from different backgrounds interacted freely, some grouping patterns based on religious affiliation were noticed, particularly among boys during lunch breaks and prayer times. Teachers acknowledged these tendencies, noting they were not institutionally sanctioned and largely driven by student preferences. Students in FGDs mentioned sitting with friends from similar backgrounds in some instances but denied any exclusionary practices.

Non-Mixing Patterns. In Case 3 (Unaided Hindu Management School) and Case 4 (Unaided Muslim Management School), interaction patterns naturally reflected religious homogeneity due to the absence of religious diversity.

Observations confirmed that students mixed freely within their religiously homogeneous peer groups. Notably, in Case 4, while students were exclusively Muslim, they were observed informally interacting with teachers from other religious backgrounds, indicating some level of cross-cultural interaction within staff-student dynamics. Teachers in both cases described a harmonious environment within the homogeneous student body, and no exclusionary incidents were reported.

Field observations across the five upper primary schools revealed clear variations in student grouping patterns in public spaces based on school type. In the government school (Case 1) and unaided Christian management school (Case 5), students from different religious and socio-cultural backgrounds were observed interacting freely and forming mixed groups during lunch and playtime. The aided school (Case 2) showed generally mixed groups with occasional informal clustering along religious lines, particularly among boys. In unaided Hindu (Case 3) and unaided Muslim management schools (Case 4), grouping patterns reflected religious homogeneity, with students mingling within their single-faith peer group. Across all cases, no signs of overt exclusion or institutional segregation were observed.

Teachers' Perception of Student Interaction in Public Spaces. To explore how students interact socially during informal times such as breaks, lunchtime, and play sessions, semi-structured interviews were conducted with teachers in selected case schools. Thematic analysis of their responses revealed three clear sub-themes, which are detailed below.

Inclusive and Supportive School Environment. Teachers in Case 1 (Government School), Case 2 (Aided School), and Case 5 (Unaided Christian Management School) consistently described their schools as maintaining an inclusive, cooperative environment. They reported that students from different religious and

socio-cultural backgrounds interacted freely in public spaces such as lunch areas and playgrounds. No incidents of exclusion were observed, and schools actively promoted inclusivity through various programmes and community activities. Teachers also emphasised their role in facilitating students' participation in both academic and non-academic activities, ensuring equal opportunities for social interaction.

Promoting Exposure in Mono-Religious Schools. In Cases 3 (Unaided Hindu Management School) and 4 (Unaided Muslim Management School), teachers acknowledged that student groups were religiously homogeneous and naturally mixed within their single-faith peer groups. While no exclusion incidents were observed, teachers recognised the limited opportunity for inter-religious interaction. They expressed a conscious effort to familiarise students with broader cultural and social experiences through curricular and co-curricular activities, intended to promote awareness of other communities despite the homogeneity of their school settings.

Proactive Support for Disadvantaged Students. Across Case 1, Case 2, and Case 5, (Government, Aided and Christian Management school) teachers highlighted their proactive role in supporting socially and economically disadvantaged students. This included organising the provision of learning materials, financial support, and personal assistance to ensure that no student was left out of school activities or social interactions due to economic hardship. These efforts were facilitated through collaboration with local clubs, social groups, and community organisations, reinforcing the schools' commitment to social equity and inclusivity in public spaces and beyond.

The thematic analysis of teacher interviews revealed that in mixed schools (Cases 1, 2, and 5), teachers observed a generally inclusive and supportive environment where students interacted freely in public spaces. In mono-religious

schools (Cases 3 and 4), while no exclusions were reported within the student body, teachers recognised the limitations posed by the homogeneity and made deliberate efforts to introduce elements of diversity.

Students' Perception and Experiences of Interaction in Public Spaces. To explore students' perceptions and experiences of peer interaction in informal public spaces such as playgrounds, lunch areas, and free periods, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were conducted with students across selected case schools. The discussions aimed to understand how students socialise in these settings, and the responses revealed three recurring sub-themes:

Active and Positive Peer Interaction in Informal Spaces. Across Case 1 (Government School), Case 2 (Aided School), and Case 5 (Unaided Christian Management School), students consistently described active, positive, and friendly interactions in public spaces. Break times and lunch hours were used for playing, chatting with friends, or casual activities. Students expressed enthusiasm for opportunities to engage in physical activity and informal gatherings. In Case 1, a student noted:

"We love free hours and use them for play and other activities with friends."

In Case 5, students similarly shared:

"If we get permission to go out, we used to play with friends."

Students also spoke of friendships that extended beyond school hours, with visits to friends' homes during holidays and weekends. A student from Case 2 remarked:

"We have bicycles and we are visiting friends' houses during holidays and programmes."

In Cases 3 and 4, although interactions were naturally within religiously homogeneous groups, students still reported active, friendly interaction and peer support within their groups.

Absence of Discrimination and Positive Social Climate. In Cases 1, 2, and 5, students strongly affirmed that discrimination based on religion or socio-cultural background was absent in their peer interactions. Friendships were described as being based on mutual affection, personal closeness, and shared interests, with no attention given to identity markers.

A student from Case 2 openly stated:

"Hey, sir, do you think anyone will think so in terms of religion and others? We are thick friends (katta friends).

Similarly, another student from Case 5 mentioned:

"No discrimination, no consideration for anything, we are gathering with our chunks."

In Case 3 (Unaided Hindu Management School) and Case 4 (Unaided Muslim Management School), students acknowledged limited interaction with peers from other backgrounds but expressed no negative feelings or prejudices. One student from Case 4 shared: *"We have no more friends from other religious and cultural backgrounds. But no negative feelings toward them."*

Limited Diversity and Occasional Peer Group Dynamics. Although overall interaction patterns were inclusive, students in Case 2 and Case 5 mentioned minor peer grouping tendencies based on personal preferences or occasional conflicts between boys and girls. These were considered normal and unrelated to religious or cultural factors.

A boy from Case 2 observed:

"Some of my classmates are not my type, so my friends are in other classes. Together we sit, talk, and play during lunchtime".

Another student from Case 5 mentioned:

"Some issues are there between boys and girls".

In Cases 3 and 4, students reiterated the absence of religious diversity within their schools but spoke positively of their classmates and informal interactions with neighbours and teachers from other communities. A students from Case 3 noted:

"We have good friends and no issues, but no friends from other backgrounds here".

The thematic analysis of student FGDs revealed that in mixed schools (Case 1, Case 2, and Case 5), students experienced active, positive, and inclusive social interactions in public spaces, with no reports of exclusion or discrimination based on religion or socio-cultural background. Friendships were based on personal closeness, and students expressed strong peer bonds within and outside school. In mono-religious schools (Case 3 and Case 4), while opportunities for inter-religious interaction were limited, students maintained positive attitudes towards peers and neighbours from other communities and reported harmonious interactions within their peer groups. Minor peer grouping and interpersonal tensions occurred occasionally but were unrelated to identity differences. The findings confirm that students' informal social interaction patterns in public spaces remain largely inclusive and relationship-driven, shaped more by personal affinity than by religious or socio-cultural identity.

Triangulated Analysis of Student Interaction Patterns in Public Spaces

The triangulation of findings from field observations, teacher interviews, and student Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) across selected case schools revealed consistent trends across data sources with some minor interpretive differences, closely linked to school management type and religious composition.

In Government (Case 1) and unaided Christian management schools (Case 5), all three data sources consistently reported inclusive and mixed interaction patterns. Field observations showed students from different religious and socio-cultural backgrounds forming natural, mixed groups in public spaces. Teachers confirmed the absence of exclusion and highlighted their efforts to create a supportive school climate through inclusive programmes. Students echoed these perceptions, describing friendly, active peer relationships based on personal closeness rather than religious identity, with no experience of discrimination.

In aided schools (Case 2), while most students interacted freely, occasional informal clustering along religious or personal preference lines was noted in field observations, especially among boys during lunch and prayer times. Teachers largely perceived the environment as inclusive and denied noticing exclusionary practices, though students themselves acknowledged occasional peer grouping based on personal preferences rather than religious or cultural background. The triangulation indicates a semi-inclusive pattern, with mixed interactions generally prevailing, alongside minor, informal clustering that was not institutionally driven.

In unaided Hindu (Case 3) and Muslim management schools (Case 4), interaction patterns naturally reflected religious homogeneity due to mono-religious enrolment. Observations and student FGDs consistently reported active, friendly

interactions within peer groups, with no exclusions since religious diversity was absent. Teachers acknowledged the absence of inter-religious interaction but described conscious efforts to promote awareness of other cultural traditions through school activities. Students maintained positive attitudes towards members of other communities outside school, confirming a socially cohesive environment within the homogeneous group.

Across all cases, no serious incidents of religious or socio-cultural exclusion were observed or reported by teachers or students. Minor interpersonal tensions or peer-grouping tendencies occasionally surfaced, primarily between boys and girls or along personal preference lines, but these were consistently described as normal social dynamics unrelated to religious or cultural identity.

Summary. The triangulated analysis of data collected through field observations, semi-structured interviews with teachers, and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) of student interaction in public spaces revealed that in mixed schools (Cases 1, 2, and 5), students generally experienced inclusive, active, and positive social relationships, with grouping patterns shaped more by personal closeness than socio-religious identity. Aided schools (Case 2) have displayed a semi-inclusive pattern, where occasional informal clustering based on religious affinity or personal preference occurred without institutional enforcement. In mono-religious schools (Case 3 and Case 4), interaction patterns reflected religious homogeneity, with no exclusionary practices and a consciously maintained positive social climate. Across all cases, teachers played an active role in supporting peer interaction and promoting inclusive practices, while students confirmed a socially cohesive and supportive peer environment in informal school settings. The findings affirm that school type, management orientation, and student religious composition

remain influential in shaping informal social dynamics within school public spaces, echoing patterns observed earlier in classroom seating arrangements.

Value Education and Moral Lessons

To examine how moral education is structured and delivered in upper primary schools in Kerala, qualitative data were collected through field observations across selected case schools. The analysis focused on identifying the nature of moral education content in assemblies and lessons, and the presence or absence of inclusivity messages. Thematic analysis of this data revealed three distinct sub-themes based on school management type and the nature of moral instruction. The general outline of the data is presented in Table 59.

Table 59

Moral Education Provisions in Schools Selected as Cases

Sl. No.	Case details	Themes in Moral Lessons / Assembly Talks	Presence of Inclusivity Messages
1.	Case 1 – Government School	Emphasis on curriculum-based secular and national themes	Occasionally addressed
2.	Case 2- Aided School	Curriculum-based moral lessons from textbooks, general assembly talks on good habits and duty	Occasionally addressed
3.	Case 3 – Unaided Hindu Management School	Hindu religious moral lessons, Sanskrit prayers, emphasis on Hindu ethics and traditional values	Rarely addressed
4.	Case 4- Unaided Muslim Management School	Islamic religious and moral instruction, daily Islamic teachings, and value-based messages.	Rarely addressed
5.	Case 5- Unaided Christian School	Christian values are talked about by sisters and teachers, general virtues like kindness, honesty, and obedience	Occasionally addressed

Table 59 reveals the outline of the moral education provision in selected case schools and the data shows different patterns in different types of schools.

Curriculum-Based Moral Lessons with Occasional Inclusivity. In Case 1 (Government School) and Case 2 (Aided School), moral education was largely curriculum-driven, with lessons on good habits, duty, and social values delivered through prescribed textbooks. While these schools occasionally organised morning assembly talks addressing topics like national integration, tolerance, and unity, inclusivity themes were infrequently and inconsistently addressed. Teachers followed textbook content without any structured, additional moral instruction, focusing on communal harmony.

In these schools, moral education was present but limited to formal lessons, and inclusivity messages appeared more as occasional themes than an intentional, structured priority.

Faith-Based Moral Instruction with Minimal Inclusivity. In Case 3 (Unaided Hindu Management School) and Case 4 (Unaided Muslim Management School), moral education was firmly rooted in religious teachings specific to each community. Case 3 focused on Hindu scriptures, Sanskrit prayers, and traditional values, while Case 4 delivered Islamic religious instruction and value-based talks during morning assemblies. Inclusivity messages promoting communal harmony or inter-religious respect were largely absent or rare, with moral teachings confined within their respective religious frameworks. In these unaided schools, moral education served primarily to reinforce faith-based values, with limited or no emphasis on multi-religious coexistence or secular moral ideals.

Informal Moral Talks Promoting General Values. In Case 5 (Unaided Christian Management School), formal moral education sessions were absent, but informal value talks were regularly delivered by teachers. These talks typically addressed general virtues like kindness, honesty, discipline, and obedience.

Messages of inclusivity were occasionally integrated into these moral discussions, though without systematic emphasis. This approach promoted universal moral values with occasional references to inclusivity, reflecting a semi-structured moral instruction model shaped by the Christian management ethos.

The thematic analysis of moral education practices across five upper primary schools revealed three distinct patterns. Government and aided schools followed a curriculum-based approach with occasional inclusivity messaging, whereas unaided Hindu and Muslim management schools emphasised faith-based moral instruction with limited exposure to inclusive and secular values. Christian management schools adopted a model of informal moral talks promoting general virtues, occasionally referencing communal harmony. These findings indicates that the school management type and religious orientation play a decisive role in shaping the content and inclusivity of moral education in Kerala's upper primary schools.

Teachers' Perception of Value Education and Moral Lessons. To gain insight into how schools address moral education and value-based instruction, semi-structured interviews were conducted with teachers from case schools in Kerala. Teachers were asked about the presence, delivery methods, and content of moral lessons or value education in their schools. Thematic analysis of their responses revealed three clear sub-themes based on the patterns emerging from different school management types.

Curriculum-Based or Informal Moral Instruction. Teachers in Case 1 (Government School), Case 2 (Aided School), and Case 5 (Unaided Christian Management School) reported that moral education was delivered either through syllabus-based classes or informal advice during assemblies and lessons. They noted the absence of dedicated moral education teachers or structured moral instruction

periods, and instead described occasional value-based talks by teachers or headmasters. A teacher from Case 1 remarked:

> *"There are no separate moral lessons here. Syllabus-based instructions are provided."*

In Case 5, teachers shared that while no formal classes existed, some biblical stories and general advice were given during assemblies or when situations arose. In these schools, moral education was not systematically structured but delivered informally alongside regular teaching, with occasional moral advice integrated into daily routines.

Dedicated Religious Moral Instruction in Unaided Schools. Teachers from Case 3 (Unaided Hindu Management School) and Case 4 (Unaided Muslim Management School) described well-established, religion-specific moral education systems. In Case 3, students received Veda classes, Sanskrit lessons, and weekly moral instruction sessions aligned with Hindu religious teachings. A teacher noted:

> "*We have Veda padas and moral instruction. Separate lessons are there once in a week."*

Similarly, in Case 4, teachers reported daily Madrassa education and structured Islamic moral instruction provided by designated moral teachers. In these unaided schools, moral education was systematically organised, focusing exclusively on religious values, with limited exposure to inter-religious inclusivity or secular moral topics.

Mixed Perception on the Value and Relevance of Moral Instruction. Some teachers, especially in Case 2 (Aided School) and Case 5 (Unaided Christian Management School), expressed mixed feelings about the current delivery of moral education. They observed that while occasional advice was given, formalised moral

education was either missing or sometimes perceived as unengaging by students. One teacher remarked:

> *No need for any separate moral teachers here, some of our teachers provide instructions at regular intervals."*

The thematic analysis of teacher interviews revealed that in government, aided, and Christian management schools (Cases 1, 2, and 5), moral education was largely curriculum-based or informally provided through occasional moral advice in assemblies or classrooms. Special, structured moral instruction systems were prominent in religious unaided schools (Cases 3 and 4), where value education was aligned closely with Hindu and Islamic teachings. Teachers in some cases acknowledged that informal, unstructured moral advice was often perceived as monotonous by students, indicating the need for more engaging, inclusive, and culturally relevant moral education practices. These findings confirm that school management type and religious affiliation decisively shape both the structure and inclusivity emphasis of moral education practices in upper primary schools in Kerala.

Students' Perception and Experiences of Value Education and Moral Lessons. To understand how students experience and perceive moral education within their schools, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were conducted with students from selected case schools. Students were asked about the nature of moral instruction in their schools, the presence of moral education sessions or assembly talks, and whether inclusivity themes were addressed. Thematic analysis of the responses revealed three clear sub-themes.

Curriculum-Based or Informal Moral Lessons. Students in Case 1 (Government School), Case 2 (Aided School), and Case 5 (Unaided Christian

Management School) consistently reported that moral education was delivered either through syllabus-based lessons or occasional advice from teachers during class or assemblies. They noted the absence of dedicated moral teachers or formal moral education sessions. A student from Case 1 mentioned:

> *"No moral lessons. Syllabus-based classes and instructions are provided."*

Similarly, in Case 5, a student shared:

> *"Our teachers share some biblical stories in some classes and assemblies."*

Students felt that while some moral instructions were offered, these were largely occasional and sometimes uninteresting. A student from case 2 commented that:

> *"Some of our teachers give such lessons, and sometimes it feels boring."*

Faith-Based Moral Education in Religious Unaided Schools. In Case 3 (Unaided Hindu Management School) and Case 4 (Unaided Muslim Management School), students described structured, religiously framed moral education systems. Students in Case 3 reported receiving Veda classes and moral lessons weekly, with compulsory Sanskrit lessons. One student said:

> "*We are getting Veda padas and moral instruction. Separate lessons are there for us once a week."*

In Case 4, students detailed attending madrassa education within school premises, alongside daily moral lessons from designated teachers.

> *"Our moral teachers are here, and they attend moral lessons daily."*

These schools provided structured religious moral instruction, reinforcing faith-based values through formal and regular sessions.

Mixed Student Perception on Moral Education's Relevance. In Cases 1, 2, and 5 (Government, Aided and Christian Management Schools), some students expressed ambivalence about the relevance and interest level of informal moral advice given by teachers. While they acknowledged receiving moral advice in class or assemblies, some students viewed these sessions as either routine or unengaging. A student from Case 2 remarked:

> *"Some teachers' advice and moral instructions make us feel like they are criticising us."*

This reflects that informal moral advice without engaging methods or cultural relevance can risk being perceived as monotonous by students.

The thematic analysis of student FGDs revealed that in government-aided and Christian management schools (Cases 1, 2, and 5), moral education was primarily delivered through curriculum-based lessons or informal teacher advice, with no formal sessions or moral teachers appointed. In unaided Hindu and Muslim management schools (Cases 3 and 4), students have experienced structured, religion-based moral education through weekly or daily lessons aligned with religious traditions. While some students appreciated moral guidance, others, particularly in mixed schools, expressed that informal moral talks sometimes lacked engagement or felt repetitive.

Triangulated Analysis of Value Education and Moral Lessons Across Case Schools

The triangulated analysis of findings from field observations, teacher interviews, and student Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) reveals consistent patterns across data sources, with some interpretive differences between institutional

intentions and student perceptions, closely linked to management type and religious orientation.

In Government (Case 1) and Aided schools (Case 2), all three data sources confirmed that moral education was primarily curriculum-based, delivered through textbook lessons or occasional advice during assemblies and classes. Field observations noted sporadic inclusivity messages during assemblies, while teachers described occasional informal talks alongside syllabus-based lessons, and students acknowledged receiving moral advice, though some considered it repetitive or unengaging. This indicates a semi-structured provision of moral instruction, with inclusivity themes occasionally addressed but without systematic emphasis.

In unaided Hindu (Case 3) and unaided Muslim management schools (Case 4), a strong alignment was observed across all data sources. Field observations confirmed the presence of structured, faith-based moral instruction: Veda classes and Sanskrit lessons in Case 3, and Madrassa education and daily Islamic moral teachings in Case 4. Teachers corroborated this, reporting systematic religious moral education aligned with their faith tradition, while students openly shared their experiences of regular religious moral lessons, expressing familiarity with these systems. Inclusivity messages were largely absent, with moral education restricted to faith-specific values.

In unaided Christian management schools (Case 5), field observations noted informal moral talks during assemblies and classroom lectures, delivered occasionally by Christian sisters or teachers. Teachers confirmed the absence of formal moral classes, relying instead on general advice and biblical stories shared during assemblies. Students also described this informal model of moral instruction, occasionally welcoming it but sometimes finding it routine. Inclusivity messages were occasionally addressed but without structured emphasis. Across all cases, while moral

education was present in varying formats, structured inclusivity content was inconsistently integrated, depending on school type and management orientation.

Summary. The triangulated analysis of data collected through field observations, semi-structured interviews with teachers, and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs of value education and moral lesson practices revealed that in government-aided and unaided Christian management schools (Cases 1, 2, and 5), moral education was curriculum-based or informally delivered through occasional advice and assembly talks, with inclusivity messages occasionally addressed but lacking formal emphasis. In unaided Hindu and Muslim management schools (Cases 3 and 4), moral education was systematically structured as faith-based instruction, with little or no exposure to inter-religious inclusivity themes. Students in diverse schools perceived informal moral advice as sometimes monotonous, while students in religious schools were familiar with structured religious moral education. These findings confirm that school management type and religious orientation remain decisive in determining both the content focus and inclusivity emphasis of moral education practices in upper primary schools in Kerala.

Sub Theme III- Diversity in School Programmes

School-based programmes and celebrations extend beyond curricular instruction to serve as an important platform where students encounter, experience, and negotiate socio-cultural and religious diversity in school life. Activities such as festival celebrations, commemorative days, arts and literary competitions, and extracurricular clubs offer opportunities for fostering intercultural awareness, mutual respect, and democratic participation among students from varied backgrounds (Banks, 2006; NCF, 2005). In a culturally pluralistic society like Kerala, these programmes are instrumental in shaping students' attitudes towards

inclusivity and coexistence (Ramachandran, 2019). Recognising this significance, the present study examined the nature and organisation of school programmes and activities in the selected upper primary case schools through three data sources: document analysis of school records, magazines, and social media handles; semi-structured interviews with teachers; and Focus Group Discussions with students. The triangulation of these data sources provides a comprehensive understanding of the opportunities by schools provide for students to experience and engage with socio-cultural and religious diversity in their institutional spaces. For the analysis, the data were thematically organised under four predetermined categories:

- School Celebrations
- School Arts Festivals and Cultural programmes
- Student Clubs and related Activities.

School Celebrations and Programmes

Common school celebrations are an important part of school life, offering opportunities for students to engage in collective experiences and encounter the cultural and religious diversities reflected within their society. This section examines the nature, inclusivity, and diversity of religious and national festival celebrations organised across the case schools.

Document Analysis. The data regarding school celebrations were collected through document analysis. This involved reviewing school reports, magazines, and school social media handles to identify the programmes and festivals celebrated in each case school. The findings are summarised in Table 60.

Table 60

Descriptive Comparative Table of School Celebrations Across Schools Selected as Cases

Programme Category	Case 1 Government School	Case 2 Aided School	Case 3 Unaided Hindu Management School	Case 4 Unaided Muslim Management School	Case 5 Unaided Christian Management School
Religious and National Festivals	A variety of religious and national festivals Onam, Eid, Christmas, Independence Day, and Republic Day are given equal importance	Similar variety; includes Vishu celebration along with other common religious and national events	Hindu religious festivals like Vishu, Sree Krishna Jayanthi, Ramayana Month are celebrated alongside national days; Eid and Christmas are excluded	Focused on Islamic festivals like Eid, Nabi Dinam, and Mehndi Fest; Onam and Christmas are not celebrated	Christian and national festivals prioritised; Christmas, Independence Day, and Onam celebrated; Eid excluded
Day Observances and Commemorative Events	Regularly observes days like Environment Day, Reading Day, Teachers' Day, Gandhi Jayanti, Yoga Day, and Constitution Day	Similar range of day observances; actively observed throughout the year	Regularly observes day events, including unique cultural days like Sree Krishna Jayanthi	Limited observances; focus on key national days like Environment Day, Teachers' Day, and Gandhi Jayanti	Select day observances such as Children's Day and Gandhi Jayanti; fewer commemorative events overall
Arts and Sports Programmes	Annual Arts Fest and Sports Meet conducted with diverse, inclusive programmes; Yoga Day also celebrated	Annual Arts and Sports events held, including Yoga Day; competitive and well-participated	Annual Arts and Sports events organised with Hindu religious and cultural themes; Yoga Day celebrated	Conducts annual Arts and Sports events, but with emphasis on Islamic cultural performances; no Yoga Day	Annual Arts and Sports events organised; cultural programmes, Christian and secular
Social Programmes	Conducts Food Fest and school election as part of co-curricular engagement	Food Fest is occasionally organised; no school election noted	Limited Food Fest; no mention of school election; religious and cultural fests prioritised	Food Fest and Mehndi Fest were conducted with strong community participation	No Food Fest or school election documented

Table 60 provides a comparative summary of the school programmes observed in selected case schools; the result is discussed under the following sub-themes:

Celebration of Religious and National Festivals. The document analysis revealed that both the government school (Case 1) and the aided school (Case 2) conducted a wide variety of religious and national festivals, providing inclusive representation to major religious communities and national events. Festivals such as Onam, Eid, Christmas, Independence Day, and Republic Day were celebrated with equal importance in these schools. The aided school also included the regional Hindu festival Vishu, reflecting sensitivity to the local cultural milieu.

In contrast, the Unaided Hindu management school (Case 3) primarily organised Hindu religious festivals such as Vishu, Sree Krishna Jayanthi, Ramayana Month, and other religious-cultural days alongside national events like Independence Day and Republic Day. Notably, festivals of other religious groups, such as Eid and Christmas, were excluded from the school's programme calendar. Similarly, the Unaided Muslim management school (Case 4) focused predominantly on Islamic religious events such as Eid, Nabi Dinam (Prophet's Birthday), and Mehndi Fest, with no observance of festivals like Onam or Christmas. The Christian management school (Case 5) gave priority to Christian religious celebrations, notably Christmas, while also observing Onam, Independence Day, and Republic Day, but excluded Islamic festivals like Eid. This pattern underscores how religious management affiliations directly shaped the inclusivity of festival celebrations within these schools.

Day Observances and Commemorative Events. A similar trend was evident in the observance of commemorative and civic awareness days. Both the government school (Case 1) and the aided school (Case 2) regularly organised programmes for Environment Day, Reading Day, Teachers' Day, Gandhi Jayanti,

Yoga Day, and Constitution Day, reflecting a commitment to civic and educational values through annual observances.

The Unaided Hindu management school (Case 3) also conducted national day observances, including Independence Day and Republic Day, and incorporated unique Hindu cultural commemorations like Sree Krishna Jayanthi. However, other commemorative civic days, such as Environment Day or Constitution Day, were less visible. The Unaided Muslim management school (Case 4) had limited day observances, focusing primarily on key national events like Independence Day, Republic Day, Environment Day, and Teachers' Day, with few other civic or cultural commemorations. In the Unaided Christian management school (Case 5), only Children's Day and Gandhi Jayanti were recorded as commemorative events, indicating fewer civic and educational day observances compared to other cases.

Arts and Sports Programmes. All five case schools documented annual Arts Fest and Sports Meet programmes. The government school (Case 1) and aided school (Case 2) conducted these events with inclusive participation from students of all backgrounds. Notably, both schools also organised Yoga Day as part of their annual programmes. The Unaided Hindu management school (Case 3) organised its arts and sports events with performances aligned to Hindu religious and cultural themes, alongside Yoga Day celebrations. The Unaided Muslim management school (Case 4) conducted similar annual events, but with performances primarily reflecting Islamic cultural content. Yoga Day was notably absent from this school's calendar, illustrating how religious orientations influenced programme selection. The Unaided Christian management school (Case 5) organised annual arts and sports events featuring Christian religious and secular items but did not document Yoga Day celebrations, reflecting selective adoption of certain cultural programmes.

Social and Participatory Programmes. Document analysis revealed significant differences in social and participatory programmes. The government school (Case 1) conducted both food fests and school elections as part of its co-curricular and participatory engagement initiatives, promoting student involvement and civic awareness. The aided school (Case 2) occasionally organised food fests but did not conduct school elections.

Among unaided schools, the Hindu Management School (Case 3) showed limited engagement, placing greater emphasis on religious and cultural celebrations. The Muslim management school (Case 4) stood out for conducting both Food Fests and Mehndi Fests with active community participation, offering students opportunities for social engagement within the community. The Christian management school (Case 5) did not document any food fests or school elections, reflecting the narrowest scope for participatory programmes among the cases studied.

Summary. The document analysis findings confirm clear management-based patterns in the organisation of school programmes.

- Government and aided schools demonstrated relatively inclusive and balanced programme calendars, accommodating religious, civic, and participatory events that reflected Kerala's socio-cultural diversity.
- In contrast, the unaided religious management schools predominantly reinforced mono-religious identities through their festivals and commemorations, with varying degrees of engagement in civic and participatory programmes.
- The Hindu management school conducted the largest variety of programmes but remained confined within a religious framework,

while the Muslim management school balanced religious events with socially participatory activities.

- The Christian management school maintained the most minimalistic and selective programme structure.

These patterns underline how school management affiliations significantly shape students' exposure to cultural, religious, and civic experiences within the school environment.

Teachers' Perception on School Programmes. To gain deeper insights into the nature, organisation, and inclusivity of programmes and celebrations conducted in upper primary schools in Kerala, semi-structured interviews were conducted with selected teachers from five case schools. The data were thematically analysed to explore teachers' perceptions and experiences regarding the planning, execution, and challenges of school programmes. The findings are presented under five core sub-themes.

Variety and Nature of Programmes Conducted. Teachers from both the government and aided schools reported conducting a rich and varied range of programmes throughout the academic year. They described these events as meaningful, inclusive, and beneficial for the holistic development of students. A teacher from Case 1 (government school) remarked:

> *"Many useful and important programmes and celebrations are conducted here. We get support from the PTA and local people, and it feels like a community function."*

This sentiment was similarly echoed by teachers from Case 2 (Aided School), who reported actively involving staff, students, and the local community in various celebrations.

In contrast, teachers from unaided religious management schools acknowledged certain limitations in the variety of programmes permitted. In Case 3 (Unaided Hindu Management School), for instance, a teacher noted:

> *"Many programmes are conducted, but not all types of programmes are allowed; there are some restrictions from the management."*

Similar views were expressed in Case 4 (Unaided Muslim Management School), where religiously diverse events such as Onam and Christmas were generally avoided. As one teacher explained:

> "*Management supports maximum and provides facilities, but we don't have instructions for Onam or Christmas programmes. We avoid seeking permission for such events."*

In Case 5 (Unaided Christian Management School), while a range of programmes was conducted, teachers reported that these were carried out under strict management supervision.

Decision-making and Planning Process. Decision-making processes regarding school programmes were found to be participatory and collaborative in the government and aided schools. Teachers indicated that events were decided through regular staff meetings, with opportunities for open discussion and contribution from all stakeholders. A teacher from Case 1 stated:

> "*Programmes are set based on staff discussions and with parental support. Teachers are allotted charge of each programme and plan based on others' opinions."*

Similarly, in Case 2, teachers described how staff meetings were convened to decide on programme details, and when public participation was intended, the management was informed accordingly. In unaided management schools (Cases 3,

4, and 5), the planning process was predominantly top-down. Teachers in Case 3 expressed that:

> *"Programmes are fixed by the management and the principal. We support and do our assigned duty in each programme well."*

A similar administrative pattern was reported in Case 4, where programme instructions came from the management and principal, with teachers largely responsible for execution. In Case 5, although occasional staff discussions were held, teachers stated that:

> "*Programmes are instructed and fixed by the management. We execute them and provide maximum support."*

Role of Teachers in Organisation and Implementation. Teachers in the government and aided schools reported playing active and responsible roles in the planning, organisation, and execution of school programmes. They highlighted that those responsibilities were often distributed among staff members and that teachers were engaged throughout the process, from conceptualisation to implementation. A participant from Case 1 shared:

> *"We take an active and responsible role in planning, fixing, and implementing. All teachers work together."*

In unaided management schools, teachers' roles were primarily confined to operational duties. In Case 3, for example, a teacher explained: *"Even though the management decides everything, we give our best to make the programmes lively for students."*

This operational role was consistent in Cases 4 and 5, where teachers described themselves as implementers of pre-decided plans, albeit with efforts to ensure successful execution. One teacher from Case 5 noted,

> *"Our role is in executing the programme as instructed. We encourage and motivate students to participate."*

Inclusivity and Student Participation. Teachers in the government and aided schools demonstrated a conscious effort to ensure the participation of students from diverse religious and socio-cultural backgrounds. In Case 1, teachers reported introducing competitions and involving parents to foster greater inclusivity. One teacher explained:

> *"We ensure maximum student and teacher support by making events competitive and interesting for all."*

In unaided management schools, inclusivity was more restricted, largely reflecting management policies. In Case 3, a teacher shared that although religious diversity celebrations were not permitted, they tried to make available programmes meaningful for all students. In Case 4, while religiously diverse programmes were absent, teachers encouraged active participation within the permitted scope. A teacher commented:

> *"All students support and participate in different programmes. Though management decides the type of programmes, we motivate students to involve themselves actively."*

In Case 5, student participation was sometimes affected by interpersonal issues, as noted by a teacher who remarked:

> *"Student ego and attitude are sometimes a problem, but we try to overcome this by assigning duties and motivating them."*

Challenges and Institutional Support. Teachers across the case schools identified various challenges in organising school programmes. In the government and aided schools, resource limitations and fluctuating student strength were

common issues, but both schools benefited from strong institutional and community support. A teacher from Case 1 observed:

> *"Student strength is a challenge, but with the support of teachers and parents, we manage things well."*

In unaided management schools, however, challenges were often linked to management control and restrictions on programme content. In Case 3, a teacher admitted,

> "*Management influence is a problem, especially in programmes with religious or cultural diversity. Still, we try to provide good experiences for students."*

In Case 4, teachers highlighted that while infrastructural support was good, there were no instructions for including non-Islamic festivals. In Case 5, management involvement was particularly highlighted, with teachers reporting,

> *"No instructions regarding some celebrations are given, but we try to create a positive environment for students within the allowed framework."*

This analysis highlights significant variations in school programme organisation and inclusivity across different management types. Government and aided schools emerged as spaces with participatory decision-making, inclusive practices, and strong community involvement. In contrast, unaided management schools reflected more hierarchical structures with management-dominated decision processes, selective programme content, and limited scope for religious and cultural diversity. And across all cases, teachers demonstrated commendable commitment in ensuring meaningful student participation and quality programme execution within the constraints of their respective institutional contexts.

Students' Perception and Experiences of School Programmes. To understand students' experiences and perceptions of school celebrations and events,

Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were conducted with upper primary students from five case schools. The discussions focused on the types of programmes conducted, the students' enjoyment, perceived inclusivity, and challenges faced. The analysis of data led to four prominent sub-themes, highlighting how students view and interpret the programme culture in their schools.

Programme Variety and Institutional Culture. Students from Case 1 (Government School) and Case 2 (Aided School) consistently expressed positive perceptions regarding the range and inclusivity of school programmes. They perceived their schools as vibrant spaces where a variety of cultural, religious, and national celebrations were regularly organised. Students in Case 1 remarked:

> *"Many programmes and all cultural and school-based celebrations are conducted, and we happily participate."*

These students also saw the celebrations as occasions for communal joy and friendly competition with students from other schools, suggesting a sense of pride in their school's programme culture.

In contrast, students from unaided management schools perceived their institutions as more restrictive and selective in organising programmes. In Case 3 (Unaided Hindu Management School), students acknowledged that while certain events like Onam, Vishu, and Hindu religious festivals were celebrated, others, such as Eid and Christmas, were omitted. They perceived this as a limitation, as one student noted:

> *"We celebrate Guru Pooja and Srikrishna Jayanthi, but there's no Eid or Christmas in our school."*

Students in Case 4 (Unaided Muslim Management School) expressed disappointment over the exclusion of non-Islamic festivals, perceiving their school's celebration culture as narrow and lacking in diversity.

Enjoyment and Experiences of Programmes. Students across all schools described school celebrations as moments of happiness, social bonding, and relief from academic routines. In Case 1, students emphasised their excitement during events like Onam, explaining:

> *"During Onam, there are many competitions, and we are very interested. It's our favourite time because there are fewer classes and more fun."*

In Case 2, however, while students enjoyed the celebrations, some felt marginalised when teachers selectively chose participants based on personal preference. One student commented:

> *"In some programmes we feel 'poka' (worthless), because teachers pick the same students."*

Students from Cases 3 and 4 perceived their enjoyment of programmes as limited due to restrictions imposed by management or certain teachers. In Case 4, students expressed dissatisfaction that;

> *"Our neighbouring friends have more celebrations than us, and we get tense when they share their experiences."*

These perceptions reflect an emotional longing for a more inclusive and varied celebration culture, as well as a sense of exclusion and comparative deprivation.

Perception of Inclusivity and Freedom of Participation. In government and aided schools (Cases 1 and 2), students perceived participation as generally open, though they acknowledged instances of bias in selection for individual performances. While group events and competitions were widely enjoyed, some students preferred not to engage in solo acts. One student in Case 1 remarked:

> *"We get opportunities to participate, but we're not interested in individual performances."*

In unaided management schools (Cases 3, 4, and 5), students perceived limited freedom in programme content and participation opportunities. In Case 3, students reported celebrating some festivals unofficially in classrooms, such as:

> *"Students initiated a collective sadhya (special meal) for Onam and made reels for Christmas to send to friends."*

This highlights students' agency in creating informal spaces for cultural expression when institutional programmes did not meet their expectations. In Case 5, although some programmes were held, students perceived the school's focus on academics rather than celebrations and programmes. A student commented:

> "*Teachers say there's no time for programmes; study comes first."*

Perception of Challenges and Institutional Support. Students' perceptions of the challenges surrounding school programmes varied across management types. In Cases 1 and 2, while students appreciated teacher encouragement and community involvement, they felt that local adults often dominate the school programmes, leaving limited space for student-led initiatives. As a student in Case 1 expressed that:

> *"Local people are making the programmes their own, and we are getting fewer opportunities."*

In Case 2, students also pointed to practical challenges like fund collection, which occasionally burdened celebrations, and criticised teachers for prioritising social media visibility over student experiences. A student remarked:

> *"The main programme for teachers is making reels and posting them in school groups."*

In unaided schools (Cases 3, 4, and 5), students perceived management control and certain teachers' restrictive attitudes as significant challenges. In Case 4, a student bravely commented,

"Some teachers are 'monnas' (narrow-minded); they don't support many programmes."

Despite these constraints, students expressed a clear desire for broader, more inclusive celebrations and lamented missed opportunities when comparing their school life to that of peers in other institutions.

This analysis of students' perceptions reveals distinct differences in how school programme cultures are experienced across different case schools. Government and aided schools are perceived as relatively open and community-driven, though students noted occasional favouritism and adult dominance. Unaided religious management schools, on the other hand, are perceived as restrictive, selective, and heavily management-controlled, with limited inclusivity in programme content. Across all settings, students valued celebrations as essential opportunities for enjoyment, cultural expression, and relief from academic pressure.

Triangulated Interpretation and Summary

The triangulated analysis of data collected through document analysis, teacher interviews, and student Focus Group Discussions provides an in-depth understanding of how and what school programmes and celebrations are organised, perceived, and experienced within upper primary schools in Kerala. The findings reveal distinct patterns shaped by the nature of school management, influencing the inclusivity, variety, and participatory culture of school programmes.

The data consistently show that government and aided schools maintain relatively inclusive, balanced, and participatory programme calendars. Both document analysis and teachers' accounts highlight a rich variety of religious and national festival celebrations, encompassing major events like Onam, Eid, Christmas, Independence Day, and Republic Day. Teachers in these schools reported collaborative decision-making processes involving staff discussions and

parental support, with responsibilities distributed among teachers for effective implementation. Correspondingly, students in these schools described their programme culture as vibrant, diverse, and enjoyable, associating school celebrations with moments of happiness, cultural exposure, and relief from academic routines. However, both teachers and students raised concerns regarding certain operational issues, including occasional favouritism in participant selection, fund collection challenges, and an emerging trend of prioritising social media visibility over authentic student engagement.

In contrast, unaided management schools displayed a mono-religious and management-controlled pattern of programme organisation. The document review confirmed the selective inclusion of religious and cultural events that aligned with the management's religious identity, while festivals representing other faiths were systematically excluded. Teachers acknowledged these restrictions, citing top-down decision-making structures where programmes were fixed by the management and teachers served as executors of assigned duties. Students in these schools expressed mixed sentiments, enjoying the celebrations permitted while voicing dissatisfaction over the absence of culturally diverse festivals. Particularly in unaided Hindu and Muslim management schools, students reported informal, private celebrations organised independently within classrooms to compensate for institutional omissions. This reflects both a latent desire for broader cultural experiences and students' agency in negotiating their programme culture.

Across all management types, teachers demonstrated a commendable sense of commitment, striving to organise meaningful programmes within institutional constraints. Government and aided school teachers benefited from stronger PTA and local community support, which helped to manage challenges like large student strength and limited resources. In unaided schools, however, teachers' operational

roles were assigned by management directives, limiting their ability to introduce diverse or inclusive programmes. Students' perceptions similarly mirrored these institutional realities. While students in government and aided schools appreciated the relative openness and inclusivity of their school celebrations, they critiqued the increasing dominance of adults and local community figures in some school programmes. In unaided schools, students perceived management control and certain teachers' restrictive attitudes as major barriers to a culturally inclusive and participatory programme culture. The Government and aided schools emerged as more inclusive, community-driven spaces for cultural expression, while unaided management schools largely reinforced mono-religious identities, with limited scope for religious and cultural diversity. Despite these variations, teachers across all cases displayed professional dedication to ensuring programme success, and students consistently valued celebrations as essential opportunities for enjoyment, cultural learning, and social engagement.

School Arts Festivals and Cultural Programmes

School arts festivals and cultural programmes are integral components of school life, providing students with valuable opportunities to express their artistic abilities, engage with their cultural traditions, and experience the diverse socio-religious heritage embedded within their communities. This section examines the nature, inclusivity, and cultural representation within the arts festivals and cultural programmes organised across the selected case schools.

Document Analysis. The data regarding school arts festivals and cultural programmes were collected through document analysis. This involved reviewing school reports, event schedules, and school social media handles to identify the types of cultural and artistic programmes conducted in each case school. The findings are summarised in Table 61.

Table 61

Details of Arts Festival and Cultural Programmes Conducted Across Schools Selected as Cases

Programme Category	Case 1 Government School	Case 2 Aided School	Case 3Unaided Hindu Management School	Case 4 Unaided Muslim Management School	Case 5Unaided Christian Management School
Islamic Culture-Based Programme	Oppana, Duffmuttu, Kolkali, Mappilappattu, Arabic Song, Arabic Poem Recitation, Arabic Speech, Vattappattu	Oppana, Duffmuttu, Aravana Muttu, Kolkali, Mappilappattu, Arabic Song, Arabic Poem Recitation	Mappilappattu	Oppana, Duffmuttu, Kolkali, Mappilappattu, Arabic Song, Arabic Poem Recitation, Arabic Speech, Arabic Dance, Kissappattu	Oppana, Mappilappattu, Arabic Song
Hindu Culture-Based Programmes	Bharatanatyam, Mohiniyattam, Kuchipudi, Folk Dance, Nadan Pattu	Bharatanatyam, Mohiniyattam, Kuchipudi, Devotional Song, Margam Kali, Folk Dance, Nadan Pattu	Bharatanatyam, Mohiniyattam, Kuchipudi, Devotional Song, Margam Kali, Folk Dance, Nadan Pattu	Nadan Pattu	Devotional Song, Margam Kali, Folk Dance, Nadan Pattu
Christian Culture-Based Programmes	Margam Kali, Folk Dance, Devotional Songs	Margam Kali, Devotional Songs, Carole Song	No programme	No programme	Margam Kali, Devotional Songs, Carole Song, Christmas Card Making
Cross-Cultural Items	Cinematic Dance, Nadan Pattu, Light Music, Skit, Fancy Dress, Tablo, Mono Act, Speech/Recitation, Versification, Drawing, Essay Writing, Water Colouring, Poster Making	Cinematic Dance, Nadan Pattu, Light Music, Skit, Mime, Fancy Dress, Tablo, Mono Act, Speech/Recitation, Versification, Drawing, Essay Writing, Water Colouring, Poster Making	Cinematic Dance, Nadan Pattu, Light Music, Song, Skit, Mono Act, Versification, Drawing, Water Colouring, Poster Making	Nadan Pattu, Mono Act, Speech/Recitation, Versification, Drawing, English Poem Recitation, Essay, Water Colouring, Poster Making	Cinematic Dance, Nadan Pattu, Light Music Dance, Skit, Mono Act, Poem Recitation, Drawing, Essay, Water Colouring, Poster Making
Related to National Themes	Patriotic Song	National Anthem Competition, Patriotic Song	Patriotic Song	Patriotic Song	Patriotic Song

Table 61 presents a detailed cross-case comparison of the types of arts festivals and cultural programmes conducted in five selected upper primary case schools in Kerala. The table organises the programmes into four categories: Islamic culture-based programmes, Hindu culture-based programmes, Christian culture-based programmes, and cross-cultural items.

The data reveal that both the Government School (Case 1) and the Aided School (Case 2) included a broad variety of cultural programmes representing Islamic, Hindu, and Christian traditions, alongside a wide range of cross-cultural and secular events. These institutions organised Islamic art forms such as *Oppana, Duffmuttu, Mappilappattu*, and *Arabic Songs;* Hindu classical and folk performances like *Bharatanatyam, Mohiniyattam, Kuchipudi*, and *Nadan Pattu;* and Christian cultural items including *Margam Kali, Devotional Songs*, and *Carole Songs*. Additionally, they conducted diverse secular competitions such as *Cinematic Dance, Patriotic Songs, Skit, Poster Making*, and *Essay Writing,* reflecting an inclusive and pluralistic approach to cultural programming.

The Unaided Hindu Management School (Case 3) featured a programme calendar heavily dominated by Hindu culture-based items, prominently including *Bharatanatyam, Mohiniyattam, Kuchipudi, Folk Dance, Margam Kali, Devotional Songs*, and *Nadan Pattu.* Islamic and Christian art forms were entirely absent, indicating a selective and monocultural programming pattern. While secular and cross-cultural items were included, they appeared supplementary to the dominant religiously aligned events.

The Unaided Muslim Management School (Case 4) predominantly organised Islamic cultural programmes, including *Oppana, Duffmuttu, Kolkali, Mappilappattu*, *Arabic Speech, Kissappattu,* and *Arabic Kavali*. Hindu and Christian cultural items

were not included in this school's arts festival. However, a moderate range of cross-cultural items, such as *Nadan Pattu, Mono Act, Drawing, Essay Writing,* and *Patriotic Songs,* were conducted, though these remained secondary in prominence compared to Islamic programmes.

The Unaided Christian Management School (Case 5) prioritised Christian culture-based programmes such as *Margam Kali, Devotional Songs, Carole Songs*, and *Christmas card making*. Additionally, the school included a limited number of Islamic culture-based items like *Oppana, Mappilappattu*, and *Arabic Song*, reflecting some degree of cultural representation beyond its religious affiliation. Hindu cultural programmes were moderately represented through items like *Devotional Songs, Margam Kali, Folk Dance*, and *Nadan Pattu*. The school organised a reasonable range of cross-cultural and secular programmes such as *Cinematic Dance, Nadan Pattu, Light Music, Skit, Poem Recitation, Poster Making*, and Essay Writing, though the overall number of items was lower compared to government and aided schools.

The analysis highlights significant differences in the diversity and inclusivity of arts festivals and cultural programmes across school types. Government and aided schools demonstrated a pluralistic and balanced approach, incorporating cultural items from Hindu, Muslim, and Christian traditions alongside secular and cross-cultural items. In contrast, unaided religious management schools largely aligned their programme selections with their respective religious and cultural identities, resulting in the selective inclusion of other community representations. Unlike other unaided management schools, the Unaided Christian Management School (Case 5) exhibited a relatively more inclusive stance by incorporating selective Islamic and Hindu cultural items alongside Christian and secular programmes. However, the volume and variety of such items remained modest compared to government and aided schools. The

analysis highlights the strong influence of institutional management structures on the scope, diversity, and intercultural opportunities available to students within Kerala's upper primary schools.

Teachers' Perception of Diversity in School Arts Festivals and Cultural Programmes. In addition to the document analysis, semi-structured interviews were conducted with selected teachers from the five case schools to understand their perceptions regarding the planning, inclusivity, and socio-cultural relevance of arts festivals and cultural programmes. A thematic analysis of the interview data revealed four key sub-themes, and they are discussed below.

Programme Variety and Opportunities for Diversity Exposure. Teachers from both government (Case 1) and aided schools (Case 2) expressed a positive view of the variety and inclusivity of arts festivals and cultural programmes. They perceived these events as meaningful opportunities for students to engage with socio-cultural diversity within the school environment. A teacher from the government school (Case 1) remarked:

> *Yes, I think we are providing maximum opportunity to experience diversity through different programmes."*

Another teacher in the aided school (Case 2) observed:

> *"Many programmes like arts, sports, cultural events, and study tours are enough to provide students with a common experience of the diversity that exists in our society."*

In contrast, teachers in the unaided management schools noted programme limitations, especially regarding inclusivity. A teacher from the unaided Muslim management school (Case 4) stated:

> *"Arts, sports, and day celebrations like Eid and Nabi Dinam are celebrated… but Onam and Christmas and related cultural events are not promoted by the management."*

Meanwhile, in the unaided Christian management school (Case 5), one teacher observed:

> *"Many programmes like arts, sports, and cultural celebrations are held. Christmas is celebrated well, but other celebrations like Eid and Vishu are not conducted, and such a demand has not risen from students and parents."*

This indicates a clear pattern of management-led selectivity in programme variety across unaided religious schools.

Strategies to Promote Socio-Cultural and Religious Diversity. Teachers in government and aided schools highlighted deliberate efforts to promote socio-cultural diversity through programme content and student participation strategies. A teacher from Case 1 shared:

> *"We conduct many programmes like arts and sports day, and other programmes. I think these are providing enough chance for students to experience diversity and develop a common understanding."*

Teachers in aided schools also emphasised inclusive programme planning:

> *"Different programmes like sports, arts, Christmas, and Onam day celebrations are conducted… We think students are engaging with diversity in many contexts, like competitions and celebrations."*

However, in unaided management schools, teachers acknowledged limited efforts due to institutional restrictions. A teacher from Case 4 admitted:

> *"We provide possible programmes, but I don't think the school programmes are enough. Still, students are getting exposure from their surroundings."*

Most teachers in government and aided schools perceived arts and cultural programmes as effective in promoting diversity awareness. One teacher in Case 2 commented:

> *"Maximum programmes are conducted, and I think students are getting a common experience of diversity factors."*

In contrast, teachers in unaided religious schools expressed reservations about the effectiveness of their current programme frameworks. A teacher in Case 3 observed:

> "*Students are getting insight through curricular and content-based programmes."*

This illustrates a gap between awareness of the need for inclusive programming and actual institutional practice in unaided religious schools.

Management Influence and Institutional Constraints. The extent of management control emerged clearly from teacher accounts, especially in unaided management schools. In Case 4, one teacher reported:

> *"Organisational duties are managed by some persons, so we can't add many items to the programme list."*

Similarly, in the Hindu management school (Case 5), a teacher acknowledged selective celebrations and programmes:

> *"It's difficult to include more diverse items, as students are unfamiliar with programmes and art forms from other cultures, and they don't know how to prepare or perform them."*

The data from teachers interviews reveal that while government and aided schools maintain relatively inclusive and varied cultural programming with a

conscious emphasis on socio-cultural diversity, unaided management schools demonstrate selective programme planning aligned with their religious identities. Teachers in public and aided schools actively advocate and plan for inclusivity, while teachers in unaided schools recognise limitations but cite management restrictions as a constraint. Across all schools, teachers expressed a desire for increased diversity and broader cultural representation within arts festivals and cultural programmes.

Students' Experiences and Perception Regarding Diversity in School Arts and Cultural Programmes. In addition to document analysis and semi-structured interviews with teachers, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were conducted with selected students from the five case schools to explore their experiences and perceptions regarding the organisation, participation, and socio-cultural diversity in school arts festivals and cultural programmes. Thematic analysis of the FGD data identified five major themes with relevant sub-themes, which are discussed below.

Organisation and Management of Arts and Cultural Programmes.

Teacher controlled Organisation and Grouping. Across all five case schools, students reported that teachers played a central role in planning and managing arts festivals and annual day celebrations. Teachers were responsible for announcing programme dates, forming student groups or houses, and conducting competitions. Students recognised the active involvement of teachers in programme organisation. One student from Case 1 school observed,

> "*Teachers announce the dates and divide us into groups. They take charge of each group and arrange the competitions."*

Another student in case 5 school noted,

> *"Our group in charge teacher checks which programme we can do and makes a list. They give us practice and tell us when to come."*

Annual Day as a Public Event. Students across schools mentioned that annual day programmes were significant public events attended by parents, socio-political leaders, and local community members. While students appreciated the grandeur of these events, some felt disappointed by unequal participation opportunities. A student from the case 1 school shared,

> *"We don't get many chances on the annual day. Some students are always selected, and we are asked to help backstage."*

Nature of Programmes Included.

Programme Selection Controlled by Teachers. In all cases, schools based on students' perceptions, teachers controlled the selection of cultural items and finalised programme lists, often displayed on school notice boards. Students indicated that although teachers sometimes sought their preferences, final decisions rested with them. A student from case 2 remarked,

> *"Teachers fix the programmes and show them on the notice board. We can choose only from that."*

Limited Representation of Other Communities. Students acknowledged that performances from other religious or cultural groups were rarely included. For example, in the unaided Muslim management school, students reported that certain culturally specific items like Oppana and Duff muttu were encouraged, while other forms, such as drama and skits, were discouraged by moral teachers. One student in case 4 explained,

> *"We have many programmes like oppana and daff muttu, but drama and skit are not allowed. Some moral teachers say those are not good for us."*

Another student from the case 3 school mentioned,

> *"Only our usual programmes are there. Programmes from other religions are not included here."*

Student Participation Patterns and Opportunities.

Voluntary and Compulsory Participation. Student participation patterns varied across schools. In some, participation was made compulsory by assigning students specific roles, while in others it remained voluntary. Several students confessed to using these programmes as an excuse to avoid regular classes. A student from Case 2 school said,

> *"We sometimes join programmes just to skip classes. If there are too many students in a group, we can avoid participation."*

Partial Inclusion and Unequal Opportunities. Students expressed concerns about unequal opportunities for participation. Certain students were repeatedly selected for important performances, while others were given minor duties or excluded altogether. A student in Case 1 school expressed,

> *"Only some students are called for programmes. We are given duties like bringing water or arranging chairs."*

Teacher Support and Encouragement.

Active Support in Preparations. Most students acknowledged receiving support from teachers during programme preparations. Teachers arranged practice sessions, guided performances, and encouraged participation. A student from the Case5 school commented,

"Teachers help us practise and tell us what to do on the stage. They also give us ideas for programmes."

Restrictive Practices by Some Teachers. Conversely, students noted that in certain cases, especially in case 4 (unaided Muslim management), some teachers imposed restrictions based on moral or religious grounds. One student pointed out,

"Drama and skits are not promoted here because some teachers see it as a programme to promote among students"

Community and Parental Involvement. Across all schools, students mentioned the participation of parents, local socio-political leaders, and community members during annual day programmes. This made the events highly significant public occasions for students. A student from the case 3 school noted,

"Our parents and nearby people come for the annual day. Political leaders also attend and give speeches."

The Focus Group Discussions revealed that while students appreciated the organised nature of school arts and cultural programmes, they experienced limitations in terms of programme diversity, representation of other cultural communities, and equitable participation opportunities. Teachers played a pivotal role in both promoting and restricting programme content and student involvement. Although active teacher support was acknowledged, the socio-cultural inclusivity within arts and cultural programmes remained limited, reflecting the religious and management affiliations of the respective schools.

Interpretation and Summary. The data obtained through document analysis, teacher interviews, and student Focus Group Discussions collectively reveal a consistent pattern regarding the nature, inclusivity, and management of arts festivals and cultural programmes in upper primary schools of Kerala. The findings confirm that institutional management type plays a decisive role in determining the diversity and cultural representation of programmes conducted in schools.

Government and aided schools demonstrated comparatively inclusive and pluralistic cultural programming, incorporating a wide range of art forms and cultural items drawn from Islamic, Hindu, Christian, and secular traditions. Teachers in these schools perceived their programmes as opportunities for students to experience socio-cultural diversity, and students similarly confirmed exposure to varied cultural performances. School documents reflected a balanced representation of cultural items, and annual day events in particular emerged as significant public occasions, well-attended by parents, socio-political leaders, and the wider community.

In contrast, unaided religious management schools exhibited selective and religiously aligned programme patterns. The unaided Muslim management school prioritised Islamic cultural art forms while excluding Hindu and Christian cultural items. Similarly, the unaided Hindu management school featured predominantly Hindu cultural programmes, with negligible representation of other religious or cultural groups. Notably, the unaided Christian management school showed relatively better intercultural inclusion by incorporating Islamic and Hindu art forms and remained modest compared to government and aided schools. Teachers in these unaided schools acknowledged the limitations in cultural diversity, attributing them

to management-imposed restrictions and a perceived lack of student familiarity with other community art forms.

Across all five Case schools, teachers played a central organisational role in managing arts festivals and cultural programmes. Teachers were responsible for programme scheduling, forming student groups, providing practice sessions, and coordinating competitions. While teachers in government and aided schools reported deliberate efforts to promote diversity and participation, those in unaided management schools admitted limited freedom due to management control. Students consistently acknowledged teacher involvement, though they expressed concerns over limited agency in programme selection and unequal opportunities for participation. Certain students were repeatedly selected for prominent performances, while others were assigned peripheral duties such as backstage arrangements or logistical support.

Another consistent pattern was observed in community and parental involvement in school programmes, which were significant public events in all five schools. Teachers and students alike valued these occasions for community interaction and school visibility, though the cultural inclusivity within such events mirrored the overall management-influenced programme pattern of each institution.

The triangulated interpretation of findings highlights that while government and aided schools in Kerala's upper primary sector maintain relatively inclusive and pluralistic cultural programming, unaided management schools demonstrate selective, mono-cultural practices shaped by their religious affiliations and institutional norms. The scope for intercultural experiences is thereby largely determined by school management policy, teacher discretion, and

community expectations. Teachers, though actively engaged in programme organisation and student encouragement, operate within institutionally determined frameworks, with limited autonomy in unaided schools. Students, while enjoying these cultural events, perceive unequal participation patterns and restricted cultural representation, indicating areas for policy-level reflection on inclusivity and diversity promotion within school arts and cultural education in Kerala.

Theme 3 - Clubs and Related Activities

Clubs and related activities are an essential part of school structure, providing opportunities for students to develop leadership skills, social responsibility, and cultural awareness. Educational frameworks like the National Education Policy (2020) and the Kerala State Education Commission Report (2007) recommend the promotion of inclusive, active student clubs to foster democratic values and socio-cultural engagement within schools. In this study, data from document analysis, teacher interviews, and student Focus Group Discussions were used to examine the nature, diversity, and inclusivity of clubs and related activities in five selected upper primary schools in Kerala. The results of this inquiry are discussed in the following sections.

Document Analysis

Data on school clubs and related activities were collected through analysing school records, club activity reports, and school social media handles. Details of the active clubs and activities conducted in each case school were analysed in detail, and the findings are presented in Table 62.

Table 62

Details of Active Clubs and Activities in Schools Selected as Cases

Club	Case 1 Government School	Case 2 Aided School	Case 3 Unaided Hindu Management School	Case 4 Unaided Muslim Management School	Case 2 Unaided Christian Management School
IT Club / Little Kites	Digital awareness programme	Data not available	Data not available	Data not available	Data not available
Literary Club	Reading Day competition, quiz, magazine, and poem recitation	Reading Day competition, quiz, magazine, and poem recitation	Data not available	Data not available	Data not available
Nature / Eco Club	World Environment Day, planting trees, awareness programmes, vegetable garden	Planting trees, seed distribution	Tree planting	Data not available	Tree planting, seed distribution
Science Club	Science Day celebration, notice board updates, video presentation on Chandra Dinam	Quiz competition on Chandra Dinam	Data not available	Video presentation on Chandra Dinam	Data not available
Maths Club	Data not available	Data not available	Active (details not specified)	Data not available	Maths club activities
Malayalam Club	Data not available	Active (activities not listed)	Data not available	Data not available	Data not available
English Club	Data not available	Data not available	Data not available	Active (activities not listed)	Reading competition, story writing, and morning news reading every day
Sports Club	Yoga celebration, health awareness, shoot-out competition, World Cup promotion	Yoga, health awareness, sports news corner	Data not available	Data not available	Health awareness, Yoga Day celebration
Social Service / SPC / JRC	Road safety awareness, volunteer services during school events	Data not available	Data not available	Data not available	Data not available

Club	Case 1 Government School	Case 2 Aided School	Case 3 Unaided Hindu Management School	Case 4 Unaided Muslim Management School	Case 2 Unaided Christian Management School
Hindi Club	Data not available	Data not available	Active (activities not listed)	Active (activities not listed)	Active (activities not listed)
Arabic Club	Reading competition, World Arabic Day celebration	Arabic Day celebration, Quran recitation competition	Data not available	Data not available	Data not available
Yoga Club	Data not available	Data not available	Yoga Day Celebration	Data not available	Data not available
Sanskrit club	Data not available	Data not available	Active but no programme listed	Data not available	Data not available

Table 62 presents details of active student clubs and related activities in the five selected upper primary case schools. The data reveal that government-aided schools (Case 1 and Case 2) maintained a broader range of active clubs, including IT Club, Literary Club, Nature/Eco Club, Science Club, and Sports Club, conducting activities such as environmental campaigns, literary competitions, health awareness programmes, and commemorative events like World Arabic Day and Science Day. Language-based events were also noted, though largely academic.

In contrast, unaided private management schools (Cases 3, 4, and 5) demonstrated a limited and selective club structure. While some general clubs like the IT Club and Science Club existed, other clubs, including the Literary Club, Sports Club, and Social Service units, were often absent. The number and variety of activities were accordingly restricted. The result points out the absence of different club activities explicitly promoting socio-cultural or religious diversity across all case schools. The data also indicate that several clubs were either not formed or inactive during the period of data collection, especially in unaided management

schools. This reflects inconsistencies in club formation and highlights the lack of a uniform policy framework for student clubs across school types.

The analysis reveals that government and aided schools offered comparatively wider club activities than unaided management schools; however, socio-cultural and religious diversity-focused club activities were absent across all cases.

Teachers' Perception on Clubs and Activities Promoting Diversity. To complement the document analysis, semi-structured interviews were conducted with selected teachers from the five case schools to gather their perceptions regarding the functioning of student clubs, the nature of club-based activities, and the extent to which these activities promote socio-cultural and religious diversity among students. A thematic analysis of the collected interview data led to the identification of the following major themes:

Nature and Focus of Active Clubs. Teachers across all five case schools reported the presence of various active student clubs, such as Eco Club, Science Club, Literary Club, IT Club, and Sports Club. These clubs regularly organised activities focused on general educational, environmental, and social awareness topics. However, no structured programmes specifically designed to promote socio-cultural or religious diversity were reported within these clubs. A teacher from the government school (case 1) observed:

> *"Many clubs, like Eco Club, Science Club, and Literary Club, are active under in-charge teachers. Programmes focus on general themes and understanding."*

Similarly, teachers in aided schools confirmed that active clubs offered opportunities for student involvement, but the themes remained largely generic. A teacher from an aided school (case 2) remarked:

> *"Maximum student involvement is ensured. Programmes celebrated under each club address different social realities, so I think students can understand the differences."*

In unaided management schools, teachers noted that while student clubs were active and students participated enthusiastically, most programmes were limited to academic competitions, environment day observances, and national day commemorations, with no dedicated focus on fostering socio-cultural or inter-religious understanding.

Role of Teachers in Mentoring and Promoting Inclusivity. Teachers described their active roles in motivating students, mentoring club activities, and facilitating participation. While some attempts were made to integrate social themes, these were often generalised and did not include specific socio-cultural diversity initiatives. A teacher from the Christian management school stated:

> "*Active clubs are conducting many programmes and providing opportunities to understand many things through these programmes. In the classroom and outside, we try to give maximum exposure to diversity and inclusiveness."*

However, across schools, teachers acknowledged that formal opportunities to promote intercultural awareness through club platforms remained underutilised, and most exposure to diversity was informal and incidental.

Reflections and Suggestions. When invited to suggest ways to improve inclusivity and diversity within school club related programmes, teachers offered several practical recommendations like Ensuring active participation of all students, Increasing the variety and number of programmes conducted and providing special time and space for club-based activities A teacher in case 1 recommended:

"Ensure active participation of all students and provide maximum support from teachers and parents".

A teacher from case 3 suggested:

"Celebrate different programmes and increase student involvement."

These suggestions collectively reveal a shared recognition among teachers that student clubs can serve as effective platforms for fostering socio-cultural understanding among learners, and club activities are consciously expanded in upper primary schools.

The thematic analysis of teacher interviews confirms that while a variety of clubs function actively across the case schools, their activities primarily focus on general education, environmental awareness, and social campaigns. Explicit socio-cultural and religious diversity-oriented programmes within these clubs are largely absent, reflecting the patterns identified through document analysis. Teachers actively facilitate these clubs and support student participation; however, the absence of structured diversity-focused initiatives limits the potential of these platforms to contribute to intercultural awareness.

Students' Perception of School Clubs and Activities. To supplement the findings from document analysis and teacher interviews, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were conducted with selected students from the five case schools to capture their experiences, perceptions, and suggestions related to student clubs and related activities promoting inclusivity. Thematic analysis of the FGD data put forth the following key themes.

Availability and Functioning of Active Clubs. Students from government and aided schools reported the presence of several active clubs in their schools,

including Eco Club, Literary Club, Science Club, and Sports Club. They described a range of activities such as reading competitions, quiz contests, poster making, gardening, and environmental campaigns. A student from Case 1 school shared:

> *"Many clubs and related programmes are conducted. Different programmes like reading competitions, quiz competitions, gardening, farming, and field visits happen here."*

At the same time, students from unaided religious management schools (particularly Cases 3, 4, and 5) reported a limited number of clubs and comparatively fewer activities. While some standard programmes like reading competitions, poster making, and fitness activities were organised, students observed that external and innovative club activities were rare. One student from the case 4 school noted:

> *"Teachers promote class-based activities, and no external activities are promoted. We're interested in many activities, but get limited opportunities and support."*

Student Participation Patterns and Experiences. Across all cases, students acknowledged participating in various club activities. However, several students described their participation as compulsory or teacher-driven rather than voluntary and interest-based. Some students also expressed that club activities were often seen as an opportunity to get out of regular classes rather than meaningful engagement. A student from case 1 reflected:

> *"Club activities provide an opportunity to go out of regular classes. Some are interesting, but many are done out of teachers' compulsion."*

In aided schools, students appreciated certain activities like gardening, reading competitions, and anti-drug awareness programmes, but found others repetitive and unengaging. Similarly, students from unaided schools reported that while teachers encouraged participation, many activities were monotonous and lacked novelty. One student noted:

> *"Programmes are old and normal. There's no variety or anything new. Some programmes are boring, and we just attend them."*

Students' Suggestions for Improvement. When asked for recommendations to make programmes interesting and inclusive, students across school types voiced a desire for: More innovative and diverse activities, Use of digital tools and media in programmes, Reduced teacher-student hierarchy and fear, Inclusive celebrations of all festivals and events. A student from case 2 school suggested,

> *"School programmes are not only for teachers and for taking reels. Give equal chances for student participation."*

Similarly, another student recommended:

> *"Promote all types of programmes and celebrate all events like Onam and Christmas. Teachers should not be in charge of everything."*

The thematic analysis of FGD data reveals that while student clubs exist and function actively to varying extents across the five case schools, their inclusivity, variety, and socio-cultural relevance remain limited. The Government and aided schools provided comparatively more club activities, but participation was often teacher-directed and occasionally perceived as obligatory. Unaided management schools demonstrated restricted opportunities, limited club activities, and minimal exposure to diverse social or cultural themes through their club-related activities.

Triangulated Analysis. The data obtained through document analysis, semi-structured interviews with teachers, and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with students collectively highlight the varying nature, scope, and inclusivity of student clubs and related activities across the five selected upper primary schools in Kerala. The findings from these three sources were compared and synthesised to identify converging patterns, variations, and gaps in practice.

Document analysis revealed that the government and aided schools (Cases 1 and 2) maintained a broader and more structured range of student clubs, including the IT Club, Literary Club, Nature Club, Science Club, and Sports Club. These clubs organised a relatively diverse set of activities such as environmental campaigns, health awareness programmes, literary competitions, and commemorative events. However, socio-cultural and religious diversity-oriented programmes were notably absent across all cases. In unaided private management schools (Cases 3, 4, and 5), the presence and range of student clubs were limited, with fewer activities conducted and several clubs either unformed or inactive at the time of data collection.

Teacher interviews largely supported these observations. Teachers in government and aided schools confirmed the existence of multiple active clubs and regular programmes, though these typically focused on general educational, environmental, or health themes. Teachers acknowledged their active roles in guiding and facilitating these activities but admitted that specific initiatives promoting socio-cultural and religious inclusivity were not part of the formal club agenda. In unaided management schools, while clubs existed and students participated, the nature of activities remained generic and academic, with limited exposure to socio-cultural diversity themes. Teachers also offered recommendations to broaden the scope of club programmes and ensure more inclusive student participation.

Student FGDs also explored the same patterns. Students in government and aided schools reported participating in a variety of club-based activities such as reading competitions, gardening, health awareness events, and quiz contests. However, many students described these activities as repetitive, teacher-directed, and sometimes obligatory, with limited opportunities for student-led or innovative initiatives. In unaided religious management schools, students highlighted restricted club functioning, fewer activities, and limited opportunities for diverse engagement. Across all cases, students expressed a desire for more interesting, inclusive, and culturally diverse programmes and recommended that school celebrations reflect broader social and cultural themes, incorporating new media, technology, and interactive formats.

The triangulated analysis reveals that school management type strongly influences the formation, scope, and inclusivity of student clubs in upper primary schools in Kerala. Government-aided schools offered comparatively wider club activities than unaided management schools. However, across all cases, activities explicitly addressing socio-cultural and religious diversity were absent, and club-based programmes mainly focused on general educational and environmental themes. These findings stress the need for more structured practices to integrate socio-cultural and religious diversity perspectives into club-related school activities to strengthen students' experience with socio-cultural and religious diversity in different types of primary schools in Karla.

Particular emphasis was given to capturing students' perceptions of diversity, the nature of their friendships, their participation in cultural and religious celebrations, and their overall experiences of inclusivity within the school environment.

Parental Perception and Preferences in Children's Schooling

Parental involvement plays a crucial role in shaping children's educational pathways, particularly during the early stages of schooling. In Kerala, where a wide range of government-aided and unaided private schools operate under diverse socio-

cultural and religious managements, parents' perceptions, priorities, and preferences strongly influence school selection. The upper primary level typically represents the final stage where school choice is made primarily by parents as a family decision before children begin to develop and voice their own opinions about their schooling preferences and environments (Balarin, 2014; Sriprakash, 2010). Studies such as Jain and Prasad (2018) and Nambissan (2012) have indicated that in Kerala, parental preferences in their children's school selection are largely influenced by factors like academic performance, infrastructure quality, and proximity to home. Recognising this, the present study examined how parents perceive the education and schooling environment of their children, the factors that influence their decisions in selecting schools at the upper primary level, and whether cultural or religious preferences form part of these considerations.

To explore these aspects, semi-structured interviews were conducted with available parents from the selected case schools to understand their perceptions regarding their children's schooling, their reasons for choosing particular schools, and the extent to which cultural or religious preferences influenced these decisions. The findings from these interviews are presented and discussed below.

Perception of the School Environment. Across all five case schools, parents expressed a high degree of satisfaction with their children's schooling experience. They consistently described the schools as providing a safe, supportive, and caring atmosphere, with teachers actively involved in student welfare and academic progress. Minor issues such as transportation difficulties were noted in some cases, particularly in Cases 1 and 2, where a parent raised problems related to students' transportation. No parent across any case reported concerns related to the school's socio-cultural or religious environment as a negative factor.

Factors Influencing School Selection. The analysis revealed that while parents across all five case schools prioritised academic quality, proximity to home, transportation convenience, and school reputation, certain case-specific preferences were evident. In Case 1 (Government School), parents selected the school for practical reasons such as its proximity, availability of transportation, no fees, free books and uniforms, and the presence of other neighbourhood children studying in the same institution. In Case 2 (Aided Management School), parents similarly prioritised academic quality, proximity, and transportation facilities, along with the school's favourable reputation in the locality.

In Case 3 (Private Hindu Management School), parents cited academic quality, transportation facilities, the medium of instruction, the moral background of the school, and the variety of its programmes and practices as reasons for admission. While no parent explicitly mentioned religious or cultural preference, field observations revealed that the term 'moral background' in this context was closely linked to the school's religious-cultural identity and value system rooted in Hindu traditions, making it a prime consideration in school selection for these parents. A similar pattern was observed in Case 4 (Private Muslim Management School), where parents valued a safe and disciplined atmosphere, academic quality, transportation arrangements from both mothers' and fathers' homes, the school's moral background, and the medium of instruction. Here too, the reference to 'moral background' was understood, based on field observations, to reflect the school's religious-cultural environment grounded in Islamic values promoted by the management, and it stood out as a primary factor influencing parental choice.

In Case 5 (Private Christian Management School), parents highlighted academic quality, facilities, proximity to home, transportation convenience, and,

importantly, the school's strong reputation within the local community as key factors guiding their decision. Across all cases, while academic quality, proximity, and transportation remained common priorities, moral background and school atmosphere emerged as prime considerations in parental school selection in Cases 3 and 4. In these schools, parental preferences appeared closely influenced by the school's religious-cultural identity and value framework.

Parental Involvement in School Activities. The analysis showed that parents across all five case schools demonstrated varying levels of involvement in their children's education and school-related activities. In Case 1 (Government School), parents reported actively attending PTA meetings, regularly contacting teachers, and offering support to school events whenever possible. They also valued informal interactions with teachers and noted that their children frequently share school experiences at home. In Case 2 (Aided Management School), parental involvement was similarly consistent, with parents regularly participating in PTA meetings, programme functions, and occasional parent-teacher interactions. Some parents expressed that while they appreciated these opportunities, job-related emergencies occasionally limited their opportunity to attend every event.

In Case 3 (Private Hindu Management School), parents maintained active engagement through PTA meetings and informal discussions with teachers. In Case 4 (Private Muslim Management School), parental involvement was particularly strong, with parents highlighting regular communication through WhatsApp groups, consistent meetings with teachers, and active participation in school programmes. In Case 5 (Private Christian Management School), parents reported active involvement through PTA meetings, regular contact with teachers, and attendance at school functions when possible. They appreciated being invited to events and noted that while attendance at every programme was not always possible due to personal

commitments, they remained closely connected to the school through routine communication. Parents across all case school schools demonstrated a supportive attitude towards the school activities.

Perception of School Programmes and Celebrations. The analysis revealed that parents across all five case schools generally appreciated the range of programmes, celebrations, and extracurricular activities conducted by schools. In Case 1 (Government School), parents expressed satisfaction with the school's cultural and academic programmes. Parents valued the opportunity for children to engage in a variety of activities and felt that the school maintains a reasonable balance between programmes and academics. In Case 5 (Private Christian Management School), parents similarly reported satisfaction with the school's programme organisation, stating that events were well-planned. Parents appreciated receiving invitations to school celebrations, though personal commitments sometimes limited their ability to attend.

In Case 2 (Aided Management School), one parent raised the issue of how frequent school programmes sometimes disrupted academic learning time and created additional indirect responsibilities for parents. While the majority of parents appreciated the cultural exposure these events provided, this particular parent's comment suggested a tension between maintaining academic focus and fulfilling expectations tied to celebrations and school functions. In Case 3 (Private Hindu Management School), parents acknowledged that school programmes provide students with opportunities for exposure to our rich culture and heritage. In Case 4 (Private Muslim Management School), parents expressed concerns about the frequency of school events and the expectation for families to actively contribute through preparation work and logistics. While parents appreciated the value of these programmes for children's learning and social exposure, they reported difficulty in coping with the additional responsibilities.

The analysis of the data across the five case schools revealed a consistently positive perception of the schooling environment, with parents valuing the safe, supportive, and academically attentive atmosphere provided by schools. School selection decisions were primarily guided by academic quality, proximity, transportation convenience, and school reputation, though in Case 3 (Private Hindu Management School) and Case 4 (Private Muslim Management School), the schools' moral background – closely tied to their religious-cultural identity – emerged as a key consideration influencing some parental choice. Parents across cases demonstrated active involvement in school activities, commonly participating in PTA meetings and programme functions and maintaining regular contact with teachers. While overall satisfaction with school programmes and celebrations was high, concerns about programme frequency and the additional burden of event-related preparation work for families were noted in some of the case schools.

Conclusion of the Analysis of Diversity in School

The third objective of this study aimed to explore the nature and extent of socio-cultural and religious diversity in different types of upper primary schools of Kerala through a detailed examination of physical representation, school practices, and programme organisation. Data were gathered via an embedded case study approach, employing document analysis, field observations, semi-structured interviews, and Focus Group Discussions with multiple stakeholders, including students, teachers, head teachers, and parents from five selected case schools.

The analysis was organised under four thematic areas:

Diversity in Physical Representation. The study found that government and aided schools demonstrated relatively inclusive student and staff compositions across religious and social categories, reflecting open admission and public recruitment policies. In contrast, unaided Hindu management schools exhibited

complete religious homogeneity in both student and staff enrolment. In Case 4 (Unaided Muslim Management School), while student enrolment was entirely from the Muslim community, the staff composition was mixed, including teachers from different religious backgrounds. This reflected a degree of staff diversity within a religiously homogeneous student environment. The unaided Christian management school-maintained diversity in student enrolment, admitting students from Hindu, Muslim, and Christian communities. However, staff appointments reflected limited diversity, including Christian and Hindu teachers, with no Muslim staff members appointed. And Christian sisters occupied key management and leadership roles within the institution. Visual and material representations were similarly aligned with management types: government and aided schools displayed secular and national symbols, while unaided schools reinforced religious identities through artefacts, religious portraits, and festival decorations.

Diversity in School Practices. Government and unaided Christian management schools attempted to maintain inclusivity in morning prayer, assembly content, and classroom seating arrangements. In contrast, unaided Hindu and Muslim schools upheld mono-religious daily routines, reflecting their respective religious traditions. Teachers in government and Christian schools reported collaborative, inclusive practices, while other unaided schools followed management-directed, faith-specific routines. Students' accounts revealed dissatisfaction with repetitive prayers, unequal participation opportunities, and limited engagement in assemblies, particularly in religious unaided schools. Classroom seating remained mixed in government and Christian schools, partially grouped in aided schools, and religiously homogeneous in unaided Hindu and Muslim schools.

Diversity in School Programmes. The analysis showed that government and aided schools promoted inclusive cultural and national events covering multiple

religious festivals, while unaided Hindu and Muslim management schools restricted celebrations to their respective faith traditions. The unaided Christian management school demonstrated relatively broader inclusivity by acknowledging multiple festivals. Parents generally appreciated school programmes but expressed concerns in aided schools about academic time being reduced by frequent events and, in some unaided schools, about the burden of preparation work falling on families.

Parental Perception and Preferences. Parents' school selection preferences largely prioritised academic quality, proximity, transportation, and moral background. In unaided Hindu and Muslim schools, the 'moral background' preference was indirectly tied to the religious-cultural identity of the institution. Religious or cultural alignment was not explicitly stated by parents as a school selection criterion but was evident from contextual observations. Parental involvement in school activities varied, with government, aided, and Christian schools encouraging broader participation, while religious unaided schools maintained more restricted community-centric involvement.

The summary of the triangulated analysis of Objective 3 confirms that socio-cultural and religious diversity in Kerala's upper primary schools is significantly shaped by school management type. The Government and aided schools displayed greater inclusivity in admissions, staff appointments, and school practices and programmes. Unaided Hindu and Muslim management schools reinforced mono-religious identities, while the unaided Christian management school occupied a relatively balanced position between religious identity and broader inclusivity. Institutional philosophies and management priorities were found to have a major influence on diversity practices within schools.

Chapter 5

SUMMARY, FINDINGS & CONCLUSION



- Summary of the Study
- Findings and Interpretation of the Study
- Conclusions

This chapter presents a comprehensive summary and interpretation of the major findings of the study on Access, Participation, and Diversity among learners in Primary Schools of Kerala. The chapter is structured under the three core research objectives, with each section elaborating on the key themes and patterns that emerged from the data analysis. These findings are examined through the lens of development theories with a focus on social development, offering a deeper understanding of the socio-cultural and religious dynamics that influence access, participation, and diversity in the different types of school contexts. The chapter concludes with a synthesis of the findings in relation to the study objectives and theoretical framework.

Summary of the Study

The present study attempts to explore the extent of access, participation, and diversity among learners in primary schools of Kerala, with a focus on how different types of Upper Primary schools- government, aided, and private- facilitate secular educational experiences for children. This study was designed to examine these issues in the context of Kerala's Upper Primary education system, focusing on three core dimensions: access, participation, and diversity. The major objectives of the study were the following.

- To examine the extent of students' access to facilities, programmes, and practices across different types of primary schools in Kerala.
- To explore the extent of students' participation in terms of students' satisfaction in the use of school facilities, engagement in curricular activities and participation in co-curricular programmes in different types of primary schools in Kerala.
- To explore the nature and extent of socio-cultural and religious diversity in different types of primary schools in Kerala, in terms of physical representation, school practices, and school programmes.

Structured under these three objectives, the study used a mixed research method, including student questionnaires, teacher interviews, field observations, document analysis, and focus group discussions. Drawing from a wide range of stakeholders like students, teachers, parents, and school heads, the study offers a multi-dimensional understanding of how different types of Upper Primary school management types influence educational opportunities and inclusion in Kerala's primary education system. The data were analysed using percentage analysis and thematic analysis techniques. The findings are discussed in alignment with the developmental theories, providing insights into the systemic and social factors shaping the educational experience of children in the state.

The analysis of objective 1 revealed three major sub-themes: infrastructure-related factors, curricular facilities and programmes, and co-curricular facilities and activities.

The analysis of Objective 1 revealed significant differences in student access to infrastructural, curricular, and co-curricular facilities. Government schools provided comparatively better classroom infrastructure and the highest access to textbooks, audio-visual aids, and ICT tools, though their integration into classroom practice was inconsistent. Private schools offered near-universal transportation facilities and stronger participation in co-curricular clubs and structured events, whereas aided schools demonstrated limited access across most infrastructural and curricular indicators.

Analysis of Objective 2 indicated variations in student utilisation of facilities and participation in curricular and co-curricular domains. Government school students reported higher satisfaction with classroom infrastructure, playgrounds, and learning resources and demonstrated stronger engagement in classroom discussions,

debates, and practical experiments. Private schools, despite having superior infrastructure, recorded lower levels of classroom enthusiasm and academic engagement, while aided schools exhibited the lowest levels of participation, hindered by irregular teacher attendance and poorly maintained facilities. Participation in co-curricular domains such as sports and physical education was high in government and private schools, with private schools performing strongly in arts and cultural competitions. National celebrations attracted strong participation across all school types, while religious celebrations varied according to school management traditions.

Under Objective 3, the analysis highlighted substantial differences in socio-cultural and religious diversity across school types. Government and aided schools displayed the highest diversity in student and staff composition and maintained secular, inclusive practices and programmes. Unaided Hindu and Muslim schools exhibited religious homogeneity in both student body and staff, reflected in their faith-aligned assemblies, classroom practices, and festival celebrations. The unaided Christian school showed moderate diversity and inclusive practices. Parental perceptions revealed that academic quality, proximity, and moral environment were key considerations in school choice, though religious identity exerted an indirect influence in unaided religious schools.

The comprehensive analysis of the three objectives confirms that Upper Primary schools in Kerala differ substantially in student access, student participation, and socio-cultural and religious diversity practices, with these variations closely associated with school management types. Government schools consistently performed well in infrastructural provision, student participation, and diversity representation, although they continued to face operational challenges such as

maintenance issues and limited programme budgets. Private schools, despite offering superior infrastructure and structured academic timetables, underutilise their facilities for participatory and experiential learning, limiting broader student engagement. Aided schools consistently underperformed across all domains, highlighting deep-rooted systemic challenges in infrastructure, pedagogy, management, and inclusivity.

The analysis highlights the significance of early schooling environments in fostering social tolerance and inclusive social attitudes. Schools with balanced infrastructural provision, participatory pedagogies, and pluralistic environments were shown to contribute more effectively to the holistic development of children.

Findings and Interpretation of the Study

The summary of findings and interpretation on students' access, participation, and diversity is presented based on the research objectives and research questions in the following sections.

Students' Access to Facilities, Programmes and Practices

Grounded in developmental theories that emphasise the critical role of early experiences in shaping students' development and attitudes, this study focuses on students' self-reported opportunities to access infrastructural, curricular, and co-curricular facilities and activities within their schools. The findings are organised around three research questions addressing access to infrastructural and school facilities, access to curricular facilities and programmes and access to co-curricular facilities and activities, highlighting patterns and differences across government, aided, and private schools.

- The study highlights major variations in students' access to infrastructural, curricular, and co-curricular facilities and opportunities across different types of primary schools in Kerala. While core facilities and programmes were present

in most schools, the extent, quality, and variety of these provisions differed notably among government, aided, and unaided Upper Primary schools.

Access to Infrastructural Facilities

Major findings related to students access to school infrastructural facilities are:

- **Classroom and Basic Amenities.** Government schools generally offered more structurally sound classrooms with adequate seating, blackboards, and ventilation. Aided schools showed good lighting but poor maintenance and lack of storage facilities. Private schools had basic amenities but suffered from inconsistencies in comfort, lighting, and classroom management tools such as clocks and teaching stands.
- **Playground Facilities.** Private and government schools reported high availability of playgrounds. However, aided schools showed low playground access due to space repurposing and infrastructural expansions.
- Aided schools performed poorly, particularly in the provision of storage, lighting, ventilation, and environmental comfort.
- Unaided schools maintained adequate instructional facilities but suffered deficiencies in supplementary classroom resources and classroom environments.
- Student access to transportation facilities varied greatly among different types of Upper Primary schools, with private schools providing near-universal transport facilities, while aided and government schools lagged behind due to financial and operational limitations.
- **Drinking Water Facilities.** Access to drinking water facility was most satisfactory in private schools, while government schools faced maintenance issues.

Access to Curricular Facilities and Programmes

Findings related to students' access to Curricular Facilities and Programmes are:

- Related to students' access to curricular facilities and programmes, government schools ensured maximum textbook availability and outperformed other schools in providing access to audio-visual aids and ICT tools, although consistent integration into classroom practice remained limited.
- Aided schools showed strength in science and social science laboratory facilities, but the facilities were limited in terms of resources.
- Unaided schools led in the provision of access to notebooks, supplementary materials, and structured timetables, though the use of ICT and digital learning aids was notably underdeveloped.
- Library facilities were best maintained in government schools, while private and aided schools offered restricted access to literary resources, limiting opportunities for independent reading and knowledge extension.
- Private schools led in structured curriculum delivery, including adherence to timetables and teacher assessments. Government schools performed well in operational areas but were less strong in student-centred engagement. Aided schools showed the weakest implementation, partly due to shift-based scheduling and overcrowding.
- **ICT Infrastructure.** Government schools led in access to ICT resources, followed by aided schools, and private schools trailed far behind. Internet connectivity was universally poor. Many institutions depended on teachers' personal devices.

- **Curriculum Labs.** Aided schools had the best access to subject-specific labs. Government schools showed moderate access, while private school students have very low access, especially in math and social science labs. Language labs were almost non-existent across all school types. And IT labs were more consistently available.

Access to Co-curricular Facilities and Activities

Findings related to students' access to co-curricular Facilities and activities are:

- Related to co-curricular facilities and activities, government schools provided better access to audio-visual equipment for cultural and sports activities and promoted inclusive national celebrations.
- Private schools recorded higher student participation in co-curricular clubs and structured events, although meaningful integration into overall school life was limited.
- Aided schools consistently underperformed in both infrastructural provision and student participation in co-curricular activities, highlighting significant programme and resource gaps.
- **Audio-Visual and Cultural Resources:** Government schools offered the best access to audio-visual equipment enabling event-based support for celebrations and cultural programmes. Aided schools followed but regular usage was limited. Private schools had minimal AV infrastructure, often relying on mobile devices and informal setups,
- **Clubs and activities:** Private schools showed the highest rate of student access in co-curricular clubs and structured activities like school arts fests and exhibitions. Government schools also supported club activities, particularly through programmes tied to national festivals.

- **Sports Facilities:** Government schools led in providing access to sports facilities, offering adequate space for physical education and sports. Private schools followed with though limited space in urban settings constrained daily usage. Aided schools often operating in congested premises with no designated sports area.
- **Sports and Physical Education activities:** Government schools reported the highest student access to sports activities facilitated by dedicated sports hours. Aided schools and private schools showed slightly lower access.
- **Facilities for Arts and Creative Programmes:** Private schools promoted structured arts activities though often limited to a group of high-performing students. Government schools integrated the arts more actively during festivals and competitions. Aided schools have limited facilities and expert staff for arts education, which facilitates limited activities.
- Government schools made stronger efforts to integrate co-curricular activities into regular school life, especially through morning assemblies and celebration events.
- Private schools maintained structured but parallel systems for co-curriculars, often separated from common academic planning. Aided schools struggled with integration due to time constraints and low institutional support.

The findings reveal that while all types of Upper Primary schools in Kerala provide the basic structural framework for education, the extent and quality of students' access to infrastructural, curricular, and co-curricular facilities and activities vary significantly based on school management type. Government schools generally ensured access to essential physical infrastructure, co-curricular activities, and ICT resources, but faced issues related to maintenance, health provisions, and

limited access to supplementary materials. Aided schools performed best in sanitation and subject-specific labs but struggled with overcrowding, space limitations, and inconsistent programme implementation due to faculty shortages and time constraints. Private schools excelled in providing learning materials, transportation, and playgrounds but lagged in sanitation, lab access, and inclusive co-curricular engagement. The findings highlight that students' access is shaped not merely by the presence of facilities, but by how equitably and effectively they are integrated into the educational experience across different school contexts.

Students' Participation in Upper Primary Schools

The study highlights significant variations in students' participation across different types of primary schools in Kerala. While most schools provided the essential structures and provisions for student engagement, the extent, consistency, and richness of participation differed notably between government, aided, and private Upper Primary schools.

Utilisation of School Facilities and Infrastructure

- In terms of utilisation of school facilities, government schools recorded higher levels of student satisfaction with classroom infrastructure, playgrounds, and curricular resources.
- Private schools performed best in providing transportation and drinking water facilities but underutilised their ICT and co-curricular spaces.
- Aided schools ranked lowest in terms of student satisfaction and usage across these areas.
- While ICT tools and audio-visual aids were available in some private schools, their use remained limited, with government schools demonstrating better utilisation, particularly for classroom activities.

- While infrastructural presence is widespread, its maintenance and effective use are inconsistent across school types.
- Library usage was highest in government schools, where students reported high regular use, compared to aided and private schools.
- Use of ICT labs was widespread in government schools (94.59%), followed by aided (89.11%) and private (78.48%).
- Students utilisation of Science lab facility showed a reversed pattern, with aided schools leading slightly, followed by government and private schools significantly stay behind.

The qualitative insights confirmed that structured library periods were common in government schools, while aided and private schools either lacked staffing or had not integrated libraries into academic schedules. These findings indicate that beyond availability, institutional planning plays a key role in promoting students' meaningful use of common school facilities.

Qualitative insights revealed a clear gap between infrastructural provision and effective utilisation of co-curricular facilities. While private schools possessed well-equipped amenities, they were often underused. Government schools actively utilised available spaces despite limited resources, whereas aided schools frequently lacked even basic infrastructure for co-curricular activities.

Involvement in Curricular Activities

- Students' attendance remained high across all school types, with 91.42% of students in private schools, 88.39% in government, and 86.60% in aided schools attending regularly.
- Students in private schools reported the highest participation in class discussions

- Government school students showed higher engagement in practical learning such as role play and fieldwork compared to private and aided schools
- Qualitative data highlighted that government schools encouraged hands-on learning, while private schools prioritised structured academic tasks, and aided schools lacked consistent programming. These findings show that diverse teaching strategies directly affect active learning participation.
- The qualitative analysis indicated that teacher absenteeism in aided schools significantly disrupted structured learning. These patterns underline the importance of teacher availability and peer culture in fostering participatory learning environments.

Participation in Co-Curricular Programmes

- Student Participation in sports and games-related activities was highest in government schools and Separate sports hours were more regularly utilised by students in private and government schools.
- Sports activities were more integrated into the routine in government schools, supported by state-level initiatives. Aided schools faced infrastructural and staffing barriers, limiting student participation.
- Participation in arts and cultural programmes was highest in private schools, driven largely by competitive events and management emphasis.
- Unaided schools led in student participation in arts and cultural events. Government schools often relied on large-scale public events like school arts fests, while private and aided schools conducted internal cultural programmes more frequently.
- Qualitative insights noted that private schools had greater parent and management involvement in organising activities.

- Celebration of national events like Independence Day showed uniformly high participation across school types. Participation in Onam and Christmas celebrations was less common in private schools. Teachers in government and aided schools reported these events as part of their inclusive cultural programming, while some private schools limited religious celebration.
- Students in government schools reported the highest participation in club related activities and private schools reported minimal students' participation.

The findings reveal that while all school types provided basic structures for engagement, the extent, consistency, and depth of participation varied significantly based on institutional orientation and management practices. Government schools stood out for fostering active student involvement despite limited resources, with high participation in experiential learning, supplementary material use, and inclusive co-curricular programmes supported by structured planning and teacher commitment. In contrast, aided schools faced challenges due to inadequate infrastructure, irregular teacher presence, and lack of systematic programming, resulting in inconsistent participation. Private schools, although well-resourced and highly structured, tended to focus on academic performance, which limited students' engagement in hands-on and inclusive activities, leading to reduced interest and minimal participation in club-based and cultural initiatives. The study reveals that meaningful participation is not solely dependent on infrastructural availability but is deeply influenced by pedagogical practices, school culture, and institutional planning.

Diversity in School

To explore the socio-cultural and religious diversity in terms of physical representation, programmes, and practices conducted in different types of Upper Primary schools in Kerala.

Diversity in Physical Representation

Findings related to diversity in Physical representation are:

- Government and aided schools reflected relatively diverse student compositions, admitting children from multiple religious backgrounds, including Hindu, Muslim, and to a lesser extent, Christian communities. These schools also maintained better representation of SC/ST and OBC categories. In contrast, unaided Hindu and Muslim management schools showed complete religious homogeneity, enrolling only students from their respective faiths. The Christian management school stood out among unaided institutions by admitting students from Hindu, Muslim, and Christian backgrounds, though SC/ST representation was rare.
- Government and aided schools employed teachers from varied religious and social backgrounds, showing inclusivity in both teaching and non-teaching staff. Government schools, in particular, had a mix of Hindu, Muslim, and Christian teachers, and representation from SC/ST and OBC communities.
- Unaided Hindu schools had only Hindu staff, reflecting management ideology.
- The Muslim management school had both Muslim and Hindu teachers but employed only Muslim non-teaching staff.
- The Christian management school employed Hindu and Christian teachers, but no Muslim staff. Overall, government and aided schools reflected greater staff diversity, while unaided religious schools often aligned their staffing with their community identity.
- Government and aided schools displayed secular emblems, national leaders' portraits, and motivational quotes. Festival posters included Onam, Eid, and Christmas, demonstrating inclusive values.

- Unaided Hindu and Muslim schools, on the other hand, prominently displayed religious artefacts, portraits of religious leaders, and symbols aligned with their faiths- Hindu symbols like puja thalis and portraits of Vivekananda in Hindu schools, and Quranic verses and Islamic attire in Muslim schools.
- The Christian management school displayed a portrait of Jesus and included symbols of its Christian identity, though its decorations for events remained largely general and inclusive. Library resources in government and aided schools included secular and regional literature, while unaided Hindu and Muslim schools showed a narrower, religiously aligned collection. The Christian school maintained general reading materials without explicit religious texts.

Diversity in School Practices

Findings related to diversity in school practicesare:

- Government and aided schools conducted secular or multi-language prayers, offering inclusive platforms where student groups took turns. The Christian school had Christian-themed prayers, but they were conducted in a neutral tone and involved fixed teams. Unaided Hindu and Muslim schools followed religious prayers aligned with their management's faith, often led by students from within that religious group. Participation was broader in some cases, but thematic content remained mono-religious.
- Assemblies in government and Christian management schools featured motivational themes, secular salutations, and diverse student representation, often with rotating leadership. Aided schools used public

systems for announcements and attempted mixed representation. In contrast, unaided Hindu and Muslim schools integrated faith-specific greetings and practices, with participation limited to students from their respective religious groups.

- Government and aided schools allowed religious attire (e.g., hijabs, bangles, crosses) and provided informal spaces for prayer, especially for girls. They also made adjustments during fasting and religious observances.
- The Christian school was notably inclusive, permitting religious symbols and providing access to nearby places of worship and a girls' prayer room.
- Unaided Hindu and Muslim schools followed religiously exclusive accommodation, offering provisions only for their respective communities and not admitting students from other religions, thereby limiting the need or opportunity for multi-religious accommodation.
- Students in government and Christian schools freely interacted across religious lines in playgrounds, libraries, and corridors. Aided schools also provided such opportunities, though language groupings occasionally influenced peer interactions. In mono-religious unaided schools, such mixing did not occur due to the absence of religious diversity.
- Government and aided schools delivered secular and inclusive value lessons during assembly or moral instruction periods. Christian schools focused on general human values with occasional religious framing. Unaided Hindu and Muslim schools integrated faith-specific moral instruction during school routines or religious classes, with little attempt to represent other cultures or beliefs.

Diversity in School Programmes

Findings related to diversity in school programmes are:

- Government and aided schools celebrated a broad range of festivals like Onam, Eid, Christmas, Vishu, and national days, reflecting pluralistic values.
- The Christian school celebrated Christian and national festivals while also acknowledging Onam and Eid.
- In contrast, the Hindu and Muslim unaided schools celebrated only religious festivals of their management community, such as Sree Krishna Jayanthi and Ramayana month in Hindu schools, or Eid and Nabi Dinam in Muslim schools. These schools did not organise interreligious celebrations or include diverse student groups in planning.
- Cultural programmes in government schools were often tied to public festivals or national celebrations, encouraging broad student participation. Christian schools conducted structured events that involved diverse students, supported by parents and teachers. Hindu and Muslim unaided schools hosted cultural events rooted in their own religious traditions, with limited diversity in participation or themes.
- Government schools promoted participation in clubs such as science and nature clubs, often linked to state-supported schemes. Christian schools also encouraged involvement in such activities. Aided and unaided schools showed limited or irregular club functioning, with unaided religious schools often organising such programmes only during inspections.
- Government and aided schools marked national observance days (e.g., Republic Day, Independence Day), with inclusive student participation.

Christian schools are also acknowledged these days. Unaided schools observed them in formal but religiously neutral tones, with no added cultural representation.

- Event decorations in government and aided schools used general and nature-themed backdrops. Hindu and Muslim unaided schools used religious icons, names, and symbols in event titles and designs, reinforcing community identity. The Christian school avoided overtly religious decoration but retained a mildly Christian cultural tone.
- Parental preferences in the school section were primarily influenced by considerations such as academic quality, proximity, transportation, and the perceived moral environment of the institution. In the unaided Hindu and Muslim management schools, the preference for a moral foundation appeared to be closely linked to the religious and cultural orientation of the school, though this was not explicitly articulated by parents. Contextual observations indicated that cultural and religious alignment played a significant role in school choice.

The findings reveal that government and aided schools are relatively more secular in structure and practice, offering students multiple opportunities to engage with peers from diverse backgrounds through shared programmes, neutral symbols, and secular routines. Unaided Hindu and Muslim schools, while offering quality education within their communities, show limited to no religious or cultural diversity, both in enrolment and everyday practices. The unaided Christian school occupies a middle ground, maintaining its religious identity while encouraging moderate inclusivity in admission, programmes, and practices. Ultimately, school management type strongly influences how diversity is reflected and experienced by

students, not only in formal policies but also through the everyday culture and symbolic life of the institution

Conclusions

The study set out to examine whether the school environment in different types of Upper Primary schools in Kerala provides a secular and inclusive experience for learners, particularly in terms of access, participation, and exposure to socio-cultural and religious diversity. Based on developmental theories that emphasise the formative role of early experiences, the study explored the relationship between students' access to school facilities and programmes, their actual participation in them, and the presence and interaction of diversity through school life experiences.

The findings show that simply having students from different backgrounds or providing facilities is not enough to ensure a secular school environment. What truly matters is whether all students have access to and active participation in school activities and programmes that encourage understanding, respect, and positive interaction among diverse groups.

Government schools, despite operational and resource constraints, emerged as the most secular spaces, where diversity is both present and actively engaged through pluralistic programmes, shared activities, and secular routines. These schools promoted access and participation through inclusive practices and infrastructural arrangements, creating opportunities for students from varied backgrounds to interact meaningfully. In contrast, aided schools exhibited moderate diversity in enrolment but consistently struggled with participation and programme delivery, limiting their potential to promote secular experiences effectively.

Unaided Hindu and Muslim management schools offered strong academic programmes and practices but remained religiously homogeneous. In Muslim schools, this was not due to deliberate exclusion; rather, they aimed for a morally grounded and value-based educational environment, and they also made efforts to include teaching staff from other religious communities. In contrast, Hindu management schools appeared more intentionally exclusive, with limited efforts to include diversity in their practices. These schools appeared to reinforce a distinct religious identity through selective admissions and staffing practices. Although parents preferred schools for their children primarily based on academic quality, safety, and moral environment, these preferences unconsciously led to reduced exposure to diversity and limited opportunities for students to engage in a more secular social learning environment. As a result, students in these settings experienced limited exposure to socio-cultural and religious diversity, reducing opportunities for inclusive interactions, mutual social learning during a critical stage of development.

This study reflects growing concerns raised by educators and writers that the expansion of religious-based unaided schools may gradually weaken Kerala's strong tradition of secularism and social harmony. Kerala is known for its inclusive social fabric and history of peaceful coexistence among communities. However, the findings show that many unaided Hindu and Muslim schools, while providing strong academic programmes, remain religiously homogeneous and offer limited opportunities for students to interact with diversity. In contrast, the unaided Christian school in the study demonstrated a relatively more secular approach, maintaining academic quality and making efforts to represent diversity in students, staff, programmes, and practices.

Meanwhile, government and aided schools, which are more representative of diversity, face practical challenges. Aided schools, in particular, struggle with poor infrastructure and irregular teacher availability, while both government and aided schools face limitations in ensuring active student participation. These patterns suggest that diversity alone is not sufficient; schools must also provide equitable student access and meaningful participation in programmes to truly reflect and support secular and socially integrated values.

The study concludes that providing students with meaningful experiences of diversity through school practices, shared participation, and equitable access is essential for developing social understanding and secular values from an early age. While unaided schools often ensure academic quality, their limited diversity culture and exclusive environments reduce students' opportunities to engage with different perspectives. This highlights the need for all schools, especially private institutions, to move beyond academic focus and actively create learning spaces that reflect the inclusive and secular spirit of Kerala's social fabric.

Chapter 6

RECOMMENDATIONS



- Educational Implications of the Study
- Limitations of the Study
- Scope for Further Research

In the Indian context, inclusive and equitable education has been at the forefront of research and policy efforts, especially in contexts marked by socio-cultural and religious diversity. Kerala, with its long-standing tradition of social harmony and investment in education, presents a unique landscape where government-aided and unaided schools' function within diverse ideological and managerial frameworks. The current study examined the extent to which these different school types promote access to educational facilities, encourage student participation, and reflect diversity in school practices and programmes.

The findings of the study revealed significant disparities in the availability, utilisation, and inclusiveness of infrastructural, curricular, and co-curricular provisions across different types of school management. While government schools emerged as relatively more inclusive and pluralistic, they continued to struggle with infrastructural deficiencies and maintenance challenges. Aided schools, although moderately diverse in composition, were constrained by systemic issues such as teacher absenteeism, weak programme implementation, and inadequate facilities. In contrast, many unaided schools, especially Hindu and Muslim management institutions, provided academically strong but religiously homogeneous environments that offered minimal exposure to inter-religious interactions and secular values. Christian management schools displayed comparatively better integration of diversity in both representation and practice, indicating that quality and inclusivity need not be mutually exclusive.

These findings reinforce a critical insight that stresses that the mere presence of physical infrastructure or diverse student populations is insufficient to ensure an inclusive educational experience. Schools must actively engage students in

meaningful, participatory learning and foster environments that encourage mutual respect and shared experiences across socio-cultural and religious lines. Educational institutions, therefore, play a vital role not only in academic delivery but also in nurturing democratic values, secular identities, and inclusive social consciousness from early schooling onwards.

The recommendations that follow are grounded in these findings and informed by developmental perspectives. They address the roles and responsibilities of policymakers, school authorities, educators, and community stakeholders in creating equitable, inclusive, and participatory learning environments in Kerala's upper primary schools. These suggestions aim to strengthen educational practices by balancing academic excellence with social inclusion, ensuring that all children, regardless of background, benefit from a well-rounded and secular school experience.

Educational Implications of the Study

The study explored student access, participation, and the experience of diversity in different types of upper primary schools across Kerala. While basic educational provisions were available in all, notable differences were found in quality, inclusiveness, and consistency. These variations were influenced by infrastructure, practices, staff engagement, and school culture. The findings highlight the need for a collective effort from teachers, school managements, parents, communities, and government authorities to ensure equitable access, active participation, and inclusive practices in schools. The following implications suggest practical steps for each stakeholder group to help build more inclusive and socially integrated school environments.

Ensure Equitable Access to Basic Infrastructure and Facilities

The study revealed critical disparities in students' access to infrastructure and facilities in schools, particularly in Aided management schools**.** The following are recommendations suggested to address the disparities observed in access to infrastructural facilities across different types of schools.

- Government authorities must enforce minimum infrastructure standards across all school types, with targeted funding to improve hygiene, safety, and gender-sensitive provisions such as separate toilets for girls.
- School managements should prioritise maintenance and ensure the availability of essential facilities, especially in aided and private institutions.
- Community groups can support schools by mobilising local resources or infrastructure partnerships.
- Periodic infrastructure audits should be conducted by the education department to monitor the condition and adequacy of school facilities.
- Schools should make effective use of government schemes such as Samagra Shiksha for infrastructure development and digital facility enhancement.
- Teacher and parent associations can play an active role in monitoring facility upkeep and advocating for improvements.
- The education department should prioritise aided schools for targeted infrastructural support, particularly to address deficiencies in sanitation, drinking water, safety measures.
- Regular and standardised infrastructure audits should be conducted by government authorities across all management types to ensure compliance with minimum infrastructure norms

- School managements should actively engage parent- teacher associations and local community groups in monitoring infrastructure maintenance and mobilising supplementary resources

Promote Inclusive and Participatory Pedagogical Practices

Government schools showed better student engagement in classroom discussions, practical learning, and co-curricular activities, while Aided and Unaided schools often relied on routine-based instruction. The following are recommendations to address this disparity in students' participation and engagement across schools.

- Teachers should adopt student-centred, activity-based approaches that encourage participation, collaboration, and creativity.
- Management must provide adequate time, space, and teacher support for experiential and co-curricular activities.
- Government authorities should invest more in in-service teacher training on inclusive pedagogies and participatory methods.
- Schools should organise regular inter-school and intra-school events to motivate wider student participation in diverse activities.
- Mentoring and peer-learning programmes can be introduced to support less confident students and promote collaborative learning.
- Parents should be sensitised about the importance of co-curricular participation for overall development through school meetings and awareness programmes.
- School managements should ensure balanced timetables that integrate academic learning with arts, sports, and cultural activities.
- Digital and audio-visual learning resources can be introduced to make classroom processes more interactive and engaging.

Address Staff Availability and Teacher Engagement

Aided schools face major challenges in terms of teacher absenteeism, non-teaching duties, and low motivation, directly affecting student outcomes. To address these challenges, the following recommendations are suggested.

- Government authorities should streamline teacher recruitment and appointment processes, especially in aided schools, while enforcing staff accountability.
- Schools must ensure consistent teacher presence, reduce administrative burdens, and support staff with necessary resources.
- Teachers need to demonstrate commitment to classroom interaction, co-curricular facilitation, and student mentoring.
- Regular performance appraisals and constructive feedback mechanisms should be implemented to enhance teacher accountability and professional growth.
- School managements should create a supportive work environment that encourages collaboration, peer learning, and innovation among teachers.
- Deployment of non-teaching or clerical staff should be ensured so that teachers can focus primarily on instructional and mentoring responsibilities.

Integrate Socio-Cultural and Religious Diversity into School Life

Government and aided schools showed better diversity in student and staff composition, while unaided schools were largely homogeneous. The following are recommendations to promote socio-cultural and religious diversity in schools.

- Teachers play a critical role in fostering respect for diversity through inclusive moral education, secular assemblies, and classroom discussions.

- School managements should ensure inclusive visual culture, mixed seating, and pluralistic programme planning.
- Parents should be encouraged to value inter-religious interaction and secular school culture when selecting schools.
- The government should issue guidelines on representing national, cultural, and religious symbols in a balanced and inclusive manner in all types of upper primary schools.

Reorient Private Schools towards Pluralism

Unaided schools frequently reinforced religious identities through exclusive celebrations, staffing, and routines. The following recommendations are suggested to reorient private schools towards more pluralistic practices.

- Government should ensure that unaided schools respect constitutional values, especially with regard to secularism, equity, and representation.
- School Management should move beyond rigid practices and adopt interfaith celebration models and diverse staff recruitment.
- Community leaders from different faiths and cultures can be invited to engage with students, promoting openness and understanding.
- Curriculum planning should integrate value-based education that highlights unity in diversity and shared citizenship.
- Teacher orientation programmes should include modules on inclusive education, religious harmony, and cultural sensitivity.
- Parent-teacher associations can help create awareness about the importance of pluralism and inclusive values in school education.
- School libraries and activities should include materials and programmes that reflect India’s diverse cultural and religious heritage.

Improve Co-Curricular Integration and Access

While government schools facilitated broader access to clubs and celebrations, private schools provided limited facilities and support. To address these gaps in co-curricular access and participation, the following recommendations are suggested.

- Teachers must encourage students' participation in co-curricular activities and integrate these activities into the academic schedule.
- Schools should provide structured time, trained facilitators, and material resources for co-curricular activities.
- Parents should support their children's participation in cultural and sports events, beyond academic priorities.
- School managements should allocate specific budgets for arts, sports, and club activities to ensure sustainability.
- Integration of local art forms, festivals, and traditional games can help nurture cultural awareness and community connectedness among students.

Strengthen Library and ICT Integration in Teaching-Learning

Government schools made better use of libraries and ICT tools compared to unaided schools, where such resources were largely underutilised. Aided schools, meanwhile, lacked consistent access to functional ICT facilities and library resources. To address these issues, the following recommendations are suggested.

- The government must ensure universal access to digital and library infrastructure across all schools.
- Schools should provide staffing and scheduling for regular library use and ICT-supported lessons.
- Schools should ensure that libraries and ICT facilities are accessible to all students on a regular basis and integrated into classroom instruction.

- Government and management authorities must provide continuous funding for updating library collections, digital content, and ICT infrastructure.
- Teachers should receive regular training on integrating digital tools, multimedia resources, and library materials into their teaching practices.
- Schools should establish monitoring mechanisms to ensure the effective utilisation and maintenance of ICT and library resources.

Engage Parents in Inclusive Schooling Goals

Parental choices were largely shaped by academic and moral considerations, with a tendency toward religiously aligned schools, limiting children's exposure to diversity. The following are recommendations to address this trend and encourage more positive parental choices. State education authorities must prioritise aided school revitalisation through infrastructure grants, teacher appointments, and monitoring reforms.

- Schools should conduct orientation programmes to sensitise parents about the value of diversity, inclusiveness, and secular education.
- Parents should actively engage in school committees, celebrations, and feedback mechanisms, especially in unaided schools where involvement is often restricted to community circles.
- Government and community organisations can support parent outreach campaigns focused on inclusive schooling.
- Parent-teacher associations should include representatives from varied social, cultural, and religious backgrounds to ensure balanced perspectives.
- Educational authorities should encourage admission policies that ensure balanced representation of students from different communities.

Policy Interventions for Aided School

Aided schools consistently underperformed across all domains despite their wide reach. The following recommendations are suggested to strengthen policy support and improve the overall functioning of aided schools.

- State education authorities must prioritise aided school revitalisation through infrastructure grants, teacher appointments, and monitoring reforms.
- Management and teachers need to take responsibility for academic planning, staff accountability, and inclusive practices.
- A separate revitalisation plan should be developed for aided schools focusing on modernisation of infrastructure, digital facilities, and pedagogical reforms.
- Teacher vacancies should be filled promptly to avoid disruptions in the teaching-learning process.
- Strengthening collaboration between government officials and aided school managements can ensure effective implementation of education policies

Develop a Culture of Secular and Democratic Schooling

Government schools emerged as key sites of secular and pluralistic schooling, but challenges in funding, maintenance, and perception remain. The following are recommendations to enhance the effectiveness and public perception of government schools.

- The government must invest in strengthening public schools through resource allocation, autonomy, and professional development.
- Teachers and management must actively model constitutional values of equality, freedom, and justice through daily practices.

- Parents and communities should be encouraged to view schools not only as educational spaces but as democratic institutions essential to Kerala's social fabric.
- Partnerships with local governments, NGOs, and academic institutions can help bring innovation and additional resources to public schools.
- Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms should ensure transparency and accountability in school functioning and resource use.

Promote an Inclusive Atmosphere that Accommodates and Respects Diversity

In a state like Kerala, where diverse religious, caste, social, and cultural groups have coexisted harmoniously for years, these differences are social realities that cannot be ignored. The study finds that schools, rather than remaining neutral or privileging any particular identity, must cultivate a culture that actively accommodates, respects, and reflects this diversity, thereby providing children with meaningful experiences of coexistence and advancing the goals of inclusive and democratic education. True secularism in Indian education is not about avoiding religious or social differences but about creating inclusive spaces where students from all religions, castes, and communities feel valued, respected, and equally involved in school life.

- Teachers should create classrooms that encourage respectful discussions, cultural sharing, and appreciation of differences in language, dress, customs, and beliefs.
- School managements must ensure that school decor, prayers, festivals, and programmes reflect India's pluralistic values, without favouring any single group.
- Parents and communities should be involved in helping children learn respect, empathy, and cooperation across social and cultural lines.

- Government authorities need to support schools through training, resources, and policies that encourage inclusive and respectful practices across religious, caste, and cultural boundaries.

Building such inclusive environments will not only improve student well-being and participation but also help schools serve as spaces where India's diverse social fabric is strengthened through mutual understanding and shared learning.

Limitations of the Study

While this study was carefully designed and implemented to examine student access, participation, and socio-cultural and religious diversity in upper primary schools in Kerala, certain limitations remain due to practical, methodological, and contextual constraints. These limitations should be considered when interpreting the findings and applying them to broader contexts.

- **Limited Institutional Scope.** The study was conducted exclusively in Kerala and focused only on upper primary schools following the Kerala State Syllabus (SCERT). It excluded schools under CBSE, ICSE, and other central boards, as well as those operating in other Indian states. As such, the findings may not be generalised beyond this context.

- **Focus on Upper Primary Stage.** The research specifically targeted students in Upper Primary grades (Classes 5–7) only. Perspectives from lower primary or secondary students, who may have different experiences with school access, participation, and diversity, were not included.

- **Sampling Constraints in Selected Schools.** While the sample schools were purposively selected to represent government, aided, and unaided religious

management types; the sample was not statistically representative. Furthermore, schools were represented by only one school in each management type, which limits comparative depth across different types of school management.

- **Reliance on Self-Reported Data**. Much of the data, particularly from student surveys, teacher interviews, and focus group discussions, was self-reported. Such responses are subject to personal bias, social desirability, and memory-based inaccuracies.

- **Exclusion of Linguistic and Tribal Minority Schools**. Schools serving tribal communities or linguistic minority groups were not part of the sample. These schools often function in distinct socio-cultural contexts and may have unique challenges and practices related to access and diversity.

- **Constraints in Document Analysis and Observation.** The document analysis was limited to available school records and annual reports. In some schools, especially unaided institutions, documentation was either incomplete or not systematically maintained, which limited deeper programme analysis.

- **COVID-19 Disruptions and Limited School Experience.** The study was conducted soon after the COVID-19 pandemic, which had disrupted regular schooling for nearly two years. Although the sample selected had at least one full year of in-person school experience, many missed important school activities, programmes, and peer interaction during earlier years. This lack of continuous school experience may have affected their ability to fully reflect on access, participation, and diversity in a normal school setting.

Scope for Further Research

Based on the present study, several important areas are identified for further exploration. Future studies can build on the groundwork laid by this research to deepen understanding, improve practices, and shape inclusive educational policy.

- Future research could compare the access, participation, and diversity-related practices of upper primary schools across different Indian states and school boards (CBSE, ICSE, and international curricula). Such studies would help in identifying region-specific challenges and best practices.
- Long-term studies that track students from lower primary through higher secondary levels could provide insights into how school culture, diversity practices, and participation evolve over time and impact student development and social attitudes.
- As aided schools consistently underperformed in access, participation, and programme implementation, future research could focus exclusively on understanding the structural, administrative, and pedagogical limitations within these institutions, offering specific policy-level solutions.
- There is a need for a separate study examining schools serving tribal children, linguistic minorities, and migrant populations to understand how intersectional diversity is managed and how inclusion can be strengthened in under-represented communities.
- Further qualitative research focusing on students' narratives, identities, and peer relationships can reveal how school experiences shape their understanding of diversity, belonging, and secular values.
- Future researchers may test specific interventions (e.g., intercultural education modules, inclusive classroom practices, or teacher training on

diversity) to assess their impact on student participation, attitudes, and inclusivity in school environments.

- A larger sample of Hindu, Muslim, and Christian unaided schools could allow for deeper comparative research on how religious ideologies and management priorities shape access, participation, and cultural representation.

These recommendations are based on the findings of the study and are related to Kerala's local educational context. Their usefulness in other regions should be considered carefully over time, depending on different social and cultural settings. The issues of access, participation, and diversity in schools are not just about policies or facilities, they are closely linked to how students experience equality, inclusion, and respect in their everyday school life. Promoting real inclusion means creating a school culture that values pluralism, respects all identities, and upholds secular values (UNESCO, 2017). This requires consistent effort from schools, teachers, and the wider community. Further research and thoughtful practices are needed to ensure that every child feels safe, respected, and included in school, regardless of their background. Schools must also provide opportunities for students to engage with and understand the social realities in which they live.

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APPENDICES



Appendix I

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
UNIVERSITY OF CALICUT

QUESTIONNAIRE ON EQUITY IN STUDENT ACCESS IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS

(For Students)

Dr. A. Hameed
Professor

Abdunnasar N.
Research Scholar

അടിസ്ഥാന വിശദാംശങ്ങൾ

1. സ്കൂളിന്റെ പേര് :
2. മാനേജ്മെന്റ് തരം :
3. ക്ലാസ്സ് :
4. ലിംഗം :
5. മതം :
6. സ്കൂളിൽ അഡ്മിഷൻ എടുത്ത വർഷം :

നിർദ്ദേശങ്ങൾ

കേരളത്തിലെ പ്രൈമറി സ്കൂളുകളിലെ വിദ്യാർത്ഥികൾക്ക് ലഭ്യമായ സൗകര്യങ്ങൾ, പാഠ്യ-പാഠ്യേതര പ്രവർത്തനങ്ങളിലുള്ള അവസരങ്ങൾ എന്നിവയെക്കുറിച്ച് വിദ്യാർത്ഥികളിൽ നിന്നും വിവരങ്ങൾ ശേഖരിക്കുന്നതിനുവേണ്ടിയുള്ള ചോദ്യങ്ങളാണ് താഴെ കൊടുത്തിട്ടുള്ളത്. എല്ലാ ചോദ്യങ്ങളും വായിച്ച് ഉത്തരം അടയാളപ്പെടുത്തുക.

Sl. No.	Item			Yes	No
Part A: അടിസ്ഥാന സൗകര്യങ്ങൾ					
1.	ക്ലാസ് മുറിയിൽ ആവശ്യത്തിന് ഫർണിച്ചറുകൾ ലഭ്യമാണ്.				
	ക്ലാസ് മുറിയിൽ ലഭ്യമായ ഫർണിച്ചറുകൾ അടയാളപ്പെടുത്തുക	a.	ബെഞ്ച്		
		b.	ഡെസ്ക്		
		c.	പുസ്തക അലമാര		
		d.	മേശ, കസേര		
		e.	ടീച്ചിങ് സ്റ്റാന്റ്		
		f.	നോട്ടീസ് ബോർഡ്		
		g.	മറ്റുള്ളവ		

Sl. No.	Item			Yes	No
2.	ക്ലാസ് മുറിക്കുള്ളിൽ ആവശ്യമായ പഠന സൗകര്യങ്ങൾ ലഭ്യമാണ്.				
	ക്ലാസ് മുറിയിൽ ലഭ്യമായ സൗകര്യങ്ങൾ	a.	ബ്ലാക്ക്-ബോർഡ്		
		b.	എൽ.സി.ഡി പ്രൊജക്ടർ		
		c.	ടെലിവിഷൻ (ടി.വി)		
		d.	സൗണ്ട് സിസ്റ്റം		
		e.	കമ്പ്യൂട്ടർ		
		f.	സ്മാർട്ട് ബോർഡ്		
		g.	മറ്റുള്ളവ		
3.	സ്കൂളിലെത്താൻ വാഹന സൗകര്യം ലഭ്യമാണ്.				
4.	ആൺകുട്ടികൾക്കും പെൺകുട്ടികൾക്കും പ്രത്യേകം ടോയ്ലറ്റ് സൗകര്യം ലഭ്യമാണ്.				
5.	സ്കൂളിൽ കുടിവെള്ള സൗകര്യം ലഭ്യമാണ്.				
6.	സ്കൂളിൽ കളിസ്ഥലം ലഭ്യമാണ്.				
7.	ക്യാമ്പസിൽ വിദ്യാർത്ഥികൾക്ക് പ്രാർത്ഥനാമുറി ലഭ്യമാണ്.				
	Part B- പഠന സാമഗ്രികളും പഠന പ്രവർത്തനങ്ങളും			**Yes**	**No**
8.	സ്കൂളിൽ ആവശ്യമായ പഠന സാമഗ്രികൾ എനിക്ക് ലഭ്യമാണ്.				
	ലഭ്യമായ പഠന സാമഗ്രികൾ അടയാളപ്പെടുത്തുക.	a.	ടെക്സ്റ്റ് ബുക്ക്		
		b.	നോട്ട് ബുക്ക്		
		c.	വർക്ക് ബുക്ക്		
		d.	പേനയും പെൻസിലും		
		e.	ഇൻസ്ട്രുമെന്റ് ബോക്സ്		
		f.	മറ്റുള്ളവ		
9.	മുഴുവൻ വിഷയങ്ങളും പഠിപ്പിക്കാൻ അധ്യാപകർ ലഭ്യമാണ്.				
10.	ടൈം ടേബിൾ അടിസ്ഥാനമാക്കിയാണ് സ്കൂളിൽ ക്ലാസുകൾ നടത്തുന്നത്.				
11.	ടൈം ടേബിൾ അനുസരിച്ച് അധ്യാപകർ ക്ലാസിൽ എത്താറുണ്ട്.				
12.	സ്കൂളിൽ ക്ലാസ് ലൈബ്രറി ലഭ്യമാണ്.				
13.	ലാബ് സൗകര്യങ്ങൾ സ്കൂളിൽ ലഭ്യമാണ്.				
	ലഭ്യമായ സൗകര്യങ്ങൾ	a.	സയൻസ് ലാബ്		
		b.	സോഷ്യൽ സയൻസ് ലാബ്		
		c.	കമ്പ്യൂട്ടർ ലാബ്		
		d.	ആർട്ട് ആൻഡ് ക്രാഫ്റ്റ് സെന്റർ		
		e.	ലാംഗ്വേജ് (ഭാഷ) ലാബ്		
		f.	മാത്തമാറ്റിക്സ് ലാബ്		
		g.	മറ്റുള്ളവ		

Sl. No.	Item			Yes	No
14.	സ്കൂളിൽ വിദ്യാർത്ഥികൾക്കായി പൊതുവായ ലൈബ്രറി സൗകര്യം ലഭ്യമാണ്.				
	ലഭ്യമായ സൗകര്യങ്ങൾ	a.	ലൈബ്രേറിയൻ		
		b.	മതിയായ ഫർണിച്ചറുകൾ		
		c.	ഇരിപ്പിട സൗകര്യങ്ങൾ		
		d.	കാറ്റലോഗ്		
		e.	മതിയായ പുസ്തകങ്ങൾ		
		f.	പ്രവർത്തന സമയ ചാർട്ട്		
		g.	മറ്റുള്ളവ		
15.	വൈവിധ്യമാർന്ന പാഠ്യ പ്രവർത്തനങ്ങൾ ക്ലാസ് മുറിയിൽ നടത്തപ്പെടുന്നു.				
	പാഠ്യ പ്രവർത്തനങ്ങൾ	a.	ചർച്ച		
		b.	സംവാദം		
		c.	വീഡിയോ പ്രസന്റേഷൻ		
		d.	നാടകം		
		e.	ഡെമോൺസ്ട്രേഷൻ		
		f.	ഫീൽഡ് വർക്ക്		
		g.	എക്സിബിഷൻ		
		h.	മറ്റുള്ളവ		
16.	എന്റെ സ്കൂളിൽ ധാർമ്മികവും മതപരവുമായ വിദ്യാഭ്യാസത്തിന് അവസരമുണ്ട്.				
	വിശദാംശങ്ങൾ:				
	Part C - പാഠ്യേതര പ്രവർത്തനങ്ങളും സൗകര്യങ്ങളും			**Yes**	**No**
17.	സ്പോർട്സിനും അനുബന്ധ കളികൾക്കും മതിയായ സൗകര്യങ്ങളും ഉപകരണങ്ങളും സ്കൂളിൽ ലഭ്യമാണ്.				
18.	കലാ-സംഗീത പഠനത്തിനാവശ്യമായ അടിസ്ഥാന സൗകര്യങ്ങൾ സ്കൂളിൽ ലഭ്യമാണ്.				
19.	വിവിധ പാഠ്യേതര പ്രവർത്തനങ്ങൾക്ക് പ്രത്യേക അധ്യാപകർ ലഭ്യമാണ്.				
	ലഭ്യമായ അധ്യാപകർ	a.	കായിക അധ്യാപകൻ		
		b.	സംഗീത അധ്യാപകൻ		
		c.	ആർട്ട് ആന്റ് ക്രാഫ്റ്റ്		
		d.	മറ്റുള്ളവർ		

Sl. No.	Item			Yes	No
20.	വിവിധ പാഠ്യേതര പ്രവർത്തനങ്ങൾ സ്കൂളിൽ നടത്തപ്പെടാറുണ്ട്.				
	പാഠ്യേതര പ്രവർത്തനങ്ങൾ	a.	പഠന യാത്ര		
		b.	കായികമേള		
		c.	കലാമേള		
		d.	എക്സിബിഷൻ		
		e.	ഓണാഘോഷം		
		f.	വിഷു ആഘോഷം		
		g.	ക്രിസ്തുമസ് ആഘോഷം		
		h.	പെരുന്നാൾ ആഘോഷം		
		i.	സ്വാതന്ത്ര്യദിനാഘോഷം		
		j.	മറ്റുള്ളവ		
21.	വിവിധ ക്ലബ്ബുകൾ സ്കൂളിൽ പ്രവർത്തിക്കുന്നു.				
	വിവിധ ക്ലബ്ബുകൾ	a.	ഭാഷാ ക്ലബ്ബ്		
		b.	സയൻസ് ക്ലബ്ബ്		
		c.	സ്പോർട്സ് ക്ലബ്ബ്		
		d.	ഗണിത ക്ലബ്ബ്		
		e.	ആർട്സ് ക്ലബ്		
		f.	നാച്ചർ ക്ലബ്		
		g.	സോഷ്യൽ സയൻസ് ക്ലബ്ബ്		
		e.	സ്റ്റുഡന്റ് പോലീസ് (SPC) & JRC		
		h.	മറ്റുള്ളവ		
22.	പ്രത്യേക പരിശീലന പരിപാടികൾക്ക് സ്കൂളിൽ അവസരമുണ്ട്.				
	വ്യക്തമാക്കുക:				

Appendix IA

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
UNIVERSITY OF CALICUT

QUESTIONNAIRE ON EQUITY IN STUDENT ACCESS IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS

(For Students)

Dr. A. Hameed
Professor

Abdunnasar N.
Research Scholar

Part -A : Basic Details

1. Name of the school :
2. Type of Management :
3. Class :
4. Sex :
5. Religion :
6. Admission year in the school :

Instructions:

Following are questions meant for collecting data from students regarding their access to school facilities and curricular and co-curricular activities conducted in primary schools of Kerala. Read all the questions and give answers in the space provided.

Sl. No.	Item			Yes	No
	Part A - Infrastructural Facilities				
1.	Adequate furnitures are available in the classroom.				
	List out available facilities in the classroom.	a.	Bench		
		b.	Desk		
		c.	Book shelf		
		d.	Table and chair for teacher		
		e.	Teaching stand		
		f.	Notice Board		
		g.	Others		

Sl. No.	Item		Yes	No
2.	Instructional facilities are available in the classroom.			
	Available facilities in the classroom.	a. Black board		
		b. LCD projector		
		c. TV		
		d. Sound system		
		e. Computer		
		f. Smart board		
		g. Others		
3.	Transport facilities are available to reach the school.			
4.	Separate Toilet facilities are available for boys and girls.			
5.	Drinking water facility is available in the school.			
6.	Playground is available in the school.			
7.	Prayer room facility is available in the campus.			
	Part B - Curricular Materials and Activities		**Yes**	**No**
8.	Basic Learning materials are available for my study in the school.			
	Select available materials.	a. Text book		
		b. Note book		
		c. Work book		
		d. Pen and pencil		
		e. Instrument box		
		f. Others		
9.	Teachers are available to teach all subjects in the school.			
10.	Classes are conducted in the school based on class time table.			
11.	Teachers are attending the class according to the time table.			
12.	Class library is available in my school.			
13.	Lab and laboratory facilities are available in the school.			
	Available lab facilities.	a. Science lab		
		b. Social science lab		
		c. Computer lab		
		d. Art and craft center		
		e. Language lab		
		f. Mathematics lab		
		g. Others		

Sl. No.	Item			Yes	No
14.	Library is available in the school.				
	Facilities available in the library.	a.	Librarian		
		b.	Adequate furniture		
		c.	Seating facilities		
		d.	Catalogue		
		e.	Books and other reading materials.		
		f.	Time schedule		
		g.	Others		
15.	Different Curricular activities are conducted in the classroom.				
	Activities conducted as part of curricular programmes.	a.	Discussion		
		b.	Debate		
		c.	Video presentation		
		d.	Dramatisation		
		e.	Demonstration		
		f.	Filed work and field visit		
		g.	Exhibition		
		h.	Other		
16.	There is opportunity for moral and religious education in my school.				
	Details:				
	Par C - Co-Curricular Activities			**Yes**	**No**
17.	Adequate facilities and equipments for sports and games are available in the school.				
18.	Facilities for art and music are available in the school.				
19.	Teachers are available for different co-curricular activities in the school.				
	Faculties available for different programmes.	a.	Physical Education Teacher		
		b.	Music Teacher		
		c.	Art And Craft Teacher		
		d.	Others		

Sl. No.	Item			Yes	No
20.	Different co-curricular activities are being conducted in the school.				
	Co-curricular activities conducted in the school.	a.	Study Tour		
		b.	Sports Meet		
		c.	Arts Fest		
		d.	Exhibition		
		e.	Onam Celebration		
		f.	X'-Mas Celebration		
		g.	Eid Celebration		
		h.	Independence Day Celebration		
		i.	Others		
21.	Clubs and related activities are conducted in the school.				
	Details of Active clubs in the school.	a.	Language Club		
		b.	Science Club		
		c.	Sports Club		
		d.	Mathematics Club		
		e.	Arts Club		
		f.	Nature Club		
		g.	Social science Club		
		h.	SPC and JRC		
		i.	Others		
22.	Extra activities and special training sessions are available in the school.				
	Details:				

Appendix II

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
UNIVERSITY OF CALICUT

INFORMATION BLANK

(STUDENT ACCESS)

Dr. A. Hameed
Professor

Abdunnasar N.
Research Scholar

Sl. No.	Particulars		Yes	No	Details
	Infrastructure				
1.	Adequate classroom.				
2.	Adequate furniture.				
3.	Adequate common hall.				
4.	Adequate instructional facilities.				
5.	Adequate transportation facilities.				
6.	Adequate toilet facilities.				
7.	Adequate play ground.				
8.	Adequate drinking water facility.				
9.	Adequate prayer room facility.				
	Curricular Activities				
10.	Adequate learning materials.				
11.	Adequate learning support system.				
12.	Adequate school library.				
13.	Adequate ICT support.				
14.	Lab and Laboratories.				
		Science			
		Social Science			
		Art And Craft			
		Language Lab			
		Mathematics Lab			
		Computer Lab			

Sl. No.	Particulars	Yes	No	Details
15.	Classroom activities.			
	Co-Curricular Activities			
16.	Adequate sports materials.			
17.	Facilities for Fine Arts.			
18.	Art And Craft Center.			
19.	Study Tour.			
20.	Sports Meet.			
21.	National Day Celebrations.			
22.	Other Day Celebrations.			
23.	Clubs.			
24.	SPC Unit.			
25.	NSS Unit.			
26.	Dining Hall.			
27.	Others			

Appendix III

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
UNIVERSITY OF CALICUT

QUESTIONNAIRE ON STUDENT PARTICIPATION IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS OF KERALA

(For Students)

Dr. A. Hameed
Professor

Abdunnasar N.
Research Scholar

അടിസ്ഥാന വിവരങ്ങൾ

സ്കൂളിന്റെ പേര് :

മാനേജ്മെന്റ് തരം :

ക്ലാസ്സ് :

അഡ്മിഷൻ എടുത്ത വർഷം :

നിർദ്ദേശങ്ങൾ

കേരളത്തിലെ പ്രൈമറി സ്കൂളുകളിൽ നടക്കുന്ന പാഠ്യ-പാഠ്യേതര പ്രവർത്തനങ്ങളിലെ വിദ്യാർത്ഥികളുടെ പങ്കാളിത്തം സംബന്ധിച്ച വിവരങ്ങൾ ശേഖരിക്കുന്നതിനുള്ള ചോദ്യങ്ങളാണ് താഴെ കൊടുത്തിരിക്കുന്നത്. എല്ലാ ചോദ്യങ്ങളും വായിച്ച് ഉത്തരങ്ങൾ നൽകുക. നിങ്ങൾ നൽകുന്ന വിവരങ്ങൾ ഗവേഷണാവശ്യത്തിന് മാത്രം ഉപയോഗിക്കുന്നതും രഹസ്യമായി സൂക്ഷിക്കുന്നതുമായിരിക്കും.

Sl. No.		Item	Yes	No
Part A - അടിസ്ഥാന സൗകര്യങ്ങളുടെ ഉപയോഗം				
1.		സ്കൂളിൽ ലഭ്യമായ അടിസ്ഥാനസൗകര്യങ്ങളിൽ ഞാൻ സംതൃപ്തനാണ്.		
2.		ക്ലാസ് മുറിയിൽ ലഭ്യമായ എല്ലാ സൗകര്യങ്ങളും ഞങ്ങളുടെ പഠനത്തിനായി ഉപയോഗിക്കുന്നു.		
3.		ക്ലാസ് മുറിയിൽ ലഭ്യമായ സൗകര്യങ്ങളിൽ ഞാൻ സംതൃപ്തനാണ്/ സംതൃപ്തയാണ്.		
സൗകര്യങ്ങൾ	a.	ബെഞ്ച്		
	b.	ഡെസ്ക്		
	c.	പുസ്തക ഷെൽഫ്		
	d.	മേശ		
	e.	നോട്ടീസ് ബോർഡ്		
	f.	മറ്റുള്ളവ		

Sl. No.		Item	Yes	No
4.		ക്ലാസ് മുറിയിൽ ലഭ്യമായ പഠന സൗകര്യങ്ങളുടെ ഉപയോഗത്തിൽ ഞാൻ സംതൃപ്തനാണ്/ സംതൃപ്തയാണ്.		
സൗകര്യങ്ങൾ	a.	ബ്ലാക്ക്-ബോർഡ്		
	b.	എൽ.സി.ഡി പ്രൊജക്ടർ		
	c.	ടെലിവിഷൻ (ടി.വി)		
	d.	സൗണ്ട് സിസ്റ്റം		
	e.	കമ്പ്യൂട്ടർ		
	f.	സ്മാർട്ട് ബോർഡ്		
		മറ്റുള്ളവ		
5.		ലഭ്യമായ ഗതാഗത സൗകര്യങ്ങളിൽ ഞാൻ സംതൃപ്തനാണ്.		
6.		സ്കൂളിൽ ലഭ്യമായ ടോയ്ലറ്റ് സൗകര്യങ്ങളിൽ ഞാൻ സംതൃപ്തനാണ്.		
7.		സ്കൂളിൽ ലഭ്യമായ കുടിവെള്ള സൗകര്യത്തിൽ ഞാൻ സംതൃപ്തനാണ്.		
8.		സ്കൂളിൽ ലഭ്യമായ മൈതാനസൗകര്യത്തിൽ ഞാൻ സംതൃപ്തനാണ്.		
9.		സ്കൂളിലെ ലഭ്യമായ പ്രാർത്ഥന മുറി സൗകര്യത്തിൽ ഞാൻ സംതൃപ്തനാണ്.		
Part B- പഠന സാമഗ്രികളും പഠന പ്രവർത്തനങ്ങളും			**Yes**	**No**
10.		ആവശ്യമായ പഠന ഉപകരണങ്ങൾ ഞാൻ ക്ലാസ്സിൽ കൊണ്ടുവരികയും ഉപയോഗിക്കുകയും ചെയ്യുന്നു.		
പഠന ഉപകരണങ്ങൾ	a.	പാഠപുസ്തകം		
	b.	നോട്ട് ബുക്ക്		
	c.	വർക്ക് ബുക്ക്		
	d.	പേനയും പെൻസിലും		
	e.	ഇൻസ്ട്രുമെന്റ് ബോക്സ്		
	f.	മറ്റുള്ളവ		
11.		അധ്യാപകർ കൃത്യമായി ക്ലാസിൽ എത്താറുണ്ട്.		
12.		ക്ലാസ് ലൈബ്രറി എന്റെ പഠനത്തിനായി ഞാൻ ഫലപ്രദമായി ഉപയോഗിക്കാറുണ്ട്.		
13.		ദൃശ്യശ്രാവ്യ പഠന സഹായികൾ ക്ലാസ് മുറിയിൽ പഠനാവശ്യത്തിനായി ഞങ്ങൾ ഉപയോഗിക്കാറുണ്ട്.		

Sl. No.		Item	Yes	No
14.		സ്കൂളിൽ ലഭ്യമായ ലബോറട്ടറി സൗകര്യങ്ങൾ ഞങ്ങളുടെ പഠനത്തിനായി പതിവായി ഉപയോഗിക്കുന്നു.		
പഠനത്തിനായി പതിവായി ഉപയോഗിക്കുന്നവ	a.	സയൻസ് ലാബ്		
	b.	സോഷ്യൽ സയൻസ് ലാബ്		
	c.	കമ്പ്യൂട്ടർ ലാബ്		
	d.	ആർട്ട് ആൻഡ് ക്രാഫ്റ്റ് സെന്റർ		
	e.	ലാംഗ്വേജ് ലാബ്		
	f.	മാത്തമാറ്റിക്സ് ലാബ്		
	d.	മറ്റുള്ളവ		
15.		പതിവായി സ്കൂൾ ലൈബ്രറി ഞാൻ സന്ദർശിക്കാറുണ്ട്.		
16.		ക്ലാസ് മുറിയിൽ നടത്തുന്ന താഴെ പറയുന്ന പഠനപ്രവർത്തനങ്ങളിൽ ഞാൻ സജീവമായി പങ്കെടുക്കാറുണ്ട്.		
സജീവമായി പങ്കെടുക്കുന്ന പ്രവർത്തനങ്ങൾ	a.	ചർച്ച		
	b.	സംവാദം		
	c.	വീഡിയോ പ്രസന്റേഷൻ		
	d.	നാടകം		
	e.	ഡെമോൺസ്ട്രേഷൻ		
	f.	ഫീൽഡ് വർക്ക്		
	g.	എക്സിബിഷൻ		
	h.	മറ്റുള്ളവ		
17.		സ്കൂളിൽ നടത്തപ്പെടുന്ന ധാർമ്മിക പഠന ക്ലാസ്സുകളിൽ ഞാൻ പങ്കെടുക്കാറുണ്ട്.		
Part C - Co-Curricular Activities			**Yes**	**No**
18.		സ്കൂളിൽ ലഭ്യമായ കായിക സൗകര്യങ്ങളും ഉപകരണങ്ങളും കായിക പരിശീലന സമയങ്ങളിൽ ഞങ്ങൾ ഉപയോഗിക്കാറുണ്ട്.		
19.		സ്കൂളിൽ ലഭ്യമായ കലാ സംഗീത സൗകര്യങ്ങൾ ഞങ്ങൾ ഉപയോഗിക്കാറുണ്ട്.		
20.		അധ്യാപകർ വ്യത്യസ്ത പാഠ്യേതര പ്രവർത്തനങ്ങളിൽ സജീവമായി ഇടപെടുകയും പ്രചോദിപ്പിക്കുകയും ചെയ്യാറുണ്ട്.		

Sl. No.		Item	Yes	No
21.		താഴെ കൊടുത്തിരിക്കുന്ന വിവിധ പാഠ്യേതര പ്രവർത്തനങ്ങളിൽ ഞാൻ പങ്കെടുക്കാറുണ്ട്.		
വിശദാംശങ്ങൾ നൽകുക	a.	പഠന യാത്ര		
	b.	കായികമേള		
	c.	കലാമേള		
	d.	എക്സിബിഷൻ		
	e.	ഓണാഘോഷം		
	f.	ക്രിസ്തുമസ് ആഘോഷം		
	g.	പെരുന്നാൾ ആഘോഷം		
	h.	സ്വാതന്ത്ര്യദിനാഘോഷം		
	i.	മറ്റുള്ളവ		
22.		സ്കൂളിൽ സംഘടിപ്പിക്കപ്പെടുന്ന ക്ലബ് പ്രവർത്തനങ്ങളിലും മറ്റും ഞാൻ പങ്കെടുക്കാറുണ്ട്.		
വിശദാംശങ്ങൾ നൽകുക.	a.	ഭാഷാ ക്ലബ്ബ്		
	b.	സയൻസ് ക്ലബ്ബ്		
	c.	സ്പോർട്സ് ക്ലബ്ബ്		
	d.	ഗണിത ക്ലബ്ബ്		
	e.	ആർട്സ് ക്ലബ്		
	f.	നാച്വറൽ ക്ലബ്		
	g.	സോഷ്യൽ സയൻസ് ക്ലബ്ബ്		
	h.	സ്റ്റുഡന്റ് പോലീസ് (SPC)		
	i.	എൻ.എസ്.എസ്		
	j.	മറ്റുള്ളവ		
23.		സ്കൂളിൽ സംഘടിപ്പിക്കപ്പെടുന്ന പ്രത്യേക പരശീലന പരിപാടികളിലും മറ്റും ഞാൻ പങ്കെടുക്കാറുണ്ട്.		
വിശദാംശങ്ങൾ നൽകുക				

Appendix III A

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
UNIVERSITY OF CALICUT

QUESTIONNAIRE ON STUDENT PARTICIPATION IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS OF KERALA

(For Students)

Dr. A. Hameed
Professor

Abdunnasar N.
Research Scholar

Part -A : Basic Details

1. Name of the school : ……
2. Type of Management : ……
3. Class : ……
4. Sex : ……
5. Religion : ……
6. Admission year in the school : ……

Instructions

Following are questions meant for collecting data from students regarding their participation in curricular and co-curricular activities conducted in primary schools of Kerala. Read all the questions and give answers in the space provided.

Sl. No.		Item	Yes	No
Part A - Use of Infrastructural Facilities				
1.		I am satisfied with the basic school facilities.		
2.		All facilities available in the classroom are open for students' use.		
3.		I am satisfied with the use of following facilities in the classroom.		
Mark you satisfaction with available facilities in the classroom	a.	Bench		
	b.	Desk		
	c.	Book shelf		
	d.	Table and chair for teacher		
	e.	Podium		
	f.	Notice Board		

Sl. No.		Item	Yes	No
4.		I am satisfied with the use of instructional facilities available in the classroom.		
Mark you satisfaction in the available facilities in the classroom	a.	Black board		
	b.	LCD projector		
	c.	TV		
	d.	Sound system		
	e.	Computer		
	f.	Smart board		
	g.	Others		
5.		I am satisfied with transportation facilities available to reach the school.		
6.		I am satisfied with the toilet facilities available in the school.		
7.		I am satisfied with the drinking water facility available in the school.		
8.		I am satisfied with the use of playground facilities available in the school.		
9.		I am satisfied with the prayer room facility available in the campus.		
Part B - Curricular Materials and Activities			**Yes**	**No**
10.		I regularly bring and use curricular materials in the class room.		
Curricular materials	a.	Text book		
	b.	Note book		
	c.	Work book		
	d.	Pen and pencil		
	e.	Instrument box		
	f.	Others		
11.		Teachers are attending the class regularly.		
12.		Class library is effectively used for my study.		
13.		Audio- visual aids available are regularly used in the class room.		

Sl. No.		Item	Yes	No
14.		Laboratory facilities available in the school are regularly used for studies.		
Regularly used lab facilities	a.	Science lab		
	b.	Social science lab		
	c.	Computer lab		
	d.	Art and craft center		
	e.	Language lab		
	f.	Mathematics lab		
15.		Regularly I do visit school library.		
16.		In the following, mark curricular activities in which you participate regularly.		
List activities in which you actively participate	a.	Discussion		
	b.	Debate		
	c.	Video presentation		
	d.	Dramatisation		
	e.	Demonstration		
	f.	Filed work and field visit		
	g.	Exhibition		
	h.	Other		
17.		I do attend moral and religious education provided in my school.		
Par C - Co-Curricular Activities			**Yes**	**No**
18.		Sports facilities and equipments available in the school are regularly used during PET hours.		
19.		We regularly use facilities for fine arts are available in the school.		
20.		We do get support and motivation for different co-curricular activities in the school.		

Sl. No.		Item	Yes	No
21.		I do participate in different co-curricular activities conducted in the school.		
Mark Co-curricular activities participated	a.	Study Tour		
	b.	Sports Meet		
	c.	Arts Fest		
	d.	Exhibition		
	e.	Onam Celebration		
	f.	X'-Mas Celebration		
	g.	Eid Celebration		
	h.	Independence Day Celebration		
	i.	Others		
22.		I do participate in clubs and related activities.		
Mention clubs in which you are a member	a.	Language Club		
	b.	Science Club		
	c.	Sports Club		
	d.	Mathematics Club		
	e.	Arts Club		
	f.	Nature Club		
	g.	Social Science Club		
	h.	SPC and JRC		
	i.	Others		
23.		I do participate in extra activities and special training sessions provided in the school.		
		Details:		

Appendix IV

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
UNIVERSITY OF CALICUT

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR TEACHERS

(Students' Participation in School Programmes and Practices)

Dr. A. Hameed
Professor

Abdunnasar N.
Research Scholar

അടിസ്ഥാന വിവരങ്ങൾ

പേര് : .....

സ്കൂളിന്റെ പേര് : .....

സ്കൂളിന്റെ തരം : .....

അധ്യാപന പരിചയം : .....

A. **സ്കൂൾ സൗകര്യങ്ങളുടെ ഉപയോഗം**

1. സ്കൂളിലെ അടിസ്ഥാന സൗകര്യങ്ങളുടെയും പഠന സൗകര്യങ്ങളുടെയും (ക്ലാസ് മുറികൾ, ലൈബ്രറികൾ, ലബോറട്ടറികൾ, കളിസ്ഥലങ്ങൾ, ശൗചാലയങ്ങൾ, കുടിവെള്ളം,) എന്നിവയുടെ പര്യാപ്തതയും ഉപയോഗക്ഷമതയും നിങ്ങൾ എങ്ങനെ വിലയിരുത്തുന്നു?

2. വിദ്യാർത്ഥികൾക്ക് സ്കൂളിൽ ലഭ്യമായ ലൈബ്രറി, കമ്പ്യൂട്ടർ ലാബുകൾ, മറ്റ് പഠന സൌകര്യങ്ങൾ എത്രത്തോളം ഉപയോഗിക്കുന്നുണ്ട്? അവയുടെ ഉപയോഗം പ്രോത്സാഹിപ്പിക്കുന്നതിനായി അധ്യാപകർ എന്തെല്ലാം പ്രവർത്തനങ്ങളാണ് നടത്തുന്നത്?

3. സ്കൂളിലെ വ്യത്യസ്ത സൗകര്യങ്ങളുടെ ലഭ്യതയിലും പരിപാലനത്തിലും നിങ്ങൾ നേരിടുന്ന വെല്ലുവിളികൾ എന്തെല്ലാമാണ്?

B. **പാഠ്യ പ്രവർത്തനങ്ങളിലുള്ള പങ്കാളിത്തം**

4. ക്ലാസ്സ് റൂമിലെ ചർച്ച, റോള്പ്ലേ, ഫീൽഡ് വർക്ക്, സംവാദം, പരീക്ഷണങ്ങൾ എന്നി പ്രവർത്തനങ്ങളിൽ വിദ്യാർത്ഥികളുടെ സ്ഥിരത, താൽപര്യം, സജീവ പങ്കാളിത്തം എന്നിവയെ നിങ്ങൾ എങ്ങനെ വിലയിരുത്തുന്നു?

5. പാഠപുസ്തകങ്ങൾ, നോട്ട് ബുക്കുകൾ, അനുബന്ധ പഠന സാമഗ്രികൾ എന്നിവയുമായി വിദ്യാർത്ഥികൾ എത്രത്തോളം ഇടപെടുന്നു? ഈ വിഷയത്തിൽ നിങ്ങൾ നൽകുന്ന പിന്തുണ എന്തെല്ലാമാണ്?
6. നിങ്ങളുടെ സ്കൂളിലെ വിദ്യാർത്ഥികളുടെ പാഠ്യപാഠ്യേതര പ്രവർത്തനങ്ങളെ പിന്തുണയ്ക്കുന്നതിൽ സഹപാഠികളുടെ പങ്ക് നിങ്ങൾ എങ്ങനെ വിവരിക്കും?

C. **പാഠ്യേതര പരിപാടികളിലുള്ള പങ്കാളിത്തം**

7. നിങ്ങളുടെ സ്കൂളിൽ കായിക പ്രവർത്തനങ്ങൾ, കലാ-സാംസ്കാരിക പരിപാടികൾ, ആഘോഷങ്ങൾ, ക്ലബ് അടിസ്ഥാനത്തിലുള്ള പ്രവർത്തനങ്ങൾ എന്നിവയിൽ വിദ്യാർത്ഥികൾ എത്രത്തോളം സജീവമായി പങ്കാളികളാകുന്നു?
8. നിങ്ങളുടെ അഭിപ്രായത്തിൽ വിദ്യാർത്ഥികളുടെ പാഠ്യപാഠ്യേതര പ്രവർത്തനങ്ങളിലെ പങ്കാളിത്തത്തെ ബാധിക്കുന്ന തടസ്സങ്ങൾ എന്തെല്ലാമാണ്?
9. നിങ്ങളുടെ അനുഭവത്തിൽ പാഠ്യവും പാഠ്യേതരവുമായ പ്രവർത്തനങ്ങളിൽ വിദ്യാർത്ഥികളുടെ പങ്കാളിത്തം വർദ്ധിപ്പിക്കുന്നതിനും സ്കൂൾ സൗകര്യങ്ങളുടെ ഉപയോഗം പരമാവധി കാര്യക്ഷമമാക്കുന്നതിനുമായി നിങ്ങൾ നൽകുന്ന നിർദ്ദേശങ്ങൾ എന്തെല്ലാമാണ്?

Appendix IVA

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
UNIVERSITY OF CALICUT

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR TEACHERS

(Students' Participation in School Programmes and Practices)

Dr. A. Hameed
Professor

Abdunnasar N.
Research Scholar

Basic Details

Name of the school : .....

Type of School : .....

Years of Teaching Experience : .....

Section A : Utilization of School Facilities

1. How would you describe the adequacy and usability of the infrastructural and learning facilities (classrooms, libraries, laboratories, playgrounds, toilets, drinking water, dining areas, etc.) in your school?
2. In your experience, how frequently do students make use of the library, computer labs, and other learning resources? What factors encourage or discourage their usage?
3. What are the challenges do you observe in the availability and maintenance of different facilities?

Section B : Engagement in Curricular Activities

4. How do you assess students' regularity, interest, and active involvement in classroom activities such as discussions, role-plays, fieldwork, debates, or experiments?
5. To what extent do students engage with learning materials like textbooks, notebooks, and supplementary resources? What support do you provide in this regard?
6. How would you describe the role of peer collaboration in supporting students' curricular learning in your school?

Section C : Participation in Co-curricular Programmes

7. How actively do students participate in sports, arts and cultural events, celebrations, and club-based activities in your school?
8. What kinds of support and encouragement are provided by teachers and the school management to enhance participation in co-curricular activities?
9. In your opinion, what are the major barriers or challenges affecting students' involvement in co-curricular programmes, especially club activities?
10. Based on your experience, what changes or improvements would you suggest to increase students' participation in both curricular and co-curricular activities and optimize the use of school facilities?

Appendix V

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
UNIVERSITY OF CALICUT

SCHEDULE FOR DOCUMENT ANALYSIS

(Students' and Staff Representation)

Dr. A. Hameed
Professor

Abdunnasar N.
Research Scholar

Basic Details

Name of the school : .....

Type of School : .....

District : .....

STUDENTS' DETAILS				
Category	**Specification**	**Class 5**	**Class 6**	**Class 7**
General Details	Total Students			
	Girls			
	Boys			
	Others			
Religion Based Details	Hindu			
	Muslim			
	Christian			
	Others			
Caste Based Details	SC			
	ST			
	OBC			
	Others			

STAFF DETAILS			
Category	**Specification**	**Teaching Staff**	**Non-Teaching Staff**
General Details	Total		
	Male		
	Female		
	Others		
Religion Based Details	Hindu		
	Muslim		
	Christian		
	Others		
Caste Based Details	SC And ST		
	OBC		
	Others		

Appendix VI

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
UNIVERSITY OF CALICUT

SCHEDULE FOR OBSERVATION

(Diversity in Material and Visual Representation)

Dr. A. Hameed
Professor

Abdunnasar N.
Research Scholar

Basic Details

Name of the school : .....

Type of School : .....

District : .....

Sl. No.	Item/Feature	Present	Details	Remarks
1	Logos and quotes			
2	Displays and portraits			
3	Prayer room and religious artefacts			
4	Decorations and events			
5	Dress code and pattern			
6	Library resources reflecting diversity			

Appendix VII

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
UNIVERSITY OF CALICUT

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR HEAD OF THE INSTITUTION

(School Perspectives on Diversity)

Dr. A. Hameed
Professor

Abdunnasar N.
Research Scholar

അടിസ്ഥാന വിവരങ്ങൾ

പേര് : .....

സ്കൂളിന്റെ പേര് : .....

സ്കൂളിന്റെ തരം : .....

അധ്യാപന പരിചയം : .....

A. **വിദ്യാലയത്തിന്റെയും സ്ഥാപനത്തിന്റെയും ദർശനം**

1. താങ്കളുടെ വിദ്യാലയം സ്ഥാപിക്കപ്പെടാൻ കാരണമായ പ്രധാന സാഹചര്യങ്ങൾ എന്തൊക്കെയായിരുന്നു?
2. വിദ്യാലയത്തിന്റെ ദർശനവും ദൗത്യവും എന്താണ്?
3. സ്കൂളിലെ പ്രവേശന നടപടികൾ, സ്റ്റാഫ് നിയമനം, ദിനംപ്രതി നടക്കുന്ന പരിപാടികൾ എന്നിവയെ വിദ്യാലയ ദർശനം എങ്ങനെ സ്വാധീനിക്കുന്നു?
4. വ്യത്യസ്ത സാമൂഹ്യ-സാംസ്കാരികവും മതപരവുമായ പശ്ചാത്തലങ്ങളിൽ നിന്നുള്ള വിദ്യാർത്ഥികളെ സ്കൂളിൽ ഉൾപ്പെടുത്തുന്നതിനെ നിങ്ങൾ എങ്ങനെ നോക്കിക്കാണുന്നു?

B. **പ്രവേശന പ്രക്രിയയും പ്രവർത്തന രീതികളും**

5. ഈ സ്കൂളിൽ വിദ്യാർത്ഥികൾക്ക് പ്രവേശനം നൽകുമ്പോൾ ഏറ്റവും പ്രധാനമായി പരിഗണിക്കുന്ന ഘടകങ്ങൾ ഏതൊക്കെയാണ്?
6. മതം, ജാതി, ലിംഗം, പ്രദേശികത, അല്ലെങ്കിൽ സമൂഹ്യ -പശ്ചാത്തലം എന്നിവയെ അടിസ്ഥാനമാക്കിയുള്ള പ്രത്യേക മുൻഗണനകൾ ഉണ്ടോ?

7. പട്ടികജാതി/പട്ടികവർഗം, ന്യൂനപക്ഷങ്ങൾ, പെൺകുട്ടികൾ തുടങ്ങിയ പിന്നാക്കമോ മതിയായ പരിഗണനയോ ലഭിക്കാത്ത വിഭാഗങ്ങളിൽ നിന്നുള്ള വിദ്യാർത്ഥികളുടെ പ്രവേശനം പ്രോത്സാഹിപ്പിക്കുന്നതിന് വിദ്യാലയം സ്വീകരിച്ചിരിക്കുന്ന നടപടികൾ എന്തൊക്കെയാണ്?

C. **അധ്യാപക നിയമന നയങ്ങളും മുൻഗണനകളും**

8. വ്യത്യസ്ത മത, ജാതി, ലിംഗ വിഭാഗങ്ങളിൽ നിന്നുള്ള അധ്യാപകരും അനധ്യാപകരുമായ ജീവനക്കാരുടെ നിയമനത്തിൽ വിദ്യാലയം പിന്തുടരുന്ന നടപടികളും പ്രവർത്തന രീതികളും എന്തൊക്കെയാണ്?

9. അധ്യാപക നിയമനത്തിൽ മുൻഗണന നൽകുന്ന പ്രധാന പരിഗണനകൾ ഏതൊക്കെയാണ്?

10. അധ്യാപകനിയമനത്തെ വിദ്യാലയസാഹചര്യം, വിദ്യാർത്ഥിഘടന, മാനേജ്മെന്റ് മുൻഗണന എന്നിവ സ്വാധീനിക്കുന്നതായി തോന്നിയിട്ടുണ്ടോ?

D. **വസ്തു-ദൃശ്യപരമായ പ്രതിനിധാനം**

11. വിദ്യാലയ പരിസരങ്ങളിൽ പ്രദർശിപ്പിക്കുന്ന ചിഹ്നങ്ങൾ, ഉദ്ധരണികൾ, ചിത്രങ്ങൾ, പ്രതീകങ്ങൾ എന്നിവയെ നിങ്ങൾ എങ്ങനെ വിലയിരുത്തുന്നു? അവയെ തീരുമാനിക്കുന്നത് എന്ത് അടിസ്ഥാനത്തിൽ?

12. വിദ്യാലയത്തിൽ കാണുന്ന പ്രത്യേക ചിഹ്നങ്ങൾ, അലങ്കാരങ്ങൾ, ഉത്സവപ്രദർശനങ്ങൾ എന്നിവ തിരഞ്ഞെടുക്കുന്നതിനുള്ള പ്രധാന കാരണങ്ങൾ എന്തൊക്കെയാണ്?

13. നിങ്ങളുടെ വിദ്യാലയത്തിലെ ദൃശ്യപരവും പ്രത്യക്ഷമായ പ്രദർശനവസ്തുക്കളുമായും ബന്ധപ്പെട്ട് രക്ഷിതാക്കളിൽനിന്നോ വിദ്യാർത്ഥികളിൽ നിന്നോ എന്തെങ്കിലും അഭിപ്രായങ്ങൾ ഉണ്ടായിട്ടുണ്ടോ?

Appendix VII A

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
UNIVERSITY OF CALICUT

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR HEAD OF THE INSTITUTION

(Perspectives on Diversity)

Dr. A. Hameed
Professor

Abdunnasar N.
Research Scholar

Basic Details

Name : .....

Name of the school : .....

Type of school : .....

Years of teaching experience : .....

A. School Establishment and Vision

1. What was the main reason and circumstances that led to the establishment of this school?
2. What are the vision and mission of the school?
3. In what ways does this vision influence the school's admission practices, staff recruitment, and day-to-day programmes?
4. How do you observe accommodation of students from different socio-cultural and religious backgrounds in the school?

B. Admission Process and Practices

5. What factors are considered most important while admitting students to this school?
6. Are there any preferences based on religion, caste, gender, locality, or community background?
7. What are the initiatives taken by the school to promote admissions from disadvantaged or underrepresented groups like SC/ST, minorities, or girls?

C. Staff Recruitment Policies and Preferences

8. What is the school procedure and practice in the staff recruitment?
9. What are the priority considerations in staff recruitment?
10. Do you think that school environment, student composition and management priorities influence the staff recruitment?

D. Material and Visual Representation

11. How do you observe the emblems, quotes, portraits, and symbols displayed within the school premises? Who decide and on what basis?
12. What are the key reasons or principles behind selecting particular symbols, decorations, and festival displays in the school?
13. Have there been any concerns, requests, or feedback from parents, staff, or students regarding material and visual representations in your school?

Appendix VIII

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
UNIVERSITY OF CALICUT

SCHEDULE FOR FIELD NOTE

(Diversity in Regular School Practices)

Dr. A. Hameed
Professor

Abdunnasar N.
Research Scholar

Basic Details

Name of the school : .....

Type of School : .....

District : .....

Sl. No.	School Practice	Observed Practice	Notes	Inclusive / Exclusive
1	Morning Prayer	Nature of prayer		
		Participates		
2	Morning Assembly	Messages or quotes		
		Representation of students and duties		
3	Religious Accommodation	Dress and uniform		
		Provision for prayer and religious attire		
4	Classroom Seating Arrangements	Seating patterns (Mixed / segregated)		
		Student grouping pattern		
5	Mixing students in public spaces	Grouping patterns during lunch, play, leisure		
6	Value Education and Moral Lessons	Themes and specifications		

Appendix IX

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
UNIVERSITY OF CALICUT

SCHEDULE FOR DOCUMENT ANALYSIS

(Diversity in School Programme)

Dr. A. Hameed
Professor

Abdunnasar N.
Research Scholar

Basic Details

Name of the School : .....

Type of School : .....

District : .....

Sl. No.	Theme	Events Celebrated		Details of the Programmes Conducted and Items	Remarks
1	Celebrations	Social events			
		Cultural celebrations			
		Religion based celebrations			
2	Arts and Cultural Programmes	**Programme**	**Items**		
		School arts fest			
		School annual day celebration			
3	Clubs and Activities	**Active Clubs in the school**	**Programmes**	**Details**	

Appendix X

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
UNIVERSITY OF CALICUT

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR TEACHERS

(Diversity in School Practices and Programmes)

Dr. A. Hameed
Professor

Abdunnasar N.
Research Scholar

അടിസ്ഥാന വിവരങ്ങൾ

പേര് : .....

സ്കൂളിന്റെ പേര് : .....

സ്കൂളിന്റെ തരം : .....

അധ്യാപന പരിചയം : .....

I. School Practices

1. നിങ്ങളുടെ സ്കൂളിൽ പ്രഭാത പ്രാർത്ഥനയും അസംബ്ലിയും എങ്ങനെയാണ് ?
2. വിവിധ മത സാംസ്കാരിക പശ്ചാത്തലങ്ങൾ ഉള്ള വിദ്യാർത്ഥികളെ ഉൾക്കൊള്ളിച്ച് അസംബ്ലി സംഘടിപ്പിക്കാൻ എന്തെല്ലാം നടപടികളാണ് നിങ്ങൾ കൈക്കൊള്ളുന്നത്?
3. അസംബ്ലിയിലുള്ള വിദ്യാർത്ഥികളുടെ ചുമതലകളും റോളുകളും എങ്ങനെയാണ് നിർണ്ണയിച്ചു നൽകുന്നത്?
4. മതപരമായ വസ്തുധാരണങ്ങൾ, വെള്ളിയാഴ്ചയിലെ പ്രാർത്ഥന, മതപരമായ വ്രതങ്ങൾ, തുടങ്ങിയ മതപരമായ ആവശ്യങ്ങൾക്ക് നിങ്ങളുടെ സ്കൂൾ കൈകൊള്ളുന്ന രീതി എന്തൊക്കെയാണ്?
5. വിദ്യാർത്ഥികളുടെ ആരാധനാകാര്യങ്ങൾക്ക് ആവശ്യമായ സജ്ജീകരണങ്ങൾ സ്കൂളിൽ ഒരുക്കിയ സന്ദർഭങ്ങൾ?
6. ക്ലാസിലെ ഇരിപ്പിടങ്ങൾ എങ്ങനെയാണ് ക്രമീകരിച്ചിരിക്കുന്നത്? ഇടകലർത്തിയുള്ള ഇരിപ്പിടങ്ങൾ ഒരുക്കുന്നതിനനുകൂലമായ നിർദ്ദേശങ്ങളെന്തെങ്കിലുമുണ്ടോ?

7. മതം, ജാതി അല്ലെങ്കിൽ സാമൂഹിക-സാംസ്കാരിക പശ്ചാത്തലം എന്നിവയുടെ അടിസ്ഥാനത്തിൽ വിദ്യാർത്ഥികൾക്കിടയിൽ സ്വാഭാവികമായ ഗ്രൂപ്പിംഗ് പ്രവണതകൾ നിങ്ങൾ ശ്രദ്ധിച്ചിട്ടുണ്ടോ?
8. ഇടവേളകളിലും ഭക്ഷണ സമയത്തും കളിസമയത്തും വിദ്യാർത്ഥികളുടെ ഇടപെടലുകളും പെരുമാറ്റങ്ങളും നിങ്ങൾ എങ്ങനെ വിലയിരുത്തുന്നു?
9. അനൗദ്യോഗികമായ മാറ്റിനിർത്തലുകൾ (Informal exclusions) നിങ്ങളുടെ ശ്രദ്ധയിൽപ്പെട്ടിട്ടുണ്ടോ? ഉണ്ടെങ്കിൽ, നിങ്ങൾ എങ്ങനെയാണ് അതിൽ ഇടപെടുകയും പരിഹരിക്കുകയും ചെയ്യുന്നത് ?
10. സ്കൂളിൽ ധാർമ്മിക-മൂല്യ വിദ്യാഭ്യാസത്തിനായി എന്തൊക്കെ പ്രവർത്തനങ്ങളാണ് നടത്താറുള്ളത്?
11. മതനിരപേക്ഷത, സഹനം, സാമൂഹിക ഐക്യം, വൈവിധ്യത്തോടുള്ള ബഹുമാനം എന്നീ ആശയങ്ങൾ ക്ലാസ് മുറികളിൽ എങ്ങനെയെല്ലാമാണ് വിദ്യാർത്ഥികളെ പരിചയപ്പെടുത്താറുള്ളത്?

II. School Programmes

12. സ്കൂളിൽ നടത്തുന്ന പരിപാടികളെയും ആഘോഷങ്ങളെയും നിങ്ങൾ എങ്ങനെ വീക്ഷിക്കുന്നു ?
13. നിങ്ങളുടെ സ്കൂളിൽ പതിവായി നടത്തുന്ന ആഘോഷങ്ങൾ ഏതൊക്കെയാണ്? ഈ പരിപാടികൾ സാധാരണയായി എങ്ങനെയാണ് തീരുമാനിക്കുന്നതും ആസൂത്രണം ചെയ്യുന്നതും?
14. സ്കൂൾ ആഘോഷങ്ങളുടെ സംഘാടനത്തിലും നടത്തിപ്പിലും വ്യക്തിപരമായി നിങ്ങൾ വഹിക്കുന്ന പങ്ക് വിശദീകരിക്കാമോ? ഈ പരിപാടികളുടെ തീരുമാനങ്ങൾ എടുക്കുന്നതിലും നടത്തിപ്പിലും അധ്യാപകർ എങ്ങനെയാണ് പങ്കുചേരുന്നത് ?
15. വിവിധ സാമൂഹിക-സാംസ്കാരിക, മത പശ്ചാത്തലങ്ങളിൽ നിന്നുള്ള വിദ്യാർത്ഥികളുടെ പങ്കാളിത്തം സ്കൂൾ ആഘോഷങ്ങളിൽ നിങ്ങൾ എങ്ങനെയൊക്കെയാണ് പ്രോത്സാഹിപ്പിക്കുകയും പിന്തുണയ്ക്കുകയും ചെയ്യുന്നത് ? ഇതിന് ഉദാഹരണങ്ങൾ പറയാമോ ?.
16. നിങ്ങളുടെ സ്കൂളിലെ കലോത്സവങ്ങൾക്കും വാർഷികാഘോഷങ്ങൾക്കും ആവശ്യമായ പ്രമേയങ്ങൾ, ആശയങ്ങൾ എന്നിവ എങ്ങനെയാണ് തിരഞ്ഞെടുക്കുന്നത് ?
17. സാമൂഹിക-സാംസ്കാരിക-മതപരമായ വൈവിധ്യങ്ങൾ പ്രോത്സാഹിപ്പിക്കുന്നതിന് മത്സരങ്ങളിലും സാംസ്കാരിക പരിപാടികളിലും ഒരു അധ്യാപകൻ എന്ന

നിലയിൽ നിങ്ങൾ സ്വീകരിക്കുന്ന മാർഗങ്ങൾ അല്ലെങ്കിൽ പ്രയോഗങ്ങൾ എന്തൊക്കെയാണ് ?

18. നിങ്ങളുടെ അഭിപ്രായത്തിൽ വിദ്യാലയ അന്തരീക്ഷങ്ങളിൽ സാമൂഹിക സാംസ്കാരിക - മതപരമായ വൈവിധ്യങ്ങൾ പ്രോത്സാഹിപ്പിക്കുന്നതിൽ പരിപാടികൾ എത്രത്തോളം ഫലപ്രദമാണ്?

19. വിദ്യാലയത്തിൽ സജീവമായി പ്രവർത്തിക്കുന്ന ക്ലബ്ബുകൾ ഏതെല്ലാമാണ്? സാമൂഹികവും സാംസ്കാരികവും മതപരവുമായ വൈവിധ്യങ്ങൾ പ്രോത്സാഹിപ്പിക്കുന്നത് ലക്ഷ്യമാക്കിയിട്ടുള്ള പ്രവർത്തനങ്ങൾ ക്ലബ്ബുകൾ ഏറ്റെടുത്ത് നടത്താറുണ്ടോ?

20. സ്കൂൾ ക്ലബ്ബുകളിലെ വൈവിധ്യവുമായി ബന്ധപ്പെട്ട പ്രവർത്തനങ്ങളിൽ മാർഗ നിർദ്ദേശങ്ങൾ നൽകുന്നതിലും മെന്ററിങ് നടത്തുന്നതിലും സുഗമമാക്കുന്നതിലും നിങ്ങൾ വഹിക്കുന്ന പങ്ക് എന്താണ് ?

21. സ്കൂളിൽ നടത്തുന്ന പരിപാടികളിൽ കൂടുതൽ വൈവിധ്യങ്ങൾ ഉൾക്കൊള്ളിക്കാൻ നിങ്ങൾ നൽകുന്ന മാർഗനിർദ്ദേശങ്ങൾ എന്തൊക്കെയാണ്?

Appendix X A

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
UNIVERSITY OF CALICUT

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR TEACHERS

(Diversity in School Practices and Programmes)

Dr. A. Hameed
Professor

Abdunnasar N.
Research Scholar

Basic Details

Name : .....

Name of the school : .....

Type of school : .....

Years of teaching experience : .....

I. School Practices

1. How morning prayers and assembly are organised in your school?
2. What measures are taken to make the assembly inclusive for students from different religious and cultural backgrounds?
3. How roles and duties in assembly is assigned to students?
4. How does your school address students' religious needs like Friday prayers, religious fasting, or wearing religious attire?
5. Can you recall any situation where a student's religious needs required special arrangements? How was it handled?
6. How are classroom seating arrangements made? Is there any guideline to promote mixed seating in school?
7. Have you observed any natural grouping tendencies among students based on religion, caste, or socio-cultural background?
8. How do you observe students mix during break, lunch, and playtime?
9. Have you noticed any informal exclusions? If so, how do you intervene or address them?
10. What are the provisions for moral and value education in school?
11. How ideas of secularism, tolerance, social harmony, and respect for diversity is transferred in classroom?

II. School Programmes

12. How do you describe the nature of programmes and celebrations conducted in school?
13. What are the celebrations regularly conducted in your school? How are these events generally planned and implemented?
14. Could you explain the role you personally play in the organisation and execution of school celebrations? How are teachers involved in the decision-making and conduct of these events?
15. In what ways do you encourage and support the participation of students from diverse socio-cultural and religious backgrounds in school celebrations? Can you mention any specific instances?
16. Have you ever encountered any challenges, difficulties, or objections in planning or conducting religious or cultural celebrations within the school context? If so, how did you address or manage those situations?
17. How are the themes, items, and performances selected for arts festivals and annual day programmes in your school?
18. As a teacher, what strategies or practices do you adopt to promote socio-cultural and religious diversity in cultural programmes and competitions?
19. In your opinion, to what extent are school programmes effective in promoting socio-cultural and religious diversity within the school environment?
20. Could you describe which school club is active in your school? Have any of these clubs undertaken activities aimed at promoting socio-cultural and religious diversity among students?
21. What role do you play in guiding, mentoring, or facilitating diversity-related activities within school clubs?
22. What suggestions or recommendations would you offer to improve the inclusivity and diversity in school programmes conducted in your school?

Appendix XI

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
UNIVERSITY OF CALICUT

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION (FGD) GUIDE

(Students' Perception of School Practices and Programmes)

Dr. A. Hameed
Professor

Abdunnasar N.
Research Scholar

അടിസ്ഥാന വിവരങ്ങൾ

- സ്കൂളിന്റെ പേര് :
- സ്കൂൾ തരം :
- പങ്കെടുക്കുന്നവരുടെ എണ്ണം :
- സമയം :
- അധ്യാപകൻ :

പ്രാരംഭം

- വിദ്യാർത്ഥികളുടെ സ്കൂളിലെ പൊതുവായ അനുഭവങ്ങൾ

I. സ്കൂൾ ദിനചര്യകൾ

A. പ്രാർത്ഥനയും, അസ്സംബ്ലിയും

- പ്രഭാത പ്രാർത്ഥന, അസ്സംബ്ലി എന്നീ സന്ദർഭങ്ങളിലെ അനുഭവങ്ങൾ.
- വിദ്യാർത്ഥികളുടെ അവസരങ്ങളും, ഉത്തരവാദിത്തവും.
- അസ്സംബ്ലി പ്രവർത്തനങ്ങൾക്കായിട്ടുള്ള വിദ്യാർത്ഥികളെ തെരെഞ്ഞെടുപ്പ് രീതികൾ.
- അസംബ്ലിയിലെ വിഷയങ്ങളും, സന്ദേശങ്ങളും.

B. മതപരമായ ആവശ്യങ്ങൾക്കുള്ള സൗകര്യം

- വിദ്യാർത്ഥികളുടെ മതപരമായ ആവശ്യങ്ങൾക്ക് എങ്ങനെയാണ് സ്കൂൾ അവസരമൊരുക്കുന്നത്.
- മതപരമായ ആവശ്യങ്ങളിൽ സുഹൃത്തുക്കളുടേയും അധ്യാപകരുടേയും പ്രതികരണം.
- വിവിധ മതപരമായ ആവശ്യങ്ങൾക്കുള്ള അവസരവും അംഗീകാരവും.

C. **വിദ്യാർത്ഥി ഇടപെടലുകളും, ഇരിപ്പിടവും**

- ഇരിപ്പിടം വിദ്യാർത്ഥി തെരഞ്ഞെടുക്കുന്ന രീതി.
- ക്ലാസ്സിലെ ഇരിപ്പിടവും വിദ്യാർത്ഥി ഇടകലരലും.
- പരിഗണിക്കപ്പെടുകയോ അവഗണിക്കപ്പെടുകയോ ചെയ്ത അനുഭവങ്ങൾ.
- വിദ്യാർത്ഥികളുടെ കളിയും ഒരുമിച്ചുള്ള പ്രവർത്തനങ്ങളും.

D. **ധാർമിക അധ്യാപനങ്ങൾ**

- ധാർമിക അധ്യാപന വേളകളിലെ അനുഭവങ്ങൾ.
- സന്ദേശങ്ങളുടേയും വിഷയങ്ങളുടേയും പൊതു സ്വഭാവം.

II. സ്കൂൾ പരിപാടികൾ

E. **സ്കൂൾ ആഘോഷങ്ങൾ**

- സ്കൂളിൽ സംഘടിക്കപ്പെടുന്ന പ്രധാന പരിപാടികൾ.
- കൂടുതൽ ആവേശകരമായ പരിപാടികൾ.
- ആഘോഷ വേളകളിലെ അനുഭവങ്ങൾ.
- ആഘോഷ വേളകളിലെ നിയന്ത്രണങ്ങളും പരിമിതികളും.

F. **കലാ സാംസ്കാരിക പരിപാടികൾ**

- കലോത്സവം , വാർഷികാഘോഷം തുടങ്ങിയ സന്ദർഭങ്ങളിലെ അനുഭവങ്ങൾ.
- കലാപരിപാടികളിലെ ഇനങ്ങൾ.

G. **ക്ലബ്ബുകളും പ്രവർത്തനങ്ങളും**

- സ്കൂളിലെ സജീവമായ ക്ലബ്ബുകളും മറ്റു സംവിധാനങ്ങളും.
- ക്ലബ് പ്രവർത്തനങ്ങളിലെ വിദ്യാർത്ഥികളുടെ അനുഭവങ്ങൾ.
- ക്ലബ് പ്രവർത്തനങ്ങളിലെ ആനന്ദകരവും ഓർമ്മിക്കുന്നതുമായ പരിപാടികൾ.
- സ്കൂൾ പ്രോഗ്രാമുകളെ കൂടുതൽ മെച്ചപ്പെട്ടതാക്കാനുള്ള നിർദ്ദേശങ്ങൾ.

Appendix XI A

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
UNIVERSITY OF CALICUT

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION (FGD) GUIDE

(Students' Perception of School Practices and Programmes)

Dr. A. Hameed — Professor
Abdunnasar N. — Research Scholar

Basic Details

Name of the school : .....

Type of school : .....

Number of Participants: .....

Duration : 40–50 minutes

Facilitator : .....

Warm-up

- Students' General school experiences

I. School Practices

A. Morning Prayer & Assembly

- Students' experience in the morning prayer and assembly.
- Students' role and opportunities.
- Students' selection pattern for leading assembly activities.
- Themes and messages in assembly.

B. Religious Accommodation

- In what ways does the school accommodate or respond to students' religious practices.
- Teachers' and fellow students' response and support in religious needs.
- Respect and accommodation for different religious needs and customs.

C. Classroom Seating Arrangements

- How students choose where to sit in class?
- Classroom sitting pattern and diversity mixing.
- Share experiences and instances excluded or included in the classroom.
- Students play and other shared practices.

D. Moral Lessons

- Experiences during moral lessons.
- Themes and messages.

II. School Programmes

E. School Celebrations

- Important celebrations and events conducted in school.
- Enjoyable events.
- Students' experience during celebrations.
- Restrictions and limitations faced by students.

F. Arts and Cultural Programmes

- Experiences during arts festivals and annual day programmes.
- Items included in school arts programme.

G. School Clubs and Activities

- Active clubs and student associations in the school.
- Students' participation experiences in club activities.
- Most enjoyable or memorable club activities.
- Suggestions to improve school programmes and practices.

Appendix XII

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
UNIVERSITY OF CALICUT

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR PARENTS

(Parental Perspectives on School Programmes)

Dr. A. Hameed
Professor

Abdunnasar N.
Research Scholar

അടിസ്ഥാന വിവരങ്ങൾ

- സ്കൂളിന്റെ പേര് :
- സ്കൂൾ തരം :

1) നിങ്ങളുടെ കുട്ടിയുടെ സ്കൂളുമായി ബന്ധപ്പെട്ട നിങ്ങളുടെ അനുഭവങ്ങൾ എന്തൊക്കെയാണ്?
2) കുട്ടിയുടെ പഠനത്തിനായ് ഈ സ്കൂൾ തെരഞ്ഞെടുക്കാനുള്ള പ്രധാന കാരണങ്ങൾ എന്തൊക്കെയാണ്?
3) സ്കൂൾ തെരഞ്ഞെടുക്കുന്നതിൽ നിങ്ങളെ സ്വാധീനിച്ച ഘടകങ്ങൾ എന്തെല്ലാമാണ്?
4) സ്കൂളിലെ പഠന, പാഠ്യേതര പരിപാടികൾ, ആഘോഷങ്ങൾ എന്നിവയെ നിങ്ങൾ എങ്ങനെ വിലയിരുത്തുന്നു?
5) വിദ്യാർത്ഥികൾക്ക് വിവിധ പരിപാടികളിൽ പങ്കെടുക്കാൻ ആവശ്യമായ അവസരം സ്കൂൾ ഒരുക്കുന്നുണ്ടോ?
6) വിദ്യാലയത്തിലെ വിവിധ പരിപാടികളിൽ നിങ്ങളുടെ കുട്ടിയെ പങ്കെടുപ്പിക്കാൻ നിങ്ങൾ നേരിടുന്ന പ്രയാസങ്ങൾ എന്തെല്ലാമാണ്?
7) സ്കൂളിലെ വിവിധ പാഠ്യ പാഠ്യേതര പരിപാടികൾ കൂടുതൽ മെച്ചപ്പെട്ടതാകാൻ നിങ്ങൾക്ക് നൽകാവുന്ന നിർദ്ദേശങ്ങൾ എന്തെല്ലാമാണ്?

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DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
UNIVERSITY OF CALICUT

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR PARENTS

(Parental Perspectives on School Programmes)

Dr. A. Hameed
Professor

Abdunnasar N.
Research Scholar

Basic Details

Name of the school : .....

Type of school : .....

1. How would you describe your overall experience with your child's school?
2. What were the most important reasons for choosing this school for your child?
3. What are the factors influenced your decision while selecting school for your child?
4. What is your opinion about the programmes, celebrations, and extracurricular activities conducted in the school?
5. Do you think that the school gives enough opportunities for students in different programmes?
6. What challenges do you face in ensuring your child's participation in school programmes and activities?
7. What changes or improvements would you suggest to make the school better?