

STUDENTS'  
JOURNAL  
OF  
EDUCATION  
AND  
DEVELOPMENT

Issue 03, September 2016



Azim Premji  
University







# STUDENTS' JOURNAL OF EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT

## **Editorial Collective**

Kavya Chowdhry | Priyanka Navle | Sanjana Santosh |  
Ujjwala Sharma | Veena Narasimharao | Vrinda Manocha

## **Project Coordination Team**

Priya Kamra | Rafi Mohammed | Sarah Jacobson |  
Saumil Sharma | Sneha Kumari

## **Advisory Board**

Aparna Sundar | Avinash Kumar | Nomita Sikand |  
Sailen Routray | Suraj Jacob



Universities in India are now battlegrounds for political dominance where particularly virulent strands of ideologies want to reign supreme by any means possible. At such a juncture, it is important that collectives of learners (be it students or teachers) speak truth to power, both inside and outside of the institutional architecture for higher education. The continued publication of Students` Journal of Education and Development (SJED) assumes salience for this reason. SJED is a space where the student community of Azim Premji University (APU) talks to itself and the wider world about issues related to public importance and interest. The papers included in this third issue of SJED amply demonstrate the depth of the students` engagement with these.

The first essay in this volume by Rachel Varghese opens up the lived experience of women belonging to the Indian Orthodox Church. It provides us with a map of the changing relationships between this ancient church and its women members. The second paper by Garima Awasthy brings into focus an important aspect of early childhood education – that of socio-emotional development; she does this by looking at schools that purportedly follow an alternative pedagogy. The learnings from this paper have important pointers for pre-school education in India. Bhavini Pant and Chryslynn D`Costa provide us glimpses into a life skills and sexuality education initiative amongst a tribal group in Rajasthan and demonstrate that we have much to learn from the egalitarian social mores of indigenous communities.

Ritika Chawla, in her paper 'Inclusive Classroom Settings`, foregrounds issues related to inclusion by basing it on her experiences on the field that try to capture the perspectives of a large variety of stakeholders. Shristee Bajpai, in her article, explores the overlaps between deep ecology and a Hindu philosophy of nature, and the possible openings such a co-reading might have for solving the ecological crisis of the Ganges. In 'State, Sustainability, and Modernity`, Nisha Subramanian extends James

Scott`s insights into the functioning of the modern state into the dynamics of the modern international state system. In the final paper in this issue, 'Business Approaches to Poverty`, Himakshi Piplani discusses the various ways in which the issues surrounding poverty have been looked at by businesses and corporates.

As must be evident from the above discussion, these papers cover a wide terrain in the domains of education and development. They deal with the issues at hand from a set of plural perspectives. Such a plural and pluralistic exploration of social issues is the need of the hour.

*The Editorial Collective, Students' Journal of Education and Development*

# CONTENTS

## Research Articles

Women in the Indian Orthodox Church: Negotiating Identity, Rights, and Community Claims - *Rachel Varghese* ————— 3

Socio-emotional Component in the Early Childhood Education Curricula - *Garima Awasthy* ————— 23

Sexuality Education in Rural Rajasthan - *Bhavini Pant & Chryslynn D'costa* ————— 43

Inclusive Classroom Settings: Understanding Teachers`, Parents`, and Students` Attitudes - *Ritika Chawla* ————— 57

## Perspectives and Practices

Towards a Riverine Philosophy: The Ganges in Ecological Crisis - *Shrishtee Bajpai* ————— 71

State, Sustainability, and Modernity - *Nisha Subramanian* ————— 87

## Notes

Business Approaches to Poverty: The Road from Charity to Responsibility - *Himakshi Piplani* ————— 97

Style Sheet ————— 107



# *Research Articles*



# WOMEN IN THE INDIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH: NEGOTIATING IDENTITY, RIGHTS, AND COMMUNITY CLAIMS

RACHEL  
VARGHESE

## Abstract

The Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church is led and administered by men. As much as social order and policies are dictated by men, policy formulation is skewed and male-oriented, with patriarchal notions and expectations of women and their preferences guiding policies. In such a situation, how do women in the church negotiate the conflicts between their citizenship rights and the claims of their religious community? How do women deal with the contrasts between scriptural imperatives and cultural practices that are disguised as church tradition? I attempt to explore women's engagement in this church in an attempt to address these questions.

## Introduction

### *A Background to the Community*

The Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church (hereafter, the Indian Orthodox Church [IOC]) is one of several denominations within the ancient Syrian Christian community based in Kerala. (Syrian Christians trace their origin to the work of St Thomas, one of the 12 disciples of Jesus Christ, who reached India to spread the Gospel.)

The traditions and liturgy of the Indian Orthodox Church have been influenced by the traditions of the West Syrian Church, and the IOC has over the ages adopted local customs in its practices.

At the top of the hierarchy of the IOC is its head—the Catholicos. This is followed by the Holy Episcopal Synod, which comprises all the bishops of the church. The Malankara Association comes next, and it is the body that elects the members of the IOC's managing committee, bishops, and the Catholicos. The association comprises a few elected members from every parish of the IOC across the world. The IOC's managing committee comes

---

*Rachel Varghese specialised in Law and Governance during her MA (Development) at Azim Premji University in 2013-15. As a William J Clinton Fellow in 2015-16, she set up Saath-Saath, a support group for domestic violence survivors at My Choices Foundation, Hyderabad. In a past life, she worked for seven years as a news editor. She hopes to combine her present interests in public health and gender to understand and reach out to the poorest amongst us. Her email id is rachelvarghese03@gmail.com.*

next in the hierarchy, and it is a smaller body to look into financial and other administrative matters of the church. It comprises of two priests and four lay members representing each diocese, who are elected for a five-year tenure. The working committee follows next, and it serves as the advisory council to the managing committee and the Catholics.

This senior hierarchy is supported by a diocesan general body in each of the 30 dioceses of the church. This is supplemented by a diocesan council in each of the dioceses.

Each diocese comprises of several parish churches. Each of these parishes has its own parish general body, which elects the parish managing committee that represents the needs and demands of the parish in the higher bodies of the IOC management.

### *Main Issues*

As elaborate and organised as the IOC management seemingly is, it also stands out for comprising of only men. Whether it is in the lowest body, i.e., the parish managing committee or at the Malankara Association at the top of the pecking order, it is only men who lead, discuss, dissent, debate, vote, and make all the decisions that impact every aspect of running the church—at the macro, micro, and all the in-between levels.

Almost all the literature produced by the IOC is by male authors, mostly the clergy and rarely the lay person. Consequently, the feminine voice seems to be heard only literally—in the spirited singing in the mass or by women teaching in the Sunday school classes—or through those participating in the goings-on in the women's spiritual wing of the church, i.e., the Martha Mariam Samajam.

Steeped in tradition as it is, the IOC is also one of the most educated, affluent, and influential communities in India. Its members have been and are at some of the highest leadership positions in the Indian bureaucracy and politics. A quick glance at any of its parish churches will show up teachers, doctors, journalists, information technology (IT) professionals, engineers, business magnates, scientists, and entrepreneurs.

However, the education and affluence achieved by the church community has had little impact on the way it operates. Preoccupied with order, structure, tradition, and boundaries, the IOC views traditional social divisions and hierarchies as predetermined realities, and the rigid separation in gender-specific roles—whether in the family, church rituals, community, and committee—derives from purported divine decree.

When St Paul wrote in his First Epistle to the Corinthians (14:34) “Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak,” he did so solely as a temporary organisational measure in order to prevent talkative women from prattling at a time others wished to pray and not as a doctrine of faith that should never be amended or changed.

And it is also St Paul who speaks of men and women as equals in the same epistle: “Nevertheless, neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord” (11:11).

### *Gender-Based Gaps*

The impact of a gender-specified socio-religious order is felt in all aspects of community life. Whether it is the way elections are held in the parishes or administrative decisions are made, the impact of these is felt by all in the community. Women, who comprise more than half the community (based on population data from Kerala and church attendance for a single large parish), most often have no say or role to play in the decision-making process or in the operations of the church, even though in their roles as mothers and wives in the family, these decisions affect them too.

Family-centeredness, gender roles, and religiosity are not necessarily barriers to equality and, if purified of patriarchy, can be avenues of emancipation. However, in seeking the empowerment of women, the IOC is anxious not to appropriate the ideals and expectations of the progressive West.

Whether women in the IOC are doomed to a life of silence and secondary status needs to be questioned and debated. These same women hold positions of authority in secular spheres outside the church community, whether at workplaces, research arenas, or in their own living communities. Simultaneously, anonymity as a normative constraint in a sphere (religion) that influences every aspect of daily living is a paradox and an unfair judgement on the women, regardless of their potential and abilities.

It would be simplistic to say women in the IOC are subjugated, powerless, and dominated by a seemingly patriarchal socio-religious order. Indeed, in 2011, in a landmark and historic amendment to the church constitution, women were granted voting rights, membership to local parishes, and the right to get elected to the parish managing committee. However, whether these constitutional amendments have led to women having an equal voice even in decision-making processes that directly affect women or significant theological opinions equal to that of male theologians, clergymen, or priests remains to be seen.

The chant of “traditional-is-bad, progressive-is-good” also does not seem to fit the bill. The women in the IOC community are as educated and empowered in the social sphere outside the church as the men. However, there has been no rallying cry for individual rights and autonomy by the women folk of the community. Furthermore, a collective move to improve the status of women without sacrificing the community’s religious traditions and doctrine has also not been initiated.

Value judgements based on preconceived notions of gender roles and social divisions, and their own expectations and preferences have seemingly for long shaped the understanding of the all-male IOC administration. Dialogue and listening to the experiences and the testimonies of the women of the community is essential. This article is based on the voices and the experiences of Orthodox women in navigating their own belief systems and in challenging deeply held traditions and institutional structures.

### **Beneficiaries of Tradition**

As a child, Mariamma<sup>1</sup> (60 years) was forbidden from touching the Bible and her father’s priestly garments, attending church services, or partaking of the Holy Communion during her menstrual cycle. Bindu (36 years) has had her scarf forcefully drawn over her head by the priest when she approached him for the *hoosoyo* (absolution) prayers during the Sunday church services. Sneha (68 years) did not know that the changes in the church constitution two years ago permit her to cast a vote for her parish committee. These women are not ignorant or non-participative in church activities. Mariamma was born into a family of priests; her grandfather, father, and others in her family are priests—she had easy access to accurate sources of church practices and norms. Sneha has held senior positions in the national council of an international ecumenical organisation, besides having been the head of the physics department at one of Bengaluru’s most prestigious colleges.

Archaic taboos and an outdated cultural bias towards women’s participation combined with misogynistic stereotypes inherited from a patriarchal society have co-existed in the life of the IOC (Behr-Sigel 1998). Spaces of worship are determined by not only ideology and culture but also gender. Cultural ideas of gender impurity have permeated the religious practices of the church. Ideology plays a central conceptual role in the discussion on culture, particularly culture as a method of domination (Samuel 2013). Ideology is not something that exists above individual consciousness but rather “is implicitly manifest in art, in law, in economic activity and in all manifestations of individual and collective life” (Gramsci 1971: 328).

Indian Orthodox Christian women for whom the church and the church community have been a pivotal influence all through their lives, their participation in the church is determined by ideologies and relations of power, which place them in deferential positions to men in the agendas and operations of the church. However, it is also their access to higher education, exposure to varied workspaces, and their lived experience that allows for Orthodox women to exercise agency and resistance as they work around these institutional structures and regulations.

### *Participation in Church and Religious Practices during Menstrual Cycles*

No church canon law or *kalpana* (bishop`s decree) exists that does not permit women from participating fully in all church services during their menstrual cycle. However, this information has not been made public by the clergy. Almost all the women I interviewed believed that there was such a prohibition, and as youngsters, they had been told to observe it by their parents in different ways, such as by refraining from either partaking in Holy Communion, attending church services, touching the Bible, lighting the lamp at home, or participating in religious ceremonies at home—the number of conditions varying from family to family.

Those who did not experience such prohibitions first-hand did, however, observe the practice amongst their peers. One of them, who did a master`s in theology in a US seminary, recounted an incident that occurred at a youth meeting there: “We were at a Bible study at a home, and I passed the Bible to my friend seated next to me. She immediately clasped her hands behind her back, and shook her head in a sign of refusal. I was perplexed, and had no idea why she did that. When I asked her in private later, she told me she was having her periods, and hence, couldn`t touch the Bible. She told me that was the rule in her house.”

The youngest woman interviewed said that she was never prohibited from participating during her periods but was aware that such an injunction existed. “The aunties in church say all these rules have changed, and things are different now. Now, girls don`t need to stay away.” However, she stated that girls in her church are not allowed to sit or recline on the three steps leading to the altar but boys are. Such instances usually occur during weekly choir practices, when in a moment of exhaustion, choristers recline on those steps to rest their legs. (There are no seating arrangements inside IOC churches; members sit on a carpeted floor.) It is in such situations, the interviewee

said, that girls are asked to leave their seat on the steps and sit elsewhere, while boys are not reprimanded. When I probed her as to what could be the probable reason for this, she hesitatingly replied, “Because of women’s impurity. A woman menstruates and that can defile...”

The religious restrictions on menstruating women are not unique to the IOC. One interviewee shared a Romanian Orthodox woman’s conversation on this topic with her bishop who explained to her that because the Holy Mysteries are the body and blood of Christ, and since it is important that the body and blood of Christ be kept within the person partaking of them, a menstruating woman should not partake of them as that would lead to the body and blood of Christ leaving the person’s body via the process of bleeding.

This explanation satisfied both women, possibly because the understanding came from a church functionary who is respected as an authority on church tradition or because the explanation was not based on the usual woman’s purity–impurity angle.

However, this teaching ought to be challenged as it reduces the Orthodox understanding of God to merely a piece of bread and wine, and partaking of the Holy Mysteries as a physical act of consumption and excretion. The Holy Mysteries are not only flesh or a physical form of God but the act of a divine indwelling, which is believed to sanctify the entire being and not just the physical body. Furthermore, such an explanation reduces God to a mere physical form that can be excreted by an involuntary body function.

Most women interviewed said they stopped observing this injunction on participation when they started college, their “thoughts matured”, and they had some autonomy in decision-making. They said they did so as they did not agree with this norm and did not consider it a correct practice. To seek clarity on the issue, they had approached priests and bishops in person or in groups at youth conferences. Each of these women said it was the clergy who stated the non-existence of a church prohibition on menstruating women. The young woman who studied at the seminary spoke of having been approached by several young women for clarity on this practice.

Two of the women interviewed did not question the norm. One of them restrained from partaking of Holy Communion during her menstrual cycles and maintained this practice all through her reproductive years. The other woman, a new mother, said she used it as an excuse to bunk church, and she was sure she would not invite censure for not attending services if she said she was menstruating.

## *Veiling*

Orthodox women cover their heads not only during services in the church but also in prayer gathering at homes and whenever in the presence of a bishop. During wedding ceremonies in the church, priests are likely to make an announcement insisting women cover their heads. At times, the enforcement of this practice has been viewed with resentment.

Most women interviewed observed this norm as they had always done it since they were children, had seen other women do it, and heard priests telling women to cover their heads. When a priest visits homes, women are likely to scurry for a veil for the prayer before he departs. Some of these women recounted that if their veil slipped off their head during service in the church and they did not realise it, other women standing nearby would drape the veil back on them. Not wearing a veil or a scarf was likely to invite censure, and girls were likely to be pulled up in case of repeatedly turning up without one.

Most of the women interviewed said that the rule of women being veiled was stated in the Bible, though only one of those interviewed was able to state the exact Pauline verse that set the norm. One woman said, “We cover our heads because Mother Mary did so.” Another recounted a priest having explained it as one of the local Indian practices that the church had incorporated. One woman spoke of a post on veiling she had read on Facebook: “In Christian worship, what is sacred is veiled. Women are sacred because they are life-givers.” One woman said it was a Jewish custom, while another recounted being told by her Sunday school master that girls were disobeying God when they did not cover their heads.

The tradition for women to cover their head has rarely been fully understood. Each of the reasons stated above is questionable. Mother Mary has been portrayed in religious art as always having a covered head, which is viewed as an act of piety worthy of emulation. However, this emulation has been enforced only on the women in the IOC. As one interviewee said, “Mary embodies the ideal. She embodies virtues everyone should have. When we say, ‘humble like Mary, modest like Mary’, these are virtues not only for women, but virtues men should have too.”

Another factor rarely considered is that the Biblical setting of Mary’s life is West Asia, primarily the desert lands, where a head covering is a necessity and a part of everyday clothing to protect from dust storms and a harsh climate. Furthermore, it is not just women but also men who cover their heads in these regions.

It is customary among Jews too, for both men and women, to cover their heads during prayer. The justification for veiling provided in terms of the church having incorporated local customs in its practices is questionable as Hindus in Kerala—from among whom came the first converts to the church, primarily Brahmins and other high-caste families—do not have a custom of covering their heads in temples or during religious ceremonies. The practice is observed among Muslims, but, in this case, both women and men cover their heads.

The Facebook post on veiling everything considered sacred has the effect of being accepted at face value. The terms “worship” and “sacred” in explaining a practice of the church results in blind acceptance because “it is there in the Bible”. It should be a matter of grave concern for men to be not considered “life-givers” by the church, or for that matter not “sacred”, while women are.

Some of the women interviewed also spoke of the practical difficulties in covering their heads. One interviewee narrated an incident, wherein she had to read from the Old Testament in the Bible before the entire congregation.

I had to at the same time, not topple the mike stand, hold on to the Bible in a way such that my sari was not revealing my stomach, make sure my Malayalam diction was correct, and through all this ensure that the sari *pallu* stayed on my head. I didn't know what to focus on—modesty or feeling spiritual while reading the Bible.

One interviewee spoke of not understanding the spiritual implications of keeping her head covered. “God created us without any covering on our heads. So how does exposing my head make me unholy? Why are priests strict about this?” Another interviewee said that during marriage ceremonies wherein women are in their finery, pulling the sari pallu over the head at times not only distorted the entire sari drape but also muddled the elaborate hairdo done for the occasion. Yet another interviewee said that during the summer months, it was too hot to cover the head with the pallu.

Even though Orthodox women are hesitant to voice their resentment, they do exercise agency in dealing with the expectation of veiling. One interviewee said, “I hardly ever cover my head fully. I just hold the sari pallu around me to cover the back, and slightly higher for a portion of the back of the head. This is enough to not invite reprimands.”

One interviewee knew of a practical-minded chorister, who tied a scarf on her head whenever she wore a sari to church. The chorister had told her, “I can't sing if I keep worrying about the sari pallu slipping all the time.”

All the women interviewed said that veiling had become an integral component of their participation in the church services. One interviewee said, “I don’t mind doing it as it is only for a few hours once a week, and that is not a problem.”

As can be noted in the practices of exclusion during menstruation or in the requisite for covered heads during services, cultural traditions have been granted religious authenticity and have been absorbed in the practices and administration of the faith.

Indeed customs that no longer have a relevant cultural or religious meaning continue to be practised in the IOC. Congregations continue to stand for services while segregated by gender. It is women who wait till the entire section of men have received the Holy Communion before they can queue up for the same. In many parishes still, though this is slowly changing, women also wait till all the menfolk have made the offertory and moved out of the church before they can queue up. One interviewee recounted the male aggression when a woman (the wife of the priest) stood to read the Old Testament to the congregation before the Eucharist services began, for the first time after the rules were changed to allow women to do so: “She was almost pulled down before she could even start reading.”

A couple of traditions have, however, changed. Till the recent past, infant girls were not taken inside the sanctuary post the baptism ceremony while baby boys were, though now both girls and boys are. Though the congregation still stands segregated by gender, women and men now stand alongside each other in service separated by a strip of red carpet, unlike the old practice of the menfolk standing in front of the sanctuary with the womenfolk behind them. Women are also now permitted to study theology at the seminary alongside men.

However, there are caveats to some of these changes. Though women now participate in services while standing alongside men, as mentioned earlier, there is a studied deference to men. Women still receive Holy Communion only after the men, and in many parishes, they do the offertory after the men. There are no salaried jobs or positions in the church administration open to women who choose to study in the seminary, unlike the men who go on to become priests. Indeed, this is one of the reasons families are reluctant to send their daughters for theological studies as they perceive no job opportunities or career options for their daughters.

## *Kept in Place*

In late 2011, in a landmark and historic amendment to the constitution of the IOC, women were granted voting rights, membership to local parishes, and the right to hold office in the parish managing committee. However, till 2015, less than 20 parishes across the world had women as part of their managing committees.

Indeed, seven of the women I spoke to were aware of only one of the many changes that had been brought about by the amendment of the church constitution—that they could sit for the parish general body meetings and voice their opinion. That they could now vote, hold individual membership to the parish, stand for election, and be appointed to administrative posts within the parish governing committee, all this, they were unaware of. These women were part of the largest and oldest parishes in their cities, and yet, they were not, or rather had not been made, aware of their own rights. They were surprised that it had been so many years, and there was no talk or discussion about it. Most of them expressed their annoyance. One said, “Why are they not implementing it? What is the point of keeping quiet about this?” Another said, “The church is not yet willing to allow women in decision-making bodies. They don’t want women to rise up the ranks. Otherwise, they would have publicised it.” One was sarcastic, “The church is 200 years late.”

The bishop I interviewed presented the sole paper that was used by the Holy Synod in justifying amendments to the church’s constitution. The paper draws heavily on Biblical references to Jesus Christ’s interactions with women, other Biblical testimonies by St Paul, teachings of the church Fathers, and theology. One of the interviewees who read the paper said, “It makes me think that, ‘Hey, these guys knew all of this, and yet they kept quiet about it.’” When asked whether any women were spoken to before the paper was presented, the bishop replied in the negative.

Whether the constitutional amendments have led to women having an equal voice in decision-making processes of the parish and in decisions that directly affect women remains to be seen. However, implementation of the amendments can mark the first step in making churches spaces where women can feel they belong.

## *Experiences in the Church Community*

Almost all the women spoke of the integral influence of the church in their lives and how the push towards reaching out to the poor and weak sections of society, an unabashed revelling in the depth and beauty of the prayers,

and the pride in being Malayalee were inculcated by the church leadership. One interviewee said, “My involvement in the church has influenced my approach to life as a Christian, shaped my behaviour at home, in the workplace, and the community. It inculcated the spirit of service to the community and empathy for the sick, needy, and helpless in the community. I am proud of my faith and identity.”

In their experiences of their local parish, there was a stark contrast between the experiences of the younger women compared with the senior women. By younger, I refer to those five women who were less than 35 years of age. The others were all older than 55 years.

The younger women felt more inhibited in the church. One of them said, “There is no space in church where you can feel comfortable. I have always felt people are looking at you, a feeling of being scanned from head to toe. There is always some comment or judgement being passed. You always have to be a good girl.” Another said, “There is always someone twisting stories. My mum would always remind me, ‘People are watching. Be careful.’”

Another recounted an experience when in the choir:

“One Sunday, we had a bishop visiting, and our priest stood to sing with the choir for some parts of the service. Suddenly, the girl next to me pointed to a large cockroach on his shoulder. I immediately brushed it off with my hymn book. He didn’t even notice, and we forgot about it too. When I reached home later in the day, my mother immediately asked me about the incident. Apparently, a parishioner from the church had phoned and said that I was seen trying to touch the priest in inappropriate ways. I was so disgusted and furious.”

Another said, “The church is more about the people, and less about God. The discussions are always about the priest, some incident during the service, and less about God. I don’t experience a closeness to God. It is important to reduce the social experience and increase the God experience.”

### *Experiences with Parish Leaders*

One young woman spoke of how daunting it was to enter the parish office. “It is always full of men, with their loud voices, laughing raucously. I avoid going there unless it is most necessary as the minute you enter, all eyes are on you. And then you have to answer a thousand personal questions in front of all of them.”

The older women did not share the feeling of being inhibited. All of them said that the nature of their work required them to interact with all kinds of people, and interacting with the all-male administration at the church was not an issue for them. This confidence perhaps came from longer years of work and access to more opportunities at developing leadership outside the church.

One of the older women described herself as someone who was not keen on participating in church activities. “There have been times I have wanted to question *achens* (priests). But I don’t want to ruffle any feathers, so I don’t ask.”

One of them recounted growing up in the church. “When I grew up, the church was a space of anger and fights. There was so much aggression from the priests, they wouldn’t even smile, acknowledge you, or say a hello. I didn’t learn anything about Christ, the Bible, hymns, or prayer here. It was only when I started attending the services of the American Evangelical Church that I started growing in Christ.”

Another interviewee recounted: “During my childhood days, the bishops and priests would inspire us to go to the needy and lend them a helping hand. They would visit homes, and there was a personal connection. Now, the only time we see the priests is in the sanctuary for the services.”

### *Dowry and Divorce*

Lina Samuel (2013) focuses on the shift in the views of 50 first- and second-generation Orthodox women migrants to Canada on the practice of dowry. The present practice of dowry usually involves material gifts, gold, and cash paid to the bridegroom and his (family (ibid). The first-generation respondents were vocal in expressing their distaste of dowry, while the second generation was opposed to the practice. A second-generation respondent stated that the practice is “insulting for women. It continues to breed the belief that women are a burden to their parents since they have to provide a dowry to the groom”.

Most of the women I interviewed also expressed their distaste for dowry and wanted the church to take a stand on it. One of them said,

“In the earlier days, there was a system wherein a percentage of the dowry was given to the church, and a record of all the dowry given was written in the church records. Now with the laws against dowry, this practice has stopped. Now there is no record of the dowry given, and when a dispute arises, there is no proof.”

Another interviewee said, “The church has taken a stand on homosexuality by supporting the Supreme Court judgment. But dowry affects all families in the church and is such a degrading practice. Domestic violence is also so common. But the church chooses to keep silent on these everyday issues affecting its members.”

The bishop I interviewed admitted that there was no process of consultations, gathering of scientific expertise, or taking into account views from the community before the church released the announcement of its stand against homosexuality. He admitted that more thought could have gone into the issue before the church made that announcement.

The two divorcees I interviewed had had difficult experiences with church leaders and the community. Both of them had endured domestic violence, dowry demands, and infidelity. The clergy had intervened in both cases. The former partners of both the women have since remarried. In the IOC, a second marriage requires the permission of the clergy.

One interviewee said,

“The bishop called the both of us as soon as he heard there was trouble in the marriage. We must have met him three to four times, and though he is a kind and loving man, he does not have the expertise of a counsellor. The conversations went nowhere, and it was quite mentally and emotionally draining. There was also a push to stay in the marriage. When the homosexuality angle turned up, the bishop had no idea what to do. He referred us to a sexologist.”

The other interviewee recounted, “We were both called for counselling by a priest. I went along with my parents, he (the former husband) never turned up. The priest heard my side of the story, didn’t offer any counselling, and told my parents not to send me back to him. That was it.”

Both interviewees were furious about the fact that the church leadership had allowed both men to remarry despite knowing that one was a homosexual and the other had indulged in infidelity and physical violence.

In the first case, the interviewee said, “Now he has remarried, and I am sure his present wife is enduring the same nonsense I did. Why did our priests not tell that girl’s family the whole truth about what happened to me?” In the second case, the interviewee said that one priest was aware of her former husband’s sexual dalliances from before his marriage and of a child born out of wedlock. “The priest didn’t utter a word about it to my family. He even came for our wedding. My life is destroyed because my priest refused

to speak the truth. When we heard he was getting married again, my father even spoke to the priest who would be officiating that ceremony, but nothing came of it, and now another girl is going through hell.”

For both these women, going to church during and after the divorce was “painful”. One of them said, “I would get stopped by priests who wanted to speak to me. The looks and stares of pity from the people in church was suffocating.”

The first divorced interviewee said, “I hadn’t spoken to one priest at all about what happened. But I later heard the priest’s mother going around telling everyone that the divorce was all my fault and that her son [the priest] had told her all about it. Even if my ex had spoken to the priest, it would have been in a counselling session or even a confession. How can the priest discuss these things at home with his family, when he is bound by oath to not discuss this ever?”

### *Need for Change*

All the women interviewed had several thoughts on everyday church processes that were problematic and needed to change. One senior interviewee said, “The priest uses the Syrian language during the liturgy. I don’t know anyone who knows that language. Why do they do that? Is it to show off their proficiency in Syriac? How does it help someone to participate in the liturgy?” Another interviewee said, “During the all-night carols, the men are reeking of alcohol. How do you expect women to participate or even allow our daughters to sing around drunk men?”

Another interviewee was critical of the content of the mandatory pre-marital counselling sessions.

They teach church history during those sessions. I’m sure church history is the last thing on anyone’s mind when the husband and wife are having a quarrel. There should be sessions on communication, financial management, advice on how to handle in-laws, these things. These sessions are also so male-oriented, with no women speakers at all. It is always about the wife who should do this and that, and not do this or that. I came away feeling that men are being taught that they are entitled to being the head of the household without making any effort at it.

One interviewee spoke of the nuns. “The rules for nuns in the church are so strict. I can see the frustration in their demeanour. They should be allowed to visit their families regularly. Their salaries are also so low.”

One interviewee spoke of the need to give jobs to theologically trained women: “If there are no job prospects or placements in the church, how do you expect women to enter the seminary to study?”

### *Women as Leaders*

The women were visibly unhappy about the absence of efforts by the church to create awareness about their right to vote and hold office in the church administration. They believed it to be a deliberate act to keep women in the dark about their rights.

All the interviewees were positive that women can play a positive role in transforming processes and systems in the church.

One interviewee said, “Men and women play complementary roles. When the views of both are taken into account towards a decision, it is always healthier than a single male voice.”

Another interviewee said, “When a man takes a decision, he may not consider a woman’s perspective. But when a woman considers a decision, she is likely to think about how it will work out for her children, her sons, her husband.”

The bishop also acknowledged the commitment of women: “In meetings, women don’t raise questions about administration alone. They also remind us about the service-oriented side of our spirituality. They have brought the focus back to serving those other than ourselves.”

Another interviewee said, “Women are more sincere and truthful in their work. Particularly in financial matters, women should be present. In the ecumenical organisation I work, not even a single extra cup of coffee is ordered, and every rupee is accounted for.”

One interviewee stated,

If women are ready to take time off from their day-to-day activities, then soon women will be elected to these organisations. In the meantime, women need to step forward and voluntarily take up positions of responsibility. Most of the time, due to flimsy excuses like work and family, it is difficult to get women to participate or take up positions. Also, in our male-dominated society, women are not encouraged to step out of their comfort zone due to the inhibitive behaviour of our men.

It is commendable that the male-oriented decision-making bodies and oppressive exclusionary processes have not prevented Orthodox women from participating in the church. Rather Orthodox women have worked their

way around these interdicts to establish their place as rightful members of the community of believers.

One of the most distressing aspects is the absence of a collective protest or even an outrage by the women at being treated with prejudice. The women's voices are hesitant but not meek. Some of these women have chosen to exit the system and develop their skills and abilities outside the church, rather than voice their disagreements. It is the IOC that loses out when it refuses to rely on or use the strength and abilities of its womenfolk.

### **Making Her Invisible**

Women in the Orthodox church belong to an ancient and tradition-filled institution, which claims to be the church of the Pentecost, as old as Christianity itself, that has come to this present age without corruption or compromise of the faith. It is a church of great ritual, ceremony and mystery.

The studied disregard of the presence of its women faithful is manifest across the various prayers of the church, wherein the feminine is mentioned only in the context of the Theotokos Mary. A few noteworthy examples are as follows: At the time of offering incense to the Mother of God, the first hymn states, "Forget your people and your father's house as the King desires your beauty now."<sup>2</sup> Even viewed within the context of the psalm (Psalm 45: 9–11) from wherein this prayer is taken, it is difficult to understand how these words exalt the Theotokos, convey a supplication to her, or have a relevant religious meaning. However, what it does do is sexualise the feminine physicality and combine it with the patriarchal and cultural notion of the woman having to forget her people and her father's house.

Topping (1987) writes that while it is true that Orthodoxy's exaltation of the Theotokos Mary has given the church a feminine face, it is equally true that veneration of the Theotokos has not brought honour or full dignity to women in the church. The high honour given to the Theotokos is in stark contrast to the low status of all other women.

In its teachings and its prayers, the church is spoken of in the feminine and is described as the bride of Christ, who is also sinful and "for whom Christ gave himself up so that she [the church] could be cleansed, made holy, blemish-free, blameless and radiant" (Varghese : 239).<sup>3</sup> The exalted status of men is also visible in the explanations of the Eucharistic prayers. According to the hymnal book, *The Living Sacrifice, the Holy Qurbanakramam* (order of the prayers of the living sacrifice) by C K Varghese, endorsed by the church hierarchs and widely used by the laity who cannot read Malayalam, in the second part

of the Eucharistic service, when the chancel is unveiled, the priest exhorts the congregation to say the “Our Father”, and pray “as sons with firm love and strong faith”. During this particular portion of the service, “We are made to remember that we got the special privilege as sons by the glory of the resurrection.” St Paul’s letter to the Galatians is quoted herein, “Because you are sons, God sent the spirit of His son into our hearts, the spirit who calls our Abba, Father. So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and since you are a son, God has made you, also an heir.”<sup>4</sup> It goes on to state, “In John 3: 35 and 1 Peter 1: 3–5, we see the greatness of the position as sons” (Varghese : 239).<sup>5</sup> John 3: 35 states, “The Father loves the Son and has given all things into His hand”<sup>6</sup> and 1 Peter 1: 3–5 states, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.”<sup>7</sup> A lay theological understanding of these verses indicates that the verse from the gospel of John points directly to the relationship between God the Father and God the Son, and the verse from the Epistle of Peter describes a heavenly heritage for “you” without a specific stating of the gender of the faithful. Neither verse indicates “the greatness of the position of sons”, as described in the prayer book.

Similarly, in the daily morning prayers prescribed by the church, the heavenly Father is described as “the God of our fathers”<sup>8</sup> and “the hope of men”.<sup>9</sup> Similarly, in another prayer, the exhortation is to “remember our fathers, who while they lived, taught us to be the children of God”.<sup>10</sup> Repeated again and again through many centuries, prayers like these erase women from the consciousness of the church, rendering invisible the women who have preserved and perpetuated the faith. Such exclusive, androcentric, and patriarchal perspectives can only alienate more and more women from the church (Topping 1987).

The IOC is also the only Orthodox church in the world to not have any female saints, other than the Theotokos Mary, as part of the church’s regular prayers and physical architecture. The walls of churches are lined with images of past bishops and the church’s male saints—St George, St Gregorios of Parumala, and St Vattasseril. A token mention is made of female saints in the fourth Thubden in the Great Intercession portion of the Eucharist; however, no names are mentioned. Though the church’s liturgical calendar lists some women saints, little is known about them, and their feast days are not observed with the pomp and grandeur of the other male saints.

Orthodox churches worldwide are known to have a slew of woman saints who are venerated, with the stories of their lives being recounted and their feast days celebrated. These women-saints lived pious lives, dedicated their lives to the service of God, or performed acts that were worthy of sainthood. These women were not necessarily nuns and were also from among the laity.

In fidelity to Christ`s teaching and praxis, the primitive Christian church recognised no inequalities or discrimination on the basis of national origin, social condition, or sex. The church governed itself according to the baptismal creed quoted in Galatians 3:28: “There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”

However, the church chooses to maintain a studied silence on oppressive cultural practices within its ambit as well as within the community. For instance, there has been no encyclical on the rampant practice of dowry, domestic violence, or child sexual abuse. Each of these evils exist in the community but is rarely spoken of or even condemned by community leaders.

Within both the orthopraxis and the liturgical experience of living Orthodoxy, the church either endorses or does not correct particular cultural traditions and practices in communities that are demeaning to Orthodox women (iveris 2013).

Allowing women the right to vote and hold office while relegating them to an inferior status in its own ritual practices smacks of a double standard, wherein there is a need to appear as if the church is in step with the times, while internally clinging on to the comfort of its past practices. This attitude is against the unifying Gospel of Jesus Christ and has to change.

This duality is also a reflection of the two streams of practices within the IOC. One stream exalts the status of Mother Mary; baptises women; gives women the right to vote and hold office, sing in choirs, teach in Sunday school, and organise themselves in women`s leagues; and proclaims that Christ came for all regardless of gender. Simultaneously, another practice subjugates women by condoning and ignoring oppressive cultural traditions that have no religious relevance, suppresses information about changes in the church`s rules that allow women to hold leadership positions, and, instead of lending a hand to empowerment, tells women to fight their battles themselves without reworking the rules that were made by male leaders in the first place.

Behr-Sigel (2001: 89) writes emphatically: “Where before, the conflict between the two was unnoticed or perhaps just endured, now the ‘signs of the times` require of the church a decision, a discernment, a separation of the one from

the other that was not required before. To refuse to decide and act is finally to decide and act anyway.”

## End Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Names of all interviewees have been changed.
- <sup>2</sup> Kukilion prayer to the Mother of God, “*Ninnal stuthiyodu raajamakal..*”
- <sup>3</sup> C.K. Varghese, *The Living Sacrifice*, Edition 11, page 239
- <sup>4</sup> St. Paul’s letter to the Galatians (4: 6–7).
- <sup>5</sup> C.K. Varghese, *The Living Sacrifice*, Edition 11, page 239
- <sup>6</sup> *The Orthodox Study Bible*, p. 1428.
- <sup>7</sup> *The Orthodox Study Bible*, p. 1683.
- <sup>8</sup> In the angelic hymn, “Melulla Uyarangallil”.
- <sup>9</sup> In the praise of the cherubim, “Papikalodu Karuna Cheyyunnavanaya Karthave”.
- <sup>10</sup> In the prayer, “Manogunamulla Deivame”.

## References

- Behr-Sigel, Elisabeth (1998): “Women in the Orthodox Church,” *The St. Nina Quarterly*, 2(2): 1.
- (2001): *Discerning the Signs of the Times: The Vision of Elisabeth-Behr-Sigel*, ed. Michael Plekon and Sarah E. Hinlicky (Crestwood: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press).
- Liveris, D L (2013): *Ancient Taboos and Gender Prejudice: Challenges for Orthodox Women and the Church*. Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Ltd.
- Philips, A (2003). “Stridhanam: Rethinking Dowry, Inheritance and Women’s Resistance among the Syrian Christians of Kerala”, *Anthropologica*, 45: 245-63.
- Samuel, L (2013): “South Asian Women in the Diaspora: Reflections on Arranged Marriage and Dowry among the Syrian Orthodox Community in Canada”, *South Asian Diaspora*, 5(1): 91-105.
- The St. Nina Quarterly* (1997): “An Interview with Susan Ashbrook Harvey”, 1(4).
- Topping, Eva C (1987): *Holy Mothers of Orthodoxy* (Minneapolis, MN: Light and Life).
- Varghese, C K *The Living Sacrifice*, Edition 11.
- Visvanathan, S (1993): *The Christians of Kerala: History, Belief and Ritual among the Yakoba* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press).





# SOCIO-EMOTIONAL COMPONENT IN THE EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION CURRICULA

GARIMA  
AWASTHY

## Abstract

This research study investigates the domain of social and emotional development in different curricula with respect to the role of a preschool teacher/caregiver. The paper looks at different approaches both Western (Head Start and Waldorf) and Indian (Aurobindo and Gijubhai) to create an understanding as to how this domain has been looked at during early years. The two Indian approaches have also been observed in practice, so as to gauge the curricular transaction and locate the essential factors attributed to socio-emotional development. The observations indicate that a teacher's attitude behavior and understanding of young children is essential for the promotion of this component. From the derived learning, a module has been created which will be helpful in promoting pro-social behaviors and social competence among young children.

## Introduction

In the field of child development, it is a well-regarded fact that development occurs in stages and optimal periods exist at different ages. Socio-emotional development starts at a very early age, and during the preschool years, the advancements take place rapidly, going up till adolescence. At the age of three years, children have some basic language skills and become socially aware of peers. Having passed the mirror stage, a term coined by Jacques Lacan, when a child's sense of self as an individual begins to emerge, the child enjoys helping and pleasing adults. By the age of four, children generally have a mastery over language and become self-confident individuals. During this stage, social play becomes important as it provides an opportunity for children to practice their social skills, stretch their cognitive abilities, work with different emotions, socialise, and be creative. The concept of the self is

---

*Garima Awasthy graduated from Azim Premji University in 2016 with an MA in Education specialising in Early Childhood Education. As part of this programme, she did a research study on Socio-emotional development in Early Childhood Education curricula and on the Academic Challenges faced by First-generation learners. She has done her Bachelor's degree in English Literature from Delhi University. Her interests are in early childhood education, literacy and art based education. She can be contacted at garima.awasthy14@apu.edu.in*

formed as children have a perception of themselves based on the reaction or response of people around them. With this gradually the child also begins to form her self-esteem by evaluating her worth in positive or negative terms. According to Sigmund Freud, the personality has three parts—id, ego, and superego. The ego is formed when a child comes to realise that needs cannot or will not always be met. The ego helps her to address her needs in socially acceptable ways. It mediates between the demands created by the id and the superego. The super ego, however, emerges when the child learns to take account of the values and expectations of parents and society (Pound 2011). At the age of five, children have refined skills and become mature, being in control and responsible. Between six and eight years, their cognitive abilities allow them to think in a logical manner and take different viewpoints into consideration, whereas their temperament or inborn characteristics like regularity, adaptability, and disposition affect behaviour.

### ***Social Competence***

Socio-emotional development is looked at in terms of competence. Competence can be defined as the ability to build and maintain relationships. This ability enables children to use personal and environmental resources to achieve satisfying and competent interactions in their immediate environment. Social competence is achieved by emotion regulation, social knowledge and understanding, accompanied by the social skills to use these components. Emotional regulation involves the use of different processes and strategies required to manage emotional arousal necessary for successful interpersonal functioning. Social knowledge and understanding includes the knowledge of norms and social customs of the group the child is part of, in addition to sufficient mastery of language essential for communication. For instance, in a preschool setting, competence can be assessed by the development of peer status and friendship. Daniel Goleman developed the concept of emotional intelligence, which refers to the acquisition and application of information of emotional nature that is necessary to feel and respond emotionally. He used the term “emotional literacy” to refer to the experience and productive management of emotions. Social skills can be observed by looking at social approach patterns during play, such as instances where the child gives positive attention to others and requests information from others as well as contributes towards ongoing discussions. The teacher’s role in establishing social competence is to help children channel and regulate their emotions in a constructive manner.

### ***Importance of Socio-Emotional Development***

Socio-emotional development is important to attain personal qualities that motivate new understandings and enable the child to approach new challenges enthusiastically. A child's social experiences with other children during the preschool years help her develop social skills and confidence that enable her to make friends in subsequent years, and these experiences further enhance the child's social competence and academic achievement. On the other hand, children who fail to develop these social skills are vulnerable to school dropout, delinquency (law-breaking), and mental-health problems. Social skills are also essential for children to later acquire complex abilities like self-regulation of emotions, behavior, and attention.

During early years, the teacher can enhance this by scaffolding children to express their emotions and by engaging them in a range of activities from play to planning and decision-making activities. Anna Freud saw play as a window to the unconscious mind of young children. She proposed that the child's unconscious enabled her to deal with difficult experiences and that change could only come about as the child became able to explore them consciously (Pound 2011). Play is identified as an important vehicle for developing self-regulation as well as for promoting language, cognition, and social competence (National Association for the Education of Young Children 2009).

Play is important in establishing will, advocating a focus on the hand rather than the head. Through play develops an emerging morality as the child learns self-regulation, reason, and congeniality. It leads to the formation of an ego identity as the child has confidence and wide interests. If this sense of initiative is denied due to inhibition, the child develops a sense of guilt, leading to perpetual self-doubt.

### ***Influences on Socio-Emotional Development***

Various influences come into play for optimal socio-emotional development, and the family plays an important role in this. The child must also have a sense of belonging to the community or social context in which she lives. Within the preschool setting (the focus of this study), peers and teachers play significant roles. Not only are peers a crucial source of information for the child but studies also show that peer deprivation has deeper and longer-lasting adverse consequences than maternal deprivation (Suomi and Harlow 1975). Teachers can create a positive influence through individual focus and interaction to increase a child's capacity to hear and respond deeply to their suggestions.

## Review of Literature

### *Socio-Emotional Development in the NAEYC*

The report of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC 2009) sets the tone for early childhood education (ECE) curricula as that of optimal learning and development through educational effectiveness. It identifies cultural and linguistic diversity, as well as inclusion of children with special needs covering children with disabilities, children at risk for disabilities, and children with challenging behaviours as key issues. It also discusses the struggle to develop and maintain a qualified teaching force. The NAEYC does not directly address socio-emotional development but refers to the “Child Outcomes Framework” (Head Start 2003), which recognises the socio-emotional as one of the domains of development.

Interventions in early childhood have a long-lasting and positive impact on children`s development, learning abilities, and capacity to regulate their emotions (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development 2003). Dimensions of socio-emotional competence and cognition also have a direct relation to how children perform later in school. Factors like independence, responsibility, self-regulation, and cooperation predict how well children make the transition to school and how they fare in the early grades. Further to this, self-regulation is also identified as the premiere developmental goal for early years as it enables functioning in the areas of problem solving, planning, focused attention, and metacognition, therefore increasing the chances of children to succeed in school (American Education Research Association 2003).

Teachers and early childhood practitioners need to be aware of contextual factors like culture, community, linguistic norms, social group, and past and current experiences along with individual differences that shape the learning environment of the child. The NAEYC has established a core principle with respect to holistic development, that is, “all the domains of development and learning—physical, social, emotional, and cognitive—are important, and they are closely interrelated.” Children`s development and learning in one domain influences that in other domains and vice versa; optimal periods exist for these developmental processes to occur. Therefore, integrated curriculum models, which focus on all aspects of development and not just the cognitive in a child-oriented environment, should be implemented.

## *Promoting Socio-Emotional Development during Early Childhood Years*

Pro-social behaviours that stress on caring and kindness are best promoted in early childhood programmes. These behaviours are nurtured in an atmosphere of acceptance where children can use inductive reasoning and take the rights and feelings of others into consideration. This can be achieved with the use of guidance as an ongoing process that involves the act of directing to a particular end (Essa 2013). It is advised that discipline should not be used as an approach because it is a response to a child's misbehaviour. Similarly, punishment as a technique is ineffective in the long run. Rather positive discipline allows the child to develop self-discipline gradually. Behaviour management posits that a child's behaviour can be changed by changing the environment, that is, by using techniques such as positive reinforcement for desirable behaviours and ignoring undesirable behaviours. Developmentally appropriate practices take into consideration children's feelings about learning (including their interest, pleasure, and motivation to learn) and children's behaviour when learning (including attention, persistence, flexibility, and self-regulation) while inculcating learning practices to promote school readiness (National Education Goals Panel 1997).

Socio-emotional development is promoted by nurturing healthy relationships. Warm, nurturing relationships with responsive adults are necessary for many key areas of children's development, including empathy and cooperation, self-regulation and cultural socialisation, language and communication, peer relationships, and identity formation (National Research Council 2000). These variables are dependent on the social and cultural context of a child. For instance, self-care children (a term used for children who after school return to an empty home because their family is at work) are at risk of developmental delays due to a very limited interaction in their home environment. Common social difficulties arise due to an insufficient impulse control to take turns, negotiate, or bargain to resolve peer conflicts. They can also arise as a result of the lack of opportunities the child is exposed to in order to learn and practice social skills.

Therefore it is essential that during early years, children be exposed to positive calm environments and role models. An early childhood education programme should support nurturing peer relationships and help the child recognise and understand her emotions. They should result in strengthening the child's self-esteem and promote regulatory behaviours by helping the

child accurately perceive social situations so as to respond appropriately. The sense of self and the ability to form intimate relationships is termed as “emotional intelligence”. The teacher can help the child learn and understand consequences of their actions and use social processes to resolve social problems. It is essential that adequate attention is given to socio-emotional development in children and that the child be exposed to positive experiences.

## **Socio-Emotional Development In Different Curriculum Approaches**

### ***Head Start***

Head Start is the most famous programme in the field of early childhood education. It is widespread in the US and has gone under many revisions and additions since its conception. It envisions optimum development of the child and lays emphasis on social and emotional development as one of the 11 identified domains. It aims at developing a healthy concept of personal identity, which has its effects up till middle childhood and adolescence. It includes children from age three to five. The domain elements include social relationships, self-concept and self-efficacy, self-regulation, and emotional and behavioural health (US Department of Health and Human Services 2011).

Social relationships include maintenance of healthy relationships and interactions with peers and adults. The component of self-concept and self-efficacy enables the child to perceive herself as capable of successfully making decisions, accomplishing tasks, and meeting goals. While self-regulations talks about the ability of the child to recognise and regulate emotions, attention, impulses, and behaviour, the last component is concerned with the child exhibiting a healthy range of emotional expressions and learning positive alternatives to aggressive or isolating behaviors.

While Head Start gives due importance to this developmental domain and lists the pro-social behaviours that are helpful for early childhood practitioners, it does not provide the path to achieving these behaviours. It does not specify the role of the teacher, making it less comprehensive for use.

### ***Waldorf Education***

Waldorf education is a progressive approach to education, which emerged with a focus on peace and reconstruction introduced by Rudolf Steiner. His approach has an abundant reliance on the teacher or the educator who

according to him shapes and influences the child's environment—not just the physical environment but also the social—by projecting desirable qualities in her own being and her relationships with others. He believed that children who live in an atmosphere of love and warmth, and who have around them truly good examples to imitate, are living in their proper element (Steiner 1884). For him, formation of a social community was paramount to education.

Similar to Aurobindo's philosophy, Steiner too saw the child as a threefold being—of body, soul, and spirit—on a path to evolutionary development through repeated earth lives. Steiner does not talk about emotional but spiritual development of the child. Spirituality, or in his terms anthroposophy, was the path to emotional development.

### ***Indian Educationists on the Component of Socio-Emotional Development***

Closer home, philosophers like Gandhi, Tagore, Aurobindo, and Gijubhai have emphasised the importance of synchrony between head, heart and hand as essential for individual growth and development. Sri Aurobindo advocated an environment that inspires children to develop the five essential aspects of personality: the physical, the vital, the mental, the psychic, and the spiritual (SAICE 2015). He envisioned this unity as the basis of knowledge, which cannot be solely fulfilled by academic subjects. For him, the mental is harmful without the emotional and the spiritual. He was one of the earliest philosophers to emphasise on the social aspect of child development. It is therefore of utmost important to take his dynamic view into account, which includes not only various kinds of information but also focuses on building the powers of the human mind and spirit.

Gijubhai too recognised that children should be provided with an environment that promotes their independence and self-reliance. He established Bal Mandir where he taught the subject matter through stories and rhymes, which attract children. Though he undertook the Montessori Method, the implementation was local. In order to see how these curricular transactions translate into reality, I chose two specific settings (which adhere to these indigenous ways) to enrich my learnings about the aforementioned approaches.

### **Research Methodology**

The methodology used was qualitative. The review was based on an analysis of different curriculum documents with an emphasis on socio-emotional development. To gain a broader understanding of the domain, specifically

in the Indian context, my engagement encompassed two settings. There is enough evidence which suggests that curriculum gaps are often the result of gaps in implementation rather than in the approach itself. To gauge this aspect, 15 days were spent in a particular setting during which I was involved in classroom and teacher interaction in the preschool. During these 15 days, a minimum of 10 observations were made, encompassing a minimum of two hours. For these observations, the event sampling method was used. The two settings where these observations took place were Wonga School, Gujarat, and Hopscotch School, in Delhi. These settings were chosen specifically as they follow the philosophies of Indian educationists Gijubhai and Aurobindo respectively in a much more contextual manner. The in-classroom observations focused on a set of attitudes in children to ascertain competence. These attitudes included communicating with peers and teachers, carrying on a discussion, negotiating, taking turns, cooperating, initiating interaction, articulating preferences, reasoning for actions, accepting compromises, and empathising with others. Along with this, relevant curriculum documents were looked at to gain a better understanding of the educational philosophy of the schools.

## **Objectives**

The research had the following objectives:

- To look at the provisions (if any) for socio-emotional development in different curricular approaches.
- To observe implementation of two different curricular approaches on the ground for a broader understanding, with an emphasis on the domain of socio-emotional development.
- To develop an illustrative module comprising a set of developmentally appropriate activities for enhancing socio-emotional development of children in a preschool curriculum.

## ***The Research Design***

Two settings were identified for this cross-sectional study, which subscribed to a particular Indian philosophy. This was done in order to gain a broader and clearer perspective on how the socio-emotional component has been looked at in different curricula and how the domain is treated or considered important by early childhood teachers and practitioners.

The study includes children in their preschool years, that is, three to six years

of age. While Hopscotch School had a single group in which this age diversity could be seen, Wonga School had different groups for different ages. This affected the observation schedule as a particular group was observed for a span of 15 days in Hopscotch, while different groups were observed for two days each in Wonga School. This included not just in-class observations but also following the group throughout a preschool day in both the settings. Informal interactions were held with teachers to gain their understanding of the domain, and curricular material such as timetables, lesson plans, and assessment modules, if any, were looked at.

My role as a researcher was not uniform in the two settings. While observations were made at both the settings, participative observations were made in Hopscotch School (as I participated in and facilitated activities) and objective observations were made in Wonga School. This difference in the kind of observation was due to the different philosophies that the schools held. While objective observations were possible in Wonga School, Hopscotch believed that a person cannot remain like an inanimate object in the classroom but should interact with the students.

### *The Research Tools and Techniques of Data Collection*

In both the settings, checklists were used to provide a framework for observing pro-social behaviours. Three checklists were formed for this purpose:

- i. Group Observation Checklist: This was used for observing socially competent behaviours in children as a group, for instance, whether children come to the setting willingly or are usually in a positive mood.
- ii. Individual Observation Checklist: This was used for observing socially competent behaviours in individual children, such as whether they approached others positively or showed an interest in others.
- iii. Teacher Observation Checklist: This was used for observing teachers fostering socially competent behaviours in children like encouraging a child's sense of self-worth or creating a safe indoor and outdoor environment.

Other than these checklists, informal interactions were held with teachers and heads of each school in order to understand the curriculum in place. Curriculum documents presently used in the schools were also looked at for the purpose of this study. Teacher preparations were also observed as both the settings were simultaneously running teacher training programmes.

After data collection was done through the checklists and the event sampling method, a detailed thematic analysis was done for each setting where events were analysed to understand the positive or negative practices in each preschool.

### ***Significance of this Research***

The context of this research will have significance for ECE practitioners and teachers. In practice, the socio-emotional development of a child is overlooked and emphasis is laid on cognition. Largely preschool is considered important only for the purpose of school readiness. At this stage, children are given books of classes one and two, which not only burdens them but also hinders their development. This study introduces the reader to the concept of holistic development and lays emphasis on the socio-emotional component.

Also, the outcome of this research is in the form of an illustrative module aimed at promoting socio-emotional development in a preschool setting. These set of activities are contextual in nature (Indian context) and can be widely used by teachers to enhance students' competence.

### ***Limitations of this Research***

The study takes into consideration only the preschool setting as a site for the promotion of holistic development of the child. Due to time constraints, components like the home environment of the child, the role of the family, and most importantly the role of the mother, all of which are equally essential for the child's socio-emotional development, could not be looked at.

Also, the study caters to children only in the age group of three to five years and does not include the entire span of early years, that is, from birth to six years, though development begins right from birth.

## **Analysis and Interpretation Of Data**

### ***Hopscotch School***

The school's philosophy broadly advocates integral education, rather than holistic education, which includes the vital, the psychic, and the spiritual as developmental domains. Socio-emotional development therefore, as the name suggests, is vital to early childhood education rather than just being a part of it.

The standalone practice of this early childhood education programme is that the teachers themselves undertake a journey of selfhood—an attempt to

understand themselves (through worksheets which involve comprehensive questions) better so as to be able to become better facilitators for children. Childhood in such a philosophy is placed as a period of vast significance, and teachers are given the responsibility to build torchbearers of the future. It is their attitude that is given more importance than the system itself. The teacher is a guidance provider who follows a developmental curriculum to fulfill the yearly objectives. The idea of a developmental curriculum is similar to the modern conception of an emergent curriculum where assessment is used not as an evaluation but rather as a directional tool for teachers to make their teaching practices more suitable for children. The planning to implement this curriculum is done on a day-to-day basis with as much detail as possible.

The day is divided into activity time, circle time, music time, and skilled work. There are two breaks in between, which provide a balanced schedule for the children. Children begin their day with physical activities, in which they play or perform activities that they like or according to their capabilities. A respect for every individual's voice is present as everyone gets a turn to share his or her ideas. This also promotes turn-taking behavior, which is considered important for the socio-emotional development of a child as it reduces the anxiety related to doing something new. All the children in this case are well aware that their opinion will be asked for and they will be given a chance. The child is given the comfort that nothing will be imposed on her, while keeping the idea of trying new things intact. The children are aware of their schedule and that a particular time is allotted to every task. They are also given the freedom to do things at their own pace. This leads to shedding of any competitiveness or tension that may arise otherwise if a task is to be accomplished in given time. During skill work, different corners are set so that the child can finish a task and move on to the other without waiting for her peers to finish them. On the completion of a task, the child is free to do anything she wishes. If the child wants to try something new, appropriate opportunities are provided to her rather than saying a straight "no". The final product is given value as the children share it amongst their peers and *didi*. The same is also displayed inside or outside their classrooms.

The curriculum document lays down development of the senses as one of the main goals of vital development. The method is also explicitly stated, that is, by spending more time with nature, where children play different sensorial games. It includes components like building of acceptance and trust, self-confidence, sharing, patience, cooperation, and courage. The child is to achieve this by self-observation. All the characteristics stated are very well imbibed in the day-to-day activities. There are numerous instances where

the teacher tries that the child reflects upon her actions, for instance, during an ongoing activity, two children were playing with sand. The teacher tells them to join the group (other children) and talks to them later one by one. The teacher talks to child 1, telling her to use her own mind and not follow her friends or others blindly. She asks, "During the play time, which activity do you think you should have been a part of? Think and tell me." To the second child, who was fidgety and distracted, the teacher held her and asked her to look at her. She first spoke about her crying in the morning and then told her about respecting others who are doing the activity and completing the activity at hand. Rather than telling the child something explicitly or using her authority, there is always an effort on the part of the teacher to reason out a particular action. This makes the child reflect upon her own actions and self-correct them in the future. The teacher also encourages the child to be a part of the larger group. When child 2 is distracted, the teacher holds her, thereby providing a comfortable space to the child rather than the usual scolding.

Moreover, the teacher gives a reason for her every action. For instance, during the activity time in the morning, the teacher asks the students, "What can my body do?" (Everyone raises hands.) The teacher says, "I can see many new ideas, I will come to them one by one." The teacher uses reasoning and explanations, and nothing is imposed on children. Every student is given a chance. This promotes turn-taking behaviour in children. As every child knows that her turn will come, it reduces anxiety. Also, consistent turn-taking behaviour makes children accept as well as respect each other's space, also leading to knowledge sharing among themselves rather than the teacher being the only provider of knowledge.

In the case of group tasks, the teacher tries to show the peers' points of view, so that the child has a foundation for social understanding and empathy. This can be elaborated with an example. When a child complains about a peer, the teacher tells them both to resolve it amongst themselves.

Child1: She hit me.

Teacher: Did you like it?

Child1: No.

Teacher: Then tell that to your friend. While playing, she does not know when she does something which others do not like. Tell her that and she will not do it.

Another crucial thing to notice is how the teacher is a keen observer, as she takes her cues from observing children's interactions. The teacher

rather than intervening in between children helps them resolve issues on their own. By telling one child that the act was not intentional, she provides another point of view—to be able to think from someone else's perspective, thus building the ability to empathise with others and maintaining positive interactions among peers. The teacher here acts as a facilitator for children to discuss and resolve their issues on their own. This makes the interaction between children more positive as they resolve their conflicts themselves and continue their friendship decidedly because of their own decision rather than because of a decision imposed on them.

The teacher also serves as a model for appropriate behaviours thereby setting an example for children. Components related to socio-emotional development are also integrated in mental development like developing the ability to express feelings freely and clearly, by encouraging children to participate in individual and group discussions. This way socio-emotional development in children forms a central part of the school's curricular goals.

First, as the literature suggested, instilling turn-taking behaviour in children is important in fostering social and emotional development as the practice reduces anxiety associated with whether their chance will come or not. Also, it gives a fair chance to everybody in the group. It covertly teaches them taking turns fairly in group activities. This practice was in place in Hopscotch School. The teacher herself demonstrated the desired behaviours, filling the gaps between theory and practice. This practice is extensively focused within the philosophy of the school and has neatly transitioned into practice. However, continuation is of absolute importance for children, as once the time was up for a particular activity and the teacher told that the others would get their turns the next day, the latter were distressed and disinterested in the class activities that followed that day. Time was a concern in sharing activities, where children not only shared their work but also showed interest in their peers' work. Shortened time made children focus on their work only or if they would get a chance that day. It is therefore vital that the children have enough time for sharing their work with each other. Strategies can be used to shorten individual sharing-time rather than putting off certain children for the next day.

Another positive practice that could be seen on ground was that the teacher constantly provided explanations for her own actions. This creates an environment where every action is accountable and promotes the idea that one should think about her actions. This makes conflict resolution easier as children explain the intention of their actions to each other. Without any

adult interference, children are able to regulate themselves and their peers. For instance, during lunchtime, C explains to V to finish her food. While explaining, C points out to V's early childhood photograph where she is happily eating something. C gives the example of P, who was not eating her lunch yesterday but then finished it. C here is motivated to take on this adult-like role due to the teacher's appreciation of her eating habits. This has built a sense of confidence in her and she takes on this role. This has been possible due to the adult-child interaction laid down by the school's philosophy, where the adult provides guidance to the child, respecting her and giving explanations rather than imposing orders.

As pointed out earlier, observation is the key for directing teachers' practices. This is done on a day-to-day basis so that negative behaviours are not formed. For instance, a child used instrumental crying to gain attention and sympathy and get things done her way. The teacher after observing this countered it by telling the child that there is no use of crying and that if she (the child) puts her point forward simply, it will be heard. She also creates a free-flowing environment for the children, where they move from one task to the other seamlessly at their own pace. There is no sense of competition or lagging behind, thereby eliminating any resultant distress.

### *Wonga School*

The school's philosophy creates an onus on the adults to understand that while young children are dependent on them, they are nevertheless individuals who have rights and should be valued. Education here refers to the broader conception of meaning-making, practical life skills, imagination, creativity, and psychosocial development rather than the subject division of knowledge. Learning here is not only limited to classrooms as young children are observational and, given a prepared environment and appropriate adult-child or peer interactions, can learn a range of things. An early childhood programme should lay emphasis primarily on physical development and health, social and emotional development, language and literacy, and cognition and general knowledge. These domains should have different learning approaches, including music, dance, art, and drama. School preparedness elements like mathematics, science, and social science knowledge and skills should form only a part of this programme. All this can only be accomplished by skilled teachers and parents. Some basic principles applicable to them include respecting children as individuals; abolishing corporal punishment; and providing children the freedom to explore, access to clean air, equal opportunities, safety, and care. There should be minimal

gap between the school and home environment so that both come together to provide the best childcare and education, which should be imparted in one's mother tongue.

However, a huge gap was observed between theory and practice. While the philosophy talks about taking cues from children and accordingly informing pedagogical decisions, the routine itself was problematic for children. For instance, during song time, younger children were unable to sit for too long; they would become restless. While five-year-old children were able to sit quietly and attentively, they could not concentrate during prayer time. I observed an instance of a teacher hitting a child and pulling her away from her peer as she was sitting in her lap. When a child was crying, the teacher ordered her to stop crying. While the school's philosophy is clearly against corporal punishment, it is not being translated into practice. The child does not even know her wrongdoing as the teacher acts in an authoritarian manner and does not provide any reasoning. In another instance, a child (child 3) hit two other children, child 1 and child 2. Child 2 gives no response, while child 1 hits back. Child 3 becomes more aggressive and violent and starts pulling her peers' cap, then punching on her face, hitting on the back. Child 1 approaches the teacher who does not pay any attention. The child who started it begins crying. Nearby child reports the hitter. The teacher picks her up and makes child 3 sit at another place. The teacher does not even try to inquire into the matter but merely diffuses the situation on the face of it. There is no solution or assurance that such an act will not be repeated in future.

The school does not provide any opportunities for social interaction except during the free play time in the morning. Even in this instance, there is no teacher to look over or observe the children. After the assembly time, children move on to object exploration, which is mostly an individual activity. This ends with a circle time when the teacher usually tells a story and they listen only responding to known answer questions. The setting therefore lacks an appropriate environment conducive for the social and emotional development of children.

The environment requires sharing of materials when activities are done according to a theme, since there is one of each kind of material. Children use a particular material and pass it on to their peers once done. They are well aware that everyone will get every material one by one, and so there is no snatching or fighting over them. However, there were no evident instances of socio-emotional development in the preschool. The activities are stretched

to such an extent that the children are unable to pay attention. The assembly time itself goes up to an hour, and the children become restless and their attention wavers. Even in the middle of the session, children aged three were not comfortable in the preschool setting. One of the prerequisites of socio-emotional development is that children come to the setting willingly (also one of the items on the checklist), which was altogether missing in this context.

Due to the high pupil–teacher ratio, the teacher is unable to pay attention to every individual child. As shared earlier, there were instances where the teacher’s intervention was required but did not take place. This leads to unregulated behaviours, and aggression was indeed one of the phenomena that took place in group settings. In the events sampled, 50 per cent were violent in nature, with physical harm of one kind or the other such as hitting or pushing. Also, children were not in the habit of interacting with each other in diverse groups.

### **Appropriate Practices for Socio-Emotional Development**

Drawing from learnings from both the schools, it can be argued that some practices are essential for socio-emotional development, while others hinder it and therefore should be avoided. Other than the learnings from both the settings, here are some principles that can be useful in fostering social and emotional development in children:

- First, opportunities should be provided for group interactions where children share materials and ideas and learn from each other individually and collectively. This provides the children a platform to not only understand each other but also acquire necessary social skills.
- Too many instructional directions from the teacher at the same time should be avoided as it creates confusion for the child. This can be elaborated with an example:

“Hey, R, where are you off to?”

“Didi said that I should go and wash my hands.”

“Don’t wash your hands now. Go and wear your socks first.”

“R, what are you doing, sitting around here? Come with me outside [for reflection].”

“But didi said I have to wash my hands and have breakfast.”

“Well, get up and come with me now for some time, then you can go and eat”.

- 
- Exploratory talk plays a crucial role in early childhood education, especially oral language development, which is a tool for social and emotional development. It is vital that a child's language is given importance (a practice observed in both the preschools), as it is a validation of her identity, culture, and language, all of which are directly related to her self-esteem.
  - The project approach can be used to increase social competence, as it provides activities and experiences involving cooperation, coordination of effort, collaboration, and conflict resolution.
  - Safe indoor and outdoor environments should be provided to the child with appropriate adult supervision. Adult to child ratio should ideally not be more than 1:10 in early-year classrooms. This helps the children be secure in the knowledge that an adult is available to help if needed. The child develops an 'I can do it' feeling about herself.
  - During an activity, the teacher should use encouragement to motivate the child rather than praise. This is so because encouragement concentrates on the process ("It is good to see that you are working so hard to tie this knot."), while praise is limited to the end product ("Wow! That is a good wall hanging."). Encouragement acknowledges the effort of the child and helps her focus on the task at hand.

## Sample Module for Enhancing Socio-Emotional Development

Time In Minutes	Activity And Material Used	Role Of Facilitator	Role Of Student	Expected Outcome
Can be done over a period of time	My flag (paper, glue, stick, colours, pictures-optional)	<p>Talk to the children about their interests. For example, What do you like to eat/play/do on your own?</p> <p>The teacher can then show them a sample flag where she has drawn/pasted herself what she likes to eat/play/do.</p>	The children will share their interests and abilities with each other and then try to represent them using crayons, paints, pictures, etc.	Children will be able to understand themselves better. This will establish self-awareness and also awareness about their peers.
Can be done over a period of time	My box (a cardboard box, paper, colours, paint, smiley cutouts)	<p>Talk about different emotions like happy, sad, angry, etc., or you can just talk about good and bad feelings. Ask the children about the different situations in which they feel these emotions. Teacher can develop different smileys depicting different moods and paste it on a paper so that children can record those thoughts.</p>	<p>Record their feelings by drawing, painting, or telling them to the teachers. They can paste pictures of things that make them happy or sad like pets. This will be put into a box and shared with their peers later.</p>	Children gain an understanding of different emotions. This will create reflective thinking and children will think of the different situations in which they have come across these emotions.

---

## References

- American Education Research Association (2003): *Research Points: Essential Information for Education Policy*,1(1).
- Essa, Eva L (2013): *Introduction To Early Childhood Education* (Andover: Cengage Learning).
- Head Start (2003): *The Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework* (Washington, DC: Head Start).
- National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) (2009): *Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs Serving Children from Birth through Age 8* (Washington, DC: NAEYC).
- National Education Goals Panel (1997). *The National Education Goals Report: Building a Nation of Learners* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office).
- National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (2003): *Early Childhood Development in the 21st Century* (New York: Teacher `s College Press).
- National Research Council (2000): *From Neurons to Neighbourhoods: The Science of Early Child Development* (Washington, DC: National Academies Press).
- Pound, L (2011): *Influencing Early Childhood Education: Key Figures, Philosophies and Ideas* (Berkshire: Open University Press).
- Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education (SAICE) (2015): "Objects and Approach", website of Sri Aurobindo Ashram, <http://sriaurobindoashram.org/ashram/saice/objects.php>, viewed on
- Steiner, R (1884): *The Education of the Child and Early Lectures on Education* (Hundson, NY: Anthroposophic Press)
- Suomi, S and H Harlow (1975): *Friendships and Peer Relations* (New York: Wiley).
- US Department of Health and Human Services (2011): *The Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework*. Head Start, Administration for Children and Families.





# SEXUALITY EDUCATION IN RURAL RAJASTHAN

BHAVINI PANT  
& CHRYSLYNN  
D'COSTA

## Abstract

This article emerged from a curiosity to understand the relevance of sexuality education in a tribe whose traditions indicate gender equality and autonomy given to adolescents to choose their life partner and low record of sexual violence. The study first looks at the tribe's traditions regarding menstruation, choosing one's life partner and gender roles. It then analyses the sexuality education of Doosra Dashak to understand question like- Is the intervention of Doosra Dashak improving the quality of choices of the participants? Is Doosra Dashak 'mainstreaming' the Garasia youth from their culture i.e. encouraging them to give up certain aspects of their lifestyle such as bathing in the open, using sanitary napkins? Have there been any feelings of alienation from one's culture experienced by the participants of the intervention? Existing literature has separately addressed the importance of sexuality education, the work of Doosra Dashak and the sexual norms of the Garasia tribe. This article links these three aspects by attempting to understand the impact of Doosra Dashak's sexuality education module on the Garasia youth.

## Introduction

According to a 1998 publication, 40% of women aged between 15 and 19 in India are married (Jejeebhoy 1998). About half of all young women are sexually active by the age of 18, and almost one in five by the age of 15. More than half of all women aged 15–19 experience a pregnancy or a birth. Yet, adolescents in India tend to be poorly informed about menstruation, sexuality,

---

*Bhavini is currently pursuing her Master's in Education at Azim Premji University. She graduated from Sophia College in Mumbai and did a series of odd jobs till she found her passion for education. She is interested in language, adolescent education, gender and citizenship education. She can be reached at bhavini.pant14@apu.edu.in*

*Chryslynn developed an interest in education during her time as a Gandhi Fellow in Rajasthan. She then graduated from Azim Premji University with a Master's in Education. She is currently the diversity and inclusion head at Serein, Bangalore. Serein uses data science, behavioural economics and sociology to address diversity and inclusion challenges in the Indian workplace. Chryslynn is interested in gender studies, sexuality education and unconscious biases. She can be reached at chryslynn.dcosta14@apu.edu.in*

reproduction, contraception, physical well-being, health, sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), and HIV/AIDS (Jejeebhoy 1998). Yet, the introduction of sexuality education in schools is met with debates and opposition from various cultural and religious groups. These groups seem to ignore the facts that indicate the need for sexuality education, and instead play the “culturally unacceptable card”, arguing that sexuality education is a Western concept that taints Indian values.

The apprehension and suppression of dialogue on sexuality has led to consequences like individuals not living their full potential or in more severe cases it has led to sexual abuse and violence, stereotyping, discrimination, and suicides. In her article on the need for sexuality education, Chowkhani (2013) links the lack of sexuality education and the resulting misinformation among adolescents with related to discrimination and patriarchal attitudes informing rape cultures.

Chowkhani's argument for empowering the child with sexuality education can be supported with statistics in the Ministry of Women and Child Development's (MWCD) report *Study on Child Abuse: India 2007*. A major finding of this report was that more than 53% children reported having faced one or more forms of sexual abuse. Among these, 21% child respondents reported facing severe forms of abuse including rape and sodomy. Additionally, more than 50% of the respondents reported other forms of sexual abuse like forcible kissing, sexual advances, and exposure to pornography. In 50% of these cases, the abusers were known to children (MWCD 2007) The silence imposed on questions related to sexuality coupled with body shaming, absence of choice in choosing one's life partner, and gender inequality are factors that contribute to a lack of understanding of issues such as consent, personal safety, personal boundaries, and physical hygiene.

This article is based on a study that emerged from a curiosity to understand the relevance of sexuality education in a tribe whose traditions indicate gender equality, autonomy given to adolescents to choose their life partners, and a low record of sexual violence. The article first looks at the tribe's traditions regarding menstruation, choosing one's life partners, and notions of gender roles. It then analyses the sexuality education curriculum of Doosra Dashak to understand the following questions: Is the intervention of Doosra Dashak improving the quality of choices of the participants? Is Doosra Dashak “mainstreaming” the Garasia youth, i.e., encouraging them to give up certain aspects of their lifestyle such as bathing in the open and encouraging new practices such as the use of sanitary pads? Has any feeling of alienation

from one's culture been experienced by the participants of the intervention? Existing literature has separately addressed the importance of sexuality education, the work of Doosra Dashak, and the sexual norms of the Garasia tribe. This article links these three aspects by attempting to understand the impact of Doosra Dashak's sexuality education module on the Garasia youth.

## **Context**

### ***Garasia Tribe***

The Garasia tribe lives in the forests of Rajasthan and Gujarat. The community is connected within and across the state borders by marriage and kinship. In Rajasthan, the Garasia tribe is categorised as a Scheduled Tribe. They are the largest tribal group in Rajasthan, followed by the Bhil and Gamethi tribes. (Rann Singh Mann 1989)

The Garasia tribes speak a dialect called Girasia or Nyra. Many of the words and their pronunciation in this dialect is influenced by Gujarati, Marwari, and Mewari. Interestingly, Garasias speak in Marwari with non-tribal outsiders (Cain 2013)

A majority of the families in this tribe are nuclear families, i.e., one generation living in one house. Aside from domestic duties of cooking, nursing cattle, milking animals, and taking care of children, women are also engaged in agricultural manual work. Most men in Pindwara are involved in stone-cutting and often migrate for the same work to other states and countries. This exposes them to cultures apart from their own.

Formal education in Pindwara is operationalised by private and government schools. A majority of students attending government schools belong to the tribal community. Teachers, however, belong to the general category or Rajput community. This disconnects teachers and students because of language and cultural differences. Organisations like Azim Premji Foundation and Educate Girls are associated with government schools in the area. Non-formal education takes place through workshops organised by Doosra Dashak.

### ***Doosra Dashak***

In 2001, Anil Bordia, an eminent educationist and former education secretary of the Government of India started a project called Doosra Dashak (which literally translates as "the second decade", i.e., the phase of adolescence).

Doosra Dashak is run by the Foundation for Education and Development (FED), a public charitable trust.

Doosra Dashak works for the education and development of adolescents in the 11–20 years age group from some of the most marginalised communities in remote rural areas. Its mission is to provide “contextually relevant and holistic education” to adolescents who are deprived of schooling, and to make these adolescents a lever for socio-economic transformation (FED nd). Through a four-month residential workshop, the project imparts education covering basic literacy and numeracy, social science, health, and life skills. Sexuality education is a section in the life skills curriculum. Through sexuality education, Doosra Dashak aims to empower young women to make conscious and safe decisions and enable young men begin to understand and imbibe gender equality and consideration for the opposite sex.

Doosra Dashak`s work with the Garasia tribe began as an alternative learning centre. This was because the formal education system had failed to account for the context, needs, and challenges of the tribe on both the academic front (syllabus and pedagogy) and the non-academic front (informal relationships between teacher and student, teacher and parent, and within the school community). A majority of government school teachers do not belong to the tribal community. In our conversations, these teachers linked low learning ability with the student`s tribal identity. Students are aware of these judgements and therefore show little interest towards regular schools.

Doosra Dashak attempts to include the community in curriculum design and implementation by training the Garasia youth to become field officers and facilitators to promote the learning programmes and residential workshops in their respective villages. On completing the residential workshops, children are encouraged and assisted to secure admissions into Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas (government hostels for tribal students) and local government schools.

## **Findings And Analysis**

### ***Sexual Practices and Norms***

#### *Marriage and Separation*

The community refers to 'marriage` as a heterosexual, non-religious, consensual arrangement between two adolescents or adults. In the Garasia community, teenaged children befriend partners of their choice at a two-day

courtship fair or *mela* held in parts of Rajasthan and Gujarat (Akhtar 2014). Once the boy and girl choose each other, the couple “elopes” and eventually returns to live either in a house of their own or with the boy’s family. Parents of the partners come to a formal, public acknowledgment of the arrangement only when the boy has paid *dapa* (bride price) to the girl’s family. Until then, the couple continue to live together and have children.

During the study, the elders of the tribe suggested their preference for children choosing their own partners at the courtship fair. This practice is seen as a cultural norm rather than parental permissiveness. One of the respondents said, “We’ve all settled down like this. My parents, me, my children and my grandchildren. This is the way things are in our society.” Some were of the view that this led to happier relationships. One of the respondents felt it made economic sense saying, “Having a marriage ceremony involves a lot of fuss and money. Arrangements have to be made for people to visit and eat. It also becomes an excuse for some unruly men to get drunk and create trouble.”

In a tribal society, equity in social relationships is deep-rooted, whereas the institution of marriage gives superiority to manhood. The community views marriage as an imposition on women (Akhtar 2014). During the study, many narratives from the community and those outside the community echoed Rajiv Gupta’s observations. In case someone in the relationship is unhappy, s/he has the freedom to break off the relationship and separate. In such a situation, the party that chooses to leave pays a sum of money to his/her partner.

Compared with women of other castes, the police observes that Garasia women are forthcoming in filing complaints at the police station. Typically, complaints received were regarding violation of marriage contracts. However, registering complaints is in fact a strategy to force the other party to show up not at the police station but at the *panchayati*—jury meetings held in a public park opposite the police station. The *panchayati*, as explained by a member of the community, is an old practice of negotiations between two warring parties. Village elders try to negotiate and settle issues through monetary penalties, compensations, social ostracisation, and counselling. For the tribe, this is the preferred way of solving issues and crimes within the community. As another member of the community explained, “We prefer this way of resolving issues because the matter is contained within our village, and we trust the members of our community to be fair and just with us.”

Thus while this indicates a community with gender equality, certain literature and the primary data point to differences in the extent of choice given to men

and women in breaking off relationships. In an ethnographic study which problematised the “tribal freedom” of Garasia women, Maya Unnithan-Kumar (1991) pointed out that the power to separate from a partner is in favour of men, since women are usually not financially independent enough to pay the separation money. She argues that the Garasias are a patriarchal society, where men are allowed to have multiple partners, but it is difficult for women to exercise the same freedom since they are financially limited, and there are societal norms restricting their sexual agency (Unnithan-Kumar 1991). In their interviews on separation, Garasia women stated that, “It is rare, but it is not prohibited actively by any member of the society.”

The sexuality education curriculum of Doosra Dashak is to enable girls to see the advantage of postponing marriage in order to study and become economically independent. The workshops also aim to enable boys to respect and value women. Gender equality is taught through an understanding of the capabilities of both genders to perform tasks and the advantages of enlisting the help of each other. While the aim is to enable the adolescents to respect each other, the assumption is that in a scenario of “no alternative” the girl is empowered to walk out of a partnership if she is threatened or unhappy.

### *Sexual Violence*

Akhtar (2014) points out that cases of violence against women such as rape and dowry deaths are rare among the Garasia. Doosra Dashak, the police, as well as the community attribute low sexual violence in the Garasia community to the freedom given to choose one’s life partner. The definition of sexual violence in the scope of this article is restricted to eve teasing and rape. The police pointed out that while the rates of theft, burglary, and dacoity committed by the tribe were high, instances of sexual violence were low.

Women in the community agreed that they felt safe while stepping out of their homes and walking in their village. According to many of them, only a “drunk man, out of his senses, would cause harm to a woman.” It was considered impossible for a man in his senses to risk such socially unacceptable behaviour, even towards non-Garasia women. However, in contrast to these views, one of the respondents, Moti, pointed out that while the panchayati system was strong, its jurisdiction extended only to members of the Garasia community. For this reason, he said that Garasia men were more afraid to sexually harass Garasia women than women from outside the community. He said, “Since you are wearing non-Garasia clothes, it puts you in slight danger of being harassed. Were you dressed in our clothes, no man would have dared to approach you inappropriately.” Moti perceives appearance as

a chance for violence, while the women view instances of drunkenness with a possibility of violence. However, apart from Moti, the common consensus was that sexual violence in the community is low.

Doosra Dashak facilitators and school teachers pointed out that Garasia adolescents are not forbidden from interacting with the opposite sex. In fact, a young Doosra Dashak facilitator stated that even before the courtship mela takes place, many boys and girls have already singled out their chosen partner and consulted with their friends and siblings on their viability (in terms of family environment, land, employment, and the personality of their partner's parents). Moti also commented on our question on sexual violence crimes saying, "When we can choose to be with who we want, why would we tease or harass women without any reason?"

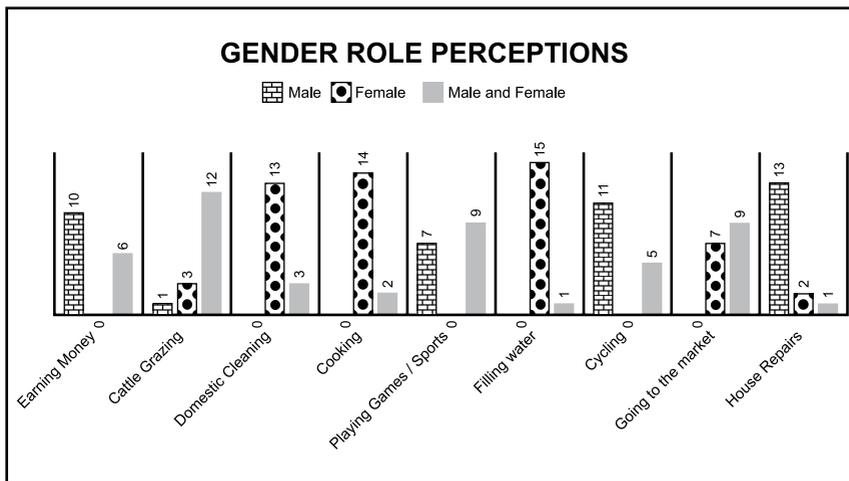
It is possible that ideas of "acceptance" and "rejection" have become common knowledge among the youth. This leads to a better reception of rejection and an awareness and respect for consent. Since exercising this choice has become a tradition, specific choices are possibly viewed as a part of the process of choosing a partner and not as a personal attack.

### *Perceptions of Gender*

The freedom of choice of partner and the freedom to separate is seen by a large amount of literature on the Garasia tribe as an indication of a gender equal community. However, other literature contradicts the same. Certain literature refers to the tribe as matrilineal and certain studies shed light on the patriarchy in the tribe. Unnithan-Kumar's (1991) study notes that in premarital stages, women hold a great deal of liberty with respect to movement, interaction with men, and mate selection. In cases of marital problems, the woman has an equal right to seek justice as a man does. However, in post-marital stages, this freedom is curtailed. Some taboos are imposed on women during menstruation, childbirth, and pregnancy, in addition to the activities which construct their daily routine. Along with *parda* (a married woman covering her face in front of her elders-in-law), the treatment of women as "impure" and 'polluted' at the time of menstruation and post-delivery are traits that the Garasia tribe has borrowed from the higher-caste Hindu traditions, the study further noted (Unnithan-Kumar 1991). While we did not notice any instance of *parda* during the field visit, the findings from a gender role game pointed out that equality does not extend to other spheres of life in the community.

In an interaction with 16 adolescent girls—we conducted a simple game. We gave the participants a set of flash cards with drawings of money, cleaning

equipment, water pots, cattle grazing, kitchen, cycle, electrical appliances, sports equipment, and local market. None of the pictures had humans in them. One at a time, each participant was asked to segregate the cards into three groups—women`s activity, men`s activity, and activity for both. The graph below indicates the results of this game.



Although our sample size is too small to make a clear generalisation, the results of the activity do suggest biased notions about the roles of men and women in the Garasia community in the minds of adolescent girls. Some tasks were considered to be exclusively done by women, for instance, cooking, cleaning the home, and filling water. On the other hand, tasks of earning money and house repairs were largely considered male chores. Cycling presented an interesting picture. While doing the activity, four girls reported that while cycling was usually done by boys and men, it was possible for girls to do it too. “We`ve never seen girls cycle in our village, but we know we can,” they said. This is in spite of the fact that none of the girls said they knew cycling. Given this response to cycling, we asked the children if men are not capable of doing the women`s jobs and vice versa. In response to this, a few participants replied that maybe they can but they do not.

The sexuality education curriculum of Doosra Dashak has a strong focus on gender. It asks the students to challenge what they see in their everyday life by asking them to give these roles a try. For example, if boys believe they cannot cook, they are asked if they have to, will they be able to. The response regarding ability to the question on cycling could be an indication of a changing mind-set.

## Community Knowledge on Sexuality

### *Menstruation and Sexual Intercourse*

When it comes to sexual intercourse, its physiological, psychological, and emotional aspects, respondents from the community indicated that some information on this is received from married friends, older siblings, and young aunts and uncles who are close to their nieces or nephews. Parents do not discuss the same with their children. As one of our respondents said, “You`d get a whack across your cheeks if you spoke about that stuff to your parents.”

Mothers are also hesitant to speak to their daughters about menstruation, but described a strategy they have used for a long time to convey necessary information. “When a mother feels that her daughter may begin menstruating, she approaches a few of her friends, and tells them about it. She then requests them to tell her daughter about it.” However, information on why menstruation occurs does not get conveyed.

There were indications of poor menstrual hygiene and an absence of knowledge on sexually transmitted diseases among the community. Conversations with women indicated that while there they did have some information about menstruation and the use of condoms, there was a lack of knowledge on why menstruation occurred or how it could be managed less painfully and uncomfortably.

None of the three villages we visited had electricity, which eliminates the chance of receiving knowledge about safe sexual intercourse, menstruation, and maternal health from television, internet, radio, etc. While we are not ruling out community health centres, government hospitals and state-sponsored advertisements on protected sex as providers of information to the Garasia community, our research leads us to consider Doosra Dashak as an important and trusted source of knowledge on personal health and hygiene.

In addition to this, several taboos regarding menstruation have decreased their hold among young camp-graduates. One facilitator described these taboos in detail:

It was believed that if a menstruating woman touched food, for instance, papad, it would become red. Earlier, menstruating women would simply sit in one corner of the house till someone served them food. They wouldn` t even enter the kitchen if they were hungry. Now, the younger girls don` t believe in all of this. They use pads and can see why menstruation happens, and how it happens.

One of the facilitators mentioned, “We try to get the girls to shed their deep hesitation to talk about menstruation, by asking them to share their experiences. In this way, many girls get information from within the group itself; we simply act as facilitators.”

In regular schools students are introduced for the first time to reproduction in class eight. An example of the limit of regular schools to provide an unbiased, comprehensive view of sexuality can be seen in the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) class eight science textbook in the chapter titled “Reproduction in Animals”. It deals with sex exclusively as a reproductive activity, as is evident from the title (NCERT 2008). There is also no mention of how this reproduction occurs between two people: the penis is mentioned as a male reproductive organ, but there no mention of the vagina, nor is it depicted in any of the diagrams. Sexual reproduction is reintroduced in class 10 and 12, but once again, there is no information on how this reproduction physically takes place; it is given almost a clinical treatment: “The sperms enter through the vaginal passage during sexual intercourse” (NCERT 2006) Many studies on child sexual abuse have indicated that this mild form of body shaming (by completely omitting the diagrams of human anatomy) and the omission of names of the genitals hinder the children from articulating and voicing cases of abuse.

Doosra Dashak`s textbook on sexuality has clear illustrations of the human anatomy. Sex is described not only as a means to procreate but also as an emotionally satisfying activity. The language has a tone of openness and stresses on the fact that all these feelings and processes are natural, normal, and important for living a fulfilling social life.

Our interviews with the youth and their parents indicate that while adolescents are given the autonomy to choose partners, it is expected that they will know what to do once they have chosen a life partner. In a society where sexual activity among adolescents is the norm, it becomes even more important for the youth to be fully informed and aware of their choices.

In such a scenario where youth do not have a guide to address questions on sexual intercourse and menstruation, our research indicates that Doosra Dashak steps in to fill this gap. The curriculum and pedagogy of Doosra Dashak as well as our interviews with the facilitators demonstrated the comprehensiveness of perspective and information provided to the Garasia youth during the residential camps of four months and seven days. This is done through discussions, theatre, and stories. The reference books at the camp on health and gender address topics like standing up against sexual

violation, gender roles, sexually transmitted diseases, understanding the physical and emotional changes during puberty, personal hygiene (wearing underwear, using sanitary pads), pregnancy, and maternal health care.

While Doosra Dashak makes efforts to provide education within the cultural context of the Garasia tribe, one begins to wonder if they are alienating Garasia youth from their cultural traditions. In this case, two incidents demonstrate the alignment of Doosra Dashak`s intervention with the community. One, Doosra Dashak does not force mothers to begin talking about menstruation with their daughters. Instead, they have worked with the youth and the community, keeping the *friend-to-daughter* tradition in mind, by encouraging girls to talk about menstruation among themselves in a safe, comfortable space—the camps.

In addition to this, an ex-facilitator of Doosra Dashak mentioned, “I bought 3,000 sanitary pads myself to distribute to the girls. But I realised that after the camp, these girls would have to buy pads on their own, which wasn`t feasible. So we introduced them to cloth pads. We taught them how to make them, use them, and maintain them, and now they teach other girls in their community.”

### ***Maternity***

As a facilitator explained to us, “We knew that many girls in the village ‘marry` early. We decided to introduce maternity health to them for this reason because we knew they had no other access to this knowledge, and many young women would die as a result of poor maternal health.” Another facilitator spoke of his learnings on the field regarding teaching maternal health to Garasia girls. “Over time, we realised we had to address this with girls as young as 13 and 14 years old. We talk about advanced maternal care to older girls as well, from the age of 17 to 20.”

Doosra Dashak`s conversations with students focus on the value of postponing pregnancies until both partners are at an age in their life when they are physically, emotionally, and financially ready to have children. Keeping in mind high rates of maternity-related deaths in the area, this becomes vitally important. During discussions on maternal health, facilitators mentioned that they try to dissuade young, un-partnered girls to delay settling down and starting a family till they are 21 or 22 years old.

It is also important to note here that Doosra Dashak has not urged the Garasia youth to discard their partner-choosing tradition in favour of a legalised, religious marriage ceremony, but it has concentrated on making the youth

aware of the responsibilities and consequences of early marriage. Thus, its focus has not been on changing the way Garasias traditionally choose to start families but on improving their quality of life in terms of maternal health and financial security.

An elderly lady pointed out to us that doctors had told them about the “operation”—vasectomy and hysterectomy—but women did not visit the hospital very often. The hospital is viewed as a remote place, where one goes only when things become very serious. She gave us the specific example of pregnancies. Almost all women, she informed us, gave birth to children inside the home. They would be assisted by the mother-in-law (or the mother, in the case of the first child) and a *dai* or the local mid-wife. When asked about using hospitals for deliveries, she responded, “How do we give birth to children in a hospital? I will be surrounded by strangers there, and I won’t feel comfortable. In the village, we know what to do.” A study on the health status of tribes in Rajasthan states, in communities with strong traditions for managing pregnancy and birth, the introduction of biomedical facilities to provide prenatal care is often met with indifference (Bhasin 2007).

There is some indication that this is changing, since two young men that we spoke to alluded to the high rates of maternity-related deaths in the community. One of these men’s partners was expecting a baby. He said, “She will be giving birth at home, but I’m going to stay outside with a vehicle just in case. Who knows what may happen?” This has been supported by other research on the subject as well. A study looking at the health status of six Rajasthani tribes (including Garasias) finds that a “majority of maternal deaths takes place at home and few on the way to health centers. Several factors were found to be deterrents to seeking timely care at the health center, including women’s preference to deliveries at home, the cost of transportation and hospitalisation and the women’s status in the society” (Bhasin 2007). In such a situation, the existence of *Doosra Dashak* becomes important.

Bisht (2008) addresses the perception of adults about adolescence in India and discusses how children falling in the age group of 12–15 years are referred to as neither adults nor children. The role of the adult in this phase is not to indoctrinate the adolescent with personal morals and values but to further develop the cognitive and emotional ability of the individual adolescent to make informed choices.

Many claim that the aim of education is preparation for adult life. The extent of knowledge on sexuality has a great influence on the choices one makes in the phase of adult life. In keeping with this view and acknowledging the

cognitive and emotional development of the adolescent, Doosra Dashak works as a mentor and friend. Its intervention addresses sexuality in a manner that is comfortable, relevant, and open to questioning. This approach has earned the organisation the trust and respect of the adolescents and older community members.

Nirantar`s report titled *Sexuality Education for Young People* (2008) delineates the difference between “sex education” and “sexuality education”: the former refers only to a biological/reproductive/anatomical understanding of sex, while the latter refers to a more holistic socio-cultural understanding of sexuality, which covers a wide range of dimensions—biological, psychological, emotional, and social. It goes on to outline the various aspects and aims of sexuality education: addressing shame and fear, understanding desire and one`s body, and creating comfortable spaces to ask questions and receive answers. The report argues that since sexuality education is aimed at adolescents, it must address sexuality in a broad, inclusive, and open manner, since adolescents have many differing yet interlinked issues regarding sexuality throughout their growing-up years (Nirantar 2008).

A sexuality education that is completely neutral of aspects like values, cultural norms, and traditions is impossible and worthless. But a curriculum inclusive of all the dimensions as mentioned in Nirantar`s report can empower the child. The sexuality education curriculum of Doosra Dashak addresses the dimensions as mentioned in the report by including several scientific, cultural, and social discourses on sexuality. This approach encourages rational choice and thus promotes health, safety, and equality. This approach coupled with community participation in the design and implementation can successfully address concerns regarding “the rights to moral impositions of one social group over another”.

## **Note**

Names of participants have been changed to respect their privacy.

## References

- Akhtar, S (2014): “Marriage an Alien Notion for Indian Tribe”, 17 June. Retrieved from ALJAZEERA: <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2014/06/marriage-an-alien-notion-indian-tribe-2014617134343167160.html>
- Anandhi, S (2007): “Sex Education Conundrum”, *Economic Political Weekly*, 42(33): 3367–69.
- Bhasin, V (2007): “Health Status of Tribals of Rajasthan”, *Ethno- Med*, 1(2): 91–125.
- Bisht, R (2008) “Who is A Child?” *Interpersona*, 2(2): 159–61.
- Cain, B (2013): *A Sociolinguistic Profile of Garasia Dialects* (SIL International).
- Chowkhani, K (2013): “Sexuality Education: Why We Need It”, *Teacher Plus*, 5 February.
- Doosra Dashak (nd): “Method of Work”. Retrieved from Doosra Dashak : Foundation for Education and Development: <http://doosradashak.in/new/detail.aspx?Catid=2&subcatid=10>
- Foundation for Education and Development (FED) (nd): “Upcoming Events”. Retrieved from Doosra Dashak: <http://doosradashak.in/new/upcomingevents.aspx>
- Jejeebhoy, S (1998): “Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Behaviour: A Review of the Evidence from India”, *Social Science and Medicine*, 46(10): 1275–90.
- Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD) (2007): *Study on Child Abuse: 2007 India* (New Delhi: Government of India).
- National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) (2006): “How Do Organisms Reproduce?” in NCERT, Science Textbook, Class 10 (New Delhi: NCERT), p. 127.
- (2008): “Reproduction in Animals”, in NCERT, Science Textbook, Class 8 (New Delhi: NCERT), p. 107.
- Nirantar (2008): *Sexuality Education for Young People* (New Delhi: Nirantar).
- Rann Singh Mann, K M (1989): “Garasia Heritage and Change”, in K M Rann Singh Mann, *Tribal Cultures and Change* (New Delhi: Mittal Publication), p. 73.



# INCLUSIVE CLASSROOM SETTINGS: UNDERSTANDING TEACHERS', PARENTS', AND STUDENTS' ATTITUDES

RITIKA  
CHAWLA

## Abstract

Inclusive education has been a big question in India. With the advent of various policies coming into play there has been a push on all schools and classrooms becoming inclusive. There has been a lot of debate in the education space on this as well. This study explores whether the stakeholders - teachers, parents, peer classmates and most importantly students themselves are ready for it. The teachers need to be equipped with both the right mindset and knowledge to manage students in inclusive settings. Both of these need to be developed through deliberate actions. But teachers are unwilling to give up and continue to learn through their experiences.

## Introduction

India is a diverse country with the second-largest elementary education system, which tries to reach out to almost 149.4 million children in the age bracket of 6–14 years. Being a country with people belonging to varied backgrounds, it becomes both difficult and important for the government to provide support to the marginalised sections of society. Hence, “inclusive education” was conceptualised to meet this challenge. Inclusion, as explained by the District Primary Education Programme, 2000, is a philosophy of bringing children with special needs well within the purview of mainstream education, recognising that quality education needs to reach everyone through appropriate curricula, teaching strategies, support services, and partnerships with the community (Kumar and Kumar 2007). This definition as well as the scheme of inclusive education was further enhanced by the Ministry of Human Resource Development in the year 2003, with inclusion being defined as covering all learners, i.e., young people with or without

---

*Ritika is currently the Curriculum Head for India School Leadership Institute (ISLI). She has also worked with school leaders as Delhi City Head under the ISLI National Fellowship as a Programme Manager. Prior to this, she was studying towards an MA in Education degree at Azim Premji University, Bangalore. She completed her Teach for India fellowship in 2012 and has taught grades two and three in a municipal school in Mumbai. She has also worked as a Business Analyst with different organisations and as a happiness consultant with Oye Happy planning surprises. Ritika has a BBA and PGDHRM from Symbiosis International University. Apart from work, she enjoys traveling, writing, reading, watching movies and surprising people.*

disabilities being able to learn together in ordinary preschool provision, schools, and community educational settings with appropriate networks of support services (Singal, 2005). In a lay person's understanding, inclusion means having children in mainstream schools, irrespective of their socio-economic background, physical or mental disability, and learning difficulty.

Since education is recognised as a catalyst for social change and bringing about social equality and justice, there have been many processes, policies, acts, provisions, etc., that the Indian government has taken up in order to ensure the participation of disadvantaged groups. As mentioned, so far, a number of policies and provisions have been made to translate the ideals of inclusive education into practice such as the Kothari Commission Report (1966), the National Policy of Education (1986), the Persons with Disability Act (1995), the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, the Right to Education Act (2009), and the Disability Bill (2012). Even at the international level, there have been policies and legislations such as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) Salamanca Declaration (1994) and No Child Left Behind Act (2001), which are aimed at developing an understanding of the historical and current position of inclusive education, both in the national and international contexts.

Inclusion-related discussions underscore the urgency for Indian policymakers as well as educational practitioners to consider the historical shifts experienced by the indigenous and traditional education systems in India in developing education-specific initiatives towards improving basic education. Today, the Right to Education (RTE) Act has made it mandatory for schools to admit children with disabilities and those from low socio-economic backgrounds under the 25% inclusion quota for disadvantaged groups. A 2012 amendment to the Act expanded the definition of disability to include autism, cerebral palsy, mental retardation, and multiple disabilities. While there has been a lot of theoretical work on inclusion in India, the support provided in practice has not been the same. Moreover, the prime stakeholders for ensuring the implementation of inclusion have not been identified or well supported by any of the schemes provided by the government.

For the purpose of this study, we included the following children when referring to inclusion—children with learning difficulties such as dyslexia, autism, and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD); those with physical disabilities; and “normal”<sup>1</sup> children, i.e., those other than the ones mentioned. A child who is “different” due to cognitive, physical, or economic

reasons is likely to be discriminated against or differentiated by teachers, peers, and parents of peers. Socio-economic backgrounds are also linked to disadvantages and advantages faced by children. Therefore, participants in inclusive processes include children with disabilities or learning difficulties and low socio-economic backgrounds, parents, teachers, peers, administrators, resource teachers, and the community. This study explores the roles and responsibilities of these participants along with understanding their interaction with one another in an inclusive setting.

Many educationists believe that putting children with special needs and low socio-economic backgrounds in mainstream schools can benefit everyone—other students, teachers, parents, and the government. However, there is no guarantee that the outcome will always be positive. It is quite likely that children from low socio-economic backgrounds and those with special needs as well as their peers in school might not be equipped to handle the situation. Peers in school play an important role in the lives of the children with disabilities. Children with disabilities often become easy targets of teasing and bullying by their non-disabled peers as reported by children interviewed in certain studies. Some schools are reluctant to take pupils with special needs because of various reasons. If schools find it difficult to accommodate such students, so do the students themselves. Practitioners and teachers face many challenges in creating an inclusive environment in a regular school setting.

So what is it that can make an inclusive approach work? Training support for teachers to develop new skills, specially designed curricula, extra help for students with special needs, workshops for other students, awareness campaign for parents, and active interaction between parents and teachers are some steps that certain schools have taken. This study was undertaken to find out whether inclusive approaches improve the quality of education and the behaviour of all those involved. It was conducted primarily with the objective of understanding the mindsets and attitude of parents, teachers, children with special needs (CWSN), and their peers. Hence the questions probed into were:

- How do the attitudes and mindsets of teachers, peers, and parents impact students?
- What are the ways in which teachers as well as parents deal with these issues and respond to these children and their problems?

## **Context**

The study was conducted in Aksharnandan School, Pune, which has children from preschool to grade 10, and follows the Secondary School Certificate (SSC) curriculum along with that of the National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) for CWSN. It has children from low-, middle-, and high- income groups, as well as those with learning difficulties and physical disabilities in one classroom setting. The school supports all children on a case-to-case basis and provides special educators and one-on-one teaching. The school is primarily Marathi medium and children are taught English and Hindi as second and third languages.

The school has been following the policy of inclusion ever since its inception, with 10% children in every classroom being those with physical or mental disabilities or from low socio-economic classes. While all children are in the “mainstream” classroom for most of the day, those with special needs are part of parallel classes, which provide them extra support in English and mathematics. The mainstream classroom has a student–teacher ratio of 40:1, while the parallel class has a ratio of about 8:1. For this school, CWSN included those with learning disabilities, attention deficit disorder (ADD), ADHD, dyslexia, Down syndrome, Asperger syndrome, hearing impairment, moderate visual impairment, and mild autism.

Other than Aksharnandan, I also visited two inclusive schools in Mumbai called Beacon High and Precious School. Beacon High caters to children with cognitive challenges and learning difficulties along with those who have visual impairment, belonging to high-economic backgrounds. This school has 30 students in each class including about six–eight with special needs. Precious School admits all those children who are rejected by mainstream schools and have an IQ above 65. It has about six–seven students per class. Both these schools are English medium and have special educators for additional support.

## **Methodology**

The study was carried out for a period of six weeks in the inclusive schools mentioned earlier. It was based on non-participatory classroom observations, interviews of various stakeholders, and a survey.

Before deciding the tool, as a researcher, I went through past studies done in this area. Some of the key findings of these studies are as follows:

- Equal opportunities for children with special needs to communicate with and learn alongside their peers are not facilitated simply by inclusion in the same classroom, as access does not automatically deliver equality (Singal 2005).
- Disabled children tend to be framed by discourses of “normality” and “difference” in school, arising from institutional factors and everyday cultural practices (Singh and Ghai 2009).
- Disability is experienced most acutely in the domain of relationships with the non-disabled (ibid.).
- Educators and teachers tend to have discriminatory attitudes towards children with disabilities (Hodkinson and Devarakonda 2009).

An in-depth literature review helped me to decide on the methodology and tools for the study.

The methodology used was a combination of qualitative and quantitative tools. Since the research was based on understanding human behaviour, thoughts and feelings located in a certain context, these could not be completely quantified. The interviews were semi-structured as they were discussion-oriented or conversation-based, and the questions were not quantifiable or close ended. These interviews helped in an understanding of the beliefs, feelings, and level of awareness of parents, teachers, principals, special educators, and students, pertaining to children under inclusion, and hence were descriptive and inferential.

Moreover, given the sensitivity of the subject matter, face-to-face interviewing was needed in order to avoid any misunderstandings or misconceptions about the purpose of the study and data collection. The observations conducted were non-participatory for classrooms of grade 6, 7 and 8 (both regular and parallel classes) in particular and the school in general.

The quantitative aspect of the study was based on Keith Cochran`s Survey called STATIC (Scale of Teachers` Attitudes towards Inclusion). The STATIC tests the advantages and disadvantages of inclusive education, professional and philosophical issues regarding inclusive education, and logistical concerns of inclusive education (Cochran 1997). This was conducted with certain modifications to make it relevant to the context of Aksharnandan School. The sample for the survey included 35 full-time and part-time teachers.

## **Data Analysis and Findings**

The analysis provided in this section is through the triangulation of data collected through observations, interviews, and the survey because it was important to really see if peoples' perspectives and actions go together and analyse any discrepancies.

### ***What Teachers Think and Feel***

The teachers at Aksharnandan at the glance seem and sound pro-inclusion. They believe in the school's ideology, and this percolates in their actions as well. More than 75% teachers felt they could teach CWSN and did feel frustrated while dealing with them. The feelings of guilt and frustration increased when they were not able to reach out to all children; yet, they did not feel anxious, despite lacking any formal training to manage them. Their positive attitude was evident in the classroom when they did their best to reach out to as many students through activities and discussion-based teaching pedagogy. They shared a special relationship with their students and had a soft corner for CWSN. Even the school staff was aware of the problems CWSN were dealing with and dealt with them more sensitively.

The teachers were also of the opinion that all children can learn in the same classroom and progress academically, and they felt they could manage children with moderate physical challenges as well. A little deviation was found in the question of whether CWSN should be placed in special schools, and about 66% teachers agreed but provided the explanation that this should be in the case of children with high levels of physical and cognitive challenges such as autism and auditory challenges. According to them, children with more than moderate challenges only acquire social skills from "normal" students in mainstream classrooms, but academically they do get left behind. Moreover, they felt that inclusion had repercussions post class five –six, as the children developed identities and became aware of the differences. Yet, they felt this could be overcome to a certain extent with interventions for both "normal" and "special" children, making them both aware of their behaviour.

A major need felt by 70% of the teachers was that of training. They felt that both pre-service and in-service training played an important role in the teachers' work. Another gap was found in the infrastructure. Large classroom sizes and inaccessibility to teaching-learning materials (TLMs) and other resources made teachers feel handicapped.

Both the survey and the interviews indicated that the vision and attitude of the

principal of the school made a huge difference in the way teachers functioned in schools. More than 90% teachers felt that they were given freedom and support by the principal in their teaching practices. Another support system for the teachers was their peers. Talking and sharing led to generation of better ideas and also a feeling that they were not alone.

Even though teachers aim at ensuring that all students learn and show progress, they do need additional support in their daily pedagogic practices. Their pedagogic techniques were based on a trial and error approach rather than a rooted research. What has made their task a little easy is having a different evaluation framework such as continuous and comprehensive evaluation (CCE). This allowed them to focus on the strengths of every child rather than having the same test or exam for all. Even the assessment or the question papers were different, with the children in parallel classes being given an easier paper as compared to the regular class.

Another aspect of inclusion that teachers dealt with was parents. The teachers expressed their distress when parents did not accept that their child required additional support. There were instances when parents did not accept for a long time that their child was any different from the other students in the school. The teachers felt it was important for parents to lower their expectations academically but treat their children just the same otherwise.

### *What Parents Feel and Believe*

The information collected was both from parents of CWSN and those of their peers. None of the parents were against inclusion, and they were staunch supporters of this approach irrespective of where other students came from or how it impacted their child. During the admission process, the school has a questionnaire that notes parents' views on inclusion and related subjects. The school does not accept those parents who are against inclusion. Further filtration takes place during the interview process, allowing admission to only those students whose parents are absolutely accepting of having their child study in a diverse classroom.

Still, there is a need for counseling parents. It is difficult for them to believe that their child is unlike other "normal" children and at times even evidence such as psychological tests and low exam scores does not suffice. Being biased due to my past learnings as a teacher, I always thought that it would be difficult to explain things to illiterate parents. However, during the course of the study, I discovered that the educational background of the parents was not linked to their acceptance of their child's situation.

An example that I encountered was of Sneha, whose mother was an educated professional. Despite her daughter having Down Syndrome and an IQ as low as 68, Sneha's mother still expected her to appear for the SSC board exams. To quote her mother, "She does everything like all other children, so she will also give exams like all of them. Why will she give NIOS when her IQ is okay?" This comparison of Sneha with her peers can put the child under a lot of pressure.

Counseling and regular communication with teachers and the principal could help in such situations. Parents also need a lot of support from the school, just as the child does.

### ***What Peers Think and Do***

As mentioned before, the school provides additional support to CWSN through parallel classes. Even children who are struggling with mathematics and English due to other reasons are part of these classes. Though most children said that parallel classes are helpful, those who have never been part of these classes prefer not to be sent there. But there was no evident discrimination in making a child part of these parallel classes.

The peers seemed accepting of CWSN, especially if they were part of their class from early years such as kindergarten or grade 1. Having grown together, peers even understand the emotional needs of CWSN. Let's take the example of Rishabh, who was partially hearing impaired and needed a hearing aid. Rishabh had friends who understood him and could easily interpret his words and were sensitive towards him. He was part of their team in sports and class projects. His impairment did not matter to them as they had grown used to it. But there were other instances that showed that children did discriminate, even if it was not intentional. Sneha, about whom I mentioned before, sat alone during lunch hour every day and was not part of any team during sports. On talking to her peers, I found out that even when they tried getting close to her, she became uncomfortable and kept away. Hence, shades of subtle discrimination could be seen.

### ***What CWSN Feel and Know***

Sonal has a learning disability and retention problem. During group projects, she is given the "easiest" task of collecting pictures. She realises that her classmates think that she is "not good enough" to do anything else. But she also knows that she is a good dancer, and when it comes to co-curricular activities, she will be taken as part of the group. Yet, these subtle forms of

discrimination hurt her, and she does not share her feelings with her parents or teachers as she feels they might worry too much. Also, though the parallel class with fewer students has helped her build a special bond with her English teacher, she stills vies to be in the regular class.

For children like Sonal, being part of inclusive settings is tough, while for children like Sneha, it becomes even worse because their disability gets more clearly visible. Being treated as an equal by schoolteachers and the school staff or being handled with more sensitivity such as being made to participate in the school annual day does not address what these children go through on a daily basis.

The principal mentioned that the school does intervene when they feel that a child is being discriminated against by his/her peers and teachers hold discussions in classes to address such issues. The principal also mentioned that while children without special needs do return to the school and feel gratitude for having been exposed an inclusive setting, those with special needs never come back and share if they had a good time during their schooling.

## **Conclusion**

The debate on inclusive education is never-ending. We are yet to define what inclusion really means. Who decides what inclusion is? Who should be included and who should be excluded? Is it about children being marginalised due to their socio-economic background, cognitive challenges, physical challenges, or something else? As mentioned earlier, there are various policies existing, but their implementation is not carried out as expected. Most teachers and parents that I spoke with felt that policymakers should see what is happening at the ground level instead of taking a top-down approach. Large classroom sizes are making it difficult for schools to manage inclusion, and this is hampering the progress of both the CWSN and their peers. An ideal student–teacher ratio for having inclusion would be 10:1. Additionally, NIOS should also be given more weightage for college admissions compared to SSC board results, so that children are not pressurised into giving SSC exams only.

Teachers felt that they lacked sufficient training and that if they knew how to work with CWSN, it would benefit other students as well. Both pre-service training during a Bachelor of Education (BEd) and in-service training would add to both their knowledge and teaching practices. This would also help them to strike a balance between supporting CWSN and letting them

become independent rather than being over-sympathetic towards them. Moreover, teachers feel that they themselves have to figure out teaching-learning materials for CWSN rather than just using those that are already easily accessible or available.

Parents and peers are an important aspect of inclusive education. Parents of both CWSN and their peers need to be oriented and sensitised towards the needs of CWSN. Having counselors and special educators should be mandatory for all schools, and if there is a dearth of them, then schools should tie up with non-governmental organisations or other schools in the vicinity to ensure that their students receive additional support both inside and outside school boundaries.

Even with all these suggestions, there are certain questions we need to continuously engage with. Is it a good idea to have inclusion, i.e., children with learning difficulties, low socio-economic backgrounds, and physical disabilities, all in one classroom? What are the biggest barriers to inclusion? What types of interventions are needed? Where do you draw the line between being supportive and making the child dependent? For children such as Sneha, Sonal, or Rishabh, scoring even a 60% in the SSC is quite ambitious, and this will not necessarily ensure them admission in a good college or enable them to do what all their other classmates will do once they pass out. So will they not be excluded once again from the mainstream education system? Do children like them really have a great childhood by being locationally included but socially excluded? Are we really ready for inclusion as a society? Would we be fine with having “teachers with special needs” in our schools?

After talking to teachers, parents, principals, special educators, counselors and other experts, as well as children, I have come to understand that children with mild to moderate cognitive disabilities can be part of mainstream classrooms, even though they would need a lot of support. Children with moderate to high challenges would, however, need special care and attention, and if they are part of a mainstream classroom, they might not only burden their teachers and peers but also not benefit from being part of the mainstream. Hence, for special cases, we do need to have special education. This special education can be provided within the mainstream school system so as to help CWSN to socialise with the “real” world rather than staying protected all their lives.

I would like to conclude by saying what one of the teachers told me during an interview: “There are practical issues for inclusion or even integration, but we are not ready to give up.” With this positive attitude and mindset, there

---

is hope that inclusion will benefit all involved, if not today, then maybe at a later stage. After all, schools and society are a reflection of each other, and to change one, the other needs to change as well.

## End Notes

<sup>1</sup> “Normal” refers to neurotypical children since that is the word generally used by schools in different communications.

## References

- Cochran, H K (1997): “The Development and Psychometric Analysis of the Scale of Teachers` Attitudes Inclusion”, Doctoral Dissertation, The University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa.
- Hodkinson, A and C Devarakonda (2009): “Conceptions of Inclusion and Inclusive Education: A Critical Examination of the Perspectives and of Teachers in India”, *Research in Education*, 82: 85–99.
- Kumar, S and K Kumar (2007): “Inclusive Education in India”, *The Electronic Journal of Inclusive Education*, Wright State University; 2(2): 1–16.
- Singal, N (2005a): “Responding to Difference: Policies to Support ‘Inclusive Education` in India”, paper presented at the Inclusive and Supportive Education Congress 2005, University of Strathclyde, Glasgow.
- Singh, V and A Ghai (2009): “Notions of Self: Lived Realities of Children with Disabilities”, *Disability and Society*, 24(2): 129–45.





*Perspectives and  
Practices*



# TOWARDS A RIVERINE PHILOSOPHY: THE GANGES IN ECOLOGICAL CRISIS

SHRISHTEE  
BAJPAI

## Abstract

A sacred river is destroyed and polluted despite the injunctions in *dharma*, reflecting decaying countenance of *adharmā*. Secular discourses have marred the sacred by deeming it irrational and have disassociated it from nature. In spite of programmes and funds, the Ganges still runs polluted. This paper focuses on understanding the reason for the above contradiction by delving into the philosophy of deep ecology. It calls for urgent re-orientation of mindsets and a radical transformation of practices.

## Introduction

This article examines the paradox of how a river that is considered sacred and is revered throughout the country is also subjected to deep ecological crises by the populace. I attempt to articulate the Hindu philosophy surrounding the Ganges. I also explore possibilities of rethinking the philosophy of water in light of its natural and sacred histories. This article looks at the ecological crises of the river in terms of physical and socio-physical aspects (Stone 1972). Such a focus appeals for radical behavioural changes, a logic that goes beyond just institutional changes. It calls for changes in the entire logic of how nature is perceived and involves an ethical transformation. It does not go into the institutional aspects for resolving ecological crises of the river but examines the need for a focus on socio-physical aspects.

First, the essay gives an account of the Hindu philosophy of river Ganges, looking at how Ganges emerged as a goddess in Hindu tradition. It traces the divinity and sacredness surrounding the river and what Hindu philosophy offers us when we think about ecological justice for the river. Second, it deals with the intersection of sacred and secular discourses and how ecological crises get manifested in these discourses. Here, an ecological crisis is understood both from the perspective of actual pollution and damming of the river and the water laws in India. Finally, it provides an account of how deep ecology

---

*Shrishtee Bajpai has a Master's degree in Development from Azim Premji University. Currently, she is working as Research Associate- Alternative practices and Visions in India, with Kalpavriksh- Environment Action Group, Pune. She can be reached at shrishtee.bajpai13@apu.edu.in.*

and Hindu philosophy can help us rethink the way Ganges is represented and provide a recourse away from the modern, secular discourse.

When discussing the sacred and secular discourses, I have only dealt with Hinduism and not with any other religion. The essay invokes religion not in a politicised manner but uses its legitimacy among the people to revamp the way ecological crises are manifested in India. I have tried to imagine an alternative mode of thinking about the river so that ecological justice is ensured for it.

## **Hindu Philosophy of Ganges**

In the Hindu tradition, Ganges is referred to as a goddess. David Kinsley (1998) notes that in the Hindu tradition most rivers are regarded as goddesses. The river holds an eminent place in the Hindu tradition and has the largest number of pilgrimage sites on its banks. There are many mythical stories around the origin of the Ganges. The oldest of all them is about the restoration of the 60,000 sons of King Sagara. The lineage of King Sagara was dull-witted, and in the process of searching for their father's horse, they disturbed sage Kapila. In anger, Kapila burned all of them to ashes and ruined the entire kingdom. Descendants of Sagara, in spite of various ascetic efforts, were unable to reinstate their incinerated forefathers. It was only when the saintly Bhagiratha, the great great great grandson of King Sagara, went to the Himalayas and did penance for centuries that the Ganges appeared in bodily form and granted his wish to come down to earth and moisten the ashes of Sagara's 60,000 sons. But there had to be someone or something to control the river otherwise it would destroy the earth. Siva was persuaded to receive the Ganges and control it by taking it on his head. It was believed that the mighty fall of the river could only be controlled in the tangles of Siva's hair. In Siva's hair, the Ganges got tempered and divided into many streams and flowed in different directions, sanctifying the areas through which it flowed. The main artery of the Ganges moistened the ashes of Sagara's sons, who were purified and freed to make their journeys in their father's land.

There are various other stories surrounding the emergence of the river Ganges. For instance, it is believed that the Ganges emerged from Lord Vishnu's foot. In another version, it is believed that Vishnu entered Brahma's pot that contained the Ganges, after listening to a sublime song of praise, and in turn sacralised the river.

These myths surrounding the river Ganges signify the sacredness and divinity of the river. Her association with important male deities such as Brahma,

Vishnu, and Mahesh makes her even more sacred and adds weight to the myth that the Ganges emerges from heaven and is divine. The Ganges in its physical form is merely one aspect of its divinity and is just one form of the cosmic river. The myths suggest that river's divinity and sacredness is transcendental.

Another important aspect that explains the reverence for rivers in the Hindu tradition as sacred and divine is the belief in the purifying ability of Ganges. Water, in the Hindu tradition, is believed to have an intrinsic characteristic of cleaning pollution and impurities (Kinsley 1998). There is a strong belief that the motion of water can remove the impurities of the world and the sins of human beings. A mere sprinkling of water drops can remove impurities, so when it comes to a sacred river like the Ganges, it is believed that the river can cleanse the entire world (Alley 2007). The reverence for the river is based on the idea that the mightiness of the river is beyond mere impurities of this world and that it would remain uncontaminated by the pollution on the earth. In fact, when descending from the heaven, the river washes away all the accumulated impurities on the earth. The Ganges, alongwith other rivers like Yamuna and Cauvery, is believed to be purifying the earth and its inhabitants for centuries, making these rivers highly revered.

The Ganges is preeminent among all the sacred rivers. Various hymns glorifying the river repeatedly emphasise the purifying powers of the river. The *Agni Purana* explains that bathing in the Ganges is an experience similar to being in heaven—it purifies the soul and cleanses the body. To die, while being immersed in the Ganges is regarded as resulting in the attainment of *moksha*, the ultimate spiritual liberation (Nelson 1998). The *Brihaddharma Purana* has a story glorifying the Ganges in which a sinful merchant is excused for his sinful activities because he lived with a merchant who used to bathe in the Ganges (Kinsley 1998). The *Mahabhagavata Purana* tells the story of a robber who was sentenced to death and sent to jail but eventually attained *moksha* and reached heaven because he ate a jackal who drank the water of the Ganges (Nelson 1998). The Ganges is considered as an intermediary between heaven and the earth. She is a continuous liquid that connects both the worlds and creates a pure relationship between them.

In the Hindu tradition, the Ganges is also regarded as *tirtha*, a sacred place for crossing over from one place to another, allowing for a movement from earthly realities to divine spaces. The Ganges is believed to be a space that facilitates such divine transcendence, which is unconditioned in the conditioned human existence (Nelson 1998). The Ganges is assumed to flow

into three worlds (Triloka–Patha–Gamini), a liquid connecting all spheres with reality and providing a sphere where one can transcend from one world to another or transcend human limitations. As Diana Eck writes “It is because the Ganga descended in her avatarana that she is a place of ascent as a tirtha” (Eck 1982). The currents and the rhythm of the river originate from heaven by coming into contact with gods like Vishnu and Siva. Her divinity connects human beings with divinity and moistens the earth with heavenly waters.

The Ganges has redemptive and liberating powers. It is believed that pouring few drops of the river’s water in the mouth of a dying person can result in ultimate liberation. It is believed that dying near the banks of the river will lead to redemption. Varanasi is a fascinating site to observe this—people in thousands throng to the city in the belief that the Ganges can provide a comfortable and accessible space to transcend the bondage of life on earth to liberation in heaven (Alley 2007). Varanasi is considered to be Siva’s universe as well as the beginning and the end of human civilisation. Ganges is Siva’s co-wife, and this highlights the power associated with the river and the reverence for it in Hinduism. Feldhaus notes that rivers and mountains are considered as sacred in India, which is why most pilgrimage sites are located close to rivers and mountains.

The river Ganges is viewed as sacred because of two primary reasons: first, it has the generative power of a mother; second, it has the power to purify. The poet *Jannatha* who was an outcast and declared impure by everyone in the community for falling in love with a Muslim girl writes in reverence for the river Ganges for accepting him and enveloping him in her womb, when everyone left him.

I come to you as a child to his mother.

I come as an orphan to you, moist with love.

I come without refuge to you, giver of sacred rest.

I come a fallen man to you, uplifter of all.

I come undone by disease to you, the perfect physician.

I come, my heart dry with thirst, to you, ocean of  
sweet wine. Do with me whatever you will.

### **Intersection of Sacred and Secular Discourses on the Ganges**

This section examines the ecological crises surrounding the river Ganges in light of sacred and secular discourses. This will compel us to look at a revised conception of the self that derives from Arne Naess’s (1989) deep ecology

and enable us to deconstruct the restoration techniques adopted for cleaning the Ganges.

“Sacred is referred to as classification of things, persons and places involving regulation of behaviour or to qualities emanating from those things themselves or to an experience of state of mind marked by characteristics such as awe, astonishment, fear etc.” (Ivakhiv 2005). It transcends all expectations and rational capacities; it is beyond rational calculations and gives a sense of divinity. Sacred is considered as some transcendental reality, something that is supernatural or divine and is confronted by religion (Evans 2003). It conveys a complex and dynamic relationship with something that is beyond the imaginable reach of human beings. It is a complex set of feelings comprising fear as well as admiration. Sacredness permeates beyond the reach of an individual and encourages the subordination of the individual or self-interests (Evans 2003). It expands the horizons within which man exists and puts him in contact with the life forces that connect him to the universe. There is a sense of awe and ecstatic joy that a man experiences in the sacred.

Modernisation has delinked and disarticulated the previously established spaces of religion and sacredness and has individualised the notion of religion. Religion has become a distinct domain, separate from the scientific, political, juridical, and other spaces of modern life (Ivakhiv 2005). Postmodernisation has exacerbated these trends and, in fact, offers religion as a product in the marketplace. In such a scenario, individual spirituality gets extremely diffused.

Against this backdrop, how does one understand what has gone wrong with the river Ganges? Why does the river suffer from deep ecological crises? What can be done to restore the river? Can we get answers from Hindu philosophy by seeing it through the lens of deep ecology?

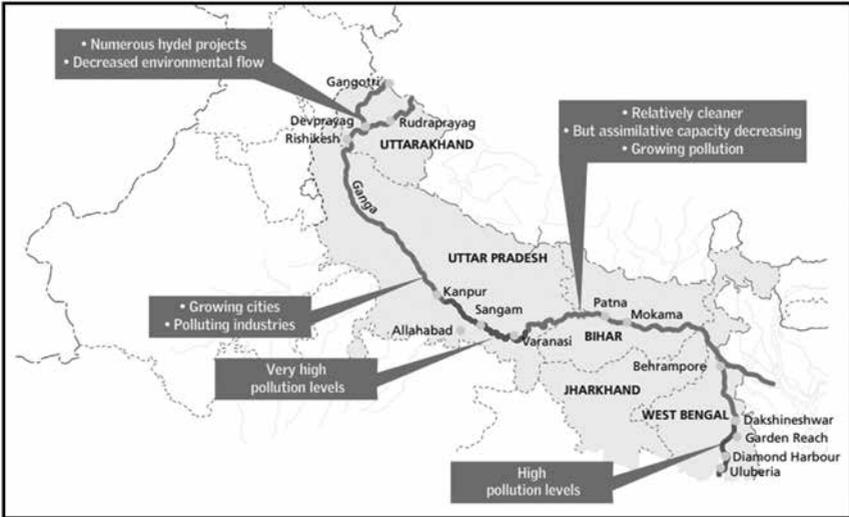
### ***Ecological Crises of the River Ganges***

In spite of the high reverence and sacredness associated with the river, the Ganges has become a site of ecological degradation notably because of excessive pollution and damming of the river. A recent report published by the Centre for Science and Environment suggests that there are three central problems associated with the pollution of the river Ganges:

- The inadequate flow of water into the river.
- The exponential quantum of untreated waste and sewage dumped in the river.

- Lack of enforcement against the industries that are the source of excessive pollution in the river.

The Ganges passes through five states, covers 26% of the land mass of the country, is heavily dammed in the upper reaches, and is excessively polluted in the plains. The map below gives an account of the physical flow of the river. This article elucidates the river's ecological crises along this physical flow.



Source: (Narain 2014).

Due to excessive damming along the Ganges, the river suffers from inadequate flow of water along its course. According to various reports, the Ganges is in serious threat by the 600 dams that are either operational or under construction. Dams affect the natural flow of the river and have a cascading effect on the marine life and biodiversity of the river as well as the entire natural system around it. There is also the danger of flooding in the downstream areas. Damming requires water diversion, and the diversion of the Ganges water has resulted in reduced surface and ground water, and has reduced the salinity of the river.

The first Ganga Action Plan launched in 1986 by Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi had one main objective—the abatement of pollution of the river Ganges. The second phase of the project expanded the plan to other tributaries of Ganga—Yamuna, Damodar, and Gomti (Narain 2014). The main sources of pollution of the river as reported by the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) are urban liquid sewage waste, industrial liquid waste, and solids and liquids

from practices such as bathing, washing and immersing dead bodies in the river (Alley 2007). Water quality is determined in terms of four parameters: (i) dissolved oxygen (permissible limit: 5mg/l; actual: 7mg/l), (ii) biological oxygen demand (permissible limit: 3mg/l; actual: 12–14mg/l), (iii) chemical oxygen demand (permissible limit: 250mg/l; actual: >250mg/l), (iv) faecal coliform (permissible limit: 500–2,500 MPN/100 ml; actual: 88,000 MPN/100 ml). This data suggests that the pollution level in the river Ganges is alarming as it has crossed its threshold (Kiran 2012 ).

M C Mehta, an environmental lawyer and activist, filed a writ petition in 1985, alleging that despite existing legal codes and rules, the government has not taken significant steps to curb the pollution of the river. Mehta used a judicial remedy, mandamus, to prevent the municipal corporation and state leather tanneries of Kanpur from disposing harmful domestic and industrial effluents in the river (Alley 2007).

About 30 million dead bodies are burnt on the banks of the river in Varanasi alone in just two ghats, resulting in the generation of 100 tonnes of ashes every month. All this gets directly deposited in the river. Half burnt bodies and animal carcasses are also dumped into the river, increasing the siltation, weed growth, and generation of pathogenic bacteria and fungi (Ahmed 1990). According to the CPCB, 2,723 million litre sewage is generated every day in 50 cities located along the banks of the Ganges, and this adds to 85% of the river`s pollution. Various existing sewage treatment plants are not functional, with their treatment capacity being inadequate or very poor. In 2013, the CPCB inspected 51 out of 64 treatment plants and found that 60% of them did not have the required treatment capacity and 30% of them were completely non-functional. The problem also lies with the underestimation of sewage treatment, which is why the treatment capacity falls short of the requisite (Narain 2014). For example, the actual discharge of water is 6,087 MLD, which is 123% higher than the estimated discharge of water. In most of the major cities through which the river passes, such as, Varanasi, Kanpur, and Allahabad, there are no proper drainage systems with 75% of the waste directly draining into the river (Narain 2014). The Kanpur–Varanasi stretch is the most polluting and contributes majorly in the river`s pollution. About 2,000 MLD waste water is discharged into the river, which is almost half of its total load. BOD (Biochemical Oxygen Demand) load is also highest in this stretch and together adds up to 94% of the total BOD load of the river, and this load is contributed by just 33 major drains in this stretch (Narain 2014). The river bleeds in these stretches because these cities do not have proper sewerage networks. The Ganga Action Plan has drastically failed

due to various reasons including exponential population stress, power cuts, and lack of funds with the municipal corporations to even run the existing systems. As a result, cities like Kanpur that have an installed capacity of 217 MLD actually discharge 417 MLD of waste, with actual major outfall of 600 MLD (Narain 2014).

The next major cause of pollution is the huge amount of industrial waste dumped in the river. Small-scale industries dump huge amounts of toxic and noxious chemical wastes into the river. The major crises arise because these industries lack enough funds to establish adequate technologies to deal with the pollution. Uttar Pradesh itself generates 764 MLD of industrial waste and 501 MLD of waste water. Excessive pollution has brutally hampered the flora and fauna of the river as well as its entire natural system, making this sacred river unfit for even reasonable usage.

The Ganges is the river that is excessively dammed and as a result has dried up. In the upper reaches of the country, the Ganges is a playground for engineers. About 70 projects have been proposed on the river to extract 9,000 megawatt of energy (Mirza 2005). The key tributaries will be modified in building these projects through diversions into channels and reservoirs. This means the flow of the river will be modified or re-engineered, which holds the risk of the river turning into an engineered drain without enough water. This issue has a major concern because authorities are not concerned about the ecological flow of the river and are ready to utilise every single drop and suck the river dry. Any opposition to such projects is always looked at in terms of financial and energy losses. Nobody is concerned about the ecological flow of the river, the ecosystem of the river, and the availability of the river for the crucial purpose of sustainable living. The inter-ministerial committee headed by B K Chaturvedi recommended that 30% of the ecological flow needs to be maintained, but less than 10% is provided as the ecological flow in the design of hydroelectric projects (Narain 2014).

The ecological crisis elucidated above is viewed differently by sacred and secular discourses. The problem lies in the way degeneracy is viewed in sacred and secular discourses, which results in somewhat contradictory and perplexing trajectories in mitigating the problem.

Sunderlal Bahugana has been a key figure protesting against the Tehri Dam construction and commercial forestry, fighting for the protection of a sacred environment (Alter 2001). He argues that the Industrial Revolution has led to a moral degeneracy of the society, where markets, technocrats, and experts are like priests in modern temples. Shiva has pointed out, “Temples

of ancient India were substituted by dams, built to cater to capitalists and industrialist to acquire western water management” (Shiva 1989). Declining respect for traditional rituals and the idolatrous propagation of religion has withered away the sacredness of the river.

The ideas of sacred purity and cleanliness are sometimes interchangeably used and, at the same time, also possess varied interpretations. What Brahmin priests mean when they talk in these terms is very different from what government officials mean. Impurity and ablution of the the world `s impurity refers to a concept of transcendental impurity in Hinduism, whereas pollution refers to physical impurities (Alley 2007). Therefore, as per Hindu philosophy, the Ganges may enter a temporary state of uncleanliness but still remain pure. The *Siva Purana* make numerous references to proper conduct in relation to the river, for instance, prescribing that people conduct their everyday activities such as brushing of teeth, spitting, and defecation at a distance away from river banks. While sacred texts have such broad prescriptions, everyday behaviour does not conform to these in each and every case. To meet the categorical ideals, it becomes important for governments and authorities to mend the disorderly nature of managing these practices (Alley 2007).

Puja and pilgrimage are not tied to civic ethics or the physical effects that they may produce. Colonial laws were devoid of scientific measures, and were thus inadequate, whereas modern laws used in global environmental protection and conservation projects have relied on a more rational model of legal system. Alley (2007) argues that the immense stress on technical solutions to clean the Ganges has led to a disenchantment among the *sadhus* and *sanths* regarding the cleaning of the river. Bureaucratic, scientific, and technocratic solutions devised for waste management have led to a complete disillusionment among the religious communities (Alley 2007).

Mawdsley (2005) argues that even religion has acquired political connotations. The opposition of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) towards the Tehri Dam is based on political grounds and is not about protecting the sacredness of the river. The VHP argued that if the Tehri Dam collapsed, it would kill thousands of Hindu pilgrims and residents. This kind of mobilisation is problematic because it leads to obscuring the ecological crises surrounding the river (Mawdsley 2005). She claims that ideological manipulation can badly hamper the success of environmental movements.

Thus, in the light of the preceding discussion, we see that corrupt religious, cultural, and political practices (of the secular world) have diluted the divinity and sacredness of the river, and this dilution has then resulted in

the pollution of the river. Confusion between ritual impurity and material dirtiness affects in the way the Ganges is polluted and the way that pollution is viewed. The morality and ethics in the Hindu tradition have gone through considerable changes and due to a simultaneous process of modernisation and industrialisation, the concepts of purity and impurity (linked with sacredness) have lost their significance. Ritual impurity is different from pollution and this difference gets lost in modern discourses.

### *Water Laws in India and Crises*

The section briefly discusses the inherent discrepancies in water laws in India to exemplify the crises surrounding the river Ganges.

The colonial British government used the domain of law to expand its power over natural resources. Colonial authorities tried to complicate indigenous rules of management of water resources. Colonial law was based on an inadequate understanding of indigenous rules, was divorced from Indian life, and played the role of legitimising British rule (Galanter 1989). Religious interpretations by colonial officials created strong distinctions between the sacred and the secular. To assert the civil order over the divine order, the interpretations adopted by colonial officers were biased towards legitimising the former. Alley (2007) alerts us to how technologies of objectification and the domain of law were used by the British to expand their power over the resources of ruled communities. The British gained control over the knowledge of indigenous systems and resources and used rationality to settle the disputes and access rights. Knowledge exerted its own disciplinary intentions and administrative control over natural resources, such as the Ganges, was normalised (Alley 2007).

The decision makers and managers through their constituents such as the ministries of environment and forests, water resources, and urban development; pollution control boards, and water quality assessment authorities have tried to mitigate the damage to the river but not incorporated democratic decision-making and processes or participatory functioning. The emphasis is solely on the infrastructure and finances and not the governance-related component of river management or an assessment of the role of communities whose lives are completely dependent on the river. So even the idea of treatment plants that are functional has not been implemented. There is no mention of the river as an entity that should be involved in the decision-making process. The National Ganga River Basin Authority (NGRBA), which was initiated in 2009 by the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government, makes no mention of

the hydropower projects that are built on the river.

There is no legal or institutional mechanism in India to ensure that when these projects are built, the perennial flow of the river is maintained. The Ministry of Environment and Forests has no policy that takes care of the preservation of rivers and ensures that fresh water flow is maintained in the river. No development policies in India have ever focused on improving the conditions of rivers and maintaining their ecosystems. The National Water Policy accords maintaining ecosystems as its fourth priority but the policy is fraught with contradictions, for instance, water is supposed to be diverted to the areas where there is a water shortage. With these persistent inherent contradictions, it becomes extremely tedious to think of a policy scenario that will talk for the legal rights of rivers.

### **Hinduism, Deep Ecology, and Restoration of the Ganges**

This article is an attempt to draw out a philosophical understanding of the ecological crises of the river Ganges. I will now draw upon Arne Naess's (1989) concept of deep ecology and its connection with Hinduism and see how it helps us to understand the philosophical implications of what is currently happening to the Ganges. This section attempts to articulate the view that the Ganges is not merely an object but an assembly of references connecting humans and the world.

Deep ecology is the central idea of *ecocentrism*, according to which intrinsic importance should be given to nature. The central idea is that the bio-rights of species and unique landscapes should remain unmolested. The deep ecology movement shows a lack of faith in modern large-scale technology and its associated demands on expertise and anti-democratic institutions. It believes materialism for its own sake is wrong and the idea that economic growth can be geared to provide for the basic needs of those below subsistence levels is false (Rothenberg 1989).

The concepts of self-realisation and identification are core components of the deep ecological movement. Identification is a part of self-realisation, the process that leads to the creation of the ecological self. Christian Diehm's (2007) idea of "identification as kinship" can help us understand the bio-spherical net of intrinsic relations with nature.

A model of nature where we fully exist with awe and reverence for the world around us will help develop and articulate basic human intuitions about the nature. According to Naess (1989), the perspectives and means of reaching

an agreement should not be lost in oneness. The environmental movement will be successful if a concise set of principles can be shown to be derived out of a variety of worldviews and backgrounds. The norm of self-realisation should not be limited to one's ego but should extend to an understanding of the widest self and include all (Naess 1989). Self-realisation does not have to necessarily be self-centred. This self-realisation can also derive from the Hindu philosophy that holds reverence for nature. Sacred manifestation of the restoration of the Ganges can possibly help us transform the way we think about the Ganges per se. A self-realising individual would be a unit of survival and that unit of survival would be an organism in its environment. If the environment fails to survive, so does the individual. A local environment could in itself be a self-realising system and in turn be part of a larger self-realising system. This would involve delving into the concept of the self-realising individual and also the intrinsic value that such an individual holds (Naess 1989).

This understanding of the self then sees destruction of nature as self-destruction. Mathews (1991) argues that when we expand our self, we realise that when we destroy the environment, we actually destroy our own self. This leads us to the basic element of deep ecology that we have certain duties towards nature and that nature is entitled to moral *consideration* (Sprigge 1992). This moral consideration comes from the understanding that "this river has some tendency to act so as to preserve itself", and is henceforth entitled to moral consideration (Mathews 1991).

Hinduism gives us a fertile ground to think about the restoration of the Ganges. Chapple (2000) notes that Hindu religion is based on *karma* and individual ego, viewing purification in terms of harmony with the natural world. The normative values in the Hindu tradition are not just centred on human beings but include all sentient beings and inanimate things such as rivers and mountains (Bilimoria 1998). The principle guiding outlook of the Hindu tradition is that the highest good is identified in a harmonious relationship with the natural world and cosmic order. The moral order should correlate with the natural order to attain meaning in life and make self-realisation possible. Both *Atharva Veda* and *Rig Veda* elucidate the intrinsic value and moral standing of all beings and the natural world. From uniqueness of the world to the complex understanding of the unique whole, they emphasise the mystical and magical interdependence of everything on everything else (Bilimoria 1998). This suggests that Hinduism has been intricately connected with the central concerns of the deep ecology movement. Something acquires sacredness when elements, species, or bio-organisms make contributions to

fulfil the larger scheme of things and therefore become elements of moral consideration (Dobson 1992).

The Ganges is sacred but this gets contradicted in the scientific ecology that considers it as a mere object (Mary Evelyn Tucker 2002). Divinity associated with the river marks her as a goddess who possesses the power to purify, nurture this world, and embody the whole world. However, such a moral consciousness is seen as falling into the ambit of irrationality in secular traditions. As mentioned earlier, the *Siva Purana* gives various references for conduct near water bodies and directs people to distance human activities away from the river and thus highlights the spatial benchmark that needs to be maintained to keep uncleanness away from the river (Alley 2007).

This objectification of nature has acquired a dominant position in modern discourses. Bruno Latour (2009) notes that scientists by understanding the laws of the non-human, non-animal world act as mediators between nature and society. This gives them the authority to represent the mute nature when humans are perplexed about nature (Latour 2009). In the discourse of industrialisation and modernisation, damming and pollution of the river are understood in very distinct terms and the Ganges is recognised only as a natural object. For engineers building the Tehri Dam, the Ganges is merely an object of the project, and they are concerned only with the economic viability of the project.

What is essential is that thinking about rivers should come first before human needs. Technologies and management of the river should stem from rootedness of place and religion. Thus there is a need to reorient the ways in which we are currently thinking about the environment. The virtues of technological largesse have acquired a central position, and it is now time for us to think over environmental ethics and inculcate ecological values to resolve the plethora of modern environmental crises that secular India is facing.

The article has examined the reasons for the paradox as to why in spite of high reverence for the river Ganges, it is still highly polluted. It has traced the sacredness and profanity associated with the river in Hindu philosophy and tried to show that despite the sacredness associated with the river, secular discourses have tainted the ecology of the river. I have shown how in the changing world, challenges of industrialisation, modernity, globalisation, and a rapidly expanding liberalised economy have hampered the way the Ganges is understood. The article suggests that the Ganges has been subjected to ecological injustice, and to mitigate this, institutions need to internalise the

idea of deep ecology that resonates with Hindu philosophy. This would mean that institutions are imbued with the idea of ecological justice and that the river's intrinsic value is recognised by the institutions.

## References

- Ahmed, S (1990): "Cleaning the Ganga: Rhetoric and Reality", *Ambio*, 19(1): 42–44.
- Alley, K D (2007): *On the Banks of the Ganga* (Michigan: University of Michigan).
- Alter, S. (2001 ): *Sacred Waters: A Pilgrimage up the Ganges Rivers to the Source of Hindu* (New York : Harcourt, Inc.).
- Arnold, D (1989): "The Ecology and Cosmology of Disease in the Banaras Region", in S B Freitag (ed), *Culture and Power in Banaras: Community, Performance, and Environment, 1800–1980*, (Berkeley: University of California Press), pp. 246–67.
- Bilimoria, P (1998): "Environmental Ethics of Indian Religious Traditions", in D E Cooper and J A Palmer (ed), *Spirit of the Environment: Religion, Value, and Environmental Concern* (London: Routledge), pp. 1–14.
- Chapple, C K (2000): *Hinduism and Ecology: The Intersection of Earth, Sky, and Water* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press).
- Diehm, C (2007): "Identification with Nature: What It Is and Why It Matters", *Ethics and the Environment* , 12(2): 1–22.
- Dobson, A (1992): *Justice and the Environment*. (Oxford: Oxford University pressPress).
- Eck, D (1982): *Banaras: City of Light* (Columbia: Columbia University Press).
- Evans, M T (2003 ): "The Sacred: Differentiating, Clarifying and Extending Concepts", *Review of Religious Research*, 45(1): 32–47.
- Feldhaus, A (1995): *Water and Womanhood: Religious Meanings of Rivers in Maharashtra* (New York: Oxford University Press).
- Galanter, M (1989): *Law and Society in India* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press).
- Hammad, S (1992): *Development of Varanasi Sewerage System and Prevention of Pollution to River Ganga*. Varanasi: A seminar on Pollution Control of River Cities of India.
- Ivakhiv, A (2005): "Toward a Geography of 'Religion': Mapping the Distribution of an Unstable Signifier", *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 96(1): 169–75.
- Kinsley, D (1998): "Learning the Story of the Land: Reflections on the Liberating Power of Geography and Pilgrimage in Hindu Tradition", in D Kinsley, *Purifying the Earthly Body of God: Religion and Ecology in Hindu India* (Albany: State University of New York Press), p. 231.
- Kiran, R (2012 ): *Case Study on River Ganges*. Retrieved from Slide Share: <http://www.slideshare.net/naarakshashi/case-study-on-the-river-ganga-by-ism-ravi-kiran-jp>
- Latour, B (2009): *Politics of Nature* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press).

- 
- Mary Evelyn Tucker, C K (2002): “Hinduism and Ecology: The Intersection of Earth, Sky, and Water”, *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 122(4): 925–27.
- Mathews, F (1991): “Value in Nature and Meaning in Life”, in F Mathews, *The Ecological Self* (Great Britain: Routledge), pp. 82–115 .
- Mawdsley, E (2005): “Vishwa Hindu Parishad and Tehri Dam”, *Worldviews: Environment, Culture, Religion*, 9(1): 1–24.
- Mirza, M M (2005): *The Ganges Water Diversion: Environmental Effects and Implications* (United States of America: Kluwer Academic Publishers).
- Naess, A (1989): *Ecology, Community and Lifestyle* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).
- Narain, S (2014): *Ganga: The River, Its Pollution and What We Can Do to Clean It* (New Delhi: Centre for Science and Environment).
- Nelson, L E (1998): *Purifying the Earthly Body of God* (Albany: State University of New York Press).
- Rothenberg, D (1989): “Introduction: Ecosophy T—from Intuition to System”, in A Naess (ed), *Ecology, Community and Lifestyle*(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), pp. 1–32.
- Shiva, V (1989): *Staying Alive: Women, Ecology and Development* (London: Zed Books).
- Sprigge, T (1992): “Review of Ecological Self”, *Environmental Values*, 365.
- Stone, C D (1972). “Should Trees Have Standing? Towards Legal Rights of Natural Objects”, in C D Stone, *The Unthinkable* (New York: S.CAI), pp. 3–57.
- Thakkar, H (2012): *The People, Piety, Pollution and Politics of Ganga* (New Delhi: Civil society).





## Abstract

Globalisation has paved way to a new form of dependency between the developed and developing worlds. The power relations between the west and non-west has experienced a shift; the power of the developed world over the developing world is no longer overtly authoritarian but hegemonic. Just as in the case of a global system, there exists a core and a periphery within a nation-state itself. The global north and the core of a state share a few characters- they are repressive, exercise control over their peripheries and their modernity is brought about by exploitation of their peripheries. In this paper, I will argue that the repressive relationship between the west and the non-west persists even today but has merely taken a different form. Using James Scott`s arguments in 'Seeing like a State`, the role of the state in the exploitation of the periphery will be explored. Finally, the paper will also attempt to draw parallels between the two kinds of exploitation.

## Introduction

The historical experience of the developed and the developing world has been different insofar as the modernisation of the former depended on the colonial past of the latter (Frank 1969). Resources extracted from the colonies fueled the industrial modernity of the West; this exploitation for the purpose of modernity has been a norm. The imperial powers, which can be seen as the core of industrialisation and modernisation, exploited the periphery, which essentially comprised the colonies.

Although dependency theory is no longer a part of the current development discourse, it makes an important argument—the developed nations were never underdeveloped and underdevelopment is an appendage, a very active one at that, of capitalism. Underdevelopment is thus an economic state that is constructed. Dependency theory argues that a mere transfer of capital to the developing world would be of no benefit as the developing world

---

*Nisha graduated from Azim Premji University with a Masters in Development degree in 2016. She currently works as Research and Communications officer in Arghyam. Her areas of interests include forest rights, land rights and socio-cultural anthropology.*

has features unique to itself and structurally different from the developed world. A global economy has paved the way for a new dynamics between states and within a state, wherein the global economy engages with the most isolated regions of the world in a hegemonic relationship. In the context of this system, I argue that the repressive relationship between the West and the non-West persists even today but has merely taken a different form.

The core and periphery exist not only in relation to nations but also within them. Resources are extracted from forests and the population that survives within these forests is ousted or denied of resources even for subsistence. This is just one of the many ways in which the core within a polity exploits its periphery. This article also argues that the state plays an active role in the exploitation of the periphery in myriad ways.

### **North and South in a Global Economy**

Globalisation has paved the way to a new form of dependency between the developed and developing worlds. There has been a shift in the power relations between the West and the non-West, with the power of the developed world over the developing world being no longer overtly authoritarian but hegemonic in nature. There are two main angles one could explore to understand this in greater depth—first, mode of production and, second, the nature of international relations.

Post industrialisation, nations have become deeply interconnected through a new mode of production, which is essentially embodied in corporations. Multinational corporations facilitate a bridge between the global and the local (James 1997). Previously, capital, land, and labour belonged to a country and the resources moved from one place to another (from the periphery to the core). In today's world, investments are directly made in the developing world where the resources, labour, and land are present. Deindustrialisation in the West has allowed capital to pull itself out from there and relocate in the Third World where the costs of production are cheaper. At the same time, the conditions of work are also poor in the Third World, which is connected to cost-cutting measures. There are countless examples of this in developing countries such as India, China, and Bangladesh. The pressure for developing countries to attract foreign direct investment threatens their sovereignty due to the very nature of their relationship with the developed world. Their governments are forced to make the cost of production cheaper to attract investments.

In the forests of South Kalimantan in Indonesia, shifting cultivation, on which

the people of the region depended for their subsistence, was made illegal. However, the government diverted the forest for a logging company, which though restricted in its powers by various laws did not adhere to these loggers and was never penalised for it. There is a continuity in how resources have been viewed from the colonial period to the present times as well as in how people on the fringes are always the ones who bear the cost (Tsing 2003).

Another example would be that of the Niger Delta in 2000. The US declared that the region was fraught with militant activities; the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) concurred with the US government in saying that the impoverished ethnic groups committed acts of terror against foreigners. This is a region of high indigeneity and ethno-linguistic complexity, and, at the same time, it is economically and politically one of the most neglected regions in Nigeria. The corrupt political class has unabashedly sold drilling rights in the region to large corporations as a result of which those living in the Niger Delta have suffered a blow. One can argue that the crisis in the Niger Delta stemmed from a state-led “development” strategy (Watts 2004).

The hegemony of globalisation is mediated by international organisations such as World Bank, United Nations Development Programme, International Monetary Fund (IMF), and United Nations Environment Programme. International aid from World Bank and IMF continues the neoliberal agenda of the West. James (1997) argues that dependency is a project of subjection, and that it is in no way a passive process.

One cannot forget the sustainability discourse while discussing the hegemony of the developed world. Even though the entire world is integrated into the global economic system and irrespective of the deindustrialisation in the West, the demand by the developed nations that the developing nations should cut down on their emissions is ludicrous. The climate change debate, in particular, puts pressure on the developing nations, whereas high emitters such as the US and Australia walk away scot-free. Although the debate has come a long way since the 1990s, the trend of setting unattainable goals by nation-states needs to be kept in check.

There is global inequity in terms of access to resources, and in the context of the global market, this access can be improved only through economic growth. Economic growth would, however, require industries, which in turn would emit more greenhouse gases (GHGs). With this mode of development comes the consumerist behaviour that prevails in the West. Thus, Sachs argues that inequity can be addressed only if the affluent countries reduce their consumption and output (Sachs et al. 1998).

Thus, developing nations are strongly tied to the global market economically, culturally, and politically. While dependency theory is no longer in fashion, the structures of inequality and exploitation highlighted by it exist even today. Dependency in the global economy is masqueraded as free market, movement of capital, and “good will” of international organisations and developed nations.

### **Core and Periphery of a Nation State**

As in the case of the global system, there exists a core and a periphery within nation states as well. Historically, the modernity of the urban centres of a nation was due to the exploitation of the periphery. In a globalised world, this difference between the core and the periphery becomes starker. While some may argue that this difference is a natural consequence of the development process, others argue that this is a difference that has been one of careful orchestration. Managing the space of the city in such cases is done in such a way that certain classes of people are kept away from the core. At the same time, the city attracts migrants from villages who often settle in areas that are devoid of sanitation, clean drinking water, or electricity. While these may be at the heart of the city and surrounded by high rises, these are by far the most neglected regions of the country. Mike Davis argues that this pattern of land use resembles imperial control and that the postcolonial elites have replicated this imperial method of control to hold on to their class privileges and spatial exclusivity (Davis 2006).

Adding to the misery of slum dwellers is the illegal nature of the land they settle in, which makes them vulnerable to eviction at any point. Davis argues that the poor in core areas find themselves in constant conflict with the government. He states the case of Rio de Janeiro where slum clearance picked up pace just as the land prices rose (Davis 2006). Presence of slums in areas occupied by the affluent also stands in the way of the beautification process of the areas and hence slums are cleared from these lands. The irony here is that most of slum dwellers need to be in close proximity to the city to earn their livelihood. Gregory Davis describes the slums of Mumbai in the following way:

It seemed impossible that a modern airport, full of prosperous and purposeful travelers, was only kilometres away from those crushed and cindered dreams. My first impression was that some catastrophe had taken place, and that the slums were refugee camps for the shambling survivors. I learned, months later, that they were survivors, of course, those slum-dwellers: the catastrophes

that had driven them to the slums from their villages were poverty, famine, and bloodshed. And five thousand new survivors arrived in the city every week, week after week, year after year (Roberts 2005).

James Scott discusses one of the most gruesome evictions of all times—Haussmann’s rebuilding of Paris by evicting the urban poor. The poor were dispossessed and marginalised with little or no power for forming a satellite town (Scott 1998). The urban poor are often forced to relocate to these satellite towns that are intentionally created by the state to keep the poor from “infiltrating” affluent settlements, all the while attracting more population from the countryside (Davis 2006). An example quoted by Scott is that of Brasilia where the planned centre required the unplanned periphery for its sustenance.

Scott also says, “Whether it is a matter of clothing, philosophy, technology, or taste, the great city dominates and colonizes the provinces: the lines of influence and command are exclusively from the center to the periphery.” A case for this would be the forests of India. By keeping enclosures, the state is in a better position to control and manage the space of the forests although this happens at the cost of the livelihoods of millions of Indians. These “protected areas” and other common lands are diverted for large projects. Between 1980 and 2011, 830,000 ha of forestland was “diverted” or cleared for non-forest use by various projects (Gopalakrishnan 2012).

Thus, the state needs to differentiate between developed and underdeveloped, backward and modern. By managing different spaces within its territory, the state gains control over these areas, which then allows it to distinguish between the two. The core–periphery relationships are, more often than not, a direct result of state planning. The distinguishing factors of the core and periphery increase the legibility of the space that the state governs. In this process of simplification results in the loss of local know-how along with the development of the parasitic core.

## **A Comparison**

The global North and the core of a state share a few characteristics—they are repressive, they exercise control over their peripheries, and their modernity is brought about by the exploitation of their peripheries. In *Seeing like a State*, Scott (1998) argues that the modern state has made complex and illegible aspects of the land more simple and legible; it is a method of centralised management. One of the most important concepts Scott uses to describe the acts of a state is that of social engineering. According to him, one of the first

processes involved in social engineering is that of the administrative ordering of nature and society. Simplification achieved in this manner is applicable to both the North and the core of a nation state. The administrative ordering of nature was essentially done in the colonial period wherein the developing world was subject to the scientific experimentation of the West. Additionally, in many developing countries one can still sense a colonial management of forests and urban spaces. Administrative ordering, I believe, was made easier in a globalised world where the West exercises significant control over the developing world through capitalism and international organisations.

Similarly, as we have already seen, exercising a centrally controlled mechanism is the manner in which the state controls its spaces. While the developed world may not “centrally control” the developing world, I argue that by integrating each nation into the global economy and by making neoliberalism the universal norm, the developed world along with international organisations has achieved administrative ordering. A common feature of this central management, both national and transnational, is the loss of local know-how.

Relying extensively on science is the next step in social engineering. Western science continues to penetrate developing nations, effectively so in a globalised world. A key example here is the use of technology and increased efficiency. The West, over the years, has used technology to address the efficiency problem but has never addressed the question of consumption.

Another way in which the modern state conducts social engineering is by means of coercion. Although the West is an advocate of liberal democracy, its agendas and ideas are hegemonic. The North is not overtly coercive but uses capital and the global economy to exercise control over the South. A democratic state can never be overtly coercive but uses hegemony as a coercive weapon. We observe this time and again when a nation state justifies its acts to its citizens. Nevertheless, a state holds the ultimate power insofar as it has internal sovereignty.

A weak civil society is the final necessity for social engineering. Civil society has gained prominence in the world of today. However, I argue that in the face of the nexus between the state and large corporations, the extent of impact of civil society is simply not enough. Similarly, at a global level, the nexus civil society is faced with is between states, corporations, and international organisations. Thus the actions of the global North and of the core of nation states are comparable in their approach towards their respective peripheries. Scott’s idea of social engineering carried out by a state is essentially a manner

of simplification—through this lens, one can view the manner in which the developed world carries out social engineering in the developing world.

This article has discussed modernity and the two levels at which exploitation occurs in achieving this modernity. Viewing the two kinds of powers and their actions through the lens of James Scott is interesting because it allows us to draw a parallel between the two. The globalised economy improves the stranglehold of the core on its periphery and hence the difference between the two becomes starker. The entities discussed here are not independent, and concomitantly, the complexity of the system increases. The roles played by capital, corporations, and international organisations are all important due to the nexus they form with and between nation states. In conclusion, there is a great deal of similarity between the ways in which the global North exploits the global South and the core of a nation exploits its periphery.

## References

- Davis, M (2006): “Haussman in the Tropics,” in M. Davis, *Planet of Slums* (Verso), p. 99.
- Frank, Andre . (1969): *Latin America: Underdevelopment or Revolution* (New York: Monthly Review Press). Davis, M. (2006). Haussman in the Tropics. In M. Davis, *Planet of Slums* (p. 99). Verso.
- Gopalakrishnan, S (2012): *Undemocratic and Arbitrary: Control, Regulation and Expropriation of India’s Forest and Common Lands* (New Delhi: SPWD; Washington, DC: Rights and Resources Initiative).
- James, P (1997) “Post Dependency? The Third World in an Era of Globalism and Late Capitalism”, *Alternatives*, 22: 205–26.
- Roberts, G (2005): *Santharam* (Place: St. Martin`s Press).
- Sachs, W, R Loske, and M Linz (1998): *Greening the North* (Place: ZED Books).
- Scott, J (1998) “Cities, People, and Language”, in J Scott, *Seeing Like a State* (New Haven: Yale University Press), pp. 53–84.
- Tsing, A (2003) “Natural Resources and Capitalist Frontiers”, *Economic and Political Weekly*, 38(48): 5100–06.
- Watts, M (2004): “Petroleum Conflict and the Political Ecology of Rule in the Niger Delta, Nigeria”, in R Peet and M Watts (ed.), *Liberation Ecologies* (London: Routledge), pp. 250–72.





# *Notes*



# BUSINESS APPROACHES TO POVERTY: THE ROAD FROM CHARITY TO RESPONSIBILITY

HIMAKSHI  
PIPLANI

## Abstract

Businesses have traditionally been involved in philanthropic activities of many kinds. One of the focus of these initiatives by businesses has had to do with reduction of poverty. This enmeshing of business houses and corporates in the area of poverty reduction increasingly involves six kinds of approaches: corporate philanthropy, microfinance, entrepreneurship, bottom of the pyramid approach, the triple bottomline approach; and, CSR. This article discusses all these six approaches and argues for an emergent method for dealing with an issue as complex as poverty.

## Introduction

According to a recent study by the World Bank, India is the world's third-largest economy on the basis of purchasing power parity.<sup>1</sup> The country's gross domestic product (GDP) growth rate for next fiscal year has been predicted to reach 7.5%.<sup>2</sup> However, the GDP per capita rankings paint a more accurate picture, pegging India at an abysmal 141.<sup>3</sup> These figures need to be seen in conjunction with the controversial report by the C. Rangarajan Committee in 2014, which estimated three in 10 Indians to be poor.<sup>4</sup> India's shining growth story clearly has a darker side, exposing income and wealth inequalities, as well as widespread poverty. Against this backdrop, the Government of India notified new rules on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) under the Companies Act in 2013, making India the only country to have legislated on CSR. Behind this historic move is the recognition of the business sector's capacity, and to some extent responsibility, to contribute towards development goals on health, education, employment, and particularly poverty alleviation, all of which were traditionally the domains of

---

*Himakshi holds a Masters degree in Development from Azim Premji University and a double-bachelors degree in Law and Arts from Symbiosis Law School, Pune. Keenly interested in health philanthropy and advocacy, she has been a member of the International Advisory Committee of AIDS Fonds, a Netherlands-based philanthropic initiative since 2010. She has also worked with HIV Young Leaders Fund, a health-focused global funding initiative, leading the Small Grants programs across South-east Asia, Central Asia and Eastern Europe. Presently, she works at Arghyam, a water and sanitation focused philanthropy, as the Monitoring and Evaluation lead.*

state actors, non-governmental organisations and civil society. Following this, in 2014–2015 alone, a whopping 5,563 crore was spent by companies through CSR, even though this was only 79% of the prescribed spending.<sup>6</sup>

Businesses have a long-standing tradition of engaging with the issue of poverty, primarily through philanthropy. CSR seems to have opened up new avenues for increasing their collective impact on poverty, by encouraging more companies to direct their resources towards improving the lives of the poor and marginalised. This shift is also contributing to the changing narrative of business's role in the poverty story. Earlier narratives in development literature placed companies squarely as actors that are responsible for perpetuating poverty through land, labour, and environment issues. However, over the last decade, businesses, globally and nationally, have begun engaging with poverty alleviation more vigorously, developing their own analysis of the problem as well as approaches to solving it, so much so that they are being heralded as the missing piece to the poverty puzzle (Prieto-Carrón et al. 2006). Does this shift in narrative really hold merit? Is it just another smokescreen for capitalism to pacify the “threat of the underfed against the overfed”? The answer lies in a deeper analysis of the business rationale and approach to addressing poverty. This article looks at the trajectory of these approaches, breaking down the problem analysis, the self-perceived role of business in the story, and the primary strategy advocated by the approach. The underlying objective is to better understand the shift from a 'no-responsibility' position of businesses to a 'social responsibility' stance.

## **Economic Theories on Poverty**

Different schools of economic thought have attempted to define poverty and theorise both the context and the factors causing poverty. A quick review shows that classical economics locates the causality in individual factors, particularly individual productivity, whereas neoclassical traditions look beyond the individual to market factors as well. The Keynesian school identifies macroeconomic causalities, holding both the state and the market responsible for poverty.

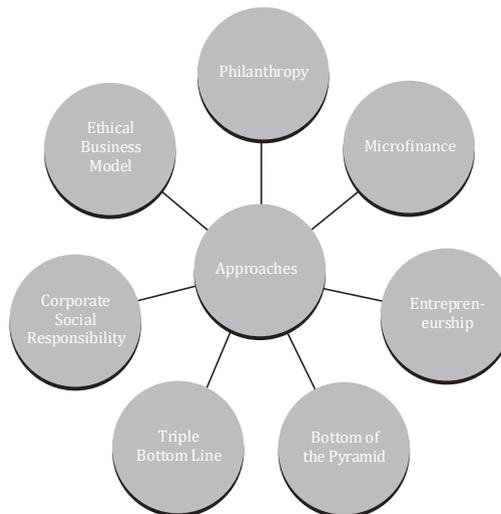
Marxian traditions clearly hold the capitalist mode of production responsible for the exploitation of the labour class, creating conditions for wealth accumulation, on the one hand, and poverty, on the other. More recent theories, described as “social capital” and “social exclusion”, give more comprehensive explanations for poverty, incorporating structural factors that go beyond the realm of economics and are situated in political and

social landscapes (Davis and Sanchez-Martinez 2014). One can already see, at this nascent stage, a link between the causes of poverty and the location of “responsibility” for being poor as well as for addressing poverty.

The business narrative, however, tells quite a distinct story, one that starts with the no-responsibility approach of corporate philanthropy and arrives at the present discourse of “ethical business models” that recognise the negative impact of businesses on communities, particularly in terms of loss of assets, livelihood, and opportunities.

## Of Profits, People, and Poverty

Businesses first became interested in the question of poverty in the early nineteenth century. In the wake of the Industrial Revolution, businesses set up “company villages” for their workers driven by the motive to prevent unionisation and some measure of “enlightened self-interest” as Tulder (2008) puts it. Since then, there have been several approaches developed by companies to engage with poverty alleviation, each with its own motive and strategy. While there is a chronological timeline to the development of these approaches, many are followed together in the present day and age by the corporate industrial sector. Some of the prominent approaches have been analysed here, examining how the problem of poverty has been understood and whether a specific “responsibility” of businesses has been located in the strategy.



**Figure 1: Business Approaches to Poverty**

### ***i. Corporate Philanthropy***

*Strategy:* Philanthropy essentially involves individual-driven redistribution of wealth where chief executive officers (CEOs), founders, and other high-net-worth individuals “give” a small part of their wealth as “charity” to a cause they espouse.

*Rationale:* Poverty alleviation is understood as the domain of the state and civil society or the development sector. The “giving” often comes from the personal ethics of individuals and may also be linked to their religious beliefs. In some societies, the culture of giving is linked with building public image and, consequently, generation of public relations and goodwill for the company.

*Analysis:* The understanding of poverty is not holistic as it excludes the economic lens and the role of markets. Thus there is no question of locating any responsibility on businesses and companies. Corporate philanthropy could at best be seen as treating the symptoms without addressing the root cause.

### ***ii. Microfinance***

*Strategy:* This approach, developed by Muhammad Yunus, focuses on providing the poor access to credit so that they are able to increase their incomes through building microenterprises. The concept of financial inclusion, which has recently been in focus, can also be seen as an extension to this strategy.

*Rationale:* Poverty is conceptualised from a microeconomic lens arguing that lack of assets and lack of access to credit perpetuate poverty. The role of business here is seen as providing that access through its operations.

*Analysis:* Structural causes of poverty, including macroeconomic causes, are not recognised. Businesses fail to examine their own role in limiting access to credit for certain socio-economic groups or their role in causing deprivation of assets, especially in the context of land and labour. Like the earlier approach, there is no notion of corporate responsibility.

### ***iii. Entrepreneurship***

*Strategy:* The focus here is to promote entrepreneurship as a means of lifting the poor out of their poverty. Programmes that provide vocational training could be seen as one such example. Another could be the efforts of big businesses and multinational corporations (MNCs) to integrate small enterprises into global supply chains. Social entrepreneurship is yet another

variation within this broader strategy where enterprises prioritise a social goal over the financial gain. This could be directed to address poverty or any other developmental goal as well.

*Rationale:* The approach proposed here comes from an understanding that economic growth is essential to address poverty and enable a favourable business climate. In particular, the approach believes that the removal of obstacles for small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) would provide the poor with the opportunity to be self-employed and create their own wealth story.

*Analysis:* The issue here is more complex. A favourable business climate for SMEs often involves relaxed regulation, decreased risk burden and decreased liability on the enterprise, and incentives for investors, all of which create an environment where both land and labour are often left to the free market, exacerbating conditions that create and perpetuate poverty. There are obvious merits to this approach, especially when viewed from the sustainability perspective, as it focuses on making the poor self-reliant as opposed to working as wage labour. However, in order for these enterprises to actually become competitive, they often have to forego regulatory standards, especially those concerning safety. Prieto-Carrón (2006) argues that MNCs, on the other hand, owing to pressure from activist groups, put additional burden on SMEs to adhere to social and environmental standards (often using the threat of switching suppliers) without providing any support or incentive to do so. This further reduces margins, putting SMEs in a precarious position. All of this has a direct impact on poverty because SMEs as well as the vendors and workers who work in these are pushed to be the cheapest option in order to compete.

#### *iv. Bottom of the Pyramid*

*Strategy:* This approach developed by C K Prahalad encourages businesses to produce low-cost products and services for the poor, viewing them as a new lucrative market that has almost 5 billion potential consumers. This was later modified into the base-of-the-pyramid approach to broaden the market scope from the poorest of poor to low-income groups. The approach also lays emphasis on businesses' capacity to innovate and sustain delivery models that meet the basic needs of this group, as opposed to the state or non-profit actors.

*Rationale:* The underlying motivation is to address poverty by making profits. The poor are viewed as "value-demanding" consumers as opposed to beneficiaries of charity.

*Analysis:* This approach has been much critiqued and debated in the business academia. Karnani (2006), the most prominent critic, has argued that, first, the market at the base claimed by Prahalad is not actually that lucrative since the consumption patterns and purchasing power of the poor have been overestimated. On a more fundamental level, however, he highlights the flaw in viewing the poor as consumers instead of producers. He argues that raising the incomes of those who are poor can alleviate poverty. In my opinion, there is another lacuna in this approach. The underlying rationale or understanding of the problem does not take into account factors that cause or perpetuate poverty. By providing the poor with low-cost products, in theory at least, there may be a positive impact on *abject poverty*. However, relative poverty would still remain a problem. Additionally, the rationale does not explain the factors that cause and perpetuate poverty. For example, if MNCs were to focus on low-cost products, they may displace the small-scale entrepreneurs already providing for that market or they may dispossess poor households of skills that they were using to make these products at home, such as hand-sewn clothes. These shifts would have to be factored in when accounting for the impact of the bottom-of-the-pyramid approach on the poor. Thus, this approach also does not locate any “responsibility” or “obligation” of businesses as it does not see any role of businesses in causing, perpetuating and exacerbating poverty.

### *v. Triple Bottom Line*

*Strategy:* While this is not a poverty-specific approach, it places an obligation on businesses to address poverty by meeting the needs of the communities they work with. Businesses evaluate their performance on three parameters: profits, planet, and people. The third parameter, i.e., people, essentially means that businesses ensure the welfare of employees, communities, and other stakeholders through their operations. Examples of businesses adhering to the triple bottom line (TBL) could be ensuring fair-trade supply chains or instituting employee friendly or labour friendly policies.

*Rationale:* The roots of this approach come from the concept of sustainable development, defined in the Brundtland Commission Report. John Elkington formally developed the triple bottom line as a sustainability accounting framework in 1994. The underlying assessment here is that for businesses to be sustainable, they need to focus on the optimal use of not just capital (i.e., profits) but also environmental (planet) and social resources (people).

*Analysis:* The TBL framework was developed as a result of extensive lobbying and pressure from environmental and labour activists. The framework while recognising the importance of social justice in sustainable businesses opens up the dialogue on businesses' "responsibility" to people and society. The approach hints at but does not explicitly locate the role of businesses in processes and structural factors that perpetuate poverty. With this approach, we see the first shift from "no responsibility" to some semblance of corporate responsibility.

### ***vi. Corporate Social Responsibility***

*Strategy:* Businesses actively allocate part of their profits to strategically impact development goals including poverty alleviation. This could be done through an external agency, an in-house department, or a registered society or foundation set up for this purpose.

*Rationale:* This approach takes on from the TBL approach and expands its scope beyond the business's immediate environment. The CSR approach locates businesses as corporate citizens with responsibilities towards the planet and the society on the whole. Thus, poverty alleviation can be seen as one of the focus areas of CSR.

*Analysis:* While most of the earlier strategies are market oriented and draw largely from an economic analysis of the issue, CSR brings in a new dimension where the business-economic discourse interacts with the broader multidisciplinary development discourse on poverty in a collaborative attempt to deliver solutions. However, CSR still falls short of recognising businesses' impact on the structural socio-economic and political factors that perpetuate poverty. While TBL pushes businesses to clean up their own act (i.e., within the company's own domain), CSR has the potential to ensure that businesses (individually and as a sector through institutions like the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry and the Confederation of Indian Industry) strategically alter their impact on the local, national, and global institutions and processes towards economic justice and mitigation of poverty.

## **Conclusion**

The notion of responsibility can be understood in two ways. The first arises from being part of the causal story, a key actor in creating or perpetuating the problem or issue at hand. The second notion derives from the capacity

to resolve the problem and thus the attached obligation to do so. When businesses engage with the issue of poverty from the “charity” lens, it is an example of the second notion of responsibility. The idea of giving back or doing something for the less fortunate arises from the capacity to use one’s resources for changing another’s life. However, Harriss-White (2006) talks of the former notion of responsibility. Her analysis, like that of Prieto-Carrón (2006) brings to light the active role of businesses in processes that create and perpetuate poverty. However, such recognition of the role of business in poverty is yet to be done by the business sector itself. The TBL approach pushes businesses to look within and engage with this notion of responsibility, placing the responsibility to create profits for investors on the same platform as the responsibility for ensuring employee welfare and adequate environmental safeguards or proper waste management. The debate on CSR is engaging with these very questions. While many studies are looking into businesses’s motivations for CSR to find the answers, the modality of CSR is where the negotiation is actually taking place. The interaction between the development narrative of poverty and the business narrative of poverty is where the notion of responsibility is being unpacked. As businesses evolve their CSR strategies, using evidence from the development sector and weigh the impact of a livelihood intervention vis-à-vis a healthcare intervention on poverty mitigation, their understanding of their role in the causal story will also shift. It is this shift that will take CSR from strategic, compliance, and philanthropy models to ones that may deliver ethical businesses and socio-economic justice.

---

## References

- Bischoff, K (2014): *'Business Approaches to Poverty Alleviation: A Classification of Company Initiatives'* (Lohmar: Josef Eul Verlag GmbH).
- Blowfield, M and J G Frynas (2005): "Setting New Agendas: Critical Perspectives on Corporate Social Responsibility in the Developing World", *International Affairs*, 81(3): 499–513.
- Davis, P and M Sanchez-Martinez (2014): "A Review of the Economic Theories of Poverty", Discussion Paper No. 435, National Institute of Economic and Social Research, London, UK.
- Karnani, A (2006): "Fortune at the Bottom of the Pyramid: A Mirage", Working Paper No. 1035, Ross School of Business, University of Michigan, Michigan, USA.
- Lund-Thomsen, P and Lindgreen, A (2014): "Corporate Social Responsibility in Global Value Chains: Where Are We Now and Where Are We Going?" *Journal of Business Ethics*, 123(1): 11–22.
- Nambiar, P and Chitty, N (2014): "Meaning Making by Managers: Corporate Discourse on Environment and Sustainability in India", *Journal of Business Ethics*, 123(3): 493–511.
- Pavlovich, K and Corner, P (2014): "Conscious Enterprise Emergence: Shared Value Creation through Expanded Conscious Awareness", *Journal of Business Ethics*, 121(3): 341–51.
- Poruthiyil, P (2013): "Weaning Business Ethics from Strategic Economism: The Development Ethics Perspective", *Journal of Business Ethics*, 116(4): 735–49.
- Prieto- Carrón, M, P Lund-Thomsen, A Chan, A Muro, and C Bhushan (2006) "Critical Perspectives on CSR and Development: What We Know, What We Don't Know, and What We Need to Know", *International Affairs*, 82(5): 977–87.
- Van Tulder, R (2008): Role of Business in Poverty Reduction: Towards a Sustainable Corporate Story?" in *UNRISD Flagship Report: Combating Poverty and Inequality* (Geneva: UNRISD).
- Weyzig, F (2009): "Political and Economic Arguments for Corporate Social Responsibility: Analysis and a proposition regarding CSR Agenda", *Journal of Business Ethics*, 86(4): 417–28.
- Davis, P. and Sanchez-Martinez, M. (2014) 'A review of the economic theories of poverty', Discussion Paper No. 435, National Institute of Economic and Social Research, London, U.K.
- Karnani, A. (2006) 'Fortune at the Bottom of the Pyramid: A Mirage', Working Paper No. 1035, Ross School of Business, University of Michigan, Michigan, U.S.A.
- Van Tulder, R. (2008) 'Role of Business in Poverty Reduction: Towards a sustainable corporate story?', UNRISD Flagship Report: Combating Poverty and Inequality,





# *Style Sheet*

We request authors to follow the guidelines in the style sheet as listed below.

This will help reduce processing times of articles that have been accepted for publication.

### *House Style*

- For the main text, use Times New Roman, 12 point, 1.5 line spacing.
- For notes, use Times New Roman, 11 point, single line spacing. Set the alignment as “left”.
- Use British and “-ise” spellings (labour, centre, organise).
- Use double quotation marks for quotations, and single marks for quotations within quotations.
- Indent quotations of more than four lines, without quotation marks.
- For quotations from other publications, always provide page number(s) for the quotation.

### *Abbreviations*

- Abbreviations including those in common use (BJP, US, BCCI, L&T), are spelled out at first occurrence, as in

**Among recent recommendations of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) are**

- Less familiar ones should be used only if they occur more than once within an article, and the terms must be spelled out on their first occurrence, as in

**The benefits of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act (ERISA) are familiar to many.**

This includes omitting the periods used after initials standing for given names, as in **G K Chesterton, J Krishnamurti.**

- No periods are used with abbreviations that appear in full capitals, whether two letters or more, as in BBC, CITU, and acronyms, as in Nasa, Nato.
- The general guideline is no periods even with abbreviations that appear in lowercase letters, as in am, pm.

- No space is left on either side of an ampersand used within an initialism. Avoid using ampersands in running text unless they are within initialisms such as R&D, Texas A&M.
- While abbreviating academic degrees, the current trend is to omit all periods within them, as in **PhD, BA**.
- Company names are best given in their full forms in running text, though such tags as Ltd and Inc may be omitted unless relevant to the context, as in **Brooks Brothers was purchased and later resold by Marks and Spencer**.
- No periods are used after any of the International System of Units symbols for units, and the same symbols are used for both the singular and the plural, as in **kg, cm, m**.
- Note that a unit of measurement used without a numeral should always be spelled out, even in scientific contexts, as in **We took the measurements in kilometers**.
- Avoid using abbreviations for two-word names as far as possible. Some may be unavoidable such as the **US** or **UP**, but where it is part of government bureaucratic or journalistic usage such as **PM, CM, DM, SC** or **HC** do avoid abbreviations.

### *Numbers*

- The numbers from one to nine must be spelled out while every number that is more than nine is written in numerals.
- However, very large round numbers, especially sums of money, may be expressed by a mixture of numerals and spelled-out numbers, as in **The population of India is now 1.2 billion**.

### *Crores/Lakhs versus Billion/Million*

*If large numbers have to be written out using numerals, when discussion values please follow the Indian numbering system when the discussion is on India:*

Rs 11,22,35,567 (ie division in crores, lakhs and thousands), or Rs 11.22 crore.

Where other units are involved, authors could use the billion/metric system, even in discussion of India. However, the preference would be for the Indian system of crore/lakh:

2,34,000 hectares ( 2.34 lakh hectares)

Or 234,000 hectares

Where the discussion is of a non-Indian issue or the currencies are of non-Indian values, then the preference would be for the standard international system:

\$ 34,234,000 or \$34.234 billion

134,567,000 tonnes or 134.57 million tones

*It is most important that authors do not switch from one system to another within the same article.*

Please ensure that either the Indian terms (lakh, crore) or the Western ones (million, billion) are used consistently within an article.

Percentages are always given in numerals. Use the symbol % instead of the words per cent, as in

**Only 45% of the electorate voted.**

Simple fractions are spelled out, as in **She has read three-quarters of the book.**

- Years are always expressed in numerals unless they stand at the beginning of a sentence.
- Decades are either spelled out (as long as the century is clear) and lowercased, or expressed in numerals, as in the **1980s and 1990s**.
- Dates should be in the form of **9 March 2007**.

Use an en dash rather than a hyphen between numbers denoting pages and dates.

### ***Capitalisation***

Be economical in the use of capitals.

- Capitalisation used with headings and titles of articles and books capitalises all words except articles (e.g., a, an, the, etc.), prepositions (e.g., as, in, of, to, etc.), and conjunctions (e.g., and, but, for, or, etc.).
- Although proper names are capitalised, many words derived from or associated with proper names (**brussels sprouts, board of trustees**), as well as the names of significant offices (**presidency, papacy**) are lowercased.

- Civil, military, religious, and professional titles are capitalised when they immediately precede a personal name, as in **Prime Minister Manmohan Singh said at the meeting that...**
- But titles are normally lowercased when following a name or used in place of a name, as in **The prime minister speaking at an informal meeting said...**
- Titles are normally lowercased when following a name or used in place of a name, as in **In an interview, the prime minister said ...**
- Titles denoting civic or academic honours are capitalised when following a personal name, as in **Lata Mangeshkar, Bharat Ratna.**
- The full names of legislative, deliberative, administrative, and judicial bodies, departments, bureaus, and offices, and often their short forms, are capitalised, as in the **United Nations General Assembly, the Parliament of India, the Lok Sabha, the Ministry of Agriculture, the Supreme Court.**
- While the names of ethnic and national groups are capitalised (**Aborigines, the Jews, the French**), designations based loosely on colour (**black people**) and terms denoting socioeconomic classes or groups (**the middle class**) are lowercased.
- *All caste, tribe and community names to be capitalised.*
- The names of political groups or movements other than recognised parties are lowercased, **anarchists, independents, communists, but the Communist Party of India.**
- The full names of associations, societies, unions, working groups, inquiry commissions, meetings, and conferences are capitalised, **as in the International Olympic Committee, the Indian Red Cross Society.**

### *Tables, Figures*

Headings should be placed above each table/figure and should follow this format:

**Table 1. Asset Ownership by Household Category**

**Figure 5. Communication Flows**

Notes and sources should be placed under each table/figure.

Column headings in tables should clearly define the data presented.

### *In-text citations*

Use the author-date system for citations.

Even if you put information in your own words by summarizing or paraphrasing, you must cite the original author or researcher and the date of publication. You are also encouraged to provide a page or paragraph number; check with your instructor to see if page numbers are required.

- Works cited in the text should read thus: **(Brown 1992: 63-64); Lovell (1989, 1993)**.
- For repeat citations: eg **(ibid 75)**
- For groups of citations, order alphabetically and not chronologically, using a semi-colon to separate names: **(Brown 1992; Gadgil and Guha 1994; Lovell 1989)**.
- Use “et al” when citing a work by more than two authors, but list all the authors in the References (unless there are six authors or more).
- To distinguish different works by the same author in the same year, use the letters a, b, c, etc., **Besson (1993a, 1993b)**.

### *References*

All works cited in the text (including sources for tables and figures) should be listed alphabetically under References, on a separate sheet of paper.

- For multi-author works, invert the name of the first author only **(Gadgil, M and R Guha)**.
- Use **(ed.)** for one editor, and multiple editors.
- When listing two or more works by one author, use --- (19xx), such as after Swann (1967), use --- (1974), etc, in chronologically ascending order.
- Indicate (opening and closing) page numbers for articles in journals and for chapters in books.
- Note that italics are used only for titles of books and names of journals. Double quotation marks are used for titles of journal articles, book chapters, dissertations, reports, working papers, unpublished material, etc.
- For titles in a language other than English, provide an English translation in parentheses.

- Use endnotes rather than footnotes.

The location of endnotes within the text should be indicated by superscript numbers.

For sources which have insufficient details to be included in the Reference, use endnotes (such as interviews, some media sources, some Internet sources).

See the following for style and punctuation in References.

### *Books*

- Wordsworth, William (1967): *Lyrical Ballads* (London: Oxford University Press).
- Watson, S and K Gibson, ed. (1995): *Postmodern Cities and Spaces* (London: Macmillan Press)

### *Contributions to Books*

- Elson, D (1996): “Appraising Recent Developments in the World Market for Nimble Fingers” in Chhachhi and R Pittin(ed) *Confronting State, Capital and Patriarchy* (Basingstoke and London: Macmillan Press) 35– 55.

### *Journal and Other Articles*

Helleiner, Eric (2006): “Reinterpreting Bretton Woods: International Development and the Neglected Origins of Embedded Liberalism”, *Development and Change*, 37(5): 943– 67.

Poniewozik, James (2000): “TV Makes a Too-Close Call”, *Time* 20 Nov: 70– 71.

### *Conference papers*

- Doyle, Brian (2002): “Howling Like Dogs: Metaphorical Language in Psalm 59.” Paper presented at the annual international meeting for the Society of Biblical Literature, Berlin, Germany, 19– 22 June.

Unpublished dissertations and theses

- Graban, Tarez Samra (2006): “Towards a Feminine Ironic: Understanding Irony in the Oppositional Discourse of Women from the Early Modern and Modern Periods,” Dissertation, Purdue University.

- Stolley, Karl (2002): “Towards a Conception of Religion as a Discursive Formation: Implications for Postmodern Composition Theory”, PhD thesis, Madras University.

### *Online Resources*

Always indicate the date that the source was accessed, as online resources are frequently updated or removed.

### *Website*

Felluga, Dino(2003): Guide to Literary and Critical Theory, 28 November, Purdue University, Viewed on 10 May 2006 (<http://www.cla.purdue.edu/english/theory>).

### *Page on a website*

“Caret.” Wikipedia: The Free Encyclopedia, 28 April 2006, Viewed on 10 May 2006 (<http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Caret&oldid=157510440>).

### *Article in a web magazine*

Bernstein, Mark (2002): “10 Tips on Writing The Living Web.” A List Apart: For People Who Make Websites. No 149 (16 Aug). Viewed on 4 May 2006 (<http://alistapart.com/articles/writeliving>).





**Students' Journal of Education and Development** is published by Azim Premji University, Bangalore, India as an annual publication. Azim Premji University has a clear social purpose – to make significant contributions towards a just, equitable, humane and sustainable society. The University aspires to do this through the development of talent and the creation of knowledge which can facilitate systemic change in education and allied development areas. The roots of Azim Premji University lie in the learning and experience of a decade of work in elementary education by Azim Premji Foundation. It is the direct result of a purposeful philanthropic initiative.

In furtherance of Azim Premji University's mission, *Students' Journal of Education and Development* aims to serve as a forum where academic excellence within the university's students' community can be promoted. The journal's goal is to provide an open space for students of Azim Premji University working in the domains of education and development to sustain critical engagements and dialogues regarding relevant issues and debates in these areas. It aims to promote interdisciplinary and reflective work that can aid the current and future practices and engagements of the students of these social science domains. It is an initiative led by the students of Azim Premji University, and plans to primarily publish the work of students and alumni of this university; though contributions from students working in these areas in other universities are also welcomed. The journal is edited and published by students in consultation with faculty at the Azim Premji University, Bangalore and follows a double-blind review process. Discussions and responses to published articles are welcome. All communications to the journal should be sent at the following email address: [studentsjournals@apu.edu.in](mailto:studentsjournals@apu.edu.in)

The content of this journal is licensed under Creative Commons, Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs CC BY-NC-ND.

