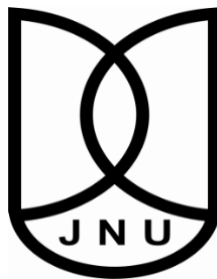


**MORAL DISCOURSE IN SCHOOLS: A STUDY OF  
VALUES IN SARASWATI MANDIRS**

*Thesis submitted to the Jawaharlal Nehru University in partial  
fulfilment of the requirements  
for the award of the degree of*

**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

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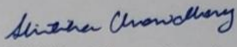


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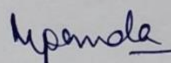
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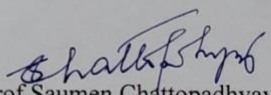
I, **Shitika Chowdhary**, hereby declare that this thesis titled “**Moral Discourse in Schools: A Study of Values in Saraswati Mandirs**” is based on my original research work and to the best of my knowledge, has not been submitted in whole or in part in this university or in any other university for the award of any degree.

  
(Shitika Chowdhary)

Certificate

We recommend that this thesis be placed before the examiner(s) for evaluation and award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

  
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## ABSTRACT

Research in psychology has traditionally looked at moral development, moral reasoning and moral judgements as individual phenomena and related these to the cognitive development of children primarily. This study adopts a sociocultural approach which argues that moral thoughts, feelings, and actions are semiotically mediated and, therefore, are culturally shaped. It entails a dialogical conception of the moral self which is generated by a move away from a paradigm of cognitive representations and internally held principles towards a paradigm of social construction and inter-subjectively possible forms of discourse, where in the self is assumed to be a shared product of social relations and communicative practices. Schools are important sites of emerging students into discourse. They are key institutions of socialization that function to evoke among children a sense of morality and values. **It is in this background that the current research aims to study the moral discourse and kind of values that are reified and promoted among children in Saraswati Mandirs.** It asks the following research questions: what are the forms and nature of moral discourse in Saraswati Mandirs?; What kind of material and symbolic resources do Saraswati Mandirs employ to generate specific kinds or moral discourse?; What and how are values reified and promoted among children in Saraswati Mandirs?

Saraswati Mandirs are private schools that are run by the Vidya Bharti Organization. This is the educational wing of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS). First established in 1952, the strength of the schools and their students has steadily increased. To find out the values that are deemed important for school children by the Government of India, the National Curriculum Frameworks were content analyzed. While school observations and recordings were carried out over a period of 5 months to study the moral discourse in Saraswati Mandirs.

The observation data and recordings were converted to text and the principles of Foucauldian Discourse Analysis were used to analyse the data.

The results of the content analysis of the National Curriculum Frameworks show that soon after independence values that stressed national integration and cohesion were promoted.

Depending on the political environment and needs of the nation the values promoted in the curriculum frameworks changed.

The Foucauldian Discourse Analysis of the school data shows that the larger discourse prevalent in the school is one that creates a docile Hindu national who is a good worker for the nation. There are three aspects to this larger discourse- being a good student, disciplined, and a good national. The personal values that were emphasised include obedience, respect, being mindful of authority, respecting time, and being hardworking. The value of education is seen through how one becomes a valued economic subject of the country.

Docility and discipline are mechanisms of power which are used to regulate the behaviour of individuals. Through the control of space, bodies and behaviour using various techniques of surveillance, the school turns itself a disciplinary space. It sharpens its symbolic (everyday rules and moral discourses) and material tools that effectively produce docile bodies for a neo-liberal economy.

What holds the disciplinary structures of a school is that the reified image of Bharat and how to become a Good Indian. Using pedagogically orchestrated discourses of values, world economy, Hinduism, and a Historical Discourse, India is reified as *Bharat Mata* and *Akhand Bharat*. Reification of the nation as a Hindu goddess justified laying down a behavioural system of reverence in the school. The goal of *Akhand Bharat* demands the school to make its instructional routines agentic and goal oriented towards making its own subjects (both teachers and students) realise this goal through repeated instructions in the early morning assembly, visual display of maps of *Akhand Bharat* on the school walls, and revisiting

selectively articulated historical narratives on *Akhand Bharat* in the assembly. Posing India as a mother who is under threat in the morning assemblies creates a desire in students and teachers to protect and defend it. The assembly discourse works effectively towards developing a range of affective resources towards *Bharat*. The extra-academic activities like **Yoga, Asanas and Sports** helped the school maintain a regime of discipline.

The data shows that almost all kinds of talk, images, songs, activities, rules, and interactions in the school are sources of moral discourse and value-education. The various school activities, and interactions in any school day tend to immerse students in particular moral discourses that creates agentic selves. These are important sources of moral and ethical values for children and therefore, for society.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## CHAPTER I

### Introduction and Review of Literature

*'The most important human endeavour is the striving for morality in our actions. Our inner balance and even our very existence depend on it. Only morality in our actions can give beauty and dignity to life. To make this a living force and bring it to clear consciousness is perhaps the foremost task of education.*

*The foundation of morality should not be made dependent on myth nor tied to any authority lest doubt about the myth or about the legitimacy of the authority imperil the foundation of sound judgement and action.'*

Albert Einstien, 1981, p. 95

The present study attempts to understand the contribution of school life in the development of morality in children. Moral development has always been a field that has successfully engaged me. One of my first research projects in higher education was in the area of *Moral Development*. It was then that the philosophical, psychological, and sociological underpinnings of everyday discourse and its role in shaping the moral behaviour of students became apparent. The deeply intertwined nexus of these in constructing morality has far-reaching consequences on actions, judgements and everyday life of students. Our everyday discourse is around morals and values that a society puts prime on. These discourses guide our intentions, actions, and interactions on a regular basis and creates an agentic self in us. They shape our thoughts, feelings, and behaviours. Many philosophers and social scientists,

therefore, have made it their lives' work making sense of morality and values, and how everyday discourse constructs these moral values in people.

Morality is a system of beliefs about what is right and wrong. It concerns people and institutions the most. Moral development refers to changes in moral beliefs during one's lifetime. Even though moral beliefs and moral behaviour are not identical, moral beliefs play a significant role in shaping children's moral behaviour. Since moral beliefs and moral behaviour play a significant role in whose worldview is upheld in a society, it is one of the most adult-controlled domains. Both home and schools are primarily adult-controlled spaces where moral values and choices are carefully controlled by instituting and legitimising certain conventions of discourse and practices over others. Compared to home, schools carry the social burden of developing values that a nation or a community requires for its smooth functioning. Different social and discursive conventions are carefully instituted by the school authorities so that children are socialised into these desirable values and behaviours. Several moral themes are pushed through everyday activities in schools like assembly, prayer, yoga, band, gardening and many other group activities.

Being larger than the family and smaller than society but representative of it, schools are crucial in inculcating in children values and morals that the society deems important. Even though schools have specific moral and value education periods, moral education and moral development are not limited to these. Everyday school practices work in tandem with value education classes and instil in children a specific moral worldview. This moral worldview that the schools promote is based on their ideological leanings, which stem from the institutions backing them and the National Curriculum, which reflects the government's values.

Schools in India have traditionally been considered sacred institutions and have historically been used by the ruling government to inculcate desired morals and values in children. This socialisation to inculcate values and morals in children takes place by immersing them in moral discourse. The present research endeavours to study the values that the National Curriculum and the school promote along with the moral discourse prevalent in a particular school.

"Where does our morality come from?" is a challenging question. Research in psychology illustrates the difficulty in answering this question. Numerous perspectives on the origins and development of morality in individuals are testament to this difficulty. I begin by tracing different philosophical perspectives on the origins and development of morality, followed by psychology's varied attempts at the same. Then I look at Moral education in schools, followed by value education in India.

### **1.1 Origins and Development of Morality in the Individual**

Morality originates from *moralitas*, meaning manner, character or proper behaviour. The Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy states that 'morality' connotes different meanings. Descriptively, it refers to 'codes of conduct, put forth by a society or a group (such as religion), or accepted by an individual for her own behaviour' (Gert & Gert, 2017). In the normative sense, it is a 'code of conduct that, given specified conditions, would be put forward by all rational people' (Gert & Gert, 2017).

Morality is a social phenomenon which influences socialisation. Family is the core of socialisation, and morality affects how families teach acceptable and unacceptable behaviours. The internalisation of morality by individuals is dependent on this process.

Moral development is an essential concern of human life and experiences. Taken alongside politics and economy, morality provides the philosophies, ideologies and rules for social organisation and human interactions that are ingrained with the potential to create spaces for mutual respect, possibly leading to democratic societies. Morality has always been an important subject matter for philosophers and sociologists but has been kept at a distance by psychology, which traditionally looked at it in a developmental framework. From Freud to Piaget and Kohlberg, moral development has been treated as something within the individual without considering culture or the role of cultural mediation.

Sigmund Freud theorised that identification with parental values results in the internalisation of morality. He focussed on the notion of conscience, parent-child relationships, emotions, and guilt (Walker, 2006). According to Freud, there is tension between the needs of society and individuals, and moral development proceeds when individual selfish desires are repressed and replaced by values of significant socialising agents in the individual's life.

When Piaget published his book in 1932, the prevalent idea was that human beings were not responsible for the moral consequences of their actions. For psychoanalysts, it was irrationality, and for behaviourists, conditioning history explained behaviours. They both downplayed individual responsibility in their actions. Inspired by Kant's philosophy, Piaget and Kohlberg emphasised personal activity, autonomy, and responsibility (Branco, 2012). Piaget (1965) proposed the existence of two stages of moral development in the child. After conducting interviews with children, he argued that with age, children become autonomous

(from an initial focus on authority mandates). Once autonomous, children can evaluate actions from a set of independent principles of morality.

Kohlberg (1969) extended Piaget's work and proposed three levels of moral development with six stages. He argued that individuals transition from a selfish desire to avoid punishment (Preconventional morality) to concern for group functioning (Conventional morality) to universal ethical principles (Post conventional morality).

Turiel (1983), in contrast to Kohlberg's levels, proposed three domains of understanding moral development. These are the personal, societal and moral obligations. He contrasted moral obligations with conventional obligations, arguing that children learn to distinguish moral obligations from conventional obligations through social interaction and communication.

The sociocultural approach to moral development conceptualises moral reasoning to be a mediated action (Tappan, 1997). Moral voices can be seen in Gilligan's work (Ethic of Care and Ethic of Justice). These moral voices are engaged in a dialogical process. Since the approach looks at moral reasoning as a mediated action, it focuses on the action and the mediational tool. The mediational tool, in this case, is moral discourse. Moral discourse permeates all aspects of an individual's life and shapes ethics. The moral discourse in which an individual is situated mediates the development of ethics.

Shweder and his colleagues (1987) describe three ethics individuals use in moral actions. These are the Ethics of Autonomy, Community and Divinity. The Ethic of Autonomy places importance on individual desires, rights and preferences. The Ethic of Community considers individuals as members of social groups, and the group's welfare is most important. Natural



law is considered the same as sacred law in the Ethic of Divinity, and individuals are considered spiritual beings. Studies on these ethics have shown that they exist in all cultures. Individuals in different cultures use these ethics to different degrees based on the moral discourse that they are situated in. Different communities have different moral discourses, and different moral discourses result in the development of different ethics.

**My research aims to understand the nature of moral discourse in schools and the values it develops.**

Before getting into the different psychological theories of moral development, understanding the difference between ethics and morality is essential. Ethics comes from the Greek word *ethos*, while morality comes from the Latin word *moris*. Morality refers to personal principles that guide an individual's conduct, while ethics refers to the collective norms within society (Hegel G. W., 1991).

Actions become moral or ethical when they are evaluated. The evaluation takes place along dimensions of rightness and wrongness, fairness and unfairness, and justice and injustice (Branco, 2012). Problems of conflict arise when general assertions of rightness, fairness or justice have to be translated into actual behaviour, making it imperative to study moral development from a cultural psychology approach, as it looks at the cultural mediation of individual values.

## **1.2 Tracing the Philosophical Roots of Morality and Ethics**

The word *moral* comes from the Greek word *moralis*, which means 'pertaining to character' (MacIntyre, 2007, p.38). An individual's character is taken as their set of

dispositions to behave systematically to live in a particular way. Early uses of the word *moral* in English conveyed the meaning of being practical (p. 38).

European philosophers theorised ideas on morality through their enquiry into happiness and answering questions like 'what makes for a human life that is good for the person living it'. Understanding the experiences that make one lead a good life and the specific ways of living and conduct one must indulge in leads to theorising morality. The idea of larger good becomes a central idea of morality.

The difference between ethics and morality has been acknowledged far before the European philosophers by ancient Greek philosophers and thinkers. *Antigona*, a play by **Sofocles**, is centred on the dilemma faced by the protagonist in deciding which rules to abide by - personal, family, cultural principles or collective, public, or social norms. The play highlights the dichotomy between moral rules concerning right and wrong and makes one appreciate the incompatibility between moral principles that develop.

Evaluating actions as moral or ethical is done by evaluating actual behaviour as right, fair, and just in contrast to wrong, unfair and unjust. **Plato and Aristotle** believed virtues were vital characteristics to be developed in humans (Branco, 2012). These are acquired through practice. By practising honesty, bravery, generosity, and justice, an individual becomes honest, brave, generous and just. According to Aristotle, when individuals develop these virtues, they make the right choices when faced with ethical dilemmas. For Plato, happiness and well-being are the goals of living a moral life and virtues are needed to attain this. His is the morality of happiness.

### 1.2.1 Rousseau and the Morality of Goodness

Rousseau considered **kindness** to be a natural human propensity. However, because of the inherent unfairness in society, kindness is sullied, leading to a distortion of goodness and virtue. *'Everything is good as it leaves the hands of the Author of things; everything degenerates in the hands of man'* (Rousseau, 1979, p. 37). He emphasised a pedagogy that would work toward promoting goodness and stopping society's negative influences on the child who was still developing. The morality of goodness should permeate all aspects of everyday life. There is an underlying innate, biological predisposition toward goodness which brings about justice and fair politics *'There is in the depths of our souls, then, an innate principle of justice and virtue according to which, in spite of our own maxims, we judge our actions and those of others as good or bad. It is to this principle that I give the name **conscience**'* (Rousseau, 1979, p. 289). Conscience is a cognitive ability and is the source of moral motivation.

### 1.2.2 Kant and the Categorical Imperative

Kant considered reason the most crucial factor in establishing actions as moral or not, as reason was superior to any other argument. No ends can justify immoral means. Moral norms could not be based on experience. The possibility of constructing a moral point of view is not attained when experiences are examined because experience shows that people have engaged in all sorts of conduct. His maxim of the **categorical imperative** is his most notable contribution to the discussion on morality (Branco, 2012). The categorical imperative is the fundamental ethical norm for each individual's private and personal life. It is the moral norm that individuals use. Kant distinguished between the public and the private aspects of

human life and believed they should not be separated (Sullivan, 2005). He believed that personal morality flourished in the context of civil society. The state, through its laws, promoted morality as it provided an environment in which moral living flourished. Kant distinguished between morality in public and the private domains as he questioned if the public law of justice can encompass all human moral life. The distinction between the public and private domain was made in a way that the universal principle of justice and the domain of civil law were restricted to actions that affect others. While civil authority can coerce laws, it cannot enforce the reasons and purposes people come up with for obeying laws (Sullivan, 2005). The personal domain includes moral character. A person with good moral character does the right thing from the motive of duty, and personal ethical life includes obligations. Internal law defines moral character and is much richer than mandatory civic duties. Abiding by civic duties does not stem from moral character as even those without it would not violate civic duties as violations result in penalties.

A person with good moral character not only does what is right but does so from the ethical motive of dutifulness. Developing moral character is more complex than developing civic duty, as those with the most basic intelligence can understand what duty is (Sullivan, 2005). Kant claims that nothing is above moral character. Everything else that can be considered good can be used immorally. *'Power, riches, honour, even health and that complete well-being and satisfaction with one's condition called happiness, produce boldness and thereby often arrogance as well unless a goodwill is present which corrects the influence of these on the mind and, in doing, also corrects the whole principle of action and brings it into conformity with universal ends- not to mention that an impartial rational spectator can take no delight in seeing the uninterrupted prosperity of a being graced with no feature of a pure and good will so that a good will seems to constitute the indispensable condition even of*

*worthiness to be happy'* (Kant, 1997, p. 4:393). One is not worthy of happiness if one does not have goodwill, which does not depend on the good things a person can accomplish. It depends instead on intentions. Even though we may not always be able to accomplish our goals, what matters are intentions. Morally good character is intrinsically good (Kant, 1997, p. 4:394).

Individual's desire for happiness and dutifulness distinguishes intentions. Morally good intentions mean doing things from the motive of duty. Ordinary people judge being happy and being morally good differently. If individuals do the morally good thing because their desire leads them to do so, it does not mean they have morally good character (Kant, 1997, p. 4:397-8). The morally right thing must be done with the right intention. The intention of actual actions which have consequences are considered when judging their moral worth, and empty intentions that are not put into any action are ignored (Hoy, 2019).

Morality is conceptualised as a form of duty of what one should and should not do. Duty makes one comply with moral law out of respect for it without considering desires one may have. Since the satisfaction of desire is not considered, Kant argues that it is the satisfaction of reason. He writes, *'we must admit, instead, that these judgements have as their covert basis the idea of another and far worthier purpose of one's existence, to which therefore, and not to happiness, reason is properly destined, and to which, as supreme condition, the private purpose of the human being must for the most part defer'* (Kant, 1997, p. 4:396). When the laws of reason are imposed on individuals' actions and the world through the action, individuals act morally.

In contrast to Rousseau, who emphasised innate, biological predispositions toward goodness, Kant exclusively emphasised reason as the Framework through which one judges moral actions.

### **1.2.3 Hegel and the Dialectical Balance between Moralitat and Sittlichkeit**

Hegel (1991) considered Kant's conceptualisation of morality and reason to be its only guide to be too abstract. He put forth the dialectical justification to critique, which was in opposition to Kant's transcendental tradition. Hegel argued in favour of dialectical balance between individuals and society. He criticised the idea of morality but advocated the notion of ethical life. Ethical life is one in which individuality and universality move together. There is immediate identification with social order and its customs. Hegel identifies morality with a loss of cultural cohesion and a movement towards social atomism. Ethical life is akin to a consciousness that transcends reason. Morality comes from the dialectic of abstract right and its breakdown in determining wrong or injustice (Wood, 2017). The dialectical is the reconstruction of experience and its assimilation in individuals, giving rise to complex structures. Unlike Kant, Hegel places importance on what one accomplishes in the world *'what the subject is, is the series of its actions. If these are a series of worthless productions, then the subjectivity of volition is likewise worthless; and conversely, if the series of the individual's deeds are of a substantial nature, then so also is his inner will'* (Hegel, 1991, p. 151).

Moral actions were thought to be motivated by self-satisfaction and the actions' contribution to individuals' self-interest. *'Since the subjective satisfaction of the individual himself (including recognition in the shape of honour and fame) is also to be found in the*

*implementation of ends which are valid in and for themselves, it is an empty assertion of the abstract understanding to require that only an end of this kind shall appear willed and attained, and likewise to take the view that, in volition, objective and subjective ends are mutually exclusive'* (Hegel, 1991, p. 151). The moral is not defined as the opposite of immoral but through the subjectivity of will. There are three aspects of moral will- the action is entirely the subjects', its intention is welfare, and the action is universally good and not just subjective welfare. While some scholars claim that Hegel argued for a dialectical balance between individuals and society (Branco, 2012), others believe that Hegel *'leaves no room for personal morality of any kind. He allows, of course, that moral agents shall have freely accepted the principles they apply, but has little or no interest in the cultivation of individual consequences for its own sake'* (Walsh, 1969, p. 18).

**Moralitat**, Hegel's word for morality, is related to the subject and **sittlichkeit**, the concept of ethics, refers to collectives- institutions, societies, and the states themselves. Individual morality was seen as 'socially mediated, and social ethics permanently enriched by the people who live within the social group or community' (Branco, 2012). This is the dialectical tension created by the individual-society polarity. Since Hegel's leaned more towards the social side, moral issues were encompassed within the **sittlichkeit** or ethics.

### **1.3 Psychological Works on Moral Development**

This section looks at key Psychological theories that explain Moral development in children.

### 1.3.1 Piaget and the Two Moralities of the Child

Jean Piaget was a genetic epistemologist interested in the processes that lead to children's understanding and respect of moral values. The idea of moral development that prevailed prior to Piaget's (1932) theory was that children are socialised morally through the constrictive power of adults. Through children's acceptance of discipline and authority of the group, children are morally socialised. This view looks at moral socialisation as one generation imposing its view on the next through respect for rules and fear of sanctions. Piaget considered this view of moral socialisation as one-sided and not allowing for reciprocity. It is an unstable equilibrium as it does not allow for coordination between the parts and wholes. He argued that once children accept adult authority, their moral socialisation begins, and children eventually form equitable social relationships, which are reciprocal, balanced, and in stable equilibrium, thereby imparting new meanings to rules. Therefore, the sense of moral obligations has two sources derived from particular forms of social relationships. The morality of constraint emerges from the context of the adult-child relationship, and this relationship endorses and maintains childish egocentrism and moral realism. This is the heteronomous orientation. In the morality of constraint, belief lies in a single, absolute moral perspective. This stage is typical of 6-year-olds. The other orientation is the autonomous orientation which emerges in the peer society, in the relationships between equals. This gives rise to the morality of cooperation, making a more equilibrated understanding of justice possible. In this stage, there is an awareness of different viewpoints regarding rules. Children do not make absolute judgements and realise that more than one viewpoint is possible. This stage is typical of 12-year-olds.

The heteronomous stage is characterised by one-sided respect for the power and authority of adults by the child. It constrains the child as the inherent inequality of this relationship results



in the child subordinating his/her interest to the adults' perspective. It also develops young children's moral notions, leading to the subordination of social interests to their point of view. This means that the more a child's interest is subordinated to adults' perspective, the more the child subordinates the strictures of adults to his or her point of view. The more the child feels constrained by the adults' point of view, the more egocentric and subjective and infused with realism the child's moral thinking will be. This stage is thus characterised by syncretism and juxtaposition (seen in the adult constraint and child's subjective point of view, respectively) and is thus subject to partial and unstable equilibrium. The child reduces moral obligation to obedience because the parents constrain the child by their greater social power. This results in a subjective and personal point of view in the child because of childish cognitive notions. Identifying fairness with egocentric desires encourages moral realism, the idea that justice is inherent in nature. In moral realism, objective consequences of moral infractions are judged without considering the intentions. The child does not understand the moral rules but submits to them due to adult constraints. While children feel restrained by rules, their behaviour is not controlled by the rules. The rules are sacrosanct and rigid, but the conduct is idiosyncratic, variable, and assimilated to individual schemes. It is only in the next stage, which is moral cooperation, that the child sees rules as flexible. The child realises that mutual consent is the source of cooperative arrangement, which serves the cause of solidarity.

The morality of cooperation is in contrast to heteronomy. It emerges in the context of peer solidarity among equals, and notions of mutual respect and equality drive it. In this society of equals, negotiation gains importance as it is through negotiation that one settles conflicts and wins over friends. In fair and equitable ways, one can sort out the burdens and benefits of cooperation (Rest, 1983). These relationships are marked by equality. A sense of moral obligation emerges, and this sense of moral obligation requires cooperation and reciprocity.

These peer relations give rise to rational moral notions than the moral realism and heteronomy of the previous stage. According to Piaget (1932), rational development is characterised by mutual respect, autonomy, and democratic cooperation. Rational development also involves moving away from the external imposition of sacrosanct injunctions, sacred laws, or the rules laid down by elders or tradition. Following Piaget's view, the rational development of societies involves a movement away from unstable equilibrium to more stable forms. It is, thus, a movement 'away from syncretism and unilateral respect for theocracy and gerontocracy to mutual respect and reciprocity of political democracy' (Lapsley, 2005).

Research has supported Piaget's developmental account to a certain extent (Likona, 1976). For example, several studies have shown that children have an inherent sense of justice and that this belief reduces with age (Jose, 1991). In addition, research has shown that moral judgement improves with perspective-taking, and peer group participation advances in perspective-taking improve moral judgement (DeRemer & Gruen, 1979; Brody & Shaffer, 1982; Enright & Stutterfield, 1980). However, other aspects of Piaget's theory have not found support in subsequent research.

Moral realism of the heteronomous stage is supposed to lead children to define moral duty in terms of obedience to authority, view rules as unchangeable as long as they are invested with adults' authority, and recognise punishment as a consequence for breaking the rules. There is, however, an absence of empirical evidence to lend credence to these claims (Turiel, 1983; Killen, 1991). The moral or social convention of violation of rules changes children's judgment about the legitimacy of parental sanctions (Tisak et al., 1986). The validity of punishments also depends on the same (Smetana, 1981, 1983). Wetson and Turiel (1980)

have shown that children do not view rules as sacred and unchangeable; moreover, children do not even hold all that the adults command as moral. Children can judge the legitimacy, obligation, and punishment by considering the situation's context (Turiel, 1983). Smetana (1983) has found children to be sensitive to the distinction between moral and conventional rules from an early age. Research conducted in the social learning tradition showed that lived and narrated exposure influences children's moral orientation. Bandura and McDonald (1983) showed that children changed their moral judgements in the same way as the adult model. Such a finding questions the idea of sequential stages of moral development. The information processing approach generated a host of research literature that showed that instead of the Piagetian notions of stages and structures, the various dimensions of moral development could be explained in terms of how children encode, store, process and retrieve information. Instead of using realism or egocentrism to explain developmental differences in moral development, developmental differences could be explained by the complexities of the tasks that lead to overburdening young children's information processing abilities (Lapsley, 1996).

### **1.3.2 Kohlberg and the Stages of Moral Development**

While Piaget was the pioneer in the study of moral development, Kohlberg galvanised the field and inspired a whole generation of scholars to investigate moral reasoning and moral development and explore its implications for education and clinical practice (Lapsley, 2005). In two of his most groundbreaking papers in moral development, *Stage and Sequence* (1969) and *From Is to Ought* (1971), Kohlberg laid the theoretical groundwork for the cognitive-developmental Framework for morality and socialisation. He asserted the superiority of the cognitive-developmental approach over its rivals in explaining socialisation. Furthermore, Kohlberg emphasised the utility of the cognitive stage theory as resource material in solving

certain fundamental issues in ethical theory. He launched the terms of the debate and presented the fundamental developmental questions which still guide research in this area.

Even though Piaget's work influenced Kohlberg, he did not consider the stages identified by Piaget as cognitive stages. For Kohlberg (1969), cognitive stages need to meet specific criteria. These stages must describe qualitative differences in models of reasoning; they must follow an invariant sequence. Each stage must describe an underlying thought organisation or structured whole. The structured wholes are not replaced in toto by the evolving thought organisations development. However, it is taken up within the new structure by the process of hierarchical integration. There are two reasons why Kohlberg does not consider Piaget's stages accurate structural-developmental stages. The first reason he gives is that he believes there is a **lack of inner logic** in the transition from heteronomous to autonomous stages. The two moralities are in opposition, with autonomy replacing heteronomy and not growing out of it. The second reason Kohlberg does not consider Piaget's stages to be true structural cognitive stages is that the stages are dependent on the outside environment. This dependence lends credence to moral relativism.

Kohlberg postulated the emergence of justice reasoning as a progressive elaboration of a sociomoral perspective through three levels of development. There are two stages within each level. The levels described by Kohlberg are the pre-conventional, conventional, and post-conventional levels. The first level is the pre-conventional level. The first stage in this level is characterised by obeying rules for the sake of avoidance of punishment. In the next stage, the individual recognises that reciprocity is possible. A system of exchange of favours characterises this stage which enables realising individualistic goals that are different from the norms and expectations of the larger group.

The next level is the conventional level. At this level, there is awareness of group membership and value is placed on these shared relationships. The individual identifies with expectations attached to social roles and accepts the necessity to put one's individualistic needs on hold for these social relationships (being a good son, dutiful daughter, loyal wife, caring husband). This perspective is more fully realised at the second stage of this level when expectations attached to being a good member of the shared relationship expand to include the impersonal collective of citizens in a shared polity. Conduct in this stage is not regulated by a set of shared expectations like in the stage before, but rather, conduct is regulated by taking in the perspective of the system as a whole. This perspective is reflected in the shared support for social institutions and equal treatment of citizen-strangers before the law. Self-interests become subordinate to the interests of shared relationships and society at the conventional level (while self-interest is of utmost importance at the pre-conventional level).

The next and final level is the post-conventional level. Here the individual identifies with general moral principles instead of rules, conventions, expectations, or laws per se. The individual recognises differences between the requirements of being a member of society and the commitment to upholding moral principles. Individuals can differentiate between moral and legal points of view. Laws and conventions are considered valid only if they align with moral considerations. Morals are taken into consideration before social conventions and legal regulations. When morals clash with laws, morals are upheld, and laws are rejected in stage 5. This is formalised in terms of universal moral obligations in stage 6. At this stage, which can be defined as the principled level of justice reasoning, moral consensus and agreement become a real possibility, and ethical relativism is most firmly rejected.

The declining influence of Kohlberg's stage theory follows the decline in the influence of Piaget's work in developmental psychology (Lapsley, 2005). Kohlberg's theory operates in the Piagetian paradigm of cognitive stages. Through the **use of Piaget's conceptual tools, Kohlberg developed his theory**. Kohlberg's dependence on Piaget's tools and theory resulted in Kohlberg losing out on paradigmatic support when newer alternative conceptualisations of cognitive development overshadowed Piaget's theory. Another reason that can be attributed to Kohlberg's theory losing its status is a fundamental issue inherent in the theory itself. Doubts over its empirical nature and understanding of fundamental concepts like stage and structure contributed to the decline in its influence. His theory ignores the role of language in determining nuances between the ontogenetically arranged stages. His faith in rationality linked it to morality because only actions that emerged from rational choice could be labelled as moral actions. In his view, *'only a judgement that an action is right or obligatory makes that action moral'* (Bergman, 2004, p. 25). One way to overcome these shortcomings is by recognising individuals' **situatedness** instead of focussing on the individuals in a vacuum.

### **1.3.3 Social Interactional Theory and the Domains of Moral Development**

This theory argues that ideas of morality are not connected to development. For the social interactional theory, ideas of moral and conventional obligations are universally present and differentiated from each other in early childhood. From the social interactional perspective, moral obligations are related to social experiences that have intrinsic implications for justice, harm, rights, and welfare. These emerge from the child's observation of consequences. The key idea here is of intrinsic implications. Conventional obligations lack this intrinsic implication and come from the social experience of socially regulated rules, which is an externally imposed social demand.

The basic idea is that moral judgement is constructed through social interactions, and various judgements are formed about the multifaceted social world (Turiel, 2002). In lieu of Kohlberg's three levels of understanding of moral development, the social interactional theory puts forth three domains of understanding: **personal, conventional, and moral**. The theory posits that children distinguish each of these domains and these domains undergo development. As a result, the domains are elaborated and become more sophisticated with time. In contrast to the cognitive-developmental view that looks at moral understanding as emerging from conventional understanding, the social interactional view argues that this understanding exists with children from early childhood and does not emerge from the development of rational reasoning. These different domains exist due to the differences in the social interactional events. According to Smetana (1983), these domains exist due to the distinct types of social interactions with different classes of events, leading to the formation of different types of social knowledge.

Theorists agree with Kohlberg in distinguishing moral understanding from conventional understanding. They do, however, believe that these exist in early childhood. Objective obligations concerned with justice, rights, harm, and human welfare are moral obligations. These can be expressed through actions that directly bear the rights and well-being of others. On the other hand, convention refers to actions that are considered right or wrong based solely on social consensus. It is conceptualised as an idea of an obligation that has no natural law.

According to the social interactional approach, some events are intrinsically moral. Children learn to distinguish those events from social conventions (which are events whose sense of rightness or wrongness is extrinsically imposed and is a matter of social consensus) through

social interaction. Through experience with both types of events, children develop the idea of moral and conventional events. They can recognise that the events are not the same.

The social interactional approach argues that young children can discern the moral quality inherent in certain events. This ability to discern comes from recognising the cause-effect relationship and simple forms of hypothetical and contrafactual reasoning. Children are also credited with recognising that specific actions are consistently considered right or wrong by group members without any objective or rational reason. This leads the child to understand that certain ideas of right and wrong are arbitrary and relative to a group.

The social interactional approach includes the implicit and explicit knowledge of moral concepts. The theory holds that moral understanding does not develop from the conventional understanding; rather, moral and conventional understanding coexist. They are understood to be different through different social events.

While the social interactional approach works at explaining and overcoming some of the shortcomings of the Kohlbergian view of moral development, this theory is fraught with issues. One is that it overlooks how social conventions may be linked to inherent ideas about harm, justice and natural law. What is classified by the theory as conventional could end up overlooking its moral significance. The theory overlooks the role of social meaning in the development of moral understanding.

Social meaning in the development of moral understanding is overlooked in the social interactional approach because Turiel, Nucci, and Smetana (1988) have defined morality without considering the social meaning that such actions would contain or represent. In their



definition of morality, there is a reference to the idea of natural law and objective obligation, along with natural rights and abstract ideas of harm. However, this ignores the emotional distress caused when there is a violation of obligations without actual harm taking place the way Turiel, Nucci and Smetana (1988) describe it. As Shweder (1987) explains, if the notion of harm is broadened to include emotional distress and the concept of persons is broadened to include all entities vulnerable to harm, insult, or abuse, it becomes difficult to differentiate between conventional events and moral events. A dress code violation, for example, may be emotionally upsetting and could be viewed as a moral event instead of a conventional event if the concepts of harm and persons are broadened. If, on the other hand, they are not, then issues, such as incest between consenting adults, get reduced to conventional events.

Murdock's (1980) work questions the separation of the hypothesised domain of conventional events from moral events, as Turiel, Nucci, and Smetana (1988) do. His work was a cross-cultural survey of theories about the causes of illness in societies. 'Mystical retribution' was one of the theories that he surveyed. This theory claims that acts which violate taboos cause illness. The acts that Turiel, Nucci, and Smetana (1988) would classify as conventions would lead to illness if violated, though they are not differentiated from moral events by the people in the society. The acts are considered moral events instead of just being conventional by the members of the society because of the meanings that those acts hold for them. This, however, is not recognised by the social interactional theorists.

Another difficulty the social interactional theory faces is underplaying the importance of explicit social communication in interpreting events as moral. This type of self-construction, through direct interaction, has been associated with conventional obligations. However, the distinction between moral and conventional events could stem from the differences in how

these events are discussed. For example, Edwards (1981) looked at the naturally occurring transgressions among children (in a district of Kenya). For transgressions considered moral, the victim's response is neither the most important nor the only source of information on moral violations for the child. Through the intervention of other children and adults and explicit communication, children learn that a moral obligation has been transgressed. Edwards (1981) also found that American children take conventional rules lightly and attribute less importance to them than Kenyan children. This differentiation between conventions and morality may not be a developmental universal.

The sociocultural and cultural developmental approaches address the issues of the distinction between conventional obligations and moral obligations and look at whether or not events are inherently moral.

#### **1.3.4 The Ethics of Community, Autonomy and Divinity**

Shweder and his colleagues (1987/1990), in their work, tested the distinction made by children between moral and conventional events along with identifying the principles and concepts that could be considered moral universals. The theory that emerged from their work in the 80s and 90s spoke of three ethics of Community, Autonomy, and Divinity. According to Shweder and his colleagues, Moral reasoning is guided by these three ethics.

The Ethic of Autonomy focuses on people as individuals with needs and preferences. Moral reasoning within this ethic looks at individuals' rights, well-being, and interests. This ethic resembles the harm-rights-and-justice code. Emphasis is on the individual's claim to independence, self-interest and non-interference from others. It represents the individuals' interests, desires, and preferences.

The Ethic of Community looks at individuals as members of social groups, and moral reasoning relates to role-related duties and the welfare of groups. It comes from the discourse of obligations that arise due to **participation in the community**. The roles and status an individual occupies are situated in a discourse that creates obligations in relation to other members of the community. **Duty, hierarchy, and interdependence** are themes that emerge from this ethic.

The Ethic of Divinity focuses on people as spiritual beings, and reasoning within this ethic comes from divine law and spiritual texts. The religious order, tradition, sanctity, and natural law are the themes of the ethic of divinity. The ethic of divinity presents the idea that sacred and natural law is the same thing.

Unlike the cognitive-developmental approach, the three ethics are not stages; individuals draw from one or more of these ethics when faced with moral dilemmas. Studies have given evidence for these three ethics in all cultures, but there is a difference in their prevalence with differences in countries, social classes and religious groups. These differences could exist because the moral discourse in which the different groups are immersed is different. The moral discourse guides the development of morality and emphasises the different ethics in negotiating moral actions differently.

Research studies have focussed on the trajectories that the three ethics take from childhood to adulthood. The ethic of autonomy appears first in childhood and remains stable across adolescence to adulthood. According to Jensen (2015), in collectivistic cultures, there may be a decline in the ethic of autonomy with age, while the ethic of community and divinity may

increase. This is because, in these cultures, needs, desires, and self-interests are seen as subordinate to the social groups and larger community to which the individual belongs.

The degree of usage and variety of ways the ethic of community is used rises throughout childhood into adolescence and adulthood. Numerous researchers have shown that individuals in various cultures invoke the ethic of community (Olson & Spelke, 2008; Shweder, Mahapatra and Miller, 1990). As the child moves from childhood to adolescence, community ethic enlarges to include social groups other than the family as well (Carlo, 2006; Schlegel, 2011).

Research on the ethic of divinity is limited, but Jensen (2015) argues that use will be low in children and will increase with age. It will rise in adolescence and become similar to the use in adulthood. Adolescence is a period of development of religiosity or spirituality, even in societies that are not affiliated with religious institutions (Trommsdorff, 2000). The ethic of divinity may be more prevalent in communities that frequently emphasise the authority of God and conceptualise these supernatural entities as distinct from them. These researchers claim that compared to children, adolescents may have the cognitive ability to understand these abstract concepts and hence use the ethic of divinity more than adults. Saraswathi (2005), however, points out that in those cultures in which these concepts are less salient and in which these entities are conceptualised as less distinct to humans, the ethic of divinity may develop in childhood. These children may use the ethic of divinity early on as these concepts are tied to everyday specific activities and objects. The moral discourse of these communities makes it possible for the ethic of divinity to develop early in childhood in contrast to the moral discourse of other communities. Pandya and Bhangokar (2012) report that a strong religious discourse results in the ethic of divinity and makes it available to individuals in

early childhood, even when they lack the cognitive capacity to engage with such abstract concepts.

Research on the three ethics shows that the differences in moral discourse create differences in the developmental trajectories of the ethics of community, autonomy, and divinity. This means that the moral discourse that a child is immersed in is responsible for the individual's values.

#### **1.4 Theoretical Framework: Sociocultural Approach to Moral Development**

The sociocultural perspective to moral development has emerged as a response to various challenges faced by the (then) theories of moral development, especially Kohlberg's theory of justice reasoning. Kohlberg's theory has faced immense criticism from various fronts. Critics argue that Kohlberg's approach does not consider the **multidimensional and multivocal nature of the moral domain**. Carol Gilligan (1977, 1982) has argued that not only Kohlberg but the classical theories of moral development (Freud and Piaget) have systematically excluded girls' and women's experiences from the theory. She claims that the orientation of justice is not the only focus of moral reasoning and action. She brought forth a Care orientation which is used more often by girls and women. The care orientation emerged in Gilligan's research when she and her colleagues moved away from the justice-laden questions used by Kohlberg to a more open-ended format that emphasises tracking the moral reasoning employed by people in their context from their own life experiences of moral conflict and choice. While there are conflicting research results on Gilligan's claims, her fundamental understanding is that **everyday moral language** leads to understanding moral experience and development. This insight, in turn, has helped pave the way for sociocultural

exploration of the centrality of words, language and forms of discourse, particularly narrative (storytelling), in human moral life (Tappan, 2006, 1991).

The central tenet of the sociocultural approach is that moral thoughts, feelings, and actions are **semiotically mediated and socioculturally situated**. It views the self as being dialogically conceived. This is generated by a move away from a paradigm of cognitive representations and internally held principles (Kohlberg, 1984) 'toward a paradigm of **social construction and intersubjectively possible forms of discourse, wherein the self is assumed to be a shared and/or distributed product of social relations and communicative practices**' (Day & Tappan, 1996). The sociocultural perspective draws heavily from Vygotsky's works. Motivated by Vygotsky's insights, scholars using this perspective have looked at the role of mediational means: physical, psychological, and semiotic tools appropriated from the social world in moulding human mental functioning. This, thus, underscores the importance of social, cultural, historical, and institutional context in giving rise to human action and interaction.

The sociocultural/dialogic perspective has three claims derived from Vygotsky's work. **First, higher mental functions can only be understood when one analyses and interprets them developmentally**. The second is that higher mental functioning is **mediated by words, language, and forms of discourse**. These act as '**psychological tools**' for facilitating and transforming mental action. The third is the claim that **forms of higher mental functioning have their origins in social relations, as 'intermental' processes between persons are internalised to become 'intramental' processes within persons**.

These three claims emerge from four principles or assumptions that characterise various sociocultural and dialogical approaches to moral development. These assumptions build on and extend central aspects of the theoretical and empirical work of both Vygotsky and Bakhtin. These assumptions look at:

1. 'Moral functioning (like all 'higher psychological functioning') as mediated by words, language, and forms of discourse;
2. Such mediation occurs primarily in private or inner speech, in the form of inner moral dialogue;
3. Processes of social communication and social relations necessarily give rise to moral functioning;
4. Moral development is always shaped by the particular social, cultural, and historical context in which it occurs' (Tappan, 1997).

Language was the most crucial semiotic tool for Vygotsky. It is language that transforms and reorganises mental functioning and does not just facilitate the operation of existing mental tasks. Early childhood is a critical period of this transformation, where egocentric speech emerges. Language becomes an instrument of thought that helps the child solve problems and plan activities. For Vygotsky, development is not a series of quantitative increments but rather a **'series of fundamental qualitative transformations or 'revolutions' associated with changes in the psychological tools to which the person has access'** (Wertsch, 1985).

The central assumption in the sociocultural perspective is that morality emerges through language. The idea of **mediation** is of utmost importance because actions would be considered moral or not through this mediation. Actions that are considered moral have particular meanings associated with them. Moral, thus, is an interpretation of actions based

on shared assumptions and understandings that constitute culture. Therefore moral functioning is mediated as it is realised through psychological tools, which in this case is language. The psychological tools enable individuals to think, feel, and act in specific ways that are considered to be moral in certain sociocultural contexts. Language and moral discourse create moral functioning and are not just used to express it.

Evidence for moral languages can be seen in Gilligan's work, where she and her colleagues talk of different moral languages people employ. In their identification of moral voices of justice and care, they have shown how the two voices show different ways of speaking about the world of human relationships (Tappan, 2005).

Tappan (2005) argues that **moral functioning can be seen as mediated action**. This would require focus on not only the agent but the mediation tool as well. Tappan (1997) has also shown the relationship between inner speech and moral development. He argues that when faced with a moral dilemma, one responds to it through inner speech or inner moral dialogue. One talks about the solution to oneself, and this dialogue would be similar in characteristics to inner speech. Gilligan and Attannucci (1988) show this similarity. They show that most people represent the justice and care voices in their reasoning through moral dilemmas. They show that these voices seem to be engaged in a dialogical process. Day (1991) provides evidence for multiple voices in moral reasoning. These multiple voices exist within the person and across communities. He put forth the idea of a moral audience, an internalised audience for whom the individual acts. It is in relation to the audience that moral principles are developed and sustained or even changed. According to him, moral action and reasoning can only be understood when the individual's relationship to this audience is understood as moral actions and are analysed retrospectively and evaluated in terms of the audience. **These voices, moral languages, and inner moral dialogue are the internalised moral discourse.**



**Discourses** are ways of constituting knowledge, social practices, forms of subjectivity, and power relations inherent in such knowledges and the relationship between them. Language is structured to mirror power relations so that no other ways of being can be seen (Parker, 1992, p. xi). Discourses facilitate, limit, and constrain what can be said, by whom, where and when. Along with repertoires, they are responsible for producing and transforming meaning (Parker, 1992). They categorise the social world and allow one to see things that are not there, and once an object has been described in a discourse, it is difficult not to refer to it as if it were real. Discourse is realised in texts, and text refers to all things that carry meaning. It is about objects, contains subjects, has a coherent system of meanings, refers to other discourses, reflects on its way of speaking, is historically located, supports institutions, reproduces power relations, and has ideological effects. They have the power to construct subjects and are implicated in how human beings are made subjects (Foucault, 1982). They provide certain ways of seeing and being in the world, and these discursive constructions have real effects. They '*construct representations of the world which have a reality almost as coercive as gravity, and like gravity, we know of objects through their effects*' (Parker, 1992, p. 8). Moral functioning can then be studied by looking at the prevalent moral discourse in the sociocultural context. Analysing all forms of texts and language in the construction of social and psychological life would make apparent the kind of moral functioning being promoted.

**Moral discourses are the mediational means, and moral functioning is the mediated action.**

The idea of mediated action was proposed by Wertsch (1991). Mediated action is an action (that an agent carries out) immersed in mediational means. He argues that sociocultural inquiry aims to understand the relationship between individuals and the social, cultural,

historical, and institutional contexts in which they live. To do this, one must not limit one's focus to individual mental functioning or social, cultural, and historical settings. Instead, one must focus on both the individual and the systemic conditions. The concept of mediation would help alleviate the tension between the individual and society along with the dangers of individualism and social reductionism. The agent and the cultural tools or the mediational means are the two central elements of mediated action. It brings focus to the agent, the agency, and the various tools individuals use.

Moral functioning can be looked at as mediated action. In Vygotsky's terms, moral functioning is a higher psychological process. An individual uses it to solve certain problems; in this case, it would be moral dilemmas that an individual faces. This requires moral decision and moral action. When moral functioning is considered a mediated action, it requires focussing on both the moral agent and the moral mediational means that the individual employs in responding to the moral problem. The mediational tools most commonly used in such situations are **words, language and forms of discourse that shape moral thinking, feeling and action** (Tappan, 2006).

Among the various mediational means, **voices** seem to have the most importance. **Voices are the words, phrases and narratives that an individual employs.** The voices are borrowed from the sociocultural environment and are used to interact with one another and to construct an account of the interactions. The idea of voices comes from Bakhtin's work, for whom voices exist in response to or in dialogue. According to Wertsch (1991), all actions are mediated through voices. Even those actions that are silent actions, such as private thoughts, are mediated via voices, which in this case would be the inner voice.

Inner speech is an internalisation of the semiotically and linguistically mediated social relations. The internalisation of moral norms is an integral part of the moral development process. Numerous studies have demonstrated this. Studies show that caregivers' language-based socialisation strategies and patterns play an essential role in the child's construction of sociomoral meanings (Bhatia, 2000). Through conversations, children learn the standards of moral behaviour (Dunn, 1987). The sociocultural perspective on moral development demonstrates that moral functioning emerges from the processes of social communication and social relations. Since social interactions always occur in the context of culture, moral development is also shaped by the particular social, cultural, and historical context in which it occurs. Thus, the development of moral functioning is necessarily and inescapably socioculturally situated, as is the development of all forms of higher mental functioning. Words, languages, and forms of discourse that are similarly shaped and contextualised help mediate inter-mental functioning, which gives rise to intra-mental processes of moral functioning. Thus, moral development is shaped by the social, cultural, and institutional contexts in which one is situated.

Social communication is used to transmit moral discourse. Research by Shweder (1987) and his colleagues have shown that within the cultures, moral judgements that are common to cultures are learned at the same rate as those judgements that are distinct from each other. There is an equal rate of acquisition of culture-specific and universal moral contents. Universal and culture-specific moral content is learned by the same processes. Children learn the culture-specific moral discourse and the universal moral code through social communication. Much (1991) highlights the fact that it is in the context of routine practices that discourse is conveyed. For her, the child's morality originates from the continuous

participation in social practices. The discourse that the child is immersed in shapes a child's morality.

### 1.5 The School, Moral Discourse and Values

Moral development and education involve an amalgamation of the democratic socialisation of moral discourse with the developmental advancement of moral reasoning. Cognitive-developmental advancements in moral reasoning and collective socialisation of morals are the basis on which Kohlberg constructed his three models of moral cognition and his three approaches to moral education. He postulated that the primary context in which a moral person develops is the group.

Kohlberg and his colleagues sought to characterise the added value of groups that would be the most relevant to moral cognition, development, and behaviour. The unit of education was the group. They concluded that **changing the moral culture of schools would significantly alter students' moral development**. They further elaborated that a democratically governed group is the most beneficial for moral development. Here the rights and responsibilities of each other and the group are recognised. Thus, moral development and moral reasoning are promoted by collective socialisation that is democratic. Such socialisation would foster moral ideals, goals, and actions and promote moral reasoning more than a promotion of individual moral reasoning.

Kohlberg's identity was centred around that of a moral educator. As per Kohlberg (1987), a person's structural changes in moral reasoning were promoted by having rich experiences in the social-moral realm. Kohlberg's pedagogical methods of moral education promote learning

from interaction with adult role models (moral exemplars), peers and friends (dilemma discussions), and the larger school community (Just Community schools).

The least acknowledged of Kohlberg's methods of moral education is his use of moral exemplars to support socialisation and promote development pedagogically. According to Kohlberg, observing or learning about those who practised moral principles was a more effective method of teaching than any theory could hope to attain. Kohlberg often demonstrated stage-level reasoning with concrete examples from moral judgment interviews, thus using moral case examples to teach his moral developmental categories. He used public moral exemplars to embody the uncommon Stage 5 and the mercurial Stage 6. Kohlberg saw public moral exemplars as a critical factor in public moral education; through their insights and actions, they 'draw' our development toward higher stages of moral reasoning.

The first genuine Kohlbergian venture into moral education began with an experiment by Kohlberg's doctoral student, Moshe Blatt, after about a decade of Kohlberg proposing his moral stage model. Blatt attempted to facilitate moral stage development among sixth-grade students through weekly classroom discussions of hypothetical moral dilemmas (Blatt & Kohlberg, 1975). Blatt found that over one-third of the students in the experimental group advanced in the stage of moral development during the year, while the other students in the control group did not. Subsequently, Kohlberg and his colleagues implemented this method by integrating dilemma discussions into the curriculum of disciplines like humanities (e.g., literature) and social studies (e.g., history). Kohlberg and colleagues held workshops and wrote about how to lead moral dilemma discussions (Fenton & Kohlberg, 1976; Kohlberg & Lickona, 1987) to prepare teachers. Some questions were similar to those used in a standard moral judgment interview. For instance, they asked students to clarify their reasoning about

why they held a particular position. Alternatively, certain questions provoked students to clarify their meaning, ensure a shared understanding, or promote peer interaction, especially perspective-taking (Selman, 1971).

The landmark meta-analysis of 55 studies by Schlaefli, Rest, and Thoma (1985) demonstrated that the dilemma discussion approach produced moderate and significant educational effects on moral development compared to other intervention programs with smaller effects. Moreover, the results produced by individual academic courses in the humanities were weaker.

DeHaan and colleagues (1997) compared the effectiveness of approaches to ethics education among high school students by enrolling students in one of four high school classes. These included an introductory ethics class, a blended economics-ethics class, a role-model ethics class taught by graduate students, and a non-ethics comparison class. The first two classes employed the dilemma discussions. All groups were assessed with pre-and post-test measures of moral reasoning, moral emotions and moral behaviour. The results indicated that the integrated economics-ethics and introductory ethics classes showed statistically significant gains in socio-moral reflection maturity, principled moral reasoning, and moral behaviour. Similar students in the comparison group and the role-model ethics class showed no such advances. These findings further strengthen the argument that if teachers explicitly draw their students' attention to ethical issues inherent in their respective courses and integrate discussion of relevant moral dilemmas into their current courses, the students would gain the most.

In 1974 Kohlberg founded the first **Just Community School**. The school was governed by direct democracy. All significant issues were discussed and democratically decided at a weekly community meeting at which all members, students and teachers had a vote. A social contract was drawn between members, which defined everyone's rights and responsibilities. Students and teachers were empowered with the same fundamental rights, including freedom of expression, respect for others, and freedom from physical or verbal harm.

The keystone of the Just Community approach was the weekly community meeting (Town Meeting), a gathering of students and staff to decide school policies and practices that dealt with issues of fairness and community. The weekly meeting was preceded by a meeting between the advisor and the standing committee groups. Each advisory group consisted of one of the five teachers and a fifth of the students. These small group meetings set the stage for the larger community meetings. They provided students and their advisors an opportunity to interact and share more personal concerns than could be addressed in the larger meeting. In addition, the agenda for the community meeting was discussed, and the small group would often debate the issues and try to achieve consensus or agreement on proposals to bring to the next day's meeting. These meetings provided a context for moral discussion and a place to build community. For the students, the key objective was to achieve a sense of community solidarity—to create a 'moral atmosphere'—through democratic governance (i.e., coming to fair decisions, carrying out these decisions, and, as necessary, democratically changing their decisions).

The sense of group solidarity enabled the peer group to function as a moral authority for its members' behaviour. Further, direct participatory democracy helped protect students' rights and limited the power of group solidarity to coerce conformity. It helped maintain the

possibility for alternative conceptions of the good to be voiced. The role of the teacher was at par with the students'. In typical moral dilemma discussions in a regular classroom, teachers primarily functioned as facilitators, but in the new Just Community schools, teachers had to function as advocates for moral content: justice and community values (Kohlberg & Selman, 1972; Selman, 2003). Thus, the teachers served as moral leaders by advocating their positions within the constraints of one person, one vote, and by being invested in 'what' students decided to do and 'why' they decided to do it (Oser & Renold, 2006).

A comparative analysis of the first three Just Community schools demonstrated that they promoted students' moral reasoning and the moral atmosphere of schools (Mosher et al., 1994; Power et al., 1989). Moreover, the students in the three Just Community schools (i.e., Cambridge, Brookline, and Scarsdale) outperformed their contemporaries attending the parallel or parent high schools on all measures of moral atmosphere. In addition, they fared better in individual moral judgment than the students in their companion traditional high schools.

In sum, the net effect of the 'Just Community' model of moral education was to extend Kohlberg's theory from the **moral reasoning of individuals to the moral culture of communities** (Oser, Althof, & Higgins-D'Alessandro, 2008). Kohlberg's Just Community approach to moral education incorporated socialisation and developmental perspectives. It provided a way for teachers and administrators to embody justice and care in their treatment of students and each other and a way for students to develop these moral values. These findings show that the **institution of a particular moral discourse in schools led to the development of certain values in children**. Since the prevalent moral discourse in these schools emphasised democratic values, so did the schools' students.



## 1.6 Moral Discourse in Schools in India

The moral discourse in which a child is situated mediates the development of values in the students. The school becomes a vital institution situating the child in a particular moral discourse. As Durkheim says, the primary function of the school is the evocation of a sense of morality and values in the child. Family is insufficient in generating a sense of morality because the family is full of emotion and sentiment and devoid of impersonality. Things change for the child once he or she enters a school. The school is bigger than the family, and it resembles society. The child is forced to adopt a moral attitude even towards those not part of his/her family. The school teaches the abstract notion of moral responsibility and instils values in the child. Schools can do this through the moral discourse prevalent in the school.

In India, schools were primarily viewed as sacred institutions. A central aim of the schools was character and moral development of the students. This notion of schools changed with Macaulay's model of modern education. The purpose of schools under the British government was to cater to their needs. For Macaulay, the purpose of education and schools in India was to produce a class of persons who were English in taste, ideas, and outlook, even though they were Indian by origin. Education aimed to develop a class of people loyal to British rule and who could serve the British government. Even after gaining independence, India did not revert to the previous educational setup but continued to function more or less in the same pattern with one minor change. Instead of using schools to instil in individuals loyalty towards the British, the schools were reworked to develop the dominant values of a sense of pride and patriotism in students. The education commission was set up in 1964, under the chairmanship of Dr K.S. Kothari expressed that schools should be the means of achieving social mobility, status, and income.

### **1.6.1 National Curriculum Frameworks and Moral Discourse**

The first National Curriculum Framework, NCF (1975), stated that the school's curriculum 'should be related to national integration, social justice, productivity, modernisation of the society, and the cultivation of normal and spiritual values'. Moral discourse in schools should have contributed to developing the values spoken about in NCF (1975). The normal and spiritual values were not defined, but the emphasis was placed on the values of compassion, courage, faithfulness, loyalty, duty, and the common good, among many others. Character building was a central objective around which the school's curriculum was proposed to be designed. Moral values were emphasised and were linked to national integration.

Ethics were emphasised in the National Curriculum Framework (1988). Character building remained one of the central goals of education, and value education was discussed explicitly. The cultural plurality of the nation was recognised, and value education was envisioned to lead the development of universal and eternal values oriented towards unity and integration of India. Education was to be the means through which the values of honesty, courage, tolerance, and justice, among others, were to be inculcated in children. It was assumed that developing these values would contribute to national integration. The National Curriculum Framework (2000) also emphasised imparting moral values to enable individuals to positively deal with ills like corruption, violence, and exploitation and foster feelings of oneness in citizens. Like the frameworks before, the National Curriculum Framework (2000) also emphasised these values for national integration.

One of the guiding principles of the National Curriculum Framework (2005) was to nurture an overriding identity informed by caring concerns within the democratic polity of India. The

NCF (2005) highlighted the idea of citizenship in a democracy. A citizen in a democracy is said to possess the values of understanding and intellectual integrity, which enable him/her to distinguish truths from lies and propaganda. The democratic citizen should also be able to reject the lure of prejudice and fanaticism. The Framework claimed that to nurture democracy, the values of equality, justice, liberty, and fraternity laid down in the constitution should be inculcated in the students (along with respect for all religious beliefs). Furthermore, the Framework proposed that 'the education system needs to respond to the inherent cultural pluralism of our society and should lead to the strengthening of cultural heritage and national identity, along with enabling the individual to reinterpret and re-evaluate the past with reference to new priorities and emerging outlooks of a changing societal context'. Thus, the Framework proposed that the schools' discourse should promote values that foster national integration and peace.

### **1.6.2 Saraswati Mandirs**

Saraswati Mandirs are schools that the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) runs. Saraswati Mandir is translated to Saraswati's Temples, Saraswati being the Goddess of learning. The first Saraswati Shishu Mandir (Shishu meaning child) was established in Gorakhpur in Uttar Pradesh in 1952. Krishna Kumar (1990) writes that while it is difficult to trace the course of growth of the RSS-affiliated schools, there has been rapid growth in the number of these schools in the 1980s. The RSS-affiliated schools are run under Vidya Bharti, which was set up in 1977 as an organisational umbrella for these schools. Panikar (1999) explains that it is difficult to determine the number of these schools because each state and region names the schools differently and has different governing bodies. The common names used for the schools include Saraswati Shishu Mandir, Vidya Bharti, Gyan Bharti, and Geeta

Vidyalaya, among others. The schools are funded through fees and private donations, with claims of no government aid being taken by the schools.

The number of Saraswati Mandirs is steadily increasing. Mukherjee, Mukherjee and Mahajan (2008) point out that by the time the Vidya Bharti was formed, there were 500 schools with 20,000 students. There were 6,000 schools with 1,200,000 students by 1993 and 14,000 Vidya Bharti Schools with 1,800,000 students by 1999.

Saraswati Mandirs follow the curriculum and textbooks prescribed by the government and supplement these with their publications and co-curricular activities developed and prescribed by the Vidya Bharti. These include additional readings for moral education. The aim of education in the Saraswati Mandirs is character building, and the discourse in the school is geared towards certain dominant values and ethics that the child should possess. The schools also use books that have been published by the RSS publishing houses like the Sanskar Bharti Prakashan and Bhartiya Shiksha Samiti. The books include Sanskar Saurabh and Naitik Shiksha- a series of books that have been used in Rajasthan to develop values in students. The most important vehicle for imparting values to the students of Saraswati Mandirs is moral education or moral improvement, termed '*Sadachar*' (virtue). This is taught as the first subject of the day (Froerer, 2007).

Froerer (2007) highlights the strong Hindu orientation in the schools. The schools are steeped in the philosophy of Hinduism, which can be seen from the school's name (being named after the Hindu Goddess of learning). The Vidya Bharti educational mission is founded on the objective of training children to see themselves as the protectors of the Hindu nation (Sundar, 2004). The Vidya Bharti schools aim to transmit Hindu cultural values, and the same

principle heavily guides the discourse in the school. The school is named after the Hindu goddess of learning and is called a Temple, which 'reinforces the notion that learning is an act of faith or religious devotion which precludes any kind of critical questioning' (Sundar, 2004). It serves as an extension of the religious discourse communicated in the temples. The discourse in these schools is thus extremely religious. The moral discourse would then be an extension of the religious discourse. Since the students are immersed in this discourse and the discourse is tied to the everyday activities and objects in the child's environment, the children of these schools may have a more developed ethic of divinity than the students of government schools (Saraswati, 2005).

As highlighted in the discussion above, the moral discourses the National Curriculum Frameworks promotes and that the Saraswati Mandirs promote are very different, resulting in the inculcation of different values. It is in this context that the present research is carried out. The present research aims to a) study the moral discourse in a Saraswati Mandir and b) examine values promoted by this discourse. Therefore, it asks the following questions:

1. What are the forms and nature of moral discourse in Saraswati Mandirs?
2. What kind of material and symbolic resources do Saraswati Mandirs employ to generate specific kinds of moral discourse?
3. What and how are values reified and promoted among children in Saraswati mandir?

## **CHAPTER II**

### **Methodology**

This chapter describes the methodology used to carry out this research. As described in the previous chapter, the sociocultural approach to moral development is the theoretical framework that the study employs. Morality is looked at as a mediated function with everyday discourse as primary mediational tools. The methodological questions revolve around how to study the everyday practices of the schools that mediate children's minds including moral development and what roles the national curriculum framework play in determining the school based practices.

#### **2.1 Research Objectives**

The primary objective of this research is to study the moral discourse and the kind of values that are reified and promoted among children in schools. As Saraswati Mandirs centre their pedagogic innovations around moral development, the present study examines the everyday practices of one of the Saraswati Mandirs of Delhi.

#### **2.2 Research Questions**

1. What are the forms and nature of moral discourse in Saraswati Mandirs?
2. What kind of material and symbolic resources do Saraswati Mandirs employ to generate specific kinds of moral discourse?
3. What and how values are reified and promoted among children in Saraswati mandirs?

### **2.3 Participants and Participant Sampling**

In order to select a Saraswati Mandir from New Delhi, I reached out to the Vidya Bharti organisation, presented them with my research proposal and obtained permission to conduct research in one of their schools situated in South Delhi. I couldn't use any random technique here as I had to accept the school that the Vidya Bharti organisation choose for my study. Saraswati mandirs are schools run by Vidya Bharti, the educational wing of the Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh. These schools have a Hindu Foundation and aim to teach the values of Hinduism to their students. First established in 1952, the strength of the schools and their students has steadily increased. They are found in all the states. The Vidya Bharti runs formal schools at primary, middle, secondary, and senior secondary levels. It also runs informal schools called Ekal Vidyalayas and Sanskar Kendras.

The classes selected for observation were the fourth, seventh and ninth standards with median ages of 8, 12 and 15 years, respectively. These classes were explicitly chosen as children's moral reasoning shifts from moral realism to moral relativism around the ages of 9 to 10 (Piaget, 1932). Children in the fourth standard would also be in the pre-conventional stage of moral development. Students of the ninth standard, being in the formal operations stage (Piaget, 1936), would have developed the abstract thinking required for post-conventional morality (Kohlberg, 1984).

Students of the eleventh standard were selected for the Personal Values Questionnaire by Sherry and Verma based on the age criteria given.

## 2.4 Tools and Strategies for Data Collection

Data were collected using audio recordings of school assemblies and classrooms, administering research tools to students, and maintaining field notes. The 'Personal Values Questionnaire' developed by Sherry and Verma was used to triangulate the data found through school observation. The salience of economic value found in the discourse through observation is corroborated by the results of the personal value questionnaire. Permission was taken from the class teachers to administer the scales. These were administered in the Zero period so that no subject class was disturbed. The scale was administered according to the manual, and students were free to participate. None of the students was forced to participate.

I conducted school observations over a period of five months by visiting the school for six days a week, 6-7 hours a day. I started the school observations with the fourth standard classroom. I spent one and a half months with the fourth standard students, participating in the school day along with them. The second class that I visited was the seventh standard; out of the two available sections, the junior section's teacher-in-charge allotted one of the sections to me. I spent the entire school days with the seventh standard students for a month and a half and then moved on to one of the ninth standard classrooms allotted to me by the teacher-in-charge for the rest of the duration of fieldwork.

The research was based on mutually voluntary and negotiated *entrée* (Schatzman & Strauss, 1973:22 as cited in Corsaro, 1991). The gatekeepers (the principal, manager of the school, teachers, parents, and the Vidya Bharti organisation) had differing degrees of control over my access to the research site and the activities the children participated in. The members of the Vidya Bharti had the most power as they were the ones to give me access to the schools. The



school manager instructed the school principal to guide me further in the school. Once the principal introduced the teacher-in-charge, I was able to enter the classrooms. The members of the Vidya Bharti had the most control over access to school, while the actual classroom teachers had the least.

The school observational method can be described as reactive participation (Corsaro, 1991). I took part in conversations that students and teachers initiated with me to build trust. I responded to questions directed at me but did not initiate conversations. I made myself as unobtrusive to the classroom as possible. I selected a seat in the classroom corner and placed the audio recorder at the teacher's desk. I took care not to disturb the students, teachers, or the school's functioning.

I wrote short brief notes about happenings during the school day in my field diary and wrote elaborate descriptions with minimal interpretations at the end of the school day. These descriptions were part of the *daily diary*.

The files from the audio recorder were transferred to a hard disk and saved in multiple locations with details of the date and class. I used the daily diary to locate relevant audio files to transcribe.

The National Curriculum frameworks published in 1975, 1988, 2000 and 2005 were used as another data set. The National Curriculum Frameworks are documents published by the National Council of Educational Research and Training, which map out the framework for making syllabi, textbooks, and teaching practices within the school education programme of India. Curriculum frameworks address educational programmes and acquaint society with what the future generations are being taught and why (Thapar, 2005). They guide school

education programmes and prescribe curricula to meet the nation's needs. The moral values prescribed in the National Curriculum Frameworks reflect the moral values held in esteem by the nation and the kind of values the citizens need to imbibe.

## 2.5 Data Analysis

Two strategies of data analysis were used. The data collected through ethnography was analysed using Foucauldian Discourse Analysis. Content Analysis was used for the analysis of the National Curriculum Frameworks of 1975, 1988, 2000 and 2005.

Discourse, according to Foucault, is understood as the ways of constituting knowledge, along with social practices, forms of subjectivity and power relations which are inherent in such knowledge and the relationship between them. FDA brings out how the object is constructed in the discourse. The analysis is concerned with the discursive formations that have been created about a particular discursive object. The present research used the steps for FDA given by Carla Willig (2008). There are six steps in this. First is the identification of **Discursive constructions**, wherein the text is read multiple times, and all instances and how the discursive object is spoken about, implicitly or explicitly, are noted down. Then, in step 2, the **identification of discourses**, all the discourse used to construct the discursive object are noted down. Step 3 is **action orientation** which looks at the functions that the discourse achieve and what is gained from constructing the discursive object through those particular discourse. Step 4 is **Positioning**, in which subject positions available in the discourse are brought out. This is followed by step 5, **Practice** which looks at the relationship between discourse and practice, and how particular discursive constructions and subject positions within them enable and constrain avenues for action. The last step is **Subjectivity** which

explores the logical consequence of taking up particular subject positions and practices associated with them.

Content Analysis is an analysis '*technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts (or other meaningful matter) to the contexts of their use*' (Krippendorff, 2004). It is more than just counting. It enables one to link results to the larger context in which they were produced (Downe-Wambolt, 1992, p. 314). The National Curriculum Frameworks were read multiple times. Every occurrence of a value was underlined and noted down. A master list of all the values was maintained in an excel sheet along with page numbers on which they occurred. This process was repeated several times. These were coded as the subordinate values. From the subordinate values, superordinate values were extracted. The frequency for each value was obtained, and their percentage of occurrence in each of the National Curriculum Frameworks was calculated.

## **2.6 Credibility and Trustworthiness**

Member checks were carried out to ensure that the participants' viewpoints were accurately understood and assessed.

I practised reflexivity by maintaining a research diary and having discussions with my supervisor and a knowledgeable peer. At times, I used my diary as a source of data too.

## **2.7 Ethical Considerations**

Informed consent and assent were taken from the school, parents, and students. The participants were free to withdraw at any point of the research. Confidentiality was maintained. Care was taken to not interfere with the day to day academic activities of the school.

## **CHAPTER III**

### **National Curriculum Framework and Value Education**

Once India gained independence, a need was felt to review the education system and the needs of the nation. In keeping with this requirement, various commissions were established to carry out this review. The first was the University Education Commission in 1948, followed by the Secondary Education Commission of 1952, the Education Commission of 1964 (also known as the Kothari Commission), and finally the National Knowledge Commission of 2009. These commissions reviewed the existing education system along with the needs of a newly formed nation, and made recommendations regarding what the education system in India should be. Based on these recommendations, the National Policies on Education (1968, 1986, and 1992, which was a modified version of the 1986 policy) were drafted. These policies guide the curriculum frameworks of the nation. The National Curriculum Frameworks are documents published by the Government of India that map out the framework for making syllabi, textbooks, and teaching practices within the school education programme of the country.

The present chapter gives a brief overview of the values in the education policies and the National Curriculum Frameworks published by the Government of India.

#### **3.1 Education in Post-independence India**

Following independence, India recognised the the fundamental role of education in national development. Education was a significant concern for the newly formed government

and was vital for national progress, integration, and inculcation of constitutional values. Various commissions on education were created to identify and achieve educational goals. Certain values were promoted by these documents and the curriculum frameworks they provided. The goals and values of the same are discussed below.

### **3.1.1 National Integration: Unity in Diversity**

National integration was the fundamental requirement of a newly independent India. Partha Chatterjee (2006) speaks of the tensions and contradictions that are a part of India. While democratic values and processes as well as the freedom movement brought the masses into the fold of the nation state, a large percentage of the population remained isolated from the new, post-independence imagination of India. To overcome this contradiction, the Educational Commission (1964–66) was appointed to advise the Government on a pattern of education and the development of educational policies for all. The document reads, *‘The Education Commission was appointed by the Government of India by a Resolution, dated 14 July 1964, to advise the Government on the national pattern of education and on the general principles and policies for the development of education at all stages and in all aspects’* (Ministry of Education, 1966, p. vii).

Based on the recommendations of this commission, the first National Policy on Education (NPE) was announced in 1968. This policy emphasised that the existing system of education needed to be overhauled for national development. One of the values that it stressed was that of national integration. It stated that the education system needed to be overhauled for national development. *‘The Government of India is convinced that a radical restructuring of education on the broad lines recommended by the education commission is essential for*

*economic and cultural development of the country, for national integration, and for realising the ideal of a socialistic pattern of society*' (NPE, 1968, p. 38). Similarly, the NPE, 1986 stated that all nations developed and continue to develop their curriculum to promote their own needs and values. It said that education was a means for nations to promote their *'unique socio-cultural identity and also to meet the challenges of the time'* (NPE, 1986, p. 1).

National integration was listed as one the national goals (NPE, 1986, p. 12). The policy looked at achieving national integration through a common core curriculum. It argued that *'appreciation of common national goals and ideals, in conformity with the core curriculum'* in the preparation of textbooks and everyday school activities could promote national integration (National Policy on Education, 1986, p. 10). In the value education section of the document, it stated that in a plural nation like India, education should foster values that result in unity and integration of the nation. According to NPE, 1986, values that promote national integration *'should help eliminate obscurantism, religious fanaticism, violence, superstition, and fatalism'*. National integration was an important concern for the newly independent nation. India's unity was of utmost importance to enable it to overcome the challenges it faced with the attainment of independence, especially in the context of partition.

These documents show that the idea of **'unity in diversity'** is embedded in the post-independence imagination of India. Cultural pluralism strengthens national integration as it *'provides a framework of accommodation for a multi-ethnic, multi-lingual, multi-religious, multi-regional, and multi-cultural society that recognizes the social and political need for articulation of different identities'* (Das, 2013). This value is desirable in a post-colonial nation as it promotes intercommunity understanding and reduces conflict in a diverse nation, but it covers up internal tensions and fissures.

### 3.1.2 Constitutional Values

The Preamble of the Constitution of India lists certain values that are the constitutional values.

*‘WE, THE PEOPLE OF INDIA, having solemnly resolved to constitute India into a SOVEREIGN SOCIALIST SECULAR DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC and to secure to all its citizens:*

*JUSTICE, social, economic and political;*

*LIBERTY of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship;*

*EQUALITY of status and of opportunity; and to promote among them all*

*FRATERNITY assuring the dignity of the individual and the unity and integrity of the Nation;*

*IN OUR CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY this twenty-sixth day of November, 1949, do HEREBY ADOPT, ENACT AND GIVE TO OURSELVES THIS CONSTITUTION’.*

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, in his address to the constituent assembly in 1949, spoke of the constitutional values. For him, the values of liberty, equality, and fraternity were inseparable and all three were required for India. *‘These principles of liberty, equality, and fraternity are not to be treated as separate items in a trinity. They form a union of trinity in the sense that to divorce one from the other is to defeat the very purpose of democracy. Liberty cannot be divorced from equality, equality cannot be divorced from liberty. Nor can liberty and equality be divorced from fraternity. Without equality, liberty would produce the supremacy of the few over the many. Equality without liberty would kill individual initiative. Without fraternity, liberty and equality could not become a natural course of things’* (Ambedkar, 1949, as cited in Moon, 2014).

Constitutional values are the most important values that the nation wants inculcated in the citizens. The University Education Commission (1948–49), the first education commission set up in independent India, clearly stated that the educational system in India should be governed by the values listed in the (then draft) Constitution. *'The outlines of the social philosophy which should govern all our institutions, educational as well as economic and political, are indicated in the preamble to our draft Constitution'* (Ministry of Education, 1950, p. 31). The Secondary Education Commission (1952–53) stressed that the textbooks used in education should adhere to the values laid down in the Constitution. The commission explicitly stated that school education should not be a means of indoctrination into political ideology but should inculcate in students a democratic way of life. *'No book should be approved which offends the religious sentiments of any section of the community, or brings into contempt any reasonable social practice and custom. They should not create any feeling of bitterness or discord among the different sections of the people. Nor should they be utilised for propaganda of any particular political ideology or attempt to indoctrinate the young minds with particular political theories, except in so far as sound principles of the democratic way of living and the democratic form of government, which the country has accepted, are brought home to the pupils. Not only should textbooks exclude any matter which may have these undesirable reactions, but they should make a positive attempt to promote social, communal, and international harmony so that the youths may be trained to become good citizens of their country as well as good citizens of the world'* (Mudaliar, 1952–53, p. 98).

The 1952–53 Commission dedicated a section to **religious and moral instruction**, considering it to play an important part in character development. It, however, equated moral instruction with religious instruction by stating that in schools run by religious



denominations, moral instruction was to be given to students who did not attend religious instruction. It also held that moral and religious values were to be inculcated through the everyday practices of the school instead of relegating it to classroom instruction. Reflecting on the value of secularism enshrined in the Preamble, the commission held that '*religious instruction cannot be given in schools except on a voluntary basis and outside the regular school hours; such instruction should be given to the children of the particular faith and with the consent of the parents and the managements concerned. In making this recommendation we wish to emphasise that all unhealthy trends of disunity, rancour, religious hatred, and bigotry should be discouraged from schools*' (Mudaliar, 1952–53, p. 126). For a newly independent India, the stress on constitutional values, especially that of secularism, was important for democracy to thrive.

The Kothari Commission (1964–66) held that constitutional values were essential in promoting **national consciousness** and hence, were important objectives of schools. It advocated the creation of courses in citizenship to inculcate in students the constitutional principles and the **human values** referred to in the Preamble. It said that schools and colleges should design educational programmes to inculcate democratic and socialist values in students.

The National Policy on Education (1986) stated that the essence of education was to further the goals of socialism, secularism, and democracy. Understanding of constitutional rights and duties of citizens was the goal of secondary education according to this policy. The document had a separate section dedicated to **education for equality**. It laid particular emphasis on '*the removal of disparities by attending to the specific needs of those who have been denied equality so far*' (NPE, 1986, p. 6). Educational development was seen as a means for

equalisation of scheduled tribes and scheduled castes with others. The idea was to create an egalitarian society with democratic values. *'The National System of Education will be based on a national curricular framework, which contains a common core along with other components that are flexible. The common core will include the history of India's freedom movement, the constitutional obligations, and other content essential to nurture national identity. These elements will cut across subject areas and will be designed to promote value such as India's common cultural heritage, egalitarianism, democracy and secularism, equality of the sexes, protection of the environment, removal of social barriers, observance of the small family norm, and inculcation of the scientific temper. All educational values will be carried on in strict conformity with secular values.'* (NPE, 1986, p. 5). Values of secularism, egalitarianism, democracy, and equality of the sexes were stressed in this national policy. It argued that a curriculum based on democratic values would lead to individual and national development.

### **3.1.3 Scientific Temper**

The notion of **Scientific temper** was first used by Jawaharlal Nehru in 1946. After India gained independence and Nehru became the Prime Minister, he expanded the notion and urged the political and scientific leadership to inculcate it among Indian citizens (Mahanti, 2013).

For nation building, governments need to encourage the scientific temper of their citizens (Chalmers, 1999). Nehru strongly believed in this notion and he envisioned India as a modern country even in the face of strong opinions among nationalists to define the national culture

(Chatterjee, 1998, pp. 74–75). His idea of India was based on the given phrase, which he first used in his book, *Discovery of India*.

*‘The scientific temper points out the way along which man should travel. It is the temper of a free man. We live in a scientific age, so we are told, but there is little evidence of this temper in the people anywhere or even their leaders. What is needed is the scientific approach, the adventurous and yet critical temper of science, the search for truth and new knowledge, the refusal to accept anything without testing and trial, the capacity to change previous conclusions in the face of new evidence, the reliance on observed fact and not on pre-conceived theory, the hard discipline of the mind- all this is necessary, not merely for the application of science but for life itself and the solution of its many problems’* (Nehru, 1946, p. 512). His was a nuanced outlook as scientific temper was the method of solving economic and cultural problems (Bauer, Durant and Evans, 1994).

The Secondary Education Commission, 1952–53, promoted scientific thinking as an essential value in a democracy. *‘To be effective, a democratic citizen should have the understanding and the intellectual integrity to sift truth from falsehood, facts from propaganda, and to reject the dangerous appeal of fanaticism and prejudice. He must develop a scientific attitude of mind to think objectively and base his conclusions on tested data. He should also have an open mind receptive to new ideas and not confined within the prison walls of outmoded customs, traditions, and beliefs’* (Ministry of Education, 1952–53, p. 24). To realise the goals of democracy and other constitutional values, scientific thinking was considered imperative.

The Kothari Commission (1964–66) looked at education as a means of human resource development. According to the commission, this resource could be developed through the inculcation of scientific temper. This value was deemed important for making strides in

agriculture, industry, and other sectors to achieve economic development. Scientific temper was seen as the value needed for problem solving and improving social conditions. *'Science strengthens the commitment of man to free enquiry and to the quest for truth as his highest duty and obligation. It loosens the bonds of dogmatism and acts as a powerful dispeller of fear and superstition, fatalism, and passive resignation. By its emphasis on reason and free enquiry, it even helps to lessen ideological tensions which often arise because of adherence to dogma and fanaticism'* (NCERT, 1964-66, p.10). The commission also held that the value of scientific temper would help in realising democracy as a form of government and a way of life.

Social and economic growth depends on scientific temper (Chow & Yong, 2013), and it affects citizens' logical, rational, and analytical thinking and conduct in society (Rautela & Chowdhury, 2016). For a newly independent India, scientific temper was a value through which it could overcome obscurantism, superstitions, and even religious and cultural differences. This value was considered important not just for economic growth and development of human capital but also for national integration and realisation of constitutional values.

### **3.2 National Curriculum Framework**

The preceding section presented values that were considered important by the Indian Government as elucidated in the various commissions and NPEs. These documents guided the National Curriculum Frameworks. The values, which are deemed important in commissions and NPEs, should be reflected in the curriculum frameworks as well. The

following section discusses the values found through content analysis in the various National Curriculum Frameworks. The results are depicted in table 3.1 given below.

Table 3.1

*Percentages of Values in National Curriculum Frameworks*

<b>Values</b>	<b>NCF 1975</b>	<b>NCF 1988</b>	<b>NCF 2000</b>	<b>NCF 2005</b>
<b>Personal Values</b>	<b>34.4</b>	<b>26.7</b>	<b>30.1</b>	<b>28.2</b>
<b>Constitutional Values</b>	<b>20.4</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>20.6</b>	<b>40.5</b>
<b>Patriotism/Nationalism</b>	<b>15.5</b>	<b>19.8</b>	<b>25.8</b>	<b>7.6</b>
<b>Emotional Values</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>0.9</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Environmental Values</b>	<b>1.6</b>	<b>4.3</b>	<b>2.7</b>	<b>2.1</b>
<b>Aesthetic Values</b>	<b>5.9</b>	<b>3.2</b>	<b>1.8</b>	<b>3.8</b>
<b>Work Ethic</b>	<b>2.1</b>	<b>1.6</b>	<b>1.2</b>	<b>2.1</b>
<b>Health and Hygiene</b>	<b>5.3</b>	<b>3.2</b>	<b>3.0</b>	<b>2.1</b>
<b>Cultural Values</b>	<b>4.3</b>	<b>9.1</b>	<b>5.8</b>	<b>2.1</b>
<b>Scientific Temper</b>	<b>5.3</b>	<b>7.5</b>	<b>2.4</b>	<b>1.7</b>
<b>Universal Values</b>	<b>4.8</b>	<b>2.1</b>	<b>5.2</b>	<b>9.4</b>

Content analysis of the National Curriculum Frameworks was carried out. First, all the documents were read multiple times and the occurrence of values, explicit and implicit, were highlighted and counted. Then, each value and its frequency were tabulated, and similar values were grouped to extract superordinate values.

### **3.2.1 NCF 1975**

The framework in 1975 highlighted the importance of the country's school curriculum. It postulated that the school curriculum should reflect the country's ethos just as much as the Constitution does. The central aim of the curriculum was to revamp the educational system from one that served the colonial rulers by producing clerks to make it one that responds to the growing needs, aspirations, and demands of a modern egalitarian society (NCF, 1975).

One of the salient recommendations of the framework was to develop a '*socially and personally*' relevant curriculum within a framework of accepted principles and values to enable a sense of national identity. It afforded the freedom to teachers and curriculum workers to adapt the curriculum to the community's needs, '*provided that fundamental values and the national goals were not sacrificed*' (NCF, 1975, 2.1). Since education is an instrument of social change, the school curriculum was a means to attain '*national integration, social justice, productivity, modernisation of society, and cultivation of normal and spiritual values*' (NCF, 1975, 2.2). Therefore, scientific thinking to develop a rational outlook, development of work ethic for fulfilling social responsibility, and freedom of human spirit within a framework of equality found their place in the salient recommendations of the framework.

The framework reflected on constitutional values in school education in order to develop a *'pluralistic society and a state which is secular, democratic, and socialist in nature'*. It argued that *'the awakening of social consciousness, the development of democratic values, and of a feeling for social justice and national integration are extremely important'* (NCF,1975, 2.5). Character building and self-actualisation were parts of the salient recommendations as well. Values such as compassion, endurance, courage, decision-making, resourcefulness, team spirit, truthfulness, faithfulness, and loyalty to duty and the common good were mentioned in the salient recommendations and even in the framework. These personal values accounted for 34.4 per cent of the total values.

Constitutional values accounted for 20.4 per cent of the total values in the curriculum. These values were directly related to the values propagated in the Constitution, such as democratic values — values that promote socialism, secularism, equality, and non-discrimination attitudes.

Aesthetic values were mentioned in the salient recommendations, stressing the interest in beauty and an ability to discern and incorporate it into one's personality. The framework states that the curriculum should be such that it provides *'ample opportunity to preserve and develop originality and creative talents and make use of gifts, aptitudes, and personal forms of expression'* (NCF, 1975, 2.7). Even though aesthetic values were part of the salient recommendations, they accounted for 5.9 per cent of the total values in the curriculum framework.

### 3.2.2 NCF 1988

The NCF, 1988 stated that its main objective was to *'build on the positive experiences of the past educational reforms and to reflect the present concerns'*. It also aimed *'at reducing the existing disparities in the quality of education provided by different institutions and the regional imbalances by setting national norms of threshold resources for achievement of the minimum levels of learning specified for each state of school education'* (NCF, 1988). Like its predecessor, this framework envisioned the inculcation of the values enshrined in the Constitution of India in children to strengthen national unity and prepare the nation to meet future challenges. In the 1988 National Curriculum Framework, constitutional values accounted for 21 per cent of the total values.

An emerging, newly independent India published the 1975 and 1988 National Curriculum Frameworks. It was essential to ensure the country's cohesiveness and feelings of pride for it. Values associated with national integration and pride for the country like unity, love for the country, pride in India, and national cohesion, among others, accounted for 15.5 per cent and 19.8 per cent of the values in the 1975 and 1988 curriculums, respectively.

Secular and democratic values can be inculcated in students through secular and democratic education, and the democratisation of education is integral to secular and democratic polity and society. However, as envisioned in the national policies and spoken about in the curriculum frameworks, access to education does not exhaust all the possibilities inherent in democratisation. For education to be democratic, it must include the structure and content of education. The democratisation of education can occur when education is not used as an



ideological apparatus of the state. Only when institutions and the individuals who constitute the institutions become autonomous can the democratisation of education be possible.

Inculcation of scientific temper as a means for national development was stressed in the national policies on education. However, they represent 5.3 per cent and 7.5 per cent of the total values in the 1975 and 1988 frameworks, respectively.

Even though constitutional values were the most salient values espoused in the national policies on education, the same is not reflected in the curriculum frameworks they guided. Neither is Nehru's stress on scientific temper.

### **3.2.3 NCF 2000 and 2005**

The central issues highlighted in the 2000 National Curriculum Framework are language education and the medium of instruction, the need for a common school structure for all stages, social cohesion, secularism, and national integration. It postulated that '*the education system of a country has to be built on the firm ground of its own philosophical, cultural, and sociological tradition and must respond to its needs and aspirations. Indigenouslyness of the curriculum, therefore, is being strongly recommended*' (NCF, 2000, p. vii). Following this postulate, the framework stressed the need to get education rooted in Indian reality and its composite culture. It also emphasised that students need to be aware of India's rich intellectual and cultural heritage and contributions to the world civilisation. Patriotism and nationalism, along with the spirit of *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam* (the world is one family), to strengthen the self-esteem of young learners were advocated.

NCF 2000 considered that nation-building rested on the shoulders of children and held that education guided them to this capability. It argued that India always had an advanced education system and that education should be based on philosophy and religion along with stress on mathematics, history, astronomy, maritime, economics, and public administration. It referred to the *Chandogya Upanishad*, which mentions 18 different subjects of study. The document talked of India as having been perceived as a source of fulfilment and highlights the religio-philosophic ethos, with self-realisation as the primary purpose. This type of conceptualisation, however, reinforces the stereotype of India as a spiritual land. While it tries to challenge the hierarchy of western ideas over Indian ones, it gives credence to the stereotype of India being a spiritual and religious (Hindu) land. The framework alleges that *‘a sizeable segment of the contemporary Indian society, seems to have distanced itself from the religio-philosophic ethos, the awareness of the social design, and the understanding of the heritage of the past. Influenced by the alien technological ethos, the parents and the educational institutions emphasise the acquisition of high-grade techno-informative knowledge alone. However, the impact of westernisation has been limited to only the elite members of the society, leaving the masses unaware of these developments’* (NCF, 2000, p. 3). The framework thus called for a return to this ‘religio-philosophical’ ethos as a movement away from it, which is the cause of the divides present in the society.

The content analysis shows that patriotism and nationalism were the most important values in NCF 2000. These included values such as national pride, love for the country, respect for national symbols like the flag, etc. Compared with the other National Curriculum Frameworks, NCF 2000 had the highest occurrence of nationalistic and patriotic values, with as much as 25.8 per cent of the document discussing these values. However, values related to

scientific temper fell to 2.4 per cent from 7.5 per cent of the total values in this framework compared to the 1986 one.

The major criticisms against the 2000 framework were that it incorporated obscurantist features of the Indian knowledge systems into science and social science curricula, it insisted on Sanskrit and value education with patriarchal features, and glorified a jingoistic concept of Indian tradition, history, and culture (Ganesh, 2005; Maurya, 2005; Sunny, 2014).

The framework was also accused of rejecting secular and democratic values. In light of this context, the results of the content analysis with respect to constitutional values of the 2005 NCF need to be seen. These values account for 40.5 per cent of the total values, the highest within and across all the curriculum frameworks. Even though constitutional values were the highest presented values, the word 'secular' was missing in the document. There was a refusal to separate the state from religion.

*'India is a secular democratic state, that means that all faiths are respected, but at the same time the Indian state has no preference for any particular faith. The felt need today is to inculcate among children a respect for all people regardless of their religious beliefs' (NCF 2005, p. 6).*

Another lacuna in values is created by the absence of India's freedom struggle. The struggle against colonialism and imperialism is an important source of constitutional values of secularism, socialism, egalitarianism, democracy, and justice which is missing in the document.

The curriculum framework of 2005 was put forth in a certain context. Other than the fact that the Indian education had gone through various changes because of many studies and documents produced by the NCERT and other Government and non-Government agencies, the previous curriculum framework (2000) and the textbooks produced in line with it were subjected to considerable criticism. The 2005 framework sought to replace the 2000 framework (Ganesh, 2005). While the framework did not state the academic, social, and political context in which the curriculum was framed, it stated that *'we have tended to avoid the blame game — perhaps due to the fact that we are all responsible in one way or the other'*. However, the document ignored the politics of knowledge at play.

The chapter examined the values present in the national curriculum frameworks and the values that school education should inculcate in students. Modern school education in India was a legacy of British colonialism. The British implemented schooling to serve their interests. They needed to produce a class of people who could work in the British Raj and hence wanted to inculcate English ideas, tastes, preferences, and outlook in Indians. When India gained independence, the education system was harnessed to promote national development. Education was considered the means through which national progress and integration could be achieved. Various national commissions on education stressed the need to review the educational system. The development of science and technology and values that emphasised national service were argued to be the basis of national progress, national integration, and of fostering a sense of common citizenship and culture. Education was identified as the means of promoting nationalism, social cohesion, pluralism, and equality.

### **3.3 Conclusion**

The National Curriculum Frameworks are documents that guide the syllabi, textbooks, teaching and evaluation practices in schools stress personal values that should be inculcated in the students. The stress on scientific thinking in the various commissions and NPEs is not found in the curriculum frameworks. Depending on the political environment in which the curriculum frameworks are drafted and implemented, the stress on constitutional values, patriotism and nationalism, and cultural values changes. The curriculum and, by extension, education is open to and is a vehicle for promoting ideas and values that are deemed important by the ruling disposition.

The following chapter describes the site of the study and gives an overview of a typical school day.

## CHAPTER IV

### The Everydayness of the Metaphor, “Saraswati Mandir, a Temple of Learning”

This chapter deconstructs the metaphor, ‘Saraswati Mandir, a Temple of Learning’ by presenting a regular day in the ‘Saraswati Mandir’, the school chosen for the study. The school is located in South Delhi and is run by the Vidya Bharti organisation. As stated previously, Vidya Bharti is the education wing of the Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh (RSS). The schools are called Saraswati Mandirs, which translate into Saraswati's Temples. In Hindu mythology, Saraswati is the goddess of learning. The name of the school includes the word *Mandir* (Temple). This establishes learning to be an act of faith or religious devotion. Saraswati Mandirs have a well-stated aim: ‘*To develop a national system of education which would build a generation of young men and women that are committed to the values of Hindutva and ‘rashtrabhakti’ (patriotic fervour). To develop young men and women physically, vitally, mentally and spiritually; capable of facing day to day challenges and being dedicated to the service of those brothers and sisters who live in villages, forests, caves and slums and are deprived and destitute, so that they are liberated from the shackles of social evils, and injustice, and thus devoted, may contribute to building up a harmonious, prosperous and culturally rich nation.*’ (retrieved from <http://www.vidyabharti.net.in/EN/AimAndObjective> on 1 December 2018). In the school chosen for this study, this aim is written in Hindi on the outline of *Akhand Bharat* (undivided India) drawn on the school wall at the entrance. It reads:

*‘Vidya Bharti*

*Akhil Bhartiya Shiksha Sansthan*

*Hamara Lakshya*

*Iss prakaar ki rashtriya shiksha pranali ka vikas karna hai jiske dwara aisi yuva peedi ka nirman ho sake jo hindutvanisht aivam rashtrabhakti se oath-prot ho, sharirik, pranik, maansik, baudhik, aivam adhyaatmik drishti se poorn viksit ho thatha jo jeevan ki vartamaan chunotiyon ka saamna safaltapoorvak kar sake aur uska jeevan graamon, vano, girikandraon aivam jhuggi-jhopadiyon mein nivaas karne wale deen-dukhi abhavgrast apne bandhvon ko samaajik kuritiyon shoshan aivam anyay se mukt karakar rashtira jeevan ko samras, susmapann aivam susanskrit banana ke liye samarpit ho.'*

This is the first object that students see as they walk into the school premise. This statement sets the tone for organising the activities in the school.

#### **4.1 A Regular Day in the School**

At 7:30 a.m., yellow buses arrive at an open ground beyond the myriad narrow roads that lead to an innocuous three-storey building that houses a school. This relatively new school building is situated in the complex of a Shiva temple. Students walk from the buses under the watchful eyes of teachers who travel with them. They enter the school either from the main gate or through the temple entrance. Nursery students are driven up to the school gate in smaller cars that the school owns. As the students walk through the main gate, they walk down into the courtyard. The wall on their right has the school motto written onto the map of *Akhand Bharat*.

As they enter the courtyard, students walk up to the idol of Goddess Saraswati, who sits just across the main gate, under a large map of *Akhand Bharat*. Students fold their hands and bow down to her. There is a small bowl with saffron-coloured vermilion that students apply on her and on themselves. They leave their bags in their classrooms located around all the four sides

of the courtyard, making the school building look like a panopticon of sorts. From their classroom, students make their way back to the courtyard for the morning prayer and assembly.

The courtyard is the site for the morning prayer and assembly for the middle and high school. It is called the *Prarthna Sthall* (Prayer Hall). The primary section does its morning prayer in the yoga room on the second floor and is expected to do it later in the porta cabin after its construction is completed. According to their class, the students sit in rows on rugs that they spread. There is a lamp on the right side in front of three pictures placed side by side. These are pictures of **Goddess Saraswati**, the symbol **Om**, and **Bharat Mata (Mother India)**. All around the *prarthna sthall* are posters of various *shlokas* and *mantras*. To the left are the microphone and the choir. Students sit facing the lamp and the goddesses under the posters of various mantras.

The morning assembly begins with a few yoga exercises that the yoga teacher makes the students perform to the beat of a drum. Then, the lamp is lit while the choir and students sing the *deep jyoti* hymn. Students follow the choir, the choir leads the prayers and hymn, and then the rest of the students join in. After the lamp is lit, the command for *Matripranam* (greetings to Mother) is given. Mother here means the Goddesses Saraswati and *Bharat Mata*. It is after bowing to the Mother that the prayers begin. The prayer follows a set pattern. First come hymns for Goddess Saraswati, then come the *Gayathri mantra*, *Bharat Stuti mantra*, and *Shanti Path*. The prayers end with *Matripranam*. After the prayers, the day, according to the Hindu calendar, is read out (*Panchang*), followed by the thought of the day. A student reads out the thought of the day twice and a teacher then explains its meaning. Next, the news is read out by another student. Those who have their birthdays make their way



forward, and the rest of the student body sings the *Sangh* birthday song while the students whose birthdays are being celebrated seek blessings from teachers by touching their feet. Then, the assembly is addressed by a teacher on any topic. After the address, students sing patriotic songs while making their way to their classes in a single file to the beat of the drum. Designated pupils pick up the rugs and leave them at their appropriate place to be picked up the next day for morning assembly. The rest of the school time is divided into two sections of four periods, and is separated by the lunch break.

I follow the students of the fourth standard into their classroom. There are 28 students in total, out of which 11 are girls. Of the 28 students, there is one Muslim boy, while the rest are Hindus. They come from the residential areas near the school. The classroom is on the second floor with four windows. Two windows open into the streets below and the other two windows open into the school corridor. There are three columns of desks and benches with 10 students in each column. They sit in pairs, facing the blackboard and teacher. The teacher's desk and chair are placed in front of the blackboard. There are shelves in the front, to the right of the board, that kept the teacher's things. These include a wooden stick, which is taken out to discipline the students. As the teacher enters, she asks the students to arrange the benches properly and settle down. Even after her repeated commands to them to settle down, she finds that one girl is still standing with her bag on her shoulders.

***Teacher: Yes, arrange your benches. Yes, no talking, please, no talking. Sit down, sit down, all of you. Khidkiyan khol do. Aapko aate hi karne chahiye bench theek. Apni seat toh khud banani chahiye naa. Chalo na apni seat pe. Seat pe jao. Pehle seat pe. Seat kahan hai aapki? Ab main yeh bhi karoon? Apni seat khud kara karo. Beta yeh sab kaam aap***

*pehle se kara karo. Chalo aap idhar aajao. Ao beta, yahaan aajao dono. Yes, no talking, please.*

*(Teacher: Yes, arrange your benches. Yes, no talking, please, no talking. Sit down, sit down, all of you. Open the windows. You should do this as soon as you come. Arrange the benches. You should make your seat on your own. Let's go, go to your seat. Go to your seat first. Where is your seat? Now, this also I have to do? Make your own place. Beta, you should do this work from beforehand. Lets' go, you come here, beta. Both of you come here. Yes, no talking, please)*

The teacher refused to intervene and settle the matter, encouraging the students to sort out the issues with the seating arrangements themselves. Once the students settled down, she marked their attendance. As she called out each student's name, they responded with '*Present ma'am*'. After the attendance calls, the lesson began.

During my visit to the school, I noticed that different teachers have their rituals that mark the beginning of a class. Some teachers walk in and wait for the students to stand up and wish them '*Good morning/afternoon*'. For some other teachers, the students stand up and greet with '*Vande Mataram acharyaji*'. These simple rituals are important as they signal what is to come next — the start of the new lesson — and they symbolically transmit cultural and societal ideologies (McLaren, 1986). They serve an inherently political function that nudges students to accept, support, and internalise dominant culture (Illich, 1970; Kapferer, 1981; Kamens, 1977). They are a form of social control as they relate students to social order and increase their respect and acceptance (Bernstein et al., 1966).

Certain behaviours are reinforced among the students in the classrooms. At the start of the day, they arrange their desks and benches, open the windows, and clean the blackboard. When teachers walk in, they stand up, maintain silence, and greet them. They sit silently and follow instructions. Classes are conducted in lecture mode with one-way communication. Students answer only when spoken to. They are discouraged from talking to each other when the lessons are on. They do their work silently, neatly, quickly, and get their notebooks corrected on time. They are expected to bring the correct books for their lessons. Even though they are punished when the correct books are not brought, they are encouraged and expected to share books. If they finish their work before others, they read on their own and do not sit idle. They are expected to take permission for everything they want to do, talk to the teachers, answer their questions, drink water, use the washroom, and enter the class. Teachers ensure that students meet these expectations by categorising students into ‘*acche bache*’ (good children) and ‘*gande bache*’ (bad children). These categories are established by relating them to different schedules of reinforcements. Good children are those who obey all rules and do not throw tantrums. They sit silently and are rewarded for their behaviour verbally by the teachers.

*Teacher: Raja matlab main bahut acha bacha. Main ghar ka, apne mummy daddy ka dada dadi ka. Main ghar main apne mummy ka papa ka dada dadi ka acha sa bacha hoon. Kuch log bolte hain na mera beta raja hai sab kuch manta hai ziddi bhi nahin hai. Theek hai. Meri beti rani hai. Kaun bolta hai mummy bolti hai? Kaun kaun rani hai? Haan? (Teacher: Prince means very good child. Good child of the home. Mummy’s, daddy’s, grandmother’s, grandfather’s, I am a good child of my mother, father, grandmother, and grandfather. Some people say that my son is a prince; he listens to everything I say. He is not stubborn. Okay. My princess. Who says it? Mothers say it. Who all are princesses?)*

***Teacher: Ab bilkul shor nahin karenge bilkul ache bache banke baitheinge.***

***(Teacher: Now, no noise at all. Be good children and sit.)***

The students have English, Hindi, maths, environmental science, social studies, and Sanskrit lessons every day. In addition, once a week, they have library, yoga, music, art, computer science, Vedic maths, moral science, and general knowledge classes. Sometimes, during unit tests, exams, and preparation for competitions, they have a scheduled zero period. There are four periods in the first half, followed by the lunch break. When the students go on lunch break, they sing the *Bhojan Mantra* in the teacher's presence in the classroom. If there is no teacher, the students do not sing the *Bhojan Mantra*.

After eating their lunch in the class, most children run out to play. The class teacher eats her lunch in the classroom as well. The girls wait for her and sit around her table for lunch. They look forward to eating lunch with her and vie to sit closest to the table. The class teacher ensures that none of the girls are left out. She makes place for all of them around her table, asking them to pull up more benches if a place is less. They look forward to sharing their food with her, and on occasions when she forgets her tiffin, they insist that she eats theirs instead. One of them is given the duty of fetching water for her from the water cooler. During this time, she enquires about their general well-being and how things are at their home, she encourages them to study hard and finds out how their tuition is going on. She knows intimate details of their families and uses this time to pay individual attention to them. She uses the lunch break to deal with accusations (of theft) made against particular students. In one instance, she explains to the child that stealing is wrong (the student was accused of stealing a water bottle). She explains that stealing a small thing like a water bottle would lead

to stealing bigger things later on in life. It falls on the class teacher to help sort out the differences between students, between students and teachers, and between teachers with respect to students missing subject classes for co-curricular classes.

Students in the class are helpful to their friends. They help each other in completing their work and share books and stationery. If their friends are absent, they make sure they know what is covered in the classes that day. They help each other with subjects they are good at and take help with those they find difficult.

***Pankaj: Haanji miss, main English mein acha hoon toh main iski English mein help karta hoon, aur science mein. Mujhe maths samajh nahin aati aur Paasi maam se darta hoon, woh bahut daanti hai to yeh na mujhe maths karwata hai.***

***(Pankaj: Yes miss, I am good in English so I help him in English and science. I do not understand maths and I am scared of Paasi maam, she scolds a lot so he helps me do maths.)***

At the same time, they fight with each other verbally and physically. As a result, students resort to using bad words, insults, and even complain to their teachers. The class teacher ignores most complaints, asking them not to be snitches, but at the same time, she asks them to bring complaints to her first before complaining at home, creating a double bind communication.

***Teacher: Agar tune ab kisiki shikayat lagai toh ab tu pitega.***

***(Teacher: If you complain about someone now, you will be beaten.)***

*Teacher: Jo mummy bolke gayi hai subah? Hain? Kaunsi? Jo lagayi hai shikayat woh bata. Ghar jaake toh tum batate ho yahan mereko bata diya karo tum pehle. Kitni baar bola hai pehle mereko batao. Bol ab.*

*(Teacher: What did your mother say in the morning. Yes? Which one? The complaint that you made. Tell that one. You go home and tell, you should tell that to me here first. How many times I have told you that you tell me first. Tell now.)*

After the fourth standard classroom, I spent time in the seventh standard classroom. The seventh standard classroom is on the second floor towards the inside where the Shiva temple is situated. There is one door and four windows that open into the *prarthna sthall*. The room has four rows of eight desks and chairs each. The teacher's table is in the front of the class and the blackboard is behind it. Students occupy desks in twos. They sit in the same seat every day. Boys sit with boys, and the eight girls occupy the last four benches in one of the rows. The walls are bare, with no charts displayed. There are 28 students, 20 are boys and eight are girls. They are all Hindus, with 21 students belonging to the general category, five OBCs, and two SCs.

Their class teacher is a Sanskrit teacher, and so the students greet him with '*Suprabhatam*' (Good Morning) and answer their roll call in Sanskrit. Their behaviour in the classroom depends on the teachers. They maintain decorum and silence for the Hindi and maths teachers but not for the others. The other teachers shout at them to maintain silence, they punish them by asking them to stand up (which may or may not be heeded), hit them and throw them out of the class. Teachers complain to the class teacher and even the vice principal, but it does not do much to deter the students. The class teacher's responsibility is to discipline them and sort out issues among the students and between subject teachers and students. Students are

friendly with each other, helping each other most of the time, but sometimes they fight with each other. Outside of the lessons, the students do not interact with the teachers.

The last class that was visited was the ninth standard. The ninth standard classroom is on the ground floor. There are 28 students in the class, out of which four are girls. The children in the ninth standard are focused on their exams and on the boards that are to be held next year. All the teachers make it a point to remind them of the same. Doing well in the exams is crucial to them. They do not make noise when the teachers teach the lessons. When there are no teachers in the classroom, they talk to each other softly and use the time to finish other work. All the teachers stress the importance of the boards. The students seem to understand that as they need to constantly work to do better. They listen to the teachers, follow all instructions that the teachers give them, and are friendly with their teachers. They even remind one of the teachers to take her medicines after lunch. They help each other with notes and homework, and some students even pay the CBSE examination fees for their friends when the friends forget or are unable to pay.

#### **4.2 Learning the Rituals of Prayer and Learning within the Framework of ‘Prayer’**

Prayer and worship are some of the most important rituals the students participate in. In fact, as discussed earlier the name of the school itself conveys that it is Goddess Saraswati’s temple. Students walk in and bow to Goddess Saraswati, and at the start of the morning prayer, they bow their heads to the Mother-Goddess Saraswati and Bharat Mata. The prayers, hymns, and prayer sequence are written in the school diary. Students are expected to bring this with them for the assembly. The choir leads the rest of the school in the prayer, but all the students need to know the prayers themselves.

*Principal: Seedhe baitho. Seedhe baithiye. Abhi yahan vandan ho rahi thi yeh 11 aur 12 baithi aapko nahin aati kya? Nahin aata toh kal se aana mat aap log. Jinko yahan baithna nahin aata prarthna mein nahin aye who. Samajh mein aaya. Itna time ho gaya hai yaad hi nahin hai. Na bolna hai na book hai. Kuch nahin bolna bhi nahin hai. Baatien karni hai. Jo aisa nahin karte jo bol nahin sakte kal se yeh vidyalay mat aao.*

*(Principal: Sit straight, sit straight. Just now the prayers were going on and these 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> standard students, do you not know the prayers? If you do not know the prayers then don't come to school tomorrow onwards. Those who do not know how to sit here for the prayer do not come. Do you understand? So much time has passed and you still don't remember? Neither do you want to recite nor do you want to bring the book. Nothing. You don't want to recite also, just want to talk. Those who do not, those who cannot recite the prayer, there is no need for them to come to school from tomorrow).*

One method of learning the prayers and rituals is by following the choir and observing the morning prayer. Students of the primary section are given explicit instructions to learn the postures associated with it. Teachers walk around and instruct students on how to sit and keep their hands while praying.

*Teacher: Kamar Seedhi, aankein bandh. Haath jodke baithiye sab bache. Aankhein band karke haath jodke baithiye. Kamar seedhi, musalmaan nahin banna aapko. Aankien band, chalo shuru karo.*

*(Teacher: Back straight, eyes closed. Fold your hands and sit. Everyone eyes closed. Fold your hands. Back straight, you don't have to become Muslims. Eyes closed. Start.)*



Knowing the prayers is a matter of pride in the primary classroom. Those who know the prayer can occupy the coveted front seat. They have the honour and privilege of leading while the rest of the students follow the prayer.

***Teacher: Prayer aati nahin phir bhi aage baithne ka shokh hai. Aage baithna zaroori hai kya? Jao wapas peche.***

***(Teacher: You don't know the prayer and still you want to sit in front? Is it necessary for you to sit in front? Go back.)***

Another method of getting students of the primary sections to learn prayers is by conducting competitions. Competitions that focus on learning and recitation of different prayers from the prayer book, *Archan Vandana*, are conducted. This year, students of the fourth and fifth standards have to learn five *chaupais and dohas* from their hymn book. Class teachers are responsible for preparing students for the competition and ensuring that they learn the shlokas. Winning the competition is a matter of pride for a student and the entire class.

***Teacher: Chaupai competition hai tumhara doha aur chaupai competition. Dohe aur chaupai competition hai woh batana bahut zaroori hai. Mujhe yaad dilade na main tumhein note karwadoongi jo dohe aur chaupaiyan bolni hai. Maine aapko sikha rakhi hai aapko chaupaiyan. Toh aapki, puri class ka competition hai fourth and fifth ka. Fourth and fifth ka doha and chaupai ka competition hai. Main tumhein pakka nishan lagwadoongi. Jo dohe bolne hai, jo chaupaiyan bolni hain. Hamari class hi jeetni chahiye.***

***(Teacher: There is chaupai competition for you. There is doha and chaupai competition and it is important for me to tell you. Remind me and I will make you mark the dohas and chaupais that you have to recite. I have taught you some chaupais. This competition is for***

*the entire class. It is for the entire fourth and fifth standards. I will make you mark the dohe and chaupais that you have to learn. Our class needs to win.)*

Prayer is an integral part of the school day. At the start of each new period, students chant *Om* and recite the *Gayatri Mantra*. They recite the *Bhojan mantra* at the start of the lunch break, and it is also played on the school public address system. Other than the regular morning prayer that takes place daily, students sing the *Hanuman Chalisa* on Tuesdays. Hanuman Chalisa is sung for Lord Hanuman, **the faithful companion of Lord Ram**, and Tuesday is the day of the week dedicated to him. During the lunch break on Tuesdays, the teachers are given *boondi* (the sweet offering made to Hanuman) prasad. Prayer rituals are one of the ways to immerse students into Hinduism. They internalise the **values of Hinduism** through these rituals. For example, the lone Muslim student in the fourth standard, like his Hindu classmates, touches his book bag to his head in respect and to **seek forgiveness when he accidentally touches it with his foot**.

In the morning assembly, Hindu festivals are celebrated with great fervour and with the rituals associated with the particular festival. On the special assembly for *Diwali, Lakshmi puja* is conducted with all the teachers taking part in the aarti. Similarly, for *Krishna Janmashtami*, the assembly revolves around *baby Lord Krishna*.

*Krishna Janmashtami* happens to be on 15 August, which is India's Independence Day, and hence the special assembly is dedicated to both these events. The stage decoration commemorates both events with the Indian flag drawn on one side and an idol of *Lord Krishna* on a swing on the other. *Krishna* is woven into the narrative of Indian independence

by being cast as a freedom fighter. He is evoked as one who has always worked for India, a protector from time immemorial.

*Principal: Krishna, jab jaise zaroorat hui jis cheez ki awashakta hui, uske anurodh dharm ki vijay honi chahiye adharm ki parajay honi chahiye aisa soch kar bhagwan Krishna ne prayas kiya aur dharm ki vijay aur dharm ko vijay dilane mein mahtvapoorn bhoomika ada ki. Toh aap sab janmashtami utsav manyege saath mein bhagwan Krishna ki unhone is desh ke liye hamara jo bahut purane Bharat ke yudh hai hamara desh Brahma desh jo Brahma hai Mayanmar, Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Nepal, Bharat, yeh saare hamare desh ke hisse they aur hum unko Bharat Varsh kehte they. aur yeh hi Nahin jo Indonesia hai Malaysia woh bhi hamare Bharat ka hi ang raha hua hai. hamari sanskriti wahan par hai.*

*(Principal: Krishna, whenever however and whatever we have needed, to defeat adharm for dharma, thinking that Lord Krishna tried to help dharma win over adharm and played an important part in that, so you are all celebrating Krishna Janmashtami together. Lord Krishna has done so much for this nation, this very old Bharat, many battles that this Brahma desh which is Mayanmar, Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Nepal, Bharat, these are all part of our country and we call it Bharat Varsh, and not just these but Indonesia and Malaysia as well are a part of Bharat as our culture is there as well.)*

Prayer rituals are observed to mark the beginning of all events. The start of the academic year is marked with a special prayer that includes multiple recitations of the *Gayatri mantra*, *Hanuman Chalisa* and *Sundarkand*. Inter- and intra-school competitions begin with the lighting of the lamp and prayers to Goddess Saraswati. The school is teeming with symbols of Hinduism, starting from the fact that it is built on the grounds of a temple that is still

functioning. There is a *peepal* tree, which the residents nearby worship. Pictures of gods and goddesses are found in the yoga room, meeting rooms, and staff rooms. The notice boards have some of the other goddess pinned to them, and the corridor walls that face inside the courtyard are full of posters of various prayers and *shlokas*. The nation too is imagined in the form of a Hindu goddess, *Bharat Mata*.

### 4.3 Disciplining Students

Students are disciplined even before they enter the school grounds. The disciplinary regime starts in the school buses, where students are repeatedly asked not to make noise and disturb the driver, sit properly, not fight with each other, and be on time. Once they enter the school and go to their classes, they have to sit at their assigned seats or negotiate with each other for the seats that they want. The drum beats signal that it is time to go for the morning prayer. The drum beats act as a catalyst, getting the students to form a single line and make their way to the *prarthna sthall*.

Students start the day with yoga exercises, which they follow to the counts given by the yoga teacher. The student body moves in unison, and when it does not, the teacher stops and instructs them to follow her count again. Yoga postures are corrected repeatedly to ensure that the bodies of the students move as one. Their bodies are required to sit, move, and even clap in a certain way in response to the drum beats. When it is not followed, they are explicitly told the 'correct' way of clapping and clap in the approved manner.

***Teacher: Seedhe baithiye. Yeh Kamar kyun neeche aati hai aap logon ki? Jitni jaldi kamar jhukegi utni jaldi budapa ayega. Haan. Swasth rehna hai toh seedhe baithna seekho.***

***Vande Matram.***

*Students: Vande Matram*

*(Teacher: Sit straight. Why does your back bend? The earlier your back bends, the earlier oldage will come. Okay. If you want to stay healthy then you need to learn to sit straight.*

*Vande matram.*

*Students: Vande Matram)*

*Teacher: Abhinandan Taali kuru.*

*Students clap haphazardly*

*Teacher: Yeh kya kar rahe ho? Teen baar hoti hai clapping*

*(Teacher: Start clapping for appreciation.*

*Students clap haphazardly.*

*Teacher: What are you doing? Clapping is done three times.)*

Time and again, their sitting posture is corrected. Teachers need not even say the complete sentence. A single word, even a mere look, suffices. As the teacher narrows her eyes and lifts her torso, the message to sit straight is conveyed to the hunched students. The students move their bodies at the teachers' commands. Once the body is made docile, it can be *used, subjected, and transformed* (Foucault, 1995, p. 136). The school exercises subtle coercion on students' bodies by controlling their movements and gestures. Regular exercise drills in the form of yoga contribute to the control and docility of their bodies. This docility of the body can be harnessed and moved towards utility, when required. It primes the students for obedience. They do what is asked of them. After some time, they do it even without asking. Certain gestures become enough to elicit desired behaviours. The beating of the drums makes students line up and move for prayer. A single word like '*seedhe*' (straight) or the narrowing of eyes and straightening of torso makes them sit up straight, face forward, and pay attention.

Just like the control of students' bodies, their movement is also controlled. There are certain places where the students are allowed to go and places where they are not. They are allowed to leave the classes only with a class pass. Those of the lower classes are instructed to not go to other classes, even if their elder sibling is in the class.

*Teacher: Ek soochna ki taraf dhyaan denge, koi bhi vidyarth bina paas ke idhar udhar kahin bhi nahin paaya jayega. Aisa paya jaata hai toh aapka naam haamre register mein aa jayega. Aur aap ko assembly mein baithkar puri prarthna aur event manage karne honge. Aur jab hamara lunch time hota hai jab hum bhojan khate hain toh aap anyatha idhar udhar kisi ki class mein nahin jayenge. Apni class ke bachon ke saath hi khana khayenge. jab hum apne, hamari class mein bahut saare hamare friend hai toh hum doosre ki class mein kyun jayenge? Apni hi class mein rahenge anyatha idhar udhar nahin jayenge. Agar koi arrangement period laga hai toh sirf aur sirf monitor unko bula ke layega jinka arrangement period hai. Agar aapki class ke bache paye jaate hai aur teesri baar wohi bache milte hain toh aapko suspend bhi kiya jaa sakta hai. Abhi itne mere khyaal se garmi nahin bachi hai ac bhi nahi chal rahe hain teacher class mein nahin hai toh darwaza bhi band nahin hona chahiye. Samajh aa gaya sabko? Apni padhai ki taraf dyaan dena hai. Hum sirf aur sirf padhne ke liye aate hain yahan par.*

*(Teacher: Pay attention to this information, no student should be found without a pass. No student should move here or there without a pass. If found, your name will be put down in our register and you will have to manage the entire assembly and prayer. And when it is our lunch time, when we are to eat our lunch, we should not go anywhere. We should eat our lunch with our classmates. We have many friends in our class so why should we go to other classes? We should sit in our class and not go anywhere. If any arrangement period*

*is scheduled then only the class monitor should go and call the teacher. If students are found elsewhere, and if they are found elsewhere three times then we can even suspend them. And I do not think it is so hot that A.C is to be used. So, if there is not teacher in the class then the door is not to be closed. Have you understood? Pay attention towards your studies. We have come here only to study.)*

The movement of students outside the school is also controlled. For example, during the parent–teacher meeting in the ninth standard classroom, the class teacher advised a boy not to go to a girl's house to get notes.

*Teacher: Ab beta kisi ladki ke ghar nahin jaana aur apne saath mein doston ko aur leke jaana. Chahe bahar main toh Harshita ki mummy ko bhi galat maanti hoon ki unhone use andar enter karne diya. Ab aaj toh woh aapke presence mein aa gaya aur kal toh woh aapke absence mein ayega. Phir? Aur aapki bhi galti hai hai ki beta aapko pure locality mein ladki ke alawa aur koi bacha nazar nahin aya jiske ghar tum jaakar copy le sakte ho? Aap khud batao locality mein boys nahin rehte hain? A, B ya C section mein se? Rehte hain. Bahut saare ache bache sab ki copy complete hoti hai sst ki. Toh harshita ke ghar mein amaan ko lejaane ka kya matlab hai?*

*(Teacher: Beta, you shouldn't go to a girl's house like that, and you have taken your friends to her house as well. I even think Harshita's mother was at fault that she let you all come inside. Today he has gone to her house in your presence, tomorrow he will go in your absence, then? And it is your fault too that in the entire locality you could find no one other than a girl to whose house you could go to get notes? You yourself tell me, do boys not stay in this locality? From A, B, or C section? They stay. Lots of good kids stay whose*

*notebooks are complete. So why did you need to take Aman to Harshita's house? So why did you take him there?*

Threats are regularly used to get students to follow the rules and regulations. Students are threatened with punishment, suspension, and even rustication if rules are not followed.

Corporal punishment in the form of slapping and hitting with a stick is common. Incidences of physical punishment reduce from the fourth to the seventh standards, and no incidence of physical punishment is found in the ninth standard. Students of the fourth standard are often beaten for not bringing the correct books, not finishing work, not being able to do the work correctly, talking in class, or any other disobedience.

*Teacher: Pehle yeh bataiye class se bahar kisko pooch ke nikle? Yeh bata dijiye pehle.*

*Kaun tha abhi? Aap nikle they? (she slaps the boy)*

*(Teacher: First tell me who did you ask to leave the class? Tell me this first who was it? did you leave? (teacher slaps the boy))*

*Teacher: Very good. (slaps another student) Main kya sikha rahi hoon? Kuch seekh bhi rahe ho? Line banani aati hai ek bhi aapko? Sirf baatein karni aati hai. Kya bola hai maine batana zara. Main board pe likhlo tum likhloge bas ho gaya kaam. Bas chup ho jaiye (has slapped another student). pushkar ne bola, main bahar kar doongi. Bilkul nahin bolega*

*(Teacher: Very good (slaps another student) What am I teaching? Are you even learning anything? Do you even know how to make a line? You know only to talk. What did I say? Tell me. I will write on the board and you will copy. That's it. Keep quiet. (Slaps another student). Pushkar is talking. I'll send you out. No talking at all now.)*



Instead of resorting to hitting students, those of the higher standards are reasoned with.

Teachers try to reason with them to get them to follow the rules and obey them.

*Teacher: Do teen bachiyon ka bhi naam liya hai. Do ya teen. Aap nahin bolenge. Main bolunga. Mere paas shikayat ayi hai. Devendre sir ne bola hai. Khade ho char bache. Khade ho jao beta. Khade ho jao. Nikki khadi ho. Khadi ho. Aur kaun hai. Acha khade ho aap. Bees saal ikkis saal hogaye unko padhate hue. Jab main yahan aaya tha na, mere yahan chatta saal hai. Jab main yahan aaya tha Devender sir yahan 16 saal se padha rahe they. Kitne saal se?*

*Students: 16*

*Teacher: Satra saal padhane ke bawajood dobara yahan se promotion hua doosre school mein. Wahan pe char panch saal padhake yahin aye hain. Itne varisht, 21 saal padhane ke bawajood aap aise teacher se aise baat karte hain? Aise behave karte hain? Achi baat hai? Beta mujhe nahin bolna mujhe sharm aati hai. Beta aap 7a ke class teacher hain aur mujhe dekh ke khud mujhe namaskar karte hain jabko mujhe pehle karna chahiye jo varisht sir hain. Bade log hamesha jhukte hain.*

*(Teacher: Names of two-three girls have been taken. Two or three. You will not talk. I will talk. A complaint has come to me from Devender sir. Four kids. Stand up beta. Stand up. Nikki stand up. And who else? Okay stand up. 20, 21 years have passed since he has been teaching. When I came here, this is my sixth year, when I came here Devender sir had already been here for 16 years. How many years?)*

*Students: Sixteen years.*

*Teacher: After teaching here for seventeen years he was promoted to a different school. After teaching there for four five years he has come back here. Such a senior teacher. He*

*has been teaching for 21 years and this is how you talk to him? This is how you behave with him? Is this a good thing to do? Beta I don't want to say anything. I am ashamed. He sees me, the class teacher of 7 A and he says namaste to me, whereas I should be saying namaste to him. Big people bend down to others.)*

Teachers resort to complaining to parents as well. The vice-principal and the teacher-in-charge of the junior section believe that teachers are responsible for disciplining the students. Many parents also feel that teachers should discipline their children but they are not in favour of physical and verbal methods of punishment. According to the teachers, disciplining students becomes difficult because teachers can no longer hit the students. Teachers now resort to using threats of complaining to parents instead.

*Teacher: Rohit aur Rahul. Yeh dono bache jo hain chutti ke baad milenge mujh se. Aap dono ke parents se mujhe baat karni hai.*

*(Teacher: Rohit and Rahul. These two students to meet me after school. I want to talk to both of your parents.)*

*Teacher: Agar maine ek phone maar diya na haan? Papa aise maarege char panch din school nahin aoge. Pata hai na. Office se bhaag ke ayenge aur aap ki shikayat ghar mein pahunchegi. Achi baat hai?;*

*Teacher: Ghar pe, main ghar pe jaonga aur phir pitwaonga bhi aur chai bhi peeke aaonga. Tumhari ma se chai banwaonga*

*(Teacher: If I make one phone call no, your father will hit you like anything. You will not come to school for four five days. You know that right. He will come running from the office and complaints against you will reach home. Is that a good thing?*

*Teacher: I will come to your house and get you beaten there. And I will drink tea also there. I will get your mother to make tea.)*

Even though teachers threaten students that they will complain to the parents and hit the students themselves, they discourage parents from hitting their children.

*Teacher: Iske papa ne chaar baar class mein pit te pit te maine bachaya phir bhi nahin sudhra. Iske last ptm mein papa ne yahin maarna tha. Maine kaha bhaisabh yahan chodo ghar pe jaake maarna jitna bhi maarna. papa ka haath chudwaya. Kitne baar kitna pareshan karke rakha hua hai mummy papa ko. Itna bade bade hoke mummy papa ko pareshan kar rahe ho. awaz bilkul nahin ayegi. Yeh khadi ho aapka bag uttao. Boys apna bag leke aao.*

*(Teacher: His father was about to hit him four times in the class and I saved him. Still he has not improved. Last PTM his father was to hit him right here. I said 'brother, leave him here, go hit him at home as much as you want'. I got his father to take his hand away. So many times. You are really troubling your parents. You have grown up and still you trouble your mother and father. You will not make any noise. Stand up and pick up your bag. Boys, bring your bag here.*

There are many tactics that the teachers use to discipline students. These include threats of complaining to parents, reducing their marks, changing seats, and withdrawing from their relationship with the students by not talking to them, teaching them, correcting their work, and making them sit far away. Surveillance is another method used to discipline students.

Each classroom is equipped with CCTV cameras and its video is monitored from and stored

in the school office. Teachers mostly monitor the students themselves and sometimes delegate this task to other students.

This chapter showed a typical day in the school. It gave an overview of the different activities carried out in the schools and also the symbolic and material resources used in these activities. The symbolic resources include maps, posters, songs, stories, idols, and narratives that immerse the students in a moral discourse, whereas the material resources include the books and materials published by *Vidya Bharti*. The primary values promoted in the school include discipline and obedience. Prayer and rituals are used to inculcate in students these values. National pride and working for various sections of society are also the aim of the school. Hence, various school activities/discourses are organised to develop these values. Given the constraint of space, this chapter does not present all the transcripts. However, some of those are used in the subsequent chapters as data along with the transcripts presented in this chapter. The following chapters analyse the discourses in the school and how the school employs particular semiotic tools and emotional resources to generate a specific kind of moral discourse. These chapters also examine the mediational role of everyday activities and discourses.

## CHAPTER V

### Identification of Discursive Objects and Processes Using Foucauldian Discourse

#### Analysis

The analysis for the present study was conducted using the stages of Foucauldian Discourse Analysis (FDA) outlined by Carla Willig (2008, p. 384). All the ways in which meaning is conveyed — speech, writing, nonverbal pictorial communication, as well as artistic and poetic imagery (Parker, 2002, pp.123-124) — are texts for the analysis. Before the analysis could begin, the data was converted into text. Thick descriptions of the school building, structure, background, organisations, decorations, notice boards, pictures, images, etc., were made. A diary was maintained to record the day-to-day activities of the students. Audio recordings of classrooms and assemblies were transcribed. All these formed the text for analysis.

The first stage was the identification of **Discursive Constructions**. Here, the text was read and re-read multiple times. Values that were spoken about, explicitly and implicitly, were underlined. The various discourses used to construct these values were identified in the second stage, that is the identification of **Discourse**. Table 5.1 shows the various discourses used to construct values. The discourses that were identified were related to personal values, values that define a good student as well as values related to respect, safety, non-violence, work ethic, economy, education, environment, nationalism, values resulting in othering, religious values, and discipline. The table gives examples of excerpts for the same.

Table5.1

*Examples of Excerpts for Each Type of Discourse Constructing Moral Values*

<b>Discourse</b>	<b>Excerpts</b>
Personal	<p>Teacher: Aaye nahin thi ka koi matlab nahin hai. Exam mein aajayga toh kya karo ge? Pehli poem hai. Apna homework pucha karo kisi se. Yeh gandi baat hai ki hum nahin aye the.</p> <p>Teacher: The fact that you did not come yesterday means nothing. If this comes in the exam then what will you do? This is the first poem. Be sure to ask someone the homework. This is <i>gandi baat</i> that you didn't come</p>
Good Student	<p>Teacher: Yeh dekho, yeh kitna acha bacha hai, itna neatly kaam kiya hai issne.</p> <p>Teacher: Look at this, he is such a good student, he has done his work so neatly</p>
Respect	<p>Teacher: Haan jo humse bade hai na unke aage Mr. aur Mrs. lagate hai. Lagate hai na. Koi bhi bada ho uski respect karni hoti hai humne toh Mr. gents ke liye lagate hai Mrs. ladies ke liye.</p> <p>Teacher: Yes, so those who are elder to us we use Mr. and Mrs. We need to respect those who are elder to us. We use Mr. for gents and Mrs. for ladies.</p>
Safety	<p>Teacher: Har baat ka jawab dena zaroori hai, sunna bhi zaroori hai. Hum aas paas se apne 1 km ke distance se kitne bachien hai jo paidal aate hai. Humein aas paas irt girt mein ache log bhi hote hain, burre log bhi hote hain. Aate jaate. Raaste mein bhi. Unse humien saavdhan rehna hai. Bahut zaroori hai.</p> <p>Teacher: Its important to answer, its important to listen as well. Around us, so many children come from around the 1km radius around school. They come walking. There are people around us. There are bad people as well. On the way, we need to be careful of them. Its very important.</p>
Non-Violence	<p>Teacher: Shakti pareshan doosron ko kasht dene ke liye nahin hai. Dadagiri nahin dikhani hai. Pehle hi bol raha hoon main.</p> <p>Teacher: Strength is not to trouble others. Its not to threaten others. I am telling you this.</p>

Work Ethic	<p>Teacher: Do ghante padhoge? Nahin chalo ek ghanta keh deti hoon. Mann laga ke. Theek hai. Aap ko do ghante zyaade lagena. Mann laga ke kitne ghante padhoge? Ek ghanta?</p> <p>Teacher: you should study for two hours. No? Okay, then one hour. You find two hours too much? How many hours will you study with concentration? One hour?</p>
Economic	<p>Teacher: Bilkul seedhe baithiye yeh paise ka mamla hai beta. Isse seriously lena chahiye beta.</p> <p>Teacher: Sit straight. This is a matter of money. It should be taken seriously.</p>
Education	<p>Teacher: Vidwan vyakti ko, educated vyakti ko shikshit vyakti ko, ko kahin bhi khaali haath nahin reh sakta. Koi bhi kuch na kuch daan karta rehta hai. raja keval apne pradesh mein hi kaam kar sakta hai. Theek hai. Doosre jagah jaake main phalane desh ka raja hoon mujhe yeh kaam dedo bolne se usko yeh kaam nahin milega. Phir shikshit vyakti ko raja ke saath tulna nahin kar sakte. barabar kar nahin sakte. Jo shikshit vyakti hoga usko raja ke jaise barabar nahin maan sakte. Woh raja se upar hai.</p> <p>Teacher: Educated people, learned people are never empty handed. Someone or the other donates someone to them. A king can work only in his kingdom. Ok. In a different country he cannot say I am a king of a country give me work, he will not get work. Then an educated person cannot be compared with a king. He is above a king.</p>
Environmental	<p>Teacher: Aur patake nahin jalane. Humein apne choton ke baare mein aur bade ke baare mein aur apne liye bhi sochna hai. koi dekh lega yeh maan ke nahin jalana. Prakratik drishti se jo nuksan dega woh nahin karna.</p> <p>Teacher: We should not burst crackers. We have to think about the young and about the old and about ourselves as well. Someone will see us so we should not burst crackers should not be the motivation, but to protect the environment.</p>
Religious	<p>Teacher: Chaliye haath jodiye, aankhien band aur prarthna shuru kijiye.</p>
Hindu	<p>Teacher: Okay fold your hands, close your eyes and lets start the prayer</p>
Othering	<p>Teacher: Usi paise ko woh Pakistan mein atankwad ko samarthan dene ke liye istemaal karte hai. Hamare paisa humien hi dhamki. Aisa hi toh china kar raha hai. Pakistan mein atankwadion ko shay deta hai aur woh hamare</p>

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	<p>khilaf unhe bhadrkata hai. Hamare desh ki zameen hamara dharm aur hamein hi beghar karne ki baat karta hai toh wakt aa gaya hai ki hum jaageing aur chinese vastuon ka bhahishkar karein.</p> <p>Teacher: Using that money (China) is supporting terrorism in Pakistan. Our money and we are the ones threatened. This is what China is doing. It is giving protection to terrorists and provokes them against us. It is our land and our religion and they are trying to throw us out. The time has come for us to awaken and boycott Chinese goods.</p>
Nationalism	<p>Teacher: Matr bhoomi ki raksha ka yeh hai daitva mahan.</p> <p>Teacher: Protection of the mother land is a great responsibility</p>
Discipline	<p>Teacher: Yes no talking please, sit down.</p>

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Table 5.2, given below, highlights the different stages of the FDA and their interactions with each other. It shows the overarching discourse in the school analysed through Carla Willig's stages of FDA. It depicts the overarching discourse of the school.



Table 5.2

*Different stages in the Extraction of Values from the Moral Discourse Present in the School*

<b>DISCOURSE</b>	<b>ACTION ORIENTATION</b>	<b>POSITIONING And PRACTICE</b>	<b>SUBJECTIVITY</b>
PERSONAL	PERSONAL VALUES	GOOD STUDENT	DOCILE HINDU NATIONAL WHO IS A GOOD WORKER FOR NATION AND IN THE WORKFORCE
GOOD STUDENT			
RESPECT			
SAFETY			
NONVIOLENCE			
WORK ETHIC	WORK ETHIC AND ECONOMIC VALUES	GOOD WORKER IN THE WORK FORCE	
ECONOMIC			
EDUCATION			
ENVIRONMENTAL			
RELIGIOUS HINDU	INCULCATION OF HINDU VALUES	NATIONALISM AND GOOD INDIAN	
OTHERING	CREATION OF OUTSIDE THREAT		
NATIONALISM	NATIONALISM		
DISCIPLINE	DISCIPLINE	DOCILE BODIES	

As can be seen in Table 5.2, the third stage of the FDA is **Action Orientation**. This stage looks at the functions that the discourses achieve. One has to pay attention to the discursive context (Potter & Wetherall, 1987; Willig, 2008). Action orientation raises questions on what is gained from the constructions of objects in this particular way and how it relates to other constructions. Discourses of personal values, good students, respect, safety, and non-violence form the action orientation of personal values. These values both promote and inhibit behaviours and guide a principled way of life. Work ethic, economic discourses, discourses on education and environmental values inform actions related to work ethic and economic values. Discourses on religious Hindu values, othering, nationalism, and discipline create action orientations that help inculcate Hindu values and create outside threat, nationalism, and discipline, respectively.

Following Action Orientation are the fourth and fifth stages of **Positioning** and **Practice**. In positioning, the subject positions available in the discourse are brought out. These subject positions are '*locations for persons within the structure of rights and duties for those who use that repertoire*' (Davies and Harre, 1999:35; cited in Willig, 2008). **Practice** brings out the relationship between discourse and practice. It explores how particular discursive constructions and subject positions within the constructions enable and constrain avenues of action. When the world is constructed in certain ways, with specific positioning of subjects within them, discourse limits things that can be said and done. Taking up a particular discourse both enables and constrains the interlocutors' ways of being. They make positions available within networks of meaning that the interlocutors can occupy. The present data shows that the creation of four subject positions and practices, namely good student, good worker in the workforce, nationalism and good Indian, and docile bodies.

The final stage of the FDA is **Subjectivity**. It explores the logical consequence of taking up particular subject positions and their practices. This deals with thoughts, feelings, and experiences within the subject positions (Willig, 2008). The data analysis shows that the logical consequence of taking up the positions and practices of being a good student, good worker in the workforce, nationalism and good Indian, along with the positionings of docile bodies, leads to a **subjectivity of a docile Hindu national who is a good worker for the nation and in the workforce**.

This discourse has three parts, namely a good student, and disciplined Hindu national, who is a good worker. These parts are discursive objects as well, which were further unpacked. The following section looks at these discursive objects.

### **5.1 Good Student**

Table 5.2 also depicts the construction of the a '*Good Student*' in the school discourse. Personal values that define a '*Good Student*' include respect for elders, intention to share, honesty, safety, and responsibility. Other values that are important for becoming '*good students*' are valuing time, education, and economic values. This is elaborated in the *Making a Good Student* chapter that comes later.

### **5.2 Discipline**

Table 5.3 shows the analysis of **Discipline**, one of the discursive objects. All instances, implicit and explicit, which alluded to discipline were noted, and the discourse employed to construct discipline were found. Discourse on space and its orderliness as well

as discourse on posture, exercise drills, threats, punishments, and surveillance, were used to construct discipline. These discourse result in a disciplinary regime, which institutes itself through the control of space, bodies (through posture and drills), behaviour (through threats and punishments), and surveillance of the student body and the teachers and staff. This results in positioning the interlocutors as the *disciplined and disciplinarians*. Students are generally disciplined with teachers occupying the disciplinarian positions. Senior teachers discipline other teachers, and sometimes teachers can elevate select students to be disciplinarians. A hierarchy is maintained, with the disciplinarians being senior to the disciplined.

Table 5.3

*Construction of Discipline in the School Discourse*

Discourses	Action Orientation	Positioning	Practice	Subjectivity
Orderliness of space	Control of Space			
Posture	Control of			
Drills	bodies	Disciplinarian	Disciplining	Docile bodies and Obedience
Threats	Control of			
Punishment	Behaviour			
Surveillance	Surveillance			

### 5.3 Good Indian

Another salient discursive object in the school discourse is **Good Indian**. There are two aspects to being a *Good Indian*. The first is the construction of India (Table 5.4a) and the second is the discursive construction of a Good Indian (Table 5.4b). India is constructed through the discourse on values, world economy, othering, Hinduism, and historical discourse. These discourses appropriate the language of decolonisation to create an idea of India as an emerging and already existing world power. They create nationalistic fervour by borrowing the legitimacy of the established discourses and their ideas (the idea of *Swadeshi* in the present case). It constructs India as a ubiquitous *Hindu Akhand Bharat*. Such a construction enables behaviours that are nationalistic for *Akhand Hindu Bharat*. It is the *Hindu Akhand Bharat* that a good Indian works towards to make a reality. A good Indian is constructed through discourses on values, work ethic, sacrifice, and Hinduism. This leads to feelings of nationalism and creation of an idea of a Hindu nation as well as instils the sense of duty of protecting this ideal.

Table 5.4a

*Construction of India in School Discourse*

Discourses	Action Orientation	Positioning	Practice	Subjectivity
Values	Creating idea of India through appropriation of decolonisation language			
World Economy	India as a world Power	India as an emerging power		Feel and believe in Hindu
Othering	Nationalistic Fervour and appropriation of Swadeshi		Nationalism	Akhand Bharat and work towards it
Hinduism	Hindu Nation			
Historical	Ubiquitous Hindu Akhand Bharat	India as Hindu Akhand Bharat		

Table 5.4b

*Construction of Indian in the school discourse*

Discourses	Action Orientation	Positioning	Practice	Subjectivity
Values		Protection of Hindu Nation and		Feel and believe in Hindu
Working for Nation	Nationalism			
Sacrifice	Appropriation of swadeshi	Weakening of Competing Discourse	Nationalism	Akhand Bharat and work towards it
Hinduism	Hindu Nation			

This chapter provides the process of analysis and the moral discourse that is present in the school. The analysis shows that the moral discourse in the school promotes the formation of a *Docile Hindu National who is a Good Worker*. The following chapters discuss these results. The chapter titled '*Making a Good Student*' discusses the creation of a *Good Student* in the school discourse. *Space, Body, Disciplining: The Creation of Docile Bodies* discusses the value of discipline in the school and how it leads to the creation of docile bodies. The last discussion chapter, *Imagining India: Making a Good Indian*, discusses the idea of construction of **India** and deliberates on the meaning of a *Good Indian* as found in the school discourse.

## CHAPTER VI

### Making a Good Student

A *Good Student* is one of the salient discursive objects found in the moral discourse of the school. Various symbolic and semiotic resources including talk, imagery, songs, pictorial representations, and involvement in activities are used to sustain the discourse in the school. This chapter discusses the creation of a *Good Student*. It identifies who a *good student* is in the school discourse and how the idea is made part of the students' consciousness.

The school discourse emphasises certain values that make up good students. They are obedient, respectful, mindful of authority, truthful, honest, patient and wait their turn, have good manners, are helpful, and are willing to help fellow students and teachers. In addition, they are eager to share and are humble, quiet, self-sufficient and hard-working. Students are characterised as *ache bache* (good children) and *gande bache* (bad children). *Ache bache* are those who have memorised the classroom lessons, done their work, brought the suitable materials to class, wait to be called on, know the songs and prayers, and share their materials. On the other hand, *gande bache* are those who do not do their work, come without the appropriate materials, speak out of turn, do not share, and do not know their songs and prayers.



## 6.1. Sharing and Honesty

Excerpt 6.1a shows that students are asked to share. They are expected to share without being asked. *Ache bache* (good children) are those who share without the teacher asking them. Notably, sharing too is commanded by the teacher. When found that a student has shared his water bottle, he is appreciated by the teacher, and referred to as a *good boy*. In excerpt 6.1b the teacher asks those students who have not prepared and learnt the lesson for the day's revision to honestly own up to it and stand up. In excerpt 6.1b, even though the teacher sarcastically says *shahbash* (well done), she expects the students to be truthful and not resort to lies about being prepared. She asks them to be honest and stand up like *ache bache*. Excerpt 6.1c shows that the teacher refers to those who have not learnt their lesson as *gande bache*. She says that she is going to ask those who have not learnt to come and write the answer on the board. This puts the spotlight on the students who have not done their work and identifies them. Those who have done their work remain invisible, given that there is no point in calling them to the board as they already know the answers. This visibility, and calling students, who have not learnt the lesson, to the blackboard is a way of shaming and embarrassing them in front of their peers. They are singled out and their incompetence is put on display.

### Excerpt 6.1a

*Teacher: Paani ki bottle lao. Hai aapke paas paani ki bottle? Haan beta usko dedo na phir aap. Ache bache toh mere bina bole hi de dete? Di thi aapne? Aare wah. Good boy.*

*(Teacher: Bring a water bottle. Do you have your water bottle? Yes beta, give him the water bottle. Good children would have given the water bottle without me asking. You gave? Arre wow Good Boy.)*

### **Excerpt 6.1b**

*Teacher: Jisne nahin kiye haath khade karo shahbash. Jisko yaad nahin hai khade ho jao. Yaad nahin hai? Very good. Paper toh dene nahin naa apne. Ussi liye toh tayari karwa rahi hoon tumhari. Khade hote jao imandari se sab, ache bachon ki tarah. Jhoot mat bolna imaandari se khade ho jao jhoot mat bolna. aur? Apne aap shabash kahade hojaiye very nice.*

*(Teacher: Those who have not done raise your hands. Very good. Those who do not remember stand up. You haven't learnt? Very good. You don't have to give exams do you? This is why I'm helping you revise. Be honest and stand up like ache bache. Do not lie, be honest and stand up. Do not lie and stand up on your own honestly. Very nice.)*

### **Excerpt 6.1c**

*Teacher: Dobaara yaad karo sab baithke. Maine unse likhwana hai jinhe nahin aata. Mujhe tumhara maloom hai. Jisko aata hai usse kya likhwana hai. Shivanshi yeh board saaf karo. Jaldi kariye Rachin ka number aane waala hai. Idhar se aane waala hai jo bacche gande bacche hai unka number aane waala hai.*

*(Teacher: Everyone sit down and learn again. I will ask those who do not know to write. I know about you, what's the point of asking those who know. Clean this board. Hurry up, Rachin's turn is about to come. We will start from here. Gande bache will be called on first.)*

## 6.2 Respecting Elders

Among the other values that are inculcated in good students is respect for elders and teachers. The students are taught that the display of respect begins with the way elders are addressed. Teachers explicitly tell the students that those who are elder to them need to be respected and this respect is to be shown by referring to them as ‘Mr. and Mrs.’ (*Teacher: Haan jo humse bade hai na unke aage ‘Mr. aur Mrs.’ lagate hai. Lagate hai na. Koi bhi bada ho uski respect karni hoti hai humne. Toh Mr. gents ke liye lagate hai Mrs. ladies ke liye*). Students are also asked to respect the leaders of the nation (Excerpt 6.2) by adding the title ‘Mr.’ or ‘Mrs.’ and not addressing them just by their names.

### Excerpt 6.2

*Teacher: Gk waale din yeh important question learn karne hai. Mehul kya bola hai? Haan ab important batane ke baad bhi nahin karoge na? Chaliye. Ek common question main puch rahi hoon aapse. Haath bandhiye. Jo sabko hi aana chahiye. Haath bandh lo aur book band karlo. Abhi tak nishan nahin lage na bandh karlo. Yes. Ab thoda sa aap ki G.K. dekhte hai kitni achi hai. Aapki G.K. strong hai na. Dekhiye G.K. strong karne ke liye kya karenge? Humein news dekhni chahiye. Kyunki news mein hamare pure world ki news aati hai. World mein kya ho raha hai humein news se pata chal jaata hai aur tumhein toh india ke baare mein hi nahi pata. Ab main puchongi na aapse. Chaliye. Yeh toh ho gaya book se sambandhit. Ab zara seedhe ho jao. Seedhe. Hogaya. Arre ghar jaake kar lena. Chaliye. Fold your arms. Dekehin*

*tumhein kuch aata bhi hai ya nahin aata apne desh ke baare mein. Who is your prime minister.*

*Students: Narendra Modi*

*Teacher: Who is your prime minister?*

*Students: Narendra Modi*

*Teacher: Ek baar phir bolna*

*Students: MR. NARENDRA MODI.*

*Teacher: Ek baar phir bolo*

*Students: MR. NARENDRA MODI*

*Teacher: Kuch bache khaali bhi toh bol rahe hain Narendra Modi. Aise bhi bol rahe hain na. Bol rahe hain, main sun rahi hoon. Tabhi toh maine teen baar bulwaya hai. Kya bolenge?*

*Students: Mr. Narendra Modi*

*Teacher: Haan jo humse bade hai na unke aage 'Mr. aur Mrs.' lagate hai. Lagate hai na. Koi bhi bada ho uski respect karni hoti hai humne. Toh Mr. gents ke liye lagate hai Mrs. ladies ke liye.*

*(Teacher: On the day of the G.K. exam, you need to learn these important questions. Mehul, what did I say? Even after I tell you the important ones you will not do right? Moving on. One common question I am going to ask you. Fold your hands. Everyone should know this. Fold your hands and close your books. You still haven't finished*

*marking? Close your books. Yes. Now let us see how good your G.K. is. Your G.K. is good right? See, what do you have to do to improve your G.K.? We should watch the news. Because the news gives us information about the whole world. What is going on in the world we find out through the news and you do not even know what is happening in India. Okay. Now I will ask you. This was related to the book. Now sit straight. Sit straight. Arre, go home and do this. Okay, lets us see if you know anything about your country or not. Who is your prime minister?*

*Students: Narendra Modi.*

*Teacher: Who is your prime minister?*

*Students: Narendra Modi.*

*Teacher: Say it once more.*

*Students: MR. NARENDRA MODI*

*Teacher: once more*

*Students: MR. NARENDRA MODI*

*Teacher: Some students are just saying Narendra Modi. You are saying it right? I can hear it, that is why I asked you to repeat it thrice. What will you say?*

*Students: Mr. Narendra Modi*

*Teacher: Yes, those who are elder to us, we need to refer to them with Mr. or Mrs. Anyone who is elder than you, you need to respect them and refer to them with Mr. or Mrs. Mr. for gents and Mrs. for ladies.)*

Such a direct command at how language is to be used can be looked at from a Lacanian perspective. Everyone is born into language or a system of signifiers (Lacan, 2001). The school discourse, wherein the students are placed, clearly dictates the way in which language needs to be used. It explicitly states that to show respect to authority (figures older to the students) they need to be addressed in a particular way. The school provides the discourse which is the ‘necessary structure’ (Lacan, 2001) embedded in the students’ interpersonal relationships with others and the world at large.

### 6.3 Safety of Self and Others

Being safe as well as keeping everyone around them safe is another value that is held in esteem in the school discourse. The students are repeatedly asked to be aware of their surroundings and not keep their safety as a priority (Excerpt 6.3).

#### Excerpt 6.3

*Teacher: Har baat ka jawab dena zaroori hai, sunna bhi zaroori hai. Hum ass paas se apne 1 km ke distance se kitne bachien hai jo paidal aate hai? Humare aas paas irt girt mein ache log bhi hote hain, burre log bhi hote hain. aate jaate. raaste mein bhi. unse humien saavdhan rehna hai. Bahut zaroori. Aapki security humari responsibility hai. Sabse pehle kisko pucha jayega?*

*Students: Class teacher.*

*Teacher: Parents, pradhanacharya, aur class teacher. Subject teacher ko nahin puchienge. Aap mat baat karo. Aapko saari jaan kari hai. Mere se kya hai. At least meri baat dhyaan se suno aap. Hemant! Jaanna achi baat hai. Lekin usko samajhna aur achi baat hai. Samajh rahe ho Main kya keh raha hoon? Dekhna. Kahin seedhi*

seedhi baat ko sunna aur aapko sirf dekhna hai. Haina aankho se dekhna. Kissine kuch baaton ko banake aapko kuch sunaya aapne dekha bhi nahin aur suna bhi nahin. Bahut saare tv channel news pe bhi apne TRP ko badhane ke liye, usko 'mera number 1 channel ho'. In baaton ko prateek kiya jata hai. sab check kiya nahin hota theek hai. Issiliye. anjaan shaksh, anjaan vyakti kabhi baat mat karo. Apna mobile number, mummy papa ka mobile number, privacy samajhte ho na. apni jo cheezien hoti hain, bank ka account number ho sakta hai, aadhar number ho sakta hai, pan card ka number ho sakta hai. theek hai. mummy papa ki private cheezien rakhi ho sakti hain uss mein. anjan vyakti aapse kisi cheez ka lalach deke aapse pooche ghar ke address toh aap kaho ki hum nahin batienge. Yeh aapki safety hai. Doosri baat. mata pitaji school chodte bhi hain agar chodke apne apne offie jaate hain. Aur unko bharosa hota hai ki school bahut acha hai. Iss mein saare ache bache hain, aisa nahin hai. Iss mein saare ache nahin hai. Agar main acha hoon, aap ache hain, toh sare ache hain. Aur bache baithke bataon, school ki bus hoti hai uske aas paas bachein khelte hain aur unke neechे bhi bache aake dab rahe hain. Itna toh hum samajh sakte hain bacha, bachon ne nahin dekha, driver ne nahin dekha, aap bus ke neechे chips kha rahe ho. Abhi parson ki baat hai daadi apni poti ko lene gayi school mein, bus se jaise hi utri bus ne nahin dekha aur bus ke neechे aa gayi. Thak. Pahiye ke neechे aa gayi aur uski wahin death ho gayi. Aap bhi ab gadi mein bus mein chadhte utade waqt bhi savdhani poorvak chadhe aur uttre. Side dekh ke road cross karien. Theek hai beta. Yeh aapke subject se bahut alag baat bata raha hoon main aapko. Bahut bahut hansna nahin. Phir shuru ho gaye. Phir shuru ho gaye. Acha. Acha chillao main jaa raha hoon. Chillao. Chillao. Ek vyakti koi aaya toh aise kyun ho rahe ho? Bahut saare hamare mummy papa working dono working bhi hote hain. Kisi ki beti ghar mein akeli hai, beta ghar mein akela hai. ghar mein courier, bahut

saare plumber, yeh paani ka kaam, gas ka kaam, gas theek karne ke naam par log aate hain. chahe beta ho chahe beti ho. Doosri baat. Agar koi kahe aur dar lage ki mummy kuch kaheinge papa kuch kahenge toh school mein koi favourite teacher toh hoga. unko bhi aap bata sakte ho. Share kar sakte ho. Unke saath. Ki mujhe pareshan kiya jaa raha hai uske dwara. Aap chote bhi nahin, bade bhi nahin. Apne aap ko kya karna hai safe rakhna hai aur awareness. Jagruk. Theek hai. Aur har parents yeh chahta hai mere beta meri beti safety se school jaye safety se school se aye. Woh bhi jagruk rahe, main bhi jagruk rahoon. Aur iss umar mein iss awastha mein, mummy papa kahe haan meri beti, mera beta hoshiyar hai. samjhlayak ho gayi hai. meri beti in sochon ko sahen nahin kar sakti bata sakti hai kissi ko bhi. Mummy papa ko bhi yeh vishwas hona chahiye. Theek hai. Doosri baat, bade bhai bhi aur badi behen bhi dono apni class ke alawa koi class mein na jayein. Chahe bhai ho. Meri baat suno. bhai behen, bhai apne apne jagah hai lekin bhai ke saath kaisa dost hai? Acha bacha bhi ho sakta hai, bura bhi ho sakta hai. Didi ke saath baithne waali saheli didi ki saheli tumhari didi maan lo, tumhari didi achi hai. tumhara bhai tumhara hi bhai hai lekin doosra vyakti nahin jaanta bhai behen bhi kai baar bhabhi bhi bua bhi doosra vyakti jo soch raha hai woh pata nahin ki uska kya hai. Moohn jaise hi kholte hain baat ka batangar bana dete hain kissi ke moohn mein tala lagaya ja sakta hai? bandook se nikla goli waapis aa sakta hai?

*Students: Nahin*

*Teacher: Haan issiliye bolne ke baad jab burre aisa karenge hi aisa bolenge hi.*

*Issliye aapko jaagruk kar raha hoon Samjha raha hoon. Koshish kar raha hoon.*

*Theek hai?*

*(Teacher: It is important to give an answer for everything. It is important to listen as well. So many of us come from nearby, about 1 km from the school. How many*



*students come walking? The people around us are good as well as bad people. On the way we have to be careful and take precautions. It is very important. Your security is our responsibility. Who will be asked first?*

*Students: Class teacher.*

*Teacher: Parents, principal, and class teacher. No one is going to ask the subject teacher. You don't talk. You know everything, what is it to me. At least carefully listen to what I am saying. Hemant! It is good to know, but it is better to understand. Are you understanding? What am I saying? See. You just have to see and listen. Right. See with your eyes. Someone makes something up and tells you, you haven't seen it nor heard it. There are many TV channels, news channels that say anything, they are doing that for TRP, so that their channel is No.1. What is the source of this news? It is not fact checked. Okay. That is why do not talk to strangers. Do not give your mobile number, your parents' mobile numbers, do you understand privacy? Your information, your bank account details, aadhaar card number, pan card number, okay, your parents' private things. If a stranger tempts you with anything and asks for your house address, do not give it. This is for your safety. Secondly, your parents leave you at school and go to their offices. They have faith that the school is very good. That all the students in the school are good, this is not the case. All the students are not good. If I am good, you are good, then everyone is good. And students, there is the school bus. Children play near that bus, and children are being run over by the busses. This much we can understand. The children have not noticed, and the driver hasn't noticed, children are eating chips near the bus. Day before yesterday, one grandmother went to get her granddaughter from the school. She got down from the bus and she did not notice, and the bus did not notice, and she was run over. Thak. She came under the tyre and lost her life there. You also, while boarding and getting*

*down from the bus, be cautious. Be safe while getting onto and getting off the bus. Look and cross the road. Okay. This is not related to your subject. Don't laugh so much. Again you have started. Again you have started. Shout, shout, I am going. Shout, shout. If someone has come to the class why are you behaving like this? There are many who have both parents working. Some have their daughters alone at home, son alone at home. Some courier, some plumber, some gas checking, some water work, people come for many types of work, whether there is a girl or a boy at home. If someone says something, and you are afraid your mother will say something, your father will say something, you must have a favourite teacher in school, you can tell them. you can share with them that you are being troubled by someone. You are not small children, neither are you adults, you need to know what to do to keep yourself safe. Be aware. Jagrukh. Okay. And all parents want their children to go to school safely and return safely. That their kids are aware, and they think that their daughters are sensible, their sons are intelligent. That their daughters will not stand for such things. Parents should have this faith. Okay. And secondly, elder brothers and elder sisters should stay in their own classes and not go to any other classes. Whether he is your brother. Listen to me. Brother sister, they are in their own place, but the brother has a friend, what sort of friend is he? He can be a good child, he can be bad also. The friend who sits with the elder sister, you can consider her your didi, your sister is good, your brother is your brother, but the other person doesn't know. Sometimes brothers and sisters, sometimes buas and bhabhis, what the other person is thinking we do not know. The moment we open our mouths we make the situation worse. We cannot lock someone's tongue, can we? Can a bullet fired from a gun come back?*

*Students: No.*

*Teacher: Yes, that is why after speaking, when bad speak like this, and behave like this, you need to be aware. Are you understanding? I am trying to make you understand. Okay?)*

The excerpt (6.3) given above shows the efforts made by a class teacher to make his students aware and careful. He illustrates various instances that could lead his students into danger. They could be walking to school and come across nefarious elements, or someone could tempt them with certain things and get personal information. He stresses the need for maintaining privacy and not sharing sensitive information with others. In another example, he mentions that in case both parents are working, the children often stay alone at home. He mentions daughters first, and then goes on to include sons. He does not elaborate what could be the cause of discomfort but alludes to abuse. He says that the students may think that their parents would scold them so they should confide in the teachers in school instead. The teacher provides a sense of structural continuity by taking the place of the mother/parent in the school. In this excerpt too, the class teacher equates the roles of the parents, principal, and class teacher. All three are equally responsible for a child's safety. The students are also cautioned against fellow students, especially the friends of their elder siblings.

The safety of girls is given special attention and care, which can be seen in this excerpt and also from a parent–teacher meeting in which the ninth standard class teacher reprimands a student for taking another boy to a girl's house. His parents, along with the teacher, express their disappointment at the boy's behaviour. The teacher cautions that although his friend went to the girl's house with him this time, he may go to her house alone the next time (*Teacher: Koi ladki ka ghar kissi ko dikhaya hi kyun..aaj woh aapke saath gaya hai, kal woh akela jayega*). Such focus on girls' safety stems from the need to circumscribe women's

sexuality within socially sanctioned bonds of marriage as they are seen as carriers of family honour (Chowdhary, 2007, pp. 16-17). Girls in the Indian society are expected to maintain their virginity until marriage. They have limited mobility to ensure their 'reputation' is not tainted. Having unknown boys show up at their door is apparently a threat to their reputation. The men in their lives are responsible for ensuring that their 'purity' is maintained. The boy who was reprimanded was the girl's classmate. Just as the class teacher is viewed as the mother in the school, male classmates are considered brothers. In this case, the boy is rebuked because he is supposed to be responsible for safeguarding the girl's purity, which he failed to do.

#### **6.4 Valuing Time, Education, and Economic Engagement**

Knowing and recognising the value of time is another important value that a 'good student' possesses according to the school discourse. In multiple instances, the students are told its value. It is to be valued and not squandered. In excerpt 6.4, the teacher is telling the students that 'lost time is never found again', meaning that once time goes, it never comes back. She tells them that in their lives it means that they should study daily. They should promptly revise whatever is taught in school as the classroom lessons will continue and the students will keep falling behind. In other instances, teachers reprimand students for wasting their time by not getting the required things to class. In one case, the class teacher scolds the students for having to remind them to bring their 'board registration fees' every day and spends her class period collecting the fees and accounting for the students who had paid and who had not. She tells the students who failed to bring the fees to call home have the fees brought to school as doing this daily was wasting her time (*Teacher: Aap registration fees*

laye hain beta? Mere paas roz roz iss pe time barbaad karne ka nahin hai, jao phone karke mangwao).

#### **Excerpt 6.4**

*Teacher: Today's thought for the day is Lost time is never found again. Jo samah chala gaya, lost time, jo hamara samah chala gaya who wapas dobara nahin aayga. Isse humien kuch seekhne ko milta hai? Is vakya se hum kuch seekh saktein hain kya kuch? Hum toh bachche hain, humien toh bahut kuch seekhna hai. Badon ke liye bhi hai lekin bachon ke liye toh bahut zyaada special hai. Lost time is never found again. Iska matlab hai, jo samah chala gaya usko hum wapas nahin laa sakte. Bachhon ke hisaab se dekho aaj hamara study ka hai, jo aaj humien padhna hai usko hum chod dein, who chootta hi chala jayega. Haina? Woh samah par nahin ho payga na aur jo samah par nahin hoga uska result kafi bura, toh jo hamien kaam karna hai, jo bhi hamien padhai karni hai, job hi hamien homework karna hai aaj ka kaam humien aak ji karna hai. Humien usi samah apna kaam karna haiyeh nahin ki abhi thodi der mein karlienge, kyonki phir jo hamara choot jaata hai, who choot ta hi rehta hai. Toh aapko jo diya hai learn karne ke liye class mein maam ne diya hai test ke liye kal, toh aaj aapko yaad karke aana hi hai haina? Agar aaj nahin karoge toh kal doosra kaam mil jayega phir who bhi choot jayega. Who nahin kar payeinge na phir. Phir hum pe itna burden ho jayega, aaj ka bhi hogaya kal ka bhi hogaya. Toh do kaam toh nahin kar payenge. Theek hai. Bachchon ke hisaab se itna seekhna bahut hai ki hamien apna kaam bilkul time pe karna hai. Time ko miss nahin karna. Karienge?*

*(Teacher: Today's thought for the day is Lost time is never found again. The time which is passed, the time which is gone, that will not come back again. What can we learn from this? Can we learn anything from this sentence? We are children, we have*

*to learn many things. This is for grownups but for children this is extra special. Lost time is never found again. This means that the time which has gone we cannot bring it back. Look at it from your point of view. Today we have to study, if we do not study today then we will keep lagging behind. We will not get the time back. We will not be able to do our work on time. And the work that is not completed on time, the result is not good. So we have to do our work. Whatever work that we have to do, whatever we have to study, the homework that we have to complete, today's work we have to complete today itself. We should do the work right then and not say that we will do it a little later because then that work will be left. So whatever is given to you to learn, what maam gives you in the classroom to learn for the test tomorrow you will have to learn it today okay. If you do not do it today then there will be different work for tomorrow. Then that will also be left incomplete. Then we will be burdened so much. For children learning this is enough that we should finish our work on time and we should not waste it. Okay?)*

### **Excerpt 6.5**

*Teacher: Yeh aapka time kill kar raha hai na. Jo aise time kill kar raha hai woh bhi terrorist hai. Haina. Waise toh woh apne aap ko hi maar rahah hai. Terrorist toh doosro ko bhi maarte hai. Haina. Yeh toh apne aap ko hi maar raha hai.*

*(Teacher: He is killing his own time. Those who kill their time like this are terrorists.*

*Right. He is hurting himself. Terrorists hurt and kill others as well. Right. He is hurting only himself.)*

The excerpts show that wasting time is considered a grave offence in the school. It is equated to terrorism (excerpt 6.5) and is seen as something that prevents the students from making the most of their education.

The value of education is spoken about in the school discourse. Excerpt 6.6 shows that education is seen as a source of values and certain qualities. It highlights the belief system that those who are educated would be the ones to stress the importance of educating future generations.

### **Excerpt 6.6**

*Teacher: Education humko kya deti hai? Quality. Uneducated vyakti ko nahin pata ki jab koi ayega toh mujhe khade hoke usko welcome karna hai. Main aati hoon aap log khade hote ho. Yeh cheez aapko kaise ayi? Sikhane se ayi. Padhne se ayi. Yehi agar koi gareeb bacha jo school nahin jaata aur agar usko school mein pehla din hota hai toh kya woh khada hoga? Nahin khada hoga. Usko aake teacher sikhaye gi. Im just giving an example. Aap logon ko pata hai ki khansi ayegi toh muhn ke aage haath rakhna hai. Aap logon ko pata hai ki mere se agar galti ho gayi toh 'sorry' bolna hai. Agar mujhe kisi ne phayda diya hai toh 'thank you' bolna hai. Bete yeh hain good qualities of population. Jo educated hai usko pata hai the value of education. Jo uneducated hai usko value of education nahin pata. aur education kya hai ek choti se choti baat se leke badi se badi baat. Teacher ka andar enter hona aur aapka khade ho jana yeh due respect. Woh kya hai? Kisne di woh seekh aapko? Education ne. Haina. Yeh automatically hai. Jaise hi aap maam ko dekhte ho aap khud khade ho jaate ho. Aadat ho gayi na aapko. Aur jo baatein maine boli, koi galti hoti hai toh sorry bolna thank you bolna achi reading karna, phayde pata hone education ke, yeh sirf*

*educated vyakti hi jaanta hai. Theek hai. Ab doosra example. Jo educated hoga woh aane waali generation ko kya bataega? Education ki importance. Educated parents hi educated bachon ko brought up karenge. Theek hai. ab ek rikshaw puller agar woh jaanta hai education ki value, toh woh apne bache ko educate karega otherwise woh kya karega? Ki mat padh doosra rikshaw tereko bhi de doon. right. Lekin kya aap jo ab padh likh rahe ho aap jab aane wale time mein aapke bache honge toh kya aap unke baare mein aisa soch sakte ho? Never. Kabhi bhi nahin. Theek hai. reason being, Aap acha padhoge, aap achi job mein jaoge jaise papa mummy jinki achi job hai ya educated aap ko kis liye bhej rahe hai? Because your parents know the value of education. Ki mera bacha acha padhega toh acha earn karega. Theek hai. acha earn karega plus yeh jo bahut saari qualittes maine aapko batai na. Woh bhi kisse ayengi?*

*Students: Education se.*

*(Teacher: What does education give us? Quality. Uneducation people do not that if someone comes they have to stand and welcome them. When I come into the class you stand up and greet me. How did you get to know to do this? You were taught this. You learnt it. If there is a poor child who does not go to school, and when he does go, when it's his first day, will he stand up? No, he will not. The teacher will teach him that. I'm just giving an example. You know that if you cough then you need to cover your mouth with your hands. You know that if you make a mistake you need to say 'sorry'. If someone helps you then you need to say 'thank you'. Beta these are good qualities of population. Those who are educated know the value of education. those who are uneducated do not know the value of education. And what is education, from a little thing to big things. When a teacher enters the room and you stand up to give*



*due respect. What is that? Who taught you that? Education did. Right. This is automatic. The moment you see ma'am you stand up. This is your habit. And the other things I told you, saying sorry for a mistake, thank you, reading well, you know the advantages of being educated. Only an educated person knows these things. Okay. Now a second example. Those who are educated, what will they tell their future generations? The importance of education. Only educated parents will bring up educated children. Okay. Now if there is one rikshaw puller, if he knows the value of education then he will educate his children, otherwise, what will he do? He will say don't study, I'll bring another rikshaw for you. Right? But you, now that you are studying, in the future would you think like this for your children? Never. Never ever. Okay. Reason being, if you study well you will get a good job. Like your parents who have good jobs, why are they sending you? Because your parents know the value of education. That if my child will study well he will earn well. Okay. He will earn well plus all these good qualities that I have told you, how will they come?*

*Students: From education.)*

Education is seen as a means of dialogue. In excerpt 6.7, the teacher refers to a few students who had threatened a teacher by saying 'Bahar dekhloonga' (I will see you outside). The teacher alludes to the student's thought process that the teacher may have authority within the school, so the student would get even outside it. The class teacher then tells the students that the purpose of education is to engage in dialogue and not to resort to physical altercation.

### **Excerpt 6.7**

*Teacher: Vidya vivadaya dhanam viday. Hamare jo education hum log grahan karte hain vidya, shiksha lete hain jhagda ke liye nahin ladai ke liye nain yudh ke liye nahin*

*hain. Vivad mane vivad ke liye nahin. samvad ke liye. Vidya hamesha samvad ke liye hota hai. Vidya, jo bacha vidya grahan karta hai aur woh kabhi bhi vivad nahin karta. Aajkal ke bache guru se vivad karte hain. samvad nahin karte. Sabko dhamkate hain. Dekh loonga tujhe. Aapka naam nahin liya. Aapka naam nahin le raha hoon. Teacher padhate hain achi baat hai lekin aaplog “bahar dekh loonga us teacher ko”. Aapka naam liya hai. Ek udharan bata raha hoon. Education hamare guru log humein padhyaya karte they. Gyan kabhi bhi vivad ke liye nahin hai samvad ke liye hai.*

*(Teacher: “Vidya vivadaya dhanam vidya”. This education that we are obtaining, this education is not for fighting. It is not for fighting, it is not for war. “Vivad” means fight, it is not for fighting, it is for “Samvad” dialogue. Education is always for dialogue. Children this education that a child gets is never for fighting. Students now a days fight with their Guru (teacher). They do not dialogue. They threaten, “Ill see you outside”. I am not taking your name. I am not taking your name. Teachers teach you good things but you kids, “Ill see you outside”. I haven’t taken your name, I am giving an example. Education is given by our teachers. This is never for fighting, it is for dialogue.)*

Obtaining high marks is taken as a benchmark for being educated. There are many instances in the school that point towards high scores being considered the most definitive factor determining a school’s ability to provide *good education*. In one instance, the teacher-in-charge of the senior wing complains to the principal (in the presence of the researcher) that the physics teacher for the eleventh and twelfth standards is wasting time by bringing in concepts that will not be asked in the board exams. The principal and the teacher-in-charge agree that in-depth learning can take place later and the need of the hour is preparing for the

boards and focussing on what is likely to be asked in the board exams (*yeh badi badi interest wali baatien baad mein bache kar sakte hain, abhi inko exam ki view se sikhana chahiye*).

The principal, in fact, even shows willingness for the Vidhya Bharti to appoint another physics teacher instead.

The importance of the board exams is reiterated to the students in all their periods from the ninth standard itself. There is hardly any class where the board exams that the students have to sit for in the next year and their importance is not talked about. The results that the students obtained in the board exams is a matter of pride for the school. It is these results that serve as advertisements for the school. It is on the basis of these results that the school gets more students to join it and continue studying in it till the eleventh and twelfth standards.

Marks obtained in all exams are important for the teachers and students. Hence, classroom instructions are based on the topics that are generally asked during the exams. One of the teachers told the researcher that they choose to skip the questions that are not asked during the exams and focus on those that are (*Teacher: Yeh jo aapka first question hai, list the games that girls and boys play, iski list banalo. Jo second part hai usko rehne do.*

*Teacher: In this first question, please make a list of the games that girls and boys play. Leave the second part*). The marks obtained are considered important as they were taken as an indication of future success. It is assumed that those who score high marks end up doing well later in life as they get admission into good colleges and find good jobs. The actual value of education is assessed by the monetary gains that one could obtain from it. Many a times students are told that getting good jobs and earning money is the fundamental aim of education (as seen in excerpt 6.6, where the teacher says that earning well is the value of

education). Excerpt 6.8 also shows how the value of education is reduced to the monetary gain that one can obtain from it.

### **Excerpt 6.8**

*Student: Alasasiya kuta vidya, avidyasya kuto dhanam, adhanasya kuto mitram, amitrasya kuto sukham. Aalsi ko vidya kahan, vidyaheen ko dhan kaha, bin adhan ke mitra kahan, aur bina mitron ke sukh kahan.*

*Student: Lazy people do not get education, uneducated fools do not get wealth, poor people do not have friends, and there is no happiness without friends.*

The joy of learning, teaching creativity, and forming ‘strong public intellectuals’ (Baltodano, 2012) seem to have disappeared from the school education (as can be seen from excerpt 6.7, 6.8, and the interactions with the teachers described above). Schools are incorporated within and further socialise students into an economic value system within which knowledge becomes ‘*objectified, measurable, and transferable*’ (Brancaleone & O’Brien, 2011). These values are seen through the emphasis on scoring good marks in the board exams and preparing students with those exams in mind. Teachers emphasise certain parts of the syllabus, depending on their value in scoring marks. They are expected to ‘teach’ in a way that enables most students to score instead of actually understanding the concepts. The results of the Personal Values Questionnaire by Sherry, administered to the students of the eleventh standard, show that the most prevalent personal value among the students is economic value.

In schools, academic achievement and marks are the leading indicators of future economic growth and individual well-being. Education has become ‘*a crucial factor in ensuring economic productivity and competitiveness in the context of informational capitalism*’ (Ball,

2008). The achievements of students are indicators of their future talent pools and economic successes. The idea seems to be that individual students benefit from scoring good marks by getting better job prospects, which lead to their social mobility and in turn the entire nation doing better. Thus, being a good worker is an avenue of serving the nation and being involved in nation-building and hence a good student is a good worker.

## **6.5 Conclusion**

*Good Student* is reified in the school discourse as *Achche Bachche*. They possess values that are considered as desirable in the school discourse. They are honest, humble, eager to share, helpful, self sufficient, respect elders, and hardworking. They study well, are patient, and know the patriotic songs and prayers. Safety is another value that is inculcated in *good students*. They are expected to keep themselves and other around them safe. Boys are held responsible for the safety of their girl classmates. Time, education, and economic engagement are valued in the school discourse, in fact, education is valued for the economic gain that one can make from it. A *good student*, then, is someone who studies well, scores well, and is able to find gainful employment, thereby becoming a good worker and serving the nation.

## CHAPTER VII

### Space, Body, Disciplining: The Creation of Docile Bodies

Discipline is a mechanism of power that regulates individuals' behaviour in the society. It is a necessary condition for effective action in the social world and, at the same time, a repressive operation through which individuals are seasoned into productive labour. Disciplinary regimes use '*coercions that act upon the body, a calculated manipulation of its elements, its gestures, its behaviour... thus discipline produces subjected and practiced bodies, docile bodies*' (Foucault, 1995, p. 138). Discipline is one of the salient discursive objects identified and extracted from the ethnographic data. The chapter discusses how the moral discourse in the school achieves discipline by controlling space, bodies, and behaviour using various pedagogically mediated narratives and mechanisms of both physical and digital surveillance. This, according to Shishu Mandir, results in the creation of docile bodies, eventually making them good workers for the nation and its workforce.

#### 7.1 Space as a Means of Supervising, Hierarchising, and Rewarding

*'Discipline sometimes requires enclosure, the specification of a place, heterogenous to all others and closed in upon itself'* (Foucault, 1995; p. 141).

Both the school and classrooms are enclosed spaces in which students spend most of their time. The larger part of their day is spent in classrooms. They leave the classrooms for only during periods like music, yoga, library, or drawing. The classroom is an organised space where students sit in pairs on desks arranged in rows. The first command that the class

teacher gives as she enters is for the students to arrange their benches (*Teacher: Haanji, arrange yourself. Bench theek se lagao*). Students are called to the teacher's desk to get their notebooks corrected in the order of seating. This prevents them from crowding around her table. The seats nearest to the teacher's table are the coveted seats. Teachers allow students to sit closer to them or in the prized front seats as a reward for good behaviour, such as knowing the prayers. Those who know the prayers can sit in the front and those who do not know the prayers have to settle for less favourable seats. Students are made to stand at the back of the class, or outside it, as punishment (see excerpt 7.1). They are derided and sent to the seats at the back. The classroom is, thus, turned into a space for '*supervising, hierarchising, and rewarding*' (Foucault, 1995; p.147).

### **Excerpt 7.1**

*Teacher: Yes, arrange your benches. Yes, no talking please, no talking. Sit down, sit down all of you. Khidkiyan khol do. Register kahan hai? (Student looks for and hands register to her). Aapko aate hi karne chahiye bench theek. Apni seat toh khud banai chahiye naa. Beta yeh sab kaam aap pehle se kara karo. Chalo Shivanshi aap idhar aajao. Ao beta, yahaan aajao dono. Yes, no talking please. Ache bache bano. Ache bache toh aap ho hi toh aur bhi ache bache bano... Hurry up, jisko yaad nahin hai peeche chale jao imandari se. Jhoot nahin bolna. Jao jao jaldi se... Mehul aap theek se baith jao. Nahin toh maine bahar khade kardena hai Pure din ke liye. Kamar seedhi. Haath neeche.*

*(Teacher: Yes, arrange your benches. Yes, no talking please, no talking, sit down, sit down all of you. Open the windows. Where is the register? You should arrange your benches as soon as you come. You should do this yourself. At least you should arrange your seats yourself. Beta, do this work beforehand. Shivamshi you come here.*

*You both come here. Yes, no talking. Be good children. You are good children become even better children... Hurry up. Those who do not remember go stand at the back. Be honest. Do not lie. Go, go, hurry up...: Mehul, sit properly. Otherwise I will make you stand outside for the whole day. Back Straight. Hands down)*

### **Excerpt 7.2**

*Teacher: Prayer aati nahin phir bhi aage baithne ka shokh hai. Aage baithna zaroori hai kya?*

*(Teacher: You do not know the prayers still you want to sit in the font. Is it necessary to sit in the front?)*

Seats are assigned to students based on friendship and gender. Friends are generally made to sit away from each other to avoid distractions, while girls are made to sit together. Students are not allowed to change seats by themselves. The fixed seats make it easier for teachers to control the class and identify absences. It guarantees obedience and ensures a better economy of time. The fixed seats make it easier for teachers to control the class and identify absences. One such instance was that of the fourth standard classroom, where a student was missing (he was later found in the second standard classroom where the Hindi teacher sent him for distracting other students).

Classroom arrangement affects classroom behaviour. Row seating reduces students to passive learners, who are meant to be seen and not heard (Atherton, 2005). It also reduces student–teacher interaction and does not allow space for students' needs (Rosenfield et al., 1985). It, however, does reduce disruptive behaviour (Hastings & Schweiso, 1995) as it enables the teacher to supervise each individual and their work simultaneously.



Student groups are divided into houses named after Hindu places of worship, Ayodhyapuri, Jagannathpuri, Dwarkapuri, and Kanchipuri. An entire class belongs to the house in which the class teacher belongs. The houses compete with each other in the competitions that are organised. This promotes competitive values and feelings of oneness among students of the same class. It primes the students to direct their competitive feelings towards the outside and towards others. They are divided into the nursery, primary, junior, and senior sections, and there are different teachers in charge of each section.

The students of each standard are divided into two or three sections, A and B and C. This not only serves to maintain the student–teacher ratio but also breaks up collectives. Disciplinary spaces are divided into many sections to enable authorities to know the presences and absences of the students (Foucault, 1995, p. 143).

The school building, too, is an enclosed space. The gates separate the school from the residential area outside. There are two gates through which the school can be entered. One of these gates is through the temple. This temple has been shifted towards the outer edge of the school recently. Earlier, it was inside the school and residents of the locality were free to walk into the school to access the temple. Therefore, the access to the school has now been restricted by shifting the temple towards the outside and building a gate between the temple and the inner side of the school. There are guards stationed at each gate to ensure entrance of only authorised individuals. These gates serve the purpose of keeping students inside and others outside.

At certain times students do venture out of the school, but the school's invisible boundaries remain around them. Their uniforms and the presence of teachers create the school's boundaries even without the physical boundaries of the building. The discipline learnt in the school is internalised and no longer remains contingent on being confined to the school premises.

## **7.2 Control of Bodies**

Students' bodies are controlled through the exercise drills, the imposition of orderliness, and establishment of timetables to create rhythms and cycles of repetition. Akin to marching troops, the students are controlled by drumbeats. The sound of the drum signals the call to prayer. As the drums beat, the students start making their way to the courtyards in a single file. Reaching on time and in an orderly manner is essential. Those who have to spread the mats rush to the utility room, bring out mats and roll them out for all students to sit. Students clap to the drumbeat as well. The *abhinandan taali* (applause for appreciation) is performed to show appreciation in a particular manner. These are three short claps to the drumbeat. Further, drumbeats accompany the yoga teacher's command while students perform the yoga drills.

Excerpt 7.3 describes how students are expected to move in a line, and on time. The students are expected to walk to the prayer hall in a single file and make their way for the morning prayer. They are told that they should be on time and walk in a single line.

### Excerpt 7.3

*Teacher: Shikshak bhi samay par aana, samay par jaana, samay se line banakar jaana. Samay par prayer pe jaana. Samay se line mein jaana, aadha idhar se aadha udhar se aadha udhar se teen bache line banake nahin aate pankti banake, class mein do bache pahunchta hai. Uske baad do minute baad teen minute baad idhar se do bache udhar se do bache. This is the way? Yeh way hai? Tareeka hai? Monitor, aapko kya bola tha maine?*

*(Teacher: Students should come on time. Should go on time. Should make a line and go. Go on time for prayer. On time, in a line. Not that students come from here and there. Three students in a line from here, you should make a line and go. Two students reach the class and then after two minutes three minutes from here and there two students come. Is this the way? Is this the way? Monitor, what have I told you?)*

The commands are detailed. They describe precisely where the limbs need to be, when to inhale, how long to hold the breath, and when to exhale. As evident from excerpt 7.4, the commands are given by a teacher during the morning assembly and the yoga exercise. The commands are detailed and precise. Every part of the body is to be in the exact position that the teacher explicitly mentions. Those not able to follow the instructions are reprimanded and shamed by being referring to as *boodhe* (elderly). Such commanding pattern of speech is found in the classrooms as well where the teachers give a barrage of instructions regarding where the students should be, what they should do, and how the classroom needs to be arranged (as seen in excerpt 7.1).

#### **Excerpt 7.4**

*Teacher: Bilkul aram se baithna hai aapko. Aur aapke haath aapke ghutne pe honge. Yeh dekhiye. Aur is mein baithne ka kya phayda hai ki aapki kamar nahin jhukti aap musalmaan nahin banoge. Nahin toh musalman ban jaate jo. Panje ko ek doosreke upak rakho. Pairon ko cross baniye. Aidiyan khuli. Okay one. Saavdhaan. Aapke haath bilkul aapke ghutno ke upar honge kamar tedi nahin hogi. Iss mein baithne ka yahi phayda hai ki aap musalman nahin banoge. Aap musalman nahin banoge aap seedhe baithoge. Ab hum thodi exercise karenge. Ab seedhe haath se ulte haath ki kalai ko pakadiye. Kamar ko seedha rakhiye. Aur gardan ko peeche khenchiye. Ek do. Aage ki taraf jhukiye. Ek do. Ek do. Ek do. Ek. Kamar seedhi. Ab dono haath. Kamar seedhi. Ab baithe baithe hi aap ek aasan karienge parvat aasan. Theek hai. Dono haathon ko jodeinge. Rumal ko chod deejiye. One. Stretch karte hue upar. Main bataon kaise kiya jaata hai. Main sikhaon wahan par aakar? One. Haath jodienge. Jo buzurg hai jin se nahin ho raha woh kar sakte hain haath neeche. Mante ho aap buzurg ho? Budhe ho chuke ho? Haath upar kheencho. One two. Sar par yahan par yahan lage ga haath. One kheenchiye haath upar khennchiye. kheenchiye haath upar. Parvat aasan baithe baithe karenge. One two. One two three four five six seven eight nine ten relax. Kamar gardan seedhi. Haath gyan mudra mein. Saamne dekhienge. Bilkul seedhe ho jaye. Kamar ko seedha karien bilkul seedha. Kamar seedhi. Ek lamba gehra saans lenge. Ek do.*

*(Teacher: Relax and sit. Your hands should be on your knees. See this. You have to sit like this. And what is the benefit of sitting like this? Your back does not bend. You will not become Muslims. Otherwise you become Muslim. Keep your feet on top of each other. Cross your feet. Heels open. Okay, one. Attention. Your hands have to be directly on top of your knees. Back will not bend. The advantage of sitting like this is*

*that you will not become Muslims. You will not become Muslims. You will sit straight. Now we will do some exercise. Now, hold your left hand with your right hand. Keep your back straight and pull your neck behind. One, two. Now bend forward. One, two. One, two. One, two. One. Back straight. Now both hands, back straight. Now you will perform one aasan while sitting, parvat aasan (mountain pose). Okay. Join both hands, leave your handkerchief. One, stretch karte hue upar. Should I tell you how it is done? Should I come there and teach you? One. Join your hands. Those who are elderly and cannot do it can lower their hands. You agree that you are elderly? Have you become old? Stretch your hands above. One, two. On your head, here, your arms will reach here. One. Stretch your arms above. Stretch, stretch your arms up. Parvat aasan, while sitting. Back and neck straight. Keep your hands in 'knowledge pose'. Look in front. Back straight. Now take deep breaths. One, breathe in, two breathe out. One two.)*

The drumbeat and teachers' commanding instructions teach students to learn the 'correct' way of clapping and making the correct yoga postures. Teachers give detailed instructions on how the body needs to be positioned. Postures are monitored and corrected. Students are required to sit straight during the morning prayer and classes. It is associated with alertness and attention, and is the desired behaviour. The undesired behaviour of not sitting straight is associated with a particular community (see excerpt 7.4).

The drumbeat imposes a collective and obligatory rhythm on the student body from the outside. It defines an *anatomo-chronological schema of behaviour* (Foucault, 1995). As Foucault describes the phenomena, *'The act is broken down to its elements; the position of the body, limbs, articulations are defined; to each movement are assigned a direction, an*

*aptitude, a duration; their order of succession is prescribed. Time penetrates the body and with it all the meticulous controls of power. Hence the correlation of body and gesture'* (Foucault, 1995, p. 152).

Discipline does not just teach, it imposes a relation between gestures and positions of the body. The body is implicated in the teachers' instructions and the students' learning.

Teachers do not even need to use complete sentences to get students to perform correct postures. Single words and even their body posture communicate to students what is desired of them. Teachers do not even need to say *kamar seedhi* (back straight), saying only *seedhe* (straight) or even looking at students and straightening their own backs gets students to sit straight. '*A disciplined body is the prerequisite of an efficient gesture*' (Foucault, 1995, p. 152). Even students' handwriting is reflective of routine and investment of the body.

According to the teacher, posture needs to be correct while writing, and only then will the writing be legible and beautiful (*Teacher: Seedhe baithkar likheye. Aise kaise baith kar likh rahe ho, tabhi toh itna ganda linkha jaa raha hai. Theek se baitho, tabhi toh writing neat and clean ayegi.*). The training of hands to hold the pen in specific ways so as to produce certain kinds of writing generates a complex referred to as the body-tool complex of Foucault (1995). Students are commanded to write neatly and, complimented for neat writing (see excerpt 7.5).

### **Excerpt 7.5**

*Teacher: Likhiye notebook mein. Ab bahut sundar writing mein, itni sundar ki bas, didi dekhien toh kush ho jayein ki itna sundar likha hai, kahein ki itna sundar likhein hai bachche main toh soch hi nahin sakti thi ki itna acha likheinge. Haina. Itni achi writing mein. Bilkul araam se, araam se neat and clean writing aur proper lines mein.*

*Humien koi jaldi nahin hai, Humein kahin jaana hi nahin hai. yahin baithna hai, Yahin kaam karna hai. Theek hai. Bilkul neat and clean. Aaj mazza aa jaaye copy dekh ke. Wow fourth class ke bacche itni achi writing likhte hai. Writing achi honi chahiye warna maroongi. Daksh, aap achi writing karke likho. Theek se baitho. Very good. Bahut sundar writing mein shahbash. Very good, Ishika ki bahut achi jaa rahi hai.*

*(Teacher: Write in your notebooks, in beautiful neat handwriting. So beautiful that when didi sees she becomes happy that its written so beautifully. That she says how beautifully and neatly the children write, I couldn't even have imagined. Right? In such neat writing. Write patiently. Patiently, neat and clean writing and in proper lines. We are not in any hurry. We do not have to go anywhere. We have to sit here. This is the work that we have to do. Okay. Write neat and clean. Today I should feel happy when I look at your notebooks. I should feel wow, fourth class students write so beautifully. Write neatly or I will hit you. Daksh, write neatly. Okay, sit properly. Very good. Very beautiful in writing. Very good. Ishika's writing is coming very neatly)*

The movement of bodies across the school campus is also controlled. Students are generally found in specific spaces at specific times of the day as per their timetables. They are expected to spend the lunch break with their classmates only. Younger children are told explicitly not to go to higher classes even if their siblings are in those. They are told to be aware of the people with whom they interact. Students need to take permission to move out of the class. They are required to raise their hand and seek permission to leave the classroom. They need permission to enter the classroom as well. They have to extend their arm inside the door and

ask the teacher if they can come in. Excerpt 7.6 illustrates the need for permissions for leaving the class to go and drink water, even if the teacher is not present in the class.

### **Excerpt 7.6**

*Teacher: Pehle yeh bataiye class se bahar kisko pooch ke nikle? Yeh bata dijiye pehle. Kisse pooch ke gaye they aap? Paani peene kisse puch ke gaye? Kisse pooch ke gaye they? Paani peene ke liye kisse pooch ke gaye they? Aapke saamne baithi nahin hai maam wahanpe? Aapko kya lagta hai woh aise hi baithi hai? Daily aapki class mein do maam hogi. Agar padhao tab bhi baatien khatam nahin hoti. Ab teeno khade raheinge baaki baith jaiye. Agar kisiki baaton ki awaz hui Aditya bhaiya, aur class se bahar koi nikla toh dekh lena*

*(Teacher: First tell me who did you ask before you left the class? Tell me this first.*

*Who did you ask? Who did you ask if you could go drink water? Who did you ask?*

*Who did you ask to go drink water before you left? Is a teacher not sitting in front of you there? Do you think she is just sitting there for no reason? There are going to be two teachers in your class daily. Even when I teach you, your stories do not stop.*

*Keep standing three of you. Now if I hear anyone talking, Aditya bhaiya, just watch if you leave the class.)*

Another method of controlling students' bodies is through the use of a timetable. Timetables are an integral part of schools, and without them, there would be chaos. The principle of non-idleness underlies timetables. Repeatedly saying '*lost time is never found again, jo samay chala jaata hai woh wapas nahin atta. Samjhe. Toh roz ki padhai roz hi karni hoti hai*' ingrains in students the value of time. Wasting time is not just a moral offence, it is also



economic dishonesty. Precise timetabling of events makes the school day routinised and predictable, ensuring that the students are occupied.

As the various excerpts show, bodies are metaphors through which traditions are constructed (in this case these are the traditions of prayer, exercise drills, yoga, and classroom behaviours). The bodies are not free spaces but are sites of enunciation and cultural inscription (McLaren, 1994). They do not simply consume cultural knowledge but are consumed by it. The school inscribes the body through its command structure of one-way monologue. The teachers instruct and the student's body follows. Schools unite the somatic with the semiotic. They socialise children into rhythms, routines, and bodily practices as seen from the given excerpts. Commands accustom students to execute the same operation quickly and efficiently. Their bodies become receptive to specified operations. They are targets for various mechanisms of power. Their bodies are manipulated by authority and become docile.

Meaning is thus '*inscribed, constructed, and reconstituted*' on the student's body (McLaren, 1995). The body does not simply consume cultural knowledge but is consumed by it. The school makes the body a central relay point in the dialectical re-initiation of meaning and desire. It acts as a site of this *enfleshment*, which is '*the mutually constitutive enfolding of social structure and desire; that is, the dialectical relationship between the material organisation of interiority and the cultural modes of materiality we inhabit subjectively*' (McLaren, 1995, p. 47). This is carried out 'through regulatory regimes of signification, majoritarian semiurgical grammars, and social and cultural practices. It is in the body that meaning is inscribed, constructed, and reconstituted. It is the interface of the individual and society and reflects the ideological leanings of the social structure inscribed into it' (McLaren, 1995, p. 63).

### 7.3 Control of Behaviour

Certain behaviours are expected from students. On their way to school, they are expected to maintain decorum in the school buses. They need to be on time at their stops to avoid everyone being late to school. Once they get down from the bus, they are expected quickly make their way to the school without loitering and stopping at shops on the way. As soon as they reach their classrooms, they are expected to arrange the desks and chairs (excerpt 7.1), leave their bags, clean the board, and wait for the drumbeat to make their way for the morning prayer in a single file (excerpt 7.3). Back in the class, they are expected to stand and greet the teachers. They are expected to sit down when the teacher permits them, sit straight, and wait for the lesson to begin. During the lesson, they are expected to maintain silence. No cross-talking is entertained. They are expected to answer questions by raising their hands and wait for the teacher to call on them; they cannot speak out of turn (excerpt 7.7). Students are expected to take permission to drink water (excerpt 7.8), both in the class and from the water cooler outside (excerpt 7.6). They need permission to enter the class as well.

#### Excerpt 7.7

*Teacher: Yeh kaunsa kaam kar rahe ho tum? Haan? Check karao. Lesson no 4. Jo question main poochongi na toh raise your hands. Theek hai. Kisko lagta hai ghar mein boys aur girls ke beech mein difference dikhai deta hai. Kiske Kiske ghar mein. Only raise your hands. Khada ho ja. Maine kya bola tha (has slapped students for speaking out of turn). Maine kya bola tha only raise your hands kisi ke naam lene ki koi zaroorat nahin hai. Bolo.*

*(Teacher: What work are you doing? Yes? Get it checked. Lesson 4. I will ask the question so raise your hand. Okay. Who all feel that in the house there is a difference in how girls and boys are treated? In whose house? Only raise your hands. Stand up. What did I say (has slapped the students for speaking out of turn). What had I said? Only raise your hands. You do not need to take anyone's name. Speak.)*

### **Excerpt 7.8**

*Teacher: Waise inki property yeh hai teacher ke saamne bottle leke paani peena hai. Yeh inki property hai. Toh inko kya kar sakte hain. Inko pehle aade ghante mein paani peene ka mauka hi nahin mila toh sir ke saamne hi peena hai. Pee sakte hain woh bhi saamne waali table par.*

*(Teacher: His property is that he can take his water bottle in front of the teacher and drink water. That is his property. So what can we do about him? In the last half hour he did not get time to drink water so he is drinking water in front of sir. He can drink, that too sitting at the table in front.)*

As the word frequency analysis of the transcripts shows, *Nahin (NO)* is the word that the students hear the most (as seen in Figure 7.1). The students are prohibited from doing many things. They are asked not to talk, laugh, move, shout, or run. These make the classroom environment autocratic. Teachers make the rules, state them to the students, and expect them to obey those rules. Behaviour is controlled through rewards and punishment. Teachers are responsible for planning and running the lessons. The language use and dialogue also point towards the autocratic nature of these classrooms. The teachers speak and the students follow (excerpts 7.1, 7.4, 7.6, 7.7, 7.8). Autocratic classrooms contrast with democratic classrooms in which students and teachers establish classroom rules together and explain the reasoning



the work, speaking out of turn, not being able to answer questions, and asking ‘silly’ questions can result in the students being hit. Students are punished by being made to stand in the classroom at their seat, stand at the back of the classroom, and stand outside the classroom. Sometimes, teachers ask them to leave with their bags and spend the rest of the day in a junior class (*Teacher: Pushakr bhैया, agar aap first class ke bache jaise harkatien karoge toh aap first class mein hi baithiye*).

Some teachers reported that disciplining students was challenging in cities compared to schools in the rural areas. This is because students are now aware of their rights and that corporal punishment is illegal, which prevents teachers from hitting to discipline them. Even though corporal punishment is a punishable offence under The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009, which prohibits physical punishment and mental harassment under section 17(1) and makes it a punishable offence under section 17(2), caning, twisting the ear, hitting with a wooden stick, making students stand with their arms raised or making them kneel down is regular in the school. Many parents asked teachers to be firm with their children, and some parents even verbally abused and physically beat up their children during the parent–teacher meeting. This is in line with studies that claim that corporal punishment is rampant in low-cost private schools and government schools (Nawani, 2013). Researches conducted by the Ministry of Women and Child Development (2007) (by Kacker et. al) and the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR 2009–10) have found a high incidence of physical and verbal abuse of children. Threats, sarcastic comments, and physical abuse of children to teach or discipline them have long-term detrimental effects on their growth. As seen in this school, Nawani (2013) too reported that some parents beat their children mercilessly when they were called to discuss the children's lack of interest and poor performance in school.

Surveillance is another method of controlling student behaviour and enforcing discipline. The school is a metaphorical panopticon. All the classrooms have CCTV cameras installed, and the videos are monitored in the school office. The students are under constant surveillance but cannot see those who is observing them. The cameras act as a deterrent to misbehaviour even without the actual presence of authority. Students know they are being watched without actually witnessing the observer. Sometimes students too rely on the CCTV for help. In one instance, a student's science project was broken in his absence. No teacher was present in the classroom. When asking his classmates about the incident did not produce any conclusive answers, the student approached the school manager and watched the CCTV footage of his classroom and showed the same to his class teacher. The video showed some students tampering with his project. The students were reprimanded, suspended, and asked to fix the broken project. In this case, the surveillance method was fruitful in zeroing in on the students who tampered with the science project. The accused students, however, continued to maintain their innocence because the video showed their backs towards the camera. Therefore, the surveillance cameras were not able to remove all doubt.

The thought of being watched is enough to enforce discipline. The school is a space of surveillance where an individual's identity is produced through specialised techniques of surveillance and punishment. The invisibility of authorities enhances control, reduces freedom, and reproduces vertical relationships and oppressive visibility. Students are visible when they do something wrong as seen during the morning prayer and assembly, when teachers survey the students, identifying those involved in bodily transgressions like not sitting straight, opening their eyes, holding the wrong hand position during prayer, and practising wrong yoga postures. They walk through the rows of students, correcting them

verbally or hitting them on their backs, arms, or heads. Not knowing the prayers during the morning assembly, sitting in the wrong posture, moving out of sync with the drumbeat, having the wrong materials or doing the exercise drills incorrectly makes students visible to authorities. This often makes them call the students out for criticism, admonishment, and punishment (see excerpts 7.2, 7.4, and 7.8). The conforming docile body remains invisible. The incessant visibility that students are subjected controls behaviour (Marquez, 2012). Students who do not conform to the set rules are made visible through the display of corporal punishment (Simpson, 2000).

Timetables, exams, and classrooms with CCTV are technologies of surveillance. These technologies not only make it possible to '*learn where and how to locate individuals*' (Foucault, 1995, p. 143) but also inquire about the rhythm of human activities and the position of bodies, assign social status, examine thought and measure skills, and control activities by embedding them within organisational structures (Marquez, 2012). These techniques separate students from one another and reduce their joint visibility through segregation of the student body and partitioning of school space. They result in shaping student behaviour, making them docile.

Discipline is a moral value as 'to act morally is to learn conduct that is orderly' (Durkheim, 1961, 31,46). It operates through the control of space, bodies, and behaviour. The construction of discipline achieves control over space, behaviour, and bodies through posture regulation, exercise drills, orderliness, timetables, threats, punishments, and surveillance. In this discourse, interlocutors occupy the positions of the disciplinarians and the disciplined. Teachers and school authorities are the disciplinarians, while the students are the disciplined.

The practice of continued disciplining results in obedience from the students, eventually reducing them to docile bodies.

#### **7.4 Conclusion**

Discipline is achieved through space, body, and behaviour. Spaces are used for supervising, hierarchising, and rewarding. Bodies are sites of enfleshment where the somatic is united with the semiotic. Commands, rhythms, routines, and repeated bodily practices teach students to perform the required operations proficiently. Repeated manipulation of bodies by authorities results in bodies becoming docile. The docile body predisposes the students to become a Hindu national who is a good and obedient worker.



## CHAPTER VIII

### Imagining India: Making a Good Indian

One of the key discursive objects present in the school's moral discourse is that of a *Good Indian*. The discourses on values, creation of hostile *others*, history, along with Hinduism are used to provide the narratives and myths that make India's origin story, casting it as a *Ubiquitous Hindu Nation*. This chapter discusses the conceptualisation of **India** in the school discourse and engages with the reification of a *Good Indian*.

#### 8.1 Paavan (Holy), Pavitra (Pure), and Sundar (Beautiful): India as Sabse Acha Desh

India is referred to as possessing various values such as purity, beauty, happiness, and peace. It is upheld as democratic, united, safe, responsible, and loved worldwide. It is repeatedly referred to as the best country, *sabse acha desh*, and the most loved nation.

##### Excerpt 8.1a

*Guest: Humara Bharat aaj vishwa mein sabse priya hai. Apne sanskaron ke kaaran woh sabse acha desh hai.*

*(Guest: Our India is the most loved in the world. Because of its values it is the best nation.)*

##### Excerpt 8.1 b

*Student: We cannot imagine while sitting here how hard independence was for India from British rule. It took sacrifices of lives of many freedom fighters and several*

*decades of struggle from 1857 to 1947. Indian soldiers raised their voice against Britishers for the independence of India. Later several great freedom fighters had struggled and spent their whole lives only for getting freedom. We can never forget the sacrifices of the Bhagat Singh, Chandrashekhar Azad, who had lost their lives in their early age just for fighting for their country. How can we ignore the struggles of Netaji and Gandhiji? Gandhiji was a great Indian personality who taught India the lesson of non-violence. He was the one and only who led India to get freedom with the help of non-violence. Finally, the result of long years came on 15th of august, 1947 when India got freedom. We are so lucky that our forefathers have given us a land of peace and happiness where we can sleep all night without fear and enjoy whole day in our school or home. Our country is developing very fast in the field of technology, education, finance, and various other fields which were almost impossible before Independence. India is one of the countries rich in nuclear power. We are going ahead by actively participating in the sports like Olympics, Commonwealth games and Asian games. We have full right to choose our government and enjoy largest democracy in the world. Yes, we are free and have complete freedom. However, we should not understand ourselves free of responsibilities towards our country. As being responsible citizens of the country we should be always ready to handle any eventuality condition in our country. Ultimately we should give our respect to the emphatic soldiers who sacrifice their lives for Mother India. Thank you. Jai hind. Jai Bharat.*

### **Excerpt 8.2**

*Teacher: Sagaram, aas paas sagar haina. Samundar se ghira hua hai. Aur sagar kaisa hai humara? Sundar hai. Haina? Aise Bharat desh, Bharat ki choti se hum*

*sagar ko dekh sakte hain aur wah sagar kaisa hai? Sundar hai. Kaun sundar hai yahan?*

*Students: Sagar.*

*Teacher: Yahan kaun sundar hai? Sab sundar hain. Saare sundar hain. Haina sundar? Aap sundar ho, sab bolo, saare sundar bolo. Toh aap saare sundar hain, toh main bhi sundar hoon. Dekho, Pushkar bahut sundar hai, saare sundar hai. Woh ladki bahut sundar hai, saare sundar hai. Koi aisa nalayak bole aisa nahin hai. Saare sundar hai. Aise hi hamare Bharat se dikhne waala jo sagar hai bahut sundar hai. Woh bhi bahut sundar hai. Bharat mein bahut bada jungle hai. Aap Assam gaye ho? North east? Bahut bada jungle hia. Woh jungle bhi bahut sundar hai, jungle ko ramaniye kaha gaya hai, jungle sundar hai. Haan, aur Bharat mein basse hue log? Jitney bhi koi bhi jo Bharat mein basse koi bhi log, saare paavan hai, pavitra hain, sundar hain. Haan, Bharat mein jitney bhi log rehte hain koi bhi jaati ka ho, Bharat mein rehne waale log bahut pavan hai, pavitra hain. Aise Bharat mein rehne waale logon ko mera pranam.*

*(Teacher: Sea, it is around isn't it? We are surrounded by the sea. And how is our sea? It is beautiful. This is Bharat, we can see the sea and how is that sea? It is beautiful. What is beautiful? The sea is beautiful. What is beautiful? Students: Sea.*

*Teacher: Who is beautiful here? Everyone is beautiful here. You are all beautiful, I am also beautiful. See, Pushkar is also beautiful, that girl is also beautiful, everyone is beautiful. No one is unworthy. Everyone is beautiful. In India there is a huge jungle. Have you been to Assam? North east? There is a huge jungle, that jungle is also beautiful, the jungle is called beautiful. Yes, and the people of India? Those who live here are all holy. They are pure and beautiful. Yes, all the people of India,*

*irrespective of their caste, all the people of India are holy, they are pure. My greetings to the beautiful and pure people of India).*

Excerpts 8.1a, 8.1b, and 8.2 illustrate the kind of personal values that are used to construct the image of India. The nation itself is described as possessing values. India is personified as one with *sanskars* (values) (see excerpt 8.1a). Peace, happiness, and security are depicted as the given state of being for all citizens (8.1b). Excerpt 8.2 describes India as a land of beauty. All parts of India are described as beautiful. *Beauty* and *purity* are shown to coexist. Not only is the nation described as beautiful and pure, its citizens too are described as *paavan* (holy) and *pavitra* (pure). The qualities of purity, holiness, and beauty are ascribed not only to the nation but to its citizens as well.

Personal values of love, beauty, holiness, and purity are mobilised into the public sphere and are considered as India's *sanskars*. These become the reasons for loving the country. The personal love that one has is brought into the public sphere (Spivak, 2009). The reiteration of India as the best country leaves no scope for equivalence or equalisation. India is viewed as better than other nations and is constructed as the best country for everyone, the *sabse achha desh*, with no cognisance that citizens of other nations may feel differently. There is no acknowledgement that other nations too can occupy the unique place of the best nation for others.

## 8.2 Post-colonial India and Colonised Mentality

Along with these positive values and ideas, India is construed as being infatuated with Western ideas, revering foreign icons, and derided for not paying attention to its own rich and progressive culture.

### Excerpt 8.3

*Guest: Hum kisike gulam nahin hue. Humne nirantar sangharsh kiya hai. Haan, shasan unhone kiya hai, aur 15 August 1943 se 47 se pehle kya tha? Hum rajneetik drishti se toh paradeen they par mansik drishti se nahin they. Aur 47 ke baad ab yeh go gaya hai, ulta. Ulta ho gaya hai. Ab hum rajneetik drishti se toh swatantra hogaye, apna shasan ho gaya, lekin hum mansik drishti se unke gulam ho gaye...abhi bhi hum sab unki taraf hi dekhte hain. Abhi bhi humare desh mein lakhon karodo sant hue hain par aaj un santon ko chod karke hum lafange awara Valentine ko sant kehte hain. Toh mera jo agrah hai bhaiya, sab ko yeh sanskar yahan diye jaate hain ki jo shresht vyakti hue hain, krantikaari hue hain, sant hue hain, un sab se prerna lein apne jeevan ke liye. Yahan se jo seekhte hain usko apne jeevan mein uttariye. Aap sab bahut shresht vyakti bane, bade vyakti bane. Neta bane bade. Aisi shubhkamna, aisa Ashirwad main aap sab ko deta hoon, Bharat mata ki jai, Vande matram.*

*(Guest: We were never slaves, we were always struggling against them. Yes, they ruled over us and before 15 August 1943, no 47 what was it? From the political point of view, we were dependent on them but not in our minds. And after 47 the reverse has happened. We are politically free, we rule ourselves, but our minds are now their slaves...even today we look towards them. We have had lakhs and crores of holy men in our country, but today, keeping them aside, our loafers and rouges consider*

*Valentine as a holy man. I appeal to you that the values given to you here, that the best people, freedom fighters, holy men, take inspiration from them to live your lives. What you learn here, apply it in your lives. Become big, important and the best people. Become big leaders, these blessings I give you. Long live Bharat Mata. Vande Matram.)*

#### **Excerpt 8.4**

*Teacher: Pythagoras theorem and Baudhayana theorem both are same. 800 years ago, Baudhayana proved it. Baudhayana Indian mathematician hai. Pythagoras is not Indian mathematician. Baudhayana hamare bhartiye gantagiya hain aur Pythagoras hamare bharat ke Baudhayana nahin hai. Toh 800 varsh pehle Baudhayana ne iss theorem ko prove kar diya tha jiska naam kisko mila tha? Pythagoras ko. Hamare desh ka durbhagya hai ki hum koi bhi kaam karte hain hamara woh formula chori ho jaata hai aur doosre log usko apne naam se usko put up karte hain all over world mein. Hum peeche ho jaate hai. Tabhi aap Noble prizes ki baat dekhien, physics chemistry bio kisi din nikaliye google pe jaa karke indian Noble prizes mein naam kam ayenge. Bahar ke naam zyada. Iss mein seedhi seedhi ek politics hai. Hamare jo Indian mathematicians, scientists hain unka famous nahin ho paate jaise Ramanujan. 32 saal ki umar mein 32 years old Ramanujan ki death ho gayi thi. Hamare desh ke andar unki koi izzat nahin hui. Bahar gaye bahar ke professor ke dwara toh woh abhi tak hamare India ke andar 100 saal 107 theorems aise shod kar gaye hain ki abhi tak kisi ne unko 1920 se leke ab tak prove nahin kar paye. 22 april 1920 mein unki death hui uske baad un work ko kisi ne abhi tak prove nahin kiya. Ek theorem pichle do saal pehle anya kisi desh ke vidyarthi ne prove kiya hai.*

*(Teacher: Pythagoras theorem and Baudhayana theorem. Both are same. 800 years before Pythagoras, Baudhayana proved it. Baudhayana is an Indian mathematician. Pythagoras is not an Indian mathematician. So, 800 years before Pythagoras, Baudhayana proved this theorem, and who got the name? Pythagoras did. This is the bad luck of our country. Whatever work that we do, the formula gets stolen and others put it up all over the world. We get left behind. That is why when you look at Nobel prize winners you will not find Indians. Physics, Chemistry, Bio, someday Google it and see. This is because of politics. Our Indian mathematicians and scientist, their work is not made famous. Like Ramanujan. He was 32 when he passed away. In our country no one respects him. He went out and because of professors outside, in India, 100 years, he left 107 theorems that no one has been able to, since 1920 to now, no one has been able to prove them. 22 April 1920 he died and that work no one has been able to prove. One theorem was proved a couple of years ago by some student.)*

The discourse highlights that India is a free and sovereign nation. Politically, India is independent and Indians rule themselves. According to the discourse, during the colonial rule India was not free politically but Indians were independent psychologically (Excerpt 8.3). Now, India is politically free, but the psyche of Indians is colonised and people of this nation constantly look up to the western ideas, icons, and customs — all of which point to the colonization of the mind (Fanon, 2008).

Excerpt 8.4 argues that Indians and India have never gotten credit for discoveries and inventions. This credit has always been given to the West. Indian ideas gain legitimacy only when they are accepted by the West. The various achievements of Indians are not recognised by others and by Indians themselves. The discourse postulates that Indians quickly adopt

Western ideas and Western icons instead of Indian ones. Such an inclination could stem from the psychological repercussions of being a colonised people. It points towards the prevalence of a colonised mentality (Fanon, 2008), wherein colonised people internalise feelings and attitudes of ethnic or cultural inferiority due to their colonisation.

Even after having attained political freedom, the mind remains colonised. As excerpt 8.3 shows, cultural priorities are altered (Nandy, 1983). Instead of revering Indian icons and Indian thinkers, Western icons like Saint Valentine are held in high regard. The West has become a psychological category for Indians as Indians turn to the West for legitimacy and acceptance.

Excerpt 8.3 shows a slip of tongue as well. When talking about attaining independence, the speaker first says that independence was achieved in 1943. The speaker then corrects it to 47. Although the speaker makes a correction, he does not acknowledge the mistake. The talk here is coming from two different places (Lacan, 2006). The first is the everyday conscious *ego talk*, which reflects what we think and believe. The second is *some other kind of talk* (Lacan, 1966), which comes from a different psychological place. It stems from the unconscious, which is *the Other's discourse* (Lacan, 2006). Such a slip of tongue is *the Other discourse* that is breaking through and interrupting the ego discourse. The *Other discourse* here is the one that believes that India gained independence in the year 1943, when Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose unfurled the national flag in Port Blair (Excerpt 8.17). This discourse has been internalised by the speaker and it makes its way out through the slip of tongue.

The colonisation of minds can be overcome by defying hierarchies that place the knowledge and values of the West above the East. In the school discourse, the hierarchy is challenged



through a romanticisation (See excerpt 8.4) and a reversion to Orientalist stereotypes of Indians. The language of post-colonial discourse is appropriated, but condemnation of Western ideas merely because they are Western, feeds into the ethnocentric ideals. There is a romanticisation of pre-colonial indigenous knowledge and no epistemological change (Spivak, 2012, p. 2) in education. Therefore, there is no actual challenge to the hierarchy that places the West above the East. India is thus constructed in the school discourse from the lens of the colonialists.

### **8.3 Othering China, Collective Remembering, and Sacrificing for the Nation**

India is considered an emerging world power and the school discourse envisions India to be a developing nation at par with so-called developed countries on the world stage. India is projected as having arrived or being on the brink of arrival in the league of nations (excerpt 8.1b). The path for attaining development is etched out in the discourse. There is a belief that India will be developed as long as Indians fight the Chinese and the present Prime Minister of the country, Mr. Narendra Modi, remains in power (Excerpt 8.5).

#### **Excerpt 8.5**

*Teacher: Haan very good. Lekin tab bhi aane waale time mein woh (China) second power of the world world banne ke liye tayar hai after America. Haan 2000 Haan India 50 tak pata nahin aaye payga.*

*Student: Andaaza hai.*

*Teacher: Haan andaaza hai I know lekin aapko lagta hai ayegi? Dekho Vallabh bol raha hai mera favourite sentence. Bolde beta*

*Vallabh: BJP ya Modi ji rahe toh zaroor ayegi. Rahul Gandhi ko toh mooh dikhake nahin chalna chahiye.*

*(Teacher: Yes, very good. In the coming times, China is set to be the second power of the world, after America. Yes. By 2050 we don't know if India will become.*

*Student: It is an estimate.*

*Teacher: Yes, I know it is an estimate but do you think we can become? See, Vallabh is saying my favourite sentence. Say it son.*

*Vallabh: As long as BJP and Modiji are there we will definitely become. Rahul Gandhi should not show his face at all.)*

India and China have a long and antagonistic relationship (Graver, 2001; Madan, 2020). Both countries imagine themselves as the modern renditions of ancient civilisations. India and China were both colonised by the Western countries and gained independence in 1947 and 1949, respectively. In 1954, the two countries agreed to the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, becoming a cornerstone of official Chinese foreign policy doctrine (Wilson Centre, 1954). Despite the theoretical agreement on values to guide them in world politics, a border dispute followed by a war broke out between the two nations in 1962. The border issue has not been settled yet and there have been on and off skirmishes between the two nations, albeit no full-fledged war. In the excerpts that follow, 8.6, 8.7, and 8.8 show how the school discourse uses instances of skirmishes between India and China on the border issue to create an image of China as an antagonistic *Other*.

### **Excerpt 8.6**

*Teacher: Aajka characha ka vishay hai ki Chinese vastuon ka bahishkar karein. Lekin kyun karen? Kya karan hai? Sirf Chinese vastuon ka bahishkar kyun karein? Aur bhi*

*bahut saare desh hai woh bhi toh yahan vastuien bejte hain unka bhaishkar kyun na karein? Doklam mein kitne bachon ko pata hain kya hua? Haath uthayenge zara? Doklam suna hai aapne? Mere bache yahaan bahut se bade bache bhi baithein hai akhbaar padhne ki, newspaper padhne ki aadat aap sab mein honi chahiye kyunki hamare maananiye pradhan mantri ji bhi kehte hai yuva peedi vishwa mein sabse zyada hamare Bharat ke paas hai. Aur hamare Bhart Varsh ka poora bhaag aapke kandhon par hai. Aapko desh ki bhaagdod sambhalni hai. Toh aapko pata hona chahiye ki haamre desh mein kya gatividhiyan ho rahi hai kya aarthik gatividhiyan ho rahi hai aur kin gatividhiyon ki wajah se hamare desh ko khatra hai. Bache China mein, China mein doklam mein jis tarah se seema par atikraman karne ki koshish ki bade brief mein sankshit roop mein batati hoon yeh aapko aaj task diya gaya hai ki aap padhiye jaaniye kya hua kyun hua kadam kadam par chahe woh Arunachal Pradesh ho chahe woh Tibet mein sadak banae ka masla ho kyunki China barkhoobhi jaanta hai Bharat ki kitni jansankhya hai, China ki utni jan sankhya hai. Sansadhamo mein Bharat China se peeche nahin hai hamare yuva peedi bhi China se kam nahin hai. China mein one child policy ko khatam kar diya gaya kyunki uski badaulat unki yuva peedi khatam hoti jaa rahi thi. Toh jab use yeh laga ki Bharat ko harana aise mushkil hai toh usne iss tarah se chaal khelni shuru ki. Hamare sainiko ko dhamkana shuru kiya. Chinese vastuon ka bahishkar karna shuru kiya yeh sab se acha mudda hai.*

*(Teacher: Today we will discuss boycott of Chinese goods. But why? What is the reason? Why boycott only Chinese goods? Many other countries send their goods here, why not boycott those goods? What happened in Doklam? How many students know? Will you raise your hands. Have you heard of Doklam? My students, there are lots of older students here, you should have the habit of reading the newspaper*

*because our respected prime minister also says that India has the largest young generation. And the fate of entire Bharat varsh is on you. You have to take over the running of the nation, you have to understand the economic climate of the country and what is a danger to us. Children, in China, in Doklam, the way China has tried to cross our border I will tell you in brief. I am giving you a task today to read about this that at every step whether it is Arunachal Pradesh, or making a road in Tibet because China knows very well the population of India is as much as the population of China. India does not have lesser resources than China, our young generation is no less than China's. One child policy has been taken back in China because it was destroying their young generation. This is why China felt that India is difficult to beat. So, China started tricking India. It started threatening our soldiers. Boycotting of Chinese goods is the best thing to do.)*

Excerpt 8.6 highlights the use of the Doklam border issue to stir students into boycotting Chinese goods. Along with the issue at Doklam, the teacher talks about the antagonizing steps taken by China like the building of roads in Arunachal Pradesh and Tibet. The teacher brings up the end of the *one-child* policy in China. The reason for its revocation is tied to the strength of India's young population. The excerpt highlights the claim that Chinese soldiers threatened Indian soldiers at Doklam because China is threatened by India.

As per the school discourse, the relationship between India and China oscillates between cooperation and competition. Both countries engage with each other in trade and finance. However, India runs a large trade deficit with China, which is a significant irritant in the relationship and the reason for the *Swadeshi* movement being propagated in the school

(Excerpt 8.6). On this occasion, the school provided students with pamphlets that spoke of the trade deficit and the need to boycott Chinese goods.

Notably, between 2000 and 2019, India's imports from China grew 45 times to more than \$70 billion annually (Kapoor, 2020). Additionally, China established itself in India's technology sector as a producer of products popular with Indian consumers and as an investor in Indian technology companies (Krishnan, 2020). The Doklam crisis provided an impetus for the Indian government to ban Chinese applications and goods from the Indian market. The government prevented Chinese construction firms from getting state road and building contracts, and showed that it would not pick Huawei as the 5G provider for Indian communication networks (Slater, 2020).

The idea of China as a threatening *Other* (Excerpts 8.5, 8.6, 8.7) is aimed to inculcate feelings of nationalism in students. Another way of cementing China as a hostile *Other* is by linking it with Pakistan (see excerpt 8.7). As widely known, India has a violent history with Pakistan and China. Excerpt 8.7 illustrates the claim that China funds Pakistani terrorists in their activities against India from the money earned through trade with India, specifically through Indians buying Chinese goods. Linking Pakistan and China strengthens their *Otherness* against India. It creates a sense of *us versus them*, which is sustained. The *Other* is stereotyped, negatively evaluated, discriminated against, socially excluded, and delegitimised.

### **Excerpt 8.7**

*Teacher: Usi paise ko woh Pakistan mein atankwad ko samarthan dene ke liye istemaal karte hai. Hamare paisa Humien hi dhamki. Aisa hi toh China kar raha hai.*

*Pakistan mein atankwadion ko shay deta hai aur woh hamare khilaf unhe bhadkata hai. Hamare desh ki zameen hamara dharm aur hamein hi beghar karne ki baat karta hai. Toh wakt aa gaya hai ki hum jaageing aur Chinese vastuon ka bhahishkar karein. Aap sab ke samartan ki zaroorat hai abhi.*

*(Teacher: China uses the same money to support terrorism through Pakistan. China uses our own money and threatens us. This is what China is doing. It is protecting Pakistani terrorists and is instigating them against us. China is trying to take away our land. The time has come that we awaken and boycott Chinese goods. We need all your support.)*

Students are given examples of the brave soldiers who keep them safe, and in turn, they are required to sacrifice for their safety and stand in solidarity with Indian soldiers (Excerpts 8.6, 8.7, 8.8, and 8.9). Bringing up the sacrifices of soldiers and their deaths creates an emotional contagion and promotes collective remembering. Excerpt 8.9 brings up the sacrifices made by Captain Jaswant Singh during the India–China War of 1962. It describes the bravery and sacrifice made by him. It states that in 1965, Captain Jaswant Singh sent back his fellow soldiers, who had elder sisters and daughters, and defended the post alone, killing thousands of Chinese soldiers. It also claims that his uniform is still ironed and made ready today, he is given leaves, and that his spirit comes to those stationed at the post to keep them alert and vigilant. His sacrifice and his continued service even after death is brought up to invigorate students towards working for the nation. Such collective remembering creates an emotional contagion that occurs at significantly less conscious levels, and is based on automatic processes and physiological responses (Hatfield, Cacioppo, and Rapson, 1994; Neumann & Strack, 2000). It primes students to make sacrifices, and the sacrifice they are asked to partake in is the Swadeshi movement which calls for the boycotting of Chinese goods

(excerpts 8.6, 8.7, 8.8 and 8.9). Terming the movement as *swadeshi* links it to the *swadeshi* movement of the independence struggle, thereby gaining legitimacy from a movement that already exists in the collective consciousness.

### **Excerpt 8.8**

*School Manager: uss paise se Chinese humare sainikon ko dhamki, aap mein se kuch bachche aise bhi henge jinke parivar mein koi na koi sainik hogay. Un maaon se puchiye jinke bachche Chinese, wahan seema pas din raat khade hain. Aur beta unki kitni, jab humein dhamki dete hain kitna dar un parivar mein rehta hai.*

*(School Manager: With that money, Chinese are threatening our soldiers. There must be many of you who have some family member in the army. Ask the mothers whose children are at the Chinese border, who stand there all night. And ask them what they feel when China threatens us, how scared the families feel.)*

### **Excerpt 8.9**

*Teacher: Jab China ke saath, kab yudh hua tha Bharat tha? 1965 mein. Tab woh ek aadmi, kya aap soch sakte hain kitne logon ko maar sakta hai? Kitne logo ko maar sakta hai ek sainik? Kitne logon ko maar sakta hai ek sainik? Kabhi socha hai? Aap bachon se zyada hum bhi nahin soch sakte. Kitne logon ko maar sakta hai beta ek sainik? Do sau? Teen sau? Captain Jaswant Singh ne, ek akele morche par ladai karte hue hazaron sainikon ko maara tha. Poori Cheeni sena, jo Bharitye sainikon ko maar chuki thi, do hi sainik bache the. Youtube pe video available hai. Aap sab google baba ki sharn mein jaate hain, lekin kuch positive, kuch aisi cheezien dekhiye aap. Fakr kar sake hum, uss Bharat desh ke nagrik hain jahan par aise mahan aatma hai jo aaj bhi vaas karti hain. Unke jo saathi they unke ghar mein badi beti, behne thi,*

*unhone unko wapas bhejkar akele morcha sambhala aur akeli hi najaane kitne Cheeni sainikon ki jaan li. Baat yahin khatam nahin hoti. Uske baad kya hua? Aap bachin hainran honge. Aaj bhi unki wardi daily press karke taangi jaati hai. Aaj bhi wo chutti pe jaate hain, aaj bhi jo sainik, jo hamare desh ki Raksha kar rahe hain, agar woh so jaate hain, agar woh laaparwahi karte hain toh aaj bhi unko daant kar khada kar dete hain. Yeh hota hai apna desh bhakti ka jazba. Toh bache, jab woh itna kar sakte hain, ek aaj physically present na hote hue bhi jab woh itna kar sakte hain toh sochiye hamara kya daitwa banta hai?*

*Teacher: When India fought with China, when did India go to war with China? In 1965, then that one man, can you imagine how many men one man can kill? How many men can one soldier kill? Two hundred? Three hundred? Captain Jaswant Singh, on one post, fighting alone, killed thousands of Chinese soldiers. The entire Chinese army that had killed Indian soldiers, only two of them were left. The video is available on youtube. You all use google, use it for looking for such positive things, see such things. Be proud that you are citizens of such an India where such great souls reside even today. His fellow soldiers, who had elder sisters and daughters, he sent them back and defended the post alone. God knows how many Chinese soldiers he killed. The story does not end here. What happened after that?? You kids will be shocked to know. His uniform still goes for ironing today, he is still granted leave today, and those soldiers who defend us today, if they fall asleep or are careless during their duty, his spirit scolds them and makes them alert. This is the passion of desh bhakti. Now children, if he can do so much, without being physically present if he can do so much, so think about what our duty towards our nation is.*



Othring is an identity formation process in which ‘groups define their identities through difference and delineation of some outgroups’ (Jensen, 2011). Self-image is formed by contrasting it with an image of another entity (Sarup, 1992, p. 98). Awareness of otherness leads to conceptualising the Other using features taken from the producers' past experiences (Sego 2001, p. 111). Memory is called upon to provide a 'usable past' that can be utilised for purposes in the present (Zamora, 1998). Memory is harnessed to establish claims for a collective identity (see excerpt 8.9), and collective remembering is one of the ways in which groups are created and maintained (Wertsch, 2002).

Discourses do not exist in a vacuum. They are strengthened and weakened by other discourses that they strengthen and weaken in turn. They are embedded in and have other discourses embedded within them. The discourse present in the school has *swadeshi* and othering embedded within it. It opens up avenues of actions that students can take up, namely the *Bahishkar* (rejection) of Chinese goods to become good workers for the nation.

## **8.4 India through Hinduism**

This section will look at the conceptualisation of India through the discourse of Hinduism. It will discuss the conceptualisation of India as *Bharat Mata*, and Hindu gods as Indian nationals.

### **8.4.1 India as *Bharat Mata***

India is considered a pure and auspicious land and is personified as *Bharat Mata*. *Bharat Mata* is an important idea for the school. Every common room in the school, the reception, the *prarthna sthal* (prayer hall), games room, rooms used by the school

administrators, meeting rooms, offices of the principal and vice-principal, and the corridors have posters of *Bharat Mata*. She is the personification of the nation in the form of a goddess. She is depicted as wearing a red saree and astride a lion with a *trishul* (trident) / spear / or the Indian flag in her hands, and is generally drawn in front of the silhouette of Bharat or *Akhand Bharat*. The North has her head adorned with a halo or crown, the South has her feet and flag pole, the East and the West show her extended arms and lions. Such an imagery reinforces the mystic, supernatural, and mythical powers of the Indian almighty. The boundaries of the South, Southeast, and Southwest are clear. However, the northern borders, those contested with Pakistan and China, are blurred and give the impression of extending towards the East, West, and North, encompassing the parts that are not even depicted.

This artefact has cultural and historical roots. It first appeared in Bankimchandra Chattopadhyay's novel *Anandamath* (1882), which tells the story of the *santans* (children) willing to give up their lives for the Motherland. *Bharat Mata* is culturally situated in Bengal's cultural legacy, and rituals of worshipping the Goddess in her many variations of *Durga*, *Kali*, and *Chandi* are the source of *Bharat Mata* (Sen 2002/2003). In this, and from this shared cultural knowledge, Chattopadhyay built for his audience the vision of the Motherland. His *Bharat Mata* comes from an amalgamation of the Goddesses *Jagaddhatri* (a form of *Durga*) and *Kali* (an incarnation of *Durga*). *Kali* is the goddess of death and time, a strong mother figure, and symbol of motherly love. The modern *Bharat Mata* is different from the first-ever pictorial representation. The first painting was traced to Abanindranath Tagore in 1905. She is depicted with four arms holding symbols to reconstruct India: food, clothing, education, and spiritual salvation. She is wearing a saffron robe, walking on lotuses, is demure and calm, and lacks the fierceness associated with *Kali* or *Durga*. This version of *Bharat Mata* lacked the revolutionary zeal required by an icon to inspire the nation to revolt

(Sen 2002/2003). With time the image of *Bharat Mata* assumed the iconography of *Kali* and was seen holding a *trishul* (trident) and is offered the sacrifice of human lives. These are the brave who give their lives for the nation.

The school children are exposed to this image as soon as they walk into the school, and they sit facing this image and pictures of *Om* and Goddess *Saraswati* during the morning prayer. A lamp is lit in front of these images when the students pray (Excerpt 8.10a). The prayer rituals serve to forge a link between the nation and a Hindu goddess, thereby making the nation a Hindu nation.

#### **Excerpt 8.10a**

*‘Ratnakaradhautapadam Himalyakirtitinim*

*Brahmarajarsiratnamdhyam vande Bharatamataram’*

*(I pay my obeisance to mother Bharat, whose feet are being washed by the ocean, who wears the mighty Himalaya as her crown, and who is exuberantly adorned with the gems of traditions set by Brahmarishis and rajrishis)’*

*Archan Vandan*, the school hymn book, contains verses of prayer dedicated to *Bharat Mata*. One of the verses refers to her as wife of Lord Vishnu, another Hindu god (Excerpt 8.10b).

#### **Excerpt 8.10b**

*‘Samudravasne devi parvatstanmandale*

*Vishnupatni namastubhyam padasparsh kshamsvame’*

*(Oh, Bharat Mata, spouse of Vishnu, your robes are oceans, and your bosoms mountains, forgive us, your children, who walk over you every day, Oh kind mother.)*

These rituals of praying to *Bharat Mata* and imagining her as a wife of a Hindu god, act as tools to forge a link between the nation and a Hindu goddess and thereby to Hinduism. India is thus personified as a Hindu goddess.

The images of *Bharat Mata* and prayer rituals are not the only mediational means. Sloganeering is another vital tool in use. During the morning prayer and even in the classes, the students chant '*Bharat Mata ki jai*'. These are done in sets of three, wherein the teacher leading the sloganeering first chants '*Bharat Mata ki*', and the students reply '*jai*'. Whenever the teachers address the students, it ends with '*Bharat Mata ki jai*' (see excerpt 8.11). This reiterates the idea of India as *Bharat Mata* and serves as a collective emotional node. During the sloganeering, the students are engaged emotionally as they partake in the sloganeering with enthusiasm. If they do not, the teachers encourage them to shout so that the whole locality can hear them (Excerpt 8.11). It generates collective pride and identification with India as *Bharat Mata*.

### **Excerpt 8.11**

*Guests: Vande Matram. Bharat Mata ki;*

*Students: Jai;*

*Guest: Bharat Mata Ki;*

*Students: jai;*

*Guest: Aap bache nashta karke ayein hai? Woh josh kahan hai aap bachon ka?*

*Hamare andar nahin, josh aapke andhar hona chahiye. Zor ke ek baar Bharat mata ki;*

*Students: JAI*

*(Guests: Vande Matram, Bharat Mata ki;*

*Students: Jai;*

*Guest: Bharat Mata ki;*

*Students: Jai;*

*Guest: Have you not eaten breakfast? Where is the enthusiasm? Not within us, but you should have enthusiasm. Once more, loudly. Bharat Mata ki;*

*Students: JAI)*

#### 8.4.2 Hindu Gods and Nationalists

Hindu gods are cast as Indian nationals and as working for India. The Independence Day and *Krishna Janmashtami* celebrations portray *Lord Krishna* as a nationalist freedom fighter. The image of *Lord Krishna* is evoked as someone who works for the nation, a hero who has come to India's aid whenever India has needed help (excerpt 8.12).

#### **Excerpt 8.12**

*Principal: Krishna, jab jaise zaroorat hui jis cheez ki awashakta hui, uske anurodh dharm ki vijay honi chahiye adharm ki parajay honi chahiye aisa soch kar bhagwan Krishna ne prayas kiya aur dharm ki vijay aur dharm ko vijay dilane mein mahtvapooran bhoomika ada ki. Toh aap sab janmashtami utsav manyege saath mein bhagwan Krishna ki unhone is desh ke liye hamara jo bahut purane Bharat ke yudh hai hamara desh Brahma desh jo Brahma hai Myanmar, Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Nepal, Bharat, yeh saare hamare desh ke hisse they aur hum unko Bharat Varsh kehte they. aur yeh hi Nahin jo Indonesia hai Malaysia woh bhi hamare Bharat ka hi ang raha hua hai. hamari sanskriti wahan par hai.*

*(Principal: Krishna, whenever however and whatever we have needed, to defeat adharma for dharma, thinking that Lord Krishna tried to help dharma win over adharma and played an important part in that, so you are all celebrating Krishna Janmashtami together. Lord Krishna has done so much for this nation, this very old Bharat, many battles that this Brahma desh which is Myanmar, Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Nepal, Bharat, these are all part of our country and we call it Bharat Varsh, and not just these but Indonesia and Malaysia as well are a part of Bharat as our culture is there as well.)*

A fancy dress competition for the nursery students further reifies Krishna as a freedom fighter. Half of the students have dress up as freedom fighters (Subhash Chandra Bose, Bhagat Singh, Mahatma Gandhi) and half dress up as Krishna. ‘*Ma maine makhan nahin khaya*’ (mother I have not eaten the butter) is alternated with ‘*Main apni Jhaansi nahin doongi*’ or ‘*Tum mujhe khoon do, main tumhein azaadi doonga*’ (I will not give my Jhansi or you give me blood and I’ll give you freedom). Such alteration associates Lord Krishna with India and reifies India as a Hindu nation since time immemorial. India thus becomes ubiquitous, and the ever-present nature of India, as presented through the discourse of Hindusim, is strengthened by the historical discourse.

### **8.5 India through the Remembered and Reiterated Past Stories of Battle and Victory**

As seen above, India is conceptualised as a *Hindu* nation in the school discourse. India is portrayed as being primarily a Hindu nation, which was first enslaved by the Muslims and then by the British. Excerpts 8.13 and 8.16 talks of the time India was subjugated. It says India was a slave for ages, first of the Mughals and then the British.

### **Excerpt 8.13**

*Teacher: Shivaji ne aurangzeb se sangharsh kiya kaisa kiya. aurangzeb kisi vyakti ki parchai bhi dekhta tha admi ki parchai dekhta tha shadow toh darta tha hai shivaji toh nahin aa gaya. aisa hi phir angrezon se bhi kiya aur angrezon se jhaansi ki rani ke baare mein aap sab jaante hain. Par ek udharan main batata hoon aapko hamare krantikariyon ka. hum sab ko dhyaan mein hai padha hai humne.*

*(Teacher: Shivaji fought against Aurangzeb. Aurangzeb used to get scared when he would see a shadow, fearing it to be Shivaji. The same fight was done against the English. Many fought against the English. You must have heard of the queen of Jhansi. This is one example that I am giving, the queen of Jhansi. We have all read about her.)*

The hostility between the Hindu and Muslim communities is given historicity in the school discourse by using the periodisation of Indian history into Hindu and Muslim civilisations.

Excerpt 8.13 talks of the battles between Shivaji and Aurangzeb.

### **Excerpt 8.14**

*Guest: Aur abhi abhi yeh khoj hui hai, aapne itihās ki pustakon mein padha hai Haldighati ki ladai mein Maharana Pratap ki haar hui thi, nahin bhaiya yeh galat padhaya jaata hai. Abhi abhi khoj hui hai, aage se dhyaan rakhein Haldighati ki ladai mein Maharana Pratap jeeta tha aur Maharana Pratap ne Akbar se sangharsh kiya. Toh kaun jeeta tha?*

*Students: Maharana Pratap*

*Guest: Kaun jeeta tha?*

*Students: Maharana Pratap;*

*Guest: kaun jeeta tha?*

*Students: Maharana Pratap.*

*(Guest: Recently it has been found, what is taught in the history books that Maharana Pratap lost the the battle of Haldighati, no brothers, this is taught wrong. Recently it has been found, and keep this in mind from now, the battle of Haldighati was won by Maharana Pratap, and Maharana Pratap fought against Akbar. So who won?)*

*Students: Maharana Pratap*

*Guest: Who won?*

*Students: Maharana Pratap*

*Guest: Who won?*

*Students: Maharana Pratap.)*

In one of the assemblies, the students are told that Prithvi Raj Chauhan defeated Muhammad of Ghor 17 times (*Teacher: Prithvi Raj Chauhan ne Muhammad Ghor ko 17 baar hara ke bheja tha wapas. Teacher: Prithvi Raj Chauhan defeated Muhammad Ghor 17 times and sent him back.*), contrary to the fact that while Muhammad of Ghor lost the first battle, Prithvi Raj Chauhan was defeated in the second (and last) battle (Chandra, 2004, p. 26). In another assembly, a guest speaker told the students that Maharana Pratap was the victor of the Battle of Haldighati fought in 1576, contrary to the historical fact as the battle was won by Akbar (Chandra, 2005, p. 120; Charley, 2017).

The school acts as an important institution for undertaking collective remembering (excerpts 8.9, 8.13, 8.14, and 8.15). Such collective memories and remembering are essential avenues of identities and attitudes. It creates citizens whose loyalties to some groups can outweigh their loyalties to other groups.



A shared history builds assumptions about natural characteristics that bind the people of a nation-state together. These are essential claims as they are the group's assertions, who belongs to the group and how ancient the group's essence is (Werstch, 2002, p. 67). Untrue pieces of information are put forth to the students, which become the basis of the collective memory and then collective remembering (excerpts 8.13, 8.14, 8.15, and 8.9). These memories inform students of those considered part of their groups and people who are the Others. Nations are not the outcome of natural or spontaneous formations. The creation and maintenance of these imagined communities require constant vigilance of remembered and reiterated stories.

The memories that are a part of the school discourse lend credence to the imagination of India as a strong Hindu nation. India is depicted as originally being a Hindu nation with a period of Muslim rule followed by British rule.

#### 8.5.1 Remembering the Freedom Movement

The nationalist independence movement, too, is retold. The freedom fighters are cast into *garam dil* and *naram dil*. The soft-hearted freedom fighters are blamed for the delay in attaining independence. It should be noted that while there is an effort to delegitimise the contribution of these national leaders, their strategy of *swadeshi* is appropriated to bring legitimacy to the boycott of Chinese goods. The efforts of the *naram dil* freedom fighters are further negated by denying the fact that independence was achieved on 15 August 1947 (excerpts 8.15 and 8.16).

### **Excerpt 8.15**

*Principal: hamare bahut saare krantikari kuch naram dil ke they kuch garam dil ke they desh ko azad banaye varsho lagaye aur hum lambe samay tak muglon ki angrezon ki ghulam rahe... jo azadi hai 1947 mein mili hum isko poorn azadi nahin maante aur, hamara sapna kya hai Akhand Bharat. jo bharat hamara tha jo poorvi Pakistan, paschimi pakistan, mane aaj ka Pakistan aur aaj ka bangladesh yeh bhi bharat ke ang bane, bharat bane. aisi akansha aur yehi hamare bharat ke netaon ki bharat ki logon ki prerna hai. Hum prayas mein hai ki hamara desh jo hai ek hoga. aaj ka Pakistan aur aaj ka Bangladesh Bharat bane ga aur punh bharat varsh ke roop mein jaana jayega.*

*(Principal: Lots of our freedom fighters were soft hearted and many were garam dil because of which it took a long time for our country was a slave to Mughals and English...the independence that we got in 1947 is not complete independence and our dream is akhand bharat, which inclues Pakistan and Bangladesh. This is what our political leaders want, this is what the people of this country want and this is what we are working towards)*

### **Excerpt 8.16**

*Teacher: hamara desh do vichaar dhaaraon mein banta hua tha. ek tha naramdal jo ahimsa ke marg par chal raha tha. jo apni maan jo apni maan ahinsa aur shantipoorn dhang se swatantrata prapt karna chahta tha. aur ek tha garmdal jo swantrata prapt karne ke liye apne jaan ki aahooti hanste hanste dene ke liye tayar tha. ek naara tha unka inqalab zindabad. Toh mere peeche peeche bolenge sabhi inqalab..*

*Students: zindabad*

*T: inquilab*

*Students: zindabad*

*T: inquilab*

*S: zindabad*

*(Teacher: our country was divided into two thoughts. One was naram dil (soft hearted) who were working on the path of nonviolence and trying to achieve freedom through that, and the other was garam dil (bold fighters), who were willing to sacrifice their lives happily for the freedom of this nation. They had their own slogans, which I want you children to repeat after me. Inquilab*

*Students: Zindabad*

*Teacher: Inquilab*

*Students: Zindabad*

*Teacher: inquilab*

*Students: Zindabad*

*(Long live the revolution)*

### **Excerpt 8.17**

*Teacher: Maine aapko pehle bhi bataya tha swatantrata humein 30 december 1943 mein mili thi jab Subhash Chandra Bose ko japan ne president declare kiya tha aur unhone port blair mein jhanda fairaya tha president hone ke naate*

*(Teacher: I have told you earlier that we gained independence on 30 December, 1943 when Subhash Chandra Bose was declared the president by Japan and he unfurled the Indian flag at Port Blair.)*

There are contradictions in the school discourse too. For instance, the discourse at times says that India attained independence on 30 December 1943 (excerpt 8.17), and at other times, maintains that independence is yet to be achieved (8.12). Excerpt 8.12 claims that actual independence will be attained when *Akhand Bharat* is realised. This *Akhand Bharat* is what the students have to work towards.

#### 8.5.2. India as Akhand Bharat

India as *Akhand Bharat* is another way of imagining the nation. It translates into undivided India. In some versions, it refers to pre-independence, pre-partition India comprising India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh. In others, the territory of *Akhand Bharat* is more spread out. Mohan Bhagwat, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) chief, includes ‘*Jammu-Kashmir, Ladakh, Gilgit, Pakistan, Siachen, and one may say the (region) east of Kabul, the area west of Chindwin river (of Myanmar) up to Kabul, the slopes of Tibet on the China side and south of Sri Lanka are one country*’ (“The people of undivided India are one”, 2018). This concept of *Akhand Bharat* extends from Afghanistan on side encompasses Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Tibet, and Sri Lanka. In the school, as soon as one walks down from the main gate into the *prarthana sthall* (prayer hall), one encounters a giant map of *Akhand Bharat*. The map is titled ‘*Punyabhoomi Bharat*’ in which Afghanistan is called ‘*Urganathan*’, Kabul ‘*Kubha Nagar*’, Peshawar ‘*Purushpur*’, Multan ‘*Moolsthan*’, Tibet ‘*Trivishtap*’, Sri Lanka ‘*Singhaldweep*’, and Myanmar ‘*Brahmadesh*’. The map states all the countries that lie north of the sea and south of the Himalayas are Bharat, and those who live in these countries are ‘*Bharatiye*’ (*Indians*).

Such imagery and talk are used to imbibe in students a sense of work required from their end towards nation building. The nation can only be realised when *Akhand Bharat* is attained,

and it is this idea that students are required to work towards. *Swadeshi* and boycott of Chinese goods is a means of preparing students for this work.

The school discourse talks of *Bharat Mata* as having had her limbs cut off (see excerpt 8.18). The partition of India into Pakistan and Bangladesh is imagined as *Bharat Mata*'s limbs being amputated. There is a desire in the school discourse for returning the completeness of the *Mother*.

### **Excerpt 8.18**

*Teacher: 47, se pehle kya tha? Hamara desh angrezon ke neeche tha. Toh aap jab bade hoge toh padhoge ki kaise hamare desh ke do tukde hue. Woh main aapko yahan nahin bataongi ki hamare kaunse netaon ne hamare desh ke tukde hone diye. Kyonki abhi aap bache ho. Bade hoge toh pata chal jayega. Theek hai?. Toh 1947 mein jab humein azaadi mili toh hamara desh do tukdon mein bant gaya. Kaunse do tukdon mein?*

*Students: Pakistan aur India*

*Teacher: Haan uske pehle bhi aur uske baad bhi uske tukde hi hote gaye. Kabhi Bangladesh bana, kabhi Afghanistan hogaya. Theek hai. Humara Burma alag ho gaya, Nepal alag ho gaya. Bhutan bhi alag hogaya. Yeh saare hamare desh ke neeche they. San saintaalis mein bant gaya do..ang priyajannani ka kat gaya do. Pakistan kehte hain na. Bharat mata ka, hamri mata ka chitra bana hua hai. Haina. Bharat mata kehte hai. Theek hai. Toh uska ek ang toh kat gaya na uska. Ek baaju gayi. Pakistan wali. Haina.*

*Ang priyajannani ka kat gaya do, desh ki apoornta mitane ke liye.*

*Students: ang priyajannani ka kat gaya do, desh ki apoornta nitane ke liye.*

*Teacher: Agar kissi ka koi ang kat jaye toh woh aadha hogaya na? Yaaniki adhoora ho gaya, toh usko bhi lagwate hain na. woh baat bhi hai na. Maanlo kisi ki taang bekaar ho gayi toh taang lagwate haina. Appornta khatam karte hai. Dono tango pe chal sake. Toh apne desh ka, hamari Bharat mata bhi apoorn hogayi jab uski ek baaju kat gayi. Toh usko wapas lane ke liye ab kya kareinge aap log? Desh ki apoornta mitane ke liye? Pakistan jo chodd chuka hai usse wapas laana hai. Theek hai. Aur woh kaise ho sakta hai? Abhi aap dekh hi rahe hain jo ho raha hai na. Kitne Hinduon ko maara jaa raha hai. Kasie kaise yahan pe ho raha hai. Toh uss sabko khatam karne keliye, jabtak hum aage nahin ayende..aap mein yeh jazba hona chahiye ki hum apne desh ke liye hain. Theek hai? Aapko yeh nahin kehta ki kurbaaniya do jaake, aap seema pe jaake. Lekin hum bahut kuch kar sakte hain aapne aap ko dekh ke theek hai. Apni desh ki khareedo, jo cheez yahan nahin milti woh alag baat hai. Lekin bahut cheezien woh humein hamare desh ki leni chahiye.*

*Vighan hua woh Pakistan chahiye.*

*Students: vighan hua woh Pakistan chahiye.*

*Teacher: humein toh...*

*Students: HAMARA HINDUSTAN CHAHIYE*

*(Teacher: What was the state before 1947? Our nation was under the rule of the British. When you grow older you will study how our nation was divided into two parts. I am not going to tell you here which of our political leaders were responsible for letting our nation be divided. Because you are still young kids, when you grow*

*older you will find out. Okay? So in 1947, when we gained independence then our nation was divided into two parts. Which two parts?*

*Students: Pakistan and India.*

*Teacher: Yes. Even after that it kept getting divided. It got divided into Bangladesh, into Afghanistan. Okay. Ours got split into Burma, Nepal separated, Bhutan too separated. All of these were under our nation. In the year 47 it got divided. Two limbs. Two limbs were cut from our dear Mother. We call it Pakistan. Our mother, Bharat Mata, her photos are there right? We call her Bharat Mata, right. So one of her limbs was cut right. One arm was lost, the Pakistan arm. Right.*

*Our beloved mother was cut into two, to overcome the incompleteness of the Mother..*

*Students: Our beloved mother was cut into two, to overcome the incompleteness of the Mother*

*Teacher: If someone loses their limb, they become incomplete right? Means they become incomplete. So they go get it fixed right. They do that too. Imagine if someone's leg becomes bad they get it fixed right? They get rid of the incompleteness. They are able to walk on two legs right. So our nation too, our Bharat Mata has also become incomplete. So to get that completeness back what will you do? What will you do to get rid of the incompleteness of the nation? Pakistan, who has left us, we have to get that back. Right? And how will we do that? You are seeing nowadays what is going on right? So many Hindus are being killed. All these things that are happening. So we have to put an end to all of that. Until we do not come forward...you need to have the passion that we are here for our nation. Okay. No one is asking you to sacrifice your lives at the border. But there are many things that we can do for our*

*nation. Buy things made in India. What is not found here that's a different thing. But there are various things that we should buy that are made here*

*We want the Pakistan that was separated.*

*Students: we want the Pakistan that was separated.*

*Teacher: We want our...*

*Students: WE WANT OUR HINDUSTAN)*

The discourse in the school creates in the student's consciousness an integrated ideal of the nation of *Akhand Bharat*. This desire and fantasy of *Akhand Bharat* is created through the structure of the discourse in the school, and by the use of semiotic and symbolic resources. The completeness of *Bharat Mata* is seen as lacking (see excerpt, 8.18 ). This *apoornta* (incompleteness) creates a lack in the consciousness. The *desire* (Lacan, 2006) for *Akhand Bharat* stems from this *apoornta*. It provides a motivation to work for the nation, towards *poornta* (completeness). There is a want to return to this ideal of a complete, integrated nation. This, however, is a *false ideal* (Lacan, 2006) and is oppressive. The goal to attain *Akhand Bharat* is, thus, a false goal.

The chapter engages with the conceptualisation of India and what it means to be a *Good Indian* in the school discourse. India is conceptualised through discourses on values, *Othering*, Hinduism, and history. It reifies India as a holy and pure land. It *Others* China and galvanises students to work for the nation by boycotting Chinese goods. It reifies India as *Bharat Mata*, a Hindu goddess, and establishes India as being ubiquitous. Moreover, it



extends the boundaries of India to include various other nations and this version is known as *Akhand Bharat*.

The discussion shows us that discourses are not present in a vacuum. They constantly refer to each other, support each other, and compete with each other for power. They are embedded within each other as well. The larger discourse that talks of a good worker for the nation has other discourses: — Hinduism, economy, nationalism, and history — which constantly refer to each other, embedded within it.

## **8.6 Conclusion**

The school discourse uses the language of post-colonial discourse to reify India as a Hindu goddess, *Bharat Mata*. Hindu Gods are cast into roles of nationalists who work for the nation. This works at reifying India as a ubiquitous Hindu nation. Conceptualising India as *Akhand Bharat* extends the nation's boundaries to include other countries and presents itself as a **goal** to be attained. This is the goal that the docile Hindu national, a good worker, works towards.

## CHAPTER IX

### Summary and Conclusions

Moral development in psychology has traditionally been seen as something to do with being within the individual, ignoring the role of cultural mediation. Freud theorised that morality stemmed from the internalisation of and then identification with parental values. Piaget proposed the existence of two stages of moral development- the morality of constraint leading to the morality of cooperation. While the morality of constraint emerges in the adult-child relationship characterised by belief in a single, absolute moral perspective, in the morality of cooperation, there is an awareness of different points of view with no absolute judgements. Kohlberg roused the study of moral development in psychology, inspiring a host of scholars to investigate moral reasoning and moral development. His is the cognitive-developmental approach to morality. Kohlberg's theory proposes three levels of moral development with two stages: pre-conventional, conventional, and post-conventional. In the pre-conventional levels. The first stage of the pre-conventional level is characterised by obeying rules to avoid punishments. In the second stage, reciprocity of favours is understood. At the conventional level, first, there is awareness of group membership. Individuals identify with expectations attached to particular social roles and accept the necessity to put one's individual needs on hold for these social relationships. Last is the post-conventional level, where individuals identify with general moral principles, not conventions or laws per se.

## 9.1 Theoretical Framework

Kohlberg's theory is plagued with methodological and theoretical limitations. One of the key criticisms against his theory is that the multidimensional and multivocal nature of the moral domain is ignored, as is the role of language. One way of overcoming this shortcoming is by recognising the situatedness of individuals instead of focussing on them in a vacuum. Carol Gilligan's critique of this theory has the central insight of **Everyday moral languages**. This insight has helped pave the way for a sociocultural approach to moral development, focusing on words, language, and forms of discourse, particularly narrative storytelling in human moral life.

The central tenet of the sociocultural approach is that moral thoughts, feelings, and actions are semiotically mediated and, therefore, socio-culturally situated. It entails a dialogical conception of the moral self, which is generated by a move away from a paradigm of cognitive representations and internally held principles towards a paradigm of social construction and inter-subjectively possible forms of discourse, wherein the self is assumed to be a shared product of social relations and communicative practices.

This approach to moral development draws from Vygotsky's work and therefore looks at the role of mediational means-both physical, psychological, and semiotic, appropriated from the social world in moulding human mental functioning. Central assumptions of this approach and this research are that words, language, and forms of discourse mediate moral functioning. Such mediation occurs primarily in private or inner speech as inner moral dialogue. Processes of social communication and social relations give rise to moral functioning, and moral

development is always shaped by the particular social, cultural, and historical context in which it occurs. The **moral voices** that Gilligan speaks about are **the internalised moral discourse**.

It is in this background that the current study is planned. **The objective of the current research was to study the moral discourse and the kind of values that are reified and promoted among children in Saraswati Mandirs.** Saraswati mandirs are schools run by the *Vidya Bharti*, the educational wing of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sansthan (RSS). Schools are important institutions for socialisation, with the inculcation of morality and values in children being an essential function of schools. Therefore, the present study aimed to answer the following research questions- **what are the forms and nature of moral discourse in Saraswati mandirs? What kind of material and symbolic resources do Saraswati Mandirs employ to generate specific kinds of moral discourse? What and how are values reified and promoted among children in Saraswati mandirs?**

## **9.2 Moral Discourse in National Policies on Education and National Curriculum Frameworks**

After independence, the fundamental role that education could, and must, play in national integration was recognised. The university education commission and the Secondary Education Commission reviewed problems inherent in the then-existing system and advocated for its reconstruction. At the end of the third five-year plan, the educational system was reviewed, and the educational commission of 64-66 was established to advise the government. The first National Policy on Education, 1968, was drafted based on this

commission. This policy called for a radical restructuring of education for the country's economic and cultural development, national integration, and realising the ideal of a socialist pattern of society. Emphasis was placed on developing science and technology and cultivating moral and social values that produce young men and women of character and ability committed to national service and development. The values stressed in the National Policy of Education, 1968, related to the development of national integration, democracy, citizenship, and national development.

National Policy on Education 1986 was concerned with the dangers of losing long-accepted values. The values stressed in this policy were secularism, socialism, democracy, and professional ethics. In addition, the value of Equality was embedded in the entire document with mentions of values that promote cultural heritage, democracy, secularism, environment, scientific temper, and family values.

The National Curriculum Frameworks map out the curriculum, syllabi, textbooks, and teaching and evaluation practices to be followed. They are based on the National Policies on Education and are supposed to reflect the country's ethos. Therefore, the values promoted in the national policies should be reflected in the national curriculum frameworks.

The National Curriculum Frameworks argued for a revamp of the educational system from one that served the interest of colonisers to one that responded to the growing needs and demands of a modern egalitarian society. The school curriculum was a means to attain national integration, social justice, productivity, modernisation of society, and cultivation of

normal and spiritual values. However, even though constitutional values were of utmost importance in the national policies on education, the same is not found in the national curriculum frameworks.

Scientific temper, too, a term first used by Jawaharlal Nehru and a value that was considered paramount for nation-building, failed to find the same stature in the national curriculum frameworks. NCF 2000 had a revisionist tone that reinforced India's stereotypes of being foremost a spiritual land. The framework argued that India had always had an advanced system of education and that the education system should be based on the strong religious and philosophical ethos.

The National Policies on Education and the National Curriculum Frameworks lay down the values that need to be inculcated in children. The government promotes values it feels are beneficial for the nation. Their translation in the school's day-to-day functioning and moral discourse was seen through the practices and discourse present in the school.

### **9.3 Moral discourse in Saraswati Mandirs**

The site of the study was a Saraswati Mandir located in New Delhi. Like other schools run by Vidya Bharti, it has a strong Hindu foundation. A typical school day begins at 730 am with the school assembly and morning prayer. After this, there are eight periods of 40 mins each with a 20 min lunch break in between. Observations and recordings of the school day over five months are the data of the study. The observations and recordings were

transcribed and converted into text. The text included thick descriptions of the school day, the posters on the walls, and materials on the notice boards. Foucauldian Discourse Analysis was carried out once the data was converted into text.

The analysis followed the steps given by Carla Willig. At the start of the analysis, the text was read multiple times. Next, an exhaustive list of all the values spoken about, implicitly and explicitly, was created. In the next stage, discourses used to construct these values were identified.

The moral discourse present in the schools promoted and reified a **Good Student, a Disciplined and Docile Hindu National**. This overarching discourse has three parts: Good student, Disciplined and docile, and Hindu National.

#### **9.4 Reifying a Good Student**

The school discourse promotes personal values considered inherent in a *Good Student*. These include obedience, respect, being mindful of authority, honest, hardworking, being safe, and valuing time and education. Students were characterised as *Ache Bache* (Good children) and *Gande Bache* (Bad Children). Teachers used praise, encouragement, and punishment to imbibe these values in the students. The safety of students, especially girls, was stressed. The discourse alluded to keeping girls pure, as they are considered the carriers of family honour and purity.

The value of education was tied to the economic gains one obtains from education. Therefore, scoring high marks was found to be of paramount importance. In addition,

obtaining high marks served as an advertisement for the school and an indication of students' future success.

### **9.5 Discipline and Docility**

Discipline leading to the creation of docile bodies is one of the salient discursive constructions. Discipline is a mechanism of power used to regulate individuals' behaviour. Through the control of space, bodies, behaviour and surveillance, the school effectively disciplines the students and reduces them to docile bodies.

The creation of boundaries is inherent in the control of space. The school building is the boundary separating the school and its students from the outside locality. The temple, on whose premises the school building is built, is within this boundary; this makes the temple, and other markers of Hinduism, very much part of the school. Students' space is also used as an avenue for hierarchising, supervising, and rewarding.

Bodies are another aspect that are controlled and disciplined in the school. Bodies are sites where meaning is inscribed, constructed and reconstituted. Schools are sites of enfleshment, and the body acts as the interface between the individual and society. Through the socialisation of children into rhythms, routines, and other bodily practises, the school unites the somatic with the semiotic. The body becomes receptive to specified operations and is the target for various mechanisms of power. Thus, the constant manipulation by authority makes the body docile and the school a disciplinary space.



## 9.6 Essentializing a Good Indian and the Role of “Othering” in oiling the Desiring Machine

The last important discursive construction that is part of the overarching larger discourse in the school is that of a good Indian. The school discourse has a particular idea of India and what it means to be a good Indian. Using the discourse on values, India is conceptualised romantically. There is a reversion to orientalist stereotypes of India and Indians. In the discourse, India is constructed through the lens of colonialists using the language of post-colonial discourse. The discourse on the world economy is used to construct India as a superpower with China as being India's rival. China, as a threatening *Other*, inculcates feelings of nationalism in students. Avenues of action against China are made available to the students in the form of the *Swadeshi apnao* or *Chinese goods ka Bahishkar*. The school puts forth actual actions that students can take to become good workers for the nation.

The discourse on Hinduism, along with the cultural practices and imagery in the school, reifies India as Bharat Mata, a Hindu goddess. The discourse also puts forth the idea of Hindu Gods having worked for the nation. This creates the idea of India being a Hindu nation. The historical discourse establishes India as being ubiquitous as well.

The goal that a good Indian national should work towards is the attainment of *Akhand Bharat*. This *Akhand Bharat* is the geographical territory that includes India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, Tibet, Myanmar and Srilanka. Sometimes it extends to Malaysia

and Afghanistan, sometimes even Iran and Iraq. Making this *Akhand Hindu Bharat* a reality is what a “good national” is supposed to work towards. *However*, *Akhand Bharat* represents a lack in the student's consciousness and therefore creates a desire to achieve it. It presents the students with an ideal they need to pursue, own up as a moral responsibility and transform this into a reality.

### **9.7 Implications for School Education**

The present study shows that all kinds of talk, images, songs, activities, rules and school interactions are sources of moral discourse and value education. Students do not engage with morals and values in a separate forty-minute period of value education. However, the entire school day, various school activities, and interactions are responsible for immersing students in a particular moral discourse. Schools need to reflect on their daily practices and ways of functioning to understand the values they impart to students. The curriculum, pedagogy, school activities, and rules should be assessed to understand the values they promote. Finally, teachers, parents, students, and other stakeholders should be aware of the values the school wants its students to imbibe. Irrespective of the ruling government and school management, school education needs to have certain values that it holds sacred. Critical thinking should be one of them so that irrespective of the ideological leanings of others, students can engage with ideas critically and make choices that are right for them.

## 9.8 Limitations and Directions for Future Research

The data was collected and analysed with honesty. Reflexivity was practised throughout the study to ensure that the data speaks for itself. This process resulted in the collection of rich and thick data. The data analysis for the same could be done in much more depth. While writing the thesis, other theoretical concepts that could be used for a richer analysis were brought to light.

An Archaeology of Knowledge approach would have been an incredibly beneficial lens to look at values in the National Policies of Education and their corresponding National Curriculum Frameworks. The space afforded to scientific temper as a value does not correspond to Jawaharlal Nehru's importance for it. For him, this was the key value that was required for nation-building. The reason for its omission in the curriculum frameworks can be extracted by undertaking this approach. This approach would also help trace the reasons for differing degrees of importance given to values over time, which the present study alludes to but does not discuss in detail.

The discourse analysis brings out a more extensive, loaded discourse in the school. This discourse has various discourses that are embedded in it. These can be analysed in greater depth and with various lenses. Discipline, for example, is looked at through a Foucauldian perspective, but the way it ties into the larger neoliberal economic ideology needs to be unpacked.

Hannah Arendt's idea of *animal laborans* is another theoretical concept that can be used in greater depth to understand the interconnections between neoliberal capitalism, discipline, education, and lack of political action. Schools have become institutions that support neoliberal capitalist economies. Instead of promoting critical learning, social justice, and active citizenship, schools reduce students to consumers. The nexus between neoliberal capitalism, education, and lack of political action can be better understood using a critical pedagogy framework.

The present research touches upon all of these. However, instead of looking at the whole data together, one aspect can be looked at through various lenses to understand the values being promoted in schools.

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