

# **Teachers' Authority; A Reflection in the Context of Contemporary Indian Society**

**Ekta Madan Singla**



**UCL Institute of Education (IOE)**

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## **Declaration and Word Count**

I, Ekta Madan Singla hereby declare that, except where explicit attribution is made, the work presented in this thesis is entirely my own.

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## **Abstract**

Teachers' authority, which I argue is a multidimensional concept, is undergoing transition under the current educational policy changes in India. These changes that are a result of economic, political and civil society intervention are changing the way education and its aims are being perceived within the country. Whereas some of these changes are reflected in a shift from the traditional authority of teachers that was expressed in archaic practices like corporal punishment, there are other changes which, on the one hand neglect the cultural-social position of the teachers with roots in religious practices of the country, while on the other hand impose a child-centered notion of the teacher as a facilitator. This neglect is articulated in the voices and actions of the teachers in the various interviews conducted among Social Science teachers in Government schools in India. At the same time, the imposition of a facilitating role on teachers is ill suited to the current educational context in schools, given the availability of cell phones and other technologies to students. In such a scenario, the teachers' authority has not been reduced but rather finds a renewed focus and importance. Dispensing with traditional notions of authority has resulted in discontent and loss of faith among teachers towards new policies, which fail to acknowledge teachers' voices.

Thus, in the current transitional phase where new policies have successfully initiated an alternative discourse of education, i.e. moving away from exam-oriented education, reducing teachers to facilitators is unhelpful due to the social realities that teachers face, highlighting the need for some form of teacher's authority.

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## **Abbreviations**

AICSE	All Indian Council for Secondary Education
ASER	Annual Status of Education Report
B.Ed.	Bachelor of Education
BJP	Bhartiya Janta Party
BRICS	Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa
CBSE	Central Board of Secondary Education
CCE	Child Centered Education
CCE[E]	Continuous Comprehensive Evaluation [Examination]
CEU	Central Examination Unit
CRR	Cash Reserve Ratio
DDE	Deputy Directorate of Education
DIET	District's Institute of Education and Training
DPEP	District Primary Education Programme
EFA	Education For All
ET	Educational Technology
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GOI	Government of India
IMF	International Monetary Fund
KVS	Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan
LEA	Local Education Authorities
MHRD	Ministry of Human Resource Development
NACO	National Aids Control Organization
NAM	Non-Aligned Movement
NCERT	National Council for Educational Research and Training
NCF	National Curriculum Framework
NCFSE	National Curriculum Framework for School Education
NCRB	National Crime Records Bureau
NEEM	National Elementary Education Mission
NPC	National Planning Commission

NPE	National Policy on Education
PT	Physical Training
RTE	Right to Education
SAP	Structural Adjustment Programme
SC/ST/OBCs	Schedule Caste/Schedule Tribe/Other Backward Classes
SCERT	State Council for Educational Research and Training
SSA	Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan
TCS	Tata Consultancy Services
UEE	Universalisation of Elementary Education
UNAIDS	The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV and AIDS
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UPA	United Progressive Alliance

## Glossary

class	grade year or educational year
copy	notebook
dalits/ harijans/ shudras/lower group	people previously considered untouchables in the Hindu caste system
dirty film	pornography
dp	display pictures
duppata	a long scarf
fb	Facebook
fresher	new to the job
guru	the word “guru” has a history in ancient Hindu teacher-student relationships in the oral religious education where a “guru” is considered above gods and goddess and the transmission of knowledge is from <i>guru</i> (teacher) to <i>shishya</i> (student). Other religions/tribes in the Indian sub-continent e.g. Islam, Buddhism, Sikhism, etc. may have different traditional teacher-student relationships with possible overlaps between each other. The current study is limited to the discussion of Hindu “Guru” tradition.
hindu	people who follow Hinduism as a religion
mark	grade in a grading system
notes	summarised written record of classroom lecture
portion	assigned syllabus for the term
private or public/ state or central government school	privately owned and managed/ managed by the state or central government. While state government school is jointly funded by state and central governments, central government school is funded exclusively by central government.
refresher	a book containing most likely questions for tests
serial	a serial drama on television

shloka	a kind of verse in classical Sanskrit poetry
teaching–learning	organisation of structure/method/equipment needed for the process of teaching and learning in the classroom
tutor	private after school tutor

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## Acknowledgements

A male friend, a few years back told me that I more easily accept male authority figures in power than women. This rang alarm bells in me. I reflected on my actions and thoughts for a while and came to the conclusion that it indeed was true. So, when I first decided to pursue research in London, I purposefully searched for a woman philosopher in Philosophy of Education.

I am not sure if I have managed to overcome latent stereotypes within me, but what I did manage to do while working with Prof. Suissa is acquire an immense sense of responsibility for my work; a way of thinking which is sensitive to people's circumstances but doesn't compromise on core values of justice. She has been very supportive and has been there for me in every possible way as I took up the laborious task of writing this thesis while moving between continents. I am glad to have had the chance to work with her not only for the very insightful inputs that she brought to this research, and for her patience at correcting my drafts with numerous typos but also her humility and love.

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## Introduction

Teachers within the Indian education system continue to occupy an important position.

Teachers who are trained professionals in children's education tend to occupy and perform many roles at once, i.e. a mediator between family and child, occasional friend, and a moral guide, to name a few. In my own years as a student in school, teachers that I came across often shifted between these roles.

### Teachers from My School Days

Ms. Das our Math teacher was a hard disciplinarian but was best to go to for advice. She had a rare smile that could be very pleasant when she saw one of us sad and wanted to console us. Although she often hit us with a cane on our knuckles, which we hated her for, we do have pleasant memories of her. Ms. Sahay was an English teacher. She seemed never to run out of ways to surprise us. She once had a class in the garden amongst all the trees. Occasional birds and other sounds distracted us but she kept her lesson interesting to keep us focused. She often got stories from China, Burma and Egypt, which we so enjoyed. She was friendly, easy to talk to, always showed that she cared for us and loved having discussions. Nonetheless, she made sure we did not take her for granted for her friendly behaviour by punishing us when we failed to do our assignments. She was our class teacher and so at the end of annual exams when parents came to collect our report cards, they would often ask her about our progress. I remember instead of talking about our grades, much to our relief, she would talk about our behaviour without being condescending, and our enthusiasm to engage in classroom and other school activities. Mr. Prasad was a funny sort of character. Even now that I think of him I remember his thick moustache, bell-bottoms and gelled, never moving hair. I never followed his teaching because he mumbled to himself. When he did teach, he only taught students who seem to follow his teaching effortlessly. I wasn't one of them. He was funny though; he always had one hand in his pocket. Always!

All teachers have a different style of teaching and have something to offer (except for the beating on knuckles) apart from teaching the subject. My school was a world in itself, which revolved around friends and teachers. Teachers continued to organise and shape teaching-learning experiences that are now etched in my memory. Even today teachers continue to occupy this role in the

lives of children, as I point out in this research. Their influence surpasses the four walls of the classroom. They are part of a community of adults around the child whose authority is necessary for support and guidance to the child when needed. It is this authority of adults and particularly the teacher that is the focus of this research.

Teachers continue to be held responsible for the moral, intellectual and emotional development of children. Yet, it is seldom that their voices and professional freedom are taken into account. With educational aims being defined in observable and measurable terms, teachers are often forced to perform more for standard tests than for the development of their students. Also, whereas there is an increasing trend to adopt child-centered approaches to education in India and elsewhere, as I will explore in the next chapter, there is not enough discussion on the challenges teachers face in classrooms and the preparation needed to implement the approach. This motivated me to investigate the idea of authority in contemporary Indian society.

The research examines teachers' authority in contemporary Indian society through its political, socio-economic and cultural matrix. Although each society differs in this matrix, the research is an effort to understand teachers' role and authority generally in relation to the matrix that can be applied and discussed in relation to other societies.

## **I. Research Question**

The research explores the question of teachers' authority in the context of India through the following questions:

- a. What does teachers' authority mean to the teachers in India, in relation to students and to the cultural, economic and socio-political structures within which they operate?
- b. How do teachers use their authority to achieve educational goals?

The current research tries to investigate teachers' role and their authority within Government schools of India amid a changing political, economic and cultural milieu that has a direct influence on teachers' educational practices and perceptions about teaching and learning. This teacher authority is then informed not just by understanding gained from philosophy of education literature but also postcolonial scholarship and interviews with teachers in Government schools and is thus weaving together commonalities and differences from various educational contexts in the west and India, converging due to economic systems, while there are clear differences due to historical inequalities, cultural practices and diversity within populations.

Listed below are current theoretical works on authority and teacher authority within political philosophy, sociology and philosophy of education with an outline of gaps in the literature. Policies like child-centered education in relation to teacher authority are discussed followed by methodology and structure of the thesis.

## **II. Current Literature on Authority**

Authority has often figured as a topic of interest among political thinkers like Thomas Hobbes (2008), John Locke (2010) and Hannah Arendt (1961a), and sociologists like Max Weber (1968). However, within education and particularly philosophy of education, authority has often found focus through work in different disciplines. Thus, political authority comes under sharp focus when the role of education and the state are considered along with parents and children's rights. Similarly, when day-to-day structures of authority are examined, where the role of agents or individuals are affected, certain historical and social forms of authority come into focus. To add to this, there is literature (Allen, 1987; Bingham, 2008; Kitchen, 2014; Peters, 1973) within philosophy of education where the authority of teachers and institutions has been examined within education.

In building support for teachers' authority R. S. Peters (1973) and Hannah Arendt (1961b) tend to focus on adults' supportive and protective care when children are growing up and their inevitable authority in matters where children are inexperienced. Teachers within philosophy of education literature are also seen as epistemic authorities as well as institutional authorities, provided to them by the institution they are employed under (Kitchen, 2014; Bingham, 2008). Other than that, the role of authority for organisational purpose and day-to-day delegation of work is emphasised by Richard Sennett (1980) and R. T. Allen (1987). It is, however, Arendt's work (1961a,b) that I use extensively to argue for teachers' authority as her work is woven around political, historical and cultural concerns which resonates with my own concerns within the context of India.

### **III. Gaps in Knowledge and Alternate Sources**

The literature on authority and educational authority helps focus on different kinds of authority that one should consider when addressing teacher authority in an educational institution, which is part of a larger society. However, there are several gaps within the literature, some of which this research addresses.

Works on authority focus on various dimensions that influence authority of a certain kind in a given scenario. These range from children's rights, the functioning of institutions, to pedagogy and knowledge. Thus, there are different kinds of authority, e.g. epistemic, cultural, among others, at work. However, there are no works that consider these different authorities at work simultaneously, i.e. the relation of one kind of authority to another, how is this relation affected by factors of economy, social expectations and political situations? There is hence a gap between theoretical writings of authority and functioning within institutions, in our case educational institutions.

The relation between technology and authority remains unexplored. Technology, according to some proponents (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010) of globalisation theories, has led to the breaking of territorial boundaries between

countries. This is leading to cultural and political homogenisation with corporations becoming more powerful than the democratic political leadership appointed by the people. While some proponents of globalisation theory (Appadurai, 1990) would deny the homogenisation and rather argue that a more heterogeneous world is coming among us due to the accessibility of resources, there is no denying that there are changes taking place at a global level that affect countries and that technology has a major role to play.

The widespread use of certain technologies is as much a result of their affordability as access. Improvements in communication brought about by the internet and related technologies have made it possible to communicate ideas across the globe. Moreover, there is increasing demand and use of computer-related skills for employment, leading to a belief that we are entering a “knowledge economy”<sup>1</sup> where continuous development of human skills is necessary for survival in a competitive work environment (Selwyn, 2013). The onset and harmonious assimilation of digital technologies in our day-to-day lives have raised several questions about the aims and purposes of education and that of other stakeholders within education. The teacher and her authority, being one of these questions, are in serious need of discussion but are absent within this literature.

In addition, the increasing development of neoliberal policy that has brought about a change in state–market relations through political, economic and social reorganisation has had its effects on education as well (Jessop, 2002). Education was previously under the purview of state, as a welfare good. It is now slowly entering the market economy in the form of a commodity (Jonathan, 1997; Ball, 2007). As a result, the aims and purposes of education are changing; there are different standards used to measure the effectiveness of

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<sup>1</sup> Knowledge economy symbolizes a transition from machine-led production of goods and services to a human knowledge with electronic brain used for production process. It is the distribution of this knowledge that drives economic processes (Chakravartty & Sarikakis, 2006, as cited in Selwyn, 2013).

the teacher and her profession. Teachers are forced to view education under the narrow lens of employment rather than raising issues of morality and responsibility within society. Thus, reducing the role and profession of teachers to that of an employee in an institution. This has greatly affected the authority of teachers based on creating a responsible and morally conscious member of society, a purpose that goes beyond the narrowly defined aims of the neoliberal state (Giroux, 1992).

Lastly, authority as a topic remains context specific that is formed within a harmonious political and cultural milieu. The discussion of authority in the present philosophy of education literature has built in socio-cultural assumptions of developed countries like the UK and the US, among others. This makes it irrelevant and rather inadequate to address the educational needs of a developing country like India, with its colonial past and its remnant structures and neoliberal economy in the face of poverty, malnutrition, illiteracy and other concerns within debates concerning teachers' authority.

Hence, in order to take account of issues relevant to India while acknowledging educational commonalities between countries that have come to be shaped by global financial networks and their effects on communities around the world including India, I draw on postcolonial scholarship (Anderson, 1991; Appadurai, 1996; Chakrabarty, 2000; Chatterjee, 1997; Kapoor, 2010; Rizvi et al., 2006; Spivak, 1988). It not only addresses the history of developing countries like India but also the changes brought about by the neoliberal economy and globalisation in the lives of people and their cultural practices.

Engagement with this literature helped to examine teacher authority within the changing cultural contexts and develop a critical but culture-sensitive lens to the issues at hand. Nonetheless, this vast and expansive literature spread across time and space which helped weave and bring together different strands, also gave me a feeling of partial understanding, i.e. a bird's eye view, since it did not directly address educational concerns today and was not related to day-to-day practices of schooling within India. In order to then fill this gap, I decided to

conduct interviews with teachers to understand structures of authority where authority often was portrayed in a negative light. More about the method and process of interviews is discussed in the section on methodology.

There are as highlighted, gaps within the literature on authority in its applicability and awareness of different contexts and culture milieus. Simultaneously, authority structures have not been subject to criticism. This is especially true in relation to the rise of child-centered movements in different parts of the world at different times.

#### **IV. Criticism of Authority from Child-Centered Ideas**

Child-Centered education comprises of many meanings and schools of thought. However, it broadly has come to mean the organisation of the classroom around the needs of a child. Child-centered education is known by different names in different countries as ideas associated with it found focus at different points of time, e.g. Progressive, Child-Centered Education (CCE), Learner-Centric, to name a few.

Criticism against authority structures from the progressive movements are discussed in some detail as they raise important concerns regarding children's freedom but are narrowly framed in terms of teaching and learning practices in school and aims of education. It is, however, the popularity of the concerns raised by progressivists that now act as barriers towards any conversation on authority in education. Child-centered ideas have been around for a while (at least since the publication of *Emile* (1921) by Jean-Jacques Rousseau) and gained momentum after the Second World War. The war led to discontent with the state and its institutions, the renewed interest of the state in educational institutions towards nation-building projects through social control, especially of the working classes. Whereas in the UK, child-centered ideas were limited to primary education, in India by contrast child-centered ideas were echoed, even before independence, in the works of Rabindranath Tagore (1917, 1931), Vivekananda (Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda, n.d) and Gandhi (1958)

who propagated it even for secondary and adult education. The ideas of these thinkers were in sharp contrast to the religious, caste-based and *Guru-Shishya*<sup>2</sup> (teacher–student) tradition that prevailed in India. However, for many like B. R. Ambedkar and others, who worked to eradicate caste-based discrimination in the country, the child-centered ideas of the thinkers failed to provide solutions to the problem and hence remained unpopular.

The many indigenous systems of learning in ancient India were based on different epistemic traditions of learning that were different from western education. However, under colonial education these systems came to be associated with authoritarian structures (Kumar, 2005) blocking ideas of freedom and critical thinking. This led to a form of criticism that over a period of time, spread against any and all structures of authority. However, the efforts by thinkers like Tagore and Gandhi to revamp the colonial education system failed to yield results. Tagore established a school named Patha Bhavana at Santiniketan, West Bengal, (now a university by the name of Visva-Bharati) in 1901 to propagate his ideas of learning and education that inculcated a deep interest in the surroundings and love for nature. His philosophy however, was confined to the small town of Santiniketan. Similarly, Gandhi's *Nai Talim*, an approach to education that combined vocational training with formal subjects in school curricula, faced enormous criticism when efforts were made to implement it at a national level.

There is no easy answer to the question of Child-Centered Education (CCE) within the Indian milieu as many factors are responsible at the central and state level for its popularity within Indian education policy. However, it is the lack of popular local alternatives that is responsible for the easy assimilation of international ideas of CCE within Indian education system. In recent times, international organisations like United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and

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<sup>2</sup> This is the spiritual relationship between the teacher who is seen as a mentor and a disciple in the religious and traditional educational system in ancient India. This relationship was based on trust, obedience and discipline of the student towards one's Guru.

the World Bank played a major role in making CCE ideas popular, as a panacea for educational issues in third world countries (Smail, 2014).

Educational policies in India have continued to work to provide access to quality education. The National Policy on Education 1986 (as modified in 1992), National Curriculum Framework for School Education [NCFSE] (2000) and National Curriculum Framework [NCF] (2005) are aware of the widespread and ongoing usage of archaic methods in our schools, like archaic teaching-learning methods such as rote memorisation, corporal punishment and limited achievements in learning outcomes. They recognise the importance of school and community interaction. Hence, over the years there have been efforts to build a system wherein school is seen as a place not just for teachers and students but involving continuous support of and interaction with parents. There have been efforts to build an inclusive learning environment for students of all religions, castes, genders and classes through CCE because it promotes a constructionist idea of education, i.e. learning takes place through interaction between teachers and students; a teacher who is a facilitator, is also a learner and learns in the process. However, the interviews that I conducted along with critical literature (de la Sablonnière et al., 2009; Schweisfurth, 2011; Smail, 2014) on CCE, suggest that it is not sufficient to meet the challenges of educational practices.

The word 'authority' continues to hold negative connotations among teachers as seen in interviews. This is further problematized in the educational policy documents e.g. NCF 2005, that use the notion of authority only to address traditional structures of teacher authority that need to be overcome for a child-centered approach. The language and conceptualisation around the authority of teachers continues to be under theorised which is a crucial component for their empowerment and for them to be radical change makers, as expected of them by recent policy (NCF 2005) in society; there is general enthusiasm towards adopting “new ideas” in education without understanding the existing practices and ideas. Critical work on progressivist (Darling, 1993; Davis, 2002; Lowe, 2007; Smail 2014) and child-centered ideas has over the years highlighted time

and again the conceptual loopholes and lack of clarity in its framework, such that "progressivists seem more united in what they stand against than what they stand for" (Dale, 1979). This lack can be seen clearly in its assumptions about authority within the school and the role it plays in the education of students.

Taking account of literature on authority, child-centered ideas and their criticism of authority structures; developing a broad view about the present Indian socio-cultural state through postcolonial scholarship, globalisation theories and neoliberal ideas, this thesis is an effort to weave together these different ideas together to make sense of teacher authority in contemporary Indian society.

## **V. Methodology**

Sections below describe the process of data collection and analysis followed in the research.

### **V.i. Analysis of Literature**

The research explores prevalent theories about authority in sociological and political texts that provide some helpful insights into the way people in authority are historically perceived or responsibilities bestowed on them that have become culturally rooted and found acceptance. This is then followed by an examination of literature within philosophy of education, situated within the assumptions of western society but relevant to the present research as it builds on the idea of teacher authority; taking into account the past theories of authority in social and other spheres, examining their transformation over time and finally creating a relationship between the past theories, aims of education and the role of the teacher. However, as witnessed during the research, context plays an important role in the way theories can increase our understanding and relevance. Hence, along with the literature on teacher authority, the research describes the educational history of India through postcolonial theory, political theory and writings from sociology, concerning cultural, political and social changes that brought about the present state of education and that of its stakeholders. Such that a conceptualisation of teacher authority for the Indian scenario, acquired from differently situated texts is not misinterpreted.

The result is an understanding of teacher authority that is informed by literature on teacher authority that was instrumental in creating the questionnaire for interviews. However, during the interviews it became apparent that earlier concepts and sections had to be changed and newer additions were developed to situate and develop the research akin with the surroundings.

## V.ii. Interviews

Interviews were thought to be necessary to place the question of teachers' authority in the present Indian scenario. This is because, in order to address the question of teacher authority in contemporary Indian society which has been influenced by historical, cultural, political, economic and social changes within the country and internationally, it was important to find the factors affecting teachers' authority; effects of the factors and possible changes to traditional teacher's authority. Once those factors are identified, it would then be possible to analyse these factors historically as they have worked within the Indian milieu and the way they work with each other to affect teacher authority at present.

I conducted 10 interviews in the cities of Mumbai, Hyderabad and Delhi. The first set of pilot interviews were in the month of December 2014, followed by the main interviews in May 2015. Of the ten interviews, number 3 was a focus group interview. Teachers in interviews 1,6 and 7 were from state government schools while those from interviews 2 and 3 from Sarvodya or central government schools in Delhi; teachers in interviews 4 and 5 were from Kendriya or central government schools in Hyderabad while those in interviews 8,9 and 10 were from Kendriya Vidyalayas in Mumbai. More details on the interviews and factors considered are discussed in the section on ethical considerations below.

The interview data used in this discussion serves to highlight teachers' day-to-day concerns and the routine within which they work, and, through their own interpretation of their role and situation, to provide a focus on particular policies, and institutional functioning within a whole constellation. This then provided

further stimulus to bring to the surface topics that I did not initially plan to address, e.g. the use of technology by students and its impact on teachers' authority. It also helped to narrow and channel the focus of research. At the same time, certain other areas that affect teachers and their classroom authority came into focus, e.g. teachers' training and gender-based discrimination, yet these are not dealt with in detail due to constraints of time and resources.

Each aspect of the interview process, from the selection of schools for interviews to the analysis of the interviews, was informed by diversity of the environment. Indian society is very diverse because of multiple languages, religions and schooling systems. In addition, there are, urban and rural, class and caste-based stratifications in society. Hence, questions and schools for the pilot interviews had to be reconsidered for the main study in light of teachers' responses during the pilot interviews.

The section below highlights the factors I considered, for interviews, before I narrowed down to the schools for my research; ethical considerations; pilot interviews conducted in the month of December 2014; main interviews conducted in May 2015; followed by the process of analysis.

### V.ii.i. Factors Considered for Interviews

#### (a) Diversity of Languages

Given the diversity of languages in India I decided to conduct interviews in places where I spoke or was familiar with the local language, i.e. Hindi and its dialects. However, often teachers decided to speak to me in English in spite of my insistence on using Hindi. This has to do with the status English enjoys in Indian society. English is one of the official languages of India and is taught as a second or third language in most schools. However, the quality of its education is questionable. Hence, although English is a much sought after medium of instruction because of it being considered a symbol of privilege, not everyone is able to get access to quality education. Thus, although many people in India speak English, there are varied levels of proficiency. Indian speakers of English,

sometimes combine the language with other local languages and accents resulting in a hotchpotch of a structure. I have purposefully kept this hotchpotch of language structure in interview excerpts so as to familiarise the reader with varied levels of English language fluency among teachers (in a context where most school textbooks [in cities] are in English), Indian English usages and retain the voices of teachers, which is one of the main focuses of my argument.

Also, English has undergone many changes over the years in the Indian subcontinent. It has absorbed the culture and ways of expression through coming in contact with other Indian languages around it, such that, it varies in each place and area within India. Hence, there are many words in Indian English that are unique (a list of these words is provided in the glossary).

Language is closely associated with politics of class and caste. This is true of languages around the world. In my case, my language highlights my privileged upbringing within the Indian subcontinent. This was especially evident during the interview process with teachers. Some teachers became very conscious of the lack of opportunities available to them while talking to me. This consciousness informed the way they spoke to me. I have written about this in the reflexivity and positionality section.

#### (b) Age

The Indian school system is divided between primary, secondary and higher secondary. For my interviews, I decided to focus on young adults in secondary and higher secondary Government schools, within the age group 13 to 17 years. I selected students of this age group on the assumption that, their developmental capacity to make informed decisions, influence classroom discourse and challenge authority structures around them is advanced, compared to that of younger students. Under this assumption, it was expected that teachers during interviews would recall instances from their classrooms where students expressed their expectations or challenged traditional structures

of authority. This then would bring forth a nuanced idea of teachers' authority in the Indian context.

#### (c) Subject

I decided to narrow down my discussion to teachers teaching social sciences and language subjects. This was based on my own background in social sciences that made it easier for me to understand teachers' classroom examples during the interviews and the complexity of teaching the topic in classroom.

#### (d) Region

Limited availability of financial, linguistic and other resources made it difficult to interview teachers from diverse backgrounds. Hence, I decided to interview teachers in three cities of India, i.e. Delhi, Mumbai and Hyderabad, where I easily found accommodation and was able to visit selected schools by public transport.

#### (e) Type of Schools

India has a diverse school system that comprises of state and central Government<sup>3</sup> schools (aided and unaided), private (recognised and unrecognised), special schools like army schools, special needs schools and others, such as schools run by religious or other minorities. Each school system follows a set of curriculum, assessment and school organisation that may be similar or different, depending on the kind of school board they are affiliated with. Although even private schools need to be registered by the education department in the area, there are many unrecognised schools that continue to operate without any such supervision. Under these conditions, it was imperative

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<sup>3</sup> The Constitution of India lays down education to be a State subject. However, other provisions within the constitution contradict the absolute delegation of authority to State List. Thus, education appears to be a joint responsibility between central and state governments than an exclusive power of the states (Naik, 1963)

to narrow down the type and kind of schools for research purposes. I decided to interview teachers from Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangthan (KVS, “Central School Organisation”) schools that are run by the central government. Historically, KVS came into existence to fulfil the educational needs of children of transferable government employees. They follow the standard CBSE (Central Board of Secondary Education) curriculum developed by Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangthan under child-centered guidelines of NCF 2005. Given the recent reforms (textbook reform, teaching–learning, teacher development, among others) brought about in CBSE, I was keen on selecting schools that follow guidelines of the aforementioned education board. While KVS are not the only kind of schools in India that follow CBSE curriculum, they are certainly the one among Government schools that have more resources to their disposal and enjoy the status of “better government schools”, i.e. teacher–student ratio, teacher qualification, to name a few. The other consideration in selecting the school was to capture the linguistic, economic and other diversities prevalent among its students. Like most Government schools, students coming to KVS come from lower- to middle-class backgrounds.

However, problems in seeking desired permission (elaborated in the section on interviews) for conducting interviews forced me to broaden my criteria for school selection to state Government schools in Delhi. These schools do not enjoy the same resources as KVS, nonetheless, they also follow CBSE curriculum. The teachers coming to KVS may come from different parts of the country; however, for state Government schools, teachers are selected locally. The management of state Government schools falls under the purview of Directorate of Education, State Government.

### V.ii.ii. Positionality and Reflection

Feminist critiques (Haraway, 1991; Harding, 1991; Rose, 1997) of research methodologies have, for some time now, pointed at the need to re-examine our intentions and our relationships with the communities we are researching, and to reflect on ethical dilemmas that may arise because of research methods. The

methods by which we choose to conduct our research define our scope of study and interaction with the community. Mauthner and Doucet (2003) argue that reflection as a process helps to unpack and bring to the surface the assumptions and biases within our research that can be engaged with. This is because we owe dual ethical responsibility that extends as much to our readers as to our research (Doucet & Mauthner, 2002).

My own reflection, on my research, began when I started to make sense of the teacher authority literature I was reading during my time in the UK and kept relating it to the situation back in India. The location of the subject provides intrinsic meaning and is epistemologically significant to speakers' claims (Alcoff, 1991). Hence, while I initially decided to examine authority only from a theoretical point of view, I later realised that concepts tend to acquire a different reality and meaning within the context that they are situated. This motivated me to examine teacher authority through interviews and engagement with the situation in India, in a more robust way.

David Scott (1999) in the Introduction to *Refashioning Futures: Criticism after Postcoloniality* lists two conditions that made it possible for him to pose the question of the politics of colonialist representation. I am not going to list those conditions here, as they are not centrally relevant to the inquiry. However, the intention to study the historical context and emergence of the question is of much interest. Any question has inbuilt concerns, values and assumptions which will press on us to make transparent our own parameters or values which we engage with in our inquiry and which force us to take stands. It is important for any inquiry or research to tackle these assumptions and concerns at the outset as they provide a helpful direction to the very question at hand. It is also crucial to mention here that one cannot disassociate oneself from the politics of the time as this politics shapes our rationality. There is a certain commitment to realism that commits us to particular rationality. As researchers, we have aspirations and values that motivate us and help us define our project. They also form part of our reasons and ethics of research.

Merriam et al. (2001) highlight how our positions vis-à-vis the communities which we research and our perceptions about them and theirs about us, have a direct effect on the way we write about them and ultimately becomes part of a body of knowledge. My position as a researcher was that of an Insider–Outsider (Mullings, 1999). As an insider, I belonged to a geographical space, culture, and socio-economic reality shared by many others, including my interviewees in India. This gave me clear advantages during interviews in terms of communication, shared language and identity formation. However, at the same time I was an outsider in my role as a researcher. I was someone who needed to distance herself from the reality that I considered shared but was not the case. This is because of my relative class, a certain kind of education and a linguistic background that is vastly different compared to majority of people in the country. This situation added another layer to my existing position, which made me an outsider among interviewees, as our realities were not so shared.

This also affects the dynamics of interviewer and participant (Ganga & Scott, 2006). During my own research, I thought my position was that of an insider belonging to the same nation, linguistic and cultural background. However, the differences of class and education were made quite evident by the interviewees who cast me as an outsider. My upbringing and the people I am surrounded with have shaped my thought, demeanour and perception of the world around me. As the example below shows, my position in comparison to that of the interviewee was evoked again and again in the process of interviewing, e.g.

*T: I can hardly say anything in the matter of how much does a school contribute in an individual's development and how much society. You are more educated than me, more...*

*E: No no...it's not about more educated. Everyone's capacity to understand is different.*

*T: Then there is another societal aspect, the one that I teach. There is a basic rule in Sociology that scarcity gets people together and wealth generates cracks in that. If you personally try to take a look at your own family, or people around you, relatives you will find this. (Interview 7)*

The teacher in the interview (previous page) comes from a relatively humble Hindu background in the state of Bihar, India, which is one of the poorest states in India. He migrated to Delhi for better economic and living opportunities for him and his family. Many students in the classroom come from similar circumstances as him. This helps him relate with the children in a way that other teachers cannot, as I elaborate in subsequent chapters. However, while interacting with me he made a very clear distinction between his own background and mine, and cast me as an outsider who, although belonging to the same country, has not lived the experiences that come with his background. He was often resentful of the opportunities that he and his family lacked which came to me quite easily because of my class. This is not the first time I was in this situation as a researcher. However, what was unique about this incident was that it made me think about what I can or cannot say about the authority of teachers. The social milieu they belong to, several identities that they share, shape teachers' own perceptions, thoughts and ultimately their actions. This does not mean that one cannot be critical of teachers; however, to do this in the light of an awareness of these different realities helps to look at the underlying structures and understand the problem better than to simply end up in a blame game, while being aware of my own position. My education and cultural background will influence me in asking particular questions about authority. This is of course an obvious point but the other important question is: Can the questions or connections I make be useful for the society in any way? It is important to see the world through others' eyes, but this should at the same time not limit possibilities of progress. The question of how to achieve a balance between these contrasting viewpoints is part of this inquiry.

### V.ii.iii. Ethical Considerations

The KVS school system is managed by central and zone offices spread across the country. One has to, like any other school, seek permission to conduct interviews with teachers. However, given my status as a foreign student, i.e. registered with a university outside India, I faced trouble in seeking this permission.

I applied for permission at the regional office of KVS in Mumbai but I was referred to the central office in New Delhi because I was registered with a university outside India. I then tried to contact the KVS office in New Delhi that asked me to submit an application with my interview schedule and letter of request via email. I was assured that I would hear back from them within a few days. However, when even after a week I did not hear from them, I made contact them in person. It was made clear to me that it would take at least one to two months before I would get any permission. As I was in India and I was doing a pilot study, I started to ask around among people who were associated with schools, if they knew teachers I could interview for my research. However, given the diversity of schools, I was referred to teachers not just in one city but two or three cities and in various kinds of Government schools teaching subjects other than social sciences or languages. I decided to talk to them, listen and learn from them about their practices and recent policy changes, which I thought could prepare me better for the main study when I finally interviewed teachers after obtaining permission. Thus, although teachers in interviews 2 and 5 were outside my interview criteria I decided to interview them. I have not included any extracts from these interviews for analysis on teacher authority. I did gain important information from these teachers, about their status within the system, e.g. the increasing use of para-teachers (i.e. contractual) rather than full-time teachers, and the state or central government's efforts to withhold benefits from teachers that they are entitled to. This helped me understand the autonomy of teachers or lack of it, and its influence on teacher's institutional authority.

Written consent was gained from each teacher for the pilot and main study to interview them and use their responses for the research. They were asked if they wanted to maintain anonymity with regard to their affiliation and name. However, most of them were happy to share their information and often asked me to quote them. In spite of the approval, I decided not to use the names of teachers in order to preserve anonymity, in accordance with the requirements of research ethics. (See Appendix 3 for consent form) I conducted five interviews

in Delhi (see Appendix 1). These teachers' work was not in a KVS school but I decided to speak to them because it belonged to the same socio-political environment and followed the CBSE curriculum. This helped me understand the current educational changes in the country, the need to understand the relation of technology with teacher authority and educational goals, and to improve my questions for the main study that I undertook in May 2015. For example, in my pilot interviews, I was unable to engage with some teachers on the question, "What do you understand by teacher authority?" I used this understanding in my later interviews to improve the question and elaborate the theoretical underpinnings of it when talking to teachers for the main interviews. (See Appendix 2 for questionnaire.)

Teachers from interviews 1, 6 and 7 in Delhi were associated with state Government schools while the other that from interviews 2 and 3 were from a Sarvodya<sup>4</sup> school. Interview 3, was a focus group interview with five to six teachers where a few dominated the conversation, given their seniority in school and level of confidence. Also, the interview was conducted in the area designated as staff room where teachers of all classes come to prepare their lessons or rest. This meant that there were constant distractions and many teachers kept leaving or joining the conversation midway. Hence, for Interview 3 I have only considered extracts of those teachers I was able to interact with for a prolonged period of time.

#### V.ii.iv. Main Study

I undertook the main study in May 2015 in Mumbai. The pilot study helped me understand the educational policies at national level that had recently come into force and were affecting the teachers at state and national levels, not just in government but also private schools across the country. Some of my initial questions, which were unclear during the pilot study, were modified for the main

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<sup>4</sup> This is a central government-run school, from Nursery to class 12 (UK Years 0 to 13; US K12). Hence it is called "Sarvodya" which means inclusive of all ages.

questionnaire (see Appendix 2 for questionnaire). I used the insights and understanding I gained from teachers in the pilot study to question teachers on their responses if I felt they were holding back information.

The interviews were translated and transcribed word-for-word from Hindi to English language, wherever necessary. Every effort was made to retain the semantics of colloquial terms or metaphors. This process took over a month, after which each interview was deconstructed using a colour and theme based code system. Each interview was later summarised under the major themes listed below. These themes emerged in the questions and responses of the participants.

1. Motivation for being a teacher
2. Comparisons used by teachers in the interviews, e.g. Private vs. Public education, Teacher vs. Student
3. Teacher's ideas on authority
4. Examples or descriptions of performance of authority by the teacher
5. Role as a teacher
6. Government policies highlighted in the interviews
7. Teacher's view on making students independent or autonomous
8. Other information

After all the interviews were summarised in the above themes, they were compared with each other in each of the themes. Major differences and similarities were considered along with topics that were ignored in the questions but came to be part of the discussions again and again, e.g. technology in classroom. These themes form the main chapters of the thesis where teachers' responses are voiced alongside discussion of the topic.

## **VI. Structure of Research**

Each chapter builds on the understanding of the previous chapter so as to familiarise the reader with the importance of the topic, the criticism that it has garnered over the years and the influence of political, historical, cultural and

technological changes on teacher authority, along with a need for bringing it back into our educational discourse.

Chapter 1 is organised to build a historical, political context of India for readers unfamiliar with it. This will be useful to underline the significance of the various issues highlighted through the thesis and appreciate the complex task of teachers. This is followed by an articulation of the justification for carrying out this research within philosophy of education, the limitations and methods adopted to fill in some of the gaps that literature has failed to fulfil.

In Chapter 2, a historical account of engagement with the idea of educational authority and the criticism that developed against it over the years within various schools of thought is discussed in detail. In a neoliberal economic society, a move away from educational authority is not just a result of lack of demand but is also about promoting individuals as consumers without adequate focus on the democratic ethos. The discussion of authority within philosophy of education and its limitation for the cultural and historical context of India and the position of teachers form the later part of the chapter.

Building on the understanding of previous chapters, Chapter 3 then elaborates on the multidimensional aspect of authority with excerpts from the interviews with teachers. Teachers tend to assume and perform an idea of authority based on their own idea of knowledge that can be observed in their actions towards students. One form of that authority can be seen in their role of a moral guide. There is discussion of a diminishing authority based on fear, which uses corporal punishment (this is assumed as constituting a form of authority because of the powerlessness experienced by teachers within the system) to regain control. There are efforts to get rid of this kind of authority, but only when teachers are given alternatives to such practices, will a shift be possible. The rise of private schooling and its effect on the authority of government institutions and teachers also find mention.

The question of teachers' role in times when modern technology is increasingly used to acquire information is explored in Chapter 4. As useful as technology can be, its interaction with people and exploitative effects on relationships cannot be ignored. Also, technology, unlike teachers, fails to guide children in issues of day-to-day significance and build a relationship with their surroundings, which are essential educational tasks. Also, technology has added, additional challenges to the task of teachers, which cannot be discussed without taking into account particular technologies and their pervasiveness in our lives.

Thus, there is a need to bring back teachers' authority as argued in Chapter 5, to mediate these challenges and to understand education and its goals from teachers' perspectives and through a sense of responsibility they feel towards students and society.

## **VII. Conclusion**

The chapters build a context for the above mentioned arguments by describing the socio-political scenario in the country, building the links and justification for topics undertaken for discussion within the broad topic of teacher authority. The research does not aim to provide a comprehensive survey of the literature on authority. It tries to weave together strands of arguments that are relevant for the socio-economic context of India and to provide a helpful bridge for further thinking on teacher authority.

Teacher authority is argued to be a multidimensional concept and is as relevant as ever and in use today, within and outside classrooms, even if educational policy discourse is silent about it. It is only by recognising the use of authority in educational institutions and acknowledging the voices of teachers who can help us build better understanding of authority that educational policies can have the desired effects.

## CHAPTER 1: Building the Context

The slated floor has students sitting around it. There are bags, books, water bottles scattered all around them. It is the month of September so the floor is not as hot as it gets in April and May. The windows provide ample light such that one doesn't realise the lack of electricity. The two doors to the classroom are left ajar. This class overlooks the school ground. The ground is huge with trees all around it. A bunch of older boys hang out around the compound wall chatting, whiling their time away. In the class the teacher is awaiting a response to her question from a student. The boys sit to the teacher's right, one behind the other in two rows while the girls are to the left, in a similar pattern. The girl standing to respond to the question is fumbling with her duppata, looking down at the floor. She is taller than the teacher but is rather pale and weak in health. The teacher is standing with her back resting on the table, hands folded and growing increasingly impatient. She is young and has not been in the school for very long. As she strolls around in the class, students look at her and then the girl standing. The class is exceptionally quiet as it usually is except for one clean-dressed, coconut-oiled lad with a broad smile, resembling Vikram Seth's "suitable boy"<sup>5</sup>. He has his hand raised in all earnestness to reply to the question Madhvi (the standing girl) is struggling with. The teacher is determined to make Madhvi respond this time. She doesn't want Eashwer to, as he always does. Madhavi steals a glance at the teacher while she is looking at Eashwer and quickly goes back to looking at the floor. Teacher repeats the question yet again. This time Eashwer is too impatient and prompts the answer. This angers the teacher no end and she shouts right back at Eashwer. She asks him to leave the class. He is taken aback by this and starts to cry. The teacher asks Madhvi to sit down while she goes up to Eashwer to console him. He ultimately stops crying but is quite flushed. The teacher warns the others not to respond to a question without seeking her permission, as she wants everyone to get the opportunity to speak. Everyone in the class after the incident went from being silent and somewhat engaged to being just silent, or so it seemed.

I am that teacher in the class. This incident has bothered me for a while and I wonder if I was right in doing what I did. It is easier to slip into an authoritative self when that authority is not questioned or is an acceptable practice. Also, it is easier to slip into a mode you are trying to fight against but do not know an alternative to. I am not a trained teacher (not that it mattered in a country where until recently one could get a teaching certificate through a correspondence course).

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<sup>5</sup> An Indian English novel

The school I described in the previous page is an Andhra Pradesh state Government school situated in a small village. I worked here as an after-school English communication skills teacher, as part of a non-profit initiative. I had no local language knowledge to my credit except for a few words. However, I was aware of gender stereotypes, caste discrimination practices and segregation of work in school among students. I was geared to confront these issues head on by bringing them up in classroom through a more egalitarian approach, but as you have seen I would easily fall back into a kind of authority I was fighting against. This was possible because the students in school had grown to accept teachers in a role of power that did not require legitimacy. Hence they did not differentiate between teachers' institutional authority given to them by the school and that of their classroom authority, that teachers require from students to meet educational aims<sup>6</sup>.

These occasional incidents would often disillusion me and I would often lose my motivation. These are also the moments, when I first started to think about the teacher's authority in the classroom where she might be struggling to establish a more democratic environment but in her day-to-day transactions it is acceptable in the community for her to fall back on her traditional authority, i.e. abuse of her power to mould the classroom the way she desires. What should a different form of teacher authority look like? What or who should provide the legitimacy for teachers' authority? These questions as much as they relate to education, inhabit the political aspect as well.

This research, while working to build an understating of teacher authority within a government educational institution such as school, takes into account the political scenario within the country, which has a direct result on the educational policy framework, as a teacher's<sup>7</sup> authority is intimately connected to that of the institutions she is part of and the various stakeholders including parents, she

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<sup>6</sup> I discuss the conceptual difference between teachers' institutional and classroom authority in Chapter 3, under 'Kinds of Authority'.

<sup>7</sup> for brevity I use the female pronoun throughout the thesis to refer to a teacher.

comes in contact with. Her authority is a direct result of the socio-economic system she finds herself in. It is not inappropriate then to place the question of teacher's authority in the socio-cultural matrix of Indian society where this project first crystallised and later found itself firmly rooted in. This is not to say, however, that this research does not have a wider appeal beyond the Indian context for anyone interested in teachers' authority.

To familiarise readers with the influence of politics, social issues and economy on education and policy, this chapter describes the aims and effects of establishing a state public education system in the country around British Imperialism in India, the influence, ideology of political parties at the national level had on shaping the educational system struggling to overcome colonial institutional structures after Indian independence (1947). This with the nation-building project based on democratic (as in the Indian constitution) ideas of citizenship through education is yet to attain conceptual and procedural fruition. The literature from postcolonial theory and philosophy of education helps to broaden the conceptual lens necessary to address educational concerns of Indian society.

The current research has tried to address most aspects that affect teacher authority in India, despite that the study is limited in other areas that are not explored in detail due to resource constraints. They are mentioned in the last section: "limitations".

## **I. India: History, Politics and its Education**

The education system in India with the existence of its various school types from state Government schools to international ones is an amalgam of its colonial past, current economic vision and an attempt to uphold democratic ideals by its people through successive governments. The diversity of these schools provides a glimpse of the power/powerlessness of its people and state in the light of neoliberal agendas seeping through education and the larger social fabric of the country. In order to understand the challenges that such a

context poses for an educational project such as this, it is crucial to paint a picture of this education system with the cultural, social diversity and the consequent effects and demands made on teachers which have an effect on their authority.

At present there are 29 states and 7 union territories<sup>8</sup> in India, with Telangana being the most recent addition. During the framing of the Constitution, primary education in India was under Article 45 of directive principals<sup>9</sup> that stated that, “the State shall endeavor to provide, within a period of ten years from the commencement of this Constitution, for free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of fourteen years” (Sripati & Thiruvengadam, 2004; Tilak, 2001). Given the federal system of governance in the country, the responsibility of implementing educational reforms after much discussion was bestowed on the state governments while higher, scientific and technical educational institutions were included in the union and concurrent<sup>10</sup> list, giving powers to the central government. However, in 1976 education was removed from the state list and placed in the concurrent list. Since then, educational provisions are shared by the state and central government (Sripati & Thiruvengadam, 2004). Each of the states has an education system with its own education policy, teaching materials and administration. Along with this, the central government runs a number of schools across the country with its own curriculum, teachers and administrative system.

These different school systems are advised by The National Council for Educational Research and Training (NCERT), a national advisory organisation set up in 1961 by the Government of India, merging seven different institutions

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<sup>8</sup> These are territories within India that are distinct from states. They are governed by the Central Government (Union) but have their own local governments, special rights and status in the Constitution of India.

<sup>9</sup> Directive principals consist of social, economic and cultural rights within the Indian constitution. They are fundamental in governing the country however, cannot be enforced in any court of law.

<sup>10</sup> The concurrent list contains items on which both the central and state governments can pass legislation.

established in the initial decade of India's independence: "NCERT was established with the agenda to design and support a common system of education, national in character, which at the same time would enable and encourage the expressions of the diverse culture across the country" (*Images 50 years of NCERT*, 2011). It assists state and central government in research, training teachers, creating teaching and learning material for a unified system of school education throughout the country. It comprises academicians, education activists, and a few teachers from across the country. It is also responsible for conducting reviews and assessing the vision of education throughout the country occasionally. It gained prominence with *The Curriculum for the Ten Year School – A Framework* (1975); *National Curriculum for Elementary and Secondary Education* (1988); *National Curriculum Framework for School Education* (NCFSE-2000); *National Curriculum Framework 2005* (NCF 2005), which were a result of discussions with activists, NGOs, academics as well as a few teachers. For NCF 2005, National Focus Group position papers (2006) on different areas in education are also available. Since then, most state and central governments are being forced to align their education policies to match to the NCF 2005 framework.

The Indian education system is, however, an amalgamation of changes through history brought about by the indigenous systems, the colonial system, independence and current global influences and their interaction with each other over the years.

### I.i. Colonial Public Education System

The British introduced public education in India as part of their colonial agenda. The governance of a large territory provided a need for administrators, clerks and the like. The educational objectives of the British in India fulfilled a dual purpose. First, to anglicise the Indian population by introducing English as a medium of instruction and English literature which cannibalized the Indian image by projecting the habits and customs of its people in a negative light, and second to teach basic skills of literacy along with bookkeeping, etc. for

administrative purposes (Kumar, 2005). The curricular idea of “*What is worth teaching?*” (Kumar, 2004) remains clouded even today because of the colonial view of Indian society.

The indigenous knowledge systems were deemed useless and condemned as superstitions, mystic and primitive (Seth, 2007), which resulted in them being considered a definition of ignorance. The concept of knowledge and its transmission underwent changes and was linked to order, behaviour change and contempt towards one’s own culture and tradition. Colonial education became an instrument of moral and economic enhancement made possible through employment opportunities with colonial education. It was disconnected from the child’s everyday milieu. The status of teachers declined. While earlier the teachers were paid and respected by the local community, they now became paid servants of the system. The low salaries kept professional autonomy low and helped the colonisers to fulfil their agenda to indoctrinate students in the way they perceived fit (Kumar, 2005; Seth, 2007).

English as a medium of instruction made it impossible for students to consider the knowledge of their surrounding as part of their cognitive makeup. This new education reconstructed an image of the “Indian” as a savage being, e.g. English literature was specifically used for this purpose (Pennycook, 1998). The evolutionary sciences and biology emergent in England in the mid nineteenth century contributed to popularise these ideas. These ideas of education were based on the eighteenth century British political ideas of bourgeoisie equality, individuality (this had repercussions on the socio-economic milieu of India, especially in relation to communal land systems) and hence the colonial education was made available to the select few (the bourgeois) India considered capable (Niranjana, 1990; Kumar, 2005).

Colonial government left India with a bureaucratic education system, which did not exist earlier, involving centralised decision making mechanisms. The old system provided independence and autonomy to the teacher while the colonial system made teachers the subordinate functionaries of the superior officer in

the education system. The colonial education was alienating as there was no link between the society and the world children were being prepared for. It is true that many Indian intellectuals were exposed to ideas of the Enlightenment and western thought but the English education also created a gap between the Indian intelligentsia and the masses. This gap became more visible after independence as power was left in the hands of Indian elites with little or no knowledge of the needs of rural people. Leaders' bilingual skills and the subsequent Swadeshi<sup>11</sup> movement bridged some of this gap (Mukherjee et al., 1989; Kumar, 2005).

### I.ii. Indian Independence Movement and its Effects on Education

The Indian independence movement (1857-1947) inspired three major quests by the very colonial educated masses and its leaders. The first being Justice – educational opportunities for downtrodden castes; the second, self-identity – the need to create India's educational needs from within its own cultural repertoire. Thirdly, progress – industrialisation came into focus. These ideas subsequently shaped Indian educational thought in the Nehruvian<sup>12</sup> era after independence (Kumar, 2005).

The second Swadeshi (national) movement (1918–1947) during the freedom struggle led to a host of initiatives like boycott of foreign goods and services in order to jeopardize the economic sovereignty of British rule in India. This included a boycott of colonial schools. As a result, schools run by and for Indians in Indian languages sprang up all over the country. The thought of grounding in an Indian way of life and being, took root among many intellectuals. A search for an Indian education sprang from a boycott of British goods and services but was unable to crystallise into a substantial idea of its

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<sup>11</sup> An economic movement started by Gandhi during Indian independence to practise self-sufficiency and boycott all products manufactured or sold by the British Empire.

<sup>12</sup> The period between 1947 and 1964, when Jawaharlal Nehru was the prime minister of India.

own. It became a complex mix of religions and local languages as each group appropriated it (Kumar, 2005).

### I.iii. Post-Independence, Constitution and Indigenous Education Innovations

Post-independence (1947) left the English-educated leaders in a bind with regard to the education policy in India, as the Swadeshi movement was not able to provide a coherent view of Indian education (Kumar, 2005). At the same time, Indian independence was accompanied by the creation of Pakistan with much violence and bloodshed. This led to communal tensions between Muslim and Hindu communities in India. This along with the rigid caste system<sup>13</sup> (very much in existence even now) needed to be addressed. This to a major extent was addressed by Dr. B. R. Ambedkar as a chairman of the Constitution drafting committee with the addition of reservations for the Dalit community. However, the leaders of a newly independent nation with its diverse population, cultural and religious practices and the promise of democracy had a Herculean task ahead of them.

The leaders were familiar with the world that western education had provided them and were ambivalent about the achievements in science and technology in the west. This can be witnessed in the Constituent Assembly debates ("CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY OF INDIA - VOLUME IX", n.d.) held between 9<sup>th</sup> December 1946, and 24<sup>th</sup> January 1950, e.g. Shri P. T. Chacko (United State of Travancore and Cochin) elaborated on 12<sup>th</sup> September 1949:

“The national language of a great country like India should also be great. Some of our languages in India are really rich in literature. But,

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<sup>13</sup> The caste system in India is a system of social stratification dominant in Hindu religion but which has spread to other religions in the Indian subcontinent. It historically separated communities into thousands of endogamous hereditary groups called *jātis*, usually translated into English as "castes". The *jātis* are thought of as being grouped into four *varnas*: Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Shudras. Certain groups, now known as Dalits, were excluded from the varna system altogether, ostracised as untouchables (Scott & Marshall, 2005).

Sir, I do not think that any of our languages contain a good scientific literature. It would be almost impossible to teach Chemistry, Physics and such other sciences in any of our languages in India. A language cannot be artificially moulded for ready use. It has to develop itself and that takes time. The adoption of a language from the languages which we are having in India will most probably, retard our national progress. It may prevent our higher studies. It may prevent scientific researches which we need. Therefore, I believe we will have to wait till the time when a language in India develops itself and matures to that stage when we can make it our official language and our national language”.

Although they wanted to develop an education system different from that of the colonisers, the leaders lacked alternatives to and critical lens on the existing education system prevalent in the country.

Gandhi and Tagore with their Nai Talem<sup>14</sup> and Vishva-Bharti University<sup>15</sup> in Shantinikaten and West Bengal, respectively, were the visionaries who conceptualised alternatives to the existing system. These ideas were close to the child-centered ideas<sup>16</sup> promoted throughout the world. However, they failed to expand these ideas at a national level, facing criticism on ideological grounds. For example, Gandhi was criticised on his educational approach, which promoted physical and intellectual labour, and would not help India compete with other industrial countries. This did little to change the then existing colonial education system (Sriprakash, 2012).

#### I.iv. Nehruvian Era of Education Reforms

On 26<sup>th</sup> January 1949, India adopted its Constitution, which made Education a state subject and divided educational responsibility between the Government of India and its many states. It provided protection to other languages in the

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<sup>14</sup> Nai Talim emerged from a rejection of colonial education and restructuring of school knowledge which involved knowledge of subjects along with that of Indian handicrafts (Kumar, 1993).

<sup>15</sup> Based on the idea of communion of world with India ("Educational Ideas", n.d)

<sup>16</sup> These ideas are discussed in detail in the next chapter.

country while English was granted official use until 1965, and adequate safeguards for the educational and cultural interests of minorities. The Constituent Assembly realised the importance of primary education and made provision under Article 45 of the Constitution that “the state shall endeavor to provide within a period of ten years from the commencement of the Constitution, for free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of 14 years”.

Subsequent education policies by Jawaharlal Nehru (who received his education in England) under the Congress party focused little on school education and more on higher education in the form of vocational and technical education development. This can be attributed to two factors: 1) the government lacked sufficient funds for the revitalization of elementary education in India and was plagued with numerous pressing problems (reorganisation of the bureaucracy and army, refugee rehabilitation, constitution building, etc.), and 2) Nehru was influenced by western ideas of industrial development, which required emphasis on vocational education (Ghosh, 2000).

#### I.v. Politics and Education in India between 1960 and 1999

The political climate in the country after independence, until 1990, went through great upheaval. Congress party’s dominance till the 1980s began to waver, leading to a political democratization through greater regional voices, ultimately leading to fractious coalition politics between the 1990s and 2000s. This affected the development of the country. India, unlike other postcolonial states, adopted a social welfare model after independence with socialist and capitalist elements to declare itself a mixed economy. As economic development became the focus of government, welfare programmes in relation to education, health, among others, saw unplanned progress. The education committees, i.e. Radhakrishnan Committee report in 1949, Kothari Commission report in 1966, under Congress party rule, provided recommendations for education policies at school and higher education levels but their implementation met various hurdles: (1) the public sector institutions were inefficient with growing corruption;

(2) the crunch of resources led to dealing with education in a piecemeal fashion; (3) education from early on was seen as a way to provide labour for industrial growth and hence early education faced neglect while vocational and technical education found momentum (Ghosh, 2000).

Politics in India underwent important changes after 1960, which saw the emergence of new political parties as people lost faith in the Congress leadership under Indira Gandhi (the only woman prime minister of India to date) who declared a state of emergency between 1975 and 1977. This gave her unlimited powers during which she held massive forced sterilization programmes and several other atrocities were reported. Between 1977 and 1980, Janta Dal under the prime ministership of Morarji Desai and later Charan Singh failed to hold office due to differences within the party. The 1980s saw Indira Gandhi come to power again, with a move towards right wing politics and moving away from politics of the communist and left parties. She changed her stance from redistributive policies to forge alliance with the business community. The expenditure in vocational and technical education in the past decade helped in providing a skilled labour force, however education still suffered from the lack of a systematic development plan (Ghosh, 2000).

The National Policy on Education, 1986 was an attempt to take corrective measures. The new policy stressed the need for educational opportunity for all; a reorientation of curricular and instructional material on the lines of child-centered ideas; better facilities to institutions; universal enrolment and retention of students up to 14 years; vocational education was made a distinct stream; a system of performance appraisal; a meaningful partnership between federal and state governments, to name a few (*Images 50 years of NCERT*, 2011). The policy made many sound recommendations, although many of these were borrowed directly from the previous committees. Many of the recommendations

were implemented as Navodya Vidyalaya<sup>17</sup> model schools were set up, District Institute of Education and Training (DIET)<sup>18</sup>, Vocational Education<sup>19</sup> and Technical Education<sup>20</sup> were finalised. But the implementation of the policy received a jolt when the Congress-led government was replaced by the National Front Government under the Janata Dal leader V. P. Singh in 1989. It was a coalition government consisting of many political parties with various affiliations. As some parties were not in favour of certain provisions of the National Policy on Education, 1986, a review committee was appointed under Acharaya Ramamurti in May 1990 (Ghosh, 2000).

The committee highlighted the fact that the education system in the country was a disaster. This was accompanied by the socio-economic problems where violence in the country had become a way of life. For any future progress, education was to play a constructive and positive role. The committee also gave village an important role and recommended increasing the decision making power of the Gramsabha (village council).

Soon after the committee's report, the then government, was replaced by a Congress-led government, under the leadership of Chandra Shekhar. However, this government lasted only a year, after which general elections were held, during which Congress prime ministerial candidate Rajiv Gandhi was assassinated. Congress again came to power under P. V. Narsimha Rao, due

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<sup>17</sup> Navodya Vidyalaya Smiti was established with the purpose to provide quality education to talented children, especially from rural areas without any financial assistance ("Secondary Education", 2016).

<sup>18</sup> District Institute of Education and Training (DIET) is a third tier (after NCERT at national level and SCERTs at state level) of training and support centre at the district level to improve basic education ("About DIET", n.d)

<sup>19</sup> Vocational Education for students at secondary education level to impart skills in students to increase individual employability, at the same time preparing students for identified occupations spanning several areas of activity (*National Policy on Education [NEP] 1986* (as modified in 1992)).

<sup>20</sup> Technical education in higher education included computer literacy as well as education in skills for management and service sector jobs through university and distant learning courses. For the same purpose, polytechnics were established (*NPE, 1986* (as modified in 1992)).

to the sympathy wave it gathered over the death of Rajiv Gandhi. Congress went back to review its National Policy on Education, 1986 (NPE) and side lined the Ramamurti report. In 1992 the government adopted NPE with changes in its action plan. However, it should be noted here that India went through a major economic crisis in 1991 when it declared bankruptcy and was forced to privatise many of its public services. Education to a large extent was beginning to be guided by international donors and universal literacy became the most important focus of all subsequent governments as state spending on education reduced over the years and reliance on international funds, especially from the World Bank, increased. These funds are guiding education policy in the country even today.

The social and cultural atmosphere in the country was brewing with religious and caste tensions with the Mandal Commission<sup>21</sup> report in discussion and the demolition of Babri Masjid (mosque) by Hindu fundamentalists (the violence was triggered by the claim that the land belonged to Hindus as it marked the birth place of a Hindu deity called *Rama* before the Mughal rulers destroyed the temple and built their own place of worship) and subsequent Hindu–Muslim riots in various parts of the country (Ghosh, 2000).

In the 1996 election, Congress failed to come to power, instead the Bhartiya Janta Party (BJP) led government came to power but lasted only 13 days, only to be succeeded by the United Front government with the support of Congress under Deve Gowda. The government appointed the Saikia Committee (1997) to suggest recommendations for achieving Education for All (EFA) and Universalisation of Elementary Education (UEE) aims in India. The committee

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<sup>21</sup> On 20<sup>th</sup> December, 1978, Shri. Morarji Desai, the then prime minister of India announced the formation of Backward Classes Commission under the leadership of B. P. Mandal to determine the criteria for defining socially and educationally backward classes and recommend steps for their social and educational advancement. In 1980, the commission suggested affirmative action practice be followed by the Indian state, to give exclusive access to government jobs and educational institutions to people recognised as belonging to Scheduled Caste/Tribes and Other Backwards Classes [SC/ST/OBCs] (*A report of the Backward Classes Commission, National Commission for Backward Classes*, 1980).

proposed to make changes to the Indian Constitution by making Elementary Education a fundamental right. The committee recommended motivating not just children but also parents to support education in the country. The action plan envisaged some other notable programmes like a free and compulsory education programme for girls up to class 5, an increase in the non-governmental spending on education, and the establishment of the National Elementary Education Mission (NEEM) for sustainability of decentralised planning and management of education in the country. However, the government did not last long enough for the recommendations to be implemented. 1998 saw the rise of BJP, which moved quickly to realise its own political agenda of promoting Hindu religious values, criminalising Muslim historical figures through education. In a conference of state education ministers and education secretaries in October 22<sup>nd</sup>–24<sup>th</sup>, 1998 a report headed by P.D. Chitalangia made recommendations to renew education within the country on "essential of Indian culture" (Basu, 2002).

#### I.vi. Politics and Education in India between 2000 and 2013

The ideology behind BJP's 1998 government soon came to surface in the National Curriculum Framework for School Education—2000. It was unsuitable for a diverse ethnic and religious country like India as it promoted Hindu ideology. This was seen in the revised content of History textbooks to be more nationalistic and biased towards Hindu values (Ghosh, 2000). The National Curriculum Framework of 2000 was a reflection of the ideological intentions of the then government under the slogan, "Indianise, nationalise and spiritualise". The policy called for revision of history textbooks throughout the country and depicted the Pakistani and Muslim minority in the country in a negative frame (Lall, 2008).

In 2004 the Congress-led UPA coalition government, amalgamation of several political parties replaced the BJP government. As seen earlier, it has always been a challenge for the government to represent diverse groups in the country and with a coalition government any decision not only becomes difficult but also

faces the imminent threat to the government's legitimacy. Within this coalition government, the left parties had considerable influence on the functioning of the government. This phase marked the increase in percentage of reservation by the government for backward classes in the public and private sectors of the country. This decision irked many corporate firms and elites and saw large-scale protests by student unions especially from medical and engineering colleges.

Elementary education was and has been a focus of attention for much of school reform. This can be attributed to the international pressure generated by the global declaration on basic education, Education for All, at Jomtien, Thailand, in 1990. This diverted national (Elementary education programmes like Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, Lok Jumbish and several other programmes under subsequent governments) and international funds towards this goal. The international goals of universal literacy for adults and school children have recently come under criticism as lacking in quality, vision and making poor use of indigenous education systems.

The National Curriculum Framework of 2005 undertook a comprehensive and detailed analysis of different aspects of school education in India. It comprised people from non-profit organisations, activists, teachers, policy makers, academics and researchers. From the colonial intervention in education to the economic and global challenges posed in educational process today, the framework outlined issues and possible ways to overcome them in languages, mathematics and sciences, social science education, gender-related issues among students and teachers, among others. Since then, most state governments have been advised to follow NCERT-guided educational reforms.

Between 2007 and 2009, India was hit by an economic slump that had its effect on the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the country. This decreased the available employment opportunities within the country. The National Knowledge Commission constituted by Manmohan Singh in 2004 submitted its report in 2007 recommending changes in higher education policies, which the then

Human Resource and Development (HRD) minister Arjun Singh did not approve of and led to the appointment of another committee called the Yashpal Committee in 2008. As can be seen, the focus of attention around the economic slump was on higher education, especially technical education. The approval of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in the country under the BJP government in 2002 led to the increase in partnerships of foreign universities with national universities. The need for skilled teachers was realised.

Teacher training programmes, an essential part of any education system, have existed in India for over a century. There have been different training programmes, which combine training with classroom experience, and distance teacher training degrees. However, although the basic features as well as theoretical thread of these programmes have altered significantly over the years to include literature on education from different education movements in India and the rest of the world, including child-centered movements, they have not influenced the mainstream teacher training programmes. On the other hand, in-service teacher training programmes that have emerged in the country are a result of the current needs in education. However, these programmes are oriented towards building awareness of new reforms rather than teacher training (*Position Paper National Focus Group on Teacher Education for Curriculum Renewal*, n.d.). Against this background, the demand for skilled teachers within sciences, social sciences and management education was realised and steps were taken to implement this, e.g. scholarships for various disciplines were introduced, international partnerships with universities around the world were established.

The Yashpal Committee recommended examination of class 10 (most education in India is examination-based especially national and state level examinations for classes 10 and 12) as optional; uniform curricula for class 12 in CBSE (Central Board of Secondary Examination<sup>22</sup>) and introduction of

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<sup>22</sup> The Central Board of Secondary Education (abbreviated as CBSE) is a Board of Education for public and private schools, under the Union Government of India ("*About CBSE*", n.d.).

CCE[E]<sup>23</sup> (Continuous Comprehensive Evaluation [Examination]) among teacher and students.

The Right to Education Act was implemented in 2010 under the Congress government although the bill had been under discussion in Parliament since 1996. The act not only guarantees elementary education but also seeks to reform the education system. It focuses on teacher training, the removal of capitation fee<sup>24</sup> from schools, bars screening and interview of parents before admission, makes corporal punishment<sup>25</sup> an offence and prohibits private tuition by teachers. The Act, since its conceptualisation, continues to be applauded as well as criticised on several grounds. However, the success of the Act in the country with its goals (like previous reports) is yet to be realised. In April 2014, the BJP-led government, under the leadership of Narendra Modi, succeeded the Congress government. In his 2016 Independence Day (15<sup>th</sup> August) address he made the availability of toilets for all children in schools a major aim, as the lack of toilets deters most children (especially girl students) from coming to schools, Modi's government has massively cut down public spending on health and school education (Chaturvedi, 2016).

### I.vii. Current Politics and Challenges for Education Reform

Independent India, while trying to remake itself and find a place in the world, has had to deal with the scars of colonisation and new neoliberal policies being developed by the IMF (International Monetary Fund) and the World Bank. Colonisation left India with an education system and teaching methodology

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<sup>23</sup> Continuous and comprehensive evaluation examination examination is a new examination system introduced by Central Board of Secondary Education in India, for students of sixth to tenth grades and twelfth in some schools. The main aim of CCE[E] is to evaluate every aspect of the child during their presence at the school ("CCE - Homepage", n.d).

<sup>24</sup> This was the practice of donation/direct or indirect charges demanded by a school while admitting a child.

<sup>25</sup> A study on child abuse in India published in 2007 by the Ministry of Women and Child Development, Govt. of India, recognises that 62% of the corporal punishment was in government and municipal schools (Kacker, Mohsin, Dixit, Varadan, & Kumar, 2007).

used for indoctrination, institutions with no respect for ideals of democracy; the idea of child as deficient and in need of adult control and character change, a curriculum with a certain patronizing idea of knowledge for Indians, and teachers whose traditional authority and respect was degraded.

Exploring the theme of the colonial past as is done by postcolonial theory is very important as it raises questions of justice and values for the present but with great wariness for the past. We live in a world where nations are still divided on the cultural and economic basis of being “developed” and “underdeveloped”. Economic policies are increasingly channelled to increase the private flow of capital, with a threat to democratic rights of citizens and possibility of aggravating persisting inequalities, e.g. India’s educational policies are influenced by private global capital for education, without addressing the challenges leftover by colonialism. These economic policies are a result of the state’s neoliberal ideology, i.e. fostering private property, individual rights and competition that can be achieved by minimum state intervention. The consequence is that capital grows by accumulation or as David Harvey (2009) writes accumulation by dispossession, i.e. others are robbed of their possessions so that wealth accumulates in the hands of a select few. The functioning of these neoliberal economic policies in India and consequent lack of educational opportunities for a large section of population are discussed in detail in the next chapter.

The juxtaposition of politics with various groups fighting for their identity, with economic policy, and the need to uphold democracy in India, has left its footprints in educational policy and educational institutions. Hence, any question of education and its stakeholders cannot be discussed in abstraction from the socio-economic and political context as meaning of any kind becomes impossible without this context.

Ideas of child-centered education, which emphasise the importance of the child’s world and his/her environment to the learning process, are seen as a panacea in the diverse educational context of India and a way to carry out the

national educational goals. However, as is discussed in the next chapter, the promotion of a certain fixed idea of education and the role of the teacher in the classroom pose problems to the status and authority of the teacher.

## **II. Philosophy of Education**

The diversity highlighted in the previous section is complex and dynamic. Given the nature of the project, taking into account the political context, cultural diversity and changes in education policy, while at the same time assessing the different arguments presented by these different standpoints, philosophy of education, provided a suitable set of conceptual resources to undertake the project. This is because it provided an avenue to incorporate different strands. However, the literature within philosophy of education on teaching, authority, state schooling, the aims of education – to name a few, while expansive in helping to build an initial understanding of ways to establish connections between educational policy, institutions and questions of philosophical nature – to draw out a conceptual framework where I could think about educational concerns pertaining to India – also left a large vacuum in terms of the social-cultural assumptions it made and the way in which philosophical ideas could be brought to life. It became difficult to transpose the many categories and arguments within the literature to the context of India, which has a different physical environment and set of complexities.

The research question on teachers' authority came with my engagement with the physical environment in India:

- a. What does teachers' authority mean to the teachers in India, in relation to students and to the cultural, economic and socio-political structures within which they operate?
- b. How do teachers use their authority to achieve educational goals?

The question has been explored in the philosophy of education literature, as the concerns it encompasses are internal to the pedagogical relationship and hence relevant to education in any country throughout the world. However, the

environment plays an important role in the way concepts, people and institutions come to acquire their meaning and influence each other. This has an effect on our understanding of the environment, which shapes and guides the research question, e.g. the practice of teaching in itself is universal. It gets a different texture, as it is located in the environment of a different nation state/context. There will be differences, as well as similarities, between India and the UK when it comes to teaching, including its aims and purposes, and the status of teachers, given the socio-economic needs and the environment. This in turn will affect our understanding of teachers' authority, which is intimately connected to the practice of teaching.

The discourse of difference and similarity has its own historical and contemporary background. The organisation of the world around us as it comes to appear in the spaces we occupy, e.g. virtual, academic, is partly structured by certain key words/themes, e.g. postcolonial, neoliberal or globalisation. These themes are themselves important as they voice concerns that should not be ignored. But they also have a tendency to create hegemony, which blocks divergent movements or thoughts away from them. The aim of this research was not to limit itself to these themes but to see how teachers in their own classrooms find a way to overcome the complex milieu created by these themes.

Thus, while increased privatisation of education has resulted in an ahistorical discourse of education influenced by neoliberal ideals of individual rights/choices that promotes school choice and the benefits of for-profit private education that limits government welfare legislation, here is a need to place the discourse in a historical and educational context to grasp the full extent of the genealogy of educational systems. Philosophy of education provided the literature to critically analyse the latent values/beliefs in the current educational discourse along with teacher's authority. On the other hand, postcolonial literature helped to understand the importance of historical injustices like colonialism in the present Indian context. How do these historical injustices play out in the current global socio-political scenario? What are the power relations

between developed or developing countries and their effects on social, economic or political atmosphere of a country like India, trying to become a global sufficient economy?

Recent work in theories of modernity within postcolonial literature have highlighted that global networks and their apparatus have informed and troubled the postcolonial perspective on the character of global culture which has helped produce different stances and positions within it. Thus, for Bhabha (1994, p.204), the globalisation of the social spaces reflects a state of “unsatisfaction” that, nevertheless, enables the articulation and enunciation of “a global or transnational imaginary and its cosmopolitan subjectivities”; for Pieterse (1998), it is through hybridity that globalisation works against “homogenization, standardization, cultural imperialism, westernization, Americanization” (as cited in Ashcroft et al., 2006, p.474). Postcolonial theory recognises that the domain of culture has escaped the third and the first world distinction but at the same time there is a danger of looking at the world only through the globalised images, subjectivities and values (Young, 2003). The emphasis on culture in globalised discourse became prominent in the 1980s, as it was believed that how people lived and experienced globalisation could be found in the literary and cultural field. In a globalised, neoliberal and postmodern world we are constantly celebrating and trying to attain commonalities rather than engage with differences of culture, imagination and belief. Debates in the UK about the existence of religious schools alongside comprehensive schools is a case in point, where the limited public understanding and thus acceptance of different religions is conditioned on changing the religious practices to accommodate popular secular views. As Arjun Appadurai (1990) calls them, global *mediascapes* and *ideoscapes* have become the site of tension between cultural homogenisation and cultural heterogenisation.

There is hence a need to rethink our systems of education not just in the current socio-political framework but also in terms of historical injustice and the relationship between the two, which perpetuate violence on individuals and communities. The process of colonisation, as mentioned earlier, led to a

knowledge transfer from West to East, ignoring the aspirations and needs of people in developing countries. If we are to rethink our stance on some of the injustices faced by marginalised people in a country like India we will have to reconsider our ideas within the social milieu of the communities we are likely to address. In the case of education, questions of knowledge, teaching will have to be studied within the cultural, traditional rationale of the society. This is not to romanticize or look for a 'true Indian education' as if there were any, but to place the current discourse of education and needs in a broader framework of historical past, current neoliberal policies and future possibilities. This will help us better understand the question in hand and the implications of our actions, and to chart a way towards possible answers for our challenges.

This also means that a discipline like philosophy of education has a responsibility to engage with philosophers of other cultures, find ways to incorporate the thoughts and voices of people/spaces across class, caste, among others. The current research attempts to take into account these highlighted concerns by initiating conversations of a philosophical nature with teachers in India and exploring the concept of authority through their voices and the conceptual connections they make to create meaning.

### **III. Limitations**

As much as one likes to expand the project and explore connections as far as possible there are some aspects which one cannot. In this project, as far as I am aware, one aspect that has been left somewhat unexplored is that of gender in relation to teachers' authority. This is not because it was unimportant, rather it is very much intertwined with the question of authority, but lack of time made it difficult to explicitly include that aspect in the project. There were however instances and suggestions made by teachers, which pointed to a gendered idea of teaching or authority during the interviews, which have been mentioned in the subsequent chapters.

## **IV. Conclusion**

Teacher authority is a political question that needs to be understood in the political and social history of the country. This is because as elaborated in the discussion, educational processes and policy are informed by complex postcolonial social histories as well as contemporary powerful political ideologies that use education as a tool to fulfil their motives. This directly affects teachers and their practice.

The current research within philosophy of education, which provided the framework to bring these different concerns together, has helped build an awareness of these complex issues, so as to think about aims of education and that of the teacher in a broad perspective.

The following chapter elaborates the literature of authority within education and explains the importance of the topic as well as the framework within which the research is conceptualised.

## CHAPTER 2: Why Discuss Authority in Education?

Education in the diverse social-cultural matrix of any society has multiple aims. These aims are added, removed and revamped over a course of time. This is a result of changes in our political, socio-economic and material environment, our interaction with it and the resultant needs that have necessitated a change in the aims of education, e.g. vocational education and its link with economy, the focus on climate change and its consequences is gaining widespread importance in schools across India and other parts of the world as we have come to realise the consequences of our actions on the environment. However, when it comes to implementation of these practices and aims, the teacher is at the centre of it and is held responsible by the society for the education of its young. If we accept this to be true, it becomes inevitable to understand the power, authority and subsequently the autonomy that the teacher possesses to carry out this process of education, without which the teacher is unable to carry out her task of providing quality education. These factors influence teachers' effectiveness. Of the many measures (learner outcome, parental support, etc.) of quality education one is teacher effectiveness. As in the UNICEF, "*Defining Quality in Education*" (2000) paper, which describes "Effective teachers are highly committed and care about their students (Craig, Kraft, & du Plessis, 1998); they need supportive working conditions to maintain these positive attitudes" (p.9). The effects of which are reflected in learners' achievements.

The aims of education in the socio-cultural milieu of the society become achievable and adaptable with changing needs due to the authority and autonomy that teachers enjoy. Teachers deal with the changing environment of students and expectations of society. This demands that they understand the situation at hand and deal with it effectively. The authority and autonomy of teachers is always under a process of negotiation. However, an attempt to dispense with it, will only lead to loss of faith in the education system and teachers. This will lead to a disadvantageous situation for society, as critical voices and insights of teachers highlighting classroom realities are curbed.

The discussion below traces the historical and social developments in India and rest of the world that led to mistrust in authority, the alternative education movements that emerged around this time to replace traditional state education and the rise of private for-profit education, which has not only resulted in homogenising education systems around the world but has also aggravated already persistent social problems, namely economic inequalities. This is followed by exploration of authority in philosophy of education literature with the many democratic concerns that authors voice while arguing for a kind of authority in relation to individual needs, texts as well as the context. This is followed by the idea of a teacher in Hindu religious and cultural practices of India that are important to take heed of in India's educational policies, as they continue to function and exist in the social imagination.

## **I. Discontent with Authority**

Different political and socio-economic changes around the world over the years led to development of ideas that have had and continue to influence our understanding of the world around us. Discontent with totalitarian structures is one such example, which was replaced by a capital-oriented welfare state and growing public discontent with the working of such a state, especially its overreaching power structure that has influenced our current understanding of authority. The following discussion attempts to chart the onset and advancing unrest with political authority in a socio-cultural environment, which is reflected within an educational context as disdain towards any discussion on authority. This is followed with a review of philosophy of education literature that provides a theoretical framework for the development of unease towards authority in society but also new dimensions for further development on the topic.

### **I.i. State Public Education System**

In the nineteenth century, rising concern about free flow of capital throughout the world, and its economic and social consequences on nation states, led to the widespread idea of a welfare state, promoted by Keynesian economics,

associated with social and economic development. However, the formation of the welfare state was marked by criticism and movements of dissent against state excesses around the World Wars, especially in relation to education.

Public education developed across the world at different times and its causes are still a matter of debate among historians (Green, 1997). In England, which was a monarchy until the nineteenth century and was under the laissez faire system of economy, public education as a need was not recognised until as late as 1902 with the Education Act, when a central body of education was created for compulsory education, although private education among the wealthy (largely limited to men) was common (Gillard, 2011).

When the state began to involve itself in the provision of schooling, it did so for particular purposes and in a particular style (Lowe, 2007). It is for this reason that anarchists such as William Godwin (Godwin, 1996 [1798]) opposed the idea of the state controlling education on principle, arguing that it would use it as an ideological tool. This notion of the state using education as an ideological tool to meet its own goals has remained ever since, given the many instances when researchers and policymakers have confirmed this suspicion, e.g. in the case of India, the 2000–2004 attempt to revise History textbooks by the then government to include Vedic scriptures was criticised on similar lines (Lall & House, 2005).

In India by contrast, British colonial empire initiated public education. There was no doubt that the colonial education was a means to provide loyal administrators for the empire. This kind of education was built on separating itself from indigenous education systems where the individual's aims of education were incompatible with that of the empire (Kumar, 2005). The emergence of the independent Indian state after 1947 came with a hope that colonial injustices would be rectified and that the new education system would cater to the needs of its people and lead to progress. However, the education system in India continued to suffer and failed to overcome the colonial legacy in education, to develop a system of education that caters to the needs of its

people. On the contrary, reports (Desai & Kulkarni, 2008) of corporal punishment, caste and class-based discrimination in Government schools, revision of history and other textbooks in different parts of India to propagate state ideology, only led to doubts about the state's motives and authority in Indian education, similar to thinkers around the world.

This discontent with state authority and its function in the education system led to the rise of progressive ideas and movements around the world.

## I.ii. The Progressive Movements

In the light of the constrained atmosphere, there were others who had alternative views about education pertaining to, who was it (education) for? How should it proceed? Some of these alternative ideas have been labelled as progressive or in other cases child-centered, learner-centred. Progressive educators were, in fact, united much more by what they were against than by what they were for (Dale, 1979). This is because the progressive movement comprised varied voices and intentions and it is difficult to bundle them into one whole. They opposed: 1) the authoritarian forms of pedagogy that promoted minimum achievable goals and authoritarian adult-child relationships; and 2) such processes of education that neglected the individual and social aspects of education to exclude particular groups and privilege certain forms of knowledge, considered by many as a dehumanising approach (Dale, 1979).

### I.ii.i. Emergence of Progressive Ideas

Progressive ideas have been around for a while in different writings of thinkers across the world, as in Rousseau's *Emile* (1762), which was an outcome of the Enlightenment era. His work explored the idea of individual freedom, the modern self as divided, of naturalness, sincerity and authenticity (Standish, 2013). Other progressive educators include Pestalozzi (1746–1827), a Swiss pedagogue, Froebel (1782–1852), a student of Pestalozzi who developed and spread the concept of kindergarten with many of his followers in the UK; Maria Montessori (1870–1952), an Italian physician and educator whose methods are

in use even now in schools across the world, including India, and John Dewey (1859–1952), an American philosopher who was a proponent of pragmatism.

In India, thinkers like Mahatma Gandhi (1869–1948), Rabindranath Tagore (1861–1941) and B. R. Ambedkar (1891–1956) among others promoted ideas where the child's environment and her relation to the world were considered paramount in education. Their ideas aimed as much to move beyond colonial education in an independent India as to overcome the religion-, caste- or class-based discrimination that existed in Indian society. There were also a great many occasions for exchange of ideas between the mentioned thinkers in India and abroad around the same time, as is discussed further. Hence, it is important to see the development of progressive ideas in India and elsewhere, in the shared global context, and concerns that occupied those thinkers along with the national issues that they were trying to address through education.

Gandhi's proposal of basic education (Nai Talem) in 1937 was conceptualised against the colonial education, based on western thought and philosophy that for Gandhi promoted violence against other races and domination. For him, school was a unit that would form the cornerstone of a new independent India and separate itself from the state. Thus, he proposed teaching of productive handicrafts in schools as a way to self-finance. However, this proposal required a complete overhaul of the sociology of school knowledge in Indian society, which associated crafts like skills with the lower castes in society. Gandhi's craft-based knowledge in school was based on two other crucial reasons that go hand in hand with his overall project of small community based life in India. Some of Gandhi's ideas are often compared with those of John Dewey who promoted a work-based model of education rooted in small village community in his 1916 book, *Democracy and Education*: 1) Gandhi believed India needed to mature politically before hurling itself into industrialisation that he thought was a threat to India's freedom. Basic education was seen as a way to slow down the advent of capitalism; and 2) a self-sustaining school and the various stakeholders including the teacher will be autonomous in thought and promote dignity of labour along with village republics (Kumar, 1993).

The model of basic education did not receive the support that Gandhi hoped. Jawaharlal Nehru, the then Prime Minister (1947–1964) of India, believed that India could safeguard its borders and attain international economic development only through industrialisation. This was in sharp opposition to Gandhi's basic education. The National Planning Commission (NPC) formed in 1950 by the Congress party recognised the increasing entrepreneurial class in the country and favoured Nehru's idea of nation development while promoting institutes of technical and vocational education in the country. A second criticism of basic education was the possibility of promoting child labour in schools under the guise of self-sustenance. Gandhi promoted a secular idea of education in line with Dewey's thoughts. However, the teacher for Gandhi was to uphold the moral truths of all religions through her actions. This idea of the moral teacher was rooted in the Hindu ashram system and was thus highly criticised by thinkers fighting against caste discrimination in the country (Kumar, 1993).

Rabindranath Tagore, contrary to Gandhi, welcomed engagement with the west and championed a cosmopolitan idea of education where an individual should be seen as a universal man. He believed that the greatest gift of the west to mankind was science. Thus science and rationality formed the basis of Tagore's philosophy of education. Whereas Tagore was critical of religious traditions and conventions in India, he valued the history, ideas and engagement with nature. The child for him should be able to develop his/her ideas in freedom, interaction with the environment and knowledge gathered from not one but various sources. The teacher should be seen as a facilitator who helps the child achieve self-expression (Ghosh et al., 2012). Tagore had travelled widely, including England, and was very well read. He established friendships with writers like W. B. Yeats, William Rothenstein and Ezra Pound, among others (Sonin, 2013). He assimilated democratic ideals and developed an independent outlook different from his contemporaries. This led him to develop the idea of a universal man who is cosmopolitan in nature (Tagore, 2003).

B. R. Ambedkar, who himself faced a hostile schooling environment as an untouchable, earned two doctorates from Columbia University and the London School of Economics, with the support of his father, an enlightened teacher, and the Maharaja of Baroda. Ambedkar while studying at Columbia University was inspired by John Dewey who was his teacher there ("Bhimrao Ambedkar", n.d). Dewey's idea of democracy and the school as a place of challenging social norms and conventions also had lasting influence on Ambedkar (Mukherjee, 2009). Throughout his life, Ambedkar propagated education as a tool for Dalit children to understand their social situation and overcome it. His slogan, "educate, agitate and organize" captured the imagination of Dalit movements in India. He established the Bahishkrit Hitkarini Sabha in 1924 that helped to establish libraries, hostels and social centres for Dalit youth. In 1928, the Depressed Classes Education Society was established 'to organize school education on a sound basis' (Nambissan, 1996).

The development and spread of these child-centered ideas whether in India or elsewhere was possible because of the confluence of cultures, exchange of ideas among thinkers, made possible through their readings, travels or education in educational institutions outside India. However, these child-centered ideas, as discussed above, did not get the attention they deserved in India. The time after India's independence saw the spread of public education linked with internationalisation of education where the child-centered ideas being promoted were starkly different from the ones discussed above.

### I.ii.ii. Progressive Ideas over the Years

Over the years, progressivists who were disillusioned by the renewed interest of the state in education continued to propagate child-centered ideas with a campaign against traditional authoritative structures under a public school education system that perpetuated class differences and social control.

In UK, the major impetus to progressive education came with the 1944 Education Act ("House of Commons - Participation by 16-19 year olds in

education and training - Education", 2011), which led to legislation for compulsory schooling when unemployment was on the rise, expansion of higher education and increase in education expenditure. All these changes for the first time prompted a favourable climate for expansive progressive ideas in state education. This was followed by the Plowden Report (1967), which endorsed progressive primary education. It encapsulated ideas such as, the centrality of experience and learning by doing; problem solving and critical thinking; education for social responsibility and democracy. It was the rhetoric of teacher autonomy that gained prominence around this time with the teachers' control of school councils under Local Education Authorities (LEAs). However, radical progressivists in contrast saw the structure of education institutions under state authority as the underlying problem, launching a Deschooling movement (Illich, 1971). They promoted community, personal relationships and a humane idea of education but also "general futility of worldwide educational institutions" with little evidence. The deschooling movement was concerned more with the process of education than its substance (Barrow, 1978) and was hence conflicted between the child's rights and the position of the child in relation to society. This led to further disagreement among progressivists with regard to their objectives and means to achieve them (Dale, 1979). The changes in education policy around this time reflected a mix of different progressive strands with the question of teachers' position looming large.

Child-centered ideas in the official documents of India did not emerge before the National Policy on Education (NPE) in 1986. In this, concern for the needs of the child that motivate the child to attend school; activity-based learning at primary level; letting first generation students set their own pace and providing them supplementary remedial instruction; increasing cognitive instruction based on the brain development of the child; No Detention policy at primary level; and exclusion of corporal punishment, were components added under child-centered education. Child-centered ideas since then have gained prominence and are now firmly rooted in the education policy documents of India throughout its primary and secondary education. For example, the National Curriculum

Framework for School Education (2000, p.26) emphasised constructive learning with the teacher being a facilitator i.e. "a guide, providing resources for learners and enabling them to decide how to learn and what to learn". National Curriculum Framework [NCF] (2005, p.13) defines child-centered education as "giving primacy to children's experiences, their voices, and their active participation" with the teacher being assigned the role of a facilitator.

However, it is important to understand the introduction of child-centered ideas in Indian education policy at the advent of major economic crisis, internationalisation of education aid that decreased the authority and autonomy of teachers in the country and raises questions about the intention of the then proposed educational changes.

### I.ii.iii. Spread of Progressive Ideas in India

Between the 1960s and the 1990s, India, a newly independent country, was trying to establish itself in the world economic and political sphere. India, by forming the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), refused to align with the Soviet or US allies in the cold war. However, the 1980s were a time of world economic crisis where the newly independent countries along with other Latin American countries saw falling household income (Kumar et al., 2001). The welfare state was unable to channel funds to public education and other services. Thus, school enrolment rates in African countries fell, in India half of the school-going age children were out of school and there were wide gaps in gender disparity. In this scenario, the Jomtien consensus, Education for All, an UN-led initiative, was promoted as a way to deal with the qualitative and quantitative crisis. This led to development initiatives in developing countries, particularly education. The shift was triggered by the World Bank's publication of an education policy paper in 1980 that diversified the analytic models for assessing education outcomes beyond forecasting manpower needs to include such calculation as the economic rates of return on education investments (Heynemen & Lee, 2016). Primary education was seen to have higher returns to investment and reduce poverty (Psacharopoulos et al., 1986; Colclough & De, 2010).

In India, the National Education Policy 1986 and programmes under it, including Operation Blackboard, and District Primary Education Programme (DPEP), shifted the discourse of education in the country. The role of the teacher, status of the child and goals of education and its process underwent significant changes. Introduction of child-centered ideas led to the discussion of quality in education and a move to question teacher attitudes towards gender, caste and class biases (Sarangapani, 2014). However, this was being done while curtailing the authority, status and role of the teacher. The teacher under British rule had lost much of her cultural authority, attaining a status of paid employee of the administration to further its goals in the colony. After independence, it was hoped that this status of the teacher would undergo a positive change. However, programmes like DPEP worked against this goal. From being subjects of colonial government, teachers after independence became employees of the central government. The teacher-government relationship came to precede the teacher-student relationship.

DPEP started in 1994 under Education for All in India, and was basically a structural adjustment programme (SAP) for the Indian economy, i.e. a corrective development policy where the macro-economic policy provides the base for the state's overall development. SAP was not a choice but enforced to open India to international aid and co-operation (Kumar et al., 2001). The DPEP programme was implemented under the authority of each state government such that recruitment of regular full-time teachers was shifted to employing more para-teachers<sup>26</sup>. The teachers under this programme were appointed under the contractual scheme, on a salary, half of that of regular teachers. This led to a

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<sup>26</sup> The term 'para teachers' is a generic term applied to characterize all government school teachers appointed by state governments on contract basis often under varying service conditions in terms of emoluments and qualification requirements. Some documents also refer to them as 'contract teachers'. In fact, official documents of state governments refer to them in vernacular terms such as *shiksha karmi*, *shiksha mitra*, *guruji* and so on depending on the schemes under which teachers are being employed. In one sense, there is no clarity on who is a para teacher or under what kind of contract are teacher engaged if not on permanent tenures (Govinda & Josephine, 2004).

severe crisis in primary education in India that threatened the position of the teacher (Kumar et al., 2001). This also affected the professional freedom of teachers, hindered the development of legitimate teacher authority necessary for constructive educational processes and the space to build relationships with students to fulfil a facilitating role as a teacher.

The child-centered education approach in the National Policy on Education (1986) was promoted as a panacea to reform the education system in the country that alienated the child, (Dyer, 1994) without any discussion of the process of alienation that resulted from colonisation being a major factor that caused the aforementioned alienation. Major goals of education reform, including child-centered education, were geared towards achieving literacy levels so as to prepare a skilled population for the economic and technological development of the country. Although child-centered ideas in the country came to be associated with the constitutional aims of democracy, social justice and child's needs, there was little qualitative change in the education scenario. While vast numbers of schools were built, a large number of school-going children remained outside the school (5AIES, 1990). Thus there was a clear difference between the child-centered ideas promoted by educationists like Gandhi and Tagore and that of the education policies in the independent state of India.

In the last two decades, there have been attempts to re-examine quality of education from a more holistic perspective that includes school infrastructure, teachers' educational levels, learning and implementation of child-centered ideas in the teaching-learning processes, i.e. making learning relevant to the child's environment and needs. NCF 2005, elaborates, that with the prevalent caste-, class- and gender-based discrimination, traditional structures of teacher authority that relate with corporal punishment in the country, child-centered ideas provide the possibility to create more democratic structures of education if parallel reforms in teacher training, curriculum revision and other areas are initiated simultaneously. However, the child-centered approach has failed to proliferate and continues to be resisted among teachers in India.

There are multiple factors responsible for this impediment. Since the National policy on Education, 1986 changing discourse on education has shifted towards child centered ideas that promote learner centric classrooms, constructive meaning making classrooms, teachers as learners and facilitators without discussing the ways these ideas can be implemented in the current classroom realities. While there is an attempt to overcome teacher's authority that utilises rote-memorisation, punishment as a means of teaching through child centered pedagogy; there is no discussion of the historical role of teachers and various purposes it fulfilled or the way authority of teacher can evolve in the new role. There is a lack of discussion and translation of child-centered ideas through teacher training programmes, resulting in a creation of multiple meanings of child-centered ideas, its scope and meaning differs greatly among teachers across the country (Smail, 2014). Shifting meanings of child-centered ideas continue to be used by the state to promote its own ideology (Kumar, 2004); and the teacher continues to occupy a subordinate role in educational policy making while being held responsible for the implementation process.

Progressive education's goal of teachers as facilitators is limited in scope and cannot solve the complex network of problems created by neoliberalism, colonial structures, and socio-economic issues. Child-centered ideas based on child rights discourse are an attempt to overcome colonial authoritative structures and processes of education (e.g. corporal punishment) in the new educational policies, e.g. a constructivist education. However, the child-centered movement ends up propagating child rights, without considering the historical relationships between adults and children, society and its culture. Hence, in order to develop a workable idea of teacher's authority that blends with child-centered discourses, which are valuable to voice children's concerns in education, one needs to differentiate between various authorities that teachers have claim to and assess their legitimacy, rather than getting rid of all kinds of authority within education. Otherwise, child-centered ideas under neoliberalism unintentionally move the child to a position of a consumer. This only makes the child and the survival of networked communities around her more vulnerable.

## II. Neoliberalism and Teacher Authority

Neoliberalism is a term that relates to not just economic but also social and political relations in a society; the way they are all modified in a process to accomplish goals that serve the free flow of capital and expansion of markets. This makes it rather difficult to define neoliberalism. Stephen J. Ball in his book *Global Education Inc.* (2012) acknowledges this difficulty. He also mentions that neoliberalism's wide use has made it susceptible to losing all meaning. Instead, he cites Carvaliho and Rodrigues (2006, citing Wood, 1997) in Shamir (2008, p.3) to express his understanding of neoliberalism. Neoliberalism, he says:

“Is treated neither as a concrete economic doctrine nor as a definite set of political projects. Rather, I treat neoliberalism as a complex, often incoherent, unstable and even contradictory set of practices that are organised around a certain imagination of the “market” as a basis for “the universalization of market-based social relations, with the corresponding penetration in almost every single aspect of our lives of the discourse and/or practice of commodification, capital-accumulation and profit-making”.

Neoliberalism is thus a process that helps in the expansion of the private sector, increases attention towards individual rights over collective or community rights and decreases the authority and function of a welfare state. However, as Ball (2012, p.15) highlights, neoliberalism also works on public sector institutions, increases private–public partnerships and the state, as the state is important to neoliberalism for its own expansion and growth. The sections below highlight the process and expansion of neoliberal agenda within education.

### II.i. Changes in the Educational Processes

Since the World Conference on Education for All in 1990 held in Jomtien, Thailand, international aid agencies, as highlighted earlier, have penetrated the education system of India. The international flow of capital in the education sector of a developing country like India with its limited resources has resulted in greater influence of agents and actors on the international arena to influence educational policy within the country. Policy has become a place that is being

used to change the discourse of education for the benefit of the neoliberal agenda (Apple, 2006). This has become evident with debates around quality of education and school choice in the country between private and public schools. Research (Tooley et al., 2007) is often cited to showcase the better quality of education in private schools against public schools, without any discussion of the history of the country or the community the schools are located in (Sarangapani et al., 2010). Whereas stakeholders like teachers that carry out the process of education get little say in the policy making process, investment in teacher training lacks clarity and sufficient state funding. In fact, teachers through various measurements tools like performance indicators that include student results are held accountable and geared to perform specific educational purposes. This is because aims of education and processes are now more and more influenced by economic objectives of the country with little regard for domestic interests. This change is a result of the transformation of the state that now includes private players and protects their interests to meet its own welfare goals, e.g. introduction of the voucher system in private school to meet the demands of Right to Education, 2009 in Delhi, India. The welfare state then no longer enjoys the authority it did to uphold the constitutional aims in the country and is reduced to the role of vigilante and provider of financial resources without any say in the functioning of the education system. Civil society members then have to fight even harder to protect community interests in the face of internationalisation of education.

## II.ii. Effects of Neoliberalism on Social and Political, Aims and Relations

Education is just one area among others, where neoliberalism is expanding its scope. Education that under the welfare state was a public good used to uphold constitutional aims and objectives of equality and liberty in the country is now seen as a commodity to be bought and sold. Education is no longer seen as a collective social good but one that serves individual interests, a positional good (Jonathan, 1999). Although, the defence of individual freedom has a long history in liberal political thought, under neoliberalism this individual freedom is

disassociated from others in society, such that the freedom of others is seen as an outcome of a collection of each individual's freedom in society. This emphasis on individual freedom comes at a cost of cultural/ community rights. Communities of any kind – religious, ethnic or cultural – willing to protect and nurture practices based on mechanisms like trust, expertise, among others, e.g. teacher's professional communities, are being pushed to adopt elements of the market mechanism, thus changing the practices themselves. Historically, communities with their unique practices that are sometimes indigenous to the place for religious or cultural reasons have been granted group rights that confer group-differentiated individual rights (different from individual rights enjoyed by other citizens in a geographical region) to the members of the group to protect their unique practices that will help in their flourishing (Kymlicka, 1995), e.g. land rights of people living in the North-East states of India are protected by the state in India, such that no person who cannot claim to have been born in the region can own any land there. These rights are a result of the special recognition enjoyed by the group due to threat or concern towards the vulnerability of its way of living. Thus, individual rights of citizens in the state may not necessarily come in conflict with the rights enjoyed by special groups. However, in a market mechanism that propagates individual rights before those of communities, the community rights are seen as an obstruction to the growth of a neoliberal regime. This is achieved by showcasing the failure of the welfare state 1) through indicators that are measurable, e.g. student achievement and school choice, unlike indicators like social cohesion, diversity; 2) modifying the welfare state and reducing state investment in public institutions; and 3) providing access to private investors and services to increase individual choice, increase in costs, making goods a matter of individual rather than community choice.

The government failed in its objective to meet new demands after independence. Such as, providing quality education, use of technologies for educational purposes with critical analyses of these modern technologies. The state in the new neoliberal scenario is being forced (by private interests and the

market system), while in some cases is willingly withdrawing, from fulfilling its welfare responsibility (Mander, 2015). Education has become a marketable good with minimal state interference with larger scale consequences to the social and political rights of most vulnerable people in the country. Rising quality education costs and promotion of neoliberal state and market interests in the school curriculum and teaching, overshadow the needs of vulnerable communities (forming a large part of the population) in the country, leading to increased inequalities (Srivastava & Noronha, 2016). If a large section of the population fails to enjoy necessary freedoms, it will lead to social unrest that in turn will prove unhealthy for the economic growth of the country. Teachers in the interviews often mentioned lack of connection between teacher training courses and reality of the classroom that brought to the surface many issues that they were often unprepared for. These issues revolved around the economic or social conditions of students and families that the curriculum has little space to discuss. These issues, teachers mentioned, created barriers for them to carry out the process of education.

### II.iii. Rise of Private Education and the State

In the current context of India when public investment in state education is being decreased (Srivastava, 2014), leading to decline in quality of education, more and more people are opting for private education for their children, such that private low-budget and expensive for-profit schools in education are providing people of all classes access to educational opportunities for their children. This has opened large-scale debates about state vs. private for-profit quality school education not just in India but other countries as well, including the UK.

Market mechanisms which work on demand and supply factors within education have aggravated the already persistent socio-economic inequalities (Srivastava, 2014). This is because individuals from certain classes and castes within India who can afford to send their children to expensive private schools are opting for it while ignoring the increasingly dilapidated state education system, left for

children of poor households, often from the most vulnerable communities in India.

In the wake of this crisis, market-led private school education has become an immediate panacea against state education. The rise of private for-profit schools is a case in point. However, various studies (Chavan, Banerji, Wadhwa & Aiyar, 2013; *Annual Status of Education Report [ASER] (Rural) 2014*; Sarangapani, 2009) have shown that private for-profit schools still fail to meet expectations on curriculum, quality of teaching, and other measures. Hence, private education does not necessarily perform better than state education. Questions about teachers' authority remain unaddressed in the classroom and have led to new challenges about quality and the aims of education, as quality of education has come to be equated with private school education. In fact, private education has resulted in new breed of schools that cater to different communities, class and caste in India, perpetuating differences rather than negotiating differences. In developing countries like India, the arrival of large-scale private (budget as well as expensive) schools coupled with problems of teacher attitudes, illiteracy among adults, the unavailability of a culturally relevant curriculum and teacher expertise, have made education more instrumental, linking it to mere employment opportunities (Sarangapani, 2009).

The link between employment and education has created an unhealthy relationship of rooting economic problems in the shortcomings of the educational system, which needs reformulation, rather than making changes at the structural level of the national and global economy. Thus, education has become a site of struggle where questions about teacher authority for constructive pedagogical force in the classroom, the role of teachers as caregivers who may perceive ideas of education and educational process, contrary to popular demands, is incompatible with neoliberal ideals. Teachers' historical status and position within communities is now 'sacrificed to the dictates of an instrumental rationality largely defined through the optic of measurable utility' (Giroux, 2013, p.2) without any attention to the global exploitative economic system.

These various links have not only changed the landscape of education but also of all the other social institutions that have an effect on each other. The current eruptions in our social and political landscape, i.e. increasing cost of education, massive social inequalities and resultant degradation of standard of living, increase in regional and international conflicts/wars, are a result of the contradictions within and between the economy, state, family and education which are not being successfully mediated by existing ideological and structural arrangements at these various levels. An exemplar of this can be witnessed in the recent education policy changes in India, with the increasing emphasis on child-centered ideas.

Any change requires an effort to understand all these various elements and their relationship with each other. Thus the changes in education cannot be limited to the idea of choice and demands of people (as currently seen under neoliberalism) or just overcoming obsolete structures, as there is a dialectical relation between structural dynamics and human action, people's educational reform rhetoric and activity are both constituted by and constitutive of social structures (Giddens, 1979).

The questions of teacher authority in the complex Indian social structures found conceptual clarity within Philosophy of Education literature. Various kinds of teacher authority that emerged in the interviews, found their rationale and further understanding in the literature. In the light of this understanding the next section outline contributions as well as gaps in the literature that provided a framework for this research.

### **III. Authority in Philosophy of Education Literature and its Limitations**

In the previous section authority was examined in the socio-cultural background of India, whereas this section traces discussions about authority, within the theoretical literature of philosophy of education. This section also examines critical perspectives about authority in relation to autonomy, textbooks and the

importance of context in discussions of authority. This is followed by outlining gaps in the current literature on authority with aspects especially crucial to consider in the context of India.

Philosophy of education literature is rich with discussions from various disciplinary traditions. The reasons for these being: (1) Education throughout history has been a political topic closely connected with the formation of states. It has often been used as a tool for furthering the state ideology. In Gramsci's (1971) terms it is a hegemonic tool. As a result, changes in the status, role and power of the state have an effect on the larger society and inadvertently, education. (2) Philosophy of education has played a significant role in accepting perspectives from different disciplines, e.g. economics, history, sociology, and linguistics, among others (most recently neuroscience and cognitive science) under its umbrella. This to a large extent has also been possible because of the increasing influence of these disciplines in education/educational policy, e.g. neuroscience research has gained prominence in education in determining learning disabilities. (3) "It [philosophy of education] saw its task as dispelling the confusions and mystification engendered by careless thinking" (Blake et al., 2008, p.2). Taking into account the amalgamation of these thoughts, the writers mentioned below are ones who have examined the concept of authority through these different disciplines and have paved a way for its use in education.

Hannah Arendt's (1961a) essay "What is Authority?" within political philosophy literature, makes a distinction between authority and power before going on to explain what she means by authority. This distinction according to her is important and rests on the premise that, while authority requires consent and legitimacy from people on which authority is exercised, power has no such requirement, thus rendering it open to abuse. In fact, the use of power is a sign of loss of authority. Thus, power for her, falls under abusive practices. However, as is argued later, the relation between power and authority is not dichotomous. Arendt's distinction between authority and power may hold for political theory, but it is not very useful to the educational context. As is discussed later, people

in a position of authority like teachers need to have sufficient power to exercise their authority. Hence sufficient power is necessary to exercise authority.

For political thinkers examining theories of rights, state and subsequently governments such as Hobbes (*Leviathan*, 1651) and Max Weber (1958) political authority has long been a topic of interest. Weber mentioned three kinds of legitimate political authorities that rulers can use as a rationale to rule i.e. 1) Legal authority- based on a system of legal rules as applicable, 2) traditional authority- a system of inheritance, 3) charismatic authority- virtues, charisma of the leader motivates people to follow him and legitimate his rule. This description of authority figures is often used to highlight certain aspects of a teacher's authority in the classroom. In interview 6, the teacher clearly used his charisma to gain legitimacy among students. Questions about the purpose such an authority fulfils in the Indian context are discussed in the next chapter.

Weber also highlighted that these legitimate authorities come under question when faced with a political crisis. Given the political nature of education then, a crisis of political authority leads to the questioning of educational authority.

The question of authority in education has become pertinent in our times because of the breakdown of traditional political authority. Political authority in the west, made up of tradition, religion and culture, is undergoing a crisis because of the steady decline of tradition and religion based on Greek and Roman ideology, with the rise of totalitarian forms of government. Frank Furedi supported this view in his work *Authority: A Sociological History* (2013). For R. S. Peters (1973) the crisis in authority is associated with the downfall of adult authority accompanied by breakdown in traditional family structures. The fall of patriarchal forms of authority in society, accompanied by changes in family structure and advances in science and morality are some of the causes. The breakdown of traditional modes of authority has consequences, such that the prevalence of this authority in all areas including education is under question. In the Indian context, the project of nation building based on democratic ethos has prompted similar questions along with that of caste, religion and gender based

discrimination. This forces us as a society to find ways to deal with these problems.

The breaking down of traditional modes of political authority based on religion and tradition created a space for newer forms of political systems to emerge. The welfare democratic state was one such invention. However, the rise of neoliberalism that has made education into a commodity under a democratic state has raised questions about the idea of democracy as a viable political system. Thus, John White (2007) discusses authority in a democratic society and mentions that one of the purposes of education in a democratic society is to equip people for a flourishing life. Part of the aim is to become better qualified to make judgements. Some of the ideas about human flourishing are beyond individuals and are rather acquired with engagement in cultures. Thus, although personal autonomy is itself a value, the activities themselves are cultural products. This resonates with the value cultural practices should play in our attempt to locate democratic education in the changing contemporary Indian society. The discussion of teacher authority needs to be discussed with the democratic ideals accepted by Indian society as their authority affects that of the teacher engaged in an effort to train students to make qualified judgements.

This attempt is fraught with ambiguity around the question of authority. For Peters (1973), the current crisis of authority is as much a result of the changing nature of education, and the demands made on teachers and the authorities they are expected to be. He points to the larger socio-political system that education is a part of and the way it gets influenced by the changing nature of society. For others like Elyahu Rosenow (1993), the dispute is not so much about the authority of the teacher as the authority of the democratic state, with the status of the individual and that of the society. Thus, an attempt has been made in this research to locate educational authority of the teacher within the larger socio-political system of India to see the changing nature of education and its influence on teacher and other authorities.

This crisis of authority at the same time has one other consequence in the

enlightenment era, as Peters (1973) highlights, the requirement of causes and justification for individual authorities, threatening the survival of ancient structures of authority based on tradition and mutual trust. This is also the reason Guru-shishya relationship based on "older pedagogical traditions that are a part of the folklore and shared cultural inheritance of the community... have a strong moral-epistemological character" (Sarangapani, 2003) find it difficult to fit into the present education or system of knowledge, although they continue to find saction in social imagination. Thus questions like: Who should be involved in the process of education? How should processes of education be designed and for what kind of education? What kind of values should be taught to children? are not seen as given but debated, in the light of democratic values of our times. Factors such as age, knowledge and experience that gave a teacher her authority, in the current society, tend to be useless and are discarded.

On the other hand, it is this crisis of authority in education that provided impetus for various child-centered movements to emerge across the world that questioned the then existing structures of authority in education. Thus, the role and position of the teacher by some child-centered movements was suggested to be that of a facilitator: a role that differed from that of a traditional teacher, to encourage classroom discussion and broke away from the earlier lecture mode of teaching. Although this has been a welcome move, one of the other consequences of this shift in the teacher's position is to subvert the constructive use of teacher authority for children's development. Authority of the teacher seen from the narrow lens of bygone society is being ignored in current times and is associated with abuse of power ignoring progressive movements like critical pedagogy that have tried to provide alternative discourse on teacher authority, most notably Paulo Freire, who suggested the use of authentic authority, a kind of authority that is based on freedom.

Authority, he argues, is needed for organisation and can avoid conflict if it is based on delegation or sympathetic adherence (Freire, 1970). However, popular child-centered movements that are being promoted through policy documents (NCFSE-2000; NCF 2005) in India have adopted child-centered

ideas without any discourse on teacher authority, failing to account for multiple uses of teacher authority for constructive educational purposes, in the dynamic environment that stakeholders have to work in. As a result, while the teachers continue to employ forms of authority discussed in this research, policy documents are either silent or choose to focus on a narrow definition of authority in education.

Arendt in her essay “Crisis in Education” (1961b) blames the child-centered movement in part, for the breakdown of adult authority. She states that it is adults’ refusal to take responsibility for the child’s preparation into the adult world of work that has led to this “crisis”. She states that educational authority has an important role to play. She links authority in education to the public–private spheres and responsibility of adults towards the world, that they are part of. She mentions that children are born into the world. They are newcomers into the world, which existed before them and are part of the world that is yet to come. Education renews itself with the arrival of new human beings. Hence, the child is not complete but is always in a state of becoming. Human parents who have brought the child into the world have not just a responsibility towards the preservation of the child but also towards the world that existed before her. Hence, the two responsibilities may be in conflict with each other, such that the adult who daily goes into the public sphere of the world returns to the protection and concealment of the private life. This private life acts as a shield against the public life of the world, which is disregarding of life in the private sphere. It is the lack of this protective private sphere in modern societies, where a social sphere is added, bringing everything from the private to public life, that has resulted in deprivation of children's protective cover, that helps them to mature undisturbed. The school, a place where the child first was introduced to the world, is no longer so as it has become interposed between the private and the public sphere. It assumes to be the world although it is not. At this stage, adults (educators, teachers) again assume responsibility for the child. They initiate the child into the world unknown to her. They have the necessary qualification to instruct the child. However, this qualification is not what gives them authority

rather it is the responsibility towards the world. Thus Arendt (1961b, pp.9–10) states,

“In any case, however, the educators here stand in relation to the young as representatives of a world for which they must assume responsibility although they themselves did not make it, and even though they may, secretly or openly, wish it were other than it is. This responsibility is not arbitrarily imposed upon educators; it is implicit in the fact that the young are introduced by adults into a continuously changing world”.

In the interviews it was this sense of responsibility among teachers that Arendt (1961) highlights, which often motivated teachers to engage with students outside the school, through social media, in an attempt to guide them and introduce them to the changing world so that, they took recourse to traditional ideas of authority in India available to them as well as students, who legitimised the use of such authority, in social imagination but not so in the official education policy.

For John Carroll (1979), students in early childhood yearn (based on Freud’s ideas) for the parental protection and security at home and that of the teacher in the classroom. This need can take a destructive form in the case of totalitarian regimes. However, in a classroom such authority can be used for the development of the child by continuing the experience of family authority. However, Richard Sennett (1980) extends this discussion to argue that it is not just children but also adults who feel the need for authority, as seen in work places. This is because authority helps in organising and channelling the purpose towards successful implementation of tasks. As this research does not explore the psychoanalysis literature on authority, it will be difficult to evaluate and find support from those arguments for the current project. Nonetheless, it is useful to mention the existence of this literature for further exploration and depth.

The discussion so far is helpful to understand the importance of adult authority, in terms of the continuing need for and role of adults in the life of a child trying to adjust into the world. This, however, still leaves the epistemological question

about the grounds for authority unanswered, i.e. adults may be seen as authorities, responsible for the education of children; having said that, what do adults, especially teachers, offer in the process of education that makes them authority figures for students? Why should students accept their authority?

Of the many acceptable forms of authority that are described in the literature, the most prominent one is epistemic authority. Jeremy Wanderer (2013) uses R. B. Friedman's (1989) description of authority as "in authority" and "an authority" which in turn is inspired by Oakeshott's theory of law (1978), to describe the role of a teacher of philosophy. In the case of "in authority" like that of a general in the army, 'the system of authority is logically prior to the person'. This means that the system gives legitimacy to the general to seek compliance from a soldier even if the command itself is unwise. By contrast, the teacher is "an authority" because she has expertise on the subject, which is independent from the system of authority. Elyahu Rosenow (1993), building on Dewey (1916), attributes the authority of the teacher to the position of the teacher and what she represents, i.e. one who enables the child to do what the child wants. William Kitchen (2014) goes further to explain that, teachers gain this authority from the teaching community as a trained expert during their training. However, for Wanderer, being "an authority" as a teacher and being believed also involves reasoned engagement between teachers and students, as G. E. M. Anscombe explains in her 1979 work on belief in a person. It also means that one is open to criticism and vulnerability. Nonetheless, how do teachers come to be "an authority"? What does this say about the process of learning and knowledge?

William Kitchen (2014) states that knowledge should be seen as a collective inheritance of experiences and judgement, contrary to the current rhetoric in education of change, skill-based and lifelong learning [education], which is an effort to disown our past practices and intellectual heritage without any critical engagement. While it is true that we need to examine past practices and experiences as they do have something useful to offer before we move on to adapt newer modes of learning, one should be flexible to change and unlike

William Kitchen, let go of archaic knowledge. Further, in the process of teaching, any child to develop critical thinking skills needs to have some prior knowledge to make judgements and thus initially, children have to accept the teacher's testimony. Another point Kitchen argues for is unquestioned compliance of students towards their teachers, based on the prevalence of tacit knowledge. Building on Polanyi (1967), Kitchen mentions that there are some traditions and knowledge that are tacit in nature and can be transmitted only by the living presence of the master. He argues there is no better candidate to initiate the young into this knowledge than the teacher and trust in teachers is not ill founded.

Kitchen's account of teacher authority raises several crucial questions on the nature of knowledge and learning in relation to teacher authority, engagement with which helps us examine the question of authority in some depth. Nonetheless, there are several inadequacies in his account that need mention.

- 1) William Kitchen does not explicitly state the subject matter of the teacher but the examples in his book are most often from mathematics. His arguments may be suitable for that subject but are difficult to accept for other subject areas like literature or social sciences that operate within a relative complex world, e.g. a child from a relatively vulnerable rural community in India finds herself in a urban school where the teacher or her classmates who are unaware of her environment will benefit in learning about her experiences.
- 2) While it is true that we all in our initial years accept the information and knowledge received from adults around us, what Kitchen and others do not differentiate between is the kinds of productive teacher authority required at different ages of a child depending on her needs and that of the society she is part of. Students may start with no foundational knowledge about a subject but as they find themselves within a system of knowledge they do not have to blindly accept the testimony of the teacher and neither is tacit knowledge necessarily acquired under conditions of subordination. R. T. Allen (1987) succinctly sums up the point that we as a society have a right to train students in our ways of life through the use of cognitive authorities whose authority we either take for

granted because we do not have enough knowledge on that topic or we are not trained to understand that body of knowledge or directive authorities like teachers who may teach us the process of learning. However, the various authorities should also teach students to reach their own conscience so that they become their own personal authorities and are able to carve a way for themselves in life making their own decisions.

It is the interplay of these various authorities, whether visible or invisible, political, social or educational, in an institution such as school through the teacher that is absent in the literature. This research tries to address and bring to surface some of these authorities in the Indian context and attempts to weave a meaningful discourse of authority in education to better understand its role in the process of education.

### III.i. Authority in Relation to Autonomy

The problematic relation of authority with individual autonomy has been discussed at some length within philosophy of education literature. This literature on autonomy draws on Kant's moral philosophy (Johnson, 2004) and John Stuart Mill's Utilitarian (Mill, 1993) tradition of liberal political thought. Autonomy in education is related to concerns about freedom and choice of various stakeholders who may find themselves in conflict with the exercise of authority.

The word "autonomy" comes from the Greek etymon 'autos', which means self-rule. This idea of self-rule within a framework of autonomy is explained by Kant, as an action by an individual within the bounds of law by the use of their own practical reason. It is also a rationally informed choice (Scheffler, 1967; Bailey, 1976; Hirst, 1990). For others like R. S. Peters (1973), confirming to the values of rationality gets us nowhere and we should rather vouch for authenticity which is less about full choices but rather about, what one can do in a situation that one finds oneself in. In addition to this, when making choices, we find ourselves caring about things that we hold necessary for our well-being, a mode referred

to as “unthinkability”. This condition limits our choices or gives meaning to our choices and is necessary for true autonomy and authenticity (Frankfurt, 1988), e.g. when buying bags at a shop, a person may limit one’s choice to bags made without leather. This is because buying leather comes into conflict with her love for animals. Thus, the idea of “unthinkability” poses a challenge to rational choice or makes it crucial for our rationality to consider these unthinkable facets of our lives. This highlights a crucial distinction between autonomy and authenticity based on voluntaristic and non-voluntaristic decisions, at the centre of which is the question of active will, ownership and responsibility, i.e. an autonomous agent is governed by herself and acts on her own accord while authenticity depends on substantial will, and action, that depends on a person’s immediate control. But authenticity, as well as autonomy has its criticisms. For brevity, it would be difficult to elaborate them here. In education, some of the forms of student autonomy, which were associated with progressive education, are still under debate with regard to their right place, e.g. autonomy for students with regard to curriculum and learning. The other thing to point out here is the means we apply to negotiate with factors or people blocking our autonomy, which is dependent as much on cultural factors as it is on individual personality.

If we take the above debate further in the context of developing countries like India, which are haunted by their colonial past and live in a multi-ethnic and religious society, and face the burden of economic and welfare development, the discussion about autonomy, as an educational aim, becomes more complicated. India adopted an industrial model of development after independence from the British Empire in 1947. Since then, subsequent governments have focused on economic development with little emphasis on cultural and socio-economic growth. This means that investment in education and health; housing and public transport has never been a priority. It followed the larger universal discourse of eradicating unemployment to overcome poverty (trickle-down effect), failing to invest in social services that contribute to reducing unemployment and the health of its citizens. Thus, although The Economist (“When Giants Slow Down; Emerging Economies”, 2013) projected

India to be one of the fast emerging BRICS countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa), India finds itself amid various economic, social and political problems. The social issues and structures in any country define the freedom that an individual can have, i.e. movement, speech and other individual freedoms.

Arti Sriprakash (2012) in “Pedagogies for Development” conceptualises the current education policy in India within a child-centered education framework and the difficulties in implementing such policies due to colonial structures and attitudes towards education. She highlights the low status of teachers and the lack of teachers’ autonomy in decision-making, which make any classroom change difficult to execute. Although NCF 2005, focuses on developing children’s autonomy by inculcating critical thinking and promoting a dialogic process of education, teachers’ own autonomy and freedom with their professional authority are at stake, which is another factor due to which these changes, as expected by the legislation, are far from being realised, as I discuss at some length in the next chapter.

This brings us to the discussion of autonomy of teachers and their voices in relation to their own position. In the interviews with teachers they highlighted the lack of autonomy they enjoyed within the education system. The dearth of educational material in school was highlighted by the English teacher in interview 4 that restricted her teaching practice and ultimately affected her already subordinated authority compared to teachers of others subjects.

The kind of teacher autonomy I am in support of is not unregulated and unrestrictive and neither are teachers completely bound by the current system, as teachers tend to implement or figure out alternatives in classrooms or other spaces, when faced with challenges, as is seen in the next chapter. However, for a few teachers to bring about a large-scale change needed in the current education system is difficult. For that purpose, we need to give teachers autonomy, to exercise their professional knowledge, when facing challenges and hear teachers’ voices and inculcate consideration for them and their

opinions. While freedom and autonomy are important aims of education, there is an absence/silence on teachers' own position within the educational system. Their voices are important to understand the politics, institutional networks and the impact of these networks on the lives of stakeholders in order to better conceive their position and generate a thorough analysis of the crisis of authority in education. The way contemporary politics influences the aims of education and the resultant authority of the teacher needs to be addressed. This requires critical examination of the intentions, purposes as well as dominant ideology of our times. This has an added advantage of understanding authority not just through a theoretical lens but also the day-to-day practices of educational institutions.

### III.ii. Teachers, Text and Authority

Textbook content is not neutral. The knowledge therein is related to the social, political and economic relations of that time. It also inhabits a system of truth and knowledge that is organised by a group of people. Whether it represents the views of the dominant culture or that of a culture that has evolved after a prolonged struggle by vulnerable groups to voice their culture, textbooks are seen as a tool for cultural transformation, in social institutions concerned with transmission of knowledge. Thus, textbook controversies are not just about the content; they are about who should control the curriculum, the common good in our society, where it should be heading (Apple, 1992). It is then important to reflect on the relation between texts and teachers within a theoretical framework for further impetus.

Charles Bingham (2008, p.18) while writing about educational authority as a university professor brings an added component of texts within this relationship and mentions that,

“Authority in education is thus not only a relation between people who use texts; it is also a relation between people who are in the process of becoming, themselves, textual. To partake in educational authority is to partake in authorship”.

This analysis of his own authority as a teacher is based on the works of Hans-Georg Gadamer and Jacques Derrida. While Gadamer holds the authority of the text above that of a person, Derrida sees the two, i.e. person and text, in an organic relationship. Moreover, Gadamer rejects the idea that anyone can claim authority; rather he describes individuals as being authoritarian: drawing on the institutional and hierarchal power of a system, and being authoritative: drawing upon superior knowledge and insight within a given cultural background. Thus a teacher should be authoritative. Derrida is used to supplement the use of text by a teaching authority to render it intelligible to the students (Bingham, 2008). Bingham's extension of authority from people to text has been a useful insight for this research.

Textbooks in India remain an important tool around which classroom teaching is organised and assessed. Krishna Kumar (1988) calls it the "Textbook Culture", where the teacher has no freedom with regard to curriculum content; resources other than the textbook are not available and even if they are, they are seldom used; examination is also textbook-based. Disha Nawani (2010, p.157) writes, "textbooks form an indispensable and much visible physical and symbolic manifestation of all that is legitimate, all that needs to be taught and learnt within the sacred portals of the classroom".

The reliance on textbooks in the Indian education system can be seen as a colonial legacy. The centralisation of education control by reducing the autonomy of the teacher and making them employees of the system, strict adherence to textbook content, and textbook-centered examination all resulted in creating a textbook culture. After independence, this culture has changed little. Textbooks underwent changes but did not do anything to weaken the culture of textbook education. In fact, they continue to be used by the state to reconstruct, mould, and reinterpret the past, and to change the definition of citizenship as in the case of the 2003 history revision debate<sup>27</sup> (Nair, 2009).

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<sup>27</sup> The then Bhartiya Janta Party government faced criticism in its effort to introduce Hindu deities or Vedic science in school curriculum as an attempt to "saffronise" the school curriculum.

Although there is increasing focus on child-centered education in education policy, the conditions for its prevalence and progress are absent (Kumar, 1986, 1988). This is because teachers continue to be in a subordinate position with little say in education policy or classroom organisation or curricular content. The increasing levels of bureaucratic tasks, degrading working conditions, with little time for the process of education has led to *intensification* (of teachers' working conditions). The result is that there is more reliance on experts who aid in getting the job done; and the quality of education is falling (Apple & Jungck, 1990).

Authority then as discussed is a multidimensional concept. It can be understood in the institutional structures, among stakeholders who form part of the system, as well as in relation to teaching and learning technologies like textbooks, techniques of assessment and devices, and tools like computers. Although the current research is exploring a certain dimension of an educational authority, i.e. teacher authority, it was ineffective to address this dimension without addressing the significance and influence of other authorities on teacher authority, as well as the influence of modern devices like smartphones and internet that are discussed in a later chapter.

Such a multidimensional idea of teacher authority has remained under-theorised within current literature. Translation, i.e. the process of translating the word 'authority' in Indian languages, has been one important element which posed a difficulty in conducting this research, but this initial difficulty later opened up the possibility of conceptualising a multidimensional idea of authority. While there are different ideas of educational and teacher authority expressed in the literature, hardly any conceptualise the possibility of multiple authorities working simultaneously, e.g. institutional authority, subject authority and epistemic authority working in tandem.

### III.iii. Teacher Authority and Context

While the discussion above hinted at theoretical gaps within the literature, there

are other issues that are important because of the geographical and cultural context of India. This context helps in opening up the topic to new dimensions, which adds nuances to the existing literature and suggestions for new ways to re-examine teacher authority within the UK and other countries.

India as a country has always been multicultural with elements of class, caste, gender, and ethnicity woven into the fabric. As a result, one's understanding has to be examined along with the social position one occupies in the social matrix, leading to the researcher's position as an insider/outsider within the community being researched. This consciousness is important to break away from the understanding and lens that one's position constructs, about other communities, different from that of the researcher. This leads to an important consequence, whereby one speaks or remains silent about the 'other' in relation to one's own social position. The absence of such a reflective process hampers our representation of the world around our socio-cultural milieu or us, with the effect on the process of knowledge construction.

Cultural and historical differences between India and other countries whose literature has been referred to here, especially the colonisation of India and remnants of this past within education, continue to pose problems in the process of education reform. Discussion of the status of the teacher, which takes into account her position within the indigenous systems and religious practices of a country like India, in comparison to her current position in Government schools, is absent in the philosophy of education literature. These accounts may help us understand current teacher authority, the historical progression of teacher's current position, in addition to the gaps in the current accounts.

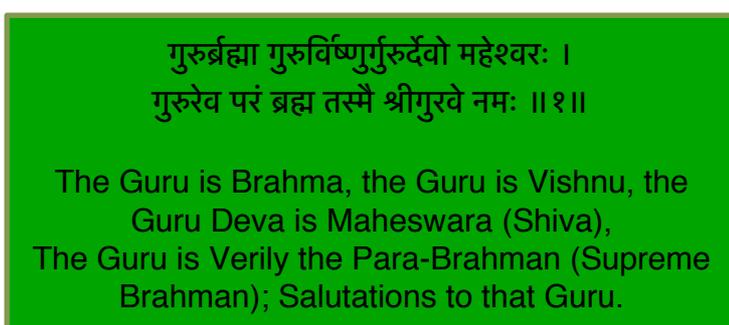
These limitations further pave the way for conceptualising teacher authority within the Indian reality. This will go a long way towards addressing the gaps in the literature while also building on the insights provided by the philosophy of education literature.

## IV. The Idea of Guru in Indian Society

Questions such as, what was the historical role of a teacher in Indian society? How was the teacher perceived in relation to religious practices? Does the historical role of a teacher have any relevance in contemporary Indian society? -are discussed in the following sections.

### IV.i. Teacher, Knowledge and Religion

Teachers in India have historically enjoyed a position of respect and reverence next only to God and Goddess. Figure no.1 (next page), will help understand this relation better. The *shloka* in Devanagari script in the image is often used even now as a prayer for teachers on Teacher's Day, 5th September,<sup>28</sup> to honour and evoke a sense of respect on the part of students for teachers, who are considered to be sources of knowledge and wisdom. The day is marked by celebrations and performances like dance and other activities by students. Schools often distribute local sweets among students.



**Figure. 1**  
A Shloka from *Gita* (A sacred Hindu religious text).

The shloka refers to *Guru*, i.e. teacher, as Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva – the three supreme gods (see image below) in Hindu Mythology. They are also known as the Trimurti<sup>29</sup>, i.e. three forms which represent creation, maintenance and destruction, respectively.

<sup>28</sup> Date associated with the birth of Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, India's second president and a renowned scholar and teacher.

<sup>29</sup> In Hindu religious mythology, Gods are arranged in a hierarchical order based on the powers they possess where these three Gods are considered the most powerful.

This Guru-shishya tradition existed in India since Vedic times. The teacher, a sage, renounced society and sought moksha (liberation). This tradition can be traced back to Bhakti movement where human beings could meet outside the caste/religion-based constraints prevalent in those times. The teacher aimed to help students find a sense of wholeness. The Vedic idea of teacher evolved in the Bhakti movement and was inherited by the pre-colonial teacher (Sarangapani, 2003).

In the post-colonial independent India, this indigenous system of education, which was transformed to the colonial system of education in British India, continues to exist. Padma Sarangapani (2014, p.2) writes,



“The idea of the “guru” and the need for legitimate learning to be mediated by the guru is a popular and well-elaborated theme in the indigenous knowledge systems and in popular folklore. Within Indian schools even today, we continue to find the idea of the guru as well as traditional modes of teaching and learning.”

**Figure 2.**

The Trimurti: From left to right: Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva. (Source: commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Trimurti.jpg)

### A Childhood Memory of Teacher’s Day

By the time I was 10, my parents’ income had grown substantially that they had started to use for sponsoring prizes for sports and other competitions at school. This was the source of all the attention that I received at school from teachers, sometimes not so much in my favour. We usually celebrate teacher’s day in school, a way to show gratitude to our teachers. Around this time, my mother had an ingenious idea of melting the wrath of my Math teacher by giving her a huge gift, i.e. a toaster. She didn’t realise the consequence of such an act. My class teacher who did not really get any gift from me acquired the wrath of my Math teacher instead and found ways to humiliate me in class, like shouting at me and making me feel guilty about things unrelated to me. This year-long ordeal ended when I moved to the next class and my class teacher changed.

As good teachers continue to hold a reverential position for students with its



**Figure 3.** Saraswati

(Source:<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Saraswati.jpg#filelinks>)

source in the religious practices, so do knowledge and its process. Knowledge mastered through memorisation and proper enunciation of Vedas was possible only with the mediation of a guru. This process required unquestionable acceptance of the authority of the guru. The inaccessibility of such knowledge by the individual herself, led to knowledge being considered divine. Thus the idea of knowledge as gained from gods themselves is prevalent in religions across India. This traditional teacher- student relationship finds no mention in the policy documents, whereas they continue to hold social imagination and shape

classroom processes. Other examples of a close relationship between religion and acquisition of knowledge can be gauged by the presence of an idol of Goddess Saraswati (a goddess of knowledge, wisdom, music and arts) in school premises.

Poet Sujata Bhatt aptly describes it in ‘Different History’ from Brunizem (1988),

“Here, the gods roam freely, disguised as snakes or monkeys;  
every tree is sacred and it is a sin to be rude to a book.  
It is a sin to shove a book aside with your foot,  
a sin to slam books down hard on a table,  
a sin to toss one carelessly across the room.

You must learn how to turn the pages gently without disturbing Sarasvati,  
without offending the tree from whose wood the paper was made”

#### IV.ii. The Constitution on Religion in School

Although the Constitution of India (Article 28 of the Indian Constitution, 1949) promotes no official religion and is secular (42<sup>nd</sup> amendment, 1976, with religious rights for all communities to practise and promote their religion) in

nature, and mentions that there should be no religious instruction in its Government schools across the country, it is silent on the prevalence and use of such religious symbols in schools (*The Constitution of India*, 2015). The common reason offered is that, if a symbol (including idols) is not used for instruction in schools then it does not violate any constitutional law. In an interview with a teacher when I raised the question of the Saraswati idol in his school, he said:

*“This... there are some symbols which are bent towards the majority. But it depends on the authority of administration and teachers if they make children feel it or not. This is completely dependent on us. On the matter of religion, my teaching begins with religion, if one has to take inspiration. That is equality because we know that the basis of all religions is same. So why not talk about it again and again. Secondly some students have nothing much to do with religion in school compared to that of his society (religious community he/she belongs to) because this is an institute, religion is such an institute on which his society works extra and puts in effort no matter to what religion he belongs to that will inculcate those ethics in him. Those ethics are taught. Hence I neglect it so that we don't have to discuss it to that level in spite of knowing that students know about it much more than I do. So it isn't possible to teach social science without religion.”* (Interview 9)

The constitution of India adopts a secular idea of citizenship where individuals develop a sense of tolerance and familiarity with other diverse religious traditions that exist in the country. Education then is a tool to help fulfill this ideal however, as seen teachers prefer to avoid conversations about religion in the classroom rather than engage in them. The teacher training and curriculum practices in India are not equipped to deal with topics of religious and sensitivity. Also, with education becoming a marketable good linked with employable skills, topics of social relevance often find scant attention.

#### IV.iii. Issues with the Concept of Guru

The Guru-shishya tradition that in the ancient pre-colonial era of India was based on the "the discourse and traditions of the everyday and familiar in the common language, which was the Bhakti way, these (in post-colonial times)

teachers gave importance to Brahminical rituals, texts and the Sanskrit language" (Sarangapani, 2003). Guru-shishya tradition has come to be used to promote an idea of Indianness seeped in the Hindu brahminical tradition rather than the Bhakti tradition. The values of caste based discrimination associated with brahminical rituals and discourse found their way into the inherited Guru-shishya tradition.

Thus religious sacredness associated with teaching and knowledge, teaching came to be a domain reserved for people of a certain caste, i.e. Brahmins, under the caste system in India. The caste system has been a system of social division, with religious groundings, that has divided people according to their professions and the resultant respect or dignity accorded to the profession in society. People in the Dalits/Harijans/Shudras category have historically been the worst off and continue to face discrimination in society, as under the caste system they were responsible for carrying out the "dirty" tasks, e.g. cleaning toilets, sweeping, cleaning animal carcasses, skinning animals for leather, to name a few.

Against this background, the idea of teacher as guru is much opposed by Dalit activists or people fighting to erode caste-based differences, as the idea of teacher as guru is entangled with Hindu religious ideas of caste-based stratification, associated with certain fixed ancestral attributes that are inherently discriminatory towards others who fail to satisfy them; and societal expectations of the nature and role of a guru. The acceptance of this relationship and the expectation of teachers to fulfil this role in contemporary society is to then perpetuate the caste-based discrimination in schools.

Nonetheless, the association of teacher as a guru figure continues to be seen as an ideal teacher and represents what teachers desire today (Smail, 2014). Teachers I interviewed in the course of this research echoed similar intentions that their goals of teaching and learning were often influenced by the historical purpose and objective of a guru, a position they found themselves in. As teachers described, students often shared their worries and teachers termed it

as one of their responsibilities to help children deal with their inner turmoil, that helped them build a relationship of trust, which teachers greatly valued.

## **V. Conclusion**

The discontent with the notion of teacher authority is a result of political crisis as we witnessed in the last few decades. The various social and educational movements attempted to overcome it failed to provide a robust conceptualisation of educational and more specifically teacher authority. Thus, where in India educational policy is silent or provides a limited view of ancient teacher-student relationships, the traditional idea of teacher as guru still prevails in the process of education, in symbols seen around schools as well as in the popular imagination of teachers and other members of society like parents. For example a good teacher (who develops a cordial and humane relationship with students and guides students in their decisions relating to family, career and other issues) in recent times is often seen or promoted to the position of a guru.

The Hindu religion's idea of the teacher is not the only one in existence. It coexists with other religious/tribal student-teacher relationships along with recent changes to teachers' position in current Indian society that are a result of neoliberalism, the growth of the private sector in education and civil society legislation. These phenomena are changing the traditional position of a "guru" by reconceptualising knowledge and the process of education. The result is that the teacher is either (1) being promoted as a facilitator as in the National Curriculum Framework (NCF 2005) with a constructivist idea of knowledge and little authority to teachers; wherein, the idea of teacher as facilitator is derived from child-centered movements popular in the west; or (2) a professional, like in other professions someone working in an office with a 9 am to 5 pm job, especially seen in certain private sector institutions. Here, the idea of knowledge is promoted on popular demands with little emphasis on the needs or aims of education.

As I highlight later in some detail, these different notions of the teacher are constantly exerting influence on each other, which is visible in teachers' day-to-day classroom expectations. In addition, recent policy changes are trying to overcome not just archaic practices but also colonial structures of education, e.g. corporal punishment, lack of classroom dialogue, examination-oriented education, but are finding it difficult to gain the trust of the teachers as they fail to acknowledge teachers' voices. Traditional student–teacher relationships no doubt need to undergo change given the current demands and needs of education, but certain aspects of the traditional student–teacher relationship have something crucial to offer as they provide rationale for adult authorities in the changing world, in the current neoliberal era of classroom realities that teachers are confronted with, and I argue that education policies reflect an obliviousness about these traditional ideas and practices.

The NCF 2005 framework, as I argue, provides reasonable and nuanced arguments for re-examination of current educational practices with a strong discourse on change. However, it does so without taking into account the relationships between stakeholders, religious and cultural practices along with the influence of neoliberal economic policies on the lives of people and subsequent changes.

## CHAPTER 3: What is Teachers' Authority?

Chapter Two examined educational authority with particular focus on teachers' authority in the theoretical domain. That examination opened new horizons, to include the effects of context on authority; teachers' agency in implementing their authority; and the introduction of educational technologies like textbooks on teacher authority. However, the way the mentioned factors, structure teachers' position and authority, is inseparable from the physical socio-cultural environment. It is the learning that individuals gather being situated<sup>30</sup> and negotiate in that environment, that influences the way concepts, e.g. teacher authority, develop and become relevant to that context. Hence, in order to conceive a relevant conceptualisation of teacher authority in India, an examination of social-cultural factors, with inputs from the theoretical frame was developed through interviews with teachers.

Two sets of interviews were conducted between December 2014 and April 2015 with teachers from state Government schools and central Government schools in the cities of Delhi, Mumbai and Hyderabad, India. These interviews not only challenged the singular notion of teacher authority but also opened a multifaceted idea of teacher authority, which works in tandem with other authorities within the educational system. Thus, the discussion below is about discourses rather than 'a' discourse of teacher authority in the teachers' own voices. While there are kinds of authorities that teachers thought themselves to be, there are other kinds of authorities, which were apparent in their actions as narrated in the various incidents in school. These discourses bring together various historical practices, ideological structures and legislative reforms spread across different time spans and social classes. Each discourse that works within a certain power structure, attempts to homogenise an idea of teacher

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<sup>30</sup> Situated Cognition is a new emerging field in cognitive science attempting to explicate cognition by accounting for the role of situatedness which is associated with embodiment, embedment, enaction and extendeness in cognitive science. Thus viewing situated cognition as cognitive extension of mind into brain, body and the world (Lu, 2012).

authority. Some of these discourses are more forceful than others. However, the space for multiple voices to exist in Indian democracy has made it possible for these discourses to co-exist. In this light, teachers in different situations during interviews resisted the attempts by educational policies to crystallise a particular kind of teacher authority, as it is unproductive.

The discussion highlights various kinds of teacher authority that exist within the school premises and even outside it, in teachers' actions and voices, as an interpretation of their own position in the education system. Some of these authorities include archaic structures as well, which teachers tend to associate with discipline. The discussion details the reasons for the existence and association of these archaic forms of authorities in teachers' practices and fragmentary attempts to overcome them by policy makers.

## **I. Teachers' Authority in Teachers' Voices and Actions**

There are, as will be highlighted in the sections below, various kinds of authorities at work in an educational institution like school. These authorities greatly influence teacher's authority in her process of education.

### **I.i. Kinds of Teacher Authority in Teachers' Voices**

#### **I.i.i Knowledge/Epistemic Authority**

When asked "What do you think 'Authority' means to you?<sup>31</sup>", some teachers highlighted knowledge of their subject as an important factor for gaining legitimacy among students and becoming "an authority". In Jeremy Wanderer's (2013) words, this kind of authority differs from the systemic authority of the teacher, i.e. being *in* authority. The process of becoming an authority highlights the difference between teachers' epistemic authority and the institutional authority that the school as an institution provides them. The institutional authority of teachers, bestowed upon them by the institution, may not be

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<sup>31</sup> See Appendix 2 for questionnaire.

sufficient for classroom purposes. As William Kitchen (2014) highlights, for the purpose of knowledge creation, students need to accept teachers as epistemic authorities. Whereas for Kitchen, teachers' authority is ultimate and unquestioning, I believe that even if we consider knowledge as a process of transaction between students and teachers in line with the National Curriculum Framework 2005, although the epistemic authority of the teacher is important, it can be questioned. This authority is based on students granting teachers that authority to teach:

*“see teacher... authority means generally that teacher is in speaking side and students are generally in the listening side. So that word (authority) itself means that teacher should teach authoritatively because when he has command over his subject, when he is having command over his students he will speak or teach like an authority. And children have to receive that authority. See when they will receive that authority? When they feel that teacher is doing something for their betterment. Then they will receive that authority. And when the children decide whatever he is teaching, whatever he is speaking is not for our own betterment, they will not listen for a long time. They will reject. Either directly or indirectly they will reject. I feel. Authority they will reject means- so there is no proper relationship between teacher and student.”* (Interview 5)

The teacher in the interview extract highlights the importance of legitimacy in classroom teaching, absence of which points to a detrimental student–teacher relationship. At the same time, he points to a certain traditional teaching method in classrooms of India, which usually takes place, i.e. *“teacher is in speaking side and students are generally in the listening side.”* Emphasis on child-centered ideas in Indian education system has brought about a change in the discourse of teaching, however this is still at a nascent stage where certain archaic teaching methods continue to influence teachers in their expectations of classroom processes.

The teacher understands the importance of legitimacy to become “an epistemic authority” among the students; but her expectations of students' behaviour are derived from the historical idea that teachers are repositories of knowledge and

children are to have that knowledge imparted to them. In addition, this expectation is also motivated by the cultural idea of respect that is based on bodily performance and differentiates the teacher from her students. Some of these factors are discussed below.

Thus, for the teacher, legitimacy from students is based on an act of bodily performance, that helps her understand that she has gained legitimacy, i.e. unspoken attentiveness which is reflected in the way students treat or show their respect towards teachers, expressed through their bodies and silence, e.g. sitting upright, without being distracted, so as to listen with keen interest, following the established norms of the classroom without much resistance.

It is true that even today one of the methods of learning about a topic we know little about is listening to lectures while the teacher engages students on a topic, e.g. Newton's laws of motion, Shakespeare's writing style. However, this method may not always be suitable for all age groups and convenient for all learners. It is when expecting students to remain silent becomes the norm, that, it becomes a problem. Recent curriculum (National Curriculum Framework, 2005) changes are trying to move away from such methods of teaching in school classrooms that hinder co-construction of knowledge and promote dialogic teaching.

#### I.i.ii. Authority by Difference

Age continues to be a characteristic that differentiates children from adults. As Arendt (1961b) points out, adults, especially teachers have the responsibility to initiate the child into the world unknown to her. Even international child protection agencies like UNICEF (e.g. *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, 1989) continue to propagate the role of state agencies and adults, like parents and educators, in safeguarding children's interests. Thus, as a society adults continue to hold a certain authority in protecting and safeguarding children. In the interviews, teachers continued to talk about problems faced by them in schools, e.g. use of cell phones by students in class, formation of religious

groups; as societal problems, the responsibility of resolving them, lies with adults.

*“E: Do you think our education is doing that? What is your role in helping them be independent, think maturely and other things?”*

*T: Actually, maturity only comes with passage of time. When they grow older, maturity comes. It does come and the thing is as far as our role is concerned, I think we do guide them in every sense.”* (Interview 1)

It is well known that most students who come to Government schools in India are from a low- economic and social background (SC/ST/OBCs)<sup>32</sup> (*Education for All: Towards Quality with Equity India*, 2015) compared to that of the teachers. As a result, teachers often look down upon students and their behaviour, which they see as contradicting their middle class values. The perceptions and expectations of teachers from the said students are often lower, when compared to students from other economic backgrounds.

*“T: Now the children in government school they are not ready to listen properly. They are undisciplined. They are not working [doing?] their homework because they think we will get pass.”* (Interview 6)

In addition, teachers’ performance, which is measured in relation to students’ performance in examinations, can contribute to teachers’ lower expectation of students, a consequence of an exam-oriented education system. Thus, it is possible that teachers assume a class-based authority in the moral- and subject-based education of these students.

It is true that people with comparatively fewer economic resources have fewer career opportunities compared to, other privileged students, who are able to enrich their learning experience by accessing facilities outside formal

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<sup>32</sup> Schedule Caste (SC), Schedule Tribe (ST) and Other Backward Classes (OBCs) are constitutionally recognised minority groups who continue to experience religious, caste-based, economic and other discrimination in the country. Thus, in order to protect their rights, the Constitution of India has allowed them special rights like reservation in government jobs, educational institutions, to name a few.

educational processes. In most Government schools, which are accessed by students from disadvantaged economic backgrounds, teachers tend to organise expectations for students based on the resources and opportunities available to them. Thus, poverty (a systemic problem) has become a standard through which all future events, that affect students, are subsequently judged and guided by teachers. However, teachers' expectations in some cases are also motivated by empathy towards students' socio-economic circumstances, hand-to-mouth existence and thus the need to have achievable goals that do not create unnecessary pressure. They recognise the emotional and other hardships that students tend to face in their environment and play a very important role of protecting students from anti-social practices like drugs, gambling, helping to strike a balance between work and study.

*“Our aim and objective is to change the society, to change the children which are just in our hand. These they come from the lower groups, poor families whose mothers are working in the houses, whose fathers are working in the houses. They belong to the lowest income group but the children, the majority of them are away from their right path. They indulge in so many intoxications. They utilize cheroots, smoking material, chewing of tobacco and all this type of intoxicating substances... Hence our aim and objective because they are in our hands we can serve them in this particular manner... This is only the best job on this earth if I say because the future, the career, everything is in your hand. You can shape it, you can change it, you can save the valuable life of a child...” (Interview 6)*

It is essential to emphasise that difference in class, between students who come from lower economic backgrounds and teachers from the middle class, often creates negative consequences. In addition, these teachers are unable to empathise with students' lived experiences, impose their own values on them and have lower expectations (NCF 2005). Thus, teachers end up enforcing a class-based authority. Nonetheless, along with these negative factors, that new educational policies are working to overcome, there are empathetic exchanges (as seen in the interviews) between teachers and students, where teachers help students deal with social and familial issues or issues raised by new

technologies, that are common to students across all classes, exercising a kind of moral authority.

### I.i.iii. Gendered Authority

The gender inequality between men and women is very wide in India. Practices such as female infanticide, domestic violence against women, and dowry deaths are prevalent in urban as well as other parts of India (Kacker et al., 2007). The participation of women in employment and decision-making remains lower than that of men, in spite of economic growth in the country. This is more telling in the sex ratio, which is at 943 females to 1000 males. However, this is even lower in some parts of the country ("Successes", n.d). This inequality is reflected in the atmosphere of school as well, which affects the position and authority of a female teacher in the classroom, as is highlighted in the dialogue below. The teacher attributes her lack of authority to her gender, highlighting the authority a man in her position exudes.

*E: What do you understand by the word authority?*

*T: I don't yield any authority in the class. It's the students who are yielding the authority these days...*

*E: [laughs]*

*T: Really. Like until you are a very strict teacher, children won't listen to you and the second thing I feel that a female teacher that too is young, the students don't take them seriously." (Interview 4)*

Another example of gendered authority can be seen in the appointment of a teacher in charge of discipline in schools, who is most often a male teacher. As described below, the Physical Training teacher<sup>33</sup> is often called upon to discipline the child. The teacher below who faced a problem with a student

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<sup>33</sup> Physical Education/Training Teacher is a teacher who is responsible to schedule and organise sports for each class in school. However, often they are also entrusted with maintaining discipline on school premises. Most often men are selected for this position, who are called on to discipline particularly difficult children (resist authority, trouble the teachers).

describes the ways she dealt with it, with the help of a teacher who teaches Physical Education.

*“Now when I got to know it was he, I caught him up and talked to him. Once I talked to him, second time now I talked to the P.T. (Physical Training) teacher. He is the discipline in charge (head of discipline). He said ok, I’ll talk to him. He talked to him.” (Interview 1)*

#### I.i.iv. Charismatic Authority

There are other teachers who are able to have a positive impact on students and motivate them by being charismatic. Max Weber (1968, p.216) defined charismatic authority as “resting on devotion to the exceptional sanctity, heroism or exemplary character of an individual person, and of the normative patterns or order revealed or ordained by him”. The following teacher showcases some of these traits and the effect it has on students:

*“The teacher...he must have a proper knowledge about the topic he is going to teach. If he doesn’t have the authority nobody is going to listen... When you are teaching in the classroom you are giving something to the students... I have compelled them to sit, not compelled them I must say, but they are sitting on their own continuously for two hours if I am delivering the best for them... Even I can control the whole school I say sometimes... Can conduct any exam at any time. So it is the impact of your knowledge, of your personality that counts very much... If you are the best teacher, if you are imparting, giving the best subject matter to them, they would welcome you. They would worship you. They would salute you. They would touch your feet everywhere, anywhere and if you are not doing anything they would not respect you.” (Interview 6)*

This teacher has won several state and national level teacher awards. I was able to stay at his house for two days, where I witnessed his relationship with his family and colleagues in schools. This helped to understand his socio-cultural background, and his life outside the school, which has a major influence on his teaching and moral authority in the classroom, as described below.

### Staying in the House of a Charismatic Teacher

He came to Delhi from a small village in UP (Uttar Pradesh), charmed by the dreams and opportunities of the big city. He struggled his way up to become a teacher at a Government school and is now the vice-principal of the school, which he is immensely proud of. At the same time he mentioned how he always wanted to be a teacher and is devoted to this profession, unlike most teachers these days for whom teaching is the last choice. The problem is, he said, that the people who should be in teaching are not in it, while all the others are.

He bought the house I was staying in, last year. His wife mentioned how she feared living in a rented house earlier for so long but was always motivated by the teacher. She herself is an art teacher in a nearby school. The house had two small bedrooms, a drawing room and a terrace upstairs where the teacher had a small garden, which he tends over the weekends. He enjoys this activity immensely. While speaking to him he did not shy away from talking about his wife who was a big support for him. He mentioned, *“Because I am very happy in my family life. I don’t have any problems in the family. My wife provides me each and every thing at the right time. I do not have any problem for my children, I am free from them in every aspect. That’s why I am very happy in devoting myself to others in the field of education.”*

He introduced me to other teachers in his school who I was able to interview in his office while he sat there doing his administrative work. I was worried whether his presence might influence the responses of the other teachers. But to my surprise they were very open and detailed in their responses, and openly criticised the education system, using all sort of tones, which might be unheard of in any other school. This only suggested his personal and strong relationship with his teachers who did not see him as a threat to their freedom of speech, which was very commendable.

While talking about authority, the teacher highlighted that knowledge of the subject is important, as it is knowledge which gives teachers authority, but at the same time he mentioned that, it is he, more than other teachers who is able to capture students’ attention. He further elaborated the use of certain personality traits along with the knowledge of the topic that sets him apart from other teachers in the school. Thus, this highlights the dual relationship between knowledge and personality traits, as in the case of this charismatic teacher.

The authority he thus gains, leads to a sense of respect in the eyes of students, either in the form of attentiveness in classroom or him being revered as a divine entity, which has its roots in the traditional student–teacher relationship in India. Thus, although authority can be gained through the use of multiple factors, it is the consequences, i.e. the respect from students that determines the desirability and productiveness of such an authority. This is because the favourability certain subjects enjoy among students compared to others.

#### I.i.v. Subject Authority

The question of teacher authority is not unrelated to the subject she is teaching. This is especially true in the current neoliberal system, as discussed in the previous chapter, where certain subjects are valued over others. Historically, certain subjects at certain times tended to enjoy a prestigious position over others, e.g. Latin and Greek, were valued in the eighteenth century compared to Science and Math in recent times. One of the main reasons for this is the relative social position and employment opportunities linked with the knowledge of some subjects. This authority enjoyed by certain subjects has a direct effect on the authority of teachers of those particular subjects.

*T: “[student mentioned] and then English is such an easy subject even if you won’t teach we can prepare at home and get good marks.”*  
(Interview 4)

While all subjects are equally important for a child’s overall development, certain subjects in the present neoliberal examination-oriented education system enjoy more authority over the others, e.g. Science and Math over Social Sciences. Firstly (1) Science and Math are relatively abstract, compared to English and Social Sciences, which require not just learning the new language of these subjects but also application of concepts that students may not have earlier come across. (2) Along with the emphasis given to these subjects by parents and society in India and around the world, with the relative difficulty of these subjects, students tend to spend more time studying these subjects compared to other subjects. What is the effect of such discrimination on the

teachers, teaching these subjects? How are they perceived within in a school system in relation to teachers of other subjects? Some of these pertinent questions are absent in the literature concerning teacher authority. The teacher below voices the effects of subject-based discrimination in her experience as an English language teacher, in the lack of attention/seriousness on the part of the students that is fuelled by the social context.

*“T: ... and then the students are also, no... don’t pay attention. Like I worked by now for four to five years. I feel these students they just think that English is something very easy and they can manage even if they study on the last day. Whatever you do they will not study throughout the year. They will pay more attention to Physics, Chemistry, Math, and English is lacking behind. That interest we have to build up.*

*E: hmm. Do you... you think you are able to in some way...*

*T: No... I think I am really... you know weak there.*

*E: Probably you are underestimating yourself?*

*T: No, no, it’s not like that. Like I go to the class well prepared, I teach them, I think I teach them well.*

*E: Of course*

*T: aa... and I give them assignments, they never do it. Ok. Twice or thrice I spent money from my own pocket and gave them copies. I asked them to work at home and bring the answers. They weren’t the least interested.” (Interview 4)*

In addition, teacher's efforts to bring back student attention to the subject are met by hurdles, such as, insufficient school resources forcing her to spend money from her own pocket. A situation, common in many government schools across India.

## I.ii. Authority in Performance

There were other forms of authority that teachers did not highlight in their words

but that were visible in the various incidents they described within the school premises and in the interaction with various stakeholders.

In the dialogue below, the teacher describes the personal problems that students share with him.

*“You look at my class and my interaction with it. I won’t talk about others. I will speak about myself. Children tell me about these things, if they have made a mistake. I will handle it accordingly myself. I can’t let this go to the principal or their family. I give him my personal decision about it. They happen to do things which are wrong, which are beyond their age.” (Interview 7)*

This, he thinks, is possible because of the relationship he shares with his students as he can relate to their age and perform the duty of a moral guide. Thus, he seems to describe his authority in the words of Bingham (2008) as relational. The teacher is able to teach students in the classroom because of the respect he has developed among them through care, helping them resolve issues, and shielding them from other authorities in the school. It is this relationship of the teacher with his students that gives him the authority in the classroom over them because they give him the legitimacy to. As Bingham (2008, pp.6–7) mentions, “Authority gets enacted in circuits where each participant has a role to play, where authority is not simply a monological enactment, where it takes the participation of at least two people for authority to gain purchase. It works as a circuit instead of working unidirectionally or monologically”.

In another dialogue (next page), the teacher described the various sources of knowledge available to children, i.e. the after-school tuition teacher, textbooks, school-teacher. In such a scenario, confusion with regard to who holds ultimate authority on a subject matter becomes obvious. When asked how the teacher would deal with such a situation, she mentioned that the other authorities should be seen as assisting in the process of learning, whereas the written material provided by the Department of Education should be seen as the ultimate authority to settle any debate about the acceptance or appropriateness of

content in education. This is because the department holds the authority to provide marks in the examination. This signifies the continuing importance and authority given to written texts and examinations in the Indian education system rather than knowledge and learning.

*“E: Ok. There are two teachers, whom do they listen to?”*

*T: Yeah. That’s what the problem is with the students. People think, that tutor, we people are paying them and how could they tell us wrong things? Many times it does happen that if they are helping them, there is some letter and the format is, I have told them, you are not to put any commas or full stop over here, you have to leave one line over here, after a salutation you are not to put any comma. I tell them all the rules. When they get the help from their tutors and they get the body of the letter written over there then they use all those punctuation marks and when I ask them? No, our bhaiyya (brother) said, our teacher said. This is the main thing. Then I get to know your tutors are not updated. [Laughs]*

*E: [Laughs]*

*T: So it’s ok. I have to tell them that it’s ok if they are not updated, they have tried to help you out but you should at least follow those rules that I am telling you because it is there in your support material also. Students are getting support material for English teaching from the department.” (Interview 1)*

The teacher also hints vaguely at the important link between the exchange of money and the receipt of services to suggest the authority and worth such an exchange creates among the participants. This point is explored further as it has links with the growing private education sector in the country. This has resulted in a parallel institutional (private sector) authority to the state education system, with the result that the two systems influence each other. The rising demand for the private sector schools because of their accessibility, comfort for the parents to interact with teachers, compared to Government schools, where the state investment in education has decreased, has resulted in the growth of private for-profit schools in the country. The result is that private for-profit schools are often used as a measure to suggest any improvement in the quality

of education and teaching practices in Government schools, although the quality of education may not be necessarily better in private, for- or non-profit schools. In such a climate, the meaning and aims of education tend to become limited with the suggested comparisons between these two parallel institutions.

How is one to function in an environment with multiple sources? Is there an authority that subsumes all the others? What is then the role of other authorities? The teacher in the extract below provides a useful way to resolve this conflict.

*“ahh... no actually it was not around my class... in my period actually their parents came. Those children already had a fight two to three periods ago and then their parents turned up. Then I got to know about the situation what had happened. After that I... it was like every time I used to tell them that it hardly matters which religion you are, belong to or what caste you belong to. You should not behave like this. In fact, I also called up their parents after that in spite of being a class teacher of some other class, I called their parents that you should not do like this with the students because if you initiate these kind of values in them then what will the children do then? After growing up also the same type of thinking will be there in their mind. So every now and then we have to tell them and we do. Now it depends on them that how much do they... ehh...”* (Interview 1)

A class teacher is usually responsible for resolving any issues that might arise between students in her class. However, the teacher points at a situation where the class teacher was absent and she took it upon herself as an institutional authority to resolve the issue by calling on the authority of other stakeholders, such as the parents, in the case described below. The use of other authorities was often seen in interactions with teachers, when teachers found that an incident required such an intervention, especially one where support from adults both at school and home was felt necessary. This highlights the degrees of authorities present in a child's life that are responsible for her development. They form a network of authorities, where the different authorities work in collaboration with each other for student's education.

## II. Lack of Authority – a Result of the Absence of Fear

While describing what authority means for them, teachers also highlighted a lack of authority due to the absence of fear among students. The kind of authority teachers reminisced was from their own childhood. Teachers they came across in their youth, respected, feared and learnt from. This was the kind of authority based on Guru-shishya tradition where teachers enjoyed respect because of their legal-rational status, who had the right to nurture students' moral character and enjoyed reverence and respect within the community. In the colonial era corporal punishment, examination system and other tools were systematically used to mould student behaviour. This instilled fear of institutions such as the school, teachers and their authority and other stakeholders associated with it.

In the present context, policy changes such as, the 'No Detention policy'<sup>34</sup> under the Right to Education and the 2005 legislation against corporal punishment, has made physical and emotional abuse of any kind illegal, and the introduction of CCE[E]<sup>35</sup> (Continuous Comprehensive Evaluation [Examination]) emphasis on children's progress in scholastic and non-scholastic areas. Thus, reducing the institutional tools of fear, with critical discourse on abusive forms of teacher authority made available in colonial era. While the legislation is a welcome change, lack of alternative teaching or learning technologies has made it difficult to replace archaic cultural practices, like corporal punishment. This has led to a sense of powerlessness among teachers. In fact, teachers' sense of lack of authority, due to the absence of fear, can on the contrary, be perceived as their

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<sup>34</sup> 'No detention policy' is a clause under Right to Education (RTE) Act of 2009 which makes it illegal for schools to detain or expel students until class 8 (UK Year 9).

<sup>35</sup> Continuous Comprehensive Evaluation [Examination] (CCE[E]) is a year-long system of evaluation which assesses students on scholastic and non-scholastic areas. The tests under this system are designed and assessed by teachers in school and are unlike the traditional central examination system in education. More details about this assessment are discussed in the next chapter on education and technology.

fear of the freedom that students might enjoy, as teachers are unprepared to channel this freedom for productive educational purposes.

*“I don’t yield any authority in the class. It’s the students who are yielding the authority these days... I think in India the education system means getting good marks, report card and if we give up that also then the whole fear is gone. Then also we are unable to manage the students. So both ways it’s a failure.” (Interview 4)*

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (2006, p.6) defines

“Corporal” or “physical” punishment as any punishment in which physical force is used and intended to cause some degree of pain or discomfort, however light. Most involves hitting (“smacking”, “slapping”, “spanking”) children, with the hand or with an implement - a whip, stick, belt, shoe, wooden spoon, etc. But it can also involve, for example, kicking, shaking or throwing children, scratching, pinching, biting, pulling hair or boxing ears, forcing children to stay in uncomfortable positions, burning, scalding or forced ingestion (for example, washing children’s mouths out with soap or forcing them to swallow hot spices). In the view of the Committee, corporal punishment is invariably degrading. In addition, there are other non-physical forms of punishment that are also cruel and degrading and thus incompatible with the Convention. These include, for example, punishment which belittles, humiliates, denigrates, scapegoats, threatens, scares or ridicules the child”.

The Committee also highlighted that

“Corporal punishment and other cruel or degrading forms of punishment of children take place in many settings, including within the home and family, in all forms of alternative care, schools and other educational institutions and justice systems - both as a sentence of the courts and as a punishment within penal and other institutions - in situations of child labour, and in the community.” (UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, 2006, p.7).

Corporal punishment has a long history of existence in India. Almost every child growing up in India has memories of being hit by her parents or teachers at home or school, no matter the class, caste or gender. This is also one of the reasons (others involve poor teaching, child labour, migration, early marriage

and household chores in the case of girls, to name a few) for poor attendance and dropout rates in Government schools. The Ministry of Women and Child Development, India, verifies this in a study on child abuse (Kacker et al., 2007, p.vi), which covered 13 states with a sample size of 12,447 children, 2,324 young adults and 2,449 stakeholders. It reports:

- “1. Two out of every three children were physically abused.
2. Out of 69% of children physically abused in 13 sample states, 54.68% were boys.
3. Over 50% of children in all the 13 sample states were being subjected to one or the other form of physical abuse.
4. Out of those children physically abused in family situations, 88.6% were physically abused by parents.
5. 65% of school going children reported facing corporal punishment i.e. two out of three children were victims of corporal punishment.
6. 62% of the corporal punishment was in government and municipal schools,” (Kacker et al., 2007, p.vi)

Thus teachers’ use of corporal punishment is symptomatic of a larger issue of violence against children, and at the same time it hints at the inferior status of children in India. Information (in the box) compiled by the Ministry of Women and Child Development (Kacker et al., 2007, p.7) helps put this in perspective.

#### **STATUS OF INDIA'S CHILDREN**

##### **Child Survival and Child Health**

2.5 million children die in India every year, accounting for one in five deaths in the world, with girls being 50% more likely to die. One out of 16 children die before they attain one year of age, and one out of 11 die before they attain five years of age. India accounts for 35% of the developing world's low birth weight babies and 40% of child malnutrition in developing countries, one of the highest levels in the world. Although India's neo-natal mortality rate declined in the 1990s from 69 per 1000 live births in 1980 to 53 per 1000 live births in 1990, it remained static, dropping only four points from 48 to 44 per 1000 live births between 1995 and 2000.

The 2001 Census data and other studies illustrate the terrible impact of sex selection in India over the last few decades.

The child sex ratio (0-6 years) declined from 945 girls to 1000 boys in 1991 to 927 in the 2001 Census. Around 80% of the total 577 districts in the country registered a decline in the child sex ratio between 1991 and 2001. About 35% of the districts registered child sex ratios below the national average of 927 females per 1000 males. In the 1991 Census, there was only one district with a sex ratio below 850, but in the 2001 Census, there were 49 such districts.

India has the second highest national total of persons living with HIV/AIDS after the Republic of South Africa. According to National Aids Control Organization (NACO), there were an estimated 0.55 lakh HIV infected 0-14 year old children in India in 2003. UNAIDS, however, puts this figure at 0.16 million children. According to the 2001 Census report, amongst all persons living with disabilities, 35.9% were children and young adults in the 0-19 age group. Three out of five children in the age group of 0-9 years have been reported to be visually impaired. Movement disability has the highest proportion (33.2%) in the age group of 10-19 years. This is largely true of mental disability also.

#### Child Development

The population of children aged 0-6 years is 16.4 crores as per the 2001 Census. According to a UNESCO report, however, of the total child population, 2.07 crores (6%) are infants below 1 year; 4.17 crores (12%) are toddlers in the age group 1-2 years; 7.73 crores (22.2%) are pre-schoolers in the age group 3-5 years. The report highlights that only 29% of pre-primary age children are enrolled in educational institutions in India. Services under the ICDS (Integrated Child Development Services) scheme covered only 3.41 crore children in the age group 0-6 years as in March 2004, which is around 22% of the total children in that age group. Supplementary nutrition too was being provided to 3.4 crore children, as against 16 crore children. Of these, 53% were reported to be under-nourished.

#### Child Protection

While on the one hand girls are being killed even before they are born, on the other hand children who are born and survive suffer from a number of violations. The world's highest number of working children is in India. To add to this, India has the world's largest number of sexually abused children, with a child below 16 years raped every 155th minute, a child below 10 every 13th hour and one in every 10 children sexually abused at any point of time.

The National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) reported 14,975 cases of various crimes against children in 2005. Most subtle forms of violence against children such as child marriage, economic exploitation, practices like the 'Devadasi' tradition of dedicating young girls to gods and goddesses,.

genital mutilation in some parts of the country are often rationalized on grounds of culture and tradition. Physical and psychological punishments take place in the name of disciplining children and are culturally accepted. Forced evictions, displacement due to development projects, war and conflict, communal riots, natural disasters - all of these take their own toll on children. Children also stand worst affected by HIV/AIDS. Even those who have remained within the protective, net stand at the risk of falling out of it.

#### Child Participation

Children in most sections of Indian society are traditionally and conventionally not consulted about matters and decisions affecting their lives. In the family and household, the neighbourhood and wider community, in school or in work place, and across the settings of social and cultural life, children's views are mostly not given much importance. If they do speak out, they are not normally heard. The imposition of restrictive norms is especially true for girl children. This limits children's access to information and to choice, and often to the possibility of seeking help outside their immediate circumstances.

Fear induced by corporal punishment<sup>36</sup> has long been used as a technique for child rearing (Kacker et al., 2007, p.43), teaching and learning in the Indian subcontinent. Traditionally in Indian society children are expected to speak with respect for adults and authority figures like parents and teachers, as they occupy the space of moral guides in a child's life. As described earlier, teachers historically occupied a space of reverence and respect as knowledge providers. Respect is shown or performed by the use of honorifics (suffix) in the language, e.g. Mahatma Gandhi, regarded as the father of the nation, was often referred to as "Mahatma-ji" in Hindi to show respect. Honorifics are also used to distinguish formal and informal relations. On the other hand, performative gestures like touching the feet of elders of the family, on important occasions like marriage, birth anniversary, or the ceremony for a newly bought house are common across India. Unmarried girls, however, are not supposed to follow the practice as they are considered sacred and an avatar of Hindu goddesses.

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<sup>36</sup> The colonial state contributed to the institutionalisation of corporal punishment in its schools, prisons and maintaining civil order (Sherman, 2010).

People, in fact, on auspicious occasions tend to touch the feet of young girls to please the goddess and gain good luck. Folding one's hands to adults to greet them (*Namaste*) is common in the Hindi speaking parts of India. Thus the body, tone of speaking and language all form an important part of showing respect.



**Figure 4.** Namaste  
(Source:[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Namaste\\_india.png](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Namaste_india.png))

Fear in fact is considered a sign of respect to authority figures, non-compliance with which may have its consequences like corporal punishment in school and home. However, it would be naive to perceive the prevalence and historic importance of respect in Indian culture as only leading to abuse and negative outcomes in society. While it is true that instances of abuse by adult authorities should be strongly condemned and steps taken to avoid it in future, the position of the teacher in the historic cultural imagination opens possibilities to tackle complex issues, presented in the present scenario. Thus, teachers' expectation of respect should not then come as a surprise.

The National Curriculum Framework (2005, p.13) acknowledges the ill effects of archaic methods of learning in the present and unquestioning authority of adults and their expectations.

“Our school pedagogic practices, learning tasks, and the texts we create for learners tend to focus on the socialisation of children and on the ‘receptive’ features of children’s learning. Instead, we need to nurture and build on their active and creative capabilities—their inherent interest in making meaning, in relating to the world in ‘real’ ways through acting on it and creating, and in relating to other humans.

Learning is active and social in its character. Frequently, the notions of 'good student' that are promoted emphasise obedience to the teacher, moral character, and acceptance of the teacher's words as 'authoritative' knowledge".

The National Curriculum Framework (NCF 2005, p.17) document goes on to make the following recommendations:

"In the constructivist perspective, learning is a process of the construction of knowledge. Learners actively construct their own knowledge by connecting new ideas to existing ideas on the basis of materials/activities presented to them (experience)."

At the same time, this policy document also attempts to redefine the role of teacher, but as I will discuss in the next chapter ends up limiting its scope.

"The teacher is seen as transmitting 'knowledge', which is usually confused with information, to children, and organising experiences in order to help children learn. But interaction with teachers, with peers, as well as those who are older and younger can open up many more rich learning possibilities." (NCF 2005, p.18)

In the spirit of the National Curriculum Framework 2005, new assessment policies like Continuous Comprehensive Evaluation [Examination] (CCE[E]) and the No Detention policy have found their way into schools in a move to change educational practices, forcing stakeholders to move away from traditional (exam-oriented education, rote memorisation) modes of education. However, at the same time, these policies are becoming unpopular with teachers in spite of the fact that they appreciate the spirit in which they are introduced.

*"T: That is what it is. Is it is an object! Is a child an object on which we will have a right? Even if I want to conduct emotional (bhavnatmak) teaching... where do I want military style conduct! Right in the sense, what I personally understand, within the system now that they have come to know that the teacher can't beat us, hit us or fail us, these things have a negative effect on small children. Far too negative.*

*E: Why is it negative? In what way?*

*T: We don't want to fail and we will anyway go to the next class even if we don't go to school and our name won't be taken off from school. These young children in initial classes, get to know of it (No Detention policy) from children in higher classes. They stay together in the locality, lanes and school. The effect of this on children isn't very positive but rather negative and discipline is the core mantra." (Interview 7)*

In a system where teachers enjoy little autonomy and professional training, the new policies are changing their educational context and tools available to them. This places them in a situation where they have to find new ways to deal with old problems. Teachers quoting students lack of fear with the new changes actually projected their own fear. Although they understand the spirit of the proposed changes, they complain that students have failed to understand the meaning of this new policy and are using it in the traditional mode to get grades without adequate attendance and education. This suggests the structural changes and changes in perceptions needed at the societal level.

At the same time, there are other parallel reforms required at the level of teacher training, research in curriculum and teaching methodologies, the appointment of new teachers, improving the teacher/student ratio, addressing lack of teacher motivation which translates into teacher absenteeism (Ramachandran et al., 2005) with an overall need for gaining trust in the state education system and bringing back teachers' classroom authority to put an end to abusive authority and replace it with a constructive one. The teacher below highlights the dilemma of conducting education in a system that is based on an examination system and makes her feel powerless.

*"Teachers' authority in the present scenario; I don't think we are authorized for something. We are only authorized for like dealing with the situations, which happens in the class. Just only this much otherwise we are like clearly mentioned, clearly told that we are not to scold the students, we are not to give corporal punishment, we are not... I agree we can't and we should not. This is not the right way, I do agree. When we were students our teachers were authorized to do all these things and somewhere there was a respect for them... There is the CCE[E] (Comprehensive Continuous Evaluation [Examination])*

*pattern is there. We can't fail the students. We can't like give them a zero or mark them zero and the students are, I don't think students are realizing the value of CCE[E]. They are just thinking that we are not to be failed; the teacher can't make us sit in the same class next year. We are also forced to, because of the rules, and if at all, even if they are not attending the class for six months or seven months, then also they are promoted to the next class.” (Interview 1)*

Any cultural practice, in this case corporal punishment, is ingrained in the society and has become a habit. Hence, once deprived of these habits (or power, as the teacher thinks of it) that the teacher previously enjoyed, the teacher is bound to feel a lack of authority if adequate resources and alternatives are not provided, which help them understand, as well as, give them opportunities to create alternatives to archaic practices and to see, that something that they now consider a loss, is a healthy educational change not just for students but also for themselves.

### **III. The Rise of Private Schooling and Government Teachers' Authority**

The Indian state, by implementing the Right to Education (RTE) Act made it mandatory to provide education to all children until the age of 14. This requires the government to provide adequate resources for school education to achieve this goal. However, successive governments have cut down on the national education budget (Srivastava, 2014) to direct the investment to the growth of private school system. Although the legislation, as Prachi Srivastava (2014) writes, was intended specifically for Government institutions to achieve the goal, the government has been underspending on education despite macro-economic growth. She argues that the logic of scarce resources is used to mobilize and develop facilities from private non-state actors, along with programmes such as universal elementary education, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan<sup>37</sup> (SSA) and Right to

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<sup>37</sup> “Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) is Government of India's flagship programme for achievement of Universalization of Elementary Education (UEE) in a time bound manner, as mandated by

Education<sup>38</sup> (RTE) in 2009. Lack of political will, and economic growth models favouring non-state actors in private–public partnerships are reasons for the underfinancing of education by the Indian state. There are lingering concerns within the country about the role private non-state actors can play in the educational goals as stated by RTE.

Research by James Tooley (2007) has focused on the rising demand by parents of low-income families for low-fee private schools in India, based on the assumption that Government schools are underperforming and are unable to deliver, whereas private low-fee schools are performing better. Tooley, however, has been criticised (Sarangapani et al., 2010) for the lack of conceptual clarity in his aims of education, implying the commodification of education, as well as the lack of information about the socio-political matrix of the state in which he conducted his research (Andhra Pradesh). The authors argue that Tooley (2007) makes generalizations about the underperformance of Government schools, without discussing the variety of schools that exist in India, to promote private low-fee schools. The Annual Status of Education Report [ASER] (2014) is conducted by an independent research organisation that measures the basic literacy and arithmetic achievement levels of students in all kinds of schools in urban/rural parts of India (the survey is conducted at the home of the child) between ages 6 and 14 years, has shown year after year low achievement levels among students. Where students in class 5 (age 10) typically read at the level of class 1 or 2 students. There are hardly any differences between the achievement levels of students in urban private or Government schools. The most significant divide is observed among students in

86th amendment to the Constitution of India, making free and compulsory Education to the Children of 6-14 years age group, a Fundamental Right". ("Elementary Education", 2017)

<sup>38</sup> The Constitution (Eighty-sixth Amendment) Act, 2002 inserted Article 21-A in the Constitution of India to provide free and compulsory education of all children in the age group of six to fourteen years as a Fundamental Right in such a manner as the State may, by law, determine. The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009, which represents the consequential legislation envisaged under Article 21-A, means that every child has a right to full time elementary education of satisfactory and equitable quality in a formal school which satisfies certain essential norms and standards ("Elementary Education", 2016).

urban and rural private or Government schools. This has resulted in a problem of poor literacy rates in India, raising questions about the quality of education in government as well as budget private schools.

The Government school system, which is the largest provider of free education in the country, is collapsing due to inadequate funds, affecting the quality of education. Thus the system is losing trust and faith among parents and larger society. The Government schools, which over the years have come to represent deprived social groups in India like SC/ST/OBCs, are suffering the brunt of its collapse. Unfortunately a system, which is comprehensive in nature and has the ability to confront and tackle the many problems, a diverse country like India faces, is declining due to government mismanagement. The stakeholders of the Government school institutions seem to be losing their authority along with the loss of authority of the mentioned institution, within society. This loss is further aggravated by the rise of private low-cost and other schools across India, which is being promoted as a solution to the country's education inadequacy. However, as highlighted earlier, there is no conclusive evidence (as there are multiple factors including household factors that cannot be accounted for when comparing literacy gains between students of private and Government schools) to suggest that the low-cost private schools achieve better educational results in terms of teaching, examination results, or literacy rates than Government schools (*ASER*, 2009, 2014) (the picture with regard to high-fee private schools is different).

In this scenario, the day-to-day working of the teacher in a Government school is influenced by the prevalence of private for-profit schools in her vicinity. The perception of teachers about good education as seen in the interviews, is shaped by students' performance in examinations in their schools and the employment opportunities they are able to attain later in their life. Thus, teachers seem to have lower expectations of students in Government schools from disadvantaged backgrounds compared to those in private schools.

*“when I was in a public (private) school those children, when I do interact with them now, some are married, some are working, some are working abroad also. Then I feel yes and they do tell me.... But here, being a fresher here now, it just been... small duration of experience so I haven’t found such a difference in these students yet but I hope.... Because after two to three years we may interact with these students... and we find them somewhere. Because some of my colleagues tell us that those students are working, we saw them at McD [McDonalds]. They are doing some part-time job over there and they are speaking good English over there, they are interacting with the customer, dealing with them so we find that yes some of the students do become mature with the passage of time and they do learn but being like very junior like in this section here, so I can’t say anything like and... but I do hope that whatever you do tell once, twice, thrice, at least once it will surely get inside the student and they may follow.” (Interview 1)*

Another teacher mentions the general expectation of teachers for her students that are based on the economic status of the family. In fact, as a teacher highlights,

*“The system in my sense is such that education has been dispensed with. Our children... let’s not go too far but take the example of this school. The teachers who teach in this school, how many of their children study in Government schools?” (Interview 7)*

It is no secret then that as government funding decreases, and as the private education sector expands, this has a negative impact on the Government schools as they suffer the brunt, and work with limited resources.

*“They have taken the land on subsidised rates from the DDE (Deputy Directorate of Education) but they recruit their own, they make the building their own. Do everything. But simply the government provide them recognition. And due to the child, land and recognition they have gotten from the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE), the government compel them to provide education to 25% of the poor children.” (Interview 4)*

Policies such as CCE[E] which require a different skill set and resources (access to the internet and stationery for projects, activities in their teaching) are unable to take off in Government schools, as a result of the financial problems

and poorly trained teachers. However, more than that, CCE[E] in a market system of education, no matter which sector, i.e. private or state, will fail to realise its purpose.

*“CCE[E] was not a bad type of thing. It was a comprehensive and a continuous evaluation and that it is to some extent was successful, I mean public schools. But at that particular place too it could not flourish well. It could not do very much good among the children because as a matter of fact there are shops in the market that make school projects, the shops have been developed in the market, they are making projects and selling them.”* (Interview 4)

There was a concern among teachers that the government is being negligent about the needs of the poorest people in the country and lacks the will to address their needs, especially, when the government is forming partnerships with the private sector, in a politically volatile atmosphere as described in the previous chapter. They think that Government schools have become recruitment grounds for successive governments for their own agendas and policies where each welfare scheme<sup>39</sup> is a way to gain political support, e.g. distribution of scholarship money to families of SC/ST/OBCs. This then is the only purpose for which Government schools exist and are used.

*“Government is indulging in distributing money. So as to achieve the votes. But not thinking about the teachers. To recruit them. To provide them guest teachers. Provision of guest teachers<sup>40</sup> is there. But we are not able even to get the guest teachers also.”* (Interview 4)

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<sup>39</sup> Each state and central government has several welfare schemes for communities who belong to SC/ST/OBCs categories. These schemes are particularly designed for these minority communities because of their large-scale representation in government schools. Most political parties try to influence them by providing several welfare schemes to gain political support. Often these schemes are introduced a year or two before election time and last for the tenure of the ruling government. Teachers in government schools have to perform the task of distributing the benefits of these schemes while also maintaining a record.

<sup>40</sup> Guest teachers are teachers hired on a contractual basis for a semester or two in place of a full-time teacher. These teachers don't have rights like maternity leave or holidays enjoyed by other teachers.

## IV. Conclusion

The authority of a teacher in a classroom is influenced by multiple factors, from cultural and historical ideas about teachers; recent policy changes; as well as parallel institutional alternatives, e.g. the private sector. These changes can either help empower teachers or depreciate their position. Thus, the authority of a teacher in a system is also a result of the power that the teacher enjoys to voice her concerns. When a teacher feels powerless, this not only affects her status in society but also limits the possibility of changes expected within an education system by the education policy, due to teachers' lack of trust in the government and its policies. A case in point is the legislation to ban corporal punishment in India. This leads me to make the following observations:

1. Educational policy changes in recent years, i.e. the introduction of CCE[E], RTE and the No Detention policy are a step to move away from exam-oriented education, and to make education more child-centered. Whereas the policies expect teachers to be facilitators, they fail to consider the role teachers play outside the classroom, namely that of a moral guide. This role of a moral guide, which has roots in the historical-cultural position that teachers enjoyed, is no longer expected of a teacher in policy documents like NCF 2005. But this position of a moral guide has attained new significance in the era of neoliberalization due to the changes witnessed in the day-to-day functioning of the classroom, as is discussed at some length in the next chapter.
2. In the various kinds of authorities teachers described themselves to be, it is their role as a moral guide that helps them gain classroom legitimacy to perform the institutional role as a teacher and to undertake the task of educating students in the subject matter.
3. This leads us to conclude that the teacher is not 'a' kind of authority within an institution, rather the expectations of students, along with that of the institutions (cultural, government and civil society) and those of the teacher herself determine her authority, which is dynamic in nature.

4. At the same time, the various kinds of authorities described earlier may work simultaneously in tandem with each other or influence each other.
5. In recent times, the Government school teacher's authority is coming under attack by the parallel and popular growth of the private sector, which may not necessarily provide quality education, while the government fails to provide adequate resources to the state educational institutions.

Thus teacher authority at present is multifaceted, with influences from the past and the present and expectations about the future. In the present system, teacher authority is being streamlined in a top-down process to represent a certain kind of authority through the policies under discussion. However, this may not be the shape that teachers themselves want their authority to take, as evident in the interviews. This has resulted in a vacuum and gap between policy makers and teachers, such that the policies fail to penetrate the social fabric of the society and to bring about the desired changes.

## **CHAPTER 4: Teachers' Authority and its Interaction with Technology**

Teacher authority as discussed so far is a multifaceted concept that the educational policies fail to recognise. In an effort to address multiple problems facing the Indian education system, including the ones leftover by colonialism, the proposed changes in policies continue to show little success and on the contrary pose a challenge for teachers and educational policymakers. Some of the proposed changes are changing the role of a teacher to a facilitator; the introduction of new assessment technologies with a focus on the learners' environment and needs; an attempt to change the traditional perception of a child in Indian society which is of an 'empty slate'; a move from the teacher creating knowledge to involving student experiences and co-creating knowledge; at the same time addressing the discrimination of students from disadvantaged backgrounds i.e. SC/ST/OBCs, by teachers or community members in the current socio-economic conditions in the country. Whereas the motivation for the proposed changes is appreciated, the changes have much larger consequences for the educational process. The current research with the focus on teacher authority takes issue with the proposal of changing the role of a teacher to that of a facilitator. This is because for teachers who carry out the process of education in classrooms, changing their position to that of a facilitator (NCF 2005) is insufficient for the current educational context. This, with the increasing use of modern technologies among adolescents in Indian society, is creating new challenges for teachers. In this scenario, teachers need to take recourse to their institutional and cultural authority to circumvent conflicts that may arise between various stakeholders within or outside school.

This chapter highlights how the technological advancement in communication and its influence on our surroundings and the way we receive knowledge has qualitatively and quantitatively changed our interaction with the world around us. The neoliberal economy's effects on technological tools has created new realities that teachers as educators have to deal with, in two ways: (1) The

technological advancements and the way certain modern communication tools like mobile phones, and social networking websites have pervaded the social fabric because of their affordability and have carved a position of necessity. 2) These technologies are directly affecting the teacher–student relationship, which has an effect on the way teachers choose to resolve issues at hand.

The accumulation of issues without any substantial solutions, accentuates them, creating a vulnerable situation for all stakeholders, as is visible in the Indian education system. Teachers who are untrained to deal with these multiple challenges, end up choosing options that may be inadequate, e.g. a shift to new assessment techniques is seen as desirable by teachers but difficult to adopt, due to the continual focus on grades, teacher assessment and social attitudes. This has opened new questions before us, such as, what is the role of a teacher in the current technological equipped world? What should be our educational aims for current and future generations? How can we equip teachers to better deal with current classroom challenges?

The discussion below draws attention to the technological, historical, economic and social issues juxtaposed into the day-to-day challenges that teachers have to deal with; the ways teachers have carved out to overcome them, while simultaneously feeling powerless within the system that provides them few resources to deal with the complex issues; and the need to examine teachers' current position in relation to their historical role in Indian society.

## **I. Educational Technology (ET)**

Communication technologies of various kinds, e.g. cell phones, most recently smartphones and the internet, have become part of our lived reality and brought about decisive changes. Its effects are seen in many areas including education, our primary concern. In the interviews that I conducted as part of this research, teachers repeatedly spoke about the aforementioned technologies, their effects on the process of education and the teacher's own authority. This necessitated a need to critically analyse the relation of technology (particularly recent

technologies) to teacher's authority in the complex socio-economic environment of India.

In 2004 NCERT, an apex body on educational reforms was assigned the task of revising the National Curriculum Framework of 2000. It did this by forming 21 focus groups chaired by renowned academics, a few school teachers, NGOs, and parents to deliberate on topics like aims of education and the teaching of social sciences, to name a few. The position papers prepared by these focus groups highlight the vision and aims of education adopted by NCERT. The position paper on educational technology (2006) prepared by one such focus group are discussed at some length in this chapter to understand the role of technology in education, as it is a very thoughtful document in the context of India.

In describing educational technology, the group takes a wider meaning of technology to include not just physical technologies like textbooks, computers and smart boards but also technologies of processes like evaluation and management. Thus, it describes Educational Technology (ET) as

“the efficient organisation of any learning system adapting or adopting methods, processes, and products to serve identified educational goals”  
(*Position Paper National Focus Group on Educational Technology, 2006, p.v*).

Technologies of various kinds, old or new, (in fact, school itself is a technological invention for the purpose of education) have been part of educational learning at various points in time. Whereas recent inventions are bringing about a dramatic change in the direct human effort/labour of the teachers, e.g. computer, use of audio-visual aids, changes in the role, aim and functioning of schools and their stakeholders, and an impact on learning, studies (*Connecting the Learning Society, 1997; Position Paper National Focus Group on Educational Technology, 2006*) in the UK as well as India have shown that government-initiated computer-aided learning has been unsuccessful due to lack of investment in training teachers in the use of these technologies and

connecting them to learning objectives. The result is that there is a dire need to analyse and understand old and new educational technologies in schools, with the changes witnessed in particular societies and their needs. The focus group for educational technology analyses educational technologies in India aptly,

“...the education system [in India] has become highly centralized, examination driven, joyless, impersonal, and utterly irrelevant to the child’s world. The centralization deprives teachers of the freedom to organize teaching learning and meaningfully participate in the preparation of syllabi or textbooks. That in itself is bad enough, but now in addition to what is happening in India, it has become necessary to face the challenges [i.e. knowledge explosion, technological explosion, homogenization of the world, population explosion]<sup>41</sup> scarcity of resources, of a rapidly changing [due to science and technology] world in the twenty-first century.” (*Position Paper National Focus Group on Educational Technology*, 2006, p.8)

Thus, although adopting newer technologies like computers and the internet is inevitable for a country like India in the global world today, this needs to take place keeping in mind the older technologies already in use, as “Certainly, they (modern technologies) offer many exciting possibilities, but both old and new serve different purposes of teaching-learning<sup>42</sup>, and are probably equally relevant in different given contexts” (*Position Paper National Focus Group on Educational Technology*, 2006, p.2).

How can this need or conundrum to adopt newer and better technologies among older ones be resolved within education? One obvious measure/criterion for countries to consider is the amount of resources at their disposal to initiate change. This in turn would influence the decision about adopting different kinds of technologies. However, this is still an insufficient measure from an

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<sup>41</sup> Knowledge explosion: the knowledge available (scientific and technical articles) to us doubles at a much faster rate now than previously; Technological explosion: availability of various kinds of information and communication technologies; Homogenization of world: marketing and mass media is used to create global public opinion, a threat to diversity (*Position Paper National Focus Group on Educational Technology*, 2006, p.8).

<sup>42</sup> Each technology provides different opportunities to teach and learn, given its design.

educational point of view and not very helpful. Hence as the focus group concurs,

“While this [ET] field continues to evolve, we are faced with the problem of how to help learners to help themselves in learning in an effective and interactive manner...we should direct our thoughts to education, and not to any technology, the logistics of getting it set up. The emphasis has to be on a culture of learning rather than on technology per se.” (*Position Paper National Focus Group on Educational Technology*, 2006, p.1)

The reason we should focus on learning is to do with the way the focus group understands knowledge and its connection with ET. Bringing ET into today’s context,

“we must realise that knowledge springs from many sources, and that whatever is of importance in the learner’s environment and suitable for his/her needs is what we must find and use in any teaching-learning system by employing effective instructional designs. Here considerable experimentation is necessary, and appropriate technologies for these designs will have to be worked out” (*Position Paper National Focus Group on Educational Technology*, 2006, p.11).

It is true that we throughout our life acquire knowledge from different sources, and with the internet even the subject-based knowledge which was earlier the prerogative of the teachers in schools is no longer confined to them. This brings us to the role of the teacher in the changing processes of education.

The group understands the advent of technology as a double-edged sword, which opens new channels of information dissemination and communication but can also homogenise public opinion, alienating certain marginalised groups and their needs. Thus, opting for a critical approach, it suggests,

“The Internet and the Web provide sources other than the local ones. But it is necessary to inculcate media awareness in our children so that they do not replace the words of tradition by the mantras of advertisers. They must know that nothing is value-free (not even Donald Duck). The major responsibility for bringing about this change falls on the shoulders

of teachers” (*Position Paper National Focus Group on Educational Technology*, 2006, p.11).

This can be achieved but “She [teacher] has to move from being a “teacher” to being a facilitator or guide. This means an emphasis on the learning culture rather than on the use of technology” (*Position Paper National Focus Group on Educational Technology*, 2006, p.13).

The document/focus group, while describing educational technology with a critical lens, adopts a broad definition of technology within education. However, it fails to acknowledge that children like adults use technologies for varied purposes. Also, their use depends on the design and available features of technologies that enable the necessary interaction with technology. The document limits the discussion of modern technologies and their use to educational purposes while failing to address the design of technologies, e.g. regular software updates connect your email contact details with mobile applications; automatic addition of phone contacts in your WhatsApp directory without any consent. This highlights the pervasiveness and reach of these technologies, like WhatsApp,<sup>43</sup> that reduces accountability to users while creating conditions for issues to arise due to lack of this accountability. Thus the document fails to fully achieve a critical approach to technologies. The use and effects of modern technologies on students’ lives are far-reaching. With the limited knowledge and spaces to discuss the effects of such technologies on students, teachers feel unprepared to discuss the emerging issues brought about by modern technologies in classrooms. In addition, given the examination-centric process of education and the document’s failure to acknowledge students’ interaction with technology for purposes other than formal education, there are scant efforts to address issues of such nature in classrooms.

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<sup>43</sup> WhatsApp is a mobile phone and computer messenger application, which has replaced traditional phone message services. Though this application one can now send instant photos, messages, recorded voice messages, as well as make a call without spending any extra money (through internet service which is accessible at a nominal price).

At the same time the expectation of the teacher to shift from being a “teacher” (i.e. an authoritarian teacher, a view which is in itself limited) to a facilitator without considering the historical and cultural position of teachers (discussed in the previous chapter) in society becomes problematic as one begins to explore the pervasiveness of modern technologies and their impact on the student–teacher relationship in the light of the socio-economic complexities in Indian society. This brings us to conclude that it is this very role of the teacher as facilitator that is limited, for bringing about the educational changes that educational policy rightly suggests.

The following section discusses the interaction of teachers’ authority with certain modern technologies, that came up during the interviews, in classroom processes; the underlying factors that influence this interaction and teachers’ views on their own position while dealing with the challenges.

## **II. Technology and Teacher Authority**

The three technologies that are under discussion are textbooks, modern technologies, e.g. cell phones, mobile applications, Facebook<sup>44</sup>, and recently introduced assessment techniques, i.e. Continuous Comprehensive Evaluation [Examination] (CCE[E]). The discussion charts the introduction of these technologies into Indian society, changes suggested by educational policy and their influence on teacher–student relationships but particularly, the effect of these technologies in the process of education and teachers’ authority.

### **II.i. Textbooks**

The public education system in India was established during the colonisation of India by the British Empire. The education system in India even today continues to be fraught with some of those systems. The textbook is one such colonial

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<sup>44</sup> Facebook is a social networking website used by many around the world to make friends, upload personal information, including photographs about their day–to-day activities to share with friends, chat, discussions, read or access online articles and much more.

tool, established to maintain central control by the Empire over education with little teacher autonomy, and it continues to exercise central bureaucratic control in independent India. The textbook culture, as Krishna Kumar (1988) describes it, encapsulates certain common features of Indian school pedagogy, such as: 1) Teaching of all subjects based on textbooks prescribed by the state. 2) Teachers have no freedom to choose the syllabus and should finish the prescribed syllabus with the help of the textbook. 3) No other resources other than the textbook are available for teachers. If they are, they are seldom used for fear of damage. 4) Assessments made during the year or at the end of the year are based on textbooks.

Educational policies in independent India and more recently NCF 2005, have tried to move away from this textbook culture by adopting more diverse sources of teaching–learning material in spite of the diversity of schools and limited resources (these resources are in the process of being built). At the same time, there are attempts to revamp the textbooks to include varied voices and contexts with sensitivity to class, caste and gender issues; build teachers’ professional capacity and their authority, and create other sources of teaching–learning material, increasing the autonomy of teachers as well as students to reduce the authority that textbooks enjoy (so that it is used as one among many sources of information) and focus on the aspect of mutual learning.

In this process of transition from the textbook-centric culture of education to a more learner- and learning-centric culture, the interviews with teachers revealed the many struggles of teachers to consider and tackle multiple classroom issues and some hopeful changes in the process of learning. Nonetheless, factors such as lack of government funding for schools, a move to promote private interests and funding in education and socio-economic realities, intertwined with educational expectations, make it impossible to realise the changes attempted by the policies. This leads us to the questions: In the current context, with persistent focus on examinations, can teachers bring about the expected changes in education? Why do teachers still focus on exams and not learning?

How do teachers view the changes brought about to textbooks and teaching-learning material?

An incident described by a social science teacher below helps us to better understand some of these issues. The teacher describes his role in relation to the textbook while narrating an incident in class, which involved his efforts to inculcate students' interest in a certain historical character. He mentioned how he sees himself as a facilitator and tries to engage children in a dialogue with the text. Also, he pointed out, and so did other teachers I interviewed, that the textbook continues to be an important study resource for children, given the difficult economic backgrounds they come from. The poverty of alternative sources of learning due to inadequate funding of Government schools has created a dependence on textbooks. This in turn has an effect on the quality of education. However, the text is difficult for children to read<sup>45</sup>, given the difficult language of the text, as children in the class are not very fluent in English and come from households with multiple mother tongues. Thus, the text is not very helpful to ignite students' interest, which the teacher tries to do through the medium of popular TV soaps. He then discusses the facts presented by the text and the TV serial in the classroom. In the class, he then uses a method of dialogue and hopes that this dialogue will help children gain more when they go back to the text at home, highlighting the authority of the text in knowledge formation.

*"If we take the book, we can't leave it...It is very difficult when after six hours staying here they go back home. Children will be children. 6 to 10th class, now I am handling class 12. Children of different age groups have different interests...in class 6, 7 and 8 History... there is a common perception that History is a very boring subject... Hence in order to create interest I tell them stories. It takes me two to four days..."*

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<sup>45</sup> The school in the mentioned discussion is an English-medium school where the language of instruction is English, like many others in India. However, the poor quality of teacher teaching and qualifications, and the lack of an environment for children to practise their English skills and resources has led to many students of English-medium schools with poor English language skills.

*Children watch news at home. They watch serials. In my 40 mins class, 5 mins I spend talking about TV. Did you watch Ashoka the Great? Did you watch Maharana Pratap? Did you watch Veer Shivaji? All these are serials and they are closely related, too. So children try to co-relate what they studied in the text with what they watched. Immediately they ask that 'what is written in the text is Jodhabai was not the wife of Akbar, while the serial seem to claim, she is?'... So there I take command to clear that confusion. So again I ask children something because I see myself as a facilitator... my class is democratic where children speak... I have to just say yes or no. If it is yes then if there is anything to elaborate then I do... They can speak fearlessly in class. Wherever I go my principals tell me you are a very strict disciplinarian, and I am. But in my class apart from studies, as frank students are towards me I do not think they are with other teachers... I use the text as less as I can in class and use it as a supplementary reader where a child can read it for sometime at home without my help, he can get new things related to classroom discussion." (Interview 9)*

In the above discussion of a historical character and the information presented by TV soaps and textbook, I asked the teacher; if at times there is any confusion between facts presented by the two sources, which is the one he falls back on? He said, *"Then I use my knowledge which I got from the textbook"*. Thus, although NFC 2005 continues to propagate that there are multiple sources of information and we have seen that the teacher skilfully utilises these resources, i.e. TV serials, textbooks and students' own knowledge, the classroom discussion as he described continues to centre on the textbook and he sees his own authority subordinated by the textbook. Although teachers make students aware of newer information and its importance, they continue to trust the information presented by the text in an atmosphere with a continuous and persistent focus on examination. This is a social attitude, arguably shaped by the colonial legacy, that validates the accumulation of knowledge, particularly textbook-centric knowledge, and it has had the effect that learning continues to take the text as a safer authority.

The authority of the text is further reinstated by another social science teacher in the dialogue below, who suggests frequent changes in textbooks, given the

ever-evolving nature of information around us. This, he feels, will not only help students move away from textbook focused learning but will also reinstate teachers' authority and be fruitful in the process of learning through multiple sources. If students continue to hold on to out-dated knowledge of texts, this undermines his role as a teacher, his aim to provide knowledge. Thus, given the reliance on textbook-based examination, the teacher believes that his attempt to provide updated knowledge to students can only be successful if his efforts are supplemented by regular textbook updates, reinstating his authority in the process, highlighting the rigidity of the system and people in it, and lack of any improvement in our assessment techniques and people in it. Any change in the scheme of things requires an attitudinal change not just on the part of the teachers but also students and society as a whole.

*"T: Whatever the facts are... if they are changed in one or two years that will be much better because a lot of things keep changing but children keep reading the same thing.*

*E: Can you give a few examples?*

*T: Like Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and things like that. Cash Reserve Ratio (CRR), things like these in Economics. These things change every year or either the space for it is left blank. We do get them to change it but for children if it is asked in the exam they (silence)...*

*E: Whatever is in the textbook...*

*T: Yes, in the textbook. So these things are problematic for the children.*

*E: So what do they prefer in the exam?*

*T: They go with what is in the textbook. Although in the new question they don't add such things but our aim is not just to get them to pass the exams but also to give them knowledge." (Interview 10)*

A teacher of Economics in another case suggested a move away from the textbook but the reasons to do so were either the (1) difficulty of language, (2) the way concepts are presented in the text which makes it difficult for students

to understand or (3) that it is not relevant from an examination point of view. The economics textbook under question underwent changes after the NCERT's NCF 2005 document. However, the language of the new textbook has been difficult for teachers to work with, when their command of the language is limited. Thus they continue to rely on other material like a refresher's book: a guide that summarises the most important sections of the text based on the examination questions of the previous 10 to 12 years. While it is possible to engage in a meaningful dialogue using such a resource as a refresher book, the educational aims to do so seem rather limited and less likely to have a meaningful impact. This suggests that the flexibility of using teaching-learning material and providing subsequent autonomy to teachers as the document suggests is not going hand in hand with the aims of education, as propagated in the policy document, i.e. NCF 2005. This raises questions about the process of textbook revision that fails to take into account the varied language fluencies of teachers in the country.

*"T: We don't use the book at all because we directly teach the concepts and we ask them to buy refresher or textbook whatever they can, can afford. This is a Government school we just can't force them to buy anything but whatever we teach definitely I give some notes to the students in 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> Economics I am telling. And I ask them to go through my notes whatever I have taught and that is mainly important for the CBSE board exam... I ask them, give them some three to four refreshers which are good only those refreshers any one they can keep in their homes and they can go through later on.*

*E: But then why don't you use the NCERT textbooks?*

*T: NCERT [smiles and hesitates]... till 10<sup>th</sup> NCERT book is really very useful but 11<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup> very frankly speaking overall in all over India all the teachers accept... not so helpful for the students at least. We teachers little bit we can follow because some portions are really very difficult for them to understand or you can say that whatever the questions come in CBSE board... that they will not be able to solve fully if they just go through the NCERT book." (Interview 11)*

The NCERT textbooks were revised following guidelines listed in the National Curriculum Framework 2005. However, this move was not supplemented with much needed teacher training that would have eventually helped in bringing about the required shift to a dialogic process of education. The result was that although textbooks were redesigned as per the NCF 2005 guidelines, the teachers were left untrained in the new syllabus. They now had to forge new strategies to understand it and find a way to transact with pupils in the new curricular language. It is not surprising then that the new textbooks were criticised on content, level of difficulty and overall perspective (Sharma, 2015).

The combined result of examination-centric education, inadequate teacher training and socio-economic conditions of students, has a negative impact on teachers' status and their expectations of their students. The stereotypes of gender, class and caste that are to be challenged in a classroom remain and have failed to achieve the critical lens (*Position Paper National Focus Group on Gender Issues in Education*, 2006). Learning is limited to teaching the contents of the textbook. Teachers' educational aims and teaching are defined by student success in examinations rather than achievement in learning levels. The efforts to move away from a textbook-centric culture to reliance on teacher's authority based on their professional expertise remain unachieved.

## II.ii. Modern Technologies, i.e. Internet, Cell Phones, Mobile Applications

One may question if there is a need to discuss the question of modern technologies given the multiple issues highlighted earlier facing the education system in India. However, it is important to stress here that although there is a problem of educational access and quality of education within the classroom space, modern technologies already find mention in teachers' day-to-day interaction with students, and their perspectives on quality education, as was seen in the interviews I conducted.

To understand the spread and use of some of the technologies, a 2014-15

survey ("TCS GenY Survey 2014-15", 2014) by TCS (Tata Consultancy Services), a private company in 14 cities of India, is helpful. A survey of 12,365 young adults between the ages of 12 and 18 revealed that 72% of those surveyed use smartphones and 85% of them were on social networking sites. Of course, the picture in rural areas is unclear given the lack of comprehensive data. My own guess is that cell phones and smart phones are definitely on the rise along with internet access.

The spread of such technologies in our educational institutions is a result of multiple factors. One among them is the prevalence of neoliberal economic regimes, which have helped their spread, making them available at a relatively affordable price. So technologies like cell phones, which started as devices used by adults, have inhabited the life of children in societies in developed as well as developing countries. They are no longer a privilege but have become a necessity not just for adults but children alike. This availability of cell phones and now increasingly smartphones has brought them into more formal spaces of schools, which are extremely structured around adults. The cell phone, especially smart phones, with newer technologies to maintain anonymity, lets children communicate or do things that were otherwise prohibited in this formal space of school. It has on the one hand become a ready device to access useful information but on the other, made students more vulnerable to a consumerist ideology and online abuse. This has raised both expectations and frustrations and at times has a disorienting effect on society as a whole.

As far as educational policy is concerned, the NFC 2005 focus group paper on educational technology, as discussed earlier, suggests that technology, no matter who possesses it, whether the schools, children or parents, should be used to fulfil educational ends, i.e. learning. This in itself is an important democratic position and much appreciated. There are other notable and commendable suggestions that the paper posits. However, there is little discussion or awareness in the focus group paper about the way some of the available technologies (not currently adapted for education) are interacting with the socio-cultural environment and the way they may challenge the democratic

aims of learning that the position paper earlier suggested. The communicative technologies I want to discuss are the use of the internet through cell phones, computers, the use of smartphones for WhatsApp and Facebook. I am interested in these technologies because they are unplanned and divergent from an educational perspective, perceived and defined by adults; the users of these technologies are changing and challenging the dynamics of teacher–student relationships. The many examples discussed in this chapter highlight the many dynamics of this relationship.

The policy document suggests that technology is ever-evolving and the role of a teacher is to be open to newer technologies and interact with them along with their users and instil a critical lens among children about these technologies. However, in the current scenario where teachers lack resources and know-how to deal with long-standing problems in classrooms like student absenteeism, gender biases, to name a few, the challenges posed by modern technologies have left them exhausted. This is in the context where there is little understanding at the policy level on the pervasiveness of these technologies in the lives of students and teachers.

The teachers, as the interviews revealed, walk a thin line in the wake of modern technologies, connecting cultural sensitivity with changing communication patterns of adolescents, while negotiating with their own beliefs, for example when dealing with adolescent sexuality. In such cases, a facilitating role, as required by the dominant policy discourse, is not always the best way to deal with the issues at hand. This is particularly difficult for female teachers as they are confronted with invasions to their own privacy (see excerpt from Interview 1 below) and may have to then invoke their institutional authority in the process of dealing with these issues.

The interview extract on the next page, helps uncover the issues of adolescent sexuality, its mediation through technology and the teacher’s own dilemma about her social beliefs and her position as a teacher.

*T: Many a times I do catch them using the phones. Actually, it's not allowed in the school but if they bring, what to do! We just take it away from them keep it with ourselves, one or two days later I have to return it back.... But if the child is affording a phone of Rs.5000 can't he just deposit a fee of Rs.20 per month? And what about those parents?... who are giving mobile phones or something of this type! The students are using net they are sending me friend's request on FB.*

*E: So do you accept the friend request?*

*T: Never. In fact, I just come to school and scold them what rubbish things you people are doing here? It's totally not acceptable. I am on the social site that is my personal... I am doing altogether out of the school and students find us people over there and just send the friend... hardly... how could you do this? This is not feasible. Because I don't think... there should be a certain distance between students and teachers.*

*E: So you think that if you accept their friend's request you will be... you are not comfortable with it?*

*T: No, I don't think so I should accept because I... my own friend's circle is there and they people like or dislike something and I don't even want to because some of the personal things I share over there don't want the students to know that, interfere... I haven't even shared my personal number with them... because the mentality of the students couldn't be guessed. You know I may tell you one incident. I called a student's home, father one day. He had some problem, he said, ma'am please call my father. Ok I called him up. After going home he took his father's cell phone and he took my number from there. And then he took his own phone and he was sending some messages on WhatsApp...*

*E: Ok.*

*T: ... fine. I blocked the number. I never knew it's my student... after 20 to 25 days I again unblocked the number and I saw the dp (display picture) has been changed. Earlier it was with a small child with one to two years old. I couldn't recognise it was a student of my class... but now he has changed his dp. His own present dp was there. Then I got to know that it is.*

*E: Ahh*

*T: Then I called his parents to school and asked them what sort of facility are you providing to your son that he is sending me messages and he is even hiding his identity. This means something wrong must be going on in his mind and what's the use of sending messages? I am daily coming to school. Then his father scolded him and took away the phone from him. Don't give these extra facilities to them they don't deserve... At this point of stage they don't. So at times we have to guide the parents also.” (Interview 1)*

The teacher and student in the above dialogue belong to a Government state school where most of the students come from economically backward areas of the city. Most of their parents either work as housemaids, drivers or labourers.

The teacher raises questions such as: Why should parents with financial constraints buy their children cell phones? Does the child need a cell phone? Why should students interact with her on a social media website which she thinks is an invasion of her privacy? Given the situation, she also acts upon it. It is useful to understand the questions through focusing on the idea of absurdity or things she finds difficult to make sense of.

The very idea of children possessing cell phones seems absurd to the teacher and especially with children who come from a poor economic background. Her conclusion is based on two simple reasons (1) the incident she describes highlights student's misuse of technology while (2) the other is her assumption that cell phones are of no value to children and will only be misused. The incident she describes only justifies these reasons in her eyes. One can understand that with the levels of poverty that one has in the country maybe a cell phone is not the most important need and one would expect people to spend more on food than on mobiles, but this is clearly not the case and people spend based on several different factors. The teacher also has issues with the money being spent on mobiles rather than on education, to suggest wasteful spending on the part of the parents who provide children these cell phones. This clearly highlights that she does not think children should possess cell phones. She justifies this claim with the second absurdity, i.e. a child trying to communicate with her outside the school space.

She mentions the use of a social networking website and children sending her a friend's request on it. She assumes that students should not contact her outside the school space and the only relationship that is possible between them and her is that of student and teacher. This suggests a distance, which the teacher wants to maintain but children want to cross/overcome. Through Facebook, children have found a way to venture into the social or as the teacher calls it her private life.

An argument that is often made to overcome this issue is, to not have a Facebook account to avoid sharing one's private thoughts or life with the world. But we are so much more than our professions. We have lives that span beyond our professional life that includes our home, friends and family. Does a profession define all our individual being and does that shape our entire being? With the advent of technology, it has become even harder to separate the space between personal and public lives. The teacher in this case definitely does not want her students to send her a friend request and follow her personal life, but it is also a bitter truth that one has to come to terms with, that nothing that we share online is private anymore. Thus, the pervasive use of modern technologies, which has become a fact of life across different social classes, has challenged traditional conceptions of the private/professional distinction; created new forms of selfhood and social communication. The affordances of new digital media are well suited to children and adolescents' developmental needs.

"The activities offered in virtual worlds... allow children to express themselves in concrete ways, while the flexibility of new media technology provides adolescents with unprecedented opportunities to experiment with their identities...At the same time, the "hyperconnectivity" afforded by the new digital media may negatively affect youth's ability to develop an independent emotional life. Moreover, the public nature of friendships, romantic relationships, and group membership complicates the way these peer interactions are experienced." (Davis et al., 2009)

The teacher, while struggling to negotiate between her private space and her professional life, fails to understand the cultural changes brought about by social media. She expects students to perceive her as an authority and respect her, as her teachers traditionally had been perceived. This, however, seems problematic in the light of her assumptions about the socio-economic background of her students and the expectations associated with it.

Let me now come to the reason I choose the word absurdity in the above analysis of the incidents. There are certain ways of living, relationships or communicating that are shaped by the society that we live in. Walking naked on a street will of course have its repercussions, e.g. scorn from onlookers, or being taken into police custody for indecency. Most of these acts are understood as abnormal, and those engaging in them as deviants. The incident involving the teacher and students involved one such absurdity as is highlighted below.

In the case of the teacher, her judgement in calling the parents to school is not just clouded by her assumptions about the socio-economic status of the student but also her lack of understanding about adolescent sexuality and the absence of a public language to talk about such issues. The silence and shame that usually exist in India about issues concerning sexuality have in this case influenced the teacher as well, so that she conveniently blames the child instead of engaging in a reasonable dialogue with the child. Thus, by calling the parents of the child into school, she is also following the norms (silence about adolescent sexuality) that according to her exist in Indian society. Let me give you another perspective on the incident now.

The teacher thinks that the relationship between students and teachers is something that should be based on respect, as traditionally existed, and as she herself has grown up to believe in. The student's act of seeking friendship with the teacher outside the school space is an absurdity in the eyes of the teacher, which does not follow from the acceptable social norms. Thus, the only relationship possible for them is confined to the classroom space. But this is

clearly not the case with students who want to get to know her and want to communicate with her outside the school space. The situation is complicated by the adolescent years of students and the teacher's lack of understanding of their social needs. Any communication and possibility to understand the thoughts that these young boys are going through becomes even more difficult if the society that we live in refuses to accept or acknowledge the process of identity formation and the development of sexuality in adolescence. It is of course difficult (there is a lack of a public language of sexuality as the NCERT *Position Paper on Gender Issues in Education*, 2006, highlights) to talk about the feelings that students are experiencing for their teacher, but the very idea that such feelings can even exist or the possibility of acknowledging them is unthinkable for her.

As seen in the extract, the teacher calls the parents of a student to school. This is a result of a healthy practice of parents' involvement in school in India, where often teachers invite parents to discuss issues concerning their children, which can be resolved mutually. However, in the incident that the teacher narrated above, there was a need for sensitivity concerning adolescents' needs on the part of the teacher, which triggered the incident in the first place. The teacher called upon the parents not to discuss the issue but rather to blame the child. This only leads to the child being cast as a deviant. The lack of discussion between teacher and student could have been a result of teachers' assumptions about the socio-cultural background of the student and the societal silence with regard to sexuality.

The focus group document on *Gender Issues in Education* (2006) recognises that teachers themselves are embedded in the social structures of power and that there is a need to educate and train teachers to deal with gender issues, especially among adolescents, which is a long process. However, while teachers may be equipped to deal with such issues they continue to exercise their institutional and cultural authority in doing so. Teachers' authority in this phase of transition is a useful tool for a harmonious transition as they confront the challenges brought about by newer technologies. The idea therefore is not

to blame the teacher who herself is ill equipped to deal with the adolescent's needs but to understand her struggle and address the inadequacies in teacher training, as the discussion reveals, to deal with issues at hand. What does technology do in this atmosphere? It helps students gain information without any critical analysis from sources beyond adult guidance while maintaining anonymity; and to channel their feelings, which are neither named nor spoken of, but rather repressed, with possibly adverse consequences. The only acceptable social discourse available is that of a teacher as guru and student as a submissive agent. This only leads to further criminalisation of students who belong to a minority background with languages or culture that do not have any representation in schools; inadequate economic resources to improve their skills or channel their interests in other productive activities. This includes lack of accessible public open spaces. In order to protect her and deal with the issue at hand, which led to discomfort, the teacher uses her institutional authority. But did the discomfort that she was caused require the penalisation of students?

The teacher assumes that the student's act of hiding his identity and communicating with her on social media was an invasion of her privacy and unacceptable. However, in the entire episode there is no space for communication with the child or even the possibility of asking him what he intended to do due to the lack of language for talking about such issues. Maybe the incident could have been better resolved if only the teacher could find a way to communicate and understand the adolescent student's needs. But it becomes a problem, when one wants to define a relationship in a certain way, which is not the way students want to. At the same time, expecting teachers to be facilitators and deal with a situation such as that just described, may not work, if they have to protect their own privacy and space. Hence it is important to understand the kind of technologies available around us, and their impact on the social world that may force us to change our notions of learning and space.

Technology, as the teacher below highlights, can be a source of information and knowledge but can be used by students in many harmful ways. Cell phones and Facebook, of course, are opening a whole new world to the children, with

tantalising images of half-naked women (I am not criticising the dresses of women here, they can choose to flaunt their sexuality in the way they like but the way that they are portrayed on screen wearing the clothes that they do becomes associated with a certain image of women) which are readily available to children creating a certain homogenised and uncritical idea of women on screen. There is little engagement with these images on popular media, no conversation so as to gauge the effect that they might have on children. The alternate discourses that are available through mass communication, shame women or curb their freedom by restricting their movement, clothing or speech. Alternatively, when the freedom of women is brought into focus, it is done to appeal to women as consumers by marketing products (Although there are occasional stories in alternative media – small scale with word of mouth publicity – of bravery and strength shown by women in the face of adversity).

The necessary communication can be achieved through dialogue, if students see the teacher as a well-wisher and not a threat. However, as the teacher highlights in the excerpt below from Interview 9, in his experience of befriending students, he sees himself as a teacher, trying to critically engage them in a discussion about information they share online and its consequences.

*“T: I use it... Children also tend to send their requests and I accept it. I try to follow them and to know what is going on in their mind, what is their circle thinking. And if I feel something... So for a few days I tried to tell them that Facebook wasn’t good and I used to explain to them that, ‘What is Facebook? What do you share on it? Something that you are not able to share face to face that you share on Facebook’... Whether it is a positive or negative effect, both of them exist... As a teacher I can’t say that I have controlled it 100%.” (Interview 9)*

It is the teacher’s institutional authority as a teacher that gives him the legitimacy to intervene and discuss the problematic aspects of students' Facebook activity and point out the issues at hand. Thus the teacher shifts between the role of a friend and a teacher to talk to students about cyber security and privacy. Both these roles have something crucial to offer.

The teacher below points to a larger socio-economic system we inhabit which promotes certain interests while neglecting certain other welfare interests. Blaming the children for mobile phone use activities, only suggests that we as a society are neglecting the larger issues in education.

*“T: Children tell me about these things, if they have made a mistake. I will handle it accordingly myself. I can’t let this go to the principal or their family. I give him my personal decision about it. They happen to do things, which are wrong, which are beyond their age. Child alone is not responsible for it, right? This mobile that is being sold everywhere and they happen to see a dirty film on it, a child who is older, his mind then will get diverted elsewhere, isn’t it? If he happens to do something wrong and gets caught then the entire society is at fault but it isn’t his fault alone, right? How did he get access to it? Food wasn’t accessible to him, clothes weren’t accessible to him but mobile was. Somewhere there is a catch [jhol-jhal] in this all, isn’t it? You can’t blame the child 100% for this, isn’t it madam?” (Interview 7)*

The institutional authority that the institution provides a teacher is slowly crumbling as the Government schools lose face with stiff competition from private schools cropping up all around. In such a scenario, it is important to gain legitimacy as a teacher and think through their idea of a child, and to carve out new strategies to deal with private–public space. But I am arguing that these strategies should not be invented for teachers to shield themselves, e.g. by calling on the parents to blame the child without discussing the latent issues; rather they need to develop strategies for facing a reality which Indian society refuses to accept. It is only when such unspoken realities are spoken about that the criminalisation of children will stop and both parties, in this case teachers and children, will be able to deal with the situation better. While doing so, I do not think teachers can just be facilitators in such a system.

I argue that students do not just need facilitators but also strong role models with authority and legitimate power who at times are forced to take decisions that might not be acceptable to students. Such role models or guides may mediate the situation not just among students but also among parents. As many have argued, we are bombarded with constant information but we still do not

know how to think through this flow of information. The need for critically sifting through various sources of information is paramount as we are all being pushed to become individual consumers and constantly being made to choose.

### II.iii. Continuous Comprehensive Evaluation [Examination] (CCE[E])

The public education system at its inception was seen as a tool to accomplish the moral agendas of colonisation by the British Empire. Within this system, the textbook was a codified method to attain uniformity within the system, which was linked to the public examination system. As Krishna Kumar (2005, p.67) explains,

“The textbook was ‘prescribed’ by the government, and teacher training institutions worked hard to make the teacher thoroughly familiar with it... Memorization of the written word was a part of the tradition of learning in India. The tradition now acquired a new validity and focus under the auspices of a text book-centered curriculum and examination. To the English administration, examinations, like textbooks, were a means of norm maintenance. As Shukla (1978) has pointed out, colonial policy used written examinations to evolve a bureaucratic, centralized system of education. The official function of the examination system was to evolve uniform standards of promotion, scholarships and employment.”

It is no surprise then that textbooks and their relevance in examinations continue to occupy an important role among teachers and students alike.

After independence, the University Education Commission (1948) became increasingly critical about the examination system in the country and recommended changes to the examination system to bring about changes to the education system in India. This was picked up by the state Governments as well who became conscious of improving the education systems and appointed relevant committees to make changes. The Mudaliar Commission, which was a Secondary Education Commission (1952-53), led to the formation of the Central Examination Unit (CEU). In 1959, All India Council for Secondary Education (AICSE) and its CEU were absorbed into the Union Ministry of Education. 1961 saw the establishment of the NCERT, which also absorbed the CEU and was

given additional responsibilities of undertaking improvements at the primary level of education. The Kothari Commission of 1964 gave an added impetus to examination reform within the country. This commission, unlike others, studied the examination system within the country in its entirety and at all levels (Srivastava, 1979). Subsequent National Frameworks of Education 1975, 1988, 2000 and 2005 have continued to work towards the improvement of school education including the examination system in the country.

One of the notable changes brought about by the Right to Education Act (2009) was a change in the assessment system of education by the introduction of CCE[E]. Under this new system, from classes 6 to 10 and in some schools up to class 12, the evaluation of students' performance is continuous, i.e. throughout the year rather than monthly or yearly, as earlier. The evaluation is holistic, i.e. based on scholastic (school-based) subjects, as well as non-scholastic (life-skills, sports and other co-curricular activities), which are then summed up under the summative aspect of the scheme at the end of the learning year. However, teachers in interviews expressed their dissatisfaction with the new assessment system for various reasons.

As one of the teachers highlighted, CCE[E] as a system of evaluation is used until class 10, after which for further education students have to prepare for the older public examination system. Given that students are unprepared for such a shift in evaluation they tend to underperform in future assessments.

On the other hand, CCE[E] and public examinations are also used in the country to evaluate teachers' performance. Thus under CCE[E], where school teachers tend to design tests, as well as assess them, they tend to give additional marks to students (misusing assessment) even when not required, to enhance their own performance. As students' grades are used as a measure to evaluate the quality of education and teacher performance this defeats the purpose of the examinations altogether. The new scheme (CCE[E]), along with students' continuous evaluation, ensures teachers' continuous evaluation by enforcing documentation of class-based activities by teachers, which is seen as

a burden by teachers. Teachers are at times required to send the documentation of classroom activities to the office of CBSE (Central Board of Secondary Examination) for their own evaluation.

*“the teachers also have pressure on their mind that they have to get 100% result. Even if the child is not writing anything the teacher himself/herself is writing in the answer sheet and giving the marks... like for an answer the child deserves 2 we are giving 4. So that he gets into good grade... So the teacher’s result is making the teacher do all these things and the student is benefited. That’s why he is free. He knows anyway I am not going to fail... Whatever activities and all that CCE[E] has introduced they are not helping us. They are increasing our burden. We have so much of syllabus and then they ask us to record each and every activity. Ok. The child is like we... drama is there. Ok? For the whole class it has to be done. Ok? The teacher can’t do that in the class. Ok? In her free periods that too seeking the permission of the teacher who is teaching in that.” (Interview 4)*

While echoing concerns about CCE[E], some of which are similar to those of the previous teachers, this teacher highlights a lack of motivation in teachers, and a loss of responsibility on the part of the teacher to educate children under the new scheme as it is easier for them to provide more marks to students than needed which only leads to loss for the students, as they continue to move on to successive classes without gaining any skills or knowledge, e.g. reading and writing in English.

*“Yeah, but it has affected our education very much more... Teachers thought that okay it is alright. They teach to the children not in the authoritative manner but chalta hai [let it be] or in this particular manner they provide more marks in, you see, in formative tests that are held in the schools and marks in the summative exams which are held by the board or old secretariat. So their marks are very much poor. That’s why what happens but anyhow they got up till now 33% marks in all over the exams carried throughout the year. Now that’s why they got pass, from 9<sup>th</sup> they reached the 10<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup>. Now in 11<sup>th</sup> there is a big change. There is no any CCE[E] in 11<sup>th</sup> class... They are not able to read the text. They are not able to write the language... And that’s why in every subject they have a superficial knowledge. That’s why getting fail... you can see how much poor they really are.” (Interview 6)*

The new changes in assessment at school level have made it possible for students to move to a successive class without getting held back a year, given the diversity of assessment in CCE[E] (i.e. scholastic- and non-scholastic areas). However, they find themselves in the midst of a rather difficult syllabus in higher secondary classes which they are unable to cope with as they have failed to develop the foundational skills, e.g. proficiency in English, basic Math calculations, in previous classes. Under CCE[E], with the option of school-based and board-based examination at class 10, with many opting for board-based examination, many perform badly in school assessment and later on in public board exams. This has created a loss of faith in teachers in the eyes of parents, leading to a situation of conflict, as the teacher (Interview 1) below highlights.

*“But from 9<sup>th</sup> also if the child is not studying properly in [word not clear in recording] and from 9<sup>th</sup> if I suddenly make the student fail in the class then their parents also turn up that they are getting passed since 1<sup>st</sup> and now you failing them how is that possible?”* (Interview 1)

On the other hand, the teachers do not yet have the freedom to define their own curriculum. The curriculum is centrally controlled with little freedom to adapt it to classroom realities that may differ starkly between schools, regions and states. The introduction of activity- and project-based education; multiple texts for each subject, with the added responsibility of documentation on teachers with little time to adapt to the changes, are creating a dismal attitude towards CCE[E] and Government schools.

*“But I feel that syllabus should be reduced as it is because of the syllabus that the CCE[E] system is not being effective.”* (Interview 4)

CCE[E] system of assessment is a notable initiative to reverse the colonial system of examination within the education system of India and make learning holistic and assessment as an aid to learning. However, given the multiple issues affecting the education system, the teacher’s authority is being subordinated under bureaucratic processes and introduction of newer technologies without any preparation. Hence, what is required is a structural

and parallel response to these issues, a lack of which will inhibit and make it difficult to accept any singular change, as seen in the case of CCE[E]. This includes changes required to the teaching profession as well as societal change on the part of the parents and students in order to make CCE[E] successful.

### **III. Conclusion**

The Focus Group's recommendation to focus on learning rather than kinds of educational technologies has one drawback, namely that it fails to consider the pervasiveness of technologies, whether textbooks, modern technologies like cell/smart phones or the examination system. The way these technologies interact or have come to inhabit the socio-cultural environment of the country poses challenging situations for teachers who are entrusted with the responsibility of instilling a critical lens towards these technologies. Nevertheless, teachers, while being facilitators, are confronting their own biases and stereotypes, in the society teachers have grown up in. As teachers highlighted in the interviews, they see the merit in adopting a dialogic role when resolving issues faced by students, yet at the same time they continue to use their authority as teacher, which is not as unfitting as the policy suggests it to be, not just to protect themselves from the threat of technologies but also to guide, help and make students understand issues outside the school space, for example the problematic aspects of social networking websites.

Thus, the shift that the policy expects, namely that teachers should become facilitators, is narrow in its approach. As we have seen, the teachers in the interviews continue to promote and accept the role of a facilitator in the class while also describing incidents in which they used their authority as a teacher. Thus, there is a need to differentiate teaching practice from the status and role of the teacher in society. In India, where teachers historically enjoyed a position of respect and moral authority, this image of the teacher has seen a declining trend with the changes in society. However, there are spaces and needs where teachers continue to take recourse to their historical position to combat day-to-day classroom and educational challenges. While educational policy recognises

the diminished status of teachers, it wants teachers to continue to perform the role of radical change maker without discussing the authority of teachers. At the same time, the official aims of education and that of the teacher as stated in the policy may not go hand in hand. This results from teachers' understanding of responsibility beyond the school space, which differs from that of policy makers. Thus there is a need to discuss the aims of education along with the role of teachers and the status that teachers enjoy, to achieve the educational aims as perceived by teachers. The policy tends to confuse this. Also, if the government teachers are in need of empowerment, as seen in the earlier chapters, how will they attain this by being facilitators, when Government schools are being curbed under the pressure of private schooling? If the policy continues to neglect the voice of teachers in the process of change, it will continue to face problems in its successful implementation.

## **CHAPTER 5: The Need for Teachers' Authority**

In a socio-cultural context as diverse as that of India, education provided by the government school system plays a unique role of bringing students from various backgrounds together. This democratic aim is an important effort to uphold the constitutional values and preserve plurality. However, as discussed so far, there are various challenges to the system that make it difficult to successfully achieve this aim; one among them being, the status and authority of teachers.

The disruptive elements of the colonial past, and vote bank politics in an increasingly globalised and capital sensitive economy are causing detrimental consequences as visible in the Indian education system in the form of ideology laden education policies, reduced direct supply of educational funds with direct impact on the quality and status of teachers in government school system.

The various technologies introduced or available to stakeholders within the Indian education system have transformed the system over time. Textbooks introduced in colonial times subverted the authority of the teacher to make education standardised. The new CCE[E] system of examination is changing the way older examination system oriented classroom discussion and aims of education. The increasing access to and reliance on certain technologies e.g. mobile phones and applications have increased our access to a variety of knowledge. Students increasingly rely on the internet and web-based applications for information. However, the increasing reliance in the case of textbooks while non-acceptance of CCE[E] and mobile technologies in formal classrooms has only widened the gap in teachers' and students' relationships. This is because classroom teaching continues to be textbook bound and exam-oriented, failing to provide the critical discourse about new technologies necessary for students to develop a value-based opinion of the information they receive within the world they cohabit with others.

Any attempt to bring about a meaningful change in the education process through policies or technological innovations requires an understanding of the

fact that education and curriculum, along with the teacher–student relationship, evolve and change in the socio-cultural and historical context of the nation. Along with this, the stakeholders involved in the implementation process of the proposed changes need to not only be part of the process as representatives, but also their participation needs to be seen as instrumental in the process of conceptualising educational policies in India, as current efforts fail to achieve their targets. This has become even more important now, when teachers in state funded schools around the world and particularly India, are facing stiff competition from private, profit making and neoliberal education enterprises. The result is a change, undemocratic in nature, to educational aims and expectations; to the status of the teacher and the profession; and to the idea of school and its relation to wider society.

In the context of India, the policies discussed so far, like the National Curriculum Framework (2005) and resultant changes, like the ban on corporal punishment, CCE[E] (Continuous Comprehensive Evaluation [Examination]), changes to textbooks and the No Detention policy, seem to be transitional steps to bring about a purposeful shift in the schooling system of India. Whereas these changes take into account the historical and socio-cultural context of the mentioned issues, with a keen sense of social justice and equality, e.g. caste and class issues in Indian society, they lack the voices and actions of teachers, a sense of socio-cultural and historical nuances of the relationship between different stakeholders which raises questions about the way certain concepts and changes have been perceived and the potentiality of achieving them.

Teachers and their authority are two such concepts that are narrowly defined in educational policies in India and are in a need of re-examination. The current policies, for example, NCF 2005, tend to focus on the learners so as to enhance their participation in co-constructing knowledge, i.e. the idea is that there should be space in the classroom for learners to share their experiences. This in itself is important but there is little focus in the policies on the challenges teachers face in being agents of change. The policy makers fail to consider teachers' voice and actions, which highlight their use of constructive authority in situations

of conflict for successful mediation. This brings forth the importance of teachers' authority as an important tool for educational purposes. It is this authority of teachers and the reasons for retaining it that are examined further in this chapter, along with a separation between teachers and the process of teaching in the schooling system of India.

## **I. Differences between the Teacher and the Process of Teaching**

The policies discussed so far focus on learners. They suggest that school is an extension of the child's first learning environment, i.e. the home. The main suggestion in the policies is that there is a need in school to create space for learners' voices to be heard so that knowledge is co-created between teachers, students and other stakeholders. There is an effort to change the process of education for learners from a more traditional notion where teachers are repositories of knowledge to that of constructive ways of learning. The crisis as observed in traditional authority structures, requires us to re-examine and find new ways to rationalise models of authority. In this process, the teacher's role in *National Focus Group paper on Teacher Education for Curriculum Renewal* (n.d., p.20) is described as,

“The key role of teacher is as facilitator and supportive to learning. Teacher is the one who facilitates learners to realise their potentials, articulate their personal and context specific experiences in ways that are acceptable in the wider context of our nation.”

The focus group charts a facilitating role for the teacher because it believes that (1) unlike previously, the 'teacher' which has traditionally been synonymous with 'source of knowledge', no longer enjoys that role in the age of the internet and other communicative devices, as students can get access to knowledge through different modes; (2) learning should be learner-centric where the curriculum evolves and is not fixed and the teacher's role is merely to provide support to learners in this process; (3) the discrimination in the country based on caste, class and religious distinctions, which teachers themselves might inhabit as

they come from the same society, can be overcome or halted from further perpetuation by making teachers assume a facilitating role. This is because teachers as facilitators are not assumed to be repositories of knowledge; rather their role is to initiate the process of knowledge by bringing sensitive topics to the classroom. In the process, their own beliefs will be questioned and they will be forced to reflect; 4) teaching is to be dialogic and the teacher is also seen as a learner. Students' voices and experiences in the classroom, it is assumed, will bring into the classroom different experiences of discrimination in society and provide the space for discussion with teachers as facilitators. Also, teachers as learners will learn from students' experiences, unlike in the traditional role of teachers as authorities on knowledge. Thus, it is assumed in the policies that teachers' role, as facilitators and not as narrowly conceived traditional authority, will help address discrimination in society.

This narrow view of authority in education is a result of the limited role of the teacher as imagined in the space of school. However, teachers (as seen in the previous chapter) clearly seem to have a broader definition of education, educational space and learning. They are uniquely situated in the education system where they derive authority from multiple sources e.g. adult and subject based authority, as well as cultural and institutional authority. The result is that they find themselves not just being facilitators but also as reasonable authorities in the process of teaching, suitable for the context. It is often the case that teachers may use a lecture mode, dialogic- or activity-based methodology to initiate the process of learning.

It is this narrow view of traditional teachers and the use of their authority in the educational policies, which has come to correlate and confuse authority with excesses of power in the form of corporal punishment, that, I argue, has partly been the reason for the desired shift from teachers' traditional position to that of facilitators. Also, the lack of discourse and language around the term 'authority' in educational discourse is partly to blame for this. Authority, as discussed in Chapter 3, takes various forms. At the same time, within an educational context, it needs to be seen within the purview of legitimacy that is based on trust,

responsibility and professional expertise which are all factors that exist in an ideal teacher–student relationship. In addition, as is discussed further in some detail, even teachers as facilitators cannot be averse to teachers’ authority as the process of facilitation also relies on some kind of teacher authority because of the hierarchical arrangement of the school system.

The NCERT focus groups on various topics (2006) highlight the need for learner-centric education in the move to co-create knowledge through various sources, keeping in mind the historical and structural socio-economic inequalities which are crucial in the process of changing the current education system in the country. However, undertaking this task by limiting the role of teachers, i.e. defining the role of teachers as mere supporters in the process of education, is, I argue, unsuitable for accomplishing the aims promoted in the policy. This is because 1) the role of teacher as facilitator within the child-centered approach is unclear. This, as discussed in Chapter 2, is due to the globalised neo-liberal economy we have at present that has made it possible to adopt an idea of child-centeredness as a marketable strategy and in no way takes account of the child-centered ideas prevalent in various educational movements in India in the past. The conceptual gaps present in child-centered approaches make it convenient for successive governments to co-opt and frame it for their ideological gains. This has left teachers in a fund-starved state education system, undecided and sometimes confused about their role as facilitators. Thus as Rosenow (1993) mentions it is the authority of the democratic state that is in question putting that of the individual and society in dispute. 2) Teachers are the backbone in bringing about any procedural change within education and tend to inhabit and execute various roles within the school and outside it. Some of those roles, as highlighted in the previous chapter, may involve facilitation, but in other circumstances they may require the teacher to use her cultural, institutional and professional authority to combat the situation at hand. The role that the teacher plays also depends on her understanding of education, and of the role of teachers and the extent of the area of responsibility, all of which is far from clear at the moment.

The NCERT focus group paper on *Aims of Education* (2006) states that, after home, school is an extension of the learning environment of the child. The role of the teacher is then defined in relation to the school and the processes of learning that may take place within it. However, the teacher as seen in the interview excerpts (Chapter 4) clearly tends to transgress her space of work by getting involved with the community and communicating with children on social networking websites. Thus, educational space for her is not limited to that of the school.

On the contrary, it is this transgression into students' lives that helps her engage with other adult authorities. This engagement with students outside the school space is dependent on aspects of her role other than that of a facilitator. It derives from a certain sense of care for the students she is teaching, and responsibility for their educational development. This, as Bingham (2008) highlights, is because of the relationship that teacher and students develop over a course of time. Most of all, her access to spaces outside the school is possible because of the historical socio-cultural authority as a teacher that she enjoys in society e.g. Guru-shishya tradition. In a previous example (Chapter 4) where a teacher spoke about students sending him a friend request through Facebook, the teacher explained the act by describing his relationship with students as that of a facilitator. However, the possibility of him engaging students in a conversation of sharing personal things in a public forum like Facebook and its repercussions, were possible because of the status of teachers in Indian society, which gives them the legitimacy to carry out such conversations outside the school space, while at the same time the teacher's intervention in this manner is accepted by students. As John Carroll (1979) points out, children crave parental authority as it provides them with a sense of security.

In addition, as I discuss further, teachers under CCE[E] policy are given the autonomy to design student assessments based on the social context and classroom teaching. This autonomy rests on the belief that teachers are better equipped than other adults in society to design and conduct assessments as

they are the ones engaged in teaching students and can use their professional judgement for the purpose. However, it seems contradictory that the same autonomy is unavailable to them in the process of teaching.

A certain way of teaching, i.e. being a facilitator, that is scarcely understood, is being enforced without taking into account teachers' voices and socio-cultural practices within the country. The demands made on teachers and the kind of authorities they are expected to be, Peters (1973) highlights, is also the reason for the current crisis in education. One of the main reasons for enforcing such a view by policymakers is to move away from a colonial idea of teaching that instilled a hierarchical flow of information, i.e. from teacher to students, which limits the scope for a democratic interaction and increases possibilities of discrimination rather than overcoming caste, class and gender inequalities in society within school curriculum and classroom practices, e.g. asking students from Dalit families to perform tasks such as cleaning toilets, or sweeping the school grounds (these practices still exist and are often reported in media). It is also assumed that teachers as part of the society can sometimes, either out of ignorance or with full awareness, enact these unequal practices. Nonetheless, enforcing a certain method of teaching which does not take into account the nuances of teacher–student relationships and the status of teachers, is only going to delay the process of change. As Arendt (1961b) highlights adults have to take responsibility for the introducing the child to the world they are born in that has existed before them. This includes taking responsibility for various inequalities, caste, religion and gender based discrimination present in Indian society. To bring about systemic transformation and address inequalities, there should be an attempt, not only to make structural changes by including teachers from different castes, classes and genders in the process, but also to foster discussions on issues of inequalities in the larger public sphere, as representation without wider community reflection is futile and will be unsuccessful. As Kitchen (2014) mentions knowledge should be seen as a collective inheritance of experience and judgement. In order to adopt new modes of learning, archaic practices should be forgone but not by disowning our

past. Thus, teacher's being 'an authority' (Anscombe, 1979) is useful for this process as, they engage in reasonable conversations with students while being open to criticism.

One way to overcome the dichotomy between teachers as facilitators and teachers as an authority is to differentiate and understand the position of teachers and the process of teaching.

“There is no one ‘method’ that is effective in causing all learners to learn in similar ways. Each teacher has to find one’s own ‘style’ of learning through perceptive practice but recognise the fact that all learners learn in their own ways. ‘Teaching method’ therefore, has two aspects for assessing its effectiveness or appropriateness. One pertains to teacher’s style with which she uses method or methods. It relates to one’s own rationale. The second is the learner’s (school students) way of learning”. (Position Paper National Focus Group on Teacher Education for Curriculum Renewal, n.d., p.20)

While the Focus Group paper on Teacher Education (*Position Paper National Focus Group on Teacher Education for Curriculum Renewal*, n.d.) recognises that there is no single method of teaching as learners have their own unique way of learning, it expects teachers to limit their autonomy and ways of teaching by acting only as facilitators. It also needs to be emphasised here that it is generally difficult to establish a direct causal connection between teaching and learning, as the policy seems to suggest, as learning takes place through multiple factors, some of which may not even involve formal teaching. The teacher’s role is complex, involving student development, designing appropriate content for classroom discussion, and building on already existing knowledge, not all of which can be measured and accounted for. At the same time, students are not passive learners; they interact with their surroundings, which spans beyond the four walls of the school (Davis, 2003). A democratic classroom interaction can boost possibilities of learning but ignoring factors like teacher’s authority that continues to be utilised in an educational context for constructive

purposes and instead promoting the idea of teachers as facilitators, will only lead to impractical or unworkable policy expectations.

At the same time, drawing a distinction between teachers and their teaching helps in the current scenario to address the poor status of teachers in the current education system, that is having an effect on the quality of education. Their status is often affected by multiple factors including their gender, caste, class or the kind of school system they are affiliated to (Private versus Government). Moreover, the teacher is not just recognised by the process of teaching but also through the status or position she holds in society, its culture and history, which in turn affects the process. The UNESCO (*World Education Report 1998: Teachers and Teaching in a Changing World*, 1998) report summarises (next page) this fact poignantly,

“The expression "status" as used in relation to teachers means both the standing or regard accorded them, as evidenced by the level of appreciation of the importance of their function and of their competence in performing it, and the working conditions, remuneration and other material benefits accorded them relative to other professional groups.”(p. 23)

Historically, teachers in India enjoyed a position of respect, with their work often compared to that of a moral and religious guide; and earned the reverence enjoyed by gods and goddesses in the country. However, within the modern society, with the commercialization of education where for-profit private educational institutions have become a norm rather than an exception, the role of education along with that of a teacher has seen varied changes over the years. These changes have created a market out of education, affecting established systems and creating multiple others for its own perpetuation. These include teacher salaries, rise of for-profit schools, lack of or sub-standard training of teachers, undefined aims of education and notions of the role of a teacher, examination-based assessment of teacher performance and lack of teacher motivation, to name just a few.

The salaries of central government teachers, along with those of teachers in state schools (although the salaries of state school teachers differ depending on the economic capacity of the state) have seen a steady increase (Kingdom, 2011) over the years compared to their counterparts in private schools – especially after the last 6<sup>th</sup> Pay Commission (*Report of the sixth central pay commission*, 2008) which along with higher salaries introduced other benefits including housing and maternity benefits. However, this has not led to positive effects in the status of teachers in Government schools, who continue to be looked down upon in society amid growing private sector education. Poor teacher training programmes in India with unsatisfactory results in the quality of education (*Position Paper National Focus Group on Teacher Education for Curriculum Renewal*, n.d.) and insufficient public funds are some of the reasons contributing to the poor status of government teachers. Various (*Position Paper National Focus Group on Teacher Education for Curriculum Renewal*, n.d.) reviews of teacher training programmes at state as well as national level<sup>46</sup> have prompted a restructuring and reorganisation of teacher training authorities. One such measure has been the appointment of para-teachers or contractual appointments with little emphasis on pre-service teacher training.

Teaching, however, is no longer a profession people strive for, which has led to under-qualified candidates applying for teaching positions. This has had an effect on the quality of teachers and as a consequence on the professional identity of teachers and the teaching profession. This is accompanied by a poor student–teacher ratio, which means that available teachers have to compensate for the lack of teachers; leaving them little time to work and build their

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<sup>46</sup> Teacher training is carried out at state as well as national level in accordance with the National Policy on Teacher Education. The National Policy on Education (1986) led to the restructuring of teacher training by the establishment of DIETs (District Institute of Education and Training) in each district, up gradation of 250 colleges of education as college of teacher education, establishment of 50 Institute of Advanced Studies in Education (IASEs) and strengthening of SCERTs (State Councils of Educational Research and Training). Teacher training in the country is divided into pre-service and in-service teacher training with a growing emphasis on in-service training of teachers. (*Position Paper National Focus Group on Teacher Education for Curriculum Renewal*, n.d.)

professional capacity. Teachers in most Government schools are also burdened with election duty and other administrative tasks in schools adding to the negative perception and powerlessness felt by teachers in Government schools.

The National Curriculum Framework (2005) recognises the socio-political difficulties faced by teachers, as well as poor teacher training programmes. Its recommendations are spread across various levels, including that of addressing structural inequalities, economic growth and the changing needs of education, and the need to build the professional capacity of teachers with an emphasis on in-service teacher training programmes. On the face of it, the National Framework, as discussed above (see Chapter 4) expects teachers to be facilitators of knowledge as well as agents of change, through an idea of co-constructing knowledge with students. The powerlessness experienced by teachers cannot be overcome by defining their role as being mere facilitators. As seen in the interviews (Chapter 4), if teachers need to be agents of change, they sometimes need to engage with students, beyond the school space, or with parents, for which they need recourse to their cultural as well as institutional authority. Moreover, in the process of exercising their cultural and institutional authority as teachers, they seem to address issues that arise because of the pervasiveness of modern technologies but also to fight on behalf of students against the authority of their parents, to safeguard and uphold children's right to education, as previously discussed.

Thus, in order to empower teachers, while building their capacity, they need to be trusted and should be given professional autonomy. That autonomy needs to be there in all areas and not just assessment. The kind of teaching and learning methods they use may have certain drawbacks, which of course needs to be addressed in the course of training, but the teachers, as witnessed during the interviews, work with a different idea of education than the policies, that involves their interaction with the community and a greater moral responsibility. It is this sense of responsibility that works as a way for teachers to be motivated by their work, e.g. standing up for a student's right to education against her parents' who wanted the student married off early; interacting with students on social

media websites to keep a check on the various things that may influence them and engaging them in a critical discussion. Thus it is the organic relationship of teachers with their environment that helps them respond in the way they choose to.

The distinction between teachers and the process of teaching then helps us understand teachers' authority in a new light. It also helps to understand the relevance of teacher authority to the process of teaching. The next section elaborates the foundations and the use of teacher authority in its many forms, and the purpose it serves in the teaching and learning environment of schools in India.

## **II. The Need for Teacher Authority**

The National Curriculum Framework (2005) promotes an idea of education, which is in conjunction with the democratic ethos of the Indian constitution. The education system in India, particularly the public education system has over the years come to represent the most marginalised communities of the country. This is a result of a parallel rise of a private, for-profit education sector. The people who can afford to pay for such education are increasingly opting for it. The state funding in public schools is dismal and state reliance on private participants has increased to provide for adequate educational opportunities, unconcerned with questions of such a system's values. The NCF 2005 document, taking cognisance of this situation, while trying to uphold the democratic ethos of the Indian constitution, wants to promote education throughout the country, which especially takes into account the needs of marginalised communities, i.e. SC/ST/OBCs. The document plans to achieve this by promoting an idea of education (1) that addresses the silences in the curriculum with regard to the lived experiences of children who belong to neglected communities; (2) that challenges structural inequalities and discriminatory practices that are reproduced through institutions such as schools, through the organisation of space as well as the various power dynamics within the school. One of the ways these issues are addressed, as

discussed early on in Chapter 4, is by making teachers facilitators who are also learners and should reflect on their own practice.

The problem with this argument is (1) it has a very narrow view of teachers' authority. (2) It fails to address the unequal power relations that exist in school because of the difference of age and experience between students and teachers, the classroom arrangement, the design of the school, institutional structures and its functioning. These power structures, as the progressive movement has highlighted, can sometimes curb the independence of students. However, they can also be utilised for educational purposes as in the case of teachers and students. The idea that the teacher can play an important role of initiating the child into the world through her own experience, as Arendt (1961b) highlights, reflects a core notion of the responsibility of adults towards children. It is this difference, and adults' being in the world before children, that gives them the necessary experience to nurture and prepare children to deal and adapt to the new world while also, as crucially articulated by Arendt, developing the capacity to eventually act in it and on it. (3) It tends to conceive and assign teachers a role without considering teachers' voices, which highlights its own undemocratic nature. (4) Discrimination of any kind within society cannot be overcome by changing the roles of stakeholders involved in the process; rather change may require use of various positions, some of which may involve the use of authority. It should be the prerogative of the teachers to decide the position best suited for their situation.

Relationships between different stakeholders, i.e. students, teachers and parents, are complex. It has many more layers than what is portrayed in NCF—2005. For example, teachers, as described earlier, can practise and reproduce discriminatory practices, as they are part of the same society they are expected to prepare students to change. However, the intentional and non-intentional aspects of teachers' practice need to be differentiated, e.g. a teacher due to her lack of engagement with critical feminist literature which discusses the societal idea of measurement of strength, may suggest to the class that girls are physically weaker than boys. It is the aspect of self-reflection along with

information that can make her aware, as the policy suggests, of such discriminatory practices in her own teaching.

In order to address the issue of discrimination within the school, it is crucial to understand its prevalence in society as a whole and the availability or absence of measures to overcome it. Discrimination of any kind within society works on various levels including structural and routine procedures. If teachers are part of the institutions that may reproduce discriminatory practices, changing their role to that of facilitators does not address the problem at hand. At the same time, this is a very narrow view of the traditional teacher's role and responsibility within education. To take an example, let's consider caste-based discrimination in India. Issues like caste discrimination are not very obvious. Caste-based discrimination differs in urban and semi-urban areas depending on several covert and overt social practices. In my family, which resides in an urban area in India, the practice of keeping separate utensils for domestic help and people engaged in physical labour is still practised. I am an English-medium university graduate who did not realise it to be a discriminatory practice until last year when I was part of a fellowship in an organisation working for the rights of marginalised communities, including Dalits, against whom such discrimination is practised. Hence, to assume that teachers who reproduce discriminatory practices do it intentionally is to simplify the complex problem at hand. Moreover, to assume that teachers will confront and communicate about such practices if their position is changed from a traditional teacher to that of a facilitator is again too narrow an understanding of human action and agency. Even as a facilitator, until and unless the teacher consciously engages with the topic and makes an effort to bring these issues to the surface, they may not be discussed in the way they need to be. This requires many skills, like knowledge of the subject, the skills to direct the class in a certain way so as to make them see the discrimination, and most of all the belief that it is worthwhile to engage with such a topic and to get students to believe in the value of equality and justice. There will also be instances when students' knowledge of such issues may be limited, wherein the teacher will have to explain and talk about them

and for which they may assume various roles. Hence, the topic and its discussion cannot be reduced to mere facilitation that is conceptually ill defined, on the part of the teacher. Nevertheless, teachers who may have practised discrimination, in other instances continue to support students to protect their right to education, which may come under threat from parents facing economic difficulty. The fact that teachers are able to mediate the situation between parents and students has elements of them using their cultural authority, historically bestowed; and educating the parents about the value of education. This suggests that they need to be seen as authorities, with the professional ability and sense of judgement to undertake discussion of sensitive, yet socially important topics.

School as an institution within society embodies various structural relations while fulfilling its task of teaching the young, the responsibility of which relies on the adults. These relations are visible in the difference of age between students and teachers, the existence of positions such as teacher and students where one is historically considered a learner, the other a teacher. All these relations occupy certain kind of power within the relationship that is institutionally determined. At the same time, the organisation of classroom space, teaching and learning and other procedural examples create and augment the use of power. School as an institution in its organisation is hierarchal in nature. To deny this is to assume a reality that fails to account for the complexities therein (Burbules, 1986). However, as Foucault (Gordon, 1980) and others have pointed out, power does not exist with an individual, rather it flows. Structures of power are supported by institutions, by positions that individuals hold and through the various technologies that are used to maintain or recreate these positions of power. In a relationship, power is determined as much by the actors and their needs, as it is by the history of institutions that the relationship is part of and formed in. Thus, in a teacher–student relationship, the teacher’s power is dependent as much on the existence of the student and her autonomy as it is by the needs of students and the history of student–teacher relationships within the country or culture. However, this does not mean an unquestioned use and

abuse of power. It is the use of power, for direction, guidance and organisation that is desired.

Power that accompanies legitimate authority can be used for productive purposes. The teacher's authority is derived from the institution she is part of, as well as from her knowledge and the cultural factors, which also empower her to go beyond the school space, to take the initiative of working with the students. For Hannah Arendt, who considered authority to be intimately connected with tradition and religion, a collapse in political authority led to the downfall of tradition and religion with an effect on authority of all kinds. Authority, which for her is associated with "augment" and "Foundation"... "endows political structures with durability, continuity and permanence, and gives coherence and meaning to human action and existence" (Gordon, 1999, p.163).

In *The Human Condition* (1958), Arendt explains the importance of the adult-child relationship in conjunction with political action through the concept of "natality". Any newcomer (child) who comes to the world has something unique to offer, as it inherently possesses ability for action. This action is aroused within the company of others which one may join, but is not conditioned by them. Action thus should be viewed outside the means-end category, as it is an end in itself. The adults, who introduce the child into the already existing world, initiate this action. One can never anticipate all the consequences of an action that may arise from such a combination. The authority (which is different from qualifications) of adults, especially teachers, who have to initiate the young into this world, relies on them taking responsibility for the newcomers as well as for the world. Teachers' qualification to assume authority relies on their knowing the world and taking responsibility for initiating the young into this world, at the same time, preserving the newness that each newcomer possesses. It is this newness that can help to preserve the ever-changing world around us by remaking it. Adults provide children the safe space to grow and gain strength before they attain maturity. Thus, adults' protective shadow and safe haven is

important for children for their healthy development (Arendt, 1961b; Gordon, 1999) and so also their authority.

Teachers, in the context of India, who are not as trained as they should be, assume or have to assume various roles in order to mediate situations they are faced with. It is in the process of teaching that they come to understand the complex environment of their work and develop ways to deal with it, while considering it their responsibility to educate the young. It is therefore, I argue, obvious that their voices should be heard in policy making and decisions affecting the function of schools. For example, as seen in various interviews (see Chapter 4) there is a place for teachers to become facilitators in the classroom in the process of teaching. However, there are instances where teachers justifiably assume the role of a moral guide or cultural authority to instruct the parents as well as students. NCF 2005's attempts to streamline teachers' role is limited to the teachers' role in the classroom. It rather highlights a position of authority that policy makers have placed themselves in, on classroom arrangements and practices, which stifles the authority of teachers as professionals to decide their own position in classroom. This, as Stephen Ball (2015) highlights in the context of the English education system, has resulted in a relocation of authority, such that the authority of educators has diminished while that of heads of state and policy makers has expanded: "This expansion has at the same time been political and depoliticising" (Ball, 2015, p.8).

Student–teacher relationships are not just about educating children in subject matter but also relate to their personal and mental well-being. In a neoliberal environment, parents are often struggling to make ends meet, with little time to care for and spend with their children. In such a scenario, the clearly defined role and authority of a teacher is ever more necessary. At the same time, through global linkages we have brought the world closer, where there is information overload; however, we still are not equipped to make sense of it. Also, children are increasingly seen as consumers who have access to multiple images, products and life styles, which continue to shape their aspirations

without sufficient guidance. Teachers in this situation have increasingly come to be seen as individuals with whom children share personal issues and seek guidance, as seen in dialogues from collected interviews in the previous chapters. Also, it is through their role as moral guides that teachers are able to strike an amicable relationship with students, which helps them to better understand students and build an atmosphere of trust.

We as a society still hold teachers responsible for providing us with tools to make sense of this world. The teachers work as mediators between families and the world in order to equip children to slowly find their place in the world. Many teachers describe the complexities they face in terms of the daily lives of children, which takes priority before actual subject knowledge. The internet may provide us information but it may not necessarily provide us with the skills or abilities to create knowledge relevant to us. This is still a responsibility reserved solely for the teachers in our society or other adults around us. However, as the task of teachers is being streamlined in the current neoliberal systems, the possibility of co-creating knowledge while mediating the challenges faced by teachers is becoming increasingly difficult to balance. This has led to a decline in teacher motivation, and a diminishing trust in teacher–student relationships.

Teachers have a certain authority bestowed upon them by the institution they are affiliated with; they acquire professional authority through the training that they have acquired as a teacher and the other authority they receive from students, when they gain their legitimacy in the classroom. This third kind of authority is something that develops in the relationship between students and teachers, as they develop trust and have faith in each other. It is this authority that gives or takes away the freedom of the teacher to educate students in her class, be creative and introduce students to ideas that will make them think about things around them and respond accordingly. It is this authority however, that is becoming more and more endangered in our schooling system while the other two, i.e. the institutional form and that acquired by training are growing steadily.

Available teacher training programmes in the country along with a vision for new programmes under NCF 2005, expect teachers to learn about child psychology and subject-based knowledge, to develop a keen sense of judgement and also to be agents of change, while simultaneously acknowledging that within the current education system teachers tend to feel disempowered.

“At the lowest rung of the education bureaucracy, teachers have had minimal say in terms of task allotted to them of census data gathering, surveys, etc. that cut into their teaching time... the content of trainings, B.Ed courses and refresher courses for in-service and pre-service teachers, do not provide them opportunities for self-reflection or introduction to processes of looking at their own socialisation process. Teacher’s trainings, courses and refresher programmes introduce theories of learning and information as abstract, atomised knowledge creating no space for teachers to undergo a transformatory experience themselves – of reading theory in a personalised way.” (*National Focus Group on Gender Issues in Education, 2006, pp.45-46*)

This raises questions such as, how are teachers to be agents of change if they feel disempowered? How will teachers feel empowered, if they are not made to feel professional authorities when there is a lack of autonomy with regard to their role in education?

### **III. Conclusion**

Education needs to be understood in broad terms. This includes the school and communities outside it, for example, the online world. The teacher’s role can be extended to spaces outside the school if it helps students and parents to better understand and mediate the challenges around them. The teacher, in order to educate, should be able to draw on her cultural and historical position as an authority so as to gain legitimacy and thereby to be better equipped to play this expanded role. Thus, the social and cultural position not only gives her the legitimacy to participate in the wider community but it helps her communicate with parents and children about unfamiliar issues. This rather helps adults and children come together and create a common platform to face challenges and for teachers to be agents of change. It helps not just in resolving the issues at

hand but also contributes to teacher empowerment and recognition of their worth and work among community members. Thus, I argue, there is a need to recover a notion of and defence of teachers' authority within education.

## Conclusion

The research examined teacher authority in India through the following research questions:-

- a. What does teachers' authority mean to the teachers in India, in relation to students and to the cultural, economic and socio-political structures within which they operate?
- b. How do teachers use their authority to achieve educational goals?

The research focuses on teachers associated with the government school system in the country, that has a long history. In the interviews with teachers conducted in December 2014 and May 2015 teachers' responses in terms of the issues, motivation and meaning of their authority, directed the course of this research. The discussion on respect, position and expectations from teachers in a public education system, their relation with the community and the changing meaning of education in relation to the private education system in the country motivated me to engage with the relevant literature. Hence, the above questions pertaining to teacher authority are addressed by engaging in a multidisciplinary literature that accounts for educational changes in historical and present times. This literature helped build an understating on the systems of power that contributed to the changing educational context in the country; and the way this affected the current socio-political and institutional structures, within which, teacher's own authority finds meaning in relation to the communities they work with.

Teachers' defined their authority in multidimensional terms. i.e. their position with the public education system and the way it has changed historically, the ready availability of certain technological tools as well as the rise of a private education system, contributed to their meaning of teacher authority.

In order to understand the dimensions of their meaning, I engaged with critical literature on the public education system and post-independence educational politics that helped to understand the deterioration process of various

indigenous knowledge systems in the country. It built an understanding of the idea of respect that teachers often referred to in the interviews that has its source in the religious and cultural practices in ancient times i.e. Guru-shishya tradition, among others. The way this source underwent change after colonial education was connected to a change in the perception of the purpose and role of teachers. In the interviews teachers continued to take recourse to their cultural authority while dealing with issues in the school but engagement with the literature highlighted the way this cultural authority has come to be seen with suspicion due to the loss of its meaning and its relation with certain undemocratic aspects of the Indian constitution. However, certain strands of it continue to be useful.

Teachers highlighted the rise of private schools in India, subject and gender based authority, as well as that of the textbooks and various technological devices that subordinate their efforts to define their own authority in the classroom and outside it. This led me to explore the neoliberal social and economic climate in the country as examined in chapters 2 and 3 that is influencing the current educational policies.

Engagement with the policy literature highlighted the reasons teachers find it difficult to define their own authority in the current education system. This is because the educational policies influenced by international funds and ideas, adopt a narrow definition of teacher's authority. In addition they recommend child-centered ideas that are vague (as discussed in chapter 2) and hence difficult for teachers to implement. Thus teachers find themselves in a situation where they are forced to adopt a method of teaching they hardly understand or are trained for. Thereby further depreciating the poor status of government school-teachers.

The above literature and efforts made by the teachers as seen in various interview extracts through the thesis, highlights the relevance and need for teacher's authority and thus provides justification for this research project. Educational authority historically is related to structures of political authority in

our society, and the role of the state and its institutions, including the school, along with the authority of different stakeholders like parents, teachers and children, and their rights in the process of education. It is the crisis in our traditional forms of authority that resulted in an educational crisis of authority as our society underwent change. At present we need new forms of rationalisation for educational authority.

This takes us to the second research question that attempts to show the ways teachers amidst the complex problems are continuing to use a multidimensional idea of their authority to attain educational goals. The teachers highlighted in the interviews a need to recognise different forms of authority and identify conflicts of interests among them, rather than completely ignoring them. The democratic changes expected in defining teachers' position in the current Indian context cannot be achieved without examining the broad range of structures of authority as used by teachers for education in a cultural context.

For example, the ancient position of teachers in Indian society and their aims of education were informed by their relation with the child, community and school. This channelized their actions. Similarly, in the current scenario, the teachers within their institutional context sometimes define their educational goals that may be different from the one propagated by the education policies. In order to fulfil these aims they take recourse to multiple forms of authorities available to them, like relational and institutional authority in order to acquaint the child to the world.

This is because, in Arendt's (1961b) words, teachers as adults take responsibility to introduce children into the unknown world shaped by adults before them. In the Indian context, this adult/teacher's authority uses traditional strands of Guru-shishya tradition, while elements of Bingham's (2008) relational authority to protect the child from harsh treatment from other authorities, among others as mentioned earlier, depending on the situation and context. Thus the teacher, as in Wanderer's words (2013), is as much 'in authority' as she is 'an authority'.

In another example, the availability of modern technological tools in the present neoliberal socio-political situation, is changing the mode of communication with peers, through social networking websites like Facebook, or mobile internet applications like WhatsApp, that has increasingly made children vulnerable. Thus, technology pervades the social life of students and influences their relationships with others, including teachers. In this scenario, the government school-teacher has come to find a renewed use of her ancient student-teacher relationships as a framework to use her moral, epistemic and adult authority to help students.

It is the lack of understanding and discourse on classroom realities in educational policies (NCFSE-2000, NCF 2005) and teacher training courses that provided piecemeal policy recommendations that fail to bring about the desired change and are making it difficult for teachers to be change makers as expected by these policies.

The recent educational policies like Continuous Comprehensive Evaluation [Examination] (CCE[E]), changes to older textbooks, anti-corporal punishment, the No Detention policy, and the Right to Education (RTE) are an attempt to address ancient illegitimate structures of power left by colonial education. These policies, keeping in mind the needs of marginalised communities, the diminished access to quality education in the neoliberal economic system with the privatisation of education and under-investment by the state, want the state to consider education as a basic responsibility and change the way it perceives quality education, which should not be a privilege for a select few. They propose a shift from an archaic idea of teachers, which according to the current policies, include an authoritarian aspect and are inconsistent with democratic ethos of education. However, in implementing this vision, the policies fail to consider the voices of teachers about what they understand as education, pedagogy and their own role, and the challenges they face within and outside classrooms.

This situation has resulted in a feeling of mistrust among teachers with regard to the new policies. Although they acknowledge the spirit in which the policies

have been proposed, they do not think their objectives can be achieved in the complex socio-cultural environment of the community. This forces us to reconsider the significance of teachers' authority, as this research has attempted.

The historical, socio-cultural and political history of India; with the broad theoretical lens of philosophy of education on the conceptual understanding of authority and global movement of ideas, time and space in postcolonial scholarship and the present understanding gained from interviews with teachers provided the depth and nuances that have shaped the arguments of the thesis. i.e. teacher's authority is essential to any process of change.

It is through the use of various forms of authority that teachers continue to gain access to spaces other than the school in order to initiate what they think is a responsible dialogue with students. In fact, as I have shown, teachers themselves have come to redefine their role among the many challenges they face. They assume multiple roles, including that of an authority on certain cultural and moral matters. It is affected by various factors and cannot be reduced to a single conception. This adult form of teacher authority is multidimensional.

Teachers, as an alternative, need to be part of policy making not just as representatives but as acknowledged contributors because where we continue to disregard teachers' perspectives on their own roles, we continue to hold them responsible for the failures of our education system.

## **I. Suggestions for Further Research**

Educational authority has shifted or been displaced from teachers to policy makers. If authority concerning classroom teaching and learning continues to be concentrated in the hands of a select few, without taking the considerations of teachers into account, any meaningful change within education will not only be delayed but may never crystallise in the present system. Thus, an account and defence of teachers' authority is essential and needs to be brought back into the

education system. Also, teachers who are trained professionals and are familiar with the world around them are responsible for initiating children into this world. Teachers, drawing on their own culturally informed notions of authority and of their role, tend to work with a different idea of education and responsibility, which may not be confined to school. This helps teachers to address new challenges confronted by students and by the community at large and thus they can be agents of change. Along with this, systematic changes with a vision to confront inequalities in society through different means can bring about a process of education within society that may begin in institutions but moves beyond them.

While this research has opened up some key questions in the area of teacher authority, there are a number of possible avenues for further research suggested by my discussion, which I briefly outline below.

Consideration of inequalities within the Indian society that prompted the procedural and structural changes within educational policy, requires wider public engagement on issues like caste, gender and class discrimination. The teachers are part of the society they represent, including inherent discriminatory practices. Thus, long-term public education programmes with the help of wider communication media can be a way to address these issues.

Further research into previous teacher training programmes along with the recent changes brought about with the changes in policy will help understand teachers' professional status, along with skills in engaging with politically volatile issues of discrimination.

Critical research into the various students–teacher relationships prevalent among different knowledge systems in India, changes witnessed in them and the way the actors continue to adapt to these changes, could help to give a wider glimpse into the role of authority in education and society.

Professional communities of teachers need to be created where they are able to discuss routine classroom difficulties by sharing and learning from each other's experiences.

Thus, it is essential to examine the historical nature of relationships through a broad lens before proposing changes, to understand better the aspects that need to be modified and also others that continue to be useful and should be retained, as in the case of teacher authority, which continues to serve a useful purpose in education among new challenges.

I hope to have shown how teacher's authority is an under-researched and vital element in the shifting educational policy landscape in India today, and to have suggested some fruitful ways in which this notion could be further explored and developed, through both conceptual and empirical work.

## Appendix 1: Interview Schedule

Interview	School	Subject	Class	Place	Gender	Age*	Qualification	
1	State Government Boys Senior Secondary School, Vikas Puri	English	8th, 9th and 10th	Delhi	Female	30 to 35	Bachelor of Education, Masters in Education, passed National Eligibility Test for teaching at College & University level.	
2	*** Sarvodya Girls High School	Guest Lecturer for Biology	11th and 12th			29 to 35	MSc & MPhil in Biotechnology	
**3		Teacher 1 (T1) - Social Sciences, T3 - Sanskrit, T4 - Home Science, Work Education, Social use of productive work, T5 - Sanskrit	All teachers taught classes 6th to 12th			T1 - Approx. 40, T3 - Approx. 50, T4 - Approx. 32, T5 - Approx. 36	T1- Bachelors ; Others unknown	
4		**** Kendriya Vidyalaya	English			11th and 12th	Hyderabad	30 to 40 years
5		Chemistry					Male	Approx. 50

6	State Government Boys Senior Secondary School, Vikas Puri	Vice-Principal, Social Science, English, Maths	All subjects and classes from 1 <sup>st</sup> to 12 <sup>th</sup>	Delhi			Class 12	
7	State Government Boys Senior Secondary School, Vikas Puri	Social Sciences	11th and 12 <sup>th</sup>			Approx. 40		Masters in Philosophy (Hindi)
8	**** Kendriya Vidyalaya	Social Sciences and Head of School for Discipline	6th to 12th	Mumbai		Approx. 35	Bachelors in Social Science	
9		Economics	11th and 12th		Female	Approx. 40		MSc in Economics
10		Social Sciences	9th to 12th		Male			Unknown

\* I did not ask teachers their age. These are approximate ages.

\*\* Focus Group Interview with 5 to 8 teachers out of which only 4 teachers spoke.

\*\*\* This is a central Government run school, which is from Nursery unto class 12. Hence it is called "Sarvodya" which means inclusive of all ages.

\*\*\*\* This is a central Government school for central government employees' children, who have jobs that involves moving within states in India.

## **Appendix 2: Questions for Interviews**

### ***School Demographics***

- 1) What kind of school do you teach in? e.g. private, government.
- 2) How many classes or students do you teach in a day?
- 3) How different are students in your class in terms of:  
  
a) age b) gender c) religion d) class e) caste

### ***Shaping of Teacher***

- 4) Why did you decide to become a teacher?
- 5) How long have you been teaching for?
- 6) What do you think is your role as a teacher in the current education system?
- 7) Do you have any personal goals?
- 8) Which goals are more important to you personally when are teaching?

### ***Authority***

- 9) What do you think authority means to you?
- 10) Where do you practice it and how? Can you give instances?
- 11) How is authority important for your work as a teacher?
- 12) What kind of difficulties do you face while teaching and how do you handle them?

### ***Autonomy***

- 13) What do you think autonomy means?
- 14) There is a general acceptance in educational literature that children should be taught to think independently. What do you think about it?
- 15) Do you think you help them achieve that in any way? How?

### ***Education System***

- 16) What kinds of changes have taken place in government policies related to education over the years?
- 17) How have they affected you?
- 18) What kind of pressure do you face in a school system and how do you handle it?
- 19) What kind of change do you expect?

### ***Teaching of a certain Text***

- 20) What is the motive of teaching this text? Are there different motives?
- 21) Are there different ways to teach it?
- 22) How would you teach it and why?
- 23) How do you make sure children understand the text?
- 24) Do you think children know something about the text before you take it up in the class?

## **Appendix 3: Information and Consent Form**

Dear Teacher

I am currently undertaking research towards an MPhil thesis at the Institute of Education, University of London. My topic is “Teachers’ Authority; A Reflection in the Context of Contemporary Indian Society” I am exploring the meaning and use of authority by teachers in India and UK.

To this end, I plan to survey secondary CBSE (Central Board of Secondary Education) Govt. school teacher’s views on questions of changes in Government Policy that has affected their practice and relationship with students; their role as a teacher; what do they understand by teacher authority and student autonomy.

I would be delighted if you would agree to be interviewed as part of this project. The interview will focus on your attitudes and approaches to teaching in a secondary classroom.

If you agree to participate, I will present you with a list of the questions I would like to ask you. The interview itself will take place in person and should last around one hour. I will audio-record the interview. The interviews will only be used for the purpose of my research and I will not reveal any identifying personal details about you in my work.

I hope you’ll agree to participate. Please don’t hesitate to contact me if you’d like any more information about my research or about the interview process.

Thanks in advance.

CONSENT FORM  
(Please circle as appropriate)

I have been given information about the research project Yes/No

I agree that the interview will be audio-recorded Yes/No

I understand that I am free to withdraw from the project at any time, for any reason and without prejudice Yes/No

I know that I can ask questions at any time before and during the project Yes/No

I wish to remain anonymous Yes/No

If I wish to remain anonymous I have been given an assurance that while what I say may be quoted my name will not be revealed in any publication arising from the research Yes/No/NA

I agree that the researcher can hold data about me which I have supplied Yes/No

**Data Protection:** I agree to the processing of personal data, which I have supplied for any purposes connected with the Research Project as outlined to me. I understand that all personal data collected will be protected and destroyed at the end of the project.

Name (print) .....

Email (optional) .....

Signed.....

Dated.....

-----  
If you wish to withdraw from the project, please complete the form below.

**Title of Research Project:** Teacher's Authority; A Reflection in the Context of Contemporary Indian Society

I WISH TO WITHDRAW FROM THIS RESEARCH PROJECT

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

CONSENT FORM

**Teacher's Authority; A Reflection in the Context of Contemporary Indian Society**

Please complete the form below

I have read the letter describing the research  (please tick)

I agree to be interviewed on the record  (please tick)

I agree to be quoted by name  (please tick)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

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