A Synopsis of

The Development of Dharma in Children, Adolescents and Adults of Vadodara City: Embedding Moral Development in Indian Moral Worldviews

A thesis to be submitted for the award of the degree of

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Abstract

The present study employs the cultural-developmental approach to examine the use of the Ethics of Autonomy, Community, and Divinity among Indian children (grades 3 & 6, n=144), adolescents (grades 8 & 11, n=60), and adults (35-55 years, n=30). Participants were interviewed regarding five moral scenarios, and moral worldviews. First, participants' moral reasoning was examined using cross-sectional and longitudinal analyses for responses to the moral scenarios. Quantitative results suggest developmental trajectories for the three ethics in the Indian context. Further, quantitative analyses of sub-code frequencies highlight the type of moral concepts common in moral reasoning among participants in each age group. Second, participants' responses to the moral worldviews will be qualitatively analysed to understand concepts and patterns that highlight the nature of moral reasoning in the Indian context.

Introduction and Literature Review

The Indian philosophical tradition is not only one of the oldest but also one of the most evolved philosophical traditions of the world. Research shows that in spite of many influences brought about by invasions, migrations, reform movements (e.g., Buddhism and Sikhism), and modernization, the principal values of the Indian moral worldview (such as *satya* or truth and *ahimsa* or non-violence) remain integral to people's conscience (Bhangaokar & Kapadia, 2009; Saraswathi et al., 2011). Thus, the main tenets of the Indian moral worldview continue to have salience in today's modern times and have stood the test of time.

In the recent decades, much of the cultural and cross-cultural research in moral psychology has highlighted that traditional theories in moral psychology (Kohlberg, 1981; Piaget, 1932; Turiel, 2002) do not adequately capture moral reasoning pertaining to community, collectivity, and interdependence, as well as religion, divinity, and spirituality (Huebner & Grarrod, 1991; Jensen, 2011; Shweder & Much, 1991; Walker et al., 1995). In response to this critique, the Three Ethics framework (Autonomy, Community, Divinity) provides a broader conceptualization of the moral domain—one that gives equal opportunities to autonomy, community and divinity reasoning to be acknowledged and studied in moral discourse of diverse cultural groups and individuals (Jensen, 2008; Shweder et al., 1990). The cultural-developmental approach to moral reasoning (Jensen, 2008, 2015) lays out developmental trajectories for each ethic. These trajectories are conceptualized as "templates" that are flexible rather than fixed or universal. Specifically, the trajectories accommodate to the prevalence of the three ethics within a culture.

Two parts of the present research project (Studies 1 &2) implement the cultural-developmental approach to (a) study the degree of use of the Ethics of Autonomy,

Community and Divinity in moral reasoning and (b) to examine the various types of moral concepts that emerge in moral discourse of children and adolescents in an Indian context. The third part of this project (Study 3) aims to take a qualitative approach to understand concepts and patterns that highlight the nature of the Indian moral worldview.

In the following pages I give details of the proposal, beginning with an overview of relevant literature.

Morality in the Indian Ethos

Dharma, Karma and Moksha in the Hindu Framework of Morality.

The Indian moral worldview is based on the concept of dharma as the universal moral order. In essence, dharma is understood as the performance of righteous duties in view of one's station in life (Mascolo et al., 2004). However, it has a variety of connotations and is very context-sensitive. For example, dharma can be described as *asramadharma* (duties based on the stage of life), *svadharma* (righteous conduct related to one's caste or class), and *appadharma* (conduct during abnormal times, such as times of distress or emergency) (Kakar, 1981; Ramanujan, 1990; Saraswathi et al., 2011). While dharma seems like an overarching, abstract idea, it is in fact, very context-specific and blended with everyday life due to the broad spectrum of applications it can entail. For example, Hinduism also insists on upholding dharma towards nature and all forms of life, so much so that it evolved the concept of *vasudhaiva kutumbakam*, i.e. the belief that all that is alive, from plants and animals to human species, belongs to a single family. The essence of this value is that all of creation has a common origin and all living beings are interdependent.

Karma refers to a one's deeds, thoughts, feelings and intentions. It is intelligent, moral action within the framework of Dharma. It is also understood as a moral order in which events take place for ethical reasons and in the long run, sins are punished and righteous

conduct is rewarded (Huebner & Garrod, 1991; Paranjpe, 2013; Shweder et al., 1990). Thus, all actions have natural consequences. Additionally, one's karma in the present life also has consequences for one's life in future births. Thus, individuals are guided by their past karma and they also continue to actively shape their present as well as future karma based on their righteous practice of dharma. Thus, karma is commonly understood as the law of causality, where your deeds have a reciprocal effect. The ultimate goal of life is to attain moksha, i.e. the emancipation of the soul from the cycle of birth, death and rebirth, through the purification of the self, attained through good karma. Thus the observance of dharma through good karma and the pursuit of moksha comprise the central goals of human life in Hinduism.

It is important to note that most values when understood from the Indian perspective, assert the inter-connectedness of spiritual, personal and social growth. Thus, the pursuit of spiritual wellbeing by fulfilling your dharma and doing good karma also benefit one's personal self and social self. The personal and the social selves are interdependent in India. Therefore, the Hindu way of life is neither individualistic nor collectivistic but an intersection of the two (Bhangaokar & Kapadia, 2009; Saraswathi et al., 2011; Sinha & Tripathi, 2001). According to Vasudev (1994), karma, as an integral part of the Hindu religious philosophy includes an emphasis on both social obligations towards others as well as ideas of rights and personal responsibility. Similarly, the path of dharma does not involve a division of the personal, social and spiritual duties. They are all fundamentally related. An in-depth understanding of moral reasoning in India offers scope to study the dynamic interactions of the three ethics, as they operate within the Indian moral worldview. Recent research supports this line of inquiry and asserts the need for examining the co-existence and interdependence of autonomy, community, and divinity reasoning (Hickman & Dibianca Fasoli, 2015; Kapadia & Bhangaokar, 2015).

The Cultural-Developmental Approach

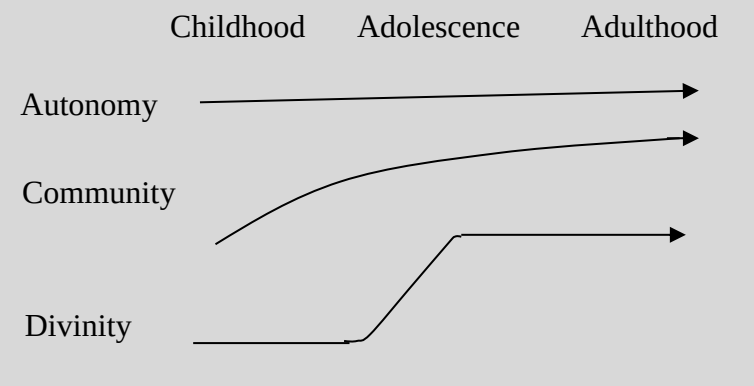
Culture and development are intrinsically related and need to be studied in tandem in developmental studies. The cultural-developmental approach allows for the intersection of culture and development in the study of moral reasoning. Based on an extensive review of theory and research, the cultural-developmental approach proposes a developmental template for the three Ethics of Autonomy, Community, and Divinity (Jensen, 2008, 2015). Briefly, the Ethic of Autonomy defines the self as an autonomous being. Moral reasoning within this ethic focuses on concepts that address the well-being, interests and rights of individuals. It also includes autonomy-oriented virtues such as self-expression, self-esteem, and independence. The Ethic of Community envisions the self as a member of social groups, with the obligation of protecting the interest and wellbeing of these groups. Thus, self-moderation, respect and loyalty towards the group are important virtues within this ethic. The Ethic of Divinity focuses on the self as a spiritual or religious being. It taps reasoning that pertains to divine and natural law, lessons in sacred texts, and the striving to avoid moral degradation and come closer to spiritual purity. This ethic encompasses divinity-oriented virtues such as faithfulness, humility, and devotion.

Research has shown the presence of the three ethics in persons of different ages from a wide variety of cultures such as Brazil, Finland, India, the Philippines, Thailand, and the United States (Arnett, Ramos & Jensen, 2001; Bhangaokar & Kapadia, 2009; Haidt et al., 1993; Jensen, 2008, McKenzie, 2019; Vainio, 2003; Vasquez et al., 2001). Research also provides evidence for the utility of the three ethics framework in examining differences in moral reasoning in groups within cultures, for instance groups of different socio-economic and religious backgrounds (Haidt et al., 1993; Jensen, 1998, McKenzie, 2019, Pandya & Bhangaokar, 2015).

The cultural-development approach allows for the analysis of moral development in terms of both, the degree of use of the ethics and the specific types of moral concepts used within each ethic. Figure 1 shows the developmental template. It illustrates the proposal for the degree to which the three ethics are used across childhood, adolescence and adulthood. The proposition is that the Ethic of Autonomy emerges early in life and remains stable across adolescence and adulthood, while the specific types of autonomy concepts used may change with age. Considerable research suggests that children from across cultures speak about harm to the self and interests of the self (Colby et al., 1983; Turiel, 2002; Walker, 1989), as well as that of other individuals (Carlo, 2006; Haidt et al., 1993; Miller, 1994). Further, as children grow into adolescence and adulthood, they continue to reason in terms of the well-being of the self and other individuals (Eisenberg et al., 1995; Jensen, 1995; Vasquez et al. 2001; Walker et al., 1995; Zimba, 1994).

Figure 1

The Cultural-Developmental Template of Moral Reasoning



Note. Each of the lines shows developmental patterns across the life span, from childhood to adulthood. The positions of the lines do *not* indicate their relative frequency in relation to one another (e.g., use of Autonomy being more frequent than use of Community and Divinity). (This is also the case for subsequent figures).

With respect to the Ethic of Community, the template suggests that the degree of use of Community and the types of concepts will increase with age. Developmental and cultural

research shows that early on, children talk about community concepts related to family (Miller et al., 1990; Olson & Spelke, 2008; Shweder et al., 1990). Moral reasoning related to family finds continued expression beyond childhood and, even more so in the course of adolescence and adulthood as a person's awareness of family roles, duties and responsibilities increases. Thus, by late childhood and adolescence, community concepts related to non-familial groups are added (Carlo, 2006) such as friends, peers, school and workplace (Chen, 2011; Rubin et al., 2006; Schlegel, 2011). Longitudinal research involving North American participants suggests that by late teens and adulthood, considerations for larger collective contexts are added, such as societal organization and harmony (Eisenberg et al., 1995; Walker, 1989). Research in India, Israel and Zambia also show how adults in these cultures give consideration to what is best for society as a whole (Jensen, 1998).

The Ethic of Divinity remains insufficiently studied in moral psychology. Based on the available empirical evidence, the proposition is that in cultures where divinity is prominent and conceptualized in abstract ways, the degree of use of divinity concepts is low among children and rises during adolescence to become similar to adult use of the ethic. The reason for this developmental trajectory is that concepts pertaining to the divine or supernatural are so abstract that they may be incorporated in moral reasoning only with the increase of cognitive complexity during adolescence (Kohlberg, 1981). However, this pattern of development of divinity reasoning may not apply to cultures where religious devotion and spiritualty coalesce with everyday activities and, where the supernatural or transcendent entities are less salient. In such cultures, like India, children may speak of divinity concepts early on (Jensen, 2008, 2011; Saraswathi, 2005; Shweder et al., 1990). Based on the available findings from India and the cultural-developmental template, we thus hypothesized that the third- and sixth-grade children would be similar in their use of the Ethic of Autonomy, and that sixth graders would use the Ethic of Community more than third graders. These

hypotheses are depicted in Figure 2. We did not expect the Ethic of Divinity primarily to emerge in early adolescence as proposed in the original cultural-developmental template (see Figure 1). Indian children may reason about moral issues in terms of Ethic of Divinity concepts from early on, including by 3rd grade, because these concepts are tied repeatedly to everyday phenomena (Jensen, 2008, 2011; Saraswathi et al., 2011; Shweder et al., 1990). While the template presents a life-course model, the approach effectively captures peculiarities of specific life stages and diverse cultural groups. Thus, in the present study we used this approach to study moral reasoning across childhood and adolescence in an Indian context. We expect that the template will take a different form, one that is specific to Indian moral worldviews.

Social Class and Moral Reasoning in India

Research on the relation of social class to children's moral reasoning in India is virtually non-existent. The daily lives of low-SES and high-SES Indian children, however, are very different. A study focusing on parenting found that low-SES Indian families were more likely than high-SES families to emphasize benevolence, whereas high-SES families were more likely to value truthfulness (Srivastava et al., 1996, as cited in Misra & Mohanty, 2000). Research observing children's behaviours in school has also shown that low-SES children were more cooperative and less competitive, compared to high-SES children (Pal et al., 1989; Srivastava & Lalnunmawii, 1989, as cited in Misra & Mohanty, 2000). Based on these findings, we hypothesized that low-SES children would show higher use of the Ethic of Community and lower use of the Ethic of Autonomy, compared to high-SES children.

We did not propose any difference between the two SES groups for the Ethic of Divinity because religious beliefs continue to influence child-rearing and socialization across social classes in spite of rapid economic and social changes to Indian society (Albert et al., 2007; Saraswathi & Ganapathy, 2002).

This dissertation project comprises of three parts—

Study 1 Moral Reasoning among Children

- Cross- sectional Design (N=144)
- Hypothetical Scenarios
- Big Three Ethics Framework
- (Data comprises Wave 1 for longitudinal analyses in Study 2)

Study 2 Moral Reasoning among Children and Adolescents: A Longitudinal Analysis

- Longitudinal Design (N=60)
- Hypothetical Scenarios
- Big Three Ethics Framework

Study 3 Moral Worldviews and Elements of Dharma in Moral Reasoning among Adults

- Qualitative Study (N=30)
- Moral Worldviews – Ideas of Selfhood and Gender Roles, Suffering and the Conceptualization of God

The following sections describe the hypotheses and method for each study.

Study 1: Moral Reasoning among Children (N=144)

Research Questions:

1. How do Indian children from high- and low- SES backgrounds use Autonomy, Community and Divinity in their moral reasoning?
2. What form does the cultural-developmental template take in the Indian context?

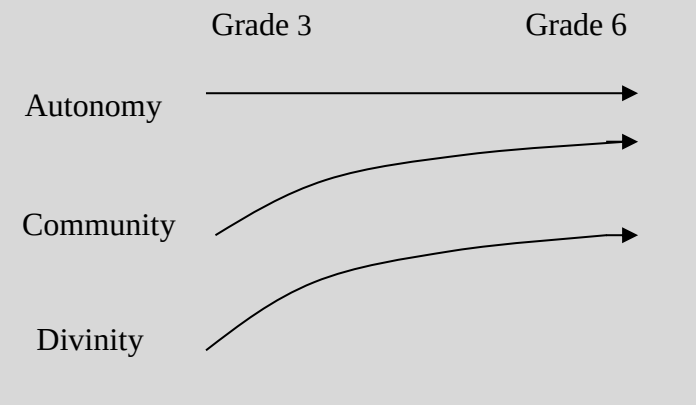
Hypothesis:

1. Third- and sixth- graders will show similar use of Autonomy.
2. Community and Divinity will be used more frequently by the sixth-graders.
3. Low-SES children will show greater use of Community and lower use of Autonomy compared to high-SES children.
4. Children from both SES groups would be similar in their use of Divinity.

Please see Figure 2 for the hypothesized expression of the template among 3rd- and 6th- grade children.

Figure 2

Hypothesized Expression of the Template among Third- And Sixth-Grade Children in India



Participants

The sample consisted of 144 children in the city of Vadodara, Gujarat, India. It was divided evenly between third (M_{age} = 8.22 years, SD = 0.61) and sixth graders (M_{age} = 11.54

years, *SD* = 0.50*)* (n = 72). Each age group had an equal number of children from high- and low-SES backgrounds. There was an even distribution of girls and boys within each age and SES group.

With respect to SES, the average monthly family income of the high-SES children was Indian rupees 80,000. High-SES parents had obtained bachelors or professional degrees and were primarily employed in business and medical professions. The average monthly family income of the low-SES children was Indian rupees 4,000. Among these parents, 54% had no formal education, 30% had attended primary school, 13% had attended high school, and 3% had completed 12^{th} grade. The majority was occupied as self-employed vegetable vendors and unskilled labourers (e.g., sweepers, domestic help, and workers in grocery shops). Ten percent were unemployed.

Given the vast differences in the daily environments of high- and low-SES children in India, the two groups had to be recruited differently. High-SES children attended school regularly and were recruited through a private, English-medium school. Children who expressed an interest in participating after an orientation about the study were given a description of the project and a consent form to show their parents. Subsequently, the researchers contacted parents by phone. Children who returned consent forms signed by their parents were interviewed.

While children from the low-SES group were enrolled in school, most did not attend school because they assisted their parents at work or did chores at home. Consequently, low-SES children were not recruited through school but through a local nonprofit organization that provides educational assistance in slum communities. Peer leaders from within the communities first participated in the study (39%), and then helped recruit additional participants (61%). This snowballing approach was crucial because the peer leaders helped

establish rapport with low-SES families. Parents or other adults responsible for the children provided informed oral (in case of illiterate adults) or written consent.

Materials

Children participated in an interview about five scenarios that involved moral dilemmas. The scenarios were developed to be relevant to the everyday experiences of the Indian children, and to potentially address diverse moral concepts such as fairness, collectivism, and spirituality. The gender of scenario protagonists and the order of presentation of scenarios were randomized. (See Appendix A for the five scenarios)

For every scenario, children were asked to indicate the right moral action for the protagonist (moral judgment), and to explain why (moral reasoning). Follow-up questions encouraged children to discuss all their moral reasons and to elaborate. For example, if participants spoke of duty, they were asked to explain who had a duty to whom, and the nature of the duty. The scenarios were structured in a narrative form to keep the children's interest. They were initially written in English, then translated into Gujarati and Hindi (the two mostly common local languages), and finally validated by language experts.

Procedure

Pilot Interviews

Pilot interviews were conducted with 6 children, 3 from each age group. The pilot interviews helped ensure that the questions and their formulations were understood by the participants. The pilot interviews also helped determine whether the five scenarios were relevant to Indian participants. Minor corrective changes and adjustments were made in the final interview protocol before proceeding with in-depth interviews for the study.

Interviews

High-SES children were interviewed at school, and low-SES children were interviewed at home. Children decided whether to be interviewed in English, Gujarati, or Hindi. Interviews were tape recorded and later transcribed verbatim. Interviews in Gujarati and Hindi were subsequently translated into English. Some Gujarati and Hindi terms and phrases were retained in the English transcripts to preserve indigenous concepts. Back-translation was done f or the scenarios used in the interview.

Quantitative Results

Coding

Moral reasons were coded with the standard manual for the three Ethics of Autonomy, Community, and Divinity (Jensen, 2008, 2015). The manual consists of the three major codes or ethics. It also contains 44 "subcodes": 15 for Autonomy, 13 for Community, and 16 for Divinity. The subcodes are the equivalent of specific *types* of moral reasons. (The first column of Table 2 shows types within each ethic that were common in the present study). The coding manual provides a definition for each ethic and type of reason. Additionally, examples are provided for each type of reason. Classifying every moral reason both in terms of an ethic and a type aids in: 1) ensuring that all stated reasons are coded, 2) differentiating among reasons, and 3) determining that a reason is sufficiently well-elaborated to decide which one of the three ethics is invoked. (For the sake of clarity, we refer to types of reasons in the remainder rather than using the coding manual terminology of subcodes). The transcribed interviews amounted to an average of 10 pages per participant, for a total of 1,140 pages of text to code. A total of 1,104 reasons were coded. Inter-rater reliability was assessed for two independent coders on 20% of randomly selected interviews. For the three ethics, Cohen's Kappa was .97. Differences between the coders were resolved through discussion.

Degree of Use of the Three Ethics

To test the hypotheses, 2 (Age) X 2 (SES) multivariate analyses of covariance (MANCOVAs) were conducted. The dependent variables were use of each of the three ethics across the five scenarios.

Total number of reasons provided by participants was entered as a covariate. An a priori analysis of variance (ANOVA) had indicated main effects of age and SES (Age: F (1, 136) = 7.63, p<.05, η^2 = .11; 3rd graders: M = 6.70, SD = 2.80, 6th graders: M = 8.10, SD = 3.78. SES: F (1, 136) = 17.17, p<.001, η^2 = .05; high-SES: M = 8.50, SD = 3.47, low-SES: M = 6.37, SD = 2.96). Total number of reasons was entered as a covariate to ensure that any significant differences in the use of the three ethics could not be accounted for by some groups providing more reasons than others. It was a significant covariate in all analyses.

For the Ethic of Autonomy, as seen in Table 1, there was a significant main effect for SES. As hypothesized, high-SES children employed this ethic more than low-SES children. For the Ethic of Community, there was a significant main effect for age. As expected, older children used this kind of reasoning more than younger children. With respect to the Ethic of Divinity, there was an unexpected main effect for age. Younger children used this ethic more than older ones. There was also an unexpected trend where high-SES children reasoned more in terms of Divinity than low-SES children. Figure 3 illustrates the expression of the cultural-developmental template among the 3rd- and 6th-grade participants.

Table 1

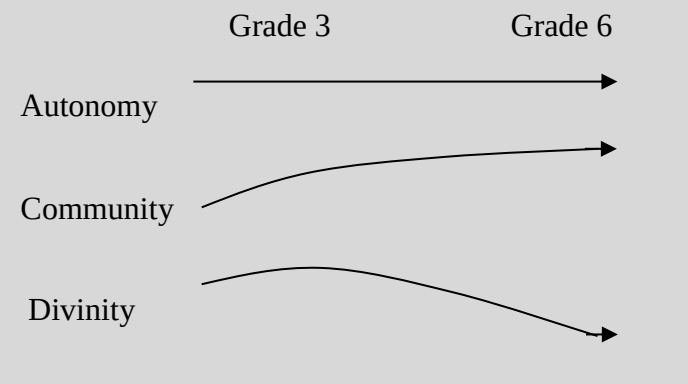
Degree of Use of Three Ethics: Means (Standard Deviations) and Main Effects

Ethic	**Grade**				**SES**			
	Third	**Sixth**	**F**	**η^2**	**High**	**Low**	**F**	**η^2**
Autonomy	3.01 (2.03)	4.02 (2.31)	2.66	.02	4.26 (2.21)	2.77 (1.98)	3.80*	.03
Community	1.01 (1.03)	1.52 (0.15)	3.71*	.03	1.41 (1.07)	1.12 (1.13)	0.01	.00
Divinity	2.93 (1.97)	2.80 (2.27)	8.27**	.05	3.12 (2.37)	2.61 (1.81)	3.61+	.03

*Note. +p < .10, *p < .05, **p < .01*

Figure 3

Resultant Expression of the Template among Third- And Sixth-Grade Children in India



Types of Reasons Used Within Each Ethic

In order to delve into the reasons used within the Three Ethics, we turned to usage of types of reasons. First, the frequency with which the age and SES group used each type of reason was calculated. Next, the types with the highest frequencies were added up until a threshold of 50% was reached. We refer to these as the "majority types." The cut-off was set at 50% because this captured the majority of types used and the remaining types were infrequent (see also Jensen & McKenzie, 2016).

Table 2 shows the use of majority types. A total of 12 types were used by the entire sample: 6 for Autonomy, 4 for Divinity, and 2 for Community. It is noteworthy that high-SES children used a total of 11 majority types, whereas low-SES children used a total of 5. Two types of reasons, Punishment Avoidance to Self (Autonomy) and Punishment Avoidance from God (Divinity), were used across all age and SES groups. Low-SES children from the 3rd grade stood out by only using majority types pertaining to Punishment Avoidance. They did so, however, in terms of each of the three ethics.

Sixth-grade children were the only ones to invoke Duty to Others (Community) among their majority types. Additionally, only high-SES 6th-graders spoke of Duty as a Spiritual/Religious Being (Divinity), Conscience (Autonomy), and Self's Psychological Wellbeing (Autonomy).

Table 2

Majority Use of Types of Reasons (Percent)

Ethics	Types	Grade 3		Grade 6	
		High-SES	Low-SES	High-SES	Low-SES
Autonomy	Punishment Avoidance (to self)	13.14	20.65	4.62	12.11
	Reciprocity	6.92			7.03
	Means-Ends Considerations (ends of an individual)	6.52		7.22	
	Other Individual's Psychological Wellbeing	4.84		7.22	
	Self's Psychological Wellbeing			8.67	
	Conscience (guilt)			4.33	
Community	Punishment Avoidance (social sanctions)		7.98		7.81
	Duty (to others)			5.49	5.85
Divinity	Punishment avoidance (from God(s))	15.91	30.04	8.67	21.48
	God(s)' authority	7.26			
	Customary Traditional Authority (of religious/spiritual nature)	4.15		5.21	
	Duty (as a spiritual/religious being)			4.91	

Qualitative Examples

Next, quotations from the interviews are provided in order to further elaborate on how the Indian children spoke in terms of the three ethics and the majority types of reasons.

Ethic of Autonomy

There were no age group differences in use of the Ethic of Autonomy (as expected). Many children spoke of avoiding punishment to the self. They feared verbal and physical discipline as well as the revocation of privileges. In response to the scenario involving a broken religious idol, a 3rd-grade girl from the low-SES group invoked all of these common fears, explaining that “If I broke God’s idol, I would tell my mother. If I don’t, then my mother will find out and she will scold me. She will punish me. She won’t let me play with my friends again.” Children from both the younger and older age groups also spoke of reciprocity. In the scenario involving the kitten, for example, a child said that if they helped

the kitten, one day the kitten might "do whatever she can for us." A 6th-grade girl from the high-SES group gave voice to a general reciprocity principle: "If we help the kitten, then someone will help us. If we don't help others, no one will help us."

While there was not an age group difference in use of the Ethic of Autonomy, the two SES groups differed. High-SES children were more often concerned with autonomy. In addition to punishment avoidance and reciprocity, they talked about psychological and emotional considerations. They spoke of their conscience and feeling guilty when transgressing. They also spoke of the negative psychological impact upon the self. In response to the broken religious idol scenario, a 6th-grade high-SES girl said that "If [I] stayed quiet then I would be affected by it. I would get dreams about it at night, and it would give me *dukh* (sorrow or anguish in Hindi)." Children from this group also often spoke of positive emotions. For example, one girl said that when you help others "you feel very happy and satisfied." In response to the scenario involving a school friend, a boy explained that "If I give her my homework then she will feel better. Then I will also help her in the future, maybe with money, so that she can do her work without feeling scared or helpless every time."

Ethic of Community

Even as the Ethic of Community was somewhat less used than Autonomy, its use rose with age. There were only two majority types within this ethic. Third grade children, especially from the low-SES group, spoke of avoiding punishment in the form of social sanctions. Unlike for the Ethic of Autonomy, the moral reasoning here indicated a deep concern with one's status within the community. A 6-year-old boy from the low-SES group gave a vivid description: "I will not steal any money. I will go and tell my mother everything. What if people in my neighbourhood see me and if they talked? They will always call me names and won't keep relations with me. *Beizzati ho jaegi* (I will lose honour [in Hindi])."

Older children also commonly spoke of social duties. One girl explained that her duties as a friend overrode school rules, “I will give [her] my homework because she is my best friend” A boy spoke at a broader level about duties as a member of society when asserting that “I wouldn’t take money without asking anyone. It is as bad as stealing, you know. I don’t want to be a bad citizen.”

Ethic of Divinity

The Ethic of Divinity was commonly used by both younger and older children, as expected. However, unexpectedly, younger children surpassed older children in their use of Divinity. Avoiding God’s punishment was a highly popular majority type among all children and certainly among younger ones. The children consistently spoke in terms of the indigenous concept of *paap*, which pertains to supernatural moral consequences. One boy said that if “If I don’t help the kitten then she will die in agony. Then we will get *paap*. Meaning then our body will get a disease, we may not be able to walk on our legs or we may get a fever. (Interviewer: Why will that happen?) Because God is watching us, he will punish us for the wrong we have done.” Reflecting on the same scenario, another boy explained that “If I see the injured kitten but choose to go for a match instead of helping her, then that will be *paap*. God will make us a kitten in our next life, just like the dying kitten, and then no one will help us.” Within this worldview, *paap* can be understood to involve consequences that are both material and immaterial, that involve both body and soul. Also, the consequences may occur in this life, as described by the first boy, or they may become part of a person’s *karma* and influence the next life, as described by the second boy.

There was an unexpected trend for high-SES children to use the Ethic of Divinity more than low-SES children. High-SES children spoke of the importance of following religious customs. In response to the scenario involving the religious idol, one boy described how “everyone [in the neighbourhood] prays together in the evenings for the 10 days of this

festival. That is how it has always been, it is a tradition that we follow every year. How can I not tell them that I broke the idol? If I tell them, we can follow the tradition and immerse the broken idol [in water]. Then we can together welcome a new idol and continue offering prayers." Older high-SES children also commonly spoke of a sense of duty towards God, as reflected in the response of a girl who said that "All living beings are sacred because God gives them life. It is also said that God is present in everything in nature, including us and the kitten too. How can we then ignore the kitten that is hurt and maybe dying? We should help the kitten. It is our duty to do that. If we help the kitten then it is like service to God, which we must do to at least say thanks to God for what he has given us."

STUDY 2- Moral Reasoning in Childhood and Adolescence: A Longitudinal Analysis

Research Question:

1. What are developmental trajectories for the use of Autonomy, Community and Divinity among children and adolescents in India?

Hypotheses:

1. Autonomy will emerge early in development and its use will remain stable across childhood and adolescence.

2. The use of Community will be low in childhood and will increase with age during the course of adolescence.

3. The Ethic of Divinity emerges early in development however its use in moral discourse recedes during adolescence.

With respect to the use of subcodes or moral reasons within each ethic, I hypothesize the following:

1. Autonomy: Children will reason using moral concepts such as Self's Psychological Wellbeing, Self's Physical Wellbeing, Interest of the Self or Punishment Avoidance to the self. Adolescents will use concepts such as Guilt/Conscience, Rights, Virtues and Fairness in addition to those used by children.
2. Community: Children will use community concepts such as Punishment Avoidance (social sanctions- such as that from family members or friends). Adolescents will use concepts such as Duty and Customary Traditional Authority.
3. Divinity: Children will rely more on Punishment Avoidance from God and God's Authority. Adolescents will reason using abstract concepts such as Respect for God, Other's Physical (Spiritual) Wellbeing, or Customary Traditional Authority.

Method

Participants

Participants took part in the same interview regarding five hypothetical moral scenarios at two different age points. For Study 1, a total of 144 children were interviewed, of which 72 children belonged to the high- and low-SES groups each. From each SES group, an equal number of child participants were drawn from grade 3 (M_{age}= 8.22 years, *SD* = 0.61) and grade 6 (M_{age}=11.54 years, *SD* = 0.50). Additionally, an equal representation of gender was maintained within each age and SES groups.

For the purpose of Study 2, only participants from the high-SES group who took part in Study 1 formed the sample to represent wave 1 of the sequential study (N=72). At retest 60 children were able to participate in the follow-up study and by then they were in grades 8 (M_{age}= 12.87 years, *SD* = 0.43) and 11 (M_{age}= 15.77 years, *SD* = 1.00). They participated in two identical in-depth interviews which were separated by a gap of 4.5 years. There was equal distribution of male and female participants in the final sample of the sequential study. Adolescents were approached through the same private, English-medium school that was contacted to recruit child participants for Study 1.

Materials

Adolescents participated in an in-depth interview about the same five scenarios with moral dilemmas that were used in Study 1 (see Appendix A for the scenarios). The procedure for data collection was retained from Study 1.

Procedure

Pilot Interviews

Pilot interviews were conducted with 8 adolescents, before proceeding with in-depth interviews for the study.

Interview

Adolescents were interviewed in school. Children decided whether to be interviewed in English, Gujarati, or Hindi. Interviews were tape recorded and later transcribed verbatim. Interviews in Gujarati and Hindi were subsequently translated into English. Some Gujarati and Hindi terms and phrases were retained in the English transcripts to preserve indigenous concepts.

Plan of Analysis

Moral reasons have been coded with the standard manual for the three Ethics of Autonomy, Community, and Divinity (Jensen, 2008, 2015). The same procedure and rigor in coding used in Study 1 was used for Study 2. Inter-rater reliability was assessed for two independent coders on 20% of randomly selected interviews. For the three ethics, Cohen's Kappa was .80. Differences between the coders were resolved through discussion.

Further, two-way repeated measures ANOVAs will be conducted to study how the degree of use of the three ethics develops from childhood to adulthood. Subcode analysis will also be done in line with Study 1. Quantitative results will be supported by qualitative examples of responses given by participants.

STUDY 3: Moral Worldviews and Elements of Dharma in Moral Reasoning among Adults

Research suggests that moral reasoning and corresponding moral behaviour are based on comprehensive cultural worldviews held by people. Thus, people's moral reasoning needs to be understood in the context of worldviews endorsed by their culture and socialization. This approach to the study of moral reasoning challenges the view proposed by cognitive-developmental theorists such as Kohlberg who tend to separate the individual from their comprehensive worldviews by suggesting predictable and universal stages of development.

Four basic questions comprise a worldview (Jensen, 1997): (1) Who are we? (i.e., what is the essence of humanness?), (2) Where are we? (i.e., what is the nature of reality? Is this the only world?), (3) Why are we suffering? (i.e., what are problems experienced by human beings? Why do these problems exist?), and (4) What is the remedy? (i.e., how can we alleviate suffering?).

The qualitative interview for Study 3 included 5 major domains to understand the Indian worldview. Appendix B has the interview schedule for the worldviews section of the study. One of the domains and its analysis is explained below in detail. All other domains will be analysed similarly. Concept maps will be developed for all domains.

Gendered Experiences of *Grihastashrama* among Indian Adults

This section uses a qualitative approach to describe the centrality of role-related responsibilities during *Grihastashrama* – the traditional Hindu, Indian life stage in the *Ashrama Dharma* Theory. Across generations, the success of the other three stages in the four-fold Indian *Ashramadharma* framework of human development (*Brahmacharyashrama, Vanaprasthashrama* and *Sanyasashrama*) depends on how efficaciously individuals execute diverse adult roles during *Grishastashrama*. Thus, *Grishastashrama* remains an extremely

challenging phase of human development in India. In both traditional and contemporary times, it involves enhancing one's capacity to meet novel demands on a variety of fronts (not just work and family) in a balanced manner. Caught in a flux of tradition and modernity, Indian families will need to reinterpret some principles of *Grishastashrama* to suit demands of a globalized, modern life in the 21st century. The main focus of this section will be to illustrate how men and women navigate traditional gender role expectations in the context of rapid social change in India.

Research Question

1. What are gendered experiences of *Grihastasharama* with reference to role-related responsibilities in contemporary urban Indian families?

Method

Participants

Participants were 30 adults (M_{age} =43.55 years, *SD* = 4.33), from upper-middle class families of Baroda, India. There was an equal distribution of women (M_{age} =42.66 years, *SD* = 4.27) and men (M_{age} = 44.40 years, *SD* = 4.37) (n=15). The average monthly family income was Indian rupees 2, 26,000. Adults were recruited in two ways: (1) by sending letters to parents of students enrolled in a private school catering to upper-middle class families in Baroda city, and (2) by requesting adult participants to suggest other adults who may be willing to participate in the interview. Only adults who met the age requirements of the study and belonged to the upper-middle class were interviewed. The adult sample did not include parents of participants from Study 1 &2.

Among the adults, 73% had nuclear families, while 27% had extended families. A majority identified as Hindu (87%), 10% as Jain and 1% as Muslim. With respect to caste

categories, 57% were Brahmin, 13% were Vaishya, 10% were Kshatriya and the remaining 20% did not report caste-affiliation as they identified as Hindu-Punjabi/Sindhi, Jain or Muslim.

The highest educational degree obtained by a majority of the adults (across gender) was a post-graduate degree (57%), followed by an undergraduate degree (43%). Women held masters (46%), bachelors (43%) or doctoral degrees (10%). Forty seven percent of women were employed and 33% were full time home makers. Of the women who were employed, 20% owned business (self-employed) and 27% were employed in full time or part time service (teachers, doctors, architects and such).

Men held master's (53%), bachelor's (33%) or doctoral degrees (13%). While 27% were self-employed, the majority (73%) were employed in full time service (doctors, engineers, scientists, chartered accountants or teachers).

Materials

Adults participated in an in-depth interview about their perception of men and women, more specifically (1) the similarities and differences in potentials of men and women; and (2) gender differences in the division of labour. Appendix B includes the interview schedule for the worldviews.

Procedure

Pilot Interviews

Pilot interviews were conducted with 6 adults that met the sampling criteria. The pilot interviews helped ensure clarity and relevance of the worldview questions. It also helped generate possible probes that helped participants reason and respond comprehensively.

Additionally, it aided in estimating the amount of time a response will take. A few minor changes were made before proceeding with in-depth interviews for the study.

Interview

Adults were interviewed at a time and place convenient to them. Seventy percent of the sample chose to take the interview at their residence and the rest requested for an interview at their workplace. Participants used a language of their choice while responding to the interview schedule. They were interviewed in English, Gujarati and/or Hindi.

Interviews were tape recorded and later transcribed verbatim. Interviews in Gujarati and Hindi were then translated into English. Indigenous terms and phrases were retained in English transcripts in order to preserve proverbs and concepts that carry important indigenous meaning.

Qualitative Results

Thematic analysis was done to understand major themes and patters in participants' responses regarding gender role expectations and potentials.

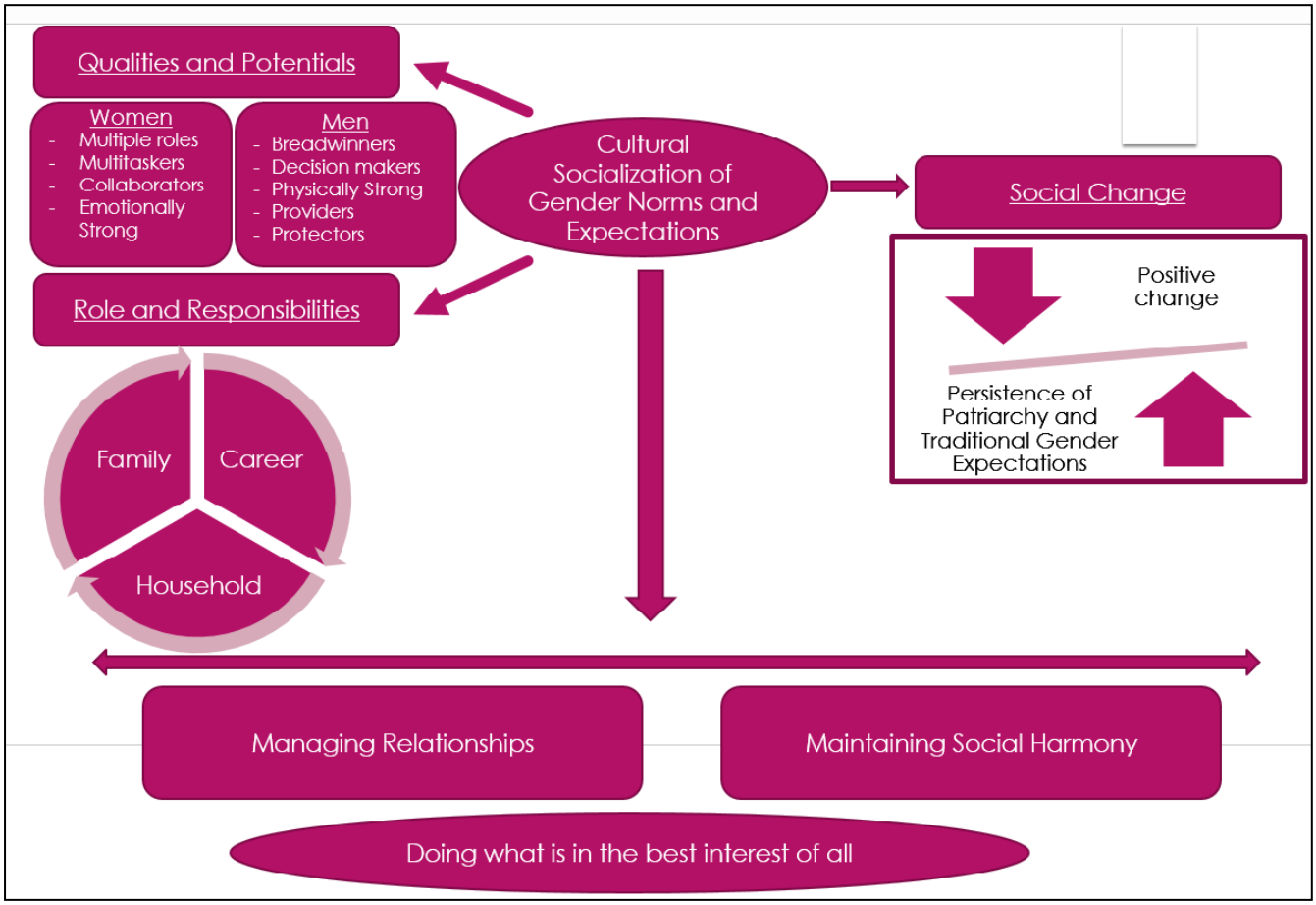
Preliminary qualitative analyses revealed that both men and women attributed equal potentials for both genders, in fulfilling a range of adult roles within and outside the family. Both the genders also agreed that even if responsibilities were 'shared', women's involvement in different roles was much more intense than men's. Women were critical of patriarchal norms that hindered participation in the workforce and led to role overload. However, they navigated diverse roles with increased efficiency, multitasking, and by utilizing social support available to them. For example, one female participant said: "My education, personality, career all are at stake if I just stay home. I can very well do that but what's the point of building aspirations as a child when I can't follow my dreams as an adult? So I will make it work. Yes, I make meal plans for the week, hire maids for the house and child care… By working I am able to make these financial investments. My own relatives tell

me that I am wasting money on childcare. But how else do I keep my family running and also keep my happiness?" Men, on the other hand showed passive acceptance and reinforced traditional gender norms in spite of complete awareness of demands generated from a rapidly changing socio-economic milieu. For example, a male participant shared that "…when I see my parents and compare, I feel my wife does much more than my mother could, you know—I mean not in the quality or amount of hard work, but then the number of roles and tasks that she can do. She will drive a car, do shopping for the house, also go to work outside the home…so not just the typical women things but she also does what my father typically did in our house growing up. This means times are changing, but still even with same education levels and abilities we will never be equal… because we live in a society and our society sees men as higher than women." Giving voice to a similar concern a female participant said that even if women pursue their careers, after a child is born "the same women will become housewives because that's what our patriarchal tradition says. Our society has not made way for our needs to both work and build a family. There is complete isolation, who will take responsibility for my child while I am in office?" In what may seem like a push and pull between the two genders, decisions of balancing work and family were always contextualized and embedded in an ethos of maintaining strong social and familial networks, indicating a clear preference for doing what was in everyone's best interest. A male participant said: "My wife is actually the one who owns the company. I do the marketing and sales but the company's development is in her hands, she's the CEO. There is nothing that I am doing that my wife can't do. But she stays (in office) till 3pm every day and is sure to be home when kids come from school. I am aware of her compromise and I do help. I cook when the maid doesn't come, I drive my kids to their football coaching etc. We have to work as a team, we have to make it work in a way that no one is overburdened and everyone is happily together." Overall, results suggested that navigating traditional gender-role expectations in marriage and

parenthood, without compromising social and familial harmony was a significant cultural marker of maturity in adulthood in India. Figure 5 illustrates the major themes generated for this domain.

Figure 4

Gendered Experience of Grihasthashram in Contemporary India



Discussion and Conclusions

The present study shows that Indian children's and adolescent's moral reasons are diverse and multifaceted. In some respects, their moral reasons resemble those found among children and adolescents from other cultures. At the same time, the present findings highlight distinctive moral reasons among the participants and situates those reasons both within their cultural worldview and social class. The study also points to potentially distinctive developmental pathways among Indians, including for the Ethic of Divinity. Not only are these findings important for a better understanding of moral reasoning among different groups in India, they contribute to a broader and more valid understanding of the psychology and development of morality.

There has been virtually no previous research examining the use of divinity-oriented reasoning among Indian children. Additionally, while moral reasoning has been studied longitudinally in Europe and North America, we are not aware of any comparable efforts in India.

Findings from the study also show the centrality of Dharma in Indian moral thought and action. Moral reasoning among children, adolescents and adults highlights the interdependence of the three ethics of Autonomy, Community and Divinity. Unlike Western frameworks of morality, dharma as a worldview enable the coexistence of the big three ethics. There is immense scope for further examinations of the Indian moral worldview. Indigenous perspectives and models have the potential to enrich the theoretical and conceptual understanding of moral reasoning.

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Appendix A: Hypothetical Scenarios

Scenario 1

Rahul is one of the good players in his school's football team. There is an inter-school match coming up and Rahul is looking forward to playing the match for his school. On the day of the match, everyone gets ready and leaves for the football ground. On the way, Rahul hears a strange sound coming from a nearby bush. He gets down from his cycle and goes towards the bush. He finds a little kitten whose leg is trapped in the fence adjoining the bush. Rahul feels sorry for the kitten and wants to help. But at the same time he realizes that he is getting late for the match. He knows that if he doesn't reach the football ground on time, someone else will take his place in the team. But he does not want to leave the kitten unattended.

Probe Questions:

What should Rahul do—help the kitten or proceed for the match?

Follow-up (Help the kitten):

- Why should Rahul help the kitten?
- What would you do if you were in Rahul's place? Why?
- What if you decide not to help the kitten and decide to go for the match instead?
- Would it be morally right or morally wrong to help the kitten? Why?

Follow-up (Go for the match):

- Why should Rahul go for the match?
- What would you do if you were in Rahul's place? Why?
- What if you decide not to go for your match and decide to help the kitten?
- Would it be morally right or morally wrong to proceed for the match? Why?

Scenario 2

One day, Preeti's mother gives her money to buy sweets for some guests who are going to visit them. Preeti goes to the shop on her cycle and buys the sweets. While returning home, she sees her friends in a nearby park, playing with a new toy. Preeti is curious and decides to go inside the park. She parks her cycle and forgets to take the bag of sweets with her. After some time when Preeti comes back to her cycle, she is surprised to find that her bag of sweets has disappeared. While she is thinking of what to do, she notices a wallet full of money which someone has left on a nearby cycle. Preeti is wondering if she should take the money from the wallet to buy a new packet of sweets.

Probe Questions:

What should Preeti do—take the money or not?

Follow-up (Take the money)

- Why should Preeti take the money?
- What would you do if you were in Preeti's place? Why?
- What if you don't take the money?
- Would it be morally right or morally wrong to take the money? Why?

Follow-up (Not take the money)

- Why should Preeti not take the money?
- What would you do if you were in Preeti's place? Why?
- What if you take the money?
- Would it be morally right or wrong to not take the money? Why?

Scenario 3

A group of children is playing football in their society garden. The festival of Ganeshchaturthi is being celebrated and an idol of Lord Ganesha has been installed near the garden. While playing, one of the children—Nikhil-- kicks the ball hard and it accidently hits the idol. As a result, the idol breaks and soon residents of the society come to know about it. They wonder who is responsible for this. None of the children speak up. Nikhil has to decide whether to tell everyone that he broke the idol by mistake or to stay quiet.

Probe Questions:

What should Nikhil do—tell everyone the truth or stay quiet?

Follow-up (Say the truth)

- Why should Nikhil say the truth to everyone?
- What would you do if you were in Nikhil's place? Why?
- What if you don't say the truth but stay quiet?
- Would it be morally right or morally wrong to say the truth? Why?

Follow-up (Stay quiet)

- Why should Nikhil stay quiet?
- What would you do if you were in Nikhil's place? Why?
- What if you don't stay quiet but say the truth to everyone?
- Would it be morally right or wrong to stay quiet? Why?

Scenario 4

Prachi studies in class IV. She and Seema are good friends. One day, the art teacher gives homework to the class which has to be done in the Diwali break and has to be submitted the day the school reopens. The teacher has asked everyone to make similar oil paintings. Prachi's parents cannot afford to buy paints for her and so, she is unable to do the home work. When the school reopens and it is time to submit the homework, the teacher sees Seema's painting and is checking other children's work. Seema feels bad for Prachi. She wonders whether she should help her by giving her own homework to Prachi.

Probe Questions:

What should Prachi do—give her own homework to Prachi or not?

Follow-up (Give homework)

- Why should Seema give her homework to Prachi?
- What would you do if you were in Seema's place and had a friend like Prachi? Why?
- What if you don't give your homework to your friend?
- Would it be morally right or morally wrong to help your friend in this way? Why?

Follow-up (Not give homework)

- Why should Seema not give her homework to Prachi?
- What would you have done if you were in Seema's place and had a friend like Prachi?
- What if you gave your homework to your friend?
- Would it be morally right or morally wrong to not help your friend in this way? Why?

Scenario 5
Neha's mother has organised a *pooja* at home. She makes *sheera* (sweet) as *prashad* (offering) to be offered to God and puts it on the table. Neha comes home after playing outside and sees the *prashad* on the table. She feels very tempted to taste the *sheera*. She looks around to ensure that no one sees her and eats a little bit of the *prashad*. At that point, her mother comes into the room and takes the *prashad* to offer it to God.

Probe Questions:
What should Neha do—should he tell his mother that she tasted the *prashad* or not?
Follow-up (tell the mother)

- Why should Neha tell her mother?
- What would you have done if you were in Neha's place? Why?
- What if you did not tell your mother that you had ate some of the *prashad?*
- Would it be morally right or morally wrong to tell your mother? Why?

Follow-up (not tell mother)

- Why should Neha not tell her mother?
- What would you have done if you were in Neha's place? Why?
- What if you tell your mother that you ate the *prashad*?
- Would it be morally right or morally wrong to stay quiet? Why?

Appendix B: Worldviews

A. Human beings

1)Good vs. bad:

a) Do you think that humans by nature are mostly good or mostly bad?

b) In what ways are people good?

c) In what ways are people bad?

2) Men and women:

a) Do you think that men and women are essentially the same or are they mostly different?

b) In what ways are they the same?

c) In what ways are they different?

d) Do you think that women should be responsible for some things that men should not be responsible for?

e) Do you think that men should be responsible for things that women should not be responsible for?

B. God

1) Existence:

a) Do you believe in God?

2) Characteristics:

a) What is God like?

b) Is there one God or are there many gods?

c) Is God male or female or something else?

3) Power:

a) How powerful is God?

b) What kinds of things does God control about your life?

c) To what extent do you determine your own life independent of God?

4) Devil:

a) Do you believe in the devil or satan or an evil force?

b) What is the Devil like? (use participant's terminology)

c) Is there one Devil or are there many devils?

d) Is the Devil male or female or something else?

C. This world and other worlds

1) More than one:

a) What happens to us when we die?

b) What is the [afterlife] like? *[use the participant's terminology]*

c) Do different people go to different places after they die?

d) On what basis do people go to different places? Who decides? *[if applicable]*

e) What do you think is the most important part of existence—here and now, or the afterlife?

f) Which one do you think would be your favorite—this world or the afterlife?

2) Historical status:

a) What do you think of the moral and ethical conditions of today's world?

b) Do you believe there has been a different time and place when the world was more ethical and good?

c) When and where? *[if applicable]*

d) Let's look into the future—Do you think our society will be better off, worse off, or about the same 100 years from now?

D. Suffering

1) All people suffer at some point in their life, why do you think there is suffering?

2) Do you think suffering serves any purpose, does it have a meaning or is it meaningless?

3) If all suffering could be eliminated, would that be a good or bad thing?

E. Remedies

1) What do you think are the worst problems that face our society or the world more generally?

2) How do you think each of those problems could be fixed? [*Go over each of the answers given immediately above previously]*

3) What can you do personally to help with those problems?

4) As a part of your community, how can you help solve these problems?

5) What do you think is the role of religious institutions in solving these problems?