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## “India is a secular state”

A study of how teachers at Jiva Public School integrate religious education in their subjects

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## **ABSTRACT**

This report is based on a field study that was carried out in India. The aim with this field study is to find out how the religious education is carried out at Jiva Public School in Faridabad. The questions that are tried to be answered are if the teachers at this school integrate religious education in some of their subjects, if they see any problems performing this kind of education and what attitudes teachers' have towards religious education.

In the presentation of previous research, opinions of several international researchers regarding religious education and their thoughts about how a good religious education can be designed will be made.

The empirical material has been assembled by doing qualitative semi-structured interviews with teachers on the school mentioned above. This kind of method suits well for the aim and questions since the focus will be on trying to understand these teachers way to discuss and act. When describing the methods, other problems that can occur during a field study are presented.

The results are presented in text but also in diagrams, so that the reader can get a good overview. In the analysis and discussion the results will refer to the previous research.

When analysing the empirical material it showed that a majority of the teachers did not integrate religious education in some of their subjects. They did not see it as their task and they meant that it is less important to get absorbed about people's different beliefs since India is a secular state. You should not give any religion preference so why should you discuss about religions in your teaching? The focus should instead be on acceptance and to teach the pupils to respect each other no matter what. The teachers that did integrate religion in their subjects did this by celebrating religious festivals within the school. Only two teachers practised "ordinary" lessons when teaching about religions.

**Keywords:** religions, religious education, school

## SAMMANFATTNING

Denna uppsats baseras på en fältstudie som har utförts i Indien. Syftet med fältstudien är att undersöka hur religionsundervisningen ser ut på Jiva Public School i Faridabad. Frågeställningarna som ska försöka besvaras är hur lärare på denna skola integrerar religionsundervisning i något av sina ämnen, om de kan se några problem med att utföra denna typ av undervisning och hur lärarnas inställning till religionsundervisning ser ut.

I avsnittet *Tidigare forskning* redovisas flera internationella forskares syn på just religionsundervisning och hur de tycker att bra religionsundervisning kan vara utformad.

Det empiriska materialet har samlats in genom kvalitativa semistrukturerade intervjuer med lärare på ovannämnda skola. Denna metod passar syftet och frågeställningarna bäst eftersom fokus kommer att ligga på att försöka förstå dessa lärares sätt att diskutera och agera. I metodavsnittet kommer också andra relevanta problem som forskare kan ställas inför då en fältstudie skall utföras tas upp.

Resultatet presenteras i löpande text, men också med diagram för att göra det hela mer överskådligt samt lättförståeligt. I analys- och diskussionsavsnittet kommer resultatet att knytas till den tidigare forskningen.

Vid analysen av det empiriska materialet visade det sig att de flesta lärare inte integrerar religion i något av sina ämnen. Detta på grund av att de ansåg att det inte var deras uppgift. De menade också att det var mindre viktigt att fördjupa sig i vad andra människor har för trosuppfattning eftersom Indien är en sekulär stat. Ingen religion skall ha företräde och varför skall man då diskutera religion i sin undervisning? Istället borde fokus ligga på acceptans och att lära eleverna att bara respektera varandra utan vidare. De lärare som däremot integrerade religion i sina ämnen gjorde detta genom att fira olika religiösa festivaler på skolan. Endast två lärare använde sig av "traditionella" lektioner då de undervisade om religion.

Nyckelord: religion, religionsundervisning, skola

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## **INTRODUCTION**

This report is based on a field study that was carried out in India in the spring of 2007. With this study I will try to find out how religious education is designed in a multicultural society like India. How do they handle this kind of education in a country with such a great variety of religions?

### **Process**

Before travelling to India my first thought was that I should find out how the religious education was carried out in some of the schools in New Delhi. I also wanted to study some of the schools' curriculum to get more knowledge about what the curriculum said about religious education. Arriving in India I soon realised that this was impossible. From Faridabad where I stayed, it was 2.5 km to New Delhi and my contact person said that it was not safe for young women to travel in that area. Therefore I decided to perform my study at only one school in Faridabad, Jiva Public School. The reason for not comparing different schools in Faridabad with each other was also because of the insecure area. It was also difficult to study the curriculum, since the informants that I interviewed at Jiva did not seem to know that much about it. Jiva has its own website, but during my field study it was under construction so I could not get any information about the curriculum.

Anyhow, I performed this study by interviewing teachers at Jiva Public School and now I first of all will give you an introduction to the religious situation in India to show you that the country is very multicultural.

### **The religious situation in India**

All the big world religions are represented in India. Because of that, the country does not have a specific national religion and India is a secular state according to constitutional law.

Even though the religions permeate the whole society and is a natural part of the daily life for most Indians religion shall not influence the politics in India. The Indian culture is known for its openness and is not foreign to influences from other countries.

The different religions in India have also influenced each other. Hinduism, which 83 per cent of the population is confessing to, is considered to be the religion that most has affected other religions in India. Hinduism has roots long back in time, despite this; Hinduism has generally developed to a religion characterized by great flexibility and tolerance towards people with different opinions.

India's second largest religion is Islam. The country has the world's second largest Muslim population, besides Indonesia. Approximately 11 per cent of the Indian population is Muslim, most of them are Sunnites. Christianity and Buddhism have quite few followers in India today. 2.4 per cent is confessing to Christianity, while Buddhism is represented with 0.7 per cent. There are also Sikhs living in the country, approximately 2 per cent are confessing to this religion.

Many of the religious groups live peacefully side by side in the Indian society, but sometimes conflicts arise, especially in the northern part of the country between Hindus and Muslims.<sup>1</sup>

### **Religious education in school**

Now I will give some brief information about how the schools in India in general are handling religious education.

India is a secular democratic state, which means that all religions should be respected, and the Indian state does not give any religion preference.

It is important that the schools teach all pupils respect for all people no matter their religious beliefs. Emphasis, according to the National Council of Educational Research and Training, should focus on that the pupils should be proud over their country's great variety of religions and to see this as something positive. All cultures have their rights to exist and live together. All humans have right to their own beliefs and instead of using violence every person should try to realise that it is valuable to live in a multi religious society and that you should be proud of it.<sup>2</sup>

Indian schools do not have a subject called religion. Instead they have a subject named value education, in which the pupils are supposed to get knowledge about different religions and their founders. Teachers who are not teaching this subject can decide by themselves how much they want to integrate religious education in their subjects.<sup>3</sup>

#### *Jiva Public School*

Below I will give you a presentation of Jiva Public School where I performed the interviews, since I want you to have an understanding of how the school is designed and what kind of learning methods the school is applying.

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<sup>1</sup> [www.ne.se/jsp/search/article.jsp?i\\_art\\_1d=211005&i\\_sect\\_id=210982&i\\_word=&i\\_history=2](http://www.ne.se/jsp/search/article.jsp?i_art_1d=211005&i_sect_id=210982&i_word=&i_history=2)

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.ncert.nic.in/sites/publication/schoolcurriculum/NCFR%202005/ncfr\\_final/Perspective.pdf](http://www.ncert.nic.in/sites/publication/schoolcurriculum/NCFR%202005/ncfr_final/Perspective.pdf). 2005, p. 7

<sup>3</sup> Interview with a teacher at Jiva Public School

Jiva Public School is a private school and was established in 1994. At the start there were only 8 pupils and 4 teachers, but now the school has grown. Today there are over 500 pupils and 40 teachers operating from a large building in Faridabad, 25 km from New Delhi. Jiva runs education from kindergarten up to 12<sup>th</sup> class<sup>4</sup>. The concept that characterise the school is that learning is seen as an active process of building knowledge through personal experience.

Jiva was the first school in India to have an Internet connection and to use computers as a tool to teach other subjects. Many large companies have supported the school, such as Apple, Microsoft and Hewlett Packard. The school has also been designed to enhance learning from the use of innovative activities. It is common that Indian schools put a lot of pressure on their pupils to have good results in examinations, often at the expense of learners' development. Jiva tries to tone this down by making a balance that has shown it is possible for pupils to score well on examinations and at the same time developing a diverse set of skills.<sup>5</sup>

A few years ago educational experts felt that there was a need to remake the curriculum that had been rendered obsolete for a long time. The experts thought that it was important to choose and implement the right tools to help the pupils become life-long learners. The need for effective learning methodologies and resources made Jiva spend approximately seven years analyzing both the curriculum in India as well as those around the world.

The results of this research have been translated into a new curriculum for learning, called ICOT, which stands for India's Curriculum of Tomorrow. The brainchild is the educational director of Jiva, Dr. Stephen Rudolph. His vision is to focus on constructive learning and provide a holistic approach to education.

This curriculum offers a comprehensive solution for all subjects and all classes. ICOT also includes textbooks and digital resources for pupils, teachers and school administrators.

The curriculum does not only try to enhance learning, but also to instil the love of learning. ICOT should be seen as a help for, not only schools, but boards, publishers and educators to help them create innovative lesson plans and textbooks that can help the pupils become more creative and innovative.

The new curriculum is the first constructive educational curriculum and it is also based on the recommendations of National Council of Educational Research and Training. Around 350 schools in India are using ICOT in their education. At Jiva the pupils are educated in many different subjects, for example maths, science, biology, English and so on.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> The pupils are 16 to 18 years when joining this class

<sup>5</sup> [www.jivagroup.com/education/jps.asp](http://www.jivagroup.com/education/jps.asp)

<sup>6</sup> [www.jivagroup.com/education/icot.asp](http://www.jivagroup.com/education/icot.asp)

## **AIM AND QUESTIONS**

The aim with this report is to study how religious education is carried out at Jiva Public School in Faridabad.

My main questions in this report are the following:

Do the teachers integrate religious education in some of their subjects? If so, how?

Can they see any problems performing this kind of education?

What are the teachers' attitudes towards religious education?

## **DISPOSITION**

First of all in this report I will give some information about previous research and how different international researchers are discussing religious education and their thoughts about how a good religious education can be designed.

After describing the method that was used to assemble the empirical data, other problems that can occur during a field study are presented. After that I will present my results from the empirical research, both in text and also illustrate with diagrams. The results are followed by an analysis and a discussion. In that part the focus will be on referring my results to previous research but also on my own thoughts and opinions. Finally a conclusion on the study's content and results is completing this report.

## **PREVIOUS RESEARCH**

Before I started writing on this report I read some literature about religious education and I found that many researchers in the religious field have something to say about it. Below I will present some researchers that all share the opinion that religious education is important, but some of them have different opinions on how the best education about religions can be achieved.

Many researchers are discussing how important religious education is for the pupils in school.<sup>7</sup> Every class has its plurality of pupils. That is why the school is seen as a place where children can develop the ability to live with religious and cultural differences and therefore it is the schools' decision how they prepare their pupils for this issue.<sup>8</sup>

### **The importance of religious education**

Professor Wolfram Weisse writes about religious education<sup>9</sup> as a goal to achieve understanding and tolerance towards other cultures and religions. Weisse himself is living in Hamburg, a big multicultural city with approximately 100 religions and languages. Hamburg has always been seen as a liberal city where people from all over the world are living. According to Weisse Hamburg is a very good example on how great the schools are working with creating a dialogue between pupils from different religions. In many German schools the pupils are divided into groups depending on which religion they are confessing to and afterwards the religious education is pursued individually in these different groups. In Hamburg on the contrary, all pupils have RE together, despite the fact that they are followers of different religions. Weisse also says that the school is playing an important role when it comes to creating tolerance towards differences between all humans in society.

Weisse thinks that the school is a society in miniature, where children and adults can teach themselves to live together, where awareness and attitudes can be created.<sup>10</sup>

David Chidester, professor of comparative religion, also talks about the importance of RE in schools. He says that the study of religions is good to prevent fear of the unknown. Instead of having a feeling of fear towards people confessing to different religions you should replace that feeling with experience and insight. With knowledge about religions it is hard to be afraid of something you really understand. Chidester also says that RE could work like a therapy for fear. The more you know about other religions the less fear you will feel. He also wants the schools to teach the pupils to look critically upon different religions, and not just

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<sup>7</sup> Leganger-Krogstad, H, 2003, p.169, Broadbent, L, 2002, p.19-20, Chidester, D, 2003, p.33

<sup>8</sup> Leganger-Krogstad, H, 2003, p.169

<sup>9</sup> From now on I will abbreviate religious education as RE

<sup>10</sup> Weisse, W, 2003, p. 192

to teach them about positive aspects. Chidester also says that religious diversity in the classroom is almost inevitable.<sup>11</sup>

### **Different criteria's in religious education**

Other researchers who also are discussing how important RE is are Broadbent and Brown and Vardy. They discuss different criteria's and aims that RE should fulfil.

Pupils in school have to be prepared to challenge different bias information to which they are unwittingly exposed, and that is why Broadbent and Brown pleads for RE. They have also come up with some criteria they think religious education should fulfil:

First of all there has to be a balance between different kinds of knowledge. You can either teach the pupils about how religion works or just give them knowledge about different religions.

The teacher should not just give the pupils information about what the different religions believe in and who the leaders are. Instead there should be an identification of the central concepts of each religion such as rituals and celebration from both a historic and current practice which serves to illustrate these central concepts.

RE has to be relevant to the pupils' cultural context. It needs to develop their knowledge and understanding about the religious society in their local area and those represented both nationally and internationally.<sup>12</sup>

### **Various aims in religious education**

Peter Vardy, theologian and author, discusses different aims of RE. The first thing he mentions is that the aim of RE is to inculcate the pupils to the religious tradition of the school. Vardy says that this form of education is common especially in many Muslim, Jewish and evangelical Christian schools. It is common that the pupils' parents have sent them to these schools to be educated into the same religious tradition as their parents. The other type of RE is when the aim is to develop an understanding and empathy for different religions. This kind of approach aims to stand outside any religious tradition and to look upon religions from an independent perspective.

Another kind of RE is the general ethical and spiritual approach, when the subject is aiming to foster moral development and a general sense of a spiritual attitude to life. Here, different religious truth claims are seen as unimportant. The last aim

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<sup>11</sup> Chidester, D, 2003, p.33

<sup>12</sup> Broadbent, L, 2002, pp. 21-26

that Vardy mention is when the education is seen as a search for truth and wisdom. This education focuses on a critical point of view, where you evaluate, challenge and try to understand the key issues arising from different religions.

A part of this education will also be to get young people to challenge their own core beliefs and to question the moral values accepted by their parents and society, so that the pupils can have a greater understanding of the basis for different religions.

Educating the pupils about the world religions is extremely important according to Vardy, but he raises his finger and says that these religions have to be taught well. He means that too many schools still use a sociological approach when they are teaching their pupils through festivals and outward practises. This type of education is more likely to increase the prejudice rather than the reverse. This method fails to give the pupils empathic feelings for different religions and traditions. Instead, Vardy means that before you can teach your pupils through religious festivals you have to give them knowledge about these religions. You cannot just go on and celebrate a festival; you have to have some knowledge about the background first.<sup>13</sup>

It is not just Broadbent and Brown and Vardy who have opinions about what the content of RE should be, different schools or teachers also have different methods and aims. Next I will present some other researchers who are discussing this, but on a deeper level.

### **Three types of religious education**

Professor Chris Hermans from Holland discusses different methods on how RE can be taught. His conclusion is that there are three different types of learning methods: mono-, multi-, - and inter-religious education.

#### *Mono-religious education*

The mono-religious education is focusing only on one particular religion, in his example Christianity. This form of education is also what Hermans call the “transfer model”, just because the aim is to carry over a special tradition to the pupils at school. Despite this, this form of education is not trying to force the pupils to just accept a ready made package; instead the education is adjusted to the pupils and their educational level. Even though the mono-religious education is focusing on only one religion it does not mean that other religions are completely put aside. Hermans makes a distinction between a rigid and a loose version within mono RE. The rigid version is limited to a Christian standpoint and is looking at other religious traditions as independent. The loose version considers other

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<sup>13</sup> Vardy, P, 2003, pp. 183-186

religions as ways to salvation and that human salvation also can be achieved by other religions.

The aim of the mono RE is to increase the interest and engagement among the pupils towards Christianity. Hermans criticise this type of education very strongly, and says that it does not encourage religious plurality at all. Even though you can discuss other religions in the loose form it is only from a Christian perspective. Hermans asks if it is legal to pursue this type of education in classes where the pupils are confessing to different religions.<sup>14</sup>

#### *Multi-religious education*

The multi-religious education is more directed towards a multi-cultural society. The aim is to introduce the pupils to the religious diversity. The education is focusing on religions from a private, ordinary and social perspective.

Knowledge about different religious traditions, how the holy books are used and typical symbols for each religion are characterising the multi-religious education. The religions should also be presented as neutral as possible. Besides building an interest, the pupils should also develop a respectful attitude towards people with different religious beliefs. Many people think that what is different is frightening and that is why pupils have to be educated about different religions.

#### *Inter-religious education*

Inter-religious education is also focusing on the multi-cultural society, but especially on dialogues between followers from different religions. Hermans makes a difference between single-dialogue and parallel-dialogue. The single-dialogue is focusing on a Christian perspective. In this type of dialogue you are also looking for knowledge about and insight in other religious traditions, but only to get a deeper insight in the Christian tradition. The aim with this type of single-dialogue is therefore to acquire yourself more knowledge about different religions so that you can increase your personal insight to Christianity. This type of dialogue is impossible to use in classes with pupils confessing to other religions than Christianity.

The parallel-dialogue on the contrary, is focusing on teaching the pupils to participate in dialogues with people confessing to other religions than their own. The aim is that the pupils should learn from each other and to see both their own and other religions in different perspectives. Through this type of dialogue both similarities and differences between different religions can be discussed among the pupils so that they can learn from each other. It is also a good opportunity to grow in your own religious beliefs. This type of dialogue is perfect to use in a class with pupils from different religions, but it can also be used in more

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<sup>14</sup> Hermans, C, 2003, pp. 337-347

homogeneous classes, but then it is necessary for the pupils to have some knowledge about different religions.<sup>15</sup>

### **Dialogue in religious education**

Another researcher who also pleads for parallel dialogue in inter-religious education is Oddbjorn Leirvik, a theologian from Norway. He wants RE to both contain a separate confessional element and also a dialogical common element for all pupils. A dialogical approach, according to Leirvik, is when you are searching for common themes and trying to develop the pupils' capacity for empathetic understanding and dialogue across different religions and beliefs<sup>16</sup>.

Just like Hermans and Leirvik, Weisse also advocates inter-religious education, where a dialogue can be created between followers from different religions. According to Weisse this is important because knowledge about other religions can lead to an appreciation among the pupils regarding the classmates' religion or cultural background. He is also positive to dialogue within RE. It is important that you in religious dialogue are both speaking about the similarities and the differences between different religious traditions. Dialogue with the pupils fosters respect for other religious movements and developing mutual understanding and respect.<sup>17</sup>

Leganger-Krogstad is also sharing the same meaning. She says that dialogue promotes new understanding. It is very likely that children, especially the younger ones, adopt their parents' opinions and put them forward at school, instead of their own. The children often tend to reproduce their parents' views on religion without having the ability to argue for them.<sup>18</sup> She says that a dialogical approach in RE is very important, especially for the youngest children. Because the school play a different role than the family.<sup>19</sup>

Leganger-Krogstad also holds that the teacher has to be open to spontaneous dialogue, whenever an opportunity occurs, but also to be able to encourage dialogue in a more structured way.

It is good if the teacher starts having religious dialogues with the children as soon as possible before they possess institutionalised knowledge about their own and other children's backgrounds.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Hermans, C, 2003, pp. 337-347

<sup>16</sup> Leirvik, O, 1996, pp.165

<sup>17</sup> Weisse, W, 2003, p.192-199

<sup>18</sup> Leganger-Krogstad, H, 2003, p.176

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., p.185

<sup>20</sup> Leganger-Krogstad, H, 2003, p. 180-181

## **METHOD**

After presenting the opinions of the researchers I will now describe the method which I used to assemble the empirical data. In this part I will also describe the qualitative method that I used and give you information on how I selected the informants and how I performed my interviews. I will also discuss different cultural difficulties that I had to face. But first of all I would like to give a few details about some limitations and difficulties.

### **Limitations and difficulties**

In this study I have chosen to interview teachers at Jiva Public School. The reason for choosing this school was because of the great willingness among the teachers at Jiva to be a part of my study. At first I wanted to compare two schools with each other, to see if there were any differences. But then I thought it would be more interesting to focus on just one school so I could get a larger sample and therefore a deeper understanding of that school's work. Jiva Public School is also a good example on how successful a school can become. I thought it could be interesting to focus on this particular school which is considered modern and which has come a long way concerning both teaching methods and material.

My first thought was that I should interview teachers with value education as their subject, but I soon realised that this was impossible. None of the teachers I interviewed at Jiva teaches value education and when I asked the informants if they knew any one teaching this subject they said no. Therefore, my aim is to see how the teachers integrate religion in their subjects even though they are not teaching value education.

One limitation is the language. Luckily all the informants spoke English fluently. But for all of them, and also for me, English is their second language and therefore misunderstandings sometimes could occur.

### *Qualitative method*

In this report I chose to do semi-structured, qualitative interviews. The method approach that principally is used in research depends on what phenomenon is being studied and the survey's purpose.<sup>21</sup> If you are interested in trying to understand people's way to argue or react or to distinguish different patterns of behaviour a qualitative method is suitable. If you instead want to study how often, how much or how common something is, then a quantitative method would be better.<sup>22</sup> I searched to know how teachers at Jiva Public School integrate religious education in their subjects and this had probably been very difficult to do with a quantitative method, using for example a questionnaire. In interviews you can also ask follow up questions which is impossible in a questionnaire.

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<sup>21</sup> Kvale, 1997, p.69

<sup>22</sup> Trost, J, 2003, p 14

### *Choice of informants*

When you are using a qualitative method you are aiming at having as big variation as possible among the informants and not a number of like-minded people.<sup>23</sup> At Jiva Public School where I performed my study the majority of the teachers are women. For that reason it is natural that only two of the informants are men. I got help from one of my contacts at Jiva to find the informants so I could not decide anything when it came to the selection method. Trost is mentioning this and says that if you have a contact that is helping you to find informants, then you have to be satisfied with the informants you get, whoever they are and just be lucky if there is some variation between them.<sup>24</sup> I cannot know if my contact chose respondents that she knew would give certain answers. I believe it was not so because my contact just seemed to do a random selection. All the informants in this study are women, except two of them. I interviewed 17 informants and the ages of them vary between 22 to 52 years.

### *Interview performance*

In my interviews I used a semi-structured interview guide (see appendix 1). This kind of guide includes an overview of different themes and suggestions of questions.<sup>25</sup> In my interviews the sequence of the questions were decided in advance, but I also asked follow up questions, depending on the informants' answers. The interviews were held in English and lasted for half an hour to one hour. I did not use a tape recorder or some other type of recorder. The reason why I did not choose to record my interviews was because I thought that maybe the informants would be disturbed by a recorder. A recording could have lead to that they did not want to give me the "right" and complete answers. I thought that they would feel more comfortable without one.

There are both negative and positive aspects of making notes during the interviews. First of all it can disturb the informant. If the interviewer is not making notes through the whole interview and only at certain times it can also be regarded as suspicious by the informant. One suggestion is that the interviewer could try to remember the whole interview and first write something down afterwards, but then you have to have a very good memory and be a well trained interviewer. The informant could also experience this as nonchalant if you do not write anything down at all.<sup>26</sup> Therefore I tried to write down key words during the whole interviews and afterwards I added by writing down the informant's answers completely.

As an interviewer you should always try to conduct your interviews in places that feel secure for the informants. Therefore, it was very good that all of the interviews took place in the school, since it is the teachers' place of work.

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid. p. 117

<sup>24</sup> Ibid. p.119

<sup>25</sup> Kvale, 1997, p.121

<sup>26</sup> Trost, 2003, p. 55

### *Cultural difficulties*

With my journey to India approaching I was a little bit nervous performing the interviews and how to act facing informants belonging to a different culture. Anne Ryen is writing about what it is like to meet another culture during a field study. She says it is hard to be an “insider”; it is more common that you are an outsider.<sup>27</sup> It is hard to be a part of the culture or to get a feeling of solidarity. It takes time to create trust and to find a way into an unknown culture.<sup>28</sup> During my stay big exams were going on. The teachers were very busy marking the exams and I felt that I did not have time to establish a deeper contact with the ones that I interviewed. I do not even know if a deeper contact would have made the informants more open, because I already felt that they were very open.

Much criticism has been directed towards trans-cultural research in the third world because it is seen to express western ethnocentrism. Ryen is talking about this and how easy it is that you are looked on as a dominant western person when you are performing your research in an under-developed country.<sup>29</sup> Both Ryen and Trost are talking about what kind of clothes to wear during an interview. This was something I thought about before going to India. I did not want to be looked upon as a rich white person, because then I could have been considered as dominant, just as Ryen says. That could have affected my interviews in a negative way, because maybe the informants would not want to open up during my interviews.

How do you dress neutral? Trost is writing about this and says that your clothes should be discreet.<sup>30</sup> Arriving in India I immediately noticed that almost all the Indian women were dressed in very colourful beautiful clothes. Pretty soon I realised that the clothing issue would not be a problem for me.

Comparing my clothing to the Indian women I think I appeared as a person with no eye for fashion what so ever since I dressed in slacks and high-necked sweaters. All my worries about the clothing and so on were actually unnecessary issues to think about. The Indian people we met were all very kind, respectful and helpful.

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<sup>27</sup> Ryen, 2004, p.182

<sup>28</sup> Ibid, 2004, p.185

<sup>29</sup> Ibid, p.191

<sup>30</sup> Trost, 2005, p.55

## **RESULTS**

Having interviewed 17 informants I had a lot of material to put together. Now I am going to present the results in text, but also in diagrams. Since I made 17 interviews I think it would be good to also present the answers in diagrams, so that the reader can get a good overview. The aim with this report is to study how religious education is carried out at Jiva Public School in Faridabad. I want to know if the teachers integrate religious education in some of their subjects and how they put it into practice. Another question that I want to find out more about is if they can they see any problems performing this kind of education and what kind of attitudes the teachers have regarding religious education? I will now first present some background information about the teachers and then describe how they felt working at Jiva.

### **Background information**

The ages among the informants varied between 22 to 52 years. A majority of them had worked as teachers for at least five to ten years and often at some other school before joining Jiva. Almost all of them had gone through some kind of teaching programme at a university. Some of the informants were married others not. The ages and subjects they were teaching were very varying. One of the informants said she was teaching *all* subjects except Hindi, but most of the teachers were teaching two subjects. It does not matter for this study what kind of subject the teachers are educating since I also want to know the teachers attitudes towards RE and that is possible to find out regardless subject. Three of the informants in this report were working in kindergarten and therefore they did not teach any special subject.

#### *Working at Jiva*

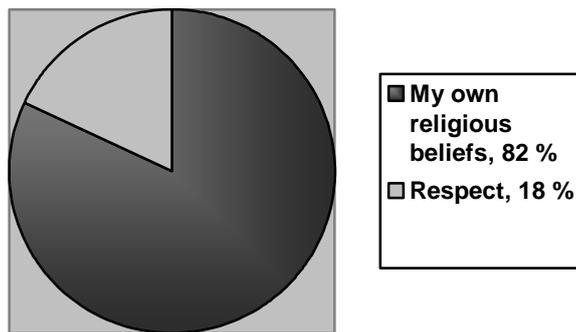
When I asked the teachers to tell me if they felt that Jiva was different from other schools they had been working at, almost all of them answered with a big yes. Many of the informants had worked in other schools before joining Jiva and they felt a big difference between Jiva and other schools. All of them were positive to the kind of learning methods that Jiva pleads for.

The informants were talking almost euphorically about how good it was working at Jiva. In other schools the education and lessons are more designed with focus on lectures. The teacher has the knowledge and the pupils are just supposed to listen to the teacher and not have any own comments or arguments. At Jiva it is the total opposite. As a teacher you engage the pupils and try to connect the education with their personal experience in daily life. The pupils are often more active than the teacher during the lessons. It is a kind of activity based learning. After these general questions about their background I focused my questions more towards RE.

## Religious education

When I started to focus more on RE I first of all asked the informants what the term religion meant to them, not what their religious beliefs were. I wanted to know more how they associated to the specific term. However all of the informants, except three, answered that religion for them were their own religious beliefs. The three who gave a different answer said that religion for them was all about respect, that you have to respect all religions. Below I present the answers from this question in per cent.

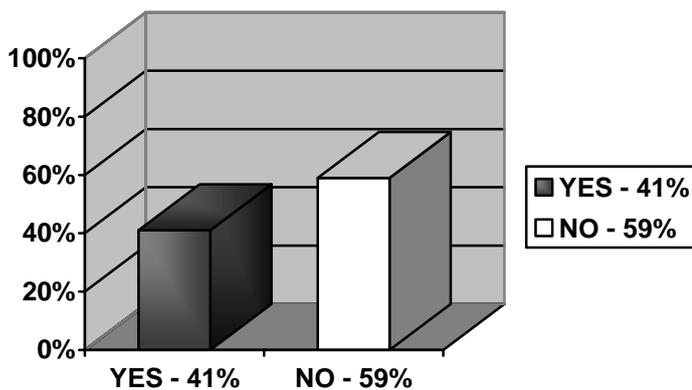
*Diagram 1: What does the term religion mean to you?*



### *Religious education or not*

The next question that I wanted to find out more about was if the teachers were integrating RE in their teaching. Here the answers were approximately fifty-fifty. Seven of them told me that they did talk about religions with their pupils but 10 of the informants answered that they did not.

*Diagram 2: Do you integrate religious education in some of your subjects?*



When I asked the teachers who did not mention religions in their education *why* they did not, some of them answered that they did not have enough time for it. They did not know where to fit it in. Some of the informants also said that RE did not “belong” to their subjects. It was not their “task” to teach their pupils about

religions. Several of the kindergarten teachers also mentioned that the children were too young to understand the “content” of religion. Another answer to why they did not integrate RE was that India is a secular state and that you should not give any religion preference. Every one is equal and it does not matter what your religious beliefs are. If you as a teacher integrate religion in your subjects it can be a risk because it can be looked upon as if you present one religion in a better way than the others.

#### *Teaching about other religions*

I wanted to know more how the teachers, who said that they integrated religious education, put this kind of teaching into practice. Consequently I asked the teachers how they teach about other religions. Do they use some kind of textbooks or other materials? One of the teachers who have literature as one of her subjects said that she has a novel by Oscar Wilde called *Men of the house* that she uses to read for her pupils. It is a Christian family story and when she reads it in her classes they also discuss Christianity at the same time, but only if they have time for it, she said. Her pupils also ask a lot of questions about Christianity. She also said that she has discussions with her classes about religions when opportunity occurs. To get knowledge about other religions than Christianity the whole school celebrates different religious traditions and festivals. Another teacher who teaches geography mentioned that she discusses religions with her pupils according to different chapters from a geography book, but only if they have time for it. She does not mention anything about religions without a certain occasion, for example if there has happened something special in a country then she can discuss it with her classes and connect it with the religious situation in that specific country.

One of the kindergarten teachers told me that in relation to the different religious festivals she talks with the children about why they celebrate this festival and the history behind it. If they for example are celebrating Christmas she has a kind of lesson where she tells about the history of Jesus and other historical facts regarding Christianity. When the school is celebrating Eid<sup>31</sup> she talks about Islam and so on. The children have a big interest in celebrating these festivals and do often discuss the similarities and differences between festivals with each other. Another teacher told me that she has a textbook that mentions different religions, for example there is a chapter each for Hinduism, Sikhism and Islam. When I asked her what in specific these chapters are containing she answered that they described different festivals within each religion.

I also interviewed another teacher with geography as one of her subjects. She told me that in her classes they discuss a lot about other religions, for example she mentioned Islam, Christianity and Judaism. She gives the pupils knowledge about the origin of the religions, different kind of faiths and she also speak about

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<sup>31</sup> Eid-ul-fitr is a festival that marks the end of the fast  
[www.ne.se/jsp/search/article.jsp?i\\_art\\_id=159591](http://www.ne.se/jsp/search/article.jsp?i_art_id=159591)  
Eid-ul-adha is a festival of sacrificing  
[www.ne.se/jsp/search/article.jsp?i\\_art\\_id=159590](http://www.ne.se/jsp/search/article.jsp?i_art_id=159590)

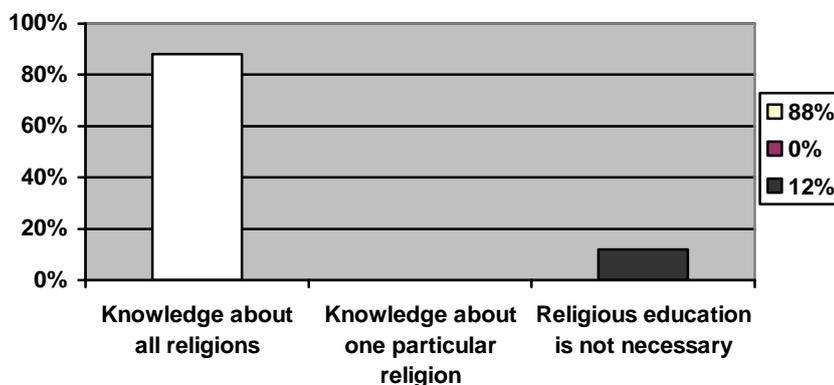
similarities between the different religions. One of the informants was a Hindi teacher and in her classes she uses a text book which is containing chapters that all have two values each. The values tells the pupils how to behave and act, what to do and not. In relation to these values she also talks about religions. This informant also teaches English and sometimes in her lessons the pupils play dramas which are about different religious festivals. One teacher teaching Environmental Studies told me that she has a text book which is telling about different religious festivals, but only in one chapter, and she only discuss it if they have enough time for it.

Even though Jiva is working on the basis of the curriculum ICOT, many of the teachers did not seem to have knowledge about that. I asked them if they had some kind of plan or curriculum that tells them what to teach about. All of them, except one, did not mention any kind of plan or curriculum. The one who did mention it was a kindergarten teacher who said that the curriculum decided *what* to teach the pupils about, but she as a teacher has to decide *how* to teach it. The reason for asking this question was to find out if the teachers based their RE on some plan or a curriculum. According to the informants it did not seem like they did.

*The importance of religious education*

The next question was about the importance of RE. I asked all the informants, even the ones who said that they did not integrate religions in their subjects, if they thought that it is more important to teach about one religion deeper or if the pupils should have some knowledge about all religions. 15 of the informants answered that the pupils should have knowledge about all religions. The other two informants told me that RE is not necessary at all.

*Diagram 3: Do you think it is more important to teach about one religion deeper or should the pupils have some knowledge about all religions?*



One of these two teachers does not talk about other religions in her classes. Instead she is focusing on teaching the pupils to respect one another and that everyone is equal and shares the same rights. It is not necessary to become

absorbed about peoples different beliefs. It is enough to know that all religions have the same goals. We all live together and why another person has a different belief than you is less important. All people have right to their own beliefs. The focus should be upon acceptance and one should not bother about persons' different beliefs. The other informant also shared the same meaning. The pupils have to be tolerant since they are spending around six till seven hours a day with each other in school. If you are not accepting one another then everything falls apart. The pupils have to co-operate and just learn to respect each other no matter their religious beliefs.

The teachers who said that it is important for the pupils to have knowledge about all religions were then asked *why* they thought it was important. Many of them answered that it is important to express yourself about different religions and that love and peace only can be achieved through education about religions. Religious education can also counteract terrorism. Another informant said that RE promotes unity and that it makes you more open-minded. Some of the teachers mentioned that you have to teach about all religions or else certain pupils could be offended. "India is a secular state and there is freedom of religion in the country." Another answer was that not only the pupils should have knowledge about religions, the whole society should. One of the teachers told me that the schools should give the pupils some general knowledge about all religions, since their family gives them deeper knowledge about their own religious beliefs.

One of the teachers said: "The pupils are our future, they are the ones who are going to build our country, and therefore knowledge about religions in this country is necessary."

#### *Preparation for the Indian society*

My final question was about how important it is that the pupils are prepared for the multi religious society in India. I also wanted to know what the best way is to prepare them for that society. From the answers I got it seems like the teachers are looking at it as, not only a task for the school, but also for the parents of the pupils. Religious education is not just something that should be brought up in the schools. The parents also need to have knowledge about different religions so that they can pass it on to their children. Many of the teachers are also discussing the problems with the parents. They feel that the school tries to teach the pupils about religions while the parents have another opinion. The parents can sometimes have discriminative opinions about people that have different religious beliefs than their own. Everything is depending on the parents, one teacher said.

What kind of attitudes towards people with other opinions the pupils get depends on their background and how tolerant the parents are concerning different religions. First of all it is the teachers who have to prepare the pupils, but their parents also play a big role.

To settle this problem both the school and the parents have to co-operate, they need to have a relation. The pupils listen more to their teachers than their family. And it is very confusing for the student to face different opinions depending on if you are in school or back home with your family. The pupils spend more time with their family than in school. When they are at home with their family it is the parents' task to give their children the right values.

Another teacher felt like it was exactly the opposite. She said that the pupils do not listen to their teacher; instead they are influenced by the mass media since most of them have a TV in their family. Therefore mass media plays a big role and it is not enough with RE at just school. She also said that while the pupils are watching TV they are relaxed and therefore they can take the information in much easier than in school. Magazines are also a good way to get knowledge about different religions. Many of the teachers also mentioned that it is much easier to influence the youngest pupils because then it is more likely that they listen to their teacher. When the pupils are young they think what the teacher says is true. If they are older they already have created their opinions and attitudes and it is harder to influence them towards the "right" values.

One teacher also said that it is not only the school and the parents that have responsibility to teach the pupils about religions. The pupils themselves also have to take some responsibility and seek information in their spare time. It is important that they visit churches and temples once in a while, because it is important that they also have practical knowledge.

A common answer was also that the best way to prepare the pupils for the Indian society is through education. Some of the teachers said that education is everything; it is the best way to learn about different religions.

A few of the teachers also referred to the celebration of the festivals and meant that this was the best way to prepare the pupils. One of the kindergarten teachers said that all people should be united and that could be achieved through these festivals. The same teacher also gave examples on what kind of festivals she thought were important. She said that they did not celebrate any Muslim festival since no Muslim family was living nearby.

An answer, different from the others, was that the local government should arrange inter-religious sessions between followers from different religions so that they could discuss different issues and learn from each other. She meant that this could be a great opportunity to teach, not only pupils, but also all people in society about religions.

## **ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION**

The aim with this report is to study how the religious education is carried out at Jiva Public School in Faridabad. I want to know if the teachers integrate religious education in some of their subjects and if so, in what way? I am also wondering if they can see any problems performing this kind of education. Another issue that I want to find out more about is the teachers' attitudes towards religious education. In this part I will try to answer these questions. I will also refer the results to the previous research presented above.

### **Religious education or not**

There was a big difference between how the teachers put the religious education into practice. Most of the teachers did not integrate RE at all in their subjects because they felt that they did not have time for it, and some of the teachers also said that they did not see it as their task to give the pupils knowledge about religions. However seven of the teachers did say that they integrate RE in their subjects. A few of them also gave me very specific details on how they designed their RE. I will now present the most common teaching method regarding RE, the practical approach. After that I will discuss that some of the teachers used another kind of approach in their education which is followed by a discussion whether the teachers can see any problems putting RE into practice or not. That is followed by a discussion about the fact that a majority of the teachers did not integrate RE at all in their subjects. Finally a presentation of the teachers attitudes towards RE will be made.

### **A practical approach - celebrating festivals**

Five of the teachers said that they give the pupils knowledge about religions through festivals. Either they read about different festivals in a book or they celebrated these festivals within the school. Two of these five teachers also gave the pupils knowledge in other ways than celebrating festivals, but the festival approach dominated their RE.

Some of the five teachers also gave the pupils information about a particular religion at the same time the festival was celebrating.

Peter Vardy does not like this kind of education. He argues against this sociological approach and says that festivals and outward practises can give the wrong impression. Instead of decreasing the prejudices it can often be the reverse. If the teacher is using this kind of method Vardy wants them to not just celebrate a festival, first you have to give the pupils some background information about that particular religion, but he is however critical regarding this kind of approach.

Jiva is a school that practice activity based learning and maybe that is why some classes celebrate different festivals within the school. Maybe the teachers feel that

it is a good way to activate the pupils and at the same time give them knowledge. Many of the teachers told me that the pupils were so fond of celebrating these festivals and argued that if they like these festivals so much they must have very big respect for different religions and their followers. I think it could also be that the pupils like these festivals because they get activated and do not have to sit still in a classroom. I am sceptical, however, if you can assume that the pupils respect different religions just because they like to celebrate a festival. I also asked one teacher if she could mention in specific what festivals they celebrate and mostly it was national festivals but also Sikh, Hindu and Christian festivals. I got the conception that they celebrate festivals according to what kind of religions the pupils are confessing to. At Jiva, the pupils confessed mostly to Hinduism, but also Christianity, Islam and Sikhism and it is also these religions that they pay attention to. I can understand that you focus on these religions but what about the other religions that exist in India?

If you look upon it with the glasses of Broadbent and Brown they have different opinions than Vardy. Broadbent and Brown claim that the religious education has to be relevant to the pupils' cultural context; the pupils need to have knowledge about the religious society in their local area. Maybe Jiva works on that basis.

The religions which the pupils confessed to were also the "only" religions that were celebrated. Broadbent and Brown mean that it is a negative thing when the teachers just give the pupils facts about different religions. Broadbent and Brown think that through celebrating festivals it is easier to identify the central concepts of each religion and it is also easier to illustrate the central concepts.

I can feel that when you are celebrating festivals it is almost only the positive sides that are brought up within a religion. I think it is hard to present some less positive aspects within a religion when you are in the middle of a celebration. I agree with Vardy when he says that this kind of approach can give the wrong impression. Chidester says that he wants the schools to teach the pupils to look critically upon different religions, and not just to teach them about positive aspects. I think it is not just the religious traditions that can represent a whole religion. Religions are so much more than just celebrations. For example I think it is important to also have knowledge about less positive things within a religion. Many people get harassed and persecute because of their religion, for example the Jewish people. I think it is important to know that religions also bring negative aspects. To have knowledge about the holy books and also how the practical life works for people confessing to different religions are also important.

Professor Hermans has come up with three types of religious education. He talks first of all about mono-religious education which is focusing only on one particular religion. This is something that the teachers in my interviews take exception to. Many of them said that you cannot just focus on one religion. First of all because it is important to have knowledge about all religions and second the pupils confessing to other religions can be offended. The second type which Hermans calls multi-religious education I think is probably the type that

corresponds best with how Jiva practise their RE. This type of education is aiming to develop respectful attitudes among the pupils towards people with different religious beliefs. It also gives the pupils knowledge about religious traditions and facts about the holy books and typical symbols within each religion.

To achieve the ultimate religious education, according to Hermans you have to practise inter-religious education. This type is quite similar to the multi-religious education but is distinguished by a dialogic approach.

The focus in this education should be on dialogue among pupils who are confessing to different religions and the aim is that the pupils can learn from each other and to both see their own and other religions in different perspectives. Leirvik and Weisse also advocate the dialogical approach. According to them, a dialogical approach is when you are searching for common themes within each religion.

The teachers that I interviewed mostly said that during the festivals the pupils discussed differences and similarities within each festival with each other. That led to that they learned from each other. However I do not think that Jiva achieves to see religions in different perspectives. After celebrating a festival there are no follow-up discussions in the classes which must make it impossible to create a dialogue. The teachers sometimes first give the pupils some information about one particular religion, and then they go on and celebrate a festival belonging to that religion and then it is finished. No discussions afterwards are held if they can see any similarities or differences between the festivals.

#### *Ordinary lessons*

You have to remember that it was not all teachers that practised these festivals. Some of them, even if they were in minority, instead put RE into practice through “ordinary” lessons. Four of the seven teachers learned their pupils through different methods. As mentioned above, two of these four teachers are the ones that practise both the approaches, even though the festival approach was dominating their RE. Both of them emphasized that only if they had time for it, they either read a novel about Christianity or either they teach the pupils different values and connect this with knowledge about religions. I got the feeling that these kinds of “ordinary” lessons were nothing that they preferred.

It felt more like they performed these lessons if they had to. The festival approach were more suitable, I experienced it.

The two teachers that stuck to “ordinary” lessons were actually two geography teachers. One of them I felt like was pretty unwilling to teach about religions. She was careful to point out that she only talked about other religions with her pupils

if she had time for it. If something special had happened in another country then she could relate that to the religious situation in that country.

The other geography teacher was the total opposite. She talked a lot about religions with her pupils, among those for example Islam and Christianity. As the only teacher she also mentioned Judaism. She also talked about similarities between these different religions. Maybe geography is such a subject that makes it easy to relate, for example, knowledge about a country with the religious situation.

### **Parents – the biggest problem**

Most of the teachers agreed that it is not just the school that should discuss religious issues with the pupils. The pupils themselves, but also their parents have to take some responsibility. Many teachers saw the parents as the biggest problem when it comes to RE. They often have different opinions than the ones that are characterized by the school and then it is impossible for the parents to teach their children the “right” values. It is a clash between the school and the home of the pupils. Maybe that is one of the reasons why several teachers felt that it was hard to give the pupils knowledge about religions.

Sometimes the parents did not like that the teachers discussed religions with their children because often the parents have different, sometimes discriminative, opinions towards people with other religious beliefs than their own.

All the kindergarten teachers told me that the best thing is to teach the pupils about respect when they are young, because then it is easier to influence them. When they get older they often get influenced by their parents and the media and then it is too late to change their values and attitudes. Leganger-Krogstad also share this meaning and talks about how the parents can play such a big role for their children’s attitudes.

### **Teaching religious education – not just an issue for the school**

The results also show that a majority of the teachers, 10 of them, did not integrate RE at all in some of their subjects. Several of those teachers said that the reason why not doing it was because they did not see it as their task to teach the pupils about other religions. They think that RE does not belong to their subjects.

Many teachers also gave the answer that India is a secular state as a reason for not teaching RE. The teachers also said that it is not only the responsibility of the school to bring this issue up. The parents of the pupils should also see it as their task to teach their kids. The pupils themselves should also take some responsibility and try to get some information about the practical parts within a religion, for example visiting a temple or a mosque. In some way I can understand

why the teachers argue like this. On the one hand, why should teachers educating for example English or history integrate RE? On the other hand it is interesting to remember that several kindergarten teachers said that it is important to teach the pupils the right values before they get too old and get too much influence from their parents. According to many teachers the parents are influencing their children in the wrong way and that is the reason why it is the responsibility of the school to give the pupils knowledge about religions.

Whether you are teaching value education or other subjects, the religions are a big part of the Indian society. Even if the teachers do not integrate RE regularly I still think that it is something that should be discussed with the pupils since Jiva is also a school that includes pupils confessing to different religions.

Maybe the best way is to just learn to respect other people no matter what and not to bother about their religious beliefs. In India people confessing to different religions live side by side and therefore the easiest way is maybe to just accept each other. If you get absorbed about people's beliefs, maybe that will create disrespect, but it can also be like Chidester says that with knowledge about religions it is hard to be afraid of something you really understand.

I think it should be more difficult to respect a person if you do not know about the underlying causes to why a person is behaving in a certain way. However, it is interesting that 15 of the teachers answered that it is important to teach the pupils about all religions. That shows that even if a majority of the teachers does not integrate RE almost all of them thought that this knowledge was important.

*"India is a secular state"*

It is interesting that many teachers used the expression *"India is a secular state"*. The teachers that did not integrate religious education in their subjects gave this phrase as an explanation on why they did not do it. If India is a secular state, then why should you focus on different religions? You should not give any religion preference and every one is equal so it does not matter what your religious beliefs are. India is a secular state and therefore RE is not necessary.

Other informants gave the opposite answer, that just because India is a secular state it is important to integrate RE. It is freedom of religion in the country and that is a big reason for having knowledge about it. RE promotes unity and makes you more open minded. It is clear that the teachers had different understandings according to this phrase. The attitude to this phrase maybe is a determining factor whether a teacher integrates RE or not.

### **The teachers' attitudes – knowledge and respect goes hand in hand?**

Religious education for some teachers is more seen as teaching different values. Maybe that is because the subject that is supposed to teach the pupils about religions is called value education. Several teachers see religion as for educational purposes, that religions are all about respect. However, almost all of the informants think that RE is very important. It was a common answer that RE teaches the pupils to respect other people confessing to different religions. They mean that knowledge about different religions can promote unity, peace and counteract terrorism.

The interesting thing is that the two teachers who said that RE is not necessary at all instead were focusing on teaching the pupils to respect one another by give them knowledge about that every one is equal and share the same rights. It seems like the teachers who are not integrating RE in their subjects mean that you can teach the pupils respect without talking about other religions. The other teachers instead mean that RE is necessary to teach the pupils respect.

Peter Vardy talks about a kind of RE which he calls the general ethical and spiritual approach, when the aim is to foster moral development and a general sense of a spiritual attitude to life. Here, RE sees different religious truth claims as unimportant. Even though Jiva has some similarities with the multi-religious education that Hermans talks about, I also think that the RE corresponds with Vardys approach. I got the feeling that at Jiva the focus is on respect and morality instead of getting a deeper insight in different religious beliefs.

One kindergarten teacher told me that if one of her pupils is Sikh you have to tell the other children not to touch his or her turban since it is forbidden and that should be enough. As a teacher you should not have to explain why not to touch it. For me this is a little bit odd. By telling your pupils why it is forbidden to touch the turban the respect ought to increase. But many teachers in my interviews looked at it differently.

They thought that the children have to learn to respect their class-mates no matter what. The teacher should not have to tell the pupils the whole background about an issue they just simply have to learn to respect people.

A common attitude among the teachers, applicable for RE, was that you should focus on the similarities instead of the differences among people. Many of the teachers mentioned the word brotherhood and that even if people have different religious beliefs in India; they all have the thing in common that they are all Indian.

I think it is very interesting that many of the teachers mentioned the word brotherhood when talking about religions, but when I asked them what the term

religion meant to them almost all teachers answered that the term religion for them meant their own religious beliefs.

I felt that among the teachers at Jiva religion was a private issue. It must be difficult to integrate RE when you see religion as something private. However the majority of the teachers thought that the best way of teaching pupils about religions was through education and that you have to teach them about all religions. Knowledge about their own religion they get from their parents.

### **Further research**

It would really have been interesting to interview a teacher educating value education to see if his or hers attitudes regarding RE is different comparing to teachers educating other subjects. What in specific is that teacher educating the pupils about? Now when I have the knowledge about the RE at Jiva it would be interesting to compare two schools with each other. How do other schools practice RE? Are there some differences between less modern schools compared to Jiva?

## CONCLUSION

The aim with this report is to study how religious education is carried out at Jiva Public School in Faridabad. My first question in this report to be answered is if the teachers integrate religious education in some of their subjects and if they can see any problems performing this kind of education. I also want to know the teachers' attitudes towards religious education.

The results show that most of the teachers did not integrate religious education in their subjects. They said that they did not see it as their task or that they did not know where to fit it in. A common answer was also that India is a secular state. The teachers who did, learned the pupils about different religions through festivals. Only two of the teachers integrated religious education by "ordinary" lessons. Many of the teachers saw the pupils' parents as the biggest problem when it comes to religious education. Often the parents have other opinions and values than the ones that Jiva is pleading for. Therefore as a teacher you have to start in the early ages when it is easier to influence the pupils and teach them about human values and respect.

Most of the teachers said that RE is more about respect than just learning facts about religions. The pupils have to learn to respect each other no matter their religious beliefs. Instead of focusing on differences the essence in religious education should be on similarities. The focus should be on that you have things in common, for example that you are all Indian and should be proud of that. Almost all of the teachers said that RE is important to learn the pupils respect and that it is through education the pupils get the best knowledge. Two of the teachers, however, said that RE is not necessary at all; the pupils can be taught to respect other people without having knowledge about religions. Instead it is important that they get knowledge about that everyone is equal and share the same rights.

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**Interviews:**

17 interviews made with teachers at Jiva Public School between February 27<sup>th</sup> and March 20<sup>th</sup>.

## **APPENDIX 1- INTERVIEW GUIDE**

Background information:

Name and age, family and working background. What kind of subject they teach.

How they find the working situation at the school; are they working in team with the other teachers when it comes to lesson planning? Do they find Jiva different from other schools they have been working at?

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Religious education:

- When you are planning your lessons, do you have some kind of plan or curriculum that tells you what to teach about?
- India is a very interesting country with a great variety of different religions; what does the term religion mean to you?
- Do you integrate religious education in some of your subjects?  
Why/why not?
- How do you teach about other religions? Do you use some kind of textbooks or other material?
- Do you think it is more important to teach about one religion deeper or should the pupils have some knowledge about all religions?  
Why/why not?
- How important is it that the pupils are prepared for the multi religious society in India?  
What is the best way to do that?