Religions and Development
Research Programme

Interactions between Religion and Development in India: Values, Organizations and Social Movements

Surinder S. Jodhka
Jawaharlal Nehru University

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The Religions and Development Research Programme Consortium is an international research partnership that is exploring the relationships between several major world religions, development in low-income countries and poverty reduction. The programme is comprised of a series of comparative research projects that are addressing the following questions:

- How do religious values and beliefs drive the actions and interactions of individuals and faith-based organisations?
- How do religious values and beliefs and religious organisations influence the relationships between states and societies?
- In what ways do faith communities interact with development actors and what are the outcomes with respect to the achievement of development goals?

The research aims to provide knowledge and tools to enable dialogue between development partners and contribute to the achievement of development goals. We believe that our role as researchers is not to make judgements about the truth or desirability of particular values or beliefs, nor is it to urge a greater or lesser role for religion in achieving development objectives. Instead, our aim is to produce systematic and reliable knowledge and better understanding of the social world.

The research focuses on four countries (India, Pakistan, Nigeria and Tanzania), enabling the research team to study most of the major world religions: Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Sikhism, Buddhism and African traditional belief systems. The research projects will compare two or more of the focus countries, regions within the countries, different religious traditions and selected development activities and policies.

The consortium consists of six research partner organisations, each of which is working with other researchers in the four focus countries:

- University of Birmingham, UK: International Development Department, Department of Theology and Religion, Centre for West African Studies, Centre for the Study of Global Ethics.
- University of Bath, UK: Centre for Development Studies.
- Indian Institute of Dalit Studies, New Delhi.
- Nigerian Institute of Social and Economic Research, Ibadan.
- University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.
- Lahore University of Management Sciences, Pakistan.

In addition to the research partners, links have been forged with non-academic and non-government bodies, including Islamic Relief.

http://www.rad.bham.ac.uk   Contact: a.f.zaidijivraj@bham.ac.uk

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Surinder S. Jodhka
Jawaharlal Nehru University

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Key words: Maharashtra, Punjab, women, Hindu, Sikh, Muslim, Buddhist, Christian, faith based organization, gender, education, wellbeing, transnationalism, corruption

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Preface

The Religions and Development Research Programme is an international comparative research programme based at the International Development Department, University of Birmingham in the UK (2005-10). Funded by the UK Department for International Development (DFID), the programme was comprised of a series of interconnected research projects in four countries of the South: India, Pakistan, Nigeria and Tanzania. For reasons explained in the paper, it was a timely initiative in the Indian context. The research programme was housed in the Indian Institute of Dalit Studies in New Delhi and coordinated by Professor Surinder S. Jodhka, but worked with a network of researchers from institutions elsewhere in India and in the UK. Professor Jodhka was also a member of the management group for the programme as a whole. It was advised by a group of experienced academics, whose comments on the research and assistance with events and publications are gratefully acknowledged.

It was comprised of a series of empirical studies that addressed questions relevant to three broad themes. Each of these projects was part of the international research programme and was coordinated by a UK-based researcher who also provided a comparative perspective. In addition to reviews of secondary material, the Indian teams carried out research on ten topics (see Appendix 1). In most cases, the Indian studies were carried out by one or two senior researchers acting as team leaders, together with one or more junior researchers, although some were carried out by a single researcher. The names of the main researchers are given in Appendix 1, but the contribution of other researchers, who participated especially in the data collection, and all those participants who gave freely of their time to respond to the researchers' questions is also acknowledged.

Summary

Central dimensions of the social and political links between religion and development in India include:

- religious organizations and their engagements with development policy and practice
- religious values in development and public life
- politics and the mobilization of religions.

This paper provides an overview and synthesis of findings from ten studies carried out during a programme of research on these links and also identifies some of their potential implications for various development actors.

Religion has not been part of the Indian discourse on development, social inclusion and poverty reduction: instead analyses of social difference and policy to address disadvantage and discrimination have focused on caste. However, the 2006 Sachar Committee Report on the 'development deficit' experienced by Muslims in contemporary India changed the terms of the debate, and formed the context for this research. Along with religion, questions of caste and gender were prominent in several studies. Some of the research focussed on Hinduism, the majority religion in India, especially the concerns of Dalits, the lowest caste ex-untouchable communities. In addition, several of the studies focussed on religious minorities, including Muslims, Sikhs and Buddhists, and their struggles for development and social justice.

The need to develop an understanding of development and religion from the perspective of the many actors concerned meant that the emphasis was on qualitative data collected through interviews and discussions with individuals and groups, rather than quantitative data, although some of the researchers carried out local surveys. Several of the studies focused on Punjab and Maharashtra, but some work was also undertaken in Orissa, Bihar, West Bengal, Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh and Himachal Pradesh.

Religious or faith-based organizations (FBOs) are mostly involved in the fields of education, health, emergency relief and community development. More recently, some have sought to empower marginalized social groups, including women. They vary widely with respect to the scale of their operations; their value orientation; and their conceptions of welfare, development and appropriate gender roles.

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- The organizations' motives include the fostering of religious values and culture, sometimes implicitly linked to Hindu nationalism; a religiously justified commitment to philanthropic work; and empowerment of the poor and women. The class basis of their supporters varies. Religious motivations for engagement in educational activities are, therefore, intertwined with the class affiliation of the organizations concerned. As a result, the extent to which they challenge class (and caste) based advantage and disadvantage and women's traditional roles and social position varies, both between and within religious traditions.

- Although fewer than four per cent of Muslim children attend madrasas, both the central and state governments have since the early 1990s developed programmes designed to 'modernize' the curriculum in madrasas and improve the quality of education they offer. While many madrasas offering education equivalent to the primary and secondary levels have chosen to accept financial assistance, Muslim leaders tend to view the governments' motives with suspicion and there are numerous problems with the implementation of the scheme.

- Anti-Muslim violence is driven less by 'religious' differences or economic motivations than by a Hindu nationalist agenda – riots happen in some places and not others because they are deliberately engineered for political purposes. The priorities of Muslim victims of inter-religious violence in Mumbai and Ahmedabad were similar: safety, shelter, the need to resume earning and a desire for their children to start attending school again. The sources of assistance varied depending on the context, with Muslims in Ahmedabad, Gujarat, seeking support from Muslim and secular organizations because of government complicity in the violence and the absence of a prosperous Muslim business community. Victims' rights to government compensation and justice for their attackers have not been realized

Religion is commonly assumed to be an important source of ideas about what it means to live well and the values that underpin behaviour.

- In development studies and policy, there are three key expectations of religion: that it is a form of social identity; that it is a source of community and social welfare; and that it provides a source of values and authority. However, the research throws doubt on all these assumptions: religion is just one of a number of identities that people have and, for most ordinary people in the Indian context, religious organizations do not seem to be important sources of welfare. Religion is about the moral order that underpins society and individual lives: it permeates everyday life, shapes people's notion of wellbeing, and is an important source of values. However, it is only one of many influences.

- Respondents largely agree that the high level of corruption is due to the non-implementation of existing rules and laws and that the main way to reduce it is therefore through enforcement of these codes of conduct and legal provisions. The potential for harnessing values imparted by religious ethical teaching for the fight against corruption is constrained by the perceived loss of moral authority by religious leaders and organizations.

The intertwining of religion and politics can be seen both in the working of democratic processes and in political mobilizations that have religious dimensions.

- Even in the Indian secular state, different processes are set in motion by electoral democracy: on the one hand, it allows the concerns of members of religious communities (such as socioeconomic disadvantage) to be forced onto the agenda of mainstream political actors; but it can also push even secular political parties into using a religious idiom when seeking support from religious sub-groups, thereby reinforcing religious identity politics.
- Dalit communities employ three key tactics in their quest for social recognition and improved wellbeing
  - religious differentiation within Hinduism or Sikhism or through conversion, to forge a distinctive religious identity
  - investment in social facilities serving not only members of the disadvantaged group itself, but often the broader community, to secure recognition of the group's achievements
  - the fostering and use of transnational networks as a source of financial and social remittances.
- In addition, organizations such as the neo-Buddhist organizations supporting slum dwellers or members of Muslim women's networks seek to empower disadvantaged groups to achieve social change.

Some of the main implications of the research for development actors in India include:

- Religion should not be incorporated into development policy and practice without giving due consideration to wider social and political issues: engagement with religious groups and organizations needs to be handled with care, lest it fuel communal agendas and religious and caste tensions; governments at every level must take responsibility for protecting the citizenship rights of all.
- The exclusion of some groups within and between religious traditions and faith-based organizations must be recognized in any discussion of the relationships between religion, political participation and development.
- The assumption that religious organizations meet the needs of poor people and challenge social inequality must be assessed by examining the characteristics and affiliations of individual organizations.

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- Religiously affiliated education providers operate on a relatively small scale, have particular value orientations and do not necessarily meet the needs of the poor, so they cannot be relied upon to make a major contribution to the aim of achieving access to education for all.

- Religion deals with the underlying moral order, while specific development programmes and projects affect only limited aspects of most people's lives, so development actors should be modest in their aims and particularly cautious about any attempt to harness religion to achieve development goals: it does not provide a magic recipe, which, if properly manipulated, can induce people to behave in particular ways.

1 Introduction

1.1 Aim of the paper

This paper presents the overall findings from a research programme that examined a variety of aspects of the social and political links between religion and development in India. Studies examined how religious organizations relate to each other, the wider society and the state in India, and their influence on governance and the achievement of human development goals; how religious values and beliefs influence individuals and social groups and their attitudes towards development; and whether and how disadvantaged groups mobilize religion in their quest for social change and development. The findings from a series of ten research projects on aspects of these themes are discussed under three thematic headings:

- religious organizations and their engagements with development policy and practice (Section 2)
- religious values in development and public life (Section 3)
- politics and the mobilization of religions (Section 4).

This synthesis is intended for a general readership, especially in India, but also beyond. The topics investigated were all relevant to development policy and practice, and the findings have potential implications for the actors concerned, including the Indian government at various levels, international agencies with a presence in India and civil society organizations, including religious organizations. In addition to academic audiences, the findings of individual research projects have been shared with relevant policy makers and development practitioners, and a series of policy briefs have been produced that reflect the outcomes of those discussions (see Appendix 2). Many of the studies are based on one or two illustrative case studies in selected locations and care needs to be taken in drawing general conclusions from them. In addition, rather than making specific recommendations, potential implications have been identified, with the purpose of encouraging further debate by those concerned with policy and practice.

First, some key social and political trends that influence contemporary politics, policy and research, both internationally and within India, are identified. These provide a background to the individual studies. The questions addressed by the research programme are outlined in Section 1.3, which also briefly describes the conceptual and methodological approach adopted and identifies the locations in which individual studies were carried out. Details of the full reports on each study are given: these have been published, mostly as working papers, and give more details of the methodology and findings.[1]

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1.2   Background

Development is an attractive and powerful idea. It has dominated the political landscape of countries in the South since their decolonization. Although it has been criticized and condemned, it continues to be an important focus of state policy in most of these countries, with poverty-related programmes being amongst the most heavily funded government schemes. International funding agencies and charities in the developed North spend significant resources on development-related activities in countries of the South. Even in popular political rhetoric, development is invoked by almost everyone, particularly in democratic societies like India, where poverty and disparities persist despite high rates of economic growth.

However, over the years, the concept and its practices have undergone some profound changes. Evolutionary theories of social change based on a traditional/modern binary, in which the process of economic development is seen as being inevitably linked to a process of modernization and cultural change and the emergence of a completely new set of values, have slowly lost their appeal. Development is no longer seen as being tied to, or premised on, a process of secularization. It is now widely recognized that cultural tradition and religious belief do not simply disappear from public life with economic change. Religious identity and belief can be important constitutive elements of the notion of wellbeing that people have in a given context. In addition, community identities are not always merely based on ideology or political interest; rather they can be a source of security and sustenance for socially disadvantaged individuals and groups.

This change in attitudes towards religion is reflected in trends in the social sciences. Over the last two or three decades, there has been a steady shift towards treating religion as a universal and 'normal' social phenomenon, without any assumptions about its pasts or futures. This shift has been reinforced by social and political trends at the global level and in countries like India.

By the turn of the century, social scientists across the globe recognized that, although religion had been an important subject of academic enquiry, it had mostly been studied by anthropologists, theologians and historians, and neglected by other disciplines, including development studies. However, religion is not merely a matter of faith for individuals, it has important social and political dimensions. It is a lived reality, a key dimension of many people's lives and an important influence on

their actions. Believers are part of wider faith traditions, but also come together as communities that are more or less formally organized. Religious faith and faith-based organizations are often linked with the political process in controversial ways. Much recent international research and policy dialogue has centred on questions of citizenship and entitlements related to cultural and group identities. With growing international movements of people, nation-states are everywhere becoming ethnically and culturally more diverse, making it difficult to ignore religious and communitarian identities (Mahajan, 2010). The relationships between culture and religious beliefs or communities and questions of development and citizenship have therefore become an increasingly important part of public and political debate. The continued presence of religion in public life requires a re-assessment of its role, including revisiting the links between it and development and poverty reduction.

In countries like India, issues relating to deprivation and citizenship have also been raised by identity movements of historically deprived groups, such as the Dalits and Adivasis[2], or religious minorities, such as the Muslims. Such groups often critique mainstream notions of development, but are not against the idea of development itself. On the contrary, the core thrust of their demands is invariably more inclusive and just development. There has also been a perceptible shift in state policy regarding religion and religious communities. With the grass-rooting of democracy and a gradual shift in the social profile of the political elite in countries like India, the old secular-communal dichotomous way of thinking is becoming increasingly meaningless.[3] The social policies dealing with issues of marginality and exclusion have invariably been framed using 'social group' variables and the Government of India has long had targeted programmes for disadvantaged groups, specifically the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. Religion has not been part of the Indian discourse on development. However, questions have been raised about the eligibility criteria used for government affirmative action policies, particularly whether they exclude some disadvantaged groups. This debate connected with the release in 2006 of the Sachar Committee Report[4] on the question of the 'development deficit' among Muslims (Sachar Committee, 2006).

With around 13 per cent of the population, Muslims are the largest religious minority in India. They have invariably articulated their aspirations in communitarian political language. The Sachar Committee Report opened up a new window for debate and brought the question of religious communities into the discourse on development. Using official data sets, the Report convincingly

showed that members of the Muslim religious minority have often experienced exclusion and discrimination, which has resulted in their being relatively less developed compared to other 'socio-religious' categories.

The historical context of the partition of the subcontinent on religious lines in 1947 and the large-scale violence that accompanied it made it difficult for a long time to talk about religion in relation to the processes of nation-building and/or development. Even though the Indian version of secularism is based on the idea of religious diversity and provides space to religious communities to express and advance their faith-based values, any involvement of religion with politics and economics has been regarded with suspicion. The Sachar Committee Report was an attempt to transcend this popular view by bringing the question of differences in levels of prosperity between religious communities into the domain of state policy. The Report generated a lot of popular interest and was extensively discussed by civil society groups. In addition, it provided a context in which other religious groups and communities could raise questions about their own development or lack of it.[5]

1.3 The research programme in India

The research focused on three overarching themes, posing a number of broad questions relevant to each:

- How do religious organizations, states, societies and economies relate to each other at local, national and international levels? How are those relationships changing in the contemporary world? What influence do they have on governance, policies and the achievement of human development goals?
- How do religious values and beliefs influence the ways in which individuals and social groups see their own situation? How does religion influence their actions? What are the common elements and differences between religious values and those underlying mainstream development policies and practices?
- How do people on the margins view religion? Do they perceive it as a resource to be mobilized to improve their own well-being, or as a cause of their exclusion from the social mainstream? What has been the nature of religious mobilization on the questions/issues related to development and social change?

Specific topics relevant to these broad questions were identified and addressed through a series of research projects carried out in different parts of the country (see Appendix 1):

i.   Religious values and development concepts and practices, including perceptions of wellbeing, ways of improving the situation of poor people and attitudes to corruption;

ii. The history and composition of faith-based organizations in India: their origins, internal differences, politics, and roles in service delivery and welfare activities;

iii. The nature of engagements between faith communities, or sections within them, and issues of governance and politics;

iv. The role faith-based organizations play in post-conflict peace-building and rehabilitation of the victims of inter-religious violence, who are often members of the religious minorities;

v.   The manner in which religious sentiments are mobilized and the role religious organizations play in movements for social change and the development of marginalized groups/ communities;

vi. The involvement of religious organizations in development activities, particularly education;

vii. Globalization and the role of transnational philanthropy in the development of marginalized social groups/ communities.

Because the theme of the relationships between religion and development had been neglected, the research was exploratory – it sought to develop appropriate conceptualizations of religion and development and to explore some of the links between them.

As is evident from the discussion in Section 1.2, categories like religion, development and community are contested notions. These categories are not mere concepts used by social scientists in their research. They also have historical and political meanings. Taking a cue from the emerging discourse on the subject of development in India, this is conceived of broadly in terms of purposive efforts by the state, civil society actors and international agencies to build a prosperous and inclusive democratic society. While in some respects the concept of religion appears to be self-evident, working on it in relation to development required it to be re-imagined in primarily 'this worldly' terms. Thus, at one level the research looked at the lived reality of religious life, especially the manner in which religious values are reproduced, propagated and interpreted in everyday life by different sets of people. In addition, at another level, it operationalized religion in terms of religious communities, or sections within them, and ways in which they are included or excluded. Further, it included studies of organizations with explicit religious motivations, especially those claiming to contribute to the achievement of development

objectives. This enabled the researchers to negotiate the comparative questions identified by the research programme internationally while at the same time connecting with emerging development issues in the context of India.

The need to develop an understanding of development and religion from the perspective of the many actors concerned entailed going beyond the dominant positivist paradigm, so the emphasis was not on collecting quantitative data. Though some of the researchers carried out local surveys, most of the research was based on qualitative data, collected through primary interviews and discussions with relevant respondents, both individuals and groups. As is the case with most research, the work of the programme and each research project began with a review of available literature on various aspects of the relationships between religions and development, drawn from different disciplines.[6]

In refining the research questions and designing the research, the Indian team gave due weight to the local context of democratic politics; the challenge of accommodating religious diversity in discourses of development and governance; and the persistence of social exclusion.[7] Thus along with religion, questions of caste and gender were prominent in several studies, while some focussed on religious minorities, including Muslims, Sikhs and Buddhists, especially their struggles for development, citizenship and social justice.[8] As a result, the research focussed more on the socially marginalized and minorities than on the mainstream and the majority. Nevertheless, some of the research focussed on Hinduism, the majority religion in India. Some considered Hinduism in general, but because of our concern to look at religion from a development-oriented perspective, most worked with a more differentiated notion of Hinduism, in particular according to caste, with several of the studies examining the religion and development-related concerns of Dalits, the ex-untouchable communities. As mentioned above, the question of the development deficit among India's Muslims acquired prominence in public life after the Sachar Committee submitted its report in 2006. In order to make the programme's work relevant to contemporary policy debates, several studies focussed on Muslim communities and examined issues raised by the Sachar Committee Report.

India is a large and varied country. While a macro-picture is important, individual studies using qualitative approaches have to focus on smaller settings in order to develop an in-depth understanding of meanings and social relationships. Ideally, researchers need to build a close rapport and engage with a particular context over a relatively long period of time to achieve this. The team tried to balance

the two sets of demands. While research was undertaken in different regions of the country, two focus states in which more than one study was conducted were also identified. Thus several studies focused on the states of Maharashtra and Punjab, which present interesting comparative cases. The religious composition of Maharashtra resembles the national scene. In contrast, in Punjab followers of Sikhism, a relatively small religion in the national Indian context, are in the majority. Both states are relatively developed, and both are characterized by an active presence of religion and a rich history of religious identity movements. In addition, individual studies were also carried out in selected locations in the states of Orissa, Bihar, West Bengal, Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh and Himachal Pradesh.

As noted above, the primary objective of this paper is to provide a broad overview and synthesis of the research findings. The discussion is divided into three parts: i) faith-based organizations and their engagements with development; ii) religious values in development and public life; iii) politics and the mobilization of religions. Findings from the relevant studies are grouped under these headings and some of the implications for policy and practice drawn out. The paper finishes with some concluding comments.

2 Religious organizations in India

India is a democratic and secular republic with no recognized official religion. However, religion has a significant presence in the country's public and political life. Religious diversity is acknowledged and protected through a framework of enabling constitutional provisions. Religion is also present in India's democratic political processes. Democratic politics in turn influences the way religious communities articulate their interests, aspirations and political agendas. India also has a long history of religious organizations participating in what can be described as development-related activities. Perhaps the most common of these have been related to education and health. However, there is no systematic information available on the role of religious organizations in development and welfare activities. To provide some contextual background, a review of available material on the history and contemporary activities of religious organizations was undertaken, followed up by an attempt to 'map' the scale and scope of religious organizations' development activities in part of one state – Maharashtra (Jodhka and Bora, 2009). This was followed by more detailed investigations of some of the development activities of organizations associated with selected religious groups, especially Hindus and Muslims. Several of these focused on education and one on the role of Muslim FBOs in the aftermath of inter-religious violence.

All the religious traditions have an organizational framework within which individual congregations are established for religious purposes (temples, mosques, gurdwaras, churches) and more or less formal and hierarchical coordinating arrangements are put in place. These may become involved in welfare activities themselves, or spawn more or less autonomous separate organizations for this and other purposes. Such formal religious organizations, as they are understood today, emerged in the subcontinent during the British colonial period. It was, in fact, the 'modernist' impulse unleashed by British colonial rule that played a critical role in shaping contemporary religious formations. As has often been pointed out by historians, the colonial state gave concrete identities to religious communities and drew boundaries where previously only fuzzy differences existed.

In one sense, the history of formally organized social activities in the subcontinent began with the arrival of the Christian missionaries. Though the colonial rulers did not directly patronize the churches, British rule made it easy for missionary activities to expand, particularly in the field of education. It was to the 'modern' features of Christianity and the colonial state that the emergent native elite responded by forming organizations associated with their own religions and initiating internal reforms within their own communities. The social reform movements that emerged during the colonial period within

different communities provided the impetus for religious revivalist movements. They also played an important role in the re-working of religious boundaries and community identities. It was around this time that religions in India began to engage themselves with what we would now describe as 'development activities'. Influenced by modern Western ideas of equality, liberty and rationality, the 'reformers' campaigned against various 'social evils', pressing particularly for women's rights. Besides building schools, colleges, dispensaries and hospitals, members of the newly emergent middle class engaged themselves with social reforms, especially the abolition of child marriage and polygamy, and improvements in the social status of women.

Many students of Indian society have suggested that these social and religious reform movements also turned out to be the defining moment in the development of contemporary Hinduism. Newly educated upper caste Hindus evolved new ideas and concepts to enable Hinduism to counter Christianity and the activities of the churches among the poor and marginalized social groups. It was around this time that ideas such as *seva* (service) and *sangathana* (association or organization) were brought into the mainstream of Hinduism, and it was only with acceptance of these ideas that Hindu leaders could begin to set up faith-based organizations that oriented themselves towards the development of marginal sections of their own 'community'. This new found concern of the Hindu elite for the development of traditionally marginalized groups was also born out of the growing significance of demographics - the Hindu elite did not want to lose the 'lower' castes to Christianity. Many of the currently active religious or faith-based organizations (FBOs) emerged during this period.[9]

The second phase in the history of FBOs in India began with India's independence from colonial rule. This political change had a direct impact on faith-based activities. Though the post-colonial Indian state recognized religion and made legal provision for the expression of religious difference and identity, religious community-based organizations were not expected to play an active role in the state-sponsored project of planning for social and economic development. The Indian state made massive investments in sectors like education and health and opened a large number of secular institutions as part of its development agenda. With the rapid expansion of the state sector in different spheres, the influence and importance of religious organizations declined. However, the Indian state did not ban them or stop them from doing the work they had already been doing.

The third phase of faith-based development activities began during the 1990s, when the official perspective on development began to change. Pressed hard by changes in the global economy and rising import bills following the 'first' gulf war, during the early 1990s, the Government of India initiated a process of economic reform and liberalization. Though initially intended to deal with an immediate balance of payments problem, the reforms turned out to be the beginning of a new phase in the economic history of India. Apart from encouraging private enterprise, this shift in economic philosophy also created new spaces for the voluntary sector. In addition to their roles in political civil society and advocacy, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and faith-based organizations began to play a greater role in the field of social development.

2.1 The scale and scope of FBOs' development activities in Maharashtra

In order to develop a more systematic overview of the scale and scope of FBOs' development activities, an attempt was made to 'map' the nature and activities of individual organizations in the districts of Pune and Nagpur in Maharashtra.[10] This survey, based on interviews with the organizations identified and other informants, showed that the faith-based sector in India is quite diverse and also that its growth and orientations are closely linked to the changes taking place in wider Indian society (Jodhka and Bora, 2009). While some of the organizations active in development and welfare have a global presence and link their activities to larger political processes at the national and international levels, many of them are small in size and work locally.

The range of activities in which they are engaged is quite limited. Their most important work has been in the fields of education, health, emergency relief and community development. More recently, some have begun to get involved with the empowerment of marginalized social groups, including women. Many FBOs appear to be community-based and oriented. All those identified are formally registered with the local authorities, have a set of office bearers and have a constitution, which enables them to secure funds from a variety of sources. However, they differ in their political and value orientations. While the Christian and Buddhist/Dalit organizations make their activities and services open to all, many of the Hindu organizations have a sectarian value orientation and a majoritarian political ideology. Some even use the services they provide to promote a politics of exclusion and hatred, with a clear majoritarian thrust. These organizations are allied with right-wing nationalist organizations like the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and the Vishwa Hindu Prishad and are quite vocal about their

hatred of Muslims. Some use the plank of 'development' to mobilize funds from the thriving Hindu diaspora in the West, although some of those that receive such funds have a covert or overt sectarian and communalist orientation (see also Sections 2.2, 2.3, and 3.2.2).

It is clear that faith-based development activity in a religiously plural society like India includes a great variety of organizations and can be quite contentious. While it can produce effective and meaningful engagement of FBOs with marginalized groups and minorities, some majoritarian organizations push an exclusionary political agenda in the name of development.

2.2   Engagement of FBOs with education in Pune and Mumbai

The mapping exercise was followed by several other studies which looked at the work of religious organizations more closely. Several findings of the survey of FBOs in Maharashtra were substantiated by a study that examined the work of selected FBOs in education in greater depth. Focusing on six self-confessed religious organizations in the cities of Pune and Mumbai in Maharashtra, the study examined their work in the field of education, in particular attempting to make a preliminary assessment of who benefits from their activities (Rew, forthcoming). A mixed methods approach drew mainly on secondary materials, including documents produced by the organizations themselves; interviews with their leaders, staff and devotees; and, in some cases, observation of their activities and interviews with users of their services.

The organizations chosen for the study were

- *Modern Educational, Social and Cultural Trust (MESCO)*, a Muslim charitable trust in Mumbai that provides support to individual students in need, kindergartens and a municipal secondary school
- *Shelter Don Bosco*, a shelter for street boys run by Catholics in Mumbai, which provides all-round support including education and vocational training
- *Sadhu Vaswani Mission (SVM),* a Hindu service organization operating a hospital and schools for girls, and providing welfare for the poor. The case study focused on an English medium secondary school for girls in Pune.
- *Mata Amritanandamayi Math (MA Math),* a large Hindu humanitarian organization engaged in a wide range of activities throughout India, including schools and colleges. The case study focused on an English medium mixed secondary school in Pune.

- *Gandhian Memorial Society (GMS)*, a Hindu/ Gandhian organization offering education and vocational training for women in Pune
- *Bahujan Hitay*, a neo-Buddhist organization providing educational support for pre-primary and primary children living in Pune's slums and educational and vocational training for women.

The organizations studied are affiliated with Hinduism, Islam, Christianity and Buddhism. They provide education and related services for different population groups and reflect the internal diversity of the faith sector in India. The main objective of the study was to develop an understanding of how the aims and activities of these organizations are influenced by their religious affiliation, and also of the outcomes they are perceived to produce, in terms of providing education for the poor.

As mentioned above, since liberalization of the Indian economy in the early 1990s, the number of non-state for-profit and not-for-profit providers of services, including NGOs and religious organizations, has significantly increased, including in the education sector. The religious organizations with the longest history of providing education are madrasas, with the Christian churches (especially the Catholic Church) growing in importance during the colonial period. Today, these continue to be important, but religious organizations associated with other religions also provide education at various levels, including pre-primary, primary, secondary, tertiary and vocational education.

The study shows that religious organizations providing education have benefited from the rhetoric of state/non-state partnership. Not only has liberalization increased demand for their services, ideas about partnership have opened up access to government finance for many of them. However, data on the overall scale and quality of non-state providers' (including religious organizations') contribution to educational provision are not collected and no clear regulatory framework has been developed. Government neglect of secondary education has led some organizations to focus on secondary schooling, while its failure to achieve universal access to basic education has led others to address the educational and training needs of poor children and women.

As the study reports, the organizations' motives vary: they include the preservation and fostering of religious values and culture, sometimes implicitly linked to Hindu nationalism; a religiously justified commitment to philanthropic and welfare work; and empowerment of the poor and women. The class basis of their supporters also varies, which influences the organizations' interpretation of religious

ideas, their motivations, their choice of activities and the design of their programmes, as well as the characteristics of their beneficiaries.

The Hindu organizations providing secondary education for girls are middle class bodies that integrate religious and secular education, promoting Hindu religious values in general and the relevant guru's teachings in particular. Donors, staff and students alike believe that *seva* (service) is a means of fostering and expressing an individual's spirituality, although the form that it takes (religiously motivated giving - *daan* - and charitable activities) implies an unequal relationship between a beneficent donor and a dependent but grateful recipient.

There are also differences in the organizations' motivations and the content of their curricula: the SVM seeks to equip girls to fulfil stereotypical gender roles as wives and mothers, so that they can fulfil their feminine destinies as the bearers and nurturers of Indian culture, while the MA Math (which has a female guru) breaks with patriarchal tradition by stressing the importance of mothering in society, but emphasizing that both men and women can fulfil this role. Hindu organizations with a different class orientation interpret *seva* in a more outward-looking way to mean duty towards others. Thus Gandhian philosophy has led the GMS to focus on addressing discrimination within the Hindu religious tradition and wider Indian society, through providing poor women with access to adult education and vocational training.

The Buddhist organization, Bahujan Hitay, is associated with ex-untouchable Hindus' strategy of escaping oppression by conversion to Buddhism: while many neo-Buddhist organizations adopt political strategies to tackle discrimination and disadvantage, Bahujan Hitay focuses on providing pre-primary education, supplementary primary classes, and education and vocational training for women living in slum areas. Shelter Don Bosco, which is staffed by priests, attempts to live out Catholic social teaching by supporting vulnerable boys, who are mainly Muslim in-migrants to Mumbai, making it recently vulnerable to attacks from a Hindu Marathi regional nationalist movement.

The study argues that religious motivations for engagement in educational activities are, therefore, intertwined in both interpretation and practice with the class affiliation of the organizations concerned. One way in which their religious obligations are enacted by many of the organizations is through 'adoption' schemes, by which disadvantaged children are assisted with the costs of schooling: SVM

assists poor children to attend school through sponsorship and the provision of uniforms etc., while both SVM and the MA Math provide a limited number of subsidized places in their own secondary schools. MESCO mobilizes religiously mandated giving (*zakat*) to provide scholarships to able students unable to afford secondary and tertiary education, to foster individual upward socio-economic mobility and the formation of a Muslim middle class. In contrast, Don Bosco provides free services to the boys who enter its programmes, and aims at comprehensive rehabilitation, including hostel accommodation, formal schooling and vocational training.

The extent to which religious organizations challenge class (and caste) based advantage and disadvantage and women's traditional roles and social position varies, both between and within religious traditions. The case studies of the Hindu organizations show that they are not uniform: their authority structures, class position and interpretations of religious principles vary. The mainstream Hindu organizations studied are characterized by a cult of personality (a living guru who provides inspiration for his/her followers and exerts strong authority over the organization), but other sources of inspiration within Hinduism (e.g. Gandhi) give rise to organizations with different aims and characteristics. The notion of 'service' as charity given to a poor other ('giving and forgetting') prevents the development of a long-term and more inclusive form of pro-poor empowerment; it contrasts with the interpretations of both MA Math and GMS, which stress that the aim of their educational programmes is personal empowerment (*strisaktijagran*, the awakening of women's inner strength), although the former is oriented towards middle class devotees and students and the latter towards poor women.

2.3   Hindu educational organizations and political parties

As noted above, some Hindu organizations have broader political objectives and are linked with national and regional level political parties. They tend to see their work in the field of education instrumentally, as a way of infusing their ideology into young people and assisting their quest to achieve political power. One study looked at the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), which is not a religious political party as such but has strong historical and ideological bonds with the self-proclaimed 'social organization', the Rashtriya Swayam Sewak Sangh (RSS). The latter pursues a *Hindutva* agenda and has established a large network of affiliates, many involved in social welfare activities (Nair, 2009). Based on existing sources and extensive interviews with key informants in Madhya Pradesh, where

the BJP was in power at the time of the study, and Uttar Pradesh, where it had been ousted some years previously, the research seeks to understand why the BJP and RSS have a compelling need for each other and to what extent the BJP, as the political offspring of the RSS, is influenced by it. In addition, it examines the relationships between the BJP and Vidya Bharati Akhil Bharatiya Shiksha Sansthan (VBABSS), the educational affiliate of RSS, in order to obtain a better insight into the BJP's role in furthering RSS's *Hindutva* agenda.

The study found that the RSS promotes the idea of a Hindu religious nation through its use of the cultural concept of *Hindutva,* a doctrine that holds that the Indian identity and nation is defined by Hindu culture, which is closely linked to the Hindu religion. It reflects the aspirations of a section of the Hindu community by responding to perceived threats to Hindu culture and seeking to sustain the supremacy of the Hindu upper castes. Some of the RSS's organizational offshoots (the *Sangh Parivar* network) have adopted militant and communally exclusivist tactics, but many are involved in the provision of social welfare services, including the Vidya Bharati, which has developed a vast network of schools – both the RSS itself and these affiliates are faith-inspired. The BJP and Vidya Bharati are two of several organizations through which the RSS promotes the idea of a Hindu *Rashtra* (nation).The BJP was formed to advance the political ambitions of some RSS members and has acquired access to power at the national level (and in some states) through its coalition strategy. Today it has an ideological but somewhat fractious relationship with the RSS: the latter seeks political power to push its agenda of cultural nationalism, whereas the BJP is willing to dilute some aspects of that doctrine to widen its political support base and has become less dependent on RSS members. There is a familial relationship between the BJP and the Vidya Bharati, whose schools seek to groom young minds towards the concept of a Hindu nation. For BJP members, links with Vidya Bharati are a means of reinforcing their ideological moorings and also gaining acceptance for the BJP in the larger *Sangh Parivar,* although some in VB fear that some members of the BJP do not adhere to the core *Hindutva* ideology.

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Some broader implications of the findings on education provision by religious organizations for those seeking to improve access to education by disadvantaged groups include:

- *Many religiously affiliated education providers operate on a relatively small scale and cannot be relied upon to make a major contribution to the aim of achieving access to education for all.*
- *Faith-based education providers that are part of large networks with international links and significant funds may have characteristics, in terms of their class orientation and choice of activities, that do not fit well with the government's aim of ensuring access by the poor to appropriate education and vocational training*
- *The assumption that religiously affiliated organizations meet the needs of poor people must be assessed by examining the characteristics and affiliations of individual organizations.*
- *The rhetoric of women's empowerment used by most religious organizations must be questioned, to assess whether in practice their teachings and activities perpetuate or challenge traditional gender roles and attitudes.*
- *In the contemporary Indian context, engagement with religious organizations needs to be handled with care, lest it fuel communal agendas and religious and caste tensions.*

2.4 Madrasas as FBOs

As noted above, about 13 per cent of India's population is Muslim, although the proportion varies between States and localities. As demonstrated by the analysis carried out by the Sachar Commission, Muslims are educationally disadvantaged. Local madrasas are the main providers of basic religious teaching amongst Muslims everywhere; senior madrasas associated with particular schools of thought may also provide more advanced education, including training scholars and teachers. In recent years, governments in a number of countries have attempted to 'reform' madrasas to enable them to teach secular as well as religious subjects and contribute to reducing the gap between educational need and school enrolment, especially amongst girls. As part of an international comparative study of some attempts by governments to reform madrasa schooling systems, one of the studies in India looked at the characteristics and progress of attempts of the state governments of Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal to reform madrasas to make them better attuned to the requirements of the modern market economy (Nair, 2010). It made use of existing materials and semi-structured

interviews with a wide range of those involved in madrasas and the staff of state government reform programmes. However, the values promoted by madrasas, systematic assessment of the quality of education provided and tracer studies of their graduates were beyond the scope of this research.

Although fewer than four per cent of Muslim children attend madrasas, both the central and state governments have developed programmes designed to 'modernize' their curriculum and improve the quality of education they offer. While many madrasas offering education equivalent to the primary and secondary levels have chosen to accept financial assistance, Muslim leaders tend to view the governments' motives with suspicion. Madrasas themselves seem to be caught between the need to maintain their identity as centres of Islamic studies and culture and at the same time to remain relevant to the present-day needs of the communities they serve.

Historically, madrasas were the main education providers during the Mughal period, producing administrators as well as religious scholars and teachers. Following the colonial government's establishment of a schooling system on the British model to produce local administrative staff, they retreated from a close relationship with the state to the provision of religious education. The *ulema* (scholars) and others set up several large madrasas, many in the north of the country, especially in the area later known as Uttar Pradesh. The aim was to preserve traditional Islamic learning by separating *dinitalim* (religious education*)* from *duniyavitalim* (worldly education), but this move led to a divide between religious and mainstream education, and to a view of madrasa curricula as rigid and unchanging. Increasingly, better off families began to send their children to English medium schools, in order to ensure their access to jobs, especially in administration or law. In contrast, the opportunities for upward social mobility, free board and lodging, education and the prospect of a livelihood as an *imam* (leader, especially in prayer)*, maulvi* (cleric) or madrasa teacher, encouraged many *ajlaf* (lower class) and poorer households to send their sons to madrasas. As a result, the resource base for madrasas declined, and the employment prospects and socio-economic profile of their students changed.

State-madrasa relationships since India's independence have been influenced by three inter-related factors: the state's constitutional obligations to minorities, the quest for political power of parties with different ideologies and bases of electoral support, and finally, the madrasas themselves, with their need to survive as institutions while continuing to offer religious education.

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Although the numbers of madrasas grew in the years after independence, especially where government schools were not provided, and some have adopted a mixed secular and religious curriculum, many provide only religious education, primarily for the poor. They include *maktab* (Qur'anic schools associated with local mosques) and madrasas, which provide an education to children in the primary and secondary school age groups and beyond, with numbers falling off steeply beyond the primary school age. Most operate independently, while some are formally or informally associated with the leading madrasas, which promote increasingly polarized schools of thought. Madrasas depend on Muslim religious charity or a *waqf* (endowment) and their stance may be conservative or liberal. They are spread across the country and their numbers are thought to have grown in recent years, but there is no accurate count: estimates vary from 8,000 to 30,000. The most quoted figure is that of the Home Ministry, according to which Uttar Pradesh has the largest number (10,000+), followed by Kerala (9,975), Madhya Pradesh (6,000), Bihar (3,500), Gujarat (1,825) and Rajasthan (1,780) (approximately 2.1 million pupils).

There are two types of madrasa: those that operate within the government system by virtue of being 'recognized', at times also receiving grant-in-aid, and those outside the system, which may or may not teach mainstream subjects. Bihar is said to have the largest number of recognized and assisted madrasas (1,100). There has been a gradual growth in madrasa education for girls. However, there is also a growing perception that a madrasa education now has little to offer as a means of accessing a livelihood, even in the informal or trading sectors in which many Muslims work, which may constrain future growth in the numbers of madrasas.

Until the early 1990s, when a formal, structured modernization programme was initiated, madrasas were mostly tolerated but neglected by the Indian government. The centrally sponsored programme for madrasa modernization provides grants-in-aid, almost wholly focused on 'modernizing' the curriculum by bringing in mainstream subjects and, in some cases, improving teaching methods. As state governments are responsible for education, central government funds are channelled through them, and they may also institute their own programmes, providing scope for different approaches and outcomes. Because of problems in the design and administration of the central government programme and because many madrasas did not wish to participate, it took off slowly and only developed momentum with the launch of the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) programme, the government's version of Universal Elementary Education under the international Education for All agenda.

State governments can also set up centres under the Education Guarantee Scheme or initiate interventions in unrecognized madrasas, especially girls' madrasas, under the Alternative and Innovative Education (A&IE) component, through which free text books and an additional teacher can be provided. This programme targets madrasas in 99 districts in 16 states, especially Bihar, West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh and Assam. In the year 2005-06 about 3,500 unrecognized madrasas received support. In order to structure and streamline support, West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan and Assam, all states with a substantial Muslim population, have constituted or reconstituted state-level madrasa education boards. However, participation in this 'modernization' process is voluntary.

While the better resourced madrasas choose to keep out of state-funded programmes, a small but significant number of those that have limited access to funds are happy to engage with the state and comply with the conditions imposed. Engagement is viewed as a convenient arrangement that enables resource-poor madrasas to generate adequate funds and to integrate mainstream with religious education. However, there are numerous problems with the implementation of the scheme, especially in states like Uttar Pradesh. Madrasas complain of unhelpful government officials and departments. Recent strains between the madrasas and the State government were attributed by informants primarily to the failure of the latter to keep its promise to provide assistance to madrasas, rather than to a policy of active discrimination against them.

The number of madrasas supported by the West Bengal State government under the Communist Party of India (Marxist) more than doubled between 1977 (238) and 2006 (507). Since madrasas in this state provide education qualifications equivalent to those in the government system, they have been able to attract some non-Muslim students as well. The West Bengal Board for Madrasa Education (WBBME) counts among its strengths its 'secular' (non-religiously biased) character, an increasingly co-educational system and the effective process of convergence with mainstream education.

However, in states such as West Bengal and Bihar, extensive secularization of the curriculum of state-supported madrasas offering primary and secondary education, control over the recruitment of teachers and increased government monitoring confirm critics' fear that the government regards them as schools like any other, over which it intends to increase its control. Thus some believe that such

madrasas have lost their distinctive religious educational function and are Islamic only in name. 'Modernization' has apparently been equated with 'westernization' by some *ulema,* leading them to resist the proposed changes. Given the general environment of mutual suspicion and opposition from some quarters to the state-led process of modernization, both governments and the madrasas are treading cautiously. In addition, care must be taken in drawing general conclusions about the desirability of diverting public sector resources into madrasa reform because general evaluations of the outcomes of such programmes, including assessments of the values inculcated in their pupils, the quality of education provided, trends in enrolment by social category and the trajectories of graduates, are not available.

The main policy implications of the research on the features of and progress with madrasa reform include:

- *Attempts to improve the educational levels of the Muslim minority in India should focus on the vast majority of Muslim children who attend government schools*
- *The government should clarify its reasons for supporting madrasas*
- *Madrasas' constitutional right to provide religious education should be upheld*
- *Improvements are needed to the range of subjects and quality of teaching in madrasas*
- *Where madrasas lack the resources for improvements, there may be a role for government to contribute, but problems in the design and implementation of current programmes need to be addressed*
- *Measures to achieve equivalence between madrasas and government schools are desirable*
- *Changes in madrasas must be responsive to the future livelihood needs of poor students*
- *Madrasas appear to have more positive relationships with government if they form associations*

2.5 Engagement of Muslim organizations with post-conflict rebuilding of community

Apart from their disadvantaged access to education and other services, religious minorities also face problems of insecurity. India has been witness to communal violence, mostly between Hindus and Muslims. Given that Muslims are in the minority, they are generally the victims of such violence. Large scale Hindu-Muslim violence occurred in the Indian cities of Mumbai in 1993 and Ahmedabad in 2002.

The violence lasted longer and harmed more people in the latter than the former. Most analysis has focused on the violent episodes themselves, and little attention has been given to how victims cope with their tragedies over the longer term. This study, therefore, aimed to develop a better understanding of the immediate and longer term aftermath of inter-religious violence, with a focus on the roles of the state and Muslim religious organizations in restoring calm, assisting those affected and rebuilding social relations. It drew on earlier research by the main researcher, published accounts of the violence, interviews with key informants and visits to neighbourhoods affected by the violence and resettlement colonies (Gupta, 2009, 2010, 2011).

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Anti-Muslim violence is driven not by 'religious' differences or economic motivations, but by a Hindu nationalist agenda – riots happen in some places and not others because they are deliberately engineered for political purposes. The larger scale and more long-lasting effects of the anti-Muslim violence in Ahmedabad can be attributed to the backing provided to anti-Muslim sentiments and the violence itself by the government of the State of Gujarat, then and now under the control of the Hindu nationalist party, the Bharatiya Janata Party. In contrast, in Mumbai the Maharashtra State government and security forces did their best to end the violence, supported by secular citizens, upright officials and concerned politicians. For example, Mohalla Committees were established in sensitive neighbourhoods to improve rapport between the police, residents and government agencies.

Over time, some kind of peace is established, victims find a home or return to their earlier homes, children begin going to school again, and members of affected households resume their attempts to earn an income. Bit by bit, the riot victims pick up the pieces of their lives, but this is a long and arduous process. It is no longer possible to return to the lives and social relationships that were 'normal' prior to the violence: the new lives and relationships between neighbours, workers and business people, and communities may be more or less different from the old, but gradually they become established; they become a 'new normal'.

The needs of Muslim victims of inter-religious violence in the two cities were similar: their first priority was safety, followed by the need for shelter, the need to resume earning, and the desire that their children can start attending school again. They hope to obtain adequate government compensation, that their attackers are brought to justice, and that they can realize their rights as citizens. The

prospect of improved wellbeing seems a distant dream in the absence of supportive government policies, but Muslim families nevertheless strive to give their children a better chance by the educational choices they make.

Although victims have similar priorities as they try to rebuild their lives, the strategies open to them differ depending on the context, which reflects the different social histories of the two cities. In particular, Mumbai's history of trade unionism, secular activism, economic diversification and greater prosperity is reflected not just in the city politics and the composition of its elites, but has also led to the emergence of a Muslim bourgeoisie. This contrasts with Ahmedabad's dependence on a declining textile industry, the lack of strong civic leaders and the absence of a self-confident Muslim elite.

The Muslim community in Ahmedabad is mostly poor, and so the political and economic support provided to victims in Mumbai by affluent Muslim business people was rarely available to them. Generally employed as artisans or labourers in the informal sector, once the violence had died down, most Muslims were able to access the same or similar occupations, with similar low incomes, although often in a different part of the city, especially in Ahmedabad. In some households, women (especially those newly widowed) had to start working to supplement family incomes. Some but not all of those with businesses were able to raise the funds to repair or replace lost property, stock and equipment.

Muslims seek education for their children that will best provide them with access to work opportunities. They choose schools, the medium of education and the content of education with this in mind. English medium education is generally too costly, so in Ahmedabad this is predominantly Gujarati medium education in schools run by government or Muslim organizations, while in Mumbai the larger size and greater self-confidence of the Muslim community means that they feel less need to become fluent in Marathi and many seek Urdu medium education in government or private schools for their children.

In Ahmedabad, State government connivance in the violence and its neglect of victims, as well as the absence of a sizable and prosperous Muslim business community, meant that Muslim victims had to rely on short-term relief and assistance from Muslim faith-based organizations (and a few secular non-government organizations). Organizations such as the Jamaat-i-Islami sponsored Islamic Relief

Committee, the Jamiat-i-Ulema-i-Hind's Gujarat Sarvajanik Relief Committee (GSRC) and the Tablighi Jamaat set up relief camps, helped victims repair their homes and assisted those who felt unable to return to their original neighbourhoods to relocate to resettlement colonies. In Mumbai, in contrast, where the assistance of such organizations was not needed, they are seen by local Muslims as purely religious bodies devoted to teaching and propagating Islam.

In the longer term in both cities, the violence has led to increased segregation of residential areas along religious lines, as Muslims have sought security in Muslim-dominated areas. In Mumbai, Muslims are able to choose between staying or moving within their original areas of residence, or relocating to new mixed income suburban areas with services and facilities, the largest of which is Mumbra, about an hour and a half by train from Mumbai Central. In Ahmedabad, in contrast, the residential areas newly established by Islamic organizations are often in remote locations with poor quality housing units and inadequate services. Although this has made it more difficult for victims to find work or restart their businesses, many felt that they had no other choice.

Those organizations that aimed to recruit Muslims to a radical Islamist agenda by providing relief and resettlement areas in Ahmedabad do not seem to have made much progress: while their beneficiaries appreciate the assistance provided, they also voice criticisms of the organizations on issues such as how individuals' compensation was used, the provision of civic amenities in the resettlement areas they administer, and the mode of worship they advocate. The inadequate levels of government compensation and the difficulty of obtaining it, together with the failure of the state to bring the perpetrators of the violence to justice, remain lingering sores, hindering the restoration of victims' trust in the state to safeguard their rights as citizens. Muslim victims of violence want justice - until this is secured, forgiveness and reconciliation are difficult.

To prevent future inter-religious violence and ensure long term improvements to the lives of minority religious groups in India, research on the aftermath of inter-religious violence in Mumbai and Ahmedabad indicates that:

- *The citizenship rights of all must be recognized and protected by the law and the courts, and the perpetrators of past violence brought to justice.*
- *The government and security forces must operate in line with the national constitution and be held to account through the democratic political process; in addition, police and legal reforms are required.*
- *Government organizations and security forces can play a positive role in establishing mechanisms that improve communication between different religious groups and can be activated when necessary.*
- *In order to reduce Muslims' economic disadvantages, their access to public and formal private sector jobs must be improved, in particular through better access to educational opportunities.*
- *Increased residential segregation cannot be prevented, but government must ensure that housing areas are provided with basic services and social facilities so that they do not worsen the economic disadvantage of Muslims or the social divide between religious communities.*

3 Religious values, development and the challenges of good governance

Religion has been an important source of values almost everywhere in the world. This is believed to be particularly so in the case of developing countries like India, where the hold of tradition continues to be strong. As discussed above, classical development theories assumed that modern technology and the process of modernization would gradually weaken religion, particularly its presence in public life, eventually leading to the emergence of a secular society. However, the available social science evidence does not support such an assumption about the implications of social and economic change for the role of religion. In the course of this research programme, several studies revisited the question of the links between religion and development from different angles: one focused on the relationship of religion with popular notions of wellbeing, another looked directly at values and a third examined whether and how religious values are relevant to attitudes towards corruption.

3.1 Religion, wellbeing and development

Conceptions of development as economic growth and wellbeing defined in monetary terms as per capita income (or consumption) have been dominant in development policy, but in recent decades their adequacy has increasingly been challenged. An earlier international research project aimed to develop an improved understanding of how people in developing countries conceive of wellbeing and the local and national factors that influence wellbeing outcomes, to contribute to development policy formulation. It assembled new data and experimented with methodological innovations designed to enable levels of wellbeing to be better assessed and linked to socio-political structures and policy interventions.[11] Although culture and religion were recognized as important to people's lives and socio-political systems, they received little explicit attention in the research. First, the research findings in Bangladesh were supplemented by additional qualitative interviews to enable the researchers to investigate the relationships between people's conceptions of wellbeing and everyday lived Islam (Devine and White, 2009; White, 2009a, 2009b). Second, a research project in India sought to test a revised version of the methodology developed in the earlier research in a multi-religious South Asian context, to incorporate consideration of culture and religion in the data collection from the outset, and to examine conceptions of religion and wellbeing in a different cultural and development context. Aspects of the research are summarized in the following sub-sections.

3.1.1   *Religion, values and notions of wellbeing*

While religion is indeed an important dimension of life for most people, particularly the poor, it is not easy to identify religious values and link them to people's wellbeing and their views about development. In other words, there is no straightforward relationship between belonging to a religion and the values that shape one's actions and decisions. Drawing from field research carried out in four locations in the states of Orissa and Punjab, a study of religion and popular notions of wellbeing shows that it is impossible to disentangle religion from its interaction with the social, economic and political contexts in which it is lived (Devine and Deneulin, 2010; White et al, 2011). The study also questions the popular assumption that religion alone is the source of values, suggesting that a view of religion as a repository of values which both unites people in worship and gives rise to strong motivations and codes of behaviour among believers tends to grossly oversimplify the complex reality.

The study identifies three interrelated problems with such a view. First, such an assumption tends to set up a model in which humanity is regarded as being essentially religious and religion is treated as an external object with enduring characteristics and values. Second, these values are then embedded in official statements and edicts which are safeguarded and promulgated by religious organizations and institutions. Finally, individual religious practices and value choices are assumed to be directly and unproblematically related to the statements and edicts of religious organizations and institutions. At both methodological and theoretical levels, such an approach tends to treat religion as something given, rather than a phenomenon that is historically, socially and politically constructed. This approach also reduces value choices to abstract statements and fails to acknowledge and/or understand the more complex space that exists between value statements and people's adoption of particular values. This space is multifaceted, diverse and ever-changing.

The empirical research used three different tools for data collection: community profiles, a survey administered to 1,200 households (with a 50/50 split of male and female respondents) and a total of 38 in-depth interviews. Respondents in both Orissa and Punjab were selected from rural and urban sites and the sample was purposively designed to capture diversity in terms of religious adherence, class and gender.

The evidence collected reveals that values are as much revealed by what is deemed acceptable behaviour as behaviour is based on values, and that religion is not the only source of values that influence everyday social life. For ordinary people, religion is a pragmatic affair that permeates their everyday concerns and mundane aspirations. However, the researchers warn about the risk of assuming that, because people are 'pragmatic' they are purely materialistic, merely superstitious, or simply instrumental about religion. Nothing, it is asserted, is further from the truth. In respondents' minds, the everyday and the supernatural, practical needs and transcendental hopes go hand in hand; they are complementary rather than mutually exclusive concerns.

Religion is also about the social order: relations within people's immediate social sphere and wider social environment. It is intrinsically linked to wider social norms and institutions. Adhering to 'religious values', in the minds of devotees, is not predominantly a matter of individual preference. Values are often unconsciously reproduced and people adopt religious values or follow religious practices simply because this is what people do. Because religion plays an important role in defining what is permitted and what is not, it is closely linked to the stability of social relations. Moreover, even when choices are available, these are permeated and structured by existing social, political and religious relations.

Religion is often seen to construct, through its rituals and social norms, the moral code of a society. It is thought to offer a kind of moral compass to help people live their lives in a proper manner. However, religion is not the only force that inspires what people choose and do with their lives, and it may not be the dominant source. It is precisely in the complex space that lies between the 'normative' (what God commands) and the 'everyday' that actual and real choices are made. Religion inhabits this space, informing both the normative and the everyday, but dominating neither.

Asked to identify the main sources of teaching about religion and values, eight out of ten survey respondents mentioned the family, followed by the media, with only four out of ten mentioning religious professionals. Christians and Muslims were most likely to mention the role of clerics associated with churches and mosques, whereas very few Hindus and Sikhs did so. Indeed, many people expressed scant regard for many religious professionals and/or committees associated with temples or mosques, seeing them as self-interested at best and corrupt at worst. Overall, therefore, despite the importance of religion as a source of values, religious professionals may be rather less important influences on thought and behaviour than is often assumed.

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The study concludes that taking religion seriously in development discourse has long been overdue. However, it does not provide a magic recipe, which, if properly manipulated, will ensure that religious adherents adopt certain norms or behaviour.

3.1.2 What does it mean to live well?

Another theme of the research reported above examines how religion provides the basis for discourses on what it means to live well, both as an individual and as a community (White et al, 2011). Believers often view religion as an important source of wellbeing, providing comfort in times of trouble, offering a framework of meaning that helps make sense of life's vicissitudes and, above all, constituting a community which gives social support and confers identity on the individual through a sense of belonging.

Some of the key findings of the study are:

- Religion is highly significant to the ways that people think about wellbeing. However, the understanding of religion that is generally invoked is rather different from the set apart area of life imagined by modernity. The religion revealed in the research is the ground of a wider moral order. It goes beyond any particular 'religion', structures roles and responsibilities and is about conduct, character and core virtues, rather than spiritual beliefs.
- In addition, religion is just one of a number of identities that people have or choose to have. As with other sources of identity, religious identity is not immutable, but can shift on its own, as well as in conjunction with other factors such as caste and class. This underlines the need to understand and accept that processes of religious identification are complex and malleable.
- Even though most people's trust in God is strong, they generally believe that God will not do anything unless a person works for it. This means that, although ultimately everything lies in the hands of God, destinies are built through human effort and work.
- In the Indian context, the idea of wellbeing is a moral construct grounded in religion. It is highly normative, embodying clear ideas of good and bad conduct, and social, prescribing proper ways of behaving towards others. People do not necessarily associate more material prosperity and modernity with greater wellbeing. This makes common Indian ideas of wellbeing different from dominant constructions in the West, which primarily invoke notions of individual fulfilment.

- Notions of wellbeing are also highly gendered. While wellbeing is seen in relational terms for everyone, women's fulfilment is seen to be essentially constituted through the wellbeing of their families. This is sustained through well-established cultural narratives of women's sacrifice, which are grounded in everyday custom as well as religious practices of prayer, service and fasting. In other words, people conceive of a gendered hierarchy of wellbeing, in which the individual fulfilment of some lies in enabling – even at personal cost – the wellbeing of others.

- The Indian evidence suggests a notion of satisfaction that implies being satisfied with what one has. This is different from the popular materialist notion of wellbeing based on quality of life, which is seen in terms of access to resources and achieving a match between one's attainment and aspirations.

- Religion and politics are often connected, but this is frequently seen in negative terms, and the majority view amongst respondents is that religion and politics should be kept separate. Increased religious activity is seen as being about either conspicuous display or a political agenda, with the result that it is regarded as fracturing rather than cementing communities; it is not considered to be *religion*, understood as moral behaviour.

- Religious institutions are not necessarily significant in providing social welfare: virtually everyone in the research sites talked of family or friends as their main sources of help. Churches and mosques, as well as newly formed religious groups in all the traditions, were more likely to be seen as sources of welfare than temples or Sikh gurdwaras. In fact, more often people provide assistance *to* religious institutions or organizations. The forms of *seva* (service) that people reported giving to religious institutions are largely focused on the place of worship itself – cleaning, or, in the case of Sikhs, tasks associated with the serving of free food. Many talked of the satisfaction they derive from such *seva*.

- Quantitative analysis examined whether differences in wellbeing are best explained by differences in economic status, caste, or religion. Using a composite index of wellbeing constructed from the survey data, initial analysis showed that Sikhs score more highly than Hindus, Hindus more highly than Muslims, general castes than Other Backward Castes, and OBCs than Dalits. However, the general level of prosperity differs between the study sites, with the urban Punjab site being the most prosperous and the Orissa village the least developed. Further analysis suggests that *where* people live has the strongest effect on their wellbeing, rather than *who* they are, in terms of caste or, even less importantly, religion. Thus inequality that appeared to be related to religious identity was on closer examination about something else, although further investigation is required, since majority/minority status might also be important.

RaD

In development studies and policy, there are three key expectations of religion: that it is a form of social identity; that it is a source of community and social welfare; and that it provides a source of values and authority. The findings of this study show that all these assumptions must be questioned. While they seem to fit with Christianity and Islam, they do not work so well with Sikhism and Hinduism. This may in part be due to the innate character of the religions, and in part to the particular context of India.

The implications for development actors of research into the role of religion in people's values, lives and ideas about wellbeing in India and Bangladesh are that:

- *Religion is important to most people's personal and social lives and to how societies are organized, so it needs to be respected and development efforts need to engage more with this dimension.*

- *However, religion has a much wider significance than development: while specific development programmes and projects deal with a small part of most people's lives, religion is associated with the underlying moral order, so development actors should be modest in their aims and claims and particularly cautious about any attempt to harness or manipulate religion to achieve development goals.*

- *Religious references offer a way for people to say things that are important to them, so it is important that development actors listen to the specifics of what is being said or shown. Such actors need to guard against projecting their own, or their tradition's, assumptions about what religion is and the roles that it can be expected to play, and to recognize the variety of ways religion is understood in everyday life in South Asia.*

- *Development actors need to understand religious traditions in their social and historical contexts, particularly noting majority/ minority dynamics and relations between religion and the state.*

RaD

3.2 Religious values, caste, gender and corruption

Religious values and beliefs influence people's visions of the world and the ways in which they negotiate their place in it, with implications for their views of important social issues such as income, gender inequality and attitudes to corruption. Three studies explored aspects of this issue, focusing on religious values, caste and gender in poor communities in Pune and middle class Hindu organizations, and whether and how religious values and beliefs influence attitudes to corruption.

3.2.1 Religion and caste in Pune slum communities

People's understanding of their own situation, ideas about a better life and strategies for achieving their visions is influenced, amongst other things, by religious values, beliefs, individuals and organizations. Short term ethnographic research in two typical slum settlements in Pune focused on poor and low caste Hindu and Buddhist communities to examine local interpretations of these two religions and their implications for how people see the world and negotiate their place in it (Bradley and Ramsay, 2011).

As shown by several of our studies, caste continues to play a critical role in shaping people's destinies and also their perceptions of the world in which they live. The Hindu beliefs in *dharma* and *karma*[12] emerged strongly. The mainstream sociological and anthropological literature tends to view the effects of such beliefs in terms of the production of a caste hierarchy in which social groups are ranked unequally on the basis of their ritual status, and which is also gendered in that men and women are allocated different roles and responsibilities. They are also said to encourage Hindus to accept their lot in this life and pursue a better situation in the next. Securing a better life through building *karma* involves religious practice but also conformity to the status quo. Both Hindus and Buddhists in the study areas see the world through a caste lens and agree that they are discriminated against because of their low caste status.

However, a clear difference emerged between some low caste Dalit people, who are happy to accept the status quo and confirm to their *dharma,* and others who have rejected Hindu ideology. The former remain Hindu (although organizations such as Shiv Sena may articulate their experience of caste injustice), whereas the latter have become Buddhists. Their conversion to a version of Buddhism promoted by B.K. Ambedkar, born in late 19th century Maharashtra into the untouchable Mahar caste,

was a response to the injustice of the caste system and also enabled them to invoke a new language of rights.

Despite their criticisms of caste, neither those who have chosen to remain Hindus nor those who are now Buddhists have abandoned religion. It provides practical resources for dealing with day-to-day difficulties, including spiritual solace, advice from local religious figures, and access to material resources and political platforms offered by slum-based religious organizations. Religious practices are woven into the fabric of everyday life and enable individuals to feel they are building *karma* and good energy that will help them to acquire a better next life. Moreover, for Buddhists, their religion is seen to provide a platform for local groups to promote specific ideological and rights-based discourses. The fluidity of religion also offers people the constant opportunity to renegotiate their identities in a personal quest for greater dignity and social respect.

It is clear that local people view religion as possessing both personal and practical potential. It can inspire and motivate people to pursue visions of how they think the world should be and provides them with possible strategies for achieving improved personal circumstances, although as will be discussed further below, religious values do not always support the emergence of a more harmonious and equal society.

3.2.2 *Religious values, class and gender in Hindu organizations*

The gendered and class value orientations of Hindus in Pune were also explored through an examination of the religious discourses of three large transnational Hindu organizations, based on a review of materials produced by the organizations themselves, visits and interviews with leaders, staff and devotees:

- Ramakrishna Mission
- Sadhu Vaswani Mission
- Guru Mata Amritanandamayi Mission (MA Math).

Despite the centrality of a spiritual message to the teachings promoted by each organization, they also pursue a less explicit political and gendered vision of the world (Bradley, forthcoming). Their ideologies are politicized in the sense that they entail the pursuit of specific visions of India and the world and these worldviews are reflected in their attitudes to gender as well as their educational and social work.

A close examination of the religious discourses used by the three organizations reveals how religious concepts such as 'love' and 'compassion' can have gendered effects when they are presented through images of women as mothers. People associated with the Sadhu Vaswani Mission and the Ramakrishna Mission are ideologically preoccupied with the patriarchal social order. Their preaching emphasizes the need to maintain a distinction between the domestic and private responsibilities of women and the public decision-making roles of men. The Sadhu Vaswani Mission urges women to prioritize mothering, so that they can nurture the next generation of Hindu nationalists, who will fight for a unified India. The vision of the Ramakrishna Mission is not very different. It wishes to retain a patriarchal and caste-based stability in which each Hindu knows and understands their place in the world. In the case of the Guru Mata Amritanandamayi Mission, although Guru Mata does not describe herself as feminist, her gender ideology does appear to separate women as biological mothers from their social and cultural role of mothering. She argues for equality between the sexes, stating that men must strive to enact the compassion women naturally experience when they embrace mothering. Although not directly expressed as a challenge to patriarchy, Guru Mata, through her work and teaching, does apparently present an alternative to the patriarchal, status-quo oriented visions of the Ramakrishna and Sadhu Vaswani Missions.

Despite the heavy use of religious concepts and symbolism, a political agenda underlies the work of each of these large Hindu organizations. In order to understand what each hopes to achieve, these less visible motives need to be revealed. An important aspect of the vision of all three is a belief in caste-based divisions justified on religious grounds: caste, they believe, offers a mechanism through which individuals can understand their role and place in life. Differences in the vision of each guru, however, can be seen in the ways in which they understand and talk about *dharma*, which in turn determine their views on the roles and responsibilities of women. All three base their view of female *dharma* on a concept of mothering. For the Ramakrishna and Sadhu Vaswani Missions, woman, mother and mothering are conflated in a distinct reading of female *dharma* which focuses women's activities in the domestic sphere. Mata Amritanandamayi, in contrast, advocates that, in pursuing the same *dharma,* which essentially focuses on developing closeness with God, men and women should share roles, specifically that of mothering. This, she suggests, will help men develop the compassionate side of their nature.

RaD

In each case, education, especially of girls, plays an important role in the organization's work, helping to secure the next generation of devotees, raise money for their operations and ensure that their teachings have an impact on how Hindus see the world. The education of girls is the means through which the Sadhu Vaswani Mission's founder hoped to achieve his vision of India, reflected in his central belief that if you 'educate a woman … you educate a whole nation'. All essentially cater for the middle class, although a few places are reserved in the schools they run for poor students.

Each guru is sure that they offer the right path through life and a correct vision of a desirable future society. The majority of devotees are middle class - they focus on the individual pursuit of spiritual growth through following a guru, affiliation with his or her organization, piety and charitable acts. The organizations focus on *seva* (service) as the foundation for their charitable and welfare activities, such as feeding the destitute. However, this is thought of as a means by which followers can express compassion and love towards others, contributing to their own spiritual merit, rather than as a way to reduce poverty. It requires passive and grateful recipients and so does not challenge the socio-economic status quo.

In practice, the spiritual and political are so deeply intertwined in the philosophy and activities of each organization that, without being aware of it, many devotees in India and beyond are helping to advance the political vision of their guru.

The findings of research amongst Hindus and Buddhists in Pune, Maharashtra demonstrate that development actors need to:

- *develop detailed insights into how poor people understand their situation*
- *support poor urban residents in their daily battles to survive, through tackling immediate problems, as well as recognizing their aspirations for a more just society and a secure and prosperous future.*
- *explore the potential for working with selected prominent religious gurus, local religious leaders and slum-based religious organizations to strengthen the voices of the poor and motivate and support local people to challenge oppressive social structures, while recognizing that the ideology they promote is sometimes divisive and reinforces the status quo.*

RaD

■ *Be aware not only of the gender assumptions embodied in the teachings and activities of prominent gurus and large Hindu religious organizations, but also that they may have an overt or covert political agenda that seeks to retain a caste-based status quo and promote a Hindu vision of India.*

3.3 Religious values and their role in shaping attitudes to corruption

As noted above, religion plays an important role in the everyday lives of people in India, both inside the home and outside, in the public domain. However, levels of religiosity vary and religion means different things to different people. It is commonly looked upon as a potent tool for promoting moral and ethical conduct and inculcating discipline in the lives of individuals. But if religion is one of the main sources of values and ethics, why is corruption so widespread in Indian society? Contemporary thinking on ways of tackling corruption is considering whether too little emphasis has been placed on values and their influence on behaviour, but little evidence is available of how religion influences attitudes to corruption. One of the studies set out to analyze people's own interpretations of both religion and corruption and to examine how these are thought to influence attitudes and behaviour (Pavarala and Malik, 2011). In-depth interviews were conducted with 120 representatives from a variety of social groups, including the government, academia, the corporate world, development organizations, the media, youth and religious associations, mainly in Andhra Pradesh and Punjab. The research also examined how Hindu and Sikh religious leaders and organizations are perceived, to determine whether they might play a role in anti-corruption efforts.

The research confirmed that religion is universally believed to be an essential part of life for Indian people, but that its importance varies between individuals. In addition, the ways in which people understand and justify their religiosity differ. A distinction is made between ritual practices and the living out of religious tenets in everyday lives, with many believing that overt religiosity does not necessarily signify that a person is 'truly religious'. Interestingly, none of the respondents claimed to be an 'atheist', though many identified themselves as agnostic in their pursuit of religion.

RaD

The professionals, bureaucrats, corporate executives, media persons and academics who were interviewed often preferred to be called 'liberal' Sikhs or Hindus. This did not necessarily mean that they wanted to present themselves as 'less religious', but indicated that they were not rigorous in their observance of rituals. People working in the development sector insisted that religion is an inspiration for doing social good, with rituals playing a vital if not mandatory role. Traditional business people were much more emphatic with respect to the importance of both the ritualistic and symbolic characteristics of religion and made no bones about the defining role that religion plays in their lives. The values that guide everyday practices are often viewed as an amalgamation of several factors and influences: upbringing, religion, education, social status and socialization. It is not easy to separate them. The family is said to play much the most important role in developing values. However, the personal, professional or socio-political environment in which a person finds him or herself exerts a strong influence, and often in practice there are contradictions between personal and professional moral codes.

A majority of the professionals interviewed claimed that their commitment to following service rules is based on values imbibed from their homes and upbringing. Most of the corporate executives and business people made a clear distinction between personal morality and their business decisions and activities. Religion was stated as coming in handy within the home, but not so much outside of it, where they acknowledged that people tend to be 'flexible' with their personal values owing to the demands of doing business.

Some even argue that certain religious ideas may encourage tolerance of corruption, for example, *karma* – the attribution of a person's position and fortunes in this life to actions in previous lives. In addition, some are said to 'bribe God' by donating the proceeds of corruption to religious organizations. Religiosity therefore is not a guarantee of honesty and integrity.

Definitions of 'corruption' also varied. There was a multiplicity of ideas and a certain amount of ambiguity in notions of what acts are corrupt and non-corrupt. Some defined it in terms of the misuse of public office, including bribery and misappropriate of public funds. Others advocate broad/moralistic definitions, which view a large number of acts as corrupt, including gift-giving/'tipping', nepotism and womanizing, with some viewing it as deviation from a code of conduct applicable to any aspect of life.

RaD

Corruption is generally blamed on greed, materialism, the desire to succeed, cumbersome bureaucracy, loopholes in administration and failure to implement rules and laws. Respondents expressed concern over the proliferation of a 'culture of corruption', which is said to be 'corrupting the culture' in India. This erosion of cultural values was viewed as a consequence of modernity, secularism and consumerism, and was said to be resulting in personal agendas taking priority over the public good, with corrupt officers no longer feeling guilty about their behaviour.

There was a general consensus amongst respondents that the high level of corruption is due to the non-implementation of existing rules and laws and that the main way to reduce it is therefore through enforcement of these codes of conduct and legal provisions.

Can religion help? The answer is not a clear yes. Religion is often considered to be discredited, not because religion itself is deficient, but because of disillusionment with those who claim to be the caretakers of religion. Religious leaders and the priestly class no longer seem to wield moral influence on people, especially young men and women; they are regarded as people who preach but are not accountable in practice. Simultaneously, however, there was a deep-seated faith in the potential of religion-based morals and narratives, especially those transmitted through the family, for contributing to curbing corruption and creating an environment in which honesty, integrity and hard work are rewarded and celebrated.

Some of the implications of research into how religion influences people's attitudes to corruption for those seeking to comprehend and fight it include:

- *Corruption, values and the role religion plays in people's attitudes and lives can only be understood through in-depth research in specific cultural and religious contexts.*
- *The potential contribution of religion to tackling corruption is limited because in contemporary Indian society, values are subject to many non-religious influences and religious leaders and organizations lack legitimacy.*
- *The main instrument for tackling corruption is believed to be the implementation of existing rules and laws.*
- *It is also thought that religious ethics and narratives have untapped potential to contribute to curbing corruption, if religion is not merely interpreted in terms of ritual practices, but its values lived out and translated into moral behaviour. It is believed that spiritual training and values must be infused from childhood, but also that the reiteration of moral and ethical ideals later in life can make a difference.*

4 Politics and religious mobilizations

Questions of religions and development are linked to the modern state and the political process. State policy towards religion and religious communities is perhaps the most important aspect of state-religion relationships in the Indian context. As mentioned above, it is framed by the historical process of state formation and the space Indian secularism provides to religion. Like other democratic nation-states the relationships between religion and politics in India are structured by the Constitution, which embodies the democratic and liberal concern for equal treatment and liberty for all, along with a deep commitment to recognizing and protecting religious and cultural diversity. If the former foregrounds the individual, the latter brings in social groups, including religious communities.

Secularism in India is understood as a commitment to the ideal of religious non-discrimination and not as indifference of the state towards religion. Although there is no official religion, the Constitution grants equal religious and political liberty to all religious communities. Instead of restricting religion to the private domain, the Indian Constitution gives each individual, and by extension each community, the right to "profess, propagate and practise" their religion. While this allows individuals to have strong religious commitments, it is not indifferent to the internal practices of religious communities: religion is not permitted to sanction inequality. The Constitution allows the state to legislate and intervene to promote equal and fair treatment for all, especially the vulnerable sections of society. It also permits 'religious' political parties to co-exist with 'secular' parties and to voice the demands of a religious community, as long as they do not encourage inter-community hatred or refer to a candidate's religion when campaigning for votes.

Article 30 of the Constitution also gives all minorities, religious and linguistic, the right to "establish and administer educational institutions of their choice". Thus parents who wish to impart a particular religious education to their children can do so without being disadvantaged. This Article aimed to assure minority communities that their identity and distinctiveness would be protected and that they would not be compelled to assimilate into the dominant culture. Finally, the Constitution gives religious communities the right to "establish and maintain institutions for religious and charitable purposes".

In this section, the findings of research into the ways in which marginalized groups within religious traditions have mobilized in their quest for greater political and social recognition and dignity are presented. A general overview of the interactions between democratic politics and religious

communities is provided in Section 4.1, followed by case studies of the religious and political strategies adopted by disadvantaged groups in Punjab and Maharashtra (Section 4.2) and two Muslim women's networks (Section 4.3). The final case study adds an examination of the important transnational dimension of a Sikh religious movement's strategy.

4.1   Religious communities and the governance agenda

Although religious communities may claim homogeneity and internal unity, they are all socially and politically heterogeneous, and sections within them interact with democratic politics in different ways. Importantly, individuals and groups have interests and identities other than those based on religion. In the Indian context, caste, class, occupation and residence are also important, and these other identities play a role in shaping interests and aspirations. Often, people's different identities are intermeshed. A study examined the relationships between religion, politics and governance by considering the interplay between the ways in which religious communities seek to advance their interests and the dynamics of electoral politics in religiously diverse and socially stratified India (Mahajan and Jodhka, 2009). The research focused on the relatively prosperous and religiously diverse States of Punjab and Maharashtra. Case studies of the political strategies of particular marginalized religious groups were undertaken to reveal the various ways in which such groups use both political opportunities and their religious identity to advance their interests.

The Constitutional provisions influence the strategies open to and adopted by political parties, religious communities and disadvantaged groups. Religious communities may seek to advance their concerns through the formation of political parties, but such parties are not the only authentic voice of religious communities. Their concerns are also taken up and articulated by so-called secular political parties. What distinguishes 'secular' from 'religious' political parties is that the former consciously seek to forge a coalition of interests, appealing to a wide social base that cuts across communities of caste, religion and language.

Identity-based parties appeal to and privilege the concerns of the group they seek to represent. While democratic arithmetic may compel them to reach out to other communities, their core social base, which they try to nurture, is narrower. However, the presence of 'religious' parties compels the 'secular' parties to take a position on religious issues. The result is that seemingly secular parties may

try to edge out a religious party by raising religious issues and at times supporting more extreme or radical religious agendas. Moreover, on occasion they concentrate on divisions within a religious community, attempting to win the support of sections within it by taking up the concerns of more marginalized groups.

Punjab and Maharashtra both have religiously diverse populations and have witnessed religious mobilizations and inter-community conflict. However, as elsewhere, there are internal divisions and differences within the religious communities. One important axis of such difference is caste. Even though traditional occupational divisions on caste lines have weakened, caste continues to determine opportunities for social mobility, particularly for the Scheduled Castes (SCs), the ex-untouchable Dalits, and the Other Backward Classes (OBCs). The case studies tried to understand the participation of selected marginalized groups within different faith communities in the democratic process and the manner in which they have managed to get their concerns inserted into the political and policy agendas of the mainstream political parties and the state system.

The presence of internal differences means that members of a religious community do not always speak with one voice; at least some of their interests differ, which means that secular parties can address the needs of a particular group, thereby weakening the control of religious parties and leaders over it. The democratic political process can also influence internal discourse within religious communities, providing channels for internally marginalized groups to address their development concerns and potentially weaning them away from religious parties and leaders. The marginalized groups may see religion as the source of their deprivation. Alternatively, they may see it as means of emancipation and achieving increased wellbeing. Their reactions are not always consistent. In some instances, the most promising political tactics involve downplaying or changing their religious identity, while in others, religious metaphors may be used to articulate developmental aspirations or rights and the support of religious groups to attain their goals.

Even in the Indian secular state, where religion has a conspicuous place in the public domain, different and sometimes contradictory processes are set in motion by electoral democracy: on the one hand, it allows the concerns of members of religious communities (such as socioeconomic disadvantage) to be forced onto the agenda of mainstream political actors; but it can also push even secular political

parties into using a religious idiom when seeking support from religious sub-groups, thereby reinforcing religious identity politics.

The political strategies adopted by members of religious minorities in India indicate that

- *internal differences within religious communities shape the participation of particular religious sub-groups in democratic political processes*
- *democratic politics provides scope for marginalized groups within religious communities to gain political backing*
- *such marginalized groups may use their existing or an adopted religious identity to achieve their aims*
- *when religion is important in the public domain, it changes the dynamics of party politics in complex ways for both secular and religious political parties.*

4.2   Religious movements of the marginalized

The initial exploration of the relationships between religions and politics in India reported on above was followed by a study which focused specifically on the quest of two Dalit communities for development and social change (Jodhka and Kumar, 2010). Both communities mobilized around the vision of a dignified religious identity, although their strategies differed.

As mentioned above, caste shapes structures of opportunity and access in the Indian subcontinent. The ideas of 'pure' and 'impure' produced a hierarchical social order, marked by rigid social inequalities and the humiliating practice of treating some groups as 'untouchables'. Caste-based culture privileged some social groups and condemned others to deprivation and poverty. The legitimacy of the caste hierarchy was questioned by religious movements during mediaeval times and more systematic political attacks on the caste system emerged during the colonial and post-colonial periods. Because caste is inextricably linked with Hinduism, anti-caste movements have invariably taken a religious form. However, while recent movements have a religious form, they also engage directly with 'secular' questions of development and social change. Their explicit objective is the empowerment and uplift of historically excluded and marginalized sections of the Indian/ Hindu population.

The study looked at two important religious movements amongst Dalits (ex-untouchables or Scheduled Castes) in two different regions: the Ad Dharm/Ravidasi movement among the Chamars of the Doaba sub-region of Punjab, and the neo-Buddhist conversion movement among the Hindu Mahars of Maharashtra. It explored their quest for a dignified social existence and their struggle for material development and empowerment through religious mobilization. Both are currently active religious movements that originated in the 20th century and have had far-reaching impacts on the social, economic and religious lives of the two communities.

The Ravidasi movement in Punjab has its origins in the Ad Dharam movement of the 1920s, which was started by Mangoo Ram. Himself a Dalit Chamar, Mangoo Ram was the son of an enterprising leather trader, who acquired secular education locally and travelled to California for work. On his return, he mobilized his fellow Dalits and demanded that they be listed as a separate religious community, Ad Dharmis, instead of being clubbed with the Hindus, who in any case treated them as 'out-castes'. The British colonial rulers conceded and listed Ad Dharmis separately in the 1931 Census. However, with the signing of the Poona Pact between national Dalit leader B.R. Ambedkar and Gandhi in 1932 and the subsequent listing of Ad Dharmis as a Scheduled Caste (SC) by the colonial government in 1835, this movement became redundant. Given that SC status was given only to Hindu Dalits, they stood to lose the benefits of quotas in government employment, education etc if they did not enumerate themselves as Hindus.

Nevertheless, their desire for secession from the Hindu religion and their quest for an autonomous identity took them initially to Sikhism and then, when caste discrimination continued (see Jodhka, 2010), to Ravidasi *deras* (sacred places) run by babas/gurus (religious leaders) belonging to their own caste. Over the years, the Chamars of the Doaba sub-region began to identify with these *deras* and to see themselves as a separate religious group, even though they are officially listed as Hindus or, in some cases, Sikhs. The prosperous among them, particularly those living in Western countries, have given generous donations to these *deras*. Apart from building new and bigger temples, these funds have been invested in setting up schools and hospitals. The Ravidasi gurus have consistently encouraged their disciples to educate their children and provide them with good health care, although respondents in the study emphasized that the schools and hospitals run by the *deras* are open to all, underlining their commitment to universalistic values.

RaD

A movement for greater autonomy among the Mahar Dalits of Maharashtra also began during the colonial period. Recruitment of Mahars into the colonial army enabled them to move out of their villages, with their caste-based economic order. It also opened up opportunities for their children to access secular education. Some went on to pursue higher education abroad, including B.R. Ambedkar. However, their achievements in the field of education and secular employment did not help them to get accepted as dignified members of the Hindu religion. They were still treated as untouchables: they were not permitted to enter Hindu temples or drink water from public sources. Ambedkar attributed this humiliation to Hinduism and began to urge members of his community to convert to Buddhism. Along with a large number of Mahars, he himself converted to Buddhism in 1955 and over the years almost the entire community of Mahars has converted. B.R. Ambedkar emerged as an iconic leader and role model for Dalit communities throughout India.

Given the nature of Dalit deprivation, conversion did not overnight transform their lives. However, the new religious identity helped them come together as a political community and gave them a sense of confidence. It significantly raised their awareness of the value of education and produced a set of motivated leaders who have worked for the social and economic development of community members. Through a network of faith/community-based organizations, the Maharashtrian neo-Buddhists run a large number of schools, cooperative banks and other support institutions for community members.

Though selected from two different regions of the subcontinent, there are significant similarities between the two movements studied, in terms of the social and historical context in which they originated. They were both made possible by the introduction of a secular education system and new economic opportunities during British colonial rule. Both the movements rejected caste and wanted radical change rather than reform. For them, it was not possible to reject caste without rejecting Hinduism. However, while they criticized Hinduism, they did not reject religion. Both movements initially approached religion in purely instrumental terms, as a possible way of extricating themselves from Hinduism, but they soon recognized the value of the spiritual and sociological dimensions of religion.

Thanks to the movements studied, the two caste groups have evolved as strong and autonomous communities in their respective regions. They have invested in institutions, especially educational

facilities, which not only help the communities to secure their own social and economic development, but also to impress other groups with their achievements Their mobilization as communities has empowered them politically at the regional level. Above all, the religious nature of the movements and the communities' newly developed networks and resources have given them a sense of confidence and pride about their identity.

Some implications of the experience of the Ravidasi and neo-Buddhist movements for social change amongst Dalit caste groups are:

- *Political influence and legal/policy change are necessary but not sufficient to overcome engrained discrimination and prejudice.*
- *For many, rejection of the caste system implies rejection of Hinduism, but because religion plays an important role in people's spiritual wellbeing and everyday lives, religions that reject caste can provide an alternative source of meaning, identity and dignity.*
- *Leadership is important, but investment in spiritual and material religious resources is also needed to secure allegiance to a 'new' religious tradition.*
- *Investment in social facilities, especially education, helps to improve a community's wellbeing and social status.*

4.3   Religion in women's struggles for equality

The case studies above examined how religion was mobilized in support of two disadvantaged groups' quest for social change. However, at least as frequently, religion has been regarded as an obstacle to reducing social inequality, not least gender inequality. In practice, the role of religion in women's movements for social change is complex. To throw light on some of the complexities, a study examined how women's rights activists working in Muslim communities have engaged with the question of religion, either within the wider women's movement or by creating a separate space for themselves outside of it. The study focuses on newly emergent networks among Muslim women and their growing emphasis on women's rights (Kirmani, 2009a, 2009b, 2009c, 2011).

RaD

The women's movement in India has historically had an ambivalent relationship with religion. This was demonstrated most clearly during the debates around the question of personal laws during the 1980s and 1990s. Although these debates centred on Muslim women's rights, limited numbers of Muslim women actually participated in the discussions. This study focused on the activities of two networks that emerged during the 1990s around the question of Muslim women's rights: the Muslim Women's Rights Network (MWRN) and the Bharatiya Muslim Mahila Andolan (BMMA). It particularly looked at how these networks engage with religion as part of the process of collective identity formation, in a context of Muslims' feelings of exclusion and marginalization as a threatened minority. The study also looked at the relationship these networks have with religious institutions like the All India Muslim Law Board (AIMLB), as well as with the wider women's movement. It aimed to understand how advocates of Muslim women's rights negotiate their multiple identities in the context of complex matrices of power based on gender, caste, class and region.

Muslim women are increasingly organizing for social change, both independently and as part of the wider women's movement. Based on extensive semi-structured interviews with women activists, the study found that the two networks studied, the MWRN and the BMMA, are re-shaping the view of 'Muslim women' as a victimized group in order to express their political agency, rather than allowing themselves to be defined by other political interest groups. Further, both networks are challenging the authority of the male religious elite to represent the entire 'Muslim community'.

Both groups have drawn attention to the multiple forms of disadvantage faced by women in minority communities, including Muslim women. While in the past they have attempted to engage with members of the AIMPLB, they have largely abandoned this strategy because of a perceived lack of progress. Within an Islamic framework, both networks have advocated greater use of the *nikahnama* (marriage contract) as a means of overcoming the limitations of Muslim personal laws, although with limited success.

More generally, the Indian women's movement is increasingly becoming diversified as members of minority groups, including Muslim and Dalit women, organize collectively, both within and outside the movement. The appearance of groups and networks led by Muslim women, like the MWRN and the BMMA, reflect the changing nature of the women's movement. The fact that Muslim women-led networks have emerged can be seen as a sign of the women's movement's inability to represent

women of marginalized communities or to deal adequately with the question of religion. It can also be seen as a result of the space earlier created by the women's movement during its campaigning and self-reflection around the issue of personal law.

The two networks studied may not have achieved significant changes in gender equality, but by participating in public debates and engaging with both religious and state institutions, they have contributed to a widening of the democratic space. Most importantly, these networks have questioned the binary opposition between religion and gender and are provoking further discussion by highlighting the complexity and multiplicity of identities. They have also questioned traditional structures of religious authority by confronting religious institutions and claiming a right to engage with religious discourses on their own terms.

The study has implications for the women's movement, the All India Muslim Personal Law Board and the government:

- *Members of the women's movement need to positively engage with and create space for women from marginalized communities, including Muslim and Dalit women.*
- *The membership and leadership of the All India Muslim Personal Law Board needs to have a better gender balance and to change its attitude towards women and the question of their rights.*
- *The Indian state should not ignore questions of gender inequality within religious communities, such as the Muslim community, when engaging with them as religious minorities.*
- *Policy makers, the media and donors should recognize the diversity amongst Muslims in India, and should make a special effort to create space for women's diverse voices to be heard in discussions around Muslim identity, rather than allowing the male-dominated religious elite to define the interests of 'the community' as a whole.*

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4.4 Transnational links, religious identity and development initiatives

The studies undertaken in India as part of this research programme concentrated primarily on the national and local context in which religious values and beliefs are formed and religious organizations operate. Although international influences and connections were not a specific focus of the research, their relevance to understanding political and religious dynamics and the funding base and status of some religious organizations emerged during some of the case studies. In practice, international influences and links can be significant.

One study, therefore, specifically investigated the nature and role of transnational religious links in shaping the identity and development agenda of a particular religious community. Building on one of the case studies of a Dalit social movement (see Section 4.2), the study explored the transnational linkages of a Ravidasi[13] *dera* in Punjab, the Dera Sant Sarwan Dass (DSSDB) at Ballan (Singh et al, 2010). The research was based on secondary materials and semi-structured interviews with leaders and supporters in the West Midlands, United Kingdom, and DSSDB sites in Punjab, India.

Many subaltern groups in India, especially low caste groups, regard a new distinctive religious identity as a necessary precondition for social recognition and equality, as reflected in the case studies summarized in Sections 3.2.1 and 4.2. This is, however, a difficult strategy, especially for groups at the boundaries of the main traditions, who not only have to compete with these traditions, but also often lack resources or support for their quest. The DSSDB has adopted three key tactics in creating a self-confident and recognized identity for a socially marginalized group: religious differentiation to forge a distinctive religious identity separate from Sikhism, investment in social facilities serving not only its own followers but also the community more broadly, and the fostering and use of transnational networks.

In its own discourse, the DSSDB projects itself as the authoritative repository of Ravidas' vision, which historically nestled within a plural Sikh universe. However, the assertion of a Khalsa identity[14] as the Sikh identity since the 19th century Singh Sabha Reform Movement has reduced the space available for traditions such as those favoured by the followers of Ravidas. Combined with the failure of major Sikh institutions to meaningfully accommodate the mission of *deras* such as DSSDB and to democratize Sikhism, such movements have been left with little alternative but to pursue the path of

religious differentiation. This choice, the DSSDB leadership insists, was not strategic: rather it was a consequence of Sikh resistance to acknowledging its followers' distinctiveness and marginalized social status. During the process of differentiation, the DSSDB's Sants have gradually adopted a new set of rituals and beliefs, which distinguish their organization from mainstream Sikhism. Their intention has been to define the ambiguous boundaries between Sikhism and Ravidas Dharm more sharply, but this has also made the (selective) adoption of Ravidas' message by mainstream Sikhism problematic. The strategy of de-Sikhization was a conscious effort to strengthen the Ravidasis' claim of a separate cultural and religious heritage: although the new religious conventions share many characteristics of Sikh religious ceremonies, followers feel that they are part of a separate religious tradition, the Ravidasi religion or 'Ravidasism'.

The second tactic used by the DSSDB has been to invest in social facilities, especially education and health institutions. Encouraged by its early religious leaders, education enabled many followers of the early Sants to emigrate, resulting in a large and geographically dispersed diaspora, many members of which became prosperous in their adopted countries. More recently, funds from these diaspora communities have been mobilized for investment in high quality educational and healthcare facilities that provide services not just for devotees and the poor but also for members of other castes and communities. The projects are not just a response to the religious injunction to serve, they are also intended to reinforce the community's sense of self-worth and to establish its status as equal to other social groups and castes. The investment to date is in a few prestigious schools and hospitals, which make only a limited contribution to the development needs of the Doaba sub-region. Rather, they are symbols of equality in a caste-ridden society and distinctive markers of the community's success. They have helped to instil among Ravidasis a new social confidence, which celebrates their achievement in effectively managing social development projects, as well as helping to create a deep sense of personal and collective pride in their Ravidasi identity.

It is unlikely that these developments would have occurred in the way that they have without transnational networks. By cultivating its transnational links, especially in the United Kingdom, the DSSDB has emerged as the main driver of Ravidas identity in Punjab. This achievement would not have been possible without the material support of the Dera's overseas followers, for whom building up social and religious institutions in Punjab has been intimately linked with their search for a separate

Ravidas identity and the need to demonstrate their collective achievement to the higher castes in Punjab. Transnationalism has been central to a process of differentiation between the followers of the DSSDB and Sikhs more generally, especially since an incident in Vienna in May 2009, which saw an armed assault on Ravidasi Sants by Sikh militants. The birth of a new religious group, the Ravidas Dharm, in 2010, marks the final parting of the ways between Ravidasis and Sikhs. Conflicts of this sort have generally been interpreted as mere schisms within the Sikh order and there has not previously been any attempt to understand the significance of transnational links in Ravidasi attempts to demarcate a distinct and dignified identity.

The DSSDB's efforts to use such networks to promote dignity and social mobility illustrate that, for marginalized social groups from the South, transnational connections can have a significant 'liberating' and empowering effect, instilling a sense of self-respect through the remittance of both funds for investment in major social institutions and new ideas. These in turn can become a resource with which to challenge groups' subordination within Sikhism in both their homeland and their host country. In the case of the DSSDB, transnational links have provided the organization and its followers with moral and social courage to challenge the culture of exploitation and subordination that is pervasive in relations between high and low castes among fellow Punjabis. In a deeply hierarchical society, such a challenge can be seen as a first step towards genuine social equality. In addition to other tactics, therefore, the study shows that for organizations such as DSSDB, which are engaged in subaltern social struggles, transnational networks can be used to undermine established hierarchies and promote development: transnationalism can be a powerful agent of religious and social change.

Wider implications of a case study of a transnational religious movement amongst low caste Sikhs include:

- *In addition to recognizing the total contribution of financial remittances, better understanding of the role of social remittances is needed*
- *Attempts to harness international remittances for development purposes must appreciate the complex motivations and dynamics associated with them*
- *Transnational networks and remittances can provide support for disadvantaged groups within religious traditions in their quest for dignity and social recognition*
- *New forms of religious transnationalism can help disadvantaged groups develop innovative strategies to achieve social equality and development in their homelands and should be distinguished from contemporary stereotypes that associate transnationalism with the 'war on terror'.*

5 Concluding comments

Existing research on development issues and policies, carried out mostly by economists but also by researchers from a variety of other disciplinary backgrounds, including anthropologists and sociologists, is almost entirely 'religion blind'. Similarly, religion has been studied extensively by historians, theologians and some social scientists. However the interface of religion and development has only occasionally been analyzed, mostly in normative terms, with commentators making judgements on the desirability or undesirability of religion intersecting with development.

While in the Indian context, politics cannot be discussed without reference to religious identities, much of the debate has remained rooted in the dynamics and legacy of Partition. As noted above, until the Sachar Commission Report, mainstream discussions about religious communities were not couched in terms of inequality and relative socio-economic status. The intention of the researchers involved in the Religions and Development Research Programme was to generate new knowledge to contribute to this debate, through a number of exploratory research projects. While the questions addressed were mostly common to research projects undertaken in two or more of the other focus countries included in the programme (Pakistan, Nigeria and Tanzania), they were adapted to the Indian context, to enable the research to contribute to contemporary Indian scholarship and policy debates.

The findings of the studies reported on here are complex and diverse. While they clearly show how important it is to improve understanding of the relationships between religions and development in their various dimensions, they do not produce simple answers to questions such as 'should development actors engage more actively with religion in order to achieve development objectives' or 'does religion make a positive or negative contribution to wellbeing and development?'

It is sometimes thought that religion's role in forming values and morals and ensuring that they are reflected in behaviour can be harnessed for development purposes. Studies that examined the relationships between religious values and development concepts and practices (such as wellbeing, social justice and attitudes to corruption) confirmed that they are closely linked. Indeed religion is so deeply embedded in everyday life and cultural practices that it is impossible to focus exclusively on religion. However, institutions that propagate religious values invariably operate with a specific notion of society that goes well with their own social and political attitudes – in the Indian context these typically include patriarchy and caste hierarchy, which are not compatible with a commitment to rights and

equality. Moreover, although the crucial role of religion in shaping the moral order is widely recognized, religious institutions and leaders (especially within Hinduism) seem to have a limited role in inculcating values and their potential to contribute eradicating corruption from public life is mostly viewed with doubt and suspicion because of the low popular credibility of religious institutions and their own lack of accountability.

The research on religious organizations also produced mixed results. In most cases, affiliation to a particular religious tradition or denomination is only one of the identities that a religiously motivated non-governmental organization has. Nor is religion the only source of their motivation. Some work with specific political ideologies that influence their activities and focus. While some work with the poor and the marginalized, others focus on the middle classes. Some are openly right wing and pursue exclusionary agendas (such as Hindu nationalist organizations), while others (such as Buddhist Dalit organizations) work with positive and inclusive notions of development. The context also shapes their activities and potential contribution. For example, in the aftermath of Hindu violence perpetrated on Muslims, Muslim community organizations can play an important and positive role in supporting victims, even when some clearly have a sectarian agenda.

Notwithstanding an official commitment to secular development and more than six decades of democratic politics, religion continues to be an important source of identity for most Indians. Even those on the margins of religious and social life tend to see their religious identity as an important aspect of their lives. For the ex-untouchable communities, the Dalits, a dignified religious identity is as important as any other aspect of development and wellbeing. Our studies of Dalit communities show that, in their perspectives on well-being or development, poverty is no worse than humiliation. As well as spiritual sustenance, religion provides people with a sense of right social ordering, so their humiliation and disadvantage is seen as having religious roots and dimensions. Religion therefore remains an important element in social movements of the marginalized, who often evolve strategies for achieving a dignified self-identity and improved socio-economic wellbeing that include religious symbols and institutions, although these objectives can never be attained purely by such tactics.

Our research has important policy implications. As is evident from the discussion above, while the established political model of 'religion-blind' secularism makes little sense, to incorporate religion into development policy and practice without giving due consideration to wider social and political issues can be quite detrimental. Questions of exclusion and inclusion within and between religious traditions and faith-based organizations are too critical to be ignored in any discussion of the relationships between religions and development.

Notes

[1]   The working papers (and short summaries) can be downloaded from
      http://www.religionsanddevelopment.org/index.php?section=47
[2]   Dalits are the lowest caste groups, formerly known as untouchables (officially Scheduled Castes).
      Adivasis are tribal groups (officially designated Scheduled Tribes). In 2001 Scheduled Castes
      comprised 16.2 per cent of the population and Scheduled Tribes 8.2 per cent.
[3]   India constitutionally has a secular state, in which religion plays no role in the public sphere of
      politics and governance. In practice, 'secularism' in the Indian context means that all religions have
      equal status, and there are significant links between religious groups and politics, governance and
      public policy (see Mahajan and Jodhka, 2009). Advocates of a secular constitution feared that
      political expression and representation based on communal (religious) identity would both threaten
      the Indian state and hinder the government's attempts to modernize its economy and society.
[4]   The Sachar Committee was a high level official commission appointed by the Prime Minister of
      India to look into the socio-economic position of Indian Muslims.
[5]   The Religions and Development Research Programme's first seminar in India, organized in the last
      week of March 2007 in Delhi, was on the theme of the developmental experience of different
      religious communities in India. A report on the seminar can be seen at: **http://
      www.rad.bham.ac.uk/files/resourcesmodule/@random44e0488bf3b15/
      1177929781_April_07_Workshop_report.pdf**). The papers presented in the seminar also became
      a source for *Religions, Communities, Development: Changing Contours of Policy and Politics in
      Contemporary India* (edited by Gurpreet Mahajan and Surinder S. Jodhka), New Delhi: Routledge
      India, 2010. In addition, an issue of *Seminar* considered the question of how religious minority
      status is conceptualized (Jodhka, 2010).
[6]   See Religions and Development Research Programme (2008). This review and other sources
      revealed the limited availability of published social science literature in the area of concern to the
      research programme, which made it difficult to identify easily researchable questions.
[7]   Background papers on each of the religious traditions with which the programme was concerned
      were also produced: Christianity, Islam, Sikhism, Buddhism and Hinduism (Kim, 2007; Kroessin,
      2008; Tatla, 2008; Tomalin, 2007, 2009).
[8]   According to the 2001 census, 80.5 per cent of the population of India was Hindu, 13.4 per cent
      Muslim, 2.3 per cent Christian, 1.9 per cent Sikh, 0.8 per cent Buddhists, 0.4 per cent Jain and 0.7
      per cent other religions. With a total of population of 1,028.6 million in that year, even religious
      minorities represent large numbers of people, for example, there were 19.2 million Sikhs and 8
      million Buddhists.
[9]   The term 'faith-based organization' has been widely adopted in recent years, especially within
      mainstream development policy and practice. However, it is sometimes resisted because of the
      association of 'faith' with Christianity, and its emergence as the favoured policy term of the Bush
      government in the US in the 1990s, which had strong associations with the religious Right. More
      generally, it implies that an organization is explicitly religiously motivated and has organizational
      features more typical of contemporary NGOs or civil society organizations than traditional religious
      organizational structures. However, defining the boundary between religious or faith-based
      organizations and secular NGOs is problematic, especially in countries where the vast majority of
      people engaged with NGOs have a religious affiliation that influences their values and motivations.
      The terms religious and faith-based organization are used interchangeably in this paper.
[10] A larger proportion of the organizations were Christian than would be expected from the proportion
      of Christians in India's population. This reflects differences in the origins, doctrine and
      organizational arrangements of Christianity (see also Robinson, 2010), but it is also possible that
      because Christian organizations are more formally organized than those associated with other
      religions, they are easier to identify and survey (Jodhka and Bora, 2009).

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[11] Funded by the UK Economic and Social Research Council, the research on Wellbeing and Development was based at the University of Bath and undertook extensive comparative studies in Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Peru and Thailand between 2002 and 2008. See White (2010) and **www.welldev.org.uk**

[12] Dharma refers to a person's duty or role and karma to rebirth (into a particular caste) as a result of actions in a previous life – it can be roughly translated as destiny.

[13] Followers of Sant Ravidas, who are primarily Chamar Dalits from the Doaba sub-region in Punjab,

[14] The orthodox majority within Sikhism; see also Jodhka, 2010.

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Appendix 1

List of research projects in India

1. Relationships between religious values and development concepts and practices.
    Main researchers: Tamsin Bradley and Zara Ramsay

2. Wellbeing and religion - questions of values and practices.
    Main researchers: Joe Devine and Sarah White

3. Religion, ethics and attitudes towards corruption.
    Main researchers: Vinod Pavarala and Kumar Malik

4. Religions, politics and governance.
    Researchers: Gurpreet Mahajan and Surinder S. Jodhka

5. The role of faith communities in contemporary social movements
    Researchers: Surinder S. Jodhka and Avinash Kumar

6. Mapping the terrain: the activities of faith-based organizations in development.
    Main researchers: Surinder S. Jodhka and Pradyumna Bora

7. Faith-based education service providers and their changing relationship with the state: madrasas and religious political parties.
    Researcher: Padmaja Nair

8. The development activities, values and performance of selected faith-based organizations providing education.
    Main researchers: Martin Rew, Emma Tomalin, Tamsin Bradley and Zara Ramsay

9. The role of faith communities in conflict transformation and long-term development
    Main researcher: Dipankar Gupta

10. New forms of religious transnationalism and development-initiatives
    Researchers: Gurharpal Singh, Charlene Simon and Darshan Singh Tatla

Appendix 2

List of policy briefs

All the Religions and Development policy briefs are available from

http://www.religionsanddevelopment.org/index.php?section=54

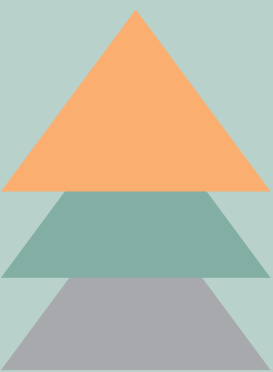Those that summarize the findings from research carried out in India are listed below:

2 Religions, democracy and governance: spaces for the marginalized in contemporary India

3 Ambivalent state-madrasa relationships and madrasa modernization in India

4 Seeking justice and rebuilding lives in the aftermath of Hindu-Muslim violence in Ahmedabad and Mumbai, India

8 Religious mobilizations for development and social change: Dalit movements in Punjab and Maharashtra, India

10 New forms of religious transnationalism and development initiatives

11 The role of religion in changing social attitudes towards corruption in India

17 Mobilizing for Muslim women's rights in India

19 Religion, wellbeing and development in India and Bangladesh

20 Religious values, everyday lives and visions of the future: Hindus and Buddhists in Pune, India

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40	Devine, J. and White, S. *Religion, Politics and the Everyday Moral Order in Bangladesh*	2009
41	Marquette, H. *Whither Morality? 'Finding God' in the Fight against Corruption*	2010
42	Marquette, H. *Corruption, Religion and Moral Development*	2010
43	Jackson, P. *Politics, Religion and the Lord's Resistance Army in Northern Uganda*	2010
44	Gupta, D. *Elusive Peace: Seeking a 'New Normal' in Post-conflict Ahmedabad and Mumbai*	2010
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