Challenges for a School Psychologist

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The challenges before the school psychologist are broadly of two types. On the one hand, a school psychologist has to offer mental health care, the need for which is on the increase, which is credible, cost-effective, and which addresses the social issues. At the same time, a school psychologist has to take up the challenge of global problems, such as the issue of sustainable development, so that he can expand the scope of psychology. If psychologists are not able to provide a sound research base on which the school psychologist take pragmatic decisions his professional competence is at stake. Today, globalization would require ever more stringent and elaborate ethical and moral codes to regulate interactions between living and non-living world so that cooperation, help and altruism prosper. Therefore a new look on human nature, away from rationality, where emotions have significant role to play, seems imperative.

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In this paper my purpose is to address, the professional challenges before a school psychologist, on the one hand, and the role of a school psychologist in meeting the global issues, on the other. In other words, the challenge for psychology is to increase the professional competence of clinical psychologists so that they may compete with other practitioners in the field as there is an increasing demand for mental health care. At the same time psychology has an imperative of expanding its scope which is possible by registering participation in solving the global problems. This issue finds an elaborate exposition in the address of the President of American Psychology Association, Kazdin (2009) on the contributions of the science of psychology to sustainable development. Whereas the former issue, which is concerned with the application of knowledge of psychology for the improvement of mental health, is taken up in an important report, where Baker, McFall, and Shoham (2008) have convincingly argued that the alarmingly high number of practitioners consider scientific evidence to be less important than their personal clinical experiences in meeting mental health needs.

A student of psychology can extend the knowledge of psychology to school domain in three ways: as a guidance person, as a counselor, and as a clinical psychologist. As one moves from the task of the guidance person to the clinical psychologist there is need for greater specialization, more time and effort, and to focus on specific psychological problems. It suggests that a school psychologist is a person, who may have several other qualifications, but at its core he is a clinical psychologist working in the school environment. Then only the aim of psychology as a helping profession in the area of school will be achieved. The various technical aspects of this endeavor are part of Ramalingam's (2011) concise report on School Psychology in India. He has also made a fervent plea to the research community to direct its focus on school psychology related issues which help in policy making and

empowerment of the school psychologist in India. Ramalingam has also underlined the need to identify the psychological issues of children that are likely to vary in the schools. As far as the global issues are concerned, the topics of the Conference Sub Themes of the ISPA 32nd Conference on School Psychology held in Dublin, Ireland in 2010 and have implications in the Indian context, a few of them are addressed in this paper. They include, for example, working together to meet societal needs, diversity and inclusion, pro-social behaviour, and bio-psycho-social health.

There are three sections in this paper. The first section explains the issue of professional competence at a very micro-level but at the same time taking up an issue which is highly pragmatic for a school psychologist. It is perhaps an arrogance to overlook the rich treasure of practices that have evolved as an integral part of the Eastern civilizations over a long period for the physical, social, mental and spiritual well-being of humankind. It is however important to re-invent them for the well-being of the child growing in the family and at school. That it is not an easy task will be clear from the section—*Of meditation and yoga.* Continuing on a similar issue the school psychologist may have to face how to conceptualize the interaction between the teacher and the pupil in a school environment. And the school psychologist would like to answer a pertinent question as to what is the best language of communication between the teacher and the pupil, along with it what are the essential features of school environment where these interactions take place over a period. The section *Beyond Guru-shishya parampara* highlights the minutiae of these interactions. The third section deals with the second category of challenges of a school psychologist, preparing the younger generation for participation in the global issues. A significant issue that is facing humanity today is the impending threat on our survival due to violent policies of development empowered by modern technology. Policy makers have realized now that the problem is multidisciplinary and human desires may need a new look, and if need be to modify and reshape them in such a way that the planet can sustain a quality of life. This would initially require a *search for values,* the moral and ethical principles that are kept in mind during the formulation of policies, which is the main thesis in the third section. A school psychologist may have an imperative of inculcating these values for quality of life which sustains humanity.

Of meditation and yoga

In a way, school psychology is a scientifically principled approach to mental health care of the children in the school environment; therefore the first issue referred above is ingrained in the definition of a school psychologist itself and is essential for imparting credible services not only to lessen infirmity among children but to enhance their mental health. As far as the second issues is concerned, a school psychologist would like to broaden the scope of its services by inculcating skills and attitudes among the school children that are pro-environment, such as the preservation of biodiversity and the plantation of the trees. Let me give a specific example to illuminate the first issue. It is fashionable to prescribe one or the other meditation technique for mental and physical well-being of children in schools or for the general public. As far as they are part of the religious and spiritual tradition, there may be experiential evidence about the beneficial effects of these Eastern meditational practices, but when they are 'stripped' of the way of life and applied in different contexts in parts, the experiential evidence about their efficacy may not hold true. It calls for independent experimental evidence of their positive effects on mental or physical health. The spiritual leaders and zealous politicians often prescribe meditation and yoga in schools, a school psychologist therefore

needs to be aware about it the experimental findings on this issue.

In order to foster pro-social behaviour, the school is the best choice where children from different sections of society join each other. And in this process the role of school in creating a facilitative environment for pro-social activities is though always a cherished goal, but searches for incorporating activities which help to achieve this objective are imperative. Whether there are some Eastern meditative practices which if included as extracurricular activities have potential in fostering pro-social behavior among children may be an area for a school psychologist to ponder upon. Therefore the next question is, if psychologists have developed such packages in the area of meditation and yoga through their researches? In other words, what is the nature of evidence suggesting enhancement in empathy by the practice of Eastern meditation and yoga?

The other side of this problem is to curtail increasing competitiveness and violence among children and enhance the romantic side of their personality, which is affectionate, care giving and even self-sacrificing. Although some recent studies from the Centre of Behavioural and Cognitive Sciences, Allahabad have explored some Eastern meditation practices (Raffone, & Srinivasan, 2010), the empathy is not the focus. The efforts of SVYASA (Swami Vivekananda Yoga Anusandhana Sansthana) in India, specializing in exploring cognitive, behavioral, physiological and neural correlates of Eastern meditational practices, also have nothing to offer for the enhancement of pro-social behaviour (Subramanya, & Shirley, 2009). In general the focus of research on meditation is not on exploring the traditional aspect, meditation as a way of transcending connective imagination, but minor changes in physiology and behavior (Adrade, & Radhakrishnan, 2009; Hussain, & Bhushan, 2010). However, some research on the meditative practices in the Western

laboratories has significance to foster pro-social behavior is enlightening (Kristeller, & Johnson, 2005; Shapiro, & Izett, 2008; Travis, & Shear, 2010). Thus there are only tentative suggestions from scientific research to a school psychologist to recommend some meditative practices that may help in fostering pro-social behaviour among children. As far as the finer variables are concerned there are even more important questions to answer.

In this regard a sort of confusion prevails among scientists in this area, particularly about the effects of Eastern meditation practices on enhancing empathy, an altruistic concern for each other to counter violence. One finds that there are conceptual differences among the investigators reporting the effect of these Eastern meditation practices. The group of psychologists (Raffone, & Srinivasan, 2010; Srinivasan, & Baijal, 2007) working at the Centre of Behavioural and Cognitive Sciences, University of Allahabad, classifies Sahaja Samadhi Meditation (Sudarshan Kriya Yoga) under the category of focused attention (FA) but the same practice is classified by another group (Travis, & Shear, 2010) working at the Center for the Brain Consciousness, and Cognition, Maharishi University of Management, Fairfield, under open monitoring meditation (OM). The proponents of this classification have underlined the conceptual understandings embedded in the eastern traditions behind these two styles of meditation, the FA and OM, without which the whole program of research becomes perilous for drawing correlations between the types of meditation and corresponding brain activity (Lutz, Stagter, Dunne, & Davidson, 2008). This controversy deepens when the psychologists (Travis, & Shear, 2010) working at the Center for the Brain Consciousness, and Cognition, Maharishi University of Management, Fairfield, disagree with Raffone, and Srinivasan (2010) to classify Transcendental Meditation (TM) under either FA or OM styles of meditation, but devise a

third category, the *automatic self-transcending* for this meditation. These conceptual differences are no doubt part of scientific tradition, but a high level of skepticism shrouds some of the research on yoga (e.g., Telles, Naveen, Gaur, & Balkrishna, 2011), which is important in context of school psychology in India. Of similar or even greater importance is the disputed research on waves emanating from the heart, a sort of electromagnetic field (e.g., McCraty, Bradley, & Tomasino, 2005), which is rampantly used to explain the effects of meditation focusing on heart. A school psychologist would require more convincing information for the prescription of these meditation practices for the general mental and physical well-being and to use it as a therapy to deal with specific mental problems among the school children. Here is another example from this area. Rahul, and Joseph (2011) reported that meditating university students had significantly low anxiety than the non-meditating ones. Although meditation was the main variable in this study, the article in its eight pages did not have a single line about the kind of meditation these students had been practicing. Not only that, the authors working at the most prestigious seat of Indian spiritual tradition, Kalady, Kerala, have not referred to a single original source on meditation from the Indian tradition. Such lacunae in research make the task of a school psychologist difficult, in other words, there is no clue about meditation in this research work.

In India, there seems to be a holy alliance between the followers of psychoanalysis and proponents of Indian Psychology in opening a tirade against experimental method in psychology to favor subjective approach. But at the same time there are dissensions between these two groups as far as their theoretical orientations are concerned. Indian Psychology, for example, places emphasis on the thoughts of Sri Aurobindo (Cornelissen, 2011) as an important part of integrative education, for a psychoanalyst Aurobindo's thoughts are delusions (Nandy, 2011). These contentious issues may find resolution in the open minded approach of Dalai Lama (Miller, 2009), for, he did not hesitate sending monks, trained in Buddhist meditation for over several years, to the psychology laboratories in the United States, where their behavioral, physiological, and neurological parameters were studied to corroborate the reported experiences.

These minute issues have significance for a school psychologist, who may have to take professionally sound decisions. A school psychologist is in fact a professional clinical psychologist working in school setting, and need to differentiate from the self-styled practitioners and social workers who seem to exploit a person's growing need for mental health care. That this is a global phenomenon is amply clear from the preceding example on meditation, and the alarm call given from a prestigious platform. An editorial note of a science magazine Nature 2009 says, "*There is a moral imperative to turn the craft of psychology—in danger of falling, Freud-like, out of fashion—into a robust and valued science informed by the best available research and economic evidence.*" (Vol. 461; p. 847) The challenge therefore is to provide mental health care, the need for which is on the increase especially in the schools, that is credible, cost-effective, and addresses to social issues.

Beyond Guru-shishya parampara

In January 2011, in a note to the 13th National Conference on Best Practices in School Psychology, jointly organized by the Pondicherry Psychology Association and Indian School Psychology Association, I made reference to the most important relationship that has special relevance in Indian tradition, the relationship between the Guru (teacher) and the *shishya* (disciple). A school psychologist has to go deeper into the relationship of *Guru* and *shishya* from three

important angles—the nature of the relationship, medium of communication, and context where it takes place. This relationship has significance in the classroom as well as in the clinic and both the aspects of this relationship has importance for a school psychologist, while the first one is obvious the second one underlined by therapists having long experience in India (Neki, 1977). The second dimension of *Guru-shishya* relationship is the medium of communication and its association with the child's cognitive development. The third dimension of this relationship involves the elements of the environment of the school, or the ecology of the school where the interaction is taking place.

Sacred relationship: In the *Guru-shishya parampara* of Indian tradition, the *shishya* or disciple surrenders to the Guru, who he thinks will remove his darkness and illuminate with knowledge (Chidananda, 1984; Sudarshan, 1982). This relationship may work today under certain specific situations, but largely it has to give way for new relationship for at least two reasons, which is particularly relevant for a school psychologist. First, the number of disciples has gone out of proportion and the same is true for the amount and specialization of knowledge. Neither it is feasible for one teacher to acquire the amount of knowledge that is available today, nor may he be able to cater the needs of so many disciples. Additionally the means of knowledge acquisition are also changing; especially the machine may be more efficient means of knowledge acquisition and storage than the teacher. Today, the surrender to a teacher is likely to be perceived as a weakness of the disciple rather a good quality. It indicates dependence and the inability to grow independently.

Thus the challenge for the school psychologist is to conceptualize the nature of relationship beyond the *Guru-shishya parampara*. However, it may not be difficult to notice occasional regression, among teachers, disciples, and also by the members of the society. The relationship between the teacher and the disciple is governed by moral and ethical codes that are embedded in society, on the one hand, and inculcated by the teacher and the school psychologist, on the other hand. Traditionally, certain communities profess *Guru* even greater than the God, since it is the former that shows path to God. It is possible that in a clinical relationship, the client may see a therapist as a *Guru* (Neki, 1977), and this conceptualization in the mind of the client may change the nature of therapeutic relationship and determine the outcome of therapy.

An important contribution of a school psychologist may be to instill hope, happiness, and hardiness in a child. These are positive aspects of mental health and over and above the task of a school psychologist to get rid of the psychological problems that a child is facing, since mental health is not simply lack of infirmity. In this enterprise a school psychologist need to understand the molar issues of the social milieu in which he finds the children situated. In these children the parents, the society, and the humanity see its future. A psychologist after taking cognizance of the issues of the social milieu has to articulate these in suitable words as people's aspirations to sensitize the children. The focus of this exercise should be to enrich the young pupil with social, economic, religious and political diversities, but making sure that it is not perceived as a burden on mind. A caution is to be taken that these exercises do no become painful reminders of social disparity, economic burden, caste problems, religious discrimination, and threat from impending injustice.

It is also important to understand the attitudes of researchers, teachers, politicians and planners towards the disadvantaged groups. Rarely do psychologists study the attitudes of teachers belonging to higher

classes toward the disadvantaged groups. Unless there is basic change in the attitudes it is difficult to impart education in an unbiased manner. Social psychologists have reported that the teachers from the upper caste show prejudice about the potential for achievement among the low-caste students. They expect these students to do poorly in their examinations. Therefore it is likely that the low-caste students begin to lose confidence in their abilities as they progress through the schooling (Pandey, & Tripathi, 1982). This hypothesis was further studied by Sharma and Tripathi (1988) where the low-caste students performed unexpectedly well, the teachers attributed this success to chances. The success of upper caste students, however, was attributed by the teachers to the student's ability.

Medium for sharing information: The sharing of information by the *Guru* with the *shishya* needs a medium or language. The medium of communication is gaining more and more importance due to globalization and movement of people to distant places. Secondly, researches in the area of psycholinguistics are bringing new facts about the role of language in the cognitive development of the child.

Mastery in a language such as English is one thing that a child must acquire, and there are many sound reasons for it. A common sense theory, why children in rural areas of India, and those reading in government schools are poor in English, is because they do not have opportunity to practice it in their families and in the milieu. Beyond that language is also a matter of social identity and therefore always associated with regional political issues. Both the arguments are fashionable but have no scientific basis. In any case, a school psychologist has to find reasonable theory with regard to various questions about language through which the teacher and the disciple share their views with each other. It

starts with, what language should be taught to a child as soon as he/she enters in a school at six years of age? Whether mother tongue education equips the child with some kind of cognitive proficiency, which is not possible with the other languages? Later, if the child learns two or more languages, has it important consequences on child's cognitive development? All these questions can now be answered from the findings of researches done by psychologists working in the area of psycholinguistics (Mohanty, 2000).

The dialogue between the teacher and the pupil is governed by two broad parameters—the cultural context and the form and structure of language. The former includes all factors in social milieu, including social and psychological conditions, which make language use possible. Of particular interest are studies on persons and communities who use two or more languages in their interactions with others. This phenomenon is known as bilingualism or multilingualism. It is indeed startling to note that as psychological work on bilingualism grew, two important facts came into light: the cognitive processes of bilingual children, and the consequences of bilingualism on cognition (Mohanty, 2000). Besides enhancements in their classroom performance, the bilingual children show better cognitive development, analytic orientation, enriched world-view, and meta-cognition.

However, a more important question awaited researchers, and that was the choice of medium of instruction. This research challenged the general conception that children in English medium schools were better in academic performance than those where the medium of instruction was mother tongue. The well-designed research, with suitable control on intelligence, indicated that mother tongue based instruction has an overall advantageous effect on the academic growth of children. The area has grown to

include various other aspects of cognition (Padakannaya, 2009; Tripathi, & Babu, 2009).   There is a consensus now that the longer the child has the mother tongue as the main medium of education, the better the child learns the subjects and easier for him/her to learn English and other dominant language. As the child begin grasping what is being taught in the class, he/she takes interest in study, and attends classes regularly. These findings are part of the document prepared by the National Multilingual Education Resource Consortium (NMRC, 2009), a joint venture of psychologists from India and abroad in the areas of language behavior and cognitive development.

The research in language and cognitive development support the view that mother tongue based multilingual education (MLE) is a new philosophy, free of fears and dogmas, and has a sound theoretical basis. The school psychologist is now well-equipped to answer questions related to the flow of information between teacher and the child in the school environment.

Context of schooling: The work of eminent psychologist J. P. Das and his colleagues (Das, Kar, & Parrila, 1996) on mental functions in children is, on the one hand, based in information processing approach and neuropsychology, but on the other hand, it underlines the contextual aspects of intelligence (Das, & Thapa, 2000). Schooling according to Das is a manmade context that shapes the "structure" of a child's intellect. Indeed he concludes that research on schooling and cognition suggests how the context of learning may alter the fundamental aspects of child's cognition. A rich array of factors is embedded in this context, which need enormous research in particular school settings, though some may be general in nature. Whereas the former involves *emic* approach, the latter uses *etic* approach. A few examples are here to illustrate how inclusive

policy requires appreciation of deeper psychological issues.

On the basis of long experience of working with children, Das (1998) cautioned that the IQ tests discriminate against disadvantaged children. These tests contain items that are familiar to the children who come from middle class and urban families. Therefore it is more likely that the children from better socioeconomic status groups living in urban areas perform better than the children who belong to Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe groups living in the rural areas. Das gives an example of a stimulus that is interpreted differently by subjects from different backgrounds. Once he was helping a child from a poor family to do simple arithmetic. His arithmetic book had a problem of subtraction. There were five bundles of firewood pictured on the page. The question read: "If I use up two bundles of firewood, how many will remain?" Anyone at his age would say three. But instead of counting bundles, the child started counting each piece of firewood in the bundle, and could not come to the correct answer. Why did he do so? After deeper probing, it became clear to Das that, in his family firewood was counted by number of pieces rather than in bundles. It is so expensive for the family to buy even one bundle of firewood that the boy could not imagine using up two bundles at once. Therefore a school psychologist has to be very careful while selecting a tool to study the intellectual capabilities of the child.

Yet on the other hand, a school psychologist needs to acquaint himself about the gross violence that is part of our developmental policies. For example, the attention that we need to focus towards the displacement of people from their native areas due to large developmental projects and consequent issues that have psychological import—the rehabilitation and acculturation of these displaced populations (Pirta, 2009). A direct challenge may be the

children in these populations and a lot more that are under constant threat and need empowerment—for example the children in tribal and non-tribal areas where violence has been going on since long.

Search for values

Both the issues raised at the outset have significance for psychology as a science. If psychology does not take up the challenge of global problems such as the issue of sustainable development, it narrows down the scope of psychologists. On the other hand, if psychologists are not able to provide cost-effective credible services in the area of mental health care, their professional competence is at the stake. A lot of research from multidisciplinary areas over the present decade suggests that the two issues are related, in the sense that the quality of our environment has close association with the quality of our life. Or, the burden on mental health increases directly with the deterioration of our environment (Kazdin, 2009). A number of proactive measures have been suggested globally, and the most important are the adoption of ethical and moral codes for a sustainable way of life.

All humanistic endeavors today are directed to foster pro-social behaviour, the need has become more imminent with increasing globalization on the one hand, and to face the challenge of widespread individual and group level violence. This violence is also directed towards nature. It is presented here as a social-psychological-political problem. And the views expressed are part of the note "*Search for Values*" submitted by the author to the Working Group on "Ecosystem Resilience, Biodiversity, and Sustainable Livelihood" for the 12th Five Year Plan 2012 to 2017, of the Planning Commission of India.

Children are inquisitive and sensitive. They have genuine questions which for example may pertain to mundane things around them. It is natural for a child to ask why we worship. Is there God? I thought that let me answer this question by exploring Mahatma Gandhi's way of life. Although there are schools in the United States, where children are deprived of introduction to the Darwin's theory of evolution even today, Gandhi ji rather found it useful to develop his ideas of moral and ethical codes long ago. This is important to understand for two reasons. First, people generally see Darwin's theory as a threat to the Divine beliefs. Secondly, it is a fact that neither the rational minds nor the saintly souls could bring people near each other. Curiously, the current trends in evolutionary theory have indications from where it may be possible to rekindle our imagination of connectedness with each other based on our common ancestry (Norenzayan, & Shariff, 2008; Nowak, 2006).

Need for ethical and moral codes: The emphasis on ethical and moral codes in human life is a contentious issue and creates uproar as it is perceived a hindrance to openness. However, it is not easy to deny the vital role of ethical and moral codes in individual and social life. These codes may be acquired by self experience, and are also innovated by social and religious institutions for its smooth functioning. Perhaps we can learn them through our transactions with nature. But the most important challenge is to inculcate them in the mind of a growing child.

A major issue that has significance here is the scale of violence that is part of policy decisions globally. The violence inflicted on nature is one major negative aspects of scientific revolution that has endangered the planet earth (Kazdin, 2009). The decrease in the biodiversity is an important indicator of the human violence on Nature, of which we have recently taken cognizance. Our main concern has been the violence between human territorial groups, which often engage in conflicts over resource use. Today we are face to face with the glaring consequences of this violence. It would require developing a culture of prudent use of nature through

increasing awareness, modifying violent attitudes towards nature, and adopting pro-environmental behaviors (Pirta, 2007).

Therefore the major task for us is to explore socio-psychological mechanisms that lower the scale of violence in the economic policies so that the biotic components of the ecosystem thrive, or there is lesser threat on the resilience of the ecosystem. These social mechanisms may involve humanistic principles of interaction with its environment. The important question therefore is, from where to acquire these principles or values, the moral and ethical codes that help us to lower the scale of violence in our economic policies while we make these behavioral transactions. Perhaps the Nature is the best friend to guide us.

The Gandhian way: A moral action has to be free from fear or compulsion, and should not involve any self-interest behind it. These ideas became part of Mahatma Gandhi's way of life, and are essentially based in Salter's *Ethical Religion* published in 1905 (see Narayan, 1969). They are equally appealing to rationalists and religious people. Gandhi ji summarized them as early as 1907 for the Gujarati audience with an introductory note "Darwin's Views on Ethics." Strangely enough, a century after Gandhi, the champion of Darwinian theory, Dawkins (2006) deliberates on this issue in two chapters of his recent book, *The God Delusion* drawing evidence from the current views on the evolution of altruism. The Editorial in the science journal *Nature*, 12 February 2009, on Darwin's 150th anniversary, underlines how much Darwin valued moral and ethical beliefs, beyond his thesis of a common human ancestry that was fatal to religious world-views. The human tragedy is that evolution and religion were propagated to perpetuate violence as much as for humanistic cause.

Mahatma Gandhi's search for peace astonishingly rests on religious as well as Darwinian roots. In Pyarelal's *Towards New Horizons* (1959) one finds that Gandhi was aware of Peter Kropotkin's study on mutual aid in nature, and the discovery of innate mechanisms for controlling aggression in animals by Konrad Lorenz, who later received the Nobel Prize in Physiology and medicine, along with Frisch and Tinbergen he laid the foundation of a new science of behaviour—the Ethology. In a beautiful synthesis of sensual and affectional currents, Mahatma Gandhi went a step ahead. Consolidating what Salter and Thoreau have already said, through askesis he paved way for the 'God of Love' using tools of *Satyagraha* (truth) and *Ahimsa* (non-violence). This according to his close associate Vinoba was an astonishing experiment on the resolution of conflict between competitive and cooperative forces through reconciliation.

At the same time naturalistic studies on animal social groups by ethologists provided a sound basis for the idea that mother-infant interactions have survival function, and the foundations of love lay in this affectional system. After the experiences of World War II, and particularly on the basis of Bowlby's observations on the institutionalized children, scientists have strongly contended the Freudian theory (Kandel, 1999), which forms the basis for an alternative view having long standing in India. It is important to underline that Bowlby's attachment theory provides the school psychologist a "*strong research and theoretical base, a framework that encompasses developmental processes and outcomes, both adaptive and maladaptive, which facilitates assessment and intervention and offers insight into classroom and family dynamics.*" (Kennedy & Kennedy, 2004)

Alternative view: This has particular relevance in context of the promotion of peace in the tribal heartland of India that has become a matter of controversy for various theoretical and pragmatic reasons, of particular significance being the

conceptualization of secularism in India. A group with particular ideology seems to question it. And for psychologists this is not only important due to the problem of violence that is rampant in this tribal region, but a more significant issue is the underlying belief in Freudian psychoanalytic framework. The latter refer to Freudian social psychological model advocated by the two eminent psychologists Kakar (1995) and Nandy (1998) in India, and are part of popular writings that seems not only radical, but challenging for a school psychologist.

The passion of Gandhi to search an antidote for violence was so deep that he did not hesitate to approach psychoanalysts in Calcutta if they had any answer to the religious conflicts between the Hindus and Muslims during the partition of India (Kakar, 1997). The jocular explanation of psychoanalysts of that day may have died, but for rationalists the psychoanalytic imagination is still a panacea. In their view, religion breeds of violence. But it is a fact that for the masses religion is a guide of moral and ethical codes. Therefore a school psychologist needs cautious about the formation of attitudes and beliefs that have basis in a particular theory. Long ago Hoch (1977) working with urban and rural populations in north India cautioned therapists not to be oblivious of the religious and cultural sensitivities of the people, whatever expertise they possessed in the field of psychology.

A major focus of the debate for long has been the concept of secularism—keeping religion separate from politics—as it is defined in the West. However, in India, where religion and polity has long history of congenial association, to seek religious independence from the politics would have needed something like a total transfusion of blood in the body. An article of Hoenig (2010) in a popular Indian magazine gives a lengthy introduction to this debate. Using the controversial psychoanalytic insight, he wonders "*If the Constitution turned into a totem, the institution of secession was made a taboo.*" As a result, Hoenig contends that it has become difficult to reap all the benefits of democracy in India. Why should one doubt the intentions of a person engaged in environmental activities if he has religious affiliation? Such apprehensions have been raised by social scientists, for example, with regard to Save Himalaya Movement of Shri Sunderlal bahuguna (Pirta, 2011). These dissenting voices showing concern with secularism and with a direct or indirect bearing on therapy, is likely to create confusion in the mind of a school psychologist. For, he has to deal with the young generation which is naturally prone to openness, only superficially understanding its deeper meanings.

Emotions anyway: Extreme forms of materialism, as has been conceptualized in selfish cost/benefit games in behavioral economics, including sociobiology, have come under severe criticism. In this rational economic human nature, the cultural route of love, empathy, altruism, and help among individuals and groups, have no scope.

The noted economist Sen (2006) in *Identity and Violence* underlines that the rational economic approach to human nature, "*makes huge idiots out of Mohandas Gandhi, Martin Luther King Jr., Mother Teresa, and Nelson Mandela, and rather smaller idiots out of the rest of us, by thoroughly ignoring the variety of motivations that move human beings living in a society, with various affiliations and commitments.*" (p. 21) For, our common future lies in imbibing moral and ethical values that guarantee prudent use of nature. Acknowledging Henry Thoreau as the prophet of conservation movement and mentor of Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr., the eminent Harvard biologist Wilson (2003) in *The Future of Life* reveals Thoreau's unique way to embrace natural world where our outside obligations are stripped to the survivable minimum.

Today, the globalization would require ever more stringent and elaborate ethical and moral codes to regulate interactions between living and non-living world so that cooperation, help and altruism prosper. Therefore a new look on human nature, away from rationality, where emotions have significant role to play, seems imperative.

Conclusion

Summing up her impressions about the scope of school psychology in India, Vogt (2010) underlined that pupil need help in cognitive, affective and behavioral domains of life. Now that Indian School Psychology Association (InSPA) is in place and more so that it has cordial associations with the International School psychology Association. And this mutually cordial relationship may have to be nourished if the goals of school psychology are to be realized at the global and regional level. In India, the school psychology has the backing of a much larger body of psychologists, the Indian Association of Applied Psychology. In this regard, the contribution of G. P. Thakur, B. Mukhopadhyay, and P. Ramalingam along with their team is historic. It remains for the rest of the community of psychologists, to enrich school psychology with their contributions that attend to the special problems of the children, but at the same time a school psychologist would need empowerment in two specific areas. First, psychologists need to enrich the school psychologist's expertise by providing appropriate theoretical models and specific tools that have relevance in his work place. Second, even more relevant issue is to help the school psychologist in understanding the social milieu which is characterized by diversity of cultural landscapes, immense variety of livelihoods, equally complex school environments ranging from where a child reads under the open sky to the luxury of public schools, from a highly responsive family of a child to a family where even

meaning of education is irrelevant, and lastly a political scenario where the will to take initiative in such issues is yet to take momentum. The last issue has immense significance because after all it is a political will that is likely to facilitate a way for school psychology in India. Once a school psychologist finds a place in the school environment, he is always dependent on the cooperation provided by the school, community, and the political administration.

In this note my attempt was to highlight some issues that lie in the Indian social milieu. They especially challenge the school psychologist as the children come from their peculiar livelihoods of families, religious institutions, caste hierarchies, deprived territories, and economic inequalities. A school psychologist has to be adequately informed about these issues as they are likely to surface in the classroom. Besides these local issues, it is equally important that a school psychologist is equipped with information for the sensitization of children on issues that has relevance from the perspective of a citizen.

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