

FOSTERING VEDIC VALUES



Fostering Vedic Values

Sixth Edition published in 2025

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PREFACE

The Vedas are widely recognized as humanity's oldest known scriptures—timeless guides provided by Ishvar to help human beings navigate daily life. These sacred texts are essentially a set of 'operating manuals' that cover a wide spectrum of knowledge including Spirituality, Mathematics, Material Science, Economics, Political Science, Sociology, and more.

The Vedas proclaim Ishvar to be One and Formless—like air, invisible yet present everywhere. This very nature enables the Divine to exist in every particle, ensuring that justice is delivered to all living beings with absolute impartiality.

Today, we find ourselves in a paradoxical world. Places of worship—temples, mosques, churches—have multiplied, yet violence in the name of religion has escalated. At the same time, many in the younger generation feel disillusioned by religious divisions and are increasingly drawn toward atheism. We believe that a true understanding of the Vedas can help young minds reconnect with spirituality in a way that is both meaningful and rational—rooted in scientific thought and timeless wisdom.

The Vedas are universal and secular. Interestingly, they make no mention of any of the world's religions as we know them today—Hinduism, Christianity, Islam, Jainism, Buddhism, Judaism—because these identities did not exist at the dawn of humanity. Instead, the Vedas offer a holistic way of life: one that promotes harmony with nature, respect for all living beings, and a balanced approach to physical, mental, and spiritual well-being. Their teachings are egalitarian, empowering, and liberating—laying the foundation not only for individual inner peace but also for collective harmony in families, communities, nations, and the world at large.

It is unfortunate that, over the past few centuries, the Vedas have been misinterpreted, leading to misconceptions and false beliefs. In 1875, Maharshi Dayanand Saraswati initiated the Arya Samaj movement with a clarion call: "Back to the Vedas." This call revived global attention toward the depth and richness of Vedic knowledge and culture.



'Fostering Vedic Values' is a carefully designed series of 10 books for students from Classes I to X, each containing 12 to 17 chapters. About half the chapters aim to provide students with a reasonably good understanding of key spiritual principles as highlighted in the Vedas. The remaining chapters focus on values such as patriotism, compassion for all living beings (including animals), social responsibility, and moral integrity. Through this holistic approach, we hope to nurture children into responsible global citizens—grounded in values, yet forward-thinking in their actions.

We envision these children not only as members of a united global family but also as proud patriots ready to stand for their nation in times of need. Our hope is for them to grow into strong, resilient individuals who, guided by spiritual wisdom, can lead their families and communities toward happiness and peace.

Many of the chapters are written in a conversational style between a child and an elder—such as a grandparent or relative. This reflects the essence of our cultural heritage, where children traditionally learned through storytelling and life lessons shared by their elders. To celebrate India's rich linguistic diversity, we've used familial terms from various Indian languages instead of generic English ones like "grandpa" or "aunt," helping children appreciate the vibrant unity in our cultural fabric.

The heart of this book lies in the wisdom of the Vedas, and we humbly acknowledge the eternal contribution of the Rishis who preserved and passed on this knowledge through generations. As a tribute to that tradition, the content of this book is not copyrighted. One can seek permission and print all or only certain chapters of the book. However, no unauthorized modification is permitted in any chapter.

This is the sixth edition of the book, and while great care has been taken, there may still be omissions or areas for improvement. We ask for your understanding and welcome your feedback to help us refine future versions. Your support and insights will always be valued.

Lastly, before we conclude, we offer our heartfelt gratitude to Ishvar—for His constant guidance, blessings, and encouragement in this humble endeavor.

ACHARYA VIKAS ARYA
Chief Editor

Chennai | May 2025

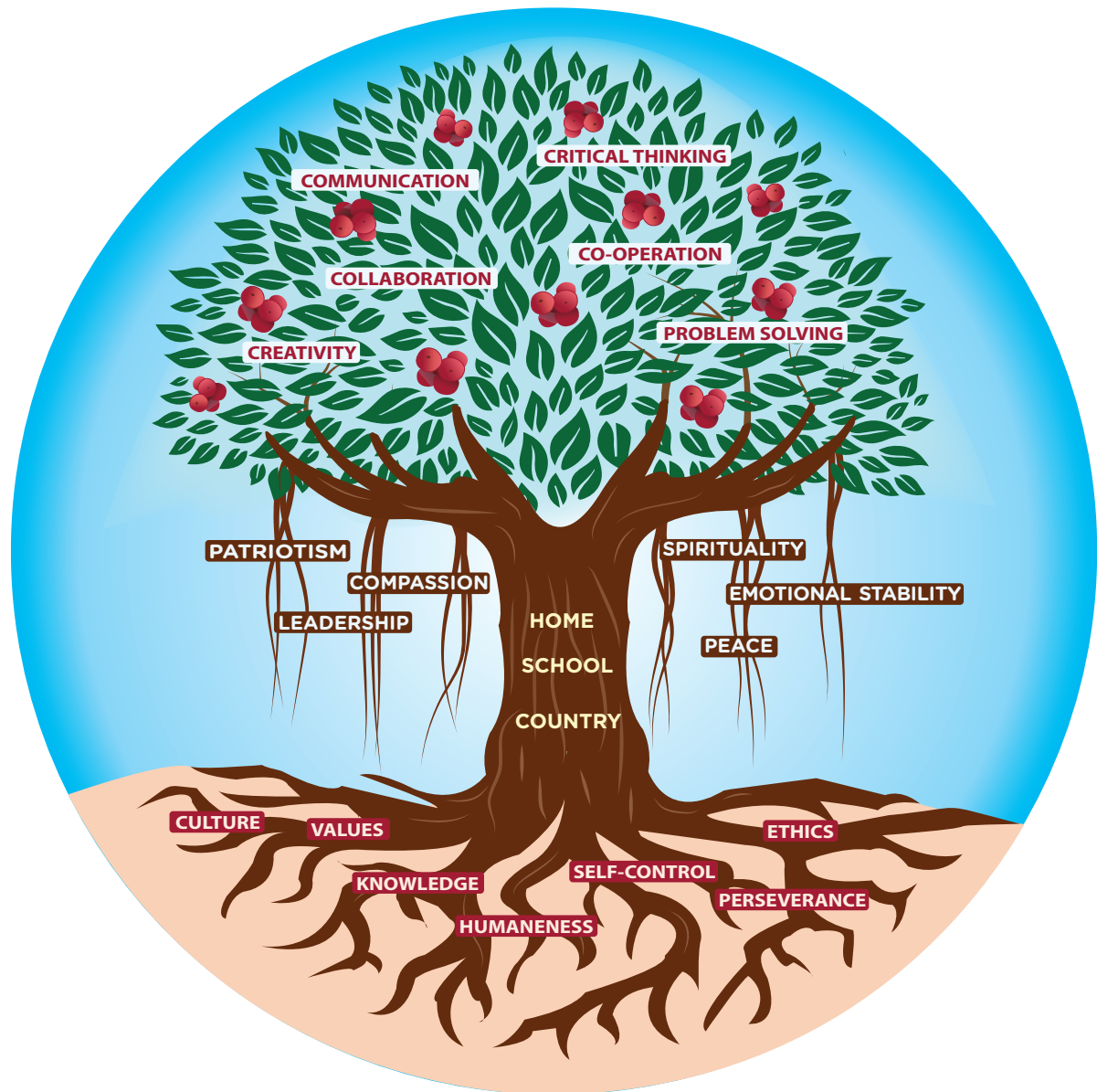


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The Learning Tree





VEDAS – A SECULAR PATH!

Expected learning outcome

Students understand the importance of the Vedas

*Karan was having an interesting conversation with his **kaki** (father's brother's wife in Odia) on understanding the right religion. Kaki first helped Karan appreciate the fact that Vedas are like a 'User manual' – original source of all knowledge. Karan was eager to know more...*

Karan – So kaki, do Hindus follow the Vedas?

Kaki – Karan, Vedas are for the entire humanity and do not belong to any particular religion. It is for all of us. Indeed, you will be surprised to know that the Vedas do not even contain the word – Hindu. None of our other scriptures like the Upanishads, Ramayana, Mahabharata, or Bhagavad Gita contain the word Hindu.

Karan – Is it so?

Kaki – Yes. The word Hindu was actually derived from the Sanskrit word Sindhu which is the local name for the Indus River that flows through the north-western part of the Indian subcontinent. Initially coined by the Greeks, the word 'Indu' got morphed into 'Hindu' when the Arabs invaded the Indian sub-continent, referring loosely to people living to the East of the river Sindhu. The term 'Hindu' was thus coined only a few hundred years ago.

Karan – This is quite fascinating! So, what were the Hindus called earlier?

Kaki – The original word for Hindus is 'Sanaatan' or 'Arya', who were largely following the Vedas or other scriptures supposedly derived from the Vedas.

Kaki – Indeed considering this background of Hinduism, the Supreme Court of India in a landmark judgement in 1995 had remarked that Hinduism is not a religion, but only a 'Way of life'.

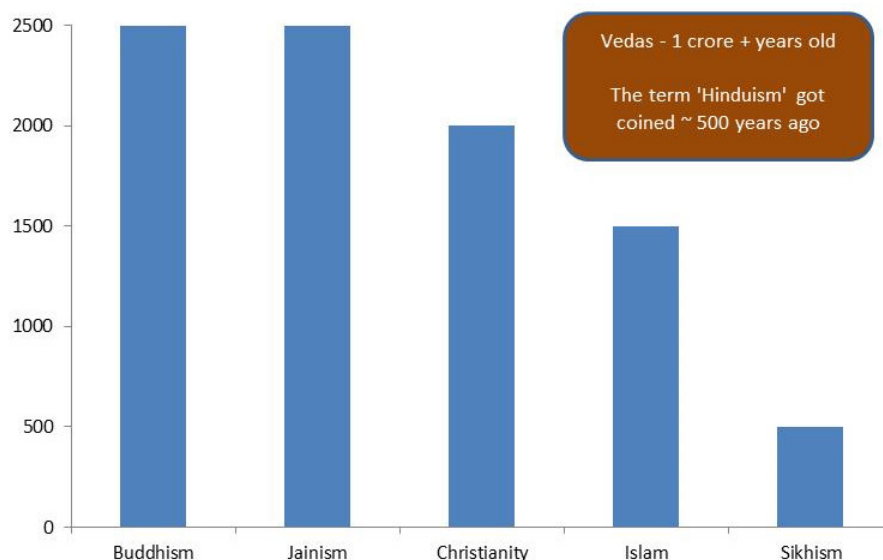


Karan – How old are some of the other key religions, kaki?

Kaki – Let us look at some of the major religions followed in India – Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism. Christianity is about 2000 years old.

As per the Gregorian calendar which is used by all of us in our everyday lives, we are currently in A.D. A.D. stands for Anno Domini, which in Latin stands for “year of our Lord,” and it means the number of years since the birth of Jesus Christ.

Islam is about 1,500 years old. Both Buddhism and Jainism are about 2,500 years old.



Kaki – I would like to highlight a very important aspect about the Vedas. The great Mahabharata war (approximately 5,000 years ago) resulted in the death of multiple scholars across the Indian subcontinent. What followed was a period of ignorance and darkness wherein certain so-called scholars either out of ignorance or self-interest, started misinterpreting the Vedas.

For instance, casteism was grossly misinterpreted as being determined by birth rather than by their profession. This especially suited a particular sect of the society while certain sects were constantly subjugated.

Kaki – Do you know how Buddhism came into being?

Karan – No kaki. But, one of my close friends is a Buddhist.

Kaki – Once, Gautama Buddha was walking down the road. He saw a shepherd who was taking his flock of sheep towards the palace of the king. The sheep were moving reluctantly.



The shepherd kept caning some of the animals. Buddha did not approve of the shepherd caning these mute creatures and asked him – “Where are you taking this flock of sheep”. The shepherd replied that there was a very large prestigious Yajnya, underway at the king’s palace, which required animal sacrifice. Hence, he was taking the sheep to be sacrificed there. Buddha was disturbed. He retorted – “What kind of Yajnya can this be?” He went along with the shepherd to the palace and questioned the priests who were in-charge of performing the Yajnya. They took a firm stance that Vedas and other scriptures stipulate animal sacrifice to ensure that the Yajnya is successful. Gautama Buddha tried to reason with them but of no avail. He then concluded - “If Vedic injunctions allow killing of animals, I do not accept the Vedic principles.”

Kaki – It is very sad that the so called scholars were preaching that Vedas encourage animal sacrifice. Due to the lack of in-depth knowledge of Sanskrit, they had misinterpreted the meaning of certain mantras.

But the fact remains that Vedas do not allow animal killing. Indeed, one of the key principles of the Vedic dharma is “अहिंसा परमोधर्मः” (Ahimsa Paramo Dharma) –Non-violence is the basic tenet of Dharma.

Karan – So, what is the conclusion kaki?

Kaki – It is best to follow the Vedas which are undoubtedly the oldest and the most authentic. We should treat only the Vedas as ‘Shabdh Pramaan’.

Almost all religions have suffered from misinterpretation at some point in their history. Therefore, it is very important for all of us to verify the authenticity of the author before believing in the text.

Karan – Kaki, I have heard some people say that all religions lead to the same destination. They are just different paths.

Kaki – This is more of a diplomatic statement to try to maintain peace and harmony amongst different religions. When there are direct contradictions, between two statements, both cannot be true.

Kaki – I am convinced that it is best to follow the ‘Vedic Dharma’.

Karan – Does ‘Dharma’ mean religion?

Kaki – No Karan. Not exactly. Dharma (धर्म) has a very simple meaning - “Whatever (good) you imbibe and follow” (धारयति इति धर्मः). Thus if you help any person in need,



or engage in charity, you are following true dharma. Meditating and having a deep sense of dedication, love and respect for Ishvar is also dharma.

Kaki – Indeed this makes Vedas the most secular path to follow!

Karan – Got it, kaki!

Let's do these exercises

a. Fill in the blanks:

1. Hindu is derived from the Sanskrit word Sindhu which is the local name for river _____.
2. We follow _____ calendar in our everyday lives.
3. Vedas are the oldest and authentic books which should be treated as _____ Pramaan.

Let's talk about these

1. “If the Vedic injunctions allow animal killing, I do not accept the Vedic principles.” Who said these words and why?
2. When and how was the term ‘Hindu’ coined?
3. “अहिंसा परमोधर्मः” why?
4. Why is the path of Vedas called the “Secular path”?
5. What does following ‘Dharma’ mean for you?
6. Vedas are the most secular path to Follow. Justify.



Expected learning outcome

Students derive inspiration from the life of Major Dhan Singh Thapa

War broke out between China and India rather unexpectedly in the year 1962. One of the causes of the war was Aksai Chin, which China started claiming as part of Xinjiang in their territory. India was unprepared and lost the war. But what stood out spectacularly was the undaunted courage and commitment to duty displayed by the brave and dedicated Indian Army.

Dhan Singh Thapa was born to Nepali parents on April 10, 1928 at Shimla in Himachal Pradesh. He was commissioned into 'Gorkha Rifles' regiment in 1949. Known for his humane qualities, he was an unassuming, humble and a pious person. He played football with passion.

In 1962, India established army posts in multiple areas within Leh district to safeguard the Indian border from the Chinese. One such post was at Srijap, Leh. Considering India's limited resources, only 28 soldiers of Gorkha Rifles were posted at Srijap. Major Dhan Singh Thapa was in command.

War had broken out with China. The terrain was rough and nature too was harsh at the time of battle. It was October 19th, when Major Thapa found that there were a lot of activities at the Chinese camp. Probably they were planning to attack Sirijap post. Major Thapa and the soldiers, handful in number, waited anxiously throughout the stormy night ready to fight and defend themselves. Those might have been the moments, which had made them realise the unpredictable flow of time just



Major Dhan Singh Thapa

waiting for the enemy to strike. The Chinese planned their battles shrewdly with strategies that shook the Indian army, attacking them when they were the least prepared.

At 06:00 A.M. on October 20th, the Chinese attacked the Sirijap post. The shelling continued till 08:30 A.M. and the whole area was set ablaze. Some shells fell on the command post and damaged the wireless set. This put the post out of communication. Signal Officer Major Ved Vyas, fondly recollected the last message he received from Major Thapa who adamantly conveyed that he would neither withdraw nor



surrender. It was the moment that immortalised him a war hero. The Chinese then attacked in overwhelming numbers. Major Thapa and his men repulsed the attack, inflicting heavy casualties. The Chinese mounted another attack in greater numbers. Major Thapa once again repulsed the attack, inflicting heavy losses on the Chinese.

A short while later, a third Chinese attack included tanks in support of the infantry. The Indian soldiers were weakened by the casualties suffered in the earlier attacks, but held out while the ammunition lasted. Major Thapa painfully watched his soldiers dying, wounded, and not in a position to defend but he kept them inspired to fight back. Major Thapa kept boosting their morale by telling them that though they were few in numbers one Gorkha was equivalent to ten soldiers when it comes to fighting.



Major Dhan Singh Thapa with cadets at the IMA, Dehradun

The freezing temperature and biting cold outside the trenches did not deter them from retaliating against their opponents. Major Thapa saw another soldier who was badly

wounded, run into the tent leaving behind his rifle. Major Thapa picked up his gun, rushed inside, patted him on the head and said, what is called to be a soldier to soldier talk: *'Kafar hunu bbanda marnu ramro'* (It is better to die than to be a coward). These are not mere words uttered but resonated the highest ideals of bravery in battle. The wounded soldier took his rifle and marched forward to fight.

It was the time to act bravely and thoughtfully; resources were few, soldiers were even less in numbers. Major Thapa picked up a rifle lying by the side of a dead soldier and rushed into the trench to take command of the fight. He positioned himself in front of the advancing enemies. The shelling went on for a long time and Sirijap turned into an inferno. Chinese soldiers took advantage of the smoke that erupted all around and moved closer to Sirijap post. Gorkha soldiers braved the attacks. Their weapons could not withstand the attacks of sophisticated Chinese ammunition.

Suddenly, there was a war cry, *'Jai Mahakali, Ayo Gorkhali'*. Gorkha soldiers attacked Chinese soldiers fiercely with khukris, their traditional knives. Major Thapa was one of the last few who were left. He jumped out of his trench and killed many intruders in hand-to-hand fighting. He was however badly injured and was physically overpowered by the Chinese. He was taken away by them as a prisoner of war. Nobody in his battalion knew about this. He was believed to have been killed in war. He was indeed awarded the **ParamVir Chakra** 'posthumously'.

Major Thapa was in Chinese captivity till May 1963. Over there, he befriended a boy who used to bring food for him in the prison. He told him about his family in India and requested him to post a letter he had written to his family. This was a turning point. The family luckily got the letter and informed the Army authorities. Subsequently, the Indian Government spoke to the Chinese and got Major Thapa released. It was an emotional family reunion. His wife Shukla, who in her heart of hearts never believed that he was dead, on seeing him alive, was ecstatic with joy. His two daughters, Pamela and Madhulika, were delighted to be reunited with their father. His son, Param Deep, was just born. True to the tradition of the soldier, his son also joined the army. Major Thapa served the army and rose to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. It was on 5 September 2005, Lt Col Thapa passed away at the age of 77, due to kidney ailment. We salute him for his bravery and dedication to the Indian army.

Acknowledgement – partially adapted from 'Veergahta', NCERT publications



Citation

Major Dhan Singh Thapa
(IC 7990), 1/8 Gorkha Rifles



Major Dhan Singh Thapa was in command of a forward post in Ladakh. On 20 October, it was attacked by the Chinese in overwhelming strength after being subjected to intensive artillery and mortar bombardment. Under his gallant command, the greatly outnumbered post repulsed the attack, inflicting heavy casualties on the aggressors. The enemy attacked again in greater numbers after heavy shelling by artillery and mortar fire. Under the leadership of Major Thapa, his men repulsed this attack also with heavy losses to the enemy.

The Chinese attacked for the third time, now with tanks to support their infantry. The post had already suffered large casualties in the two earlier attacks. Though considerably thinned, it held out to the last. When it was finally overrun by overwhelming numbers of Chinese, Major Thapa got out of his trench and killed several of the enemy in hand-to-hand fighting before he was eventually overpowered by Chinese soldiers and killed.

Major Thapa's cool courage, conspicuous fighting qualities and leadership were in the highest traditions of our Army.

Gazette of India Notification
No. 68-Pres./62

Let's talk about these

1. Narrate the incident that made Major Dhan Singh Thapa an immortal war hero.
2. Major Dhan Singh Thapa was instrumental in inspiring his soldiers? Give instances from the lesson to substantiate the statement.
3. Mention the qualities you learn from Major Dhan Singh Thapa.



Let's do these exercises

a. Fill in the blanks:

1. In 1962, war broke out between India and China because _____ .
2. On 19th October 1962, Major Dhan Singh and his soldiers waited throughout the stormy night as _____ .
3. There were only twenty eight soldiers of Gorkha Rifles at Srijap because _____ .

b. Write 'T' for true and 'F' for false:

1. When Major Dhan Singh was in prison a boy who brought food for him helped by posting a letter he had written to his family.
2. Major Dhan Singh was awarded the Paramvir Chakra at the age of 72.
3. Major Dhan Singh was in Chinese captivity till May 1963.

Project

1. Write a poem on 'A Brave Soldier'. Use the words given in the box to write the poem. You can begin the poem like this.

valour, patriotic, vigilant, protect, sacrifice - life, safety, salute, respect, fight – enemy, work tirelessly, keep flag high, proud, noble soul, hero, dedicated, inspiring, courageous

A Brave Soldier

We live in ease

As our brave soldiers fight for peace

They guard our borders



SWAMI DAYANAND SARASWATI - 2

Expected learning outcome

Students get inspired by understanding the life of Swami Dayanand Saraswati

On the night of Maha Shivaratri, Moolshankar was staying awake with his father and fasting in the temple. Moolshankar was confident that he would be able to see Ishvar as promised by his father. While waiting to get a 'darshan' of Ishvar, Moolshankar noticed that a few rats were eating away the prasad kept for Ishvar and were even running over the idol of the Lord. Moolshankar was shocked that the idol which was supposed to protect the humans couldn't save itself from the rats.

This incident had kindled the spirit of curiosity in young Moolshankar. He was convinced that there was far more to be understood about the true form of Ishvar and, worship. Days passed on in the same manner till he was eighteen years old.

Moolshankar was shocked when his 14 year old sister who was very dear to him passed away due to cholera. The death of his *chacha (father's younger brother)* a year later was also shocking. He began asking questions about life, death and the afterlife to his parents, to which they had no convincing answers. "What is death? How can I conquer it?" he wondered.

Moolshankar's father got worried. He felt that his son was getting misguided and decided to get him married so that he would become 'normal'. Moolshankar got to know about his father's plan. One day, he quietly left his home in search of the Truth.

Coming from a fairly wealthy family, he wore jewels. As he wandered, he came across few people disguised as sadhus. They asked him: "Where are you going, young boy?"

"I want to know more about Ishvar and about death. I want to know the Truth! I have therefore left my home," Moolshankar replied.



The fake sadhus sensed the opportunity to exploit the young boy. They said: “You want to seek Ishvar and know more about death. For this, you need to do Tapasya (Penance). How can you do Tapasya without renouncing your wealth? You are wearing all these jewels, which will distract you! You give them to us. We will teach you the right path.”

Moolshankar in his innocence gave away all the jewels he was wearing to them and they quickly disappeared. Moolshankar was very disappointed, not with the loss of his jewels but more with the fact that these kind of cunning people were misguiding others in the name of Ishvar. He resolved that he would expose such fake sadhus.



Meanwhile, worried that his son had fled home, Karshanji Tiwari sent his guards in search of Moolshankar. They managed to find him at Sidhpur (Gujarat) and informed Karshanji who soon reached the place. On seeing Moolshankar, he ordered him to immediately return home along with him. Moolshankar had no option, but to obey. On the way home, they stayed overnight at a place. As Moolshankar slept, Karshanji appointed two guards to keep a watch on him through the night.

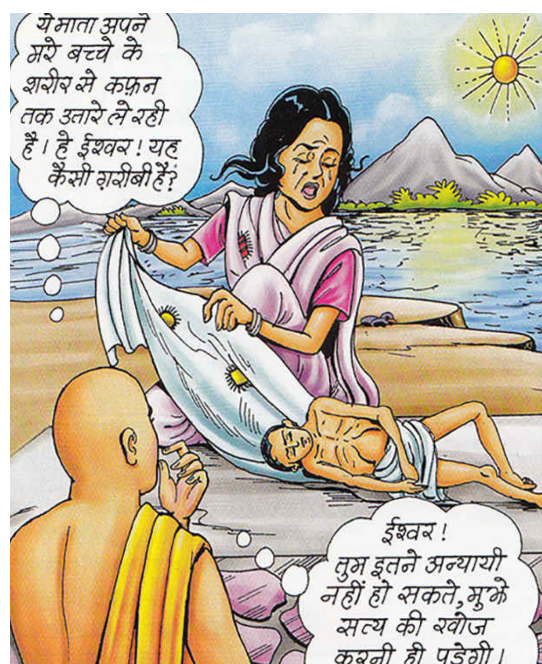
Moolshankar was very restless. His urge to learn more on spiritual aspects had grown stronger. One night, he remained awake but pretended to be asleep. He slipped away as soon as the guards fell asleep. He went with a clear mind, that he would never return home.

Moolshankar wandered for many years, spending time in various ashrams in Northern India. He learnt Sanskrit and a few aspects of the Vedic philosophy. He met Swami Poornanand Saraswati, a great sanyasi. After spending sometime under his guidance, he was given ‘Diksha’ by him. Moolshankar became Swami Dayanand Saraswati. Dayanand still had a thirst for knowledge and knew that there was a lot more to learn. He continued his journey as a seeker from one place to the other.

He reached Okhi Mutt in Uttarakhand, one of the richest mutts those days. The head of the Mutt identified the brilliance in Swamiji. He offered Swamiji a place to stay and become the next head of the Mutt after him, thus having access to enormous amount of wealth that people offered to the temple as donations. Swamiji however turned down the offer as he realized that they were practising superstitious beliefs. He told the head of the Mutt: "I had enough wealth at home. I still left home to learn the true form of Ishvar and worship. I will not be able to accept this offer."

One day Swamiji was walking past the bank of a river. He saw a woman carrying a young child in her arms, walking towards the river. The child was dead, and she had come to dispose off the body in the river. Swamiji noticed that just before the woman disposed off the body, she removed the cloth that was wrapped around him. He could not restrain himself and asked the lady: "Oh my sister! I understand you are terribly sad at the untimely death of your young son. But why did you remove the cloth wrapped around this child's body before disposing it of in the river?"

The mother started crying inconsolably. She said: "Oh Swamiji! What can I do? I am homeless and extremely poor. This child was the only hope in my life. However, he also passed away yesterday night. I could not afford his medicines as I have no money. I have only two sarees including the one that I am wearing. I wrapped him in one saree and I brought him here to the river. I cannot afford to lose this saree."



Swami Dayanand Saraswati, a very strong sanyasi, was heartbroken. That night he could not sleep. He was deeply disturbed. He wondered as to why his motherland was in such extreme poverty. He realized that he needed to work towards the spiritual, political and economic development of his country.

Let's talk about these

1. Why was Moolshankar brought back by his parents? What happened after that?
2. Narrate the incident that troubled the strong sanyasi Swami Dayanand Saraswati as he walked past a river.
3. Narrate the incident that stimulated the curiosity in the mind of young Moolshankar.
4. Why did Dayanand turn down the offer to head the Okhi Mutt?

Let's do these exercises

a. Tick the correct answers:

1. Moolshankar's sister died due to the outbreak of (**plague** / **cholera**).
2. Moolshankar's father felt that his son was being (**misguided** / **well-guided**).
3. Okhi Mutt (temple) located in (**Himachal Pradesh** / **Uttarakhand**), was considered to be one of the (**wealthiest** / **largest**) temples in those days.
4. The woman was disposing off (**garbage** / **dead body**) into the river.
5. Moolshankar quietly left his home in search of (**truth** / **wealth**).

b. Fill in the blanks:

1. Moolshankar was disappointed, not because he lost his _____ but with the fact that the fake sadhus _____ him in the name of Ishvar.
2. Dayanand realized the need to work towards _____, _____ and _____ development of the country.
3. Moolshankar was given Diksha by _____.
4. Moolshankar learnt _____ and _____ philosophy.



AYURVEDA - 2

Expected learning outcome

Students know the importance of good health and the role of a few medicinal plants in maintaining it.

*Last night, before going to bed Varun had a great talk with his **dadi** (grandmother in Hindi) about Ayurveda. He had a good night's sleep. He got up the next morning, eager to know more.*

Varun – Dadi, last night you spoke about Ayurveda.

Dadi – Yes, that is true. In allopathy, medicines are made in factories, while Ayurveda uses herbs, that are available in nature due to the blessings of Almighty .

Varun – Can you give me a few examples?

Dadi – Absolutely, I am sure you have heard about Tulsi?

Varun – Yes, it is in a pot in our balcony.

Dadi – Tulsi, also referred to as Holy Basil, has anti-toxic properties. It serves well as a nerve tonic and boosts the intellect. The herb is highly beneficial for respiratory ailments and a boon for different types of fevers. It also helps elevate your resistance to diseases.



Dadi – Another example is neem.

Varun – Yes, there are a couple of neem trees, on my way to school.

Dadi – Neem, also referred to as Margosa, is a natural cleanser that flushes out toxins from our body. Thus it clears the skin by eliminating pimples and skin eruptions. It is

recommended both for internal as well as external use. The juice extracted by grinding fresh neem leaves is a wonderful blood purifier according to Ayurveda.

Dadi – I am sure you have eaten garlic. Haven't you?

Varun – Yes, I love garlic pickle.

Dadi – A compound called allicin, found in fresh garlic has anti-bacterial and anti-fungal properties. It helps keep the digestive system healthy by flushing out toxins. It also builds immunity and prevents heart ailments by clearing the blocked arteries. It can also provide relief from cold and flu.

Dadi – In one of the pots in our balcony, you can see Aloe Vera.

Varun – Yes, dadi. It is a plant with a very short stem. The leaves are thick and fleshy.

Dadi – That's right Varun. Ayurveda recommends Aloe Vera for digestion-related ailments like acidity, excessive flatulence, indigestion, constipation, loss

of hunger and piles. This plant is also used in beauty products, as it can moisturize the skin without making it greasy. It can also be used to treat wounds, minor cuts, dry skin and even burns.

Dadi – Have you eaten gooseberries?

Varun – Yes, I ate quite a few of them when we had gone to our village last summer. They are quite tasty when eaten with a bit of salt.

Dadi – Yes Varun!

Gooseberries also known as Amla, is an excellent source of Vitamin C. It boosts our immune system and helps us remain healthy. It enriches hair growth by strengthening its roots, maintains colour and improves lustre. It is a constituent of most hair oils. It helps maintain good eyesight and reduce blood sugar in diabetic patients.



Dadi – I am fairly certain that you must have consumed turmeric.

Varun – Oh yes! Indeed, this is the spice that gives curry its yellow colour.

Dadi – This is known as the ‘golden spice’ is an important ingredient in kitchens all over the world. It contains curcumin, a substance with powerful anti-inflammatory and antioxidant properties. It boosts our immune system and prevents diseases. Indeed, when we were children, our mother would apply turmeric paste in case of minor burns! Even today, I sometimes use turmeric before taking a bath as its anti-bacterial property protects the skin.

Varun – Dadi, it is simply amazing to learn about all there!

Dadi – Yes Varun, appreciate Ishvar’s beautiful creation. There are many more such products like ginger, lemon, honey etc.

Dadi – Ayurveda, an inexpensive system of medicine, prescribes - ‘What heals also prevents.’ These natural medicines also serve as a ‘food’.



Turmeric

Dadi – Think it once Varun! Animals in many ways are similar to humans. But they do not generally fall sick. Even if they do, they do not consult any doctor. They consume these naturally available medicines and get well soon.

Varun – Dadi, I have never thought about this. But it definitely sounds logical!

Let's understand

Visit a nearby market and list 5 herbs that you find. Also find out their medicinal value.

Let's talk about these

1. Are we making the best use of the natural herbs created by Ishvar? List them down.
2. Mention the names of the natural medicines / herbs your mother uses every day in cooking.

3. Ask your grandparents about the medicines they consumed when they were sick during their childhood. Discuss your answer in the class.
4. Has your mother treated you with home remedies for any of your ailments? Discuss about this with your friends.
5. Discuss the side effects of allopathic medicines, that you have been given.
6. What are the benefits of Ayurveda?
7. Can all ailments be treated by Ayurveda? Discuss.

Let's do these exercises

a. Tick the correct answers:

1. In (**Allopathy** / **Ayurveda**), medicines are made in factories, but in (**Ayurveda** / **Allopathy**), natural herbs are directly used as medicines.
2. Neem is also known as (**Allicin** / **Margosa**), and its juice is a wonderful blood (**purifier** / **contaminator**).
3. (**Turmeric** / **Garlic**) is known as the “golden spice”.
4. (**Tulsi** / **Aloe Vera**) is a plant which is extensively used in beauty products, as it can moisturize the skin without making it greasy.
5. Gooseberries are widely used in making (**hair** / **cooking**) oil.

b. Fill in the blanks:

1. Tulsi also known as _____ serves as a nerve tonic and boosts _____. It is highly beneficial for _____ and a boon for different kinds of _____.
2. Garlic has a compound called _____ which has high anti-_____ and anti_____ properties that helps the _____ system clean by flushing out toxins.
3. Turmeric contains _____, a substance with powerful anti-inflammatory and _____ properties.
4. Ayurveda recommends Aloe Vera for a number of digestion related maladies like _____, _____, _____, _____ and _____.

c. Write 't' for true and 'f' for false:

1. Amla is an excellent source of Vitamin C as it enriches hair growth by strengthening its roots, maintains colour and improves lustre.
2. Applying a paste of turmeric on minor burns helps in the healing process.
3. Neem is a natural cleanser that flushes out toxins from the body and thus helps clear the skin from ailments like pimples and skin eruptions.
4. The use of turmeric prevents heart ailments by clearing up blocked arteries and provides relief from cold and flu.
5. Animals very often fall sick, and they take specific tablets to cure themselves.

Let's Have Fun

Given below is the recipe of a Kashayam. Rearrange the sentences in the correct order by numbering them in the given boxes.

Kashayam for fever and cold (herbal drink).

1. First add one spoon of jeera and pepper and dry-roast it.

2. Take a bowl and keep it on the stove.

3. Then add two betel leaves, one papaya leaf and one spoon of ginger paste to it.

4. Add four glasses of water and mix it.

5. Finally add a spoon of palm sugar.

6. Remove it from the stove and filter it.

☐

7. Drink it twice a day for three days.

☐

8. Let everything boil for five to seven minutes.

☐



ONE COUNTRY, ONE NATION! – 2

Expected learning outcome

Students understand the Vedic concept of ‘Universal brotherhood’

Analjit Singh was having an interesting conversation with his bebeji on treating all fellow countrymen as ‘our own’...

Bebeji – It is unfortunate that people with vested interests keep inciting ‘regionalism’ in the country. We keep talking about Marathi pride, Gujarati pride, Telugu pride, Bengali pride, Tamil pride, Malayali pride and the list goes on. But whenever an emergency strikes – civil unrest, natural calamity, terrorist attack etc., we call upon the Indian defence forces. At that point of time, we all look forward for their help. We do not judge them based on which region they belong to. For instance, a soldier from Nagaland may readily risk his life to save an old woman in the remotest district of Karnataka during floods. The soldiers guarding our borders are from different states, different communities. This is national integration. One country, one nation! There is only one pride – Indian pride!

Also, give it a thought. United we stand, divided we fall. Today, even within states, there are calls to break them up into smaller states. For instance, a few years back, Telangana was separated from Andhra Pradesh. If unchecked, this process of further division can keep going on endlessly creating smaller and smaller states. There is already active demand to separate out following areas from their respective states - Bodoland from Assam | Saurashtra from Gujarat | Bundelkhand from Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh | Vidarbha from Maharashtra | Harit Pradesh and Purvanchal from Uttar Pradesh | Gorkhaland from West Bengal.

India has seven hundred seven districts in total. A district is an administrative division of an Indian state or territory. Districts are further sub-divided into tehsils or talukas.



I hope tomorrow each district does not start talking about its 'own pride', thus completely fracturing the unity of the country.

Analjit – I agree with you, bebeji.

Bebeji – I also find it surprising that we as people are so naïve and get easily provoked to oppose other Indian languages. For instance, there have been anti-Hindi movements in Tamilnadu and Karnataka. However, we are absolutely ready to embrace English, which is a foreign language. Indeed, many of us feel proud to communicate only in English at home. Learning English is essential considering the development in world economy in last 50 years. However, we should respect our mother tongue and all other languages spoken by our countrymen.

The Vedas indeed teach us the message of 'Universal brotherhood' – वसुधैव कुटुम्बकम् (Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam). Not just India, the entire world is one family. The boundaries dividing various nations are only man-made. They came into existence only in the last few hundred years. We should therefore share the same brotherhood and bonhomie (good relationship) with all other friendly countries around the globe. But at the same time, we should aggressively defend ourselves against countries that intend to harm us.

Analjit – This is an amazing message from the Vedas of universal brotherhood.

Bebeji – However, today we are unable to imbibe this Vedic message of global harmony. As you know, nowadays, many people from Africa come to India to both study and earn a living here. We do not mingle much with them.

Analjit – Indeed I recently read in the newspaper that an African student staying in Delhi had remarked – “They (neighbours) stay away from me, just because of the colour of my skin? It saddens me deeply.”

Bebeji – Yes, many of us are quite racist ourselves. And our racism is colour-coded in black-and-white terms– White is intrinsically superior and desirable; Black is inferior and undesirable. It is the result of 250 years of rule under the British, that we developed such a narrow perspective. Most of us don't realise that our physical appearance, place of birth, colour of skin and parents are something that we don't get to choose. Ishvar chooses all these for us and we should be thankful to Him for giving us a healthy body and mind.

Bebeji – We also have so many pre-conceived notions and prejudices. We stereotype people based on their region, community etc.

Analjit – What exactly do we mean by stereotype?



Bebeji – A stereotype is any thought widely adopted about specific types of individuals or certain ways of behaving intended to represent the entire group of those individuals. It is a popular belief or generalization about something.

We do not think twice before passing an adverse judgement on a particular group of people. It almost comes naturally to most people to identify the region from where a person originates, based on his surname. We immediately try to form an opinion about the person and his behaviour. We often make irresponsible comments like “Oh, people from a particular community are stingy; cannot be trusted; are business minded; are calculative; are cunning”.

Analjit – This is so true bebeji. We have Punjabis, Gujaratis, Marwaris, Sindhis, Bengalis in our class. I think instead of building an opinion about each of them as a community, we should learn more about their culture, festivals, food etc. to have broader perspective about them. This will enable us to appreciate the glorious heritage of this remarkable country.

Bebeji – That’s excellent, Analjit! Also, remember, every community comprises of different types of people – good, evil and mixed. We should judge each person as an individual based on his behaviour. Indeed, it is to achieve this objective that Swami Dayanand Saraswati advocated that people may adopt a generic surname like ‘Arya’, which simply means a noble person. This would avoid people from having pre-conceived notions based on just the surname of the individual.

Analjit – Do we Indians also face stereotypes abroad?

Bebeji – Oh yes! India also attracts a lot of stereotypes, much to the annoyance of its citizens. Many foreigners believe that India is a land of snake charmers; Indians are very poor; life is all about singing and dancing in India etc. There are also certain positive stereotypes – All Indians practice Yoga; Indians are IT experts etc.

Analjit (laughing) – This generalization is quite hilarious.

Bebeji – Absolutely. It is so untrue, isn’t it? Each Indian is unique in his own way.

Analjit – Bebeji, I will definitely stop jumping to silly conclusions about other people and will tread the path of ‘Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam’.

Let's talk about these

1. Have you heard a mistaken judgement about someone? How did it come? What made you change?
2. How would you feel if people of varied cultures lived in your place? Discuss.

Let's do these exercises

a. Tick the correct answers:

1. We should judge each person as an individual based on his (**behaviour** / **surname**).
2. The word 'Arya' means a (**noble** / **stereotypic**) person.
3. We should perceive our identities as (**singular** / **multiple**) and as complementary to our (**national** / **religious**) identity so as to remain united.
4. Every community has (**very similar** / **different kind**) of people.
5. We (**should** / **should not**) support racism.

b. Fill in the blanks:

1. A soldier from Nagaland helping an old woman from Karnataka during a Natural Calamity is an example of_____.
2. We, living together and helping each other is according to the principle of _____given in Vedas.
3. The Vedas teach us the message of_____which implies that not just our country India, but the entire world is one family.
4. A state is divided into smaller districts and districts into _____ or_____ for ease of administration.
5. A stereotype is any_____widely adopted about specific individuals or certain_____intended to represent the entire group of those individuals. In a way, it is a_____about something.
6. A_____ is an administrative division of an Indian State or territory which is further divided into tehsils or _____.

c. Ponder:

1. Are pre-conceived notions about an individual based on the region they hail from right? Give reasons.
2. Just as Telangana got separated from Andhra Pradesh, there is a rising demand to separate Vidarbha and Bundelkhand from Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra respectively. Discuss the pros and cons of such a move.
3. While learning English is essential for the development of the world economy we should also respect and learn our mother tongue. Substantiate.
4. Many foreigners believe India to be a poor country, others believe that Indians are IT experts. Are these statements, stereotypes or truths. Discuss.

Discuss

The Vedic message of universal brotherhood seems to have been lost in the modern society due to increasing activities of terror. Prepare a poster titled “UNIVERSAL BROTHERHOOD”. Use slogans and pictures to create awareness among the people on this subject.



ARYA SAMAJ - 1

Expected learning outcome

Students understand the history of Arya Samaj

*Parth, was having an interesting conversation with his **bhuvaji** (father's elder sister in Hindi) on understanding the Vedic Dharma - a secular path to follow. Parth had also heard about Arya Samaj and had occasionally visited it's satsangs on Sundays. Was this different from Vedic Dharma? He was confused...*

Parth – So bhuvaji, what is this Arya Samaj? How old is this? How did it originate?

Bhuvaji – Arya Samaj is a movement which was started in the year 1875 by Swami Dayanand Saraswati in Mumbai. It was established with the sole aim of propagating the Vedic Dharma.

There is indeed a very interesting background, which resulted in the foundation of Arya Samaj.

Bhuvaji – During the 19th century, Indian sub-continent was going through a continued period of ignorance. India had been invaded and ruled by the Mughals for about 200-300 years and later by the British for about 100 years.

The intellectual capital of the country had eroded. Many superstitious, unjust and corrupt practices had seeped into the society and people because of ignorance and greed, misquoted Vedic scriptures to promote such beliefs.

Society was plagued with various social evils like casteism, sati and dowry system. Women were not given the right to be educated and were subjugated.

One another important aspect was the emergence of multiple deities. People were made to believe there were 33 crore deities, which in effect sub-divided people based on the deity that



each group worshipped. People did not realize that Ishvar is only One, called by different names, each representing its qualities.

Bhuvaji – This divine truth was hidden or forgotten by many, for their own vested interests. This dark period witnessed the emergence of Swami Dayanand Saraswati, a great reformist, who under the tutelage of Swami Virjanand Saraswati (a blind Vedic scholar) understood the true meaning of the Vedas. When he compared the right interpretation of the Vedas with what was prevalent in the society, he was very saddened and disappointed. He, therefore, inspired by his guru, took a vow that he would relentlessly work towards spreading the message of the Vedas.



Between 1869 and 1873, Swami Dayanand Saraswati, made his first attempt at reforming India. This attempt took the form of the establishment of “Vedic Schools” or “Gurukuls” which laid emphasis on Vedic values and culture. The Vedic Schools represented the first practical application of Swami Dayanand’s vision of religious and social reform. Students were provided food, clothing, books and lodging free of cost. The study of Sanskrit was opened to non-Brahmins which was the scenario prior to the advent of the dark period under the Mughal rulers and the British rule later. The most noteworthy feature of the schools was that, only those texts which accepted the authority of the Vedas were taught. This was critical for the spiritual and social regeneration of Vedic culture in India.

The Vedic Schools however ran into difficulties. Swami Dayanand had trouble finding qualified teachers who agreed with his views on religious reform, and there was a paucity of textbooks which he considered suitable for instruction in Vedic culture. Funding was sporadic, attendance fluctuated considerably, and tangible results in the way of noteworthy student achievement were not forthcoming.

Consequently, some of the schools were closed. As early as 1874, it had become clear to Swami Dayanand that, without a wide and solid base of support among the public, setting up schools with the goal of imparting Vedic education would prove to be an impossible task. He therefore decided to invest the greater part of his resources in the formulation and propagation of his ideology of reform. He thus decided to form Arya Samaj.

The first Arya Samaj unit was formally set up at Mumbai in 1875 and later the headquarters of the Samaj was established at Lahore.

Parth – What does the term Arya Samaj mean?

Bhuvaji – It means Arya – noble; Samaj – society. It is thus a society of noble persons.

The message of Arya Samaj is universal and meant for the whole of mankind. It tends to make all people Aryas (noble), physically and spiritually developed, materially prosperous, mentally and morally uplifted, and socially, nationally and internationally united.

The motto of Arya Samaj is कृण्वन्तो विश्वं आर्य (Krinvanto Vishvam Aaryam), meaning make the whole world noble. The purpose of the Arya Samaj is doing good deeds for the world to promote its physical, spiritual and social welfare.



India issued stamp on marking centenary of Arya Samaj (1875)

Arya Samaj clearly believes in the infallible authority of the Vedas.

Parth – Is Arya Samaj prevalent all over India?

Bhuvaji – Oh yes! Arya Samaj with over 600 branches exists in numerous cities across India. It is also firmly established in many countries outside India, which includes South Africa, Ghana, Kenya, Tanzania, Suriname, Mauritius, Trinidad, Fiji, Dutch Guyana, Singapore, Thailand, Myanmar, Netherlands, Burma, Great Britain, USA and Canada.

An Annual Arya Sammelan (congregation) of the Arya Samaj, is also organized every year, with the most recent one held in 2024 in New York, USA. The 150th Foundation Day of Arya Samaj (1875–2025) was celebrated in March 2025 in Mumbai. Additionally, the 200th birth anniversary of Maharishi Dayanand Saraswati was commemorated in 2024 in New Delhi, with the event being presided over by the Honorable Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi.

Let's talk about these



1. What is the message and purpose of Arya Samaj?
2. What motivated Swami Dayanand Saraswati to relentlessly work towards spreading the true message of the Vedas?
3. What events in Swami Dayanand Saraswati's life led to the formation of the Arya Samaj?

Let's do these exercises



a. Tick the correct answers:

1. Arya Samaj is a movement which was started in the year (1875 / 1857) by Swami Dayanand Saraswati in (Mumbai / Kolkata).
2. Dayanand's first attempt at reforming India was the establishment of (Arya Samaj / Gurukuls).
3. Arya Samaj refers to a society of (noble / rich) persons.
4. Arya Samaj clearly believes in the infallible authority of the (Vedas / Mahapuranas).

b. Fill in the blanks:

1. Arya Samaj was established with the sole aim of _____.
2. Indian society was plagued with various social evils like _____, _____ and _____, and women were not given the right to be _____.
3. The Guru of Swami Dayanand Saraswati was _____.
4. The motto of Arya Samaj 'Krinvanto Vishvam Aaryam', means to _____.
5. Dayanand had difficulty in running the Vedic schools because funding was _____ and attendance _____.

c. Write 'T' for true and 'F' for false:

1. In 2019, the Annual congregation of Arya Samaj followers was held in Chicago. USA.
2. During the 15th century, Indian sub-continent was going through a continued period of ignorance as India had been invaded and ruled by the Arabs for about 600-750 years and by the British for about 300 years.
3. When Dayanand compared the right interpretation of the Vedas with what was prevalent in the society, he found that there were a lot of misconceptions in the society.
4. The teaching of those texts which accepted the authority of the Vedas was critical for the spiritual and social regeneration of Vedic culture in India.

Activity

Find out the various activities and programmes that are conducted in an 'Arya Samaj Satsang'. Write an article about it. Stick / draw picture to make it interesting.

Expected learning outcome

Students understand the importance of the National Song and develop patriotic spirit

Jansi attended the Independence Day celebration at her school as a Guide. During the programme, the school choir sang the National Song- Vande Mataram, which evoked a sense of patriotism within her. After she came back home...

Jansi – *Doddappa (father's elder brother in Kannada),* the national song is so soothing to listen to.

Doddappa – Yes Jansi, it is a beautiful song paying respect to our motherland.

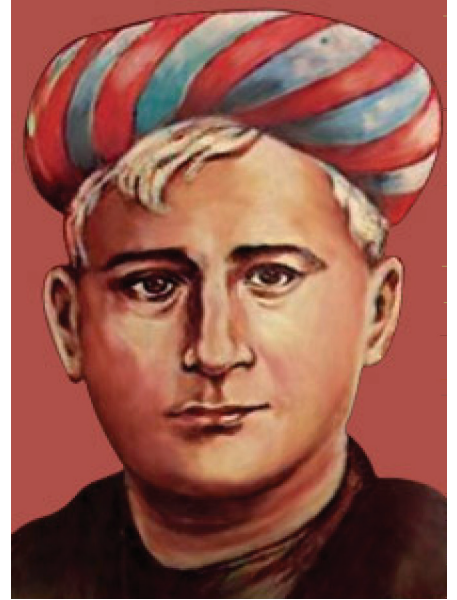
Jansi – What does the term 'Vande Mataram' mean?

Doddappa – The word 'Vande', a Sanskrit word, which appears in Rig Veda and other Vedic texts, means to bow, to pay respects. The word 'Mataram', means mother, referring here to motherland.

Jansi – Who composed this wonderful song?

Doddappa – This song was originally written by Shri Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay in 1882 in his novel 'Anandamath'.

Subsequently, the first two stanzas of the 'Vande Mataram' were officially declared as the National Song of India in 1950.



**Bankim Chandra
Chattopadhyay**

Jansi – So, was the song written sixty-five years before India's Independence?

Doddappa – Yes, that is right. “Vande Mataram” song inspired millions of Indians to participate in the Indian independence movement. The goal of all citizens was to gain independence from the British. Large rallies, initially from Bengal, would work themselves up into a patriotic fervour by shouting the slogan “Vande Mataram”, or “I praise the Motherland!” The British, fearful of the potential danger of an incited Indian populace, banned the book and made the recital of the song a crime. The British colonial government imprisoned many freedom fighters for disobeying the order, but workers and general public repeatedly violated the ban by gathering in front of British officials and singing it.

Jansi – What is the meaning of this song, doddappa?

Doddappa – I will explain it to you. It will help you further appreciate the song. Before that, let us sing the song together once.

वन्दे मातरम्	<i>Vande Mataram</i>
सुजलां सुफलां मलयजशीतलाम्	<i>Sujalaam, Suphalaam, Malayaja, Sheetalaam</i>
शस्यश्यामलाम् मातरम्	<i>Shasya Shyaamalaam Mataram</i>
वन्दे मातरम्।	<i>Vande Mataram.</i>
शुभ्र ज्योत्स्ना पुलकित यामिनीं	<i>Shubhra Jyotsnaa, Pulakita Yaaminim</i>
फुल्ल कुसुमित द्रुमदल शोभिनीं	<i>Phulla Kusumita, Drumadala Shobhinim</i>
सुहासिनीं सुमधुर भाषिणीं	<i>Suhaasinim, Sumadhura Bhaashinim</i>
सुखदां वरदां मातरम्	<i>Sukhadaam Varadaam Mataram</i>
वन्दे मातरम् ।	<i>Vande Mataram.</i>

Here is the gist of the song, followed by the word-by-word meaning.

I bow to my Motherland! Filled with water, laden with fruits, cool breeze flowing and fields full of grains. Oh my mother! I bow to you. The silver moonlight illuminating the nights, blossoming flowers and beautiful trees; you are ever smiling, soft-spoken and giver of happiness, fulfilling my every desire. I bow to my Motherland!

वन्दे मातरम्	Vande Mataram	<i>I bow to my Motherland</i>
सुजलां	Sujalaam	<i>Filled with water</i>
सुफलाम्	Suphalaam	<i>Laden with fruits</i>
मलयज शीतलाम्	Malayaja, Sheetalaam	<i>Cool breeze</i>
शस्य श्यामलाम्	Shashya Shyaamalaam	<i>Fields full of grains</i>
मातरम्।	Mataram	<i>Oh my Mother!</i>
वन्दे मातरम्।	Vande Mataram	<i>I bow to my Mother</i>
शुभ ज्योत्स्ना	Shubhra Jyotsnaa	<i>Silver moonlight</i>
पुलकित यामिनीम्	Pulakita Yaaminim	<i>Illuminating the nights</i>
फुल्ल कुसुमित	Phulla Kusumita	<i>Blossoming flowers</i>
द्रुमदल शोभिनीम्	Drumadala Shobhinim	<i>Beautiful trees</i>
सुहासिनीम्	Suhaasinim	<i>Smiling</i>
सुमधुर भाषिणीम्	Sumadhura Bhaashinim	<i>Soft spoken</i>
सुखदाम्	Sukhadaam	<i>Giver of happiness</i>
वरदाम् मातरम्।	Varadaam Mataram	<i>My mother who fulfils every desire</i>
वन्दे मातरम्।	Vande Mataram	<i>I bow to my Mother</i>

Jansi – What a meaningful song to pay our humble respects to our country!

Doddappa – Yes Jansi. Always remember,

जननी जन्मभूमिश्च स्वर्गादपि गरीयसी

Janani-Janmabhoomishcha-Svargaadapi-Gariyasi

Meaning: Mother and Motherland are superior to heaven. It implies that both of them provide us with immense happiness and bliss. We should feel proud of them.

Doddappa – It is sad that many of us tend to look down upon our motherland. We always keep complaining about the challenges we face in our country like corruption, poor infrastructure, poverty, lack of civic sense etc. Many of us even aspire to leave this country and permanently settle abroad.

Jansi – That is true, doddappa. Many of my friends do think this way.

Doddappa – The mutual love between a mother and her child is unconditional. Irrespective of the education level / economic status / profession, every son or daughter genuinely believes that he / she has the best mother in the world. The mother also always loves her child irrespective of any deficiency in the child. Even if the child is very naughty, poor in studies or even physically challenged, the mother still loves him or her immensely.



Jansi – So, is it wrong to highlight the drawbacks of our country?

Doddappa – No, we definitely need to keep introspecting as a country. We need to identify our areas of improvement. There is a subtle difference here though. Even as we complain, we should feel collectively responsible for the problems. We should not just shift the blame. We should take responsibility towards ensuring that we make it a better place to live in. This is unconditional love!

Jansi – I agree. This will be my true tribute to this great nation on our Independence Day. Vande Mataram!

Let's talk about these

1. As a citizen of India, discuss any three problems faced by you in this country. Also suggest possible solutions.
2. Do you love your motherland as much as you love your mother? Discuss the ways by which you care for your motherland.

Let's do these exercises

a. Tick the correct answers:

1. The mutual love between a mother and a child is (**conditional** / **unconditional**).

b. Fill in the blanks:

1. 'Vande Mataram' was originally written by _____ in the year _____ in his novel _____.
2. We should feel proud of our mother and motherland as they are superior to _____ and provide us with _____.
3. Our country faces many challenges. Some of them are _____, _____ and _____.
4. The first two stanzas of the 'Vande Mataram' song were officially declared as the National Song of India in _____.
5. Malayaja Sheetalaam means _____; Phulla Kusumita _____.

c. Write 'T' for true and 'F' for false:

1. Introspection is necessary for the development of an individual as well as a nation.
2. Indians obeyed the British law which banned the singing of 'Vande Mataram'.
3. Complaining about the demerits of one's own nation will help in its development.
4. We pay our humble respects to our country by singing Vande Mataram.
5. Vande Mataram was composed by Rabindranath Tagore.

Expected learning outcome

Students appreciate the immense benefits of various cow products

Paatti (grandmother in Tamil) was glad that Atharva liked milk. He would gulp down a glass of milk twice a day. One day, she decided to share her thoughts...

Paatti – Atharva, I am glad that you like milk.

Atharva – Yes, paatti. It is quite refreshing. Also, my teacher emphasizes that it is very good for health, a rich source of proteins.

Paatti – Yes, for most of us the idea of a daily glass of milk holds an emotional charge. Milk is not just a drink. It is a symbol of well-being and health. It is the primary nutrient for the young and the old. Milk and its allied products like curd, buttermilk, ghee and paneer, are used in numerous food items that we consume on a daily basis.



Paatti – Milk from cows aids our overall growth including strengthening our bones and teeth as it is rich in proteins, calcium, carbohydrates, fat, minerals and vitamins. Since milk contains most of the nutrients that our body needs, milk is a wholesome food. Curd and buttermilk help our system stay cool and are good for digestion. Even ghee has immense health benefits.

Atharva – But paatti, ghee has saturated fat. Doesn't it lead to obesity and cardiac-related problems?

Paatti – Absolutely not! It is not harmful, if it's had in small quantities. Pure ghee contains Omega-3 fatty acids which can lower bad cholesterol. Ghee is also known as a body cleanser as it removes impurities from our body. It strengthens our eyesight, muscles and tendons.

Ghee is packed with butyric acid, which aids digestion. Also, it is a great natural moisturizer for dry skin.

Until a few years ago, modern science was very hesitant to recommend ghee. But, it now recognizes the immense benefits of it, as suggested by Ayurveda since ages. Ghee is also an important ingredient for performing Agnihotra and helps improve the quality of air around us.

Atharva – This is very interesting. So, I guess it is far better to have ghee rather than other saturated oils available in the market.

Paatti – Absolutely yes!

Atharva – I also love paneer, which once again is derived from milk.



Paatti – Yes, paneer is typically made by curdling heated milk with lemon juice, vinegar or any other edible acids. It is a type of cheese and contains protein, fat and carbohydrates. All essential minerals like calcium and magnesium are present in paneer, though it does not have iron.

Paatti – There is also a very interesting by-product when we make paneer. It is the slightly yellowish liquid that gets leftover. It is also the liquid component in yoghurt. This is called ‘whey,’ a great source of protein.



Indeed, milk has two types of proteins, i.e. casein and whey. Both are excellent sources of all essential amino acids, but whey gets digested faster than casein.

Atharva – Oh yes! I have heard about whey. I have seen it on the shelves in the supermarket.

Paatti – The protein in whey is so beneficial that many gym-goers and bodybuilders consume whey protein powder on a daily basis. Many of them consume synthetic or artificial whey which has both health benefits and side effects. However, natural whey is very healthy with absolutely no side effects.

Atharva – I find it amazing that ‘simple white milk’ could have so many different forms.

Paatti – That’s true. Therefore, Ayurveda strongly promotes milk and dairy products. Milk products not only provide important protein and calcium for our tissues, but are sources of *Ojas*, which gives our body strength and immunity.

Paatti – Are you aware that cow, the giver of milk, is useful to us in many other ways?

Atharva – Yes, I have heard that the cow dung is also quite useful.

Paatti – That's right. Cow dung is converted into fuel in bio-gas plants. This fuel is high in methane, which causes very less pollution.



Cow dung is also an excellent manure. Farmers have realized that excessive use of synthetic chemical fertilizers and pesticides, has reduced soil fertility. Therefore, there is a shift towards returning to using cow dung and other natural products to re-mineralize the depleted soil—now termed as 'Organic' farming. But, there is absolutely nothing new about it. These practices have been followed by farmers for ages. For instance, they would herd cows in a field for 3 or 4 nights as that would provide excellent manure in the form of both dung and cow urine.

Atharva – But then why did they start using synthetic chemical fertilizers and pesticides?

Paatti – They were made to believe that these fertilizers and pesticides would significantly increase their crop yield. It also did so for a few seasons but led to a long-term negative impact on soil fertility.

Atharva – But who made them believe so?

Paatti – It is the link between the scientists and large corporates, primarily in the western world trying to make quick profits.

Atharva – But don't scientists promote products based on genuine research?

Paatti – Not always. There has been a lot of good work done by scientists which has benefited humanity. But at the same time, many of them have misused their positions to publish research that incorrectly declares products being sold by these large companies as beneficial.

Atharva – I am curious to know more paatti. How does this work? Why do they do so?

Paatti – To conduct research, scientists need to incur significant expenses. Now, some corporates agree to pay for the expenses incurred during research. The implied understanding is that the research will directly or indirectly promote the product being produced by the company. Even if the research shows certain deficiencies in the product, the same may be mentioned but is just not emphasized upon in the research paper, thus effectively misleading the reader.

Atharva – Oh my God! So, this is almost like a fraud.

Paatti – Yes, it is sad. But this is the reality.

To be continued...

Let's talk about these



1. Make a list of food items we use every day which are made from milk and its allied products.
2. How is Cow useful to us?
3. What is organic farming? How is it beneficial?
4. What made the farmers use synthetic fertilizers and pesticides?
5. List the benefits of ghee consumption.

Let's do these exercises



a. Name the following:

1. An important animal product for performing Agnihotra.
2. A milk product that helps us stay fit and is good for digestion.
3. A fast-digesting protein.
4. The by-product obtained while making paneer.

b. Fill in the blanks:

1. Milk is a symbol of _____ and _____.
2. Pure ghee contains _____ which helps to lower _____.
3. Milk has two types of proteins namely _____ and _____ which are a good source of _____.
4. The _____ acid in ghee aids in digestion.

c. Write 'T' for true and 'F' for false:

1. Milk is a wholesome food.
2. Cow dung has reduced soil fertility and soil contamination.
3. Biogas is a great source of green energy, but it cannot be used as a cooking fuel.
4. Natural whey is rich in protein.

Expected learning outcome

Students learn the importance of understanding the rationale behind beliefs

It was Tuesday morning assembly at school. Kaushik was pulled up by the Physical Education teacher for sporting long hair. Despite being warned the previous week, he missed getting the haircut. When he came to the classroom...

Kaushik – Ma'am, I am very sorry. I will definitely get a haircut done today evening itself.

Teacher – Yes, you clearly need one, Kaushik.

Naresh – But Ma'am, today is a Tuesday. We are not supposed to cut our hair today. It will bring us bad luck!

Suresh – Yes Ma'am. Indeed, all the barber shops are shut today.

Naresh – Also, we should not cut hair and nails on Saturdays.

Teacher – Hmm...but do you think this is logical? Will cutting your hair on Tuesday or Saturday bring you bad luck?

Shekar – No Ma'am. This is not true. My *paatti (grandmother in Tamil)* tells me that all days of the week are good days.

Teacher – That's true, Shekar. All seven days of the week are good. It is purely a matter of convenience. Many of us have this wrong notion that our life span will decrease, if we have a haircut on Tuesday or Saturday.



Naresh – My mother tells me that I should not cut my nails in the evenings. Also, she says that we should not sweep off the house in the evening. Is this true?

Teacher – Naresh, there was a certain reason why this was advised long back, when there was no electricity in villages. Due to lack of natural light, it was felt that it is advisable to not cut nails just in case someone gets hurt inadvertently. There is no association between luck and the activities.

Suresh (almost interrupting) – Guess, similar is the reason for not sweeping evenings. One may not be able to clean the place properly.

Teacher – That's right.

Suresh – Ma'am. We have a black cat that lives in the neighbouring house which is abandoned. This worries my grandma. Every time this cat crosses our house, grandma advises us not to step outside, or rather leave the house after sometime. I indeed got late to school today because of this!

Teacher – Yes, Suresh. This is an age old superstition practised in many parts of the world. It is said that if a black cat crosses your path, then you should let somebody else pass before you do. This way, the first person will have all the bad luck and you won't.

Suresh – This is a selfish thought process, isn't it?

Teacher – It is indeed. Also, the poor black cat - we all tend to unnecessarily fear or hate. They are indeed so gracious.

Rohit – Ma'am, I have one more question. Every time my father wants to give a gift to anyone, he makes it a point to always add Re 1 coin to it. He will give 101, not 100; 501 and not 500; 1001 and not 1000. What is the logic? I have asked him a few times. He says, it is the custom and is considered lucky. Is that true?



Teacher – Yes Rohit, people believe that adding an extra coin will make the entire sum an odd number and it will thus be indivisible, signifying 'Unity'. If we don't add one rupee coin, the sum will end in a zero which means 'The End'. However, as you would agree, just receiving an extra One rupee coin can never lead to unity. Being united is solely dependent on how we human beings are able to accept each other in our day to day lives.

Naresh – Ma'am, is 13 an unlucky number?

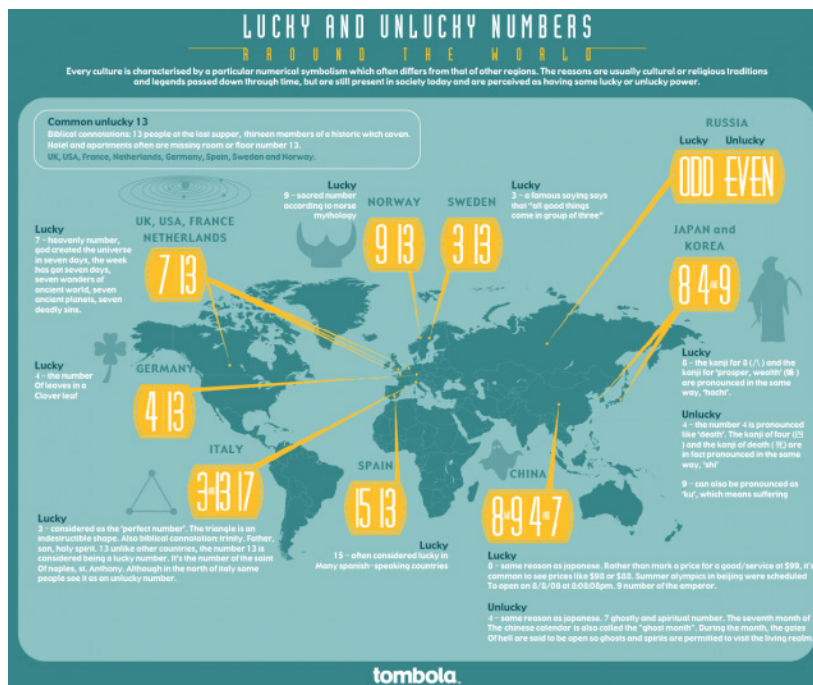
Teacher – No number is either lucky or unlucky. It is once again a belief. Let me show you a chart which shows that people in different parts of the world, consider different numbers to be lucky or unlucky.

Naresh – So from the chart, we can notice that the number 13 is indeed considered lucky in Italy, though it is considered unlucky in many other parts of the world. In Japan and Korea, number 8 is lucky; numbers 4 and 9 are considered unlucky!

Teacher – This essentially proves that there is no uniformity in belief. You will also be surprised to notice that in certain high rise buildings, the builders skip constructing the 13th floor!

Suresh – What does that mean, Ma'am?

Teacher – So, after the 12th floor, they call the next floor as 14th floor instead of the 13th floor. The builders feel that it will be difficult for them to sell the 13th floor to customers at the regular price as they may consider it to be unlucky.



Shekar – I was reading the other day in the newspaper that someone in Hyderabad paid Rs. 10.5 lakhs to just get a lucky number for his car. The number 9999 apparently is considered very lucky.



Teacher – Yes, at times, people also add the number of various digits on the number plate. If it adds upto 6 or 8 or 9, they think it is lucky. In Feb 2016, a person paid \$2.8 million, i.e. Rs. 18 crores in Hong Kong to see "28" as his car numbered – "28". In Cantonese, "28"



sounds similar to the words - “easy” and “to prosper,” therefore the number is thought to bring good fortune to its owner. Such beliefs are not logical. Indeed, if money could buy you luck, this particular person should possibly be the luckiest person on the planet.

Activity

Given below are two other popular beliefs. Discuss in the class the possible reasons behind these beliefs. Provide reasons for your answer in the given space.

S No	Beliefs / Myth		Is there any scientific reason behind it?
1	Shopkeepers hang chillies and lemon outside their shops		
2	Parents put a small little black dot on the forehead of a child		

Think And Answer

1. Which belief will you follow when you grow up? Why? Why not?
2. List any 5 age old customs that have scientific, logical explanations and reasons behind them. Make a tabular column with the reasons.
3. During the Covid pandemic, we came to understand that some age old practices were indeed meaningful. List five of them and the rationale.

Expected learning outcome

Students adopt sharing and caring practices

*It was a chilly cold night in Delhi. Siddharth curled up under the warmth of a quilt and requested his grandmother to narrate a story. His **muthassi** (grandmother in Malayalam) readily agreed...*

Muthassi – Siddharth, it was the year 1992. A young journalist, Anshu Gupta, noticed a tricycle outside a hospital in Delhi on a cold morning with this sign: “Disposer of dead bodies for the Delhi Police”. He found this very unusual. He saw a person called Habib and his blind wife Amana Begum standing by. He asked them more about what they actually did?

They told him: “We collect unclaimed dead bodies lying on the roads of Delhi and hand them over to Delhi Police, who pay us Rs.20 per body. During winters, work is more difficult because we have to collect far more dead bodies.”

“But why?” Anshu asked surprisingly.

There are a lot of homeless people who do not have proper winter clothing, on the streets of Delhi and they die due to intense cold,” the couple replied. Anshu was disturbed. He had never imagined that this could be going on in the capital of India. He wondered what the situation would be in other parts of the country.



Habib and his wife

Siddharth – I find it very difficult to believe that people die due to lack of clothing.

Muthassi – Siddharth, this does happen in our society. People like us, who are lucky, are unaware that clothing could be such a serious issue. Clothing is not just about looking good; it is necessary for survival, especially in winters. After all, cold doesn't kill people; lack of clothing does.

Siddharth – How did Mr. Anshu help them?

Muthassi – Anshu strongly felt that he should be doing something to address this acute problem. He craved for that feeling of satisfaction that went beyond one's personal goal and self-interest. His longing to give back to society, do something different to benefit thousands inspired an idea. He resigned from his high paying job and founded Goonj in 1998.



GOONJ.. a voice, an effort

Siddharth – What did he start doing?

Muthassi – Anshu started collecting old clothes from his own house, relatives and friends. He would sort them and then distribute them on the roads on chilly winter nights in Delhi. As Goonj grew, it also started collecting old toys, utensils and stationery. Toys and learning material were sent to schools in the slums. They soon started sending the collected materials to the nearby villages.

Siddharth – That is an excellent concept. The poor would get all these items for free.

Muthassi – That's right Siddharth. However, Anshu soon realized that a poor people in villages did not want to pick up the clothes for free. Even though they needed clothing, they felt it was below their dignity. People prefer to earn rather than take donations. So Goonj came up with an innovative program called '*Cloth for Work.*'

Siddharth – How does this program work?

Muthassi – A lot of villages in India lack basic facilities due to which the entire village suffers. For instance, if there is no well in a village, the entire community needs to walk long distances to fetch water. Goonj with the help of locals identifies simple basic projects that can be completed by villagers themselves, that will benefit the entire community. They then encourage villagers, many of whom may not be employed all days in a year, to work on this village project. Instead of giving cash to them, these workers are rewarded with clothes.

Other examples of such needs include cleaning ponds, repairing roads, building schools using local resources.

Siddharth – So, clothes are in a way converted into money!

Muthassi – Absolutely. It is a very helpful strategy. The ‘*Cloth for Work*’ program has immensely benefitted many villages in the country.



Goonj Sorting Center

Muthassi – Goonj has a large processing centre in many cities where it sorts, washes, and if necessary repairs the huge amount of material that it receives every day. It makes use of just about everything it receives. It repairs saris and woollens, adds drawstrings to salwars, turns old jeans into schoolbags, and cloth scraps into quilts.

At a time when consumerism is at its peak in India, with Indians amassing hoards of material goods, Goonj champions the cause of reuse and recycle.

Muthassi – Anshu Gupta has been recognized by the society for this empathetic service. He was conferred with the prestigious ‘**Ramon Magsaysay Award**’ in 2015.

Siddharth – What is “Ramon Magsaysay Award”? I have never heard about this.

Muthassi – This is an award instituted in memory of former President of Philippines, Mr. Ramon Magsaysay, who set an example of courageous service to people. It is awarded to selected persons serving people in need, in diverse fields including Public Service especially in Asia, every year.

Siddharth – Can I ask you a question?

Muthassi – Yes, sure.

Siddharth – You narrated about the happenings in the 1990s when homeless people died in the chilling cold of Delhi. Does this happen even now in 2025? India has progressed by leaps and bounds since then, hasn’t it?

Muthassi – Sadly, yes. Even now some homeless people are unable to survive the chilling cold but the numbers has come down. It is true that India has progressed, but we still have not been able to eradicate poverty.

Siddharth – Muthassi, I am going to give away all my old clothes and toys tomorrow to charity.

Muthassi – Sure Siddharth. However, please ensure that they are in usable condition. We should give with dignity!

(Acknowledgement – Articles available electronically on Goonj.org)



Anshu Gupta

Let's discuss about these

1. List 5 qualities that you admire in Anshu Gupta.
2. Explain the 'Cloth for work' program.
3. The work done by Habib and his wife is a service to the society - Discuss.

Let's do these exercises

a. Tick the correct answers:

1. Habib collected the unclaimed dead bodies lying on the roads of (**Delhi** / **Mumbai**) and handed it over to the police who would, in turn, pay him (**Rs.20** / **Rs.50**) per body.
2. Anshu Gupta was awarded the prestigious (**Ramon Magsaysay Award** / **Bharat Ratna**) for his excellent service towards the society.
3. Anshu identified the major cause of death of many poor homeless people during winters as improper (**nutrition** / **clothing**).

4. “GOONJ” was founded in the year (1898 / 1998) by a (social activist / journalist), Anshu Gupta.

b. Fill in the blanks:

1. Goonj identified some simple basic projects such as _____, _____ and _____ which could be completed by the villagers themselves and benefit the entire community.
2. Goonj came up with an innovative program called _____ which helped to overcome the problem of _____ along with restoration of self-dignity.
3. The former President of Philippines, _____ set up an example of courageous service to the people.

c. Write ‘T’ for true and ‘F’ for false:

1. The villagers who helped in accomplishing local projects were rewarded with clothes instead of money.
2. Old toys and learning materials gathered from various houses were sent to schools in slums.
3. Whenever we donate our old clothes and toys, we should ensure that it is in usable condition.
4. Goonj is unable to function well due to lack of support from the people.

d. Project:

1. “GOONJ” is a large scale social project. As a student, what are the ways in which you can contribute towards helping the weaker section of the society? Enlist those measures, visit your thoughts once in 3 months to check your progress in actions.
2. Research on the mid-day meal scheme started by the “Akshaya Patra Foundation”. Design a chart on the various stages of the APF mid-day meal programme. Stick pictures as relevant.

KRISHNA JANMASHTAMI

Expected learning outcomes

Students:

- know the significance of Krishna Janmashtami
- understand the life of Shri Krishna in historical perspective
- understand the ideal way of celebrating Krishna Janmashtami.
- derive inspiration from the life of Shri Krishna.

It was Krishna Janmashtami—a school holiday. Sudha who had moved to Mumbai recently due to her father’s job transfer was quite intrigued by the festive mood out there, especially the euphoria around ‘Dahi Handi’.

[Appa - father in Tamil]

Sudha – Appa, I have always looked forward to Janmashtami as a holiday for us to relax. While it is celebrated in other parts of India as well, it seems to be a major festival in Mumbai. What is its significance?

Appa – Janmashtami (also known as “Gokulashtami”) marks the birth anniversary of Shri Krishna. He was born in Mathura, at midnight on the eighth day of Bhadrapada month as per the ‘Vikrami’ calendar (typically overlaps with August, September). He was born in a prison that was under the custody of Krishna’s uncle, Kansa. His father, Vasudev, decided to hand over his child to Nanda, his friend to save Krishna from the clutches of Kansa. Krishna grew up in Gokul and eventually killed his cruel uncle, King Kansa.



Sudha – What is this Dahi Handi about? There is so much excitement with scores of people out there on streets.

Appa – ‘Dahi Handi’ (Dahi: curd or yoghurt, handi: earthen pot) involves communities hanging an earthen pot filled with dahi (yoghurt) or other milk based delicacies at a height difficult to reach. Young men and boys form teams, make a human pyramid and attempt to reach or break the pot.



Sudha – Oh yes! Now I can relate to it. According to legend, child Krishna, loved to eat yoghurt and butter. He would, therefore, enter others’ homes and take away yoghurt and butter without the knowledge of the inmates. Hence people would place them at heights that Krishna cannot reach. Krishna would try human pyramids with his friends to break these pots hanging high. I have heard that he is also called ‘Maakhan chor’ (Butter thief).

Appa – Hmm... I am not surprised by your explanation, because many of us believe that Krishna was so fond of butter that he playfully stole it. But Sudha, for a moment imagine that you start stealing your favourite food, i.e. chocolates from the refrigerator. Do you think I will appreciate this act of yours?

Sudha – Absolutely not! I am sure you will be quite upset.

Appa – Irrespective of the age of the child, parents will be genuinely worried if a child resorts to stealing. Now, Krishna is so revered by crores of people around the world. Why do we so proudly celebrate his stealing butter?



Sudha was confused. She did not have an answer.

Appa – It is true that Krishna did forcefully take away the butter. But it was not for selfish reasons that he wanted to eat the yoghurt and butter. He instead had a very far-sighted noble intention.

Sudha – What was that, appa?

Appa – Krishna resided in Gokul, where the major source of income for people was milk and other dairy products (chiefly butter). However, Krishna's uncle Kansa - the then ruler of Mathura, used to collect exorbitant taxes in the form of milk and butter from the cowherds of Gokul and other villages, which left the villagers with almost nothing for themselves. This was unjust so Krishna, started a 'Non-cooperation' movement wherein he wanted the entire village to stop paying the taxes. His rationale was that if some households paid the tax and others did not, then those who did not pay would be severely punished by the King. However, if none of the households paid in the entire village, it would be difficult for the King to punish everyone. Thus, to stop some of these people from paying taxes out of fear, he used to steal their butter or even throw pebbles at the pots when the cowherd women carried them on their heads to Mathura. Remember though he was only a child then, this was his playful yet effective technique of not letting Kansa get away with the wealth of the villagers.

Sudha – Wow! This is very logical.

Sudha – There is another belief that he had about sixteen thousand wives.

Appa – Krishna was a great Yogi. He always thought of collective welfare.

Appa – Yes, many people do believe so. But let me ask you a question - Who is your favourite Indian cricketer?

Sudha – Undoubtedly, Virat Kohli.

Appa – I am sure he has millions of admirers in the country, including both men and women.

Sudha – Yes, absolutely. I am his die-hard fan.

Appa – Now, it will be inappropriate to conclude that his admirers are his wives. Isn't it?

Appa – Similarly, Shri Krishna was hugely popular as a great administrator. He looked after the welfare of his subjects with immense compassion.

Sudha – How nice it would be to live in such a country !

Appa – Definitely Sudha. The citizens (men, women and children) felt very happy and blessed, living in his kingdom. However, over the years, this took a different form. People started believing that all women were his wives.

Appa – It is therefore important that we understand the lives of our great Yogis and Rishis in the right historical perspective.

Sudha – Appa, was he an incarnation of Ishvar, who was born to fight Adharma?



Appa – Ishvar is formless and present everywhere. He need not attain the form of a human being to help fight Adharma. With profound knowledge, wisdom, meditation and blessings of Ishvar, Shri Krishna was a true Yogi. His acts were so exemplary that people started believing that he was Ishvar in human form.

Sudha – Please explain this further, appa.

Appa – Shri Krishna tried to prevent the war of Mahabharata by various means, as he was aware that it would only create havoc. Indeed, India faced an intellectual vacuum and deteriorated as a society after the war. But despite his best efforts, Shri Krishna was unable to do so as things were not entirely under his control.

Sudha – Hmm...

Appa – Remember Ishvar, has created this Universe. Ishvar allocates a particular form: human being, animal, bird etc. to the soul depending on the Karma of the soul. The soul that has taken the form of a human being, is relatively free to choose its actions. Ishvar does not hold our hand and forcefully make us do anything. He may inspire us though. But, the way we conduct ourselves is entirely our choice. We are free to commit our karma, i.e. actions.

Appa – There is this very famous shloka from Bhagavad Gita - “When there is the decay of Dharma (righteousness) and the rise of Adharma (unrighteousness), then I (the Lord) am born in this world.

यदा यदा हि धर्मस्य ग्लानिर्भवति भारत।
अभ्युत्थानमधर्मस्य तदात्मानम् सृजाम्यहम्॥

**Yadaa Yadaa Hi Dharmasya Glaanirbhavati Bhaarata Abhyutthaanam
Adharmasya Tadaatmaanam Srijaamyaham**

This actually implies that we, at different points of time in our lives, face difficult situations. At that juncture, we seek advice from learned people including sages, on varied topics. There are these pious and wise scholars who are always around us. We need to identify and approach them for appropriate counsel. They will guide us to distinguish between Dharma and Adharma.

Sudha – I agree, appa. Indeed, even today we all keep mentioning that there is widespread Adharma; crimes are increasing in the society; things seem probably worse than what it was prior to the Mahabharata war. However, there is no Shri Krishna amongst us, who is an incarnation of Ishvar.

Appa – That is great logic, Sudha! But at the same time, there are so many wise people in this world who are doing great work for mankind. They collectively help relieve the suffering of millions of fellow human beings.

Sudha – I have another doubt. Did Shri Krishna love cows?

Appa – Oh yes! Absolutely. Based on Vedic knowledge, Shri Krishna believed that cows are critical for human beings and should be taken care of. The cow is seen as a maternal figure, a caretaker of her people. She is a symbol of wealth. Krishna was indeed very fond of cows and its various products. He was also known as Govinda or Gopala, which literally means “friend and protector of cows.”

Sudha – So, in this context the concept of ‘Dahi Handi’ is relevant. It is in a way celebrating his love for the cows.

Appa – Yes, that’s right Sudha. But, it has become a dangerous team sport today. It is now reduced to a competition between various groups of people (also known as Govindas), the parameter being the height at which the handi (pot) is placed for the group to reach. It’s quite risky wherein several young, naive govindas have broken their limbs and even become paralysed while attempting to break the handi. The pyramids can contain as many as nine tiers of people, reaching the height of 3 or 4 floors.



Sudha – That must be so dangerous!

Appa – The bottom levels comprise strong men, while children are at the upper reaches. The child at the very top—who is at the greatest risk—is just five or six years old. During the celebrations last year, 2 govindas lost their lives, and 117 were injured while attempting to break the dahi handis. The Supreme Court has now banned those, below 18 from participating in the dangerous sport and has limited the height of human pyramids to 20 feet, i.e. a maximum of 4 layers.

Sudha – But don’t these people get discouraged by these incidents?



Appa – They do get discouraged. With increasing awareness, the number of participants for dahi handi is declining. However, it is the herd mentality which drives them to still engage

in this risky event. It has also become a commercial tool in the hands of the local leaders to exploit the youth. They declare huge prize money for the event, based on groups that can reach the maximum height, thus encouraging them to take higher risks. The naive people tend to think that the local leader is helping them fund their religious festival.

Sudha – This is quite sad.

Appa – Yes, it is. We should rather celebrate the birth of Shri Krishna, the great strategist, warrior and Yogi, by deriving inspiration from various aspects of his life including taking care of cows.

Let's talk about these

1. If you were to talk to Shri Krishna, what would you say to him?
2. Why did Shri Krishna steal butter?
3. Shri Krishna is a Yogi. Why?
4. Contemplate on how the celebration of Janmashtami could be a fitting tribute to Krishna. Discuss your thoughts in class.
5. Discuss the meaning of the shloka - 'Yadaa Yadaa Hi Dharmasya...'

Let's do these exercises

a. Tick the correct answers:

1. According to a supreme court ruling, height of human pyramids can only be (29 m / 20 ft) in Dahi Handi.
2. Ishvar is formless, and He (needs to / need not) attain the form of human being to help fight (Dharma / Adharma).
3. The cow is seen as a (paternal / maternal) figure and is a symbol of (wealth / knowledge).
4. Dahi Handi in present days has been become a (safe / dangerous) team sport.
5. The participants in Dahi Handi have to be above the age of (21 / 18) years.

b. Fill in the blanks:

1. Shri Krishna was born in _____ at the midnight on the eight day of _____ month as per the _____ calendar.
2. Kansa, the then ruler of _____, used to collect high amount of taxes in the form of _____ and _____ from the cowherds of the village.
3. Dahi Handi involves communities hanging an earthen pot filled with _____ at a _____ and young men make _____ in an attempt to break it.
4. The main source of income for the people of Gokul was _____.
5. Shri Krishna was a great _____ and always thought of _____.
6. After the Mahabharata war, India faced an _____ which deteriorated the society.
7. At the time of difficulty, we should seek advice from learned people who will guide us to distinguish between _____ and _____.
8. The human pyramid comprises of _____ at the bottom level and a _____ at the top who is at a greatest risk of getting injured.

c. Write 'T' for true and 'F' for false:

1. In many cases, we are not free to commit our Karma as Ishvar can any time make us forcefully do as He wishes.
2. Kauravas won the Mahabharata war with the help of Krishna.
3. Krishna was a friend and protector of cows and was popularly known as Govinda or Gopala.
4. The local leaders use Dahi Handi festival as a commercial tool to exploit the youth by declaring huge cash prize.

Let's have fun



Poster time:

Dahi Handi is an exciting and a dangerous team sport. As a conscious social-welfare worker, design a poster to attract the educate the participants and the general public on how this sport can be detrimental and what are the better ways of celebrating this festival. Mention the rules related to the sport. Don't forget to give a catchy slogan for your poster.

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin orange border, intended for the student to draw their poster.

12

INDIA'S FORGOTTEN 'BLACK WATERS' – KAALA PAANI

Expected learning outcome

Students understand the intense struggle, our freedom fighters went through in the dreaded jails, at the Andaman islands, appreciate the independence and develop patriotism.

The penal colony, designed by the British to break people, would form one of the darkest chapters in India's struggle for freedom.

The revolt of 1857, also known as the Sepoy Mutiny or the First War of Independence had shaken up the British empire. It was the first time that a combined effort had been made by the Indians against the British. People rose up in mutiny across north and central India against the sovereign power of the British East India Company. It took a year and a huge British military deployment, but when the British finally suppressed the rebellion, they decided to transfer the control over India from East India Company directly to the British Government, an equally brutal force also known as the British Raj.

1857 – 1893 | Setting up the penal colony

One of the British Raj's first acts in 1858 was to establish a penal colony in Andaman and send, the so called 'hard-core elements' (i.e. the ardent Indian patriots) who took on the British there. There were two reasons: One, to keep them away from other prisoners and the other, to send out a message that a similar treatment would be meted out to anyone who challenged the British authority.

A penal settlement or colony was typically used to exile prisoners and separate them from the general population by placing them in a remote location, often an island or distant colonial territory.



On 10th March 1858, the first batch of 200 freedom fighters touched the shores of Port Blair, Andaman. Over the next few decades, more than 40,000 were to follow.

The prisoners were chained and sent into the thick forests to cut trees and clear the lands. Andaman was then a sparsely habituated island with dense vegetation. The prisoners essentially made to work, to make the island fit for the British. The so-called convicts were used in chain gangs (a group of convicts chained together while working outside the prison) to construct small buildings and harbour facilities. Many died due to inhumane conditions of work and living. The prisoners who protested were hanged to death. Those who tried to escape met a similar fate. Many of the prisoners were also injected with experimental medical drugs resulting in immense suffering and death.

1893 – 1906 | Building the Cellular Jail

It was in 1893, after the number of banished prisoners became unmanageable, the decision was taken to build a high-security jail to house them at Port Blair. For 13 long years the existing prisoners were forced to work under pitiless conditions to become the agents of their own imprisonment, as their jail rose around them with their own hands, to open in 1906.



Surrounded by hundreds of miles of ocean in every direction, the Cellular Jail was designed with the sole purpose of keeping the men in isolation, providing absolutely no hope of escape.

At the centre of this massive three-storey structure stood a tall watch tower, out of which shot seven long concreted wings, like spokes on a wheel. Each wing had rows of single iron-gated cells – 693 in total. Each cell was about 15 ft × 9 ft in size with a ventilator located at a height of 10 ft.



Each spoke of the jail was so designed such that the face of a cell in a spoke saw the back of cells in another spoke. This way, communication between prisoners was impossible. The name, '**Cellular Jail**', indeed was derived from the solitary cells which prevented any prisoner from communicating with the other.

1906 – 1942 | Torturous conditions

The jail was called Kaala Paani because the entire prison was surrounded by sea and there was no way a prisoner could escape. Transportation of the political prisoners to Andaman was thus perceived as if they were being sent for slow poisoning at that notorious island.

After crossing the “black waters”, a journey that would last days, the daily grind that awaited the prisoners was something that had been designed by the British to not only demoralise the men but to completely break them physically and mentally. Their days would be



A Cell in Kaala Paani

monotonous and long. In the morning they would join a queue to be allocated a punishing work quota, the results of which would be scrutinised at the end of the day. If they failed to meet this quota they would be beaten or whipped.

Scotsman David Barry, the jailor, was infamous for his insane cruelty. “While you are here, I am your God,” was the cry with which he welcomed prisoners.

Each prisoner was given the dry husks of 20 coconuts, which would have to be repeatedly hit with a wooden hammer until soft. The skin would then be removed and the coconut would be dipped in water and bashed again.



Another grueling task took place in the oil mill and caused many of the men to collapse from exhaustion. Their bodies covered only with strips of cloth, the prisoners had to manually turn a large wheel, which would press and squeeze coconuts for oil. They were expected to produce 30 pounds (13.6 kgs) of oil a day, a huge amount that most were unable to complete in one work session. It drove some to insanity.

Once the prisoners had finished the day's arduous labour, their reward was to spend their evenings shackled on the floor in solitary confinement. Food at Cellular Jail was rice which was more dust, rain water and wild grass. Left alone in this iron-gated cell each prisoner would sleep beside two small, clay pots: one for water and the other to be used as a toilet. So small in size were the clay pots, that the men had a difficult time in using the empty pot effectively. Some were said to be so desperate that they resorted to using the bare floor!

The jail over the years housed numerous freedom fighters such as Batukeshwar Dutt and Veer Savarkar, among others. The famous freedom fighter Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, wrote extensively of the awful conditions that he had faced, including the particularly harsh treatment by the cruel jailor David Barry, the self-declared 'God of Port Blair'.

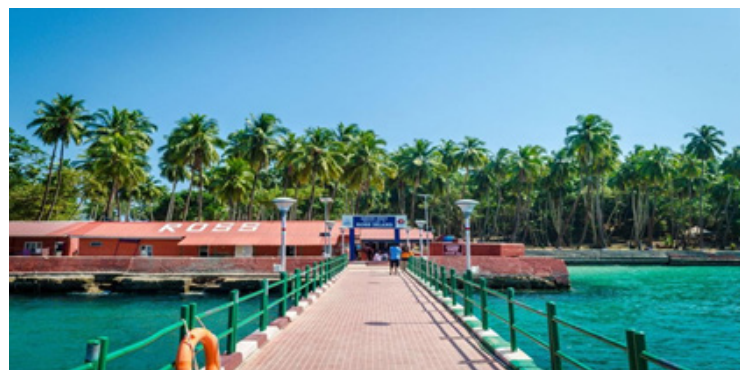


Savarkar wrote that as the gates of the prison shut behind him, he felt he had “entered the jaws of death”. He continued: “I heard a whisper going around among the warders that Barry was coming. They seemed to have seen none more cruel and hard-hearted than he, and they watched my face to see what impression that name had made upon me.”

Fed up of the incessant torture, the Indian freedom fighters decided to protest in the only way possible and during 1932-1937 many of them took part in a series of hunger strikes. In May 1933, they went on a 45-day hunger strike. However, from the ninth day, guards tried to force feed them with milk. In an effort to resist this, many prisoners including Mahavir Singh Gaddar of Punjab, Mohit Maitra and Manakrishna Nabadas of Bengal rebelled and eventually sacrificed their lives.

Ross Islands

While the prisoners were tortured and humiliated, Barry and the other British officials lived in opulence across the water on Ross Island, which was just 3 kms away from Port Blair. This small island served as the administrative headquarters for the British. The island had all modern facilities including



tennis courts, a bakery, church, club house and a swimming pool overseeing the vast ocean. Some of the so-called convicts worked there throughout the day for the maintenance, upkeep and cleanliness of the island under strict supervision of the British. The British went about their business of recreating a home far away from home with vigour, so much that the island soon earned the epithet of 'The Paris of the East'.

1942 - 1947 | Japanese invasion

During World War II, the British abandoned the Andaman Islands in haste due to advancing Japanese Forces, thus allowing the Japanese occupation of the Islands, who then ruled the territory for 4 years from 1942 to 1945. During this period, Japan built heavy military infrastructure in these islands and it was used as a forward surveillance base for its fighter planes. The cellular jail ironically then became home to a few British prisoners.

The great visionary, Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, who had built the Indian National Army (INA), partnered with the Japanese with the intent of overthrowing the British. He briefly visited the Andaman Islands during this period and hoisted the Indian National Flag for the first time at Port Blair.

However, after the defeat of Japan in World War II, the British once again gained control of the island for a brief period before finally ceding control to India in 1947.

Recent Developments

The Port Blair airport was renamed in 2002 after freedom fighter Vinayak Damodar Savarkar.

In December 2018, the Ross Island was renamed as the '**Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose Island**' by Shri Narendra Modi as a tribute to the great freedom fighter who had first hoisted the Indian national flag on the Islands.

On the occasion, Sri Narendra Modi also remarked –
“The cells of the Cellular Jail where great freedom fighters such as Veer Savarkar, Baba Bhan Singh, Indu Bhushan Roy were tortured for years by the British are no less than temples.”

The cellular jail complex now serves as a national memorial monument and is open for public viewing. It is indeed a pilgrimage site for those who deeply want to experience the freedom struggle that India went through. A small museum displays historical photographs and portraits of numerous unsung heroes who served their sentence in the jail.



There is also a Light and Sound show in the evenings, wherein an old peepal tree which stood as a mute witness to the tortures meted out to the freedom fighters and stands tall even today, chronicles the dark history of the cellular jail.

Key Learnings

Except feeling sad, we obviously cannot do much about what has already happened. However, we need to be cognizant of the fact that greed, self-centeredness and ego can drive human beings to be absolutely insensitive to others' suffering. They indeed start deriving sadistic pleasure out of it.

Also, we need to realize that numerous people underwent enormous suffering for the sake of freedom of our country. We are lucky to be born in an Independent India because of their struggle. We need to at the very least realize the price we paid for it! Lost in today's age of consumerism, we are otherwise only concerned about ourselves. It is imperative to note that even during those times, it is not that all Indians were involved in the freedom struggle. With a divided Indian society, majority of us were still concerned about our own comforts and some of us even joined the British officially and acted against our very own freedom fighters. **It is an absolute irony that a mere 20,000 British officials and troops ruled over 300 million Indians, i.e. they were less than 0.01% of the Indian population. United we stand, divided we fall.**

We shall pledge that we shall work to see this dark chapter of Indian history never repeats itself.

Let's do these exercises

a. Name the following:

1. The revolt of 1857 is also known as - _____.
2. The great freedom fighter who wrote in detail about the cruel treatment faced by the prisoners - _____.
3. The administrative headquarters of the British officials in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands - _____.
4. The great freedom fighter who hoisted the Indian national flag for the first time at Port Blair - _____.

b. Match the following:

1.	Ross Island	The cellular jail was opened
2.	1906	Port Blair
3.	The cellular jail complex	The Paris of the East
4.	Mahavir Singh Gaddar	A National memorial monument
5.	Vinayak Damodar Savarkar airport	The freedom fighter from Punjab who lost his life in the hunger strike

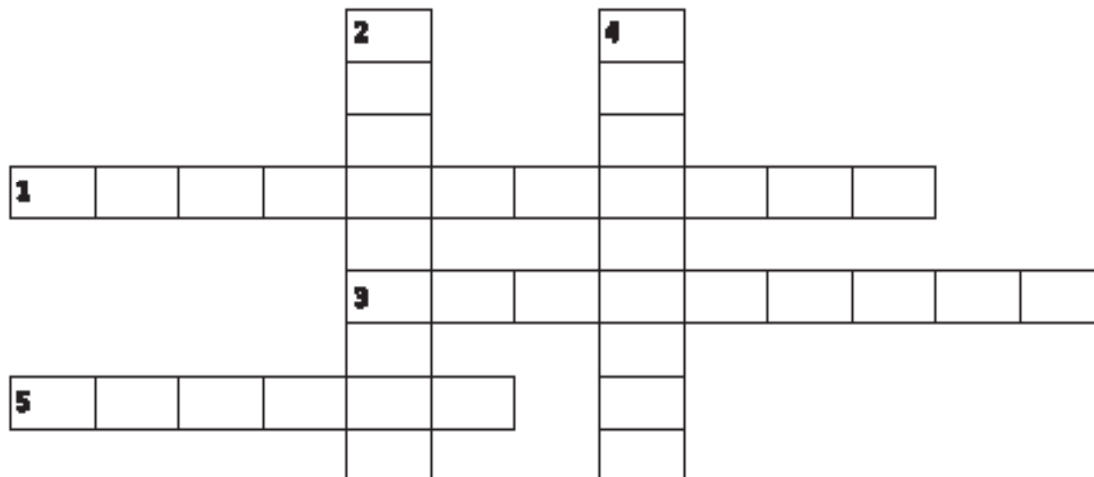
c. Fill in the blanks:

1. The revolt of 1857 was the first combined effort made by the Indians against the _____ in India.
2. After the 1857 revolt, India came directly under the rule of the _____.
3. The name cellular jail was derived from the _____ that prevented prisoners from communicating with each other.
4. On 10th March 1858, 200 freedom fighters touched the shores of _____.
5. The Ross Island was renamed as _____ by the Prime Minister Shri. Narendra Modi.

d. State whether the following statements are true or false:

1. During the second world war, the Japanese forces occupied the Andaman Islands.
2. The Britishers made the Indian prisoners build the cellular jail.
3. The prisoners in the cellular jail were provided with nutritious food.
4. The jail was called “Kaala Paani” as it was surrounded by sea.
5. One of the first act of British Raj was to establish a penal colony in Andaman Islands.

e. **Crossword**



Across

1. This is built to separate prisoners from general population and to exile them.
3. The cellular jail is located in _____ in Andaman and Nicobar Islands.
5. The revolt of 1857 was known as the _____ of the sepoys by the British.

Down

2. The other name of the cellular jail.
4. The main purpose of the cellular jail is to keep the prisoners in _____.

f. **Answer the following:**

1. Define Penal settlement/colony.
2. What were the two main objectives behind the establishment of a penal colony in Andaman Islands?
3. How were the prisoners tortured by the British in order to colonize the Andaman Islands?
4. Describe the cellular jail. How was it designed to keep the prisoners in isolation?
5. What were the hardships faced by the prisoners on a day to day basis?
6. The present government has worked on the cellular jail complex to facilitate people to visit and understand the ordeal of our patriots- Discuss the need for the same.
7. How has our honourable Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi honoured the sacrifice of the prisoners of the cellular jail?
8. Describe in your own words, how division in the Indian society was the main reason for the British rule in India.

Expected learning outcome

Students understand the Result (Award), Consequence and Effect of action

*Akash was having an engaging conversation with **pitamaha** (grandfather in Sanskrit) on Karma. The difference between Sakaama Karma (Actions with expectations) and Nishkaama Karma (Actions without expectations) was fascinating. He had many other queries about Karma...*

Akash – Does every action have a result?

Pitamaha – Oh yes, every action does have a reward. Good actions will always yield good rewards; evil deeds will result in us being appropriately punished.

Akash – But pitamaha, there are so many people around us in this world. They commit all sorts of evil deeds but are still very powerful, famous and happy.

Pitamaha – Ishvar is always Just. He rewards and punishes us appropriately based on our actions. We are unable to comprehend His system of justice and believe that evil people are let go.

Akash – It is so confusing. Sometimes, even pious people are punished by Ishvar. I recently lost my favourite teacher in a road accident. She was such a wonderful teacher, so kind and compassionate, but yet firm.

Pitamaha – Akash, it is incorrect to believe that she was punished by the Almighty, resulting in her untimely death. This was not a result of her past actions.

Pitamaha – Let us take an example. The drunken driver of a bus with 60 passengers hits the road divider and the bus turns turtle, killing 30 passengers, injuring 20 while 10 escape unscathed. People who were killed or injured were affected significantly. Do you think this is an award by the Almighty for their past evil deeds?

Akash – Probably yes!

Pitamaha – Hmm...think about it. The driver of the bus behaved irresponsibly, leading to the death of 30 people. As per law, he will be prosecuted. However, if we consider this to be an '**Award**,' then we are in a way assuming that the driver was merely acting as an agent of the Almighty. He had no control over his actions and did not act independently. He committed the act only as directed by the Almighty. If this is true, then why prosecute him?



Akash – That is quite a logical argument.

Pitamaha – Indeed, he should be honoured as he helped the Almighty, ensuring that 50 people got their due '**Awards**' instantaneously. Let us understand a key principle: An '**Award**' can be given only by someone who knows or is aware of the actions committed by the person.

Akash – So then, according to this principle, this will not qualify as an '**Award**.' The driver of the bus had no idea about the good or evil deeds committed by the 60 passengers in the bus.

Pitamaha – Exactly!

Akash – Pitamaha, but then how do you philosophically view the suffering endured by the passengers killed or injured in the road accident?

Pitamaha – Apart from '**Award**' for actions, there are two additional aspects to appreciate—'**Consequence**' and '**Effect of actions**'.

Akash – What is Consequence of Action?

Pitamaha – The fact that some people were killed, some were injured, and some were completely safe, depended purely on the impact of the accident—speed and the angle at which the bus hit the divider on the road. It is a scientific process determined by the magnitude of force faced by each passenger during the accident, resulting in injury or death. This is nothing but a '**Consequence**' (Parinaam) of the irresponsible action of the bus driver.

Akash – What is 'effect of action' then?



Pitamaha – A lot of people, including relatives would typically gather at the accident site. Some of them would be extremely disturbed and would profusely cry seeing the dead and the injured. Some others would immediately swing into action, trying to help the victims in different ways. This is an ‘**Effect**’ of the action. The ‘**Effect**’ can be seen even much after the action has been completed. For instance, people who survived the accident could be afraid of sitting in a bus next time recalling their previous harrowing experience or they may have bad dreams related to the accident — once again an **Effect** of the acts committed by the bus driver.



Akash – But then, what about the agony suffered by the accident victims? A great injustice was done to them for no fault of theirs.

Pitamaha – It is right that the agony they suffered is due to the irresponsible action of another fellow human being. Ishvar never stops any individual from committing any act, While He advises us by intuition to abstain from alcohol and drive vehicles carefully, He does not physically stop us. He has given us the intellect to choose our actions.

However, Ishvar still ensures justice to the accident victim (who suffered for no fault of theirs) by compensating them for the loss suffered. Now, this compensation may happen either during this birth or the next one! It may not be possible for the victim to be compensated entirely during the present lifetime.

But Ishvar will compensate for sure. He is Just. Indeed remember Ishvar will more than compensate! Let me give you a simple example.

Pitamaha – Assume that you were eating a laddu. You had taken a small bite. Suddenly, someone from behind pushed you, and the laddu fell down. You got upset. Your mother saw this incident. Now, what do you think she will do?

Akash – She will give me another laddu!



Pitamaha – Will she give you exactly the same amount of laddu that had fallen down? Remember you had already had a small bite of the laddu.

Akash – She will most probably give me a full one.

Pitamaha – Will she do anything else as well?

Akash – She will speak to me kindly and console me.

Pitamaha – Yes. That's right. She will more than compensate your loss, so that you will no longer have the feeling that you have lost the joy of eating the laddu. Similarly, Ishvar more than compensates in case injustice is meted out to us—in the form of an accident or robbery. Remember, Ishvar like our mother, would be watching and guiding us at all times. We will learn about this in further detail.

Let's talk about these

1. "Ishvar is Just" – justify the statement.
2. Rohit suffers a loss, as his house is looted. Is this a result of his action or consequence of robber's action? Why?
3. How does Ishvar prevent us from doing evil deeds?

Let's do these exercises

a. Fill in the blanks:

1. _____, _____ and _____ are the three aspects of our actions.
2. Good action always yields _____.

Expected learning outcome

Students know about the ranks in Indian defence forces -
Army, Navy & Airforce

INDIAN ARMY

Being the largest of the Indian Armed Forces, the Indian Army has 12.37 lakh personnel, comprising of (a) Officers & (b) Soldiers. They have different levels of educational qualification, training, authority & responsibilities.

The Officers lead the Army at various levels, while the soldiers form the backbone. Of the 12.37 lakh Indian Army personnel, approximately 40,000 are officers, with the remaining being soldiers. Soldiers typically join the Army as a 'Sipahi', while the officers join the Army with the rank of 'Lieutenant'. Based on a combination of number of years of service and merit, the officers are promoted to the next levels. Indian army is currently facing a shortage of around 35,000 personnel at various levels.

The Indian Army is headed by the Chief of the Army Staff (COAS) in the rank of General. The current COAS is General Upendra Dwivedi. The army operates Six Operational Commands and One Functional (Training) Command, each headed by a Lieutenant General. The purpose of an Operational Command is to conduct military operations within its area of responsibility, whereas the responsibility of Functional Command is to maintain combat readiness, by periodic training of the personnel.



General Upendra Dwivedi

INDIAN ARMY RANK INSIGNIA: OFFICERS

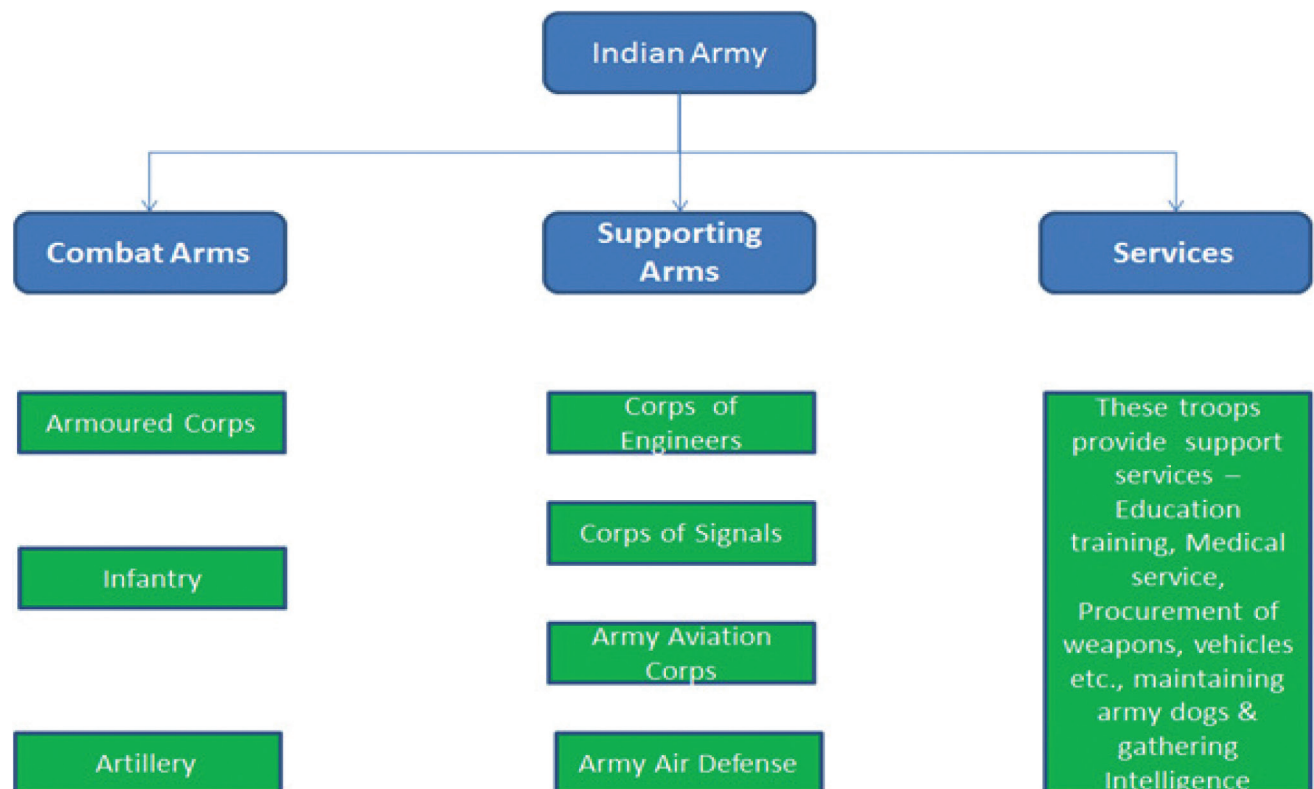


INDIAN ARMY RANK INSIGNIA: JCO/NCO/JAWANS



‘Field Marshal’ is the highest rank in the Indian Army. It is however a largely ceremonial or wartime rank, having been awarded only twice till date to two brave sons of the soil for their invaluable leadership during the Indo-Pakistan War of 1947 (Kodandera M Cariappa) and the Indo-Pakistan War of 1971 (Sam Manekshaw).

The army is operationally divided into Arms (Combat Arms and Supporting Arms) and Services that work together as a team.



Combat Arms - Combat arms are the fighting arms who engage the enemy directly in actual combat. They are further sub-divided into

- i. **Infantry:** Infantry refers to the foot soldiers of the Indian Army. They are the main offensive team. Infantry is also called the 'Queen' of the force. Infantry does the primary attacking, capturing and holding of land.
- ii. **Armoured Corps:** They comprise of tanks and other armoured vehicles. There are no foot soldiers. In an open battlefield, these men move with armoured vehicles to provide additional fire support to the infantry. They are quick and very offensive, but being on wheels, they cannot hold the land like Infantry.
- iii. **Artillery:** Artillery constitutes the big guns. They don't go into the battlefield. They fight the war outside the arena. They provide cover fire with big guns with a range of 50–60 kms and high elevation. This can shatter enemy defences and buy infantry time to move in.



Supporting Arms - Supporting arms are those who provide support to the Combat arms. They are further divided into

- i. **Corps of Engineers:** Corps of Engineers helps the Fighting Arms forces by constructing roads, bridges, railway lines, mine clearing, obstacle clearance and bunker demolition. It also checks and denies the progress of mobility to the enemy by mine laying, demolitions, obstacle construction.
- ii. **Corps of Signals:** Corps of Signals handles its military communications. Its role is to provide secure, reliable, strategic, operational and tactical communications and it spearheads the information technology revolution in the Indian army including cyber security. The men in Corps of Signals are proudly referred to as 'Information Warriors'.
- iii. **Army Aviation Corps:** The Aviation Corps provides tactical air transport, combat transportation, reconnaissance, and medical evacuation to army. AAC provides

rapid mobility to troops in the field. AAC is now also inducting attack helicopters to increase its capabilities.

- iv. **Army Air Defence:** The Air Defence Corps provides support against enemy air attack. They use anti-aircraft guns and surface to air missiles to destroy aerial enemy targets. It protects the Indian air space from enemy aircraft and missiles, especially below 5,000 feet, where it is highly impossible to intercept the threat by Air Force planes.

The motto of Indian Army is **‘Service Before Self!’**

AIR FORCE

The Indian Air Force has 1.4 lakh personnel, comprising 12,400 Officers and 1.27 lakh other personnel (Airmen) in supporting roles.

Graduates from National Defence Academy (NDA) who are selected for Air Force, typically join as ‘Flying Officers’. While the Flying Officers are in-charge of senior roles including flying of fighter jets, the airmen make sure that all the air and ground operations run smoothly. From operating Air Defence systems to fitting missiles, they are involved in all activities of an air base.

The Chief of the Air Staff (CAS) is in the rank of Air Chief Marshal. The current CAS is Air Chief Marshal Amar Preet Singh. **‘Marshal of the Air Force’** is the highest attainable rank in Indian Air Force. It is however a largely ceremonial or wartime rank, having been awarded only once till date to Arjan Singh, for his distinguished service in commanding Indian Air Force (IAF) during the Indo-Pakistan war of 1965.



**Air Chief Marshal
Amar Preet Singh**

Shoulder										
Sleeve										
Rank	Marshal of the Air Force*	Air Chief Marshal	Air Marshal	Air Vice Marshal	Air Commodore	Group Captain	Wing Commander	Squadron Leader	Flight Lieutenant	Flying Officer

* Honorary/War time rank.

The Indian Air Force has over 60 air stations all over India, divided into 7 commands - five operational and two functional. The Operational commands are spread across the country

to protect India's borders from all sides. The two Functional Commands are related to training & maintenance.

Indian Air Force has various types of aircrafts with specific uses. Fighter aircrafts are used for direct combat, while others are used for support roles like transport, reconnaissance, tanker (aerial refuelling), training etc. The best fighter plane of Indian Air Force is 'Sukhoi 30 MKI', developed by Russia. It has a speed of 2,120 km/hour and can perform complex manoeuvre in which aircraft can turn quickly at sharp angles in any direction enabling the pilot to quickly discharge its weapons on the target. Other fighter planes with Indian Air Force include MiG-29, Dassault Mirage 2000 & SEPECAT Jaguar.



However, IAF's fleet of aircrafts needs significant improvement – both in terms of technical advancement & number of aircrafts. The Indian Air Force needs at least 42 Squadrons of fighter jets to simultaneously protect its western and northern borders with Pakistan and China. There are generally 16-18 planes in a Squadron. However, we currently have only 32 squadrons with remaining planes being de-commissioned because of aging. We may further lose another 14 squadrons in next two years due to aging. Considering the gravity of the situation, India is sourcing 36 advanced Dassault Rafale fighter jets from France to bridge the gap with each jet costing us approximately Rs. 710 crores, out of which 35 fighter jets have joined our forces.

Meanwhile, India is also focusing towards further improving on the technical capabilities of its first indigenously developed fighter plane – Tejas Mark I. It is one of the smallest and lightest in its class of contemporary supersonic combat aircrafts. Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) an Indian-state owned aerospace and defence company is making all efforts to increase its production capacity to 16 fighter planes in a year. Though it initially took 19 months to build one fighter plane from start to finish, they are now trying to bring down the development time to only 9 months. Each Tejas Mark I fighter bird would cost Rs. 400 crores. It will be far easier to maintain and service these aircrafts, as they have been produced domestically.

The motto of Indian Air Force is '**Nabha Sparsham Deeptam**' – Touch the Sky with Glory!

NAVY

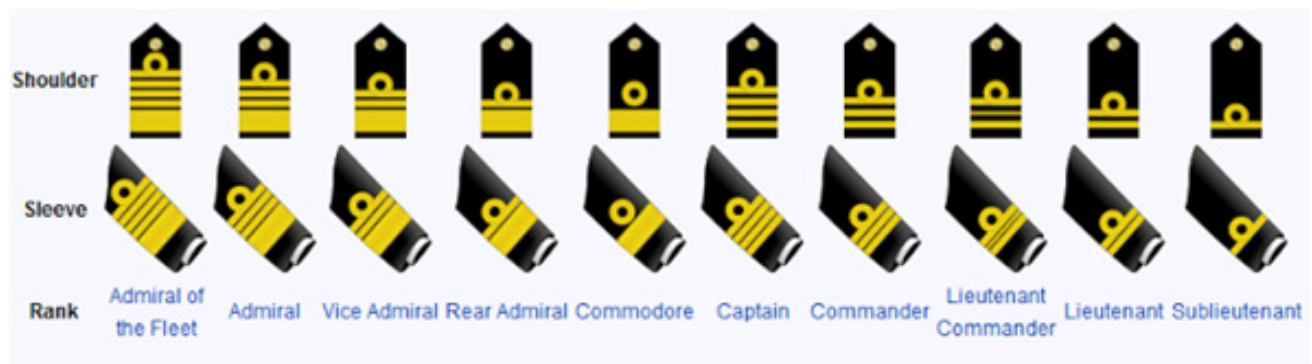
The Indian Navy has about 67,000 personnel, comprising officers and other personnel in supporting roles. Young officers join the Navy as Sub-Lieutenants. The Chief of the Naval Staff (CNS) is in the rank of Admiral, the highest-ranking officer in the Indian Navy. The current CNS is Admiral Dinesh K Tripathi.



**Admiral
Dinesh K Tripathi**

The rank of 'Admiral of the Fleet' exists, is primarily for major wartime use and honour. No officer of the Indian Navy has yet been conferred this rank.

The Indian Navy operates three Commands – Eastern, Western & Southern, stationed at Visakhapatnam, Mumbai & Kochi (Cochin) respectively. In addition, it operates a joint command at the Andaman & Nicobar islands along with Army & Air Force. Each command is headed by a Commander-in-Chief with the rank of Vice Admiral.



The Indian Navy uses a range of high-tech ships, submarines, weaponry and armaments. The most sophisticated naval vessel that the Indian navy has is the **INS Vikramaditya** – the



only aircraft carrier, which it purchased from Russia for \$2.35 billion, and commissioned it in 2013. The ship has the ability to carry over 30 aircrafts and can operate up to a range of over 7,000 nautical miles or 13000 kms with more than 1,600 personnel on board.

INTERESTING FACTS

- Prior to 1950, Indian naval ships carried the prefix HMIS (“His Majesty’s Indian Ship”) as the Indian Armed Forces were under the British Crown. After the declaration of the Republic of India on 26 January 1950, the prefix became INS (“Indian Naval Ship”)
- **Nautical mile** is based on the circumference of the earth, and is equal to one minute of latitude. It is slightly more than a mile as we measure on land. **1 nautical mile = 1.151 miles | 1 nautical mile = 1.852 kms | 1 mile = 1.609 kms**

Aircraft Carrier: An aircraft carrier is a large naval vessel or ship having a long deck or runway on which an aircraft or helicopter can take off or land at sea. It acts as a seagoing airbase which allows naval forces to launch air missions without being dependent on the airbases at land.

Aircraft carriers are like floating cities and are the most visible representation of military power and maritime dominance. They have thousands of military personnel and expensive equipment on board. It costs billions of dollars to build an aircraft carrier and it is heavily protected having its own sophisticated defence mechanisms, and is always accompanied by



numerous smaller vessels that sail along with it. The United States Navy, the world’s largest and most powerful, has a total of 11 aircraft carriers. Some of these aircraft carriers are like large office buildings with 20-25 decks (similar to floors in a building). By its diplomatic and tactical power, its mobility, its autonomy and the variety of its means, the aircraft carrier is often the centre piece of modern combat fleets.

One of its great advantages is that, by sailing in international waters, it does not interfere with any territorial sovereignty and thus obviates the need for overflight authorizations from third-party countries, reduces the time and transit distances of aircraft and therefore significantly increases the time of availability on the combat zone. It is like establishing a local presence far away from the mainland. For instance, US has been fighting wars in Iraq

& Afghanistan for decades now. Aircraft carriers are extensively used to keep US fighter aircrafts and other arms, ammunition & personnel ready to be deployed as required.

India is currently building its own indigenous aircraft carrier, **INS Vikrant**, at Kochi, at a cost of about Rs. 30,000 crores (over \$4 billion). The project which started in 2009, was completed and commissioned on 2nd September, 2022.

Apart from one aircraft carrier (INS Vikramaditya), Indian Navy has other vessels including battleships, frigates, corvettes, destroyers, nuclear-powered & ballistic missile submarines, mine countermeasure vessels, fleet tankers and various other auxiliary vessels.

The motto of Indian Navy is '**Sham No Varunaha**' – May the Lord of water (Varun) be auspicious onto us.

Operation Trident was an offensive operation launched by the Indian Navy on Pakistan's port city of Karachi during the Indo-Pakistani War of 1971. The operation was conducted on the night of 4–5 December and inflicted heavy damage on Pakistani vessels and facilities. Interestingly, the Indian navy ship crews communicated in Russian, making the transmissions between the attacking vessels difficult to intercept for enemy ears! Within a span of 90 minutes, Indian Navy vessels fired six missiles, sunk three front-line enemy vessels and destroyed the oil storage facility at the Karachi harbour, without a single Indian casualty. This Operation proved to be a very important turning point in the 1971 war and was then globally considered to be one of the most successful in naval history post-World War II. India since then celebrates its Navy Day on December 4th every year, to mark this operation

CHIEF OF DEFENCE STAFF (CDS)

The three Indian Armed forces – Army, Navy & Air Force have hitherto been operating as standalone verticals with their own independent resources. On Jan 1, 2020 India created a new position – **the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS)** with the primary objective of integrating the operations, and ensuring optimal utilisation of infrastructure in the three Services.

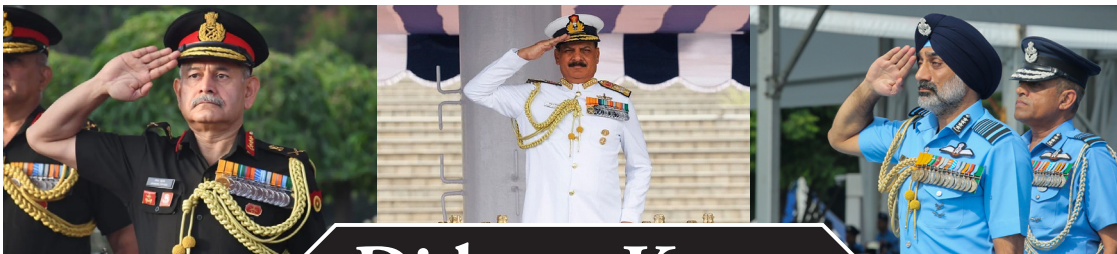
India felt the acute need for a Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) right after the Kargil war in 1999. The K. Subrahmanyam committee, set up after the Kargil war had indeed strongly recommended setting up of the CDS. But in the absence of political consensus and apprehensions among services; it never moved forward. It was a defence reform everyone knew was needed but government was not willing to push through, in the face of bureaucratic and military resistance. Interestingly, most major global powers, like USA, UK, France,

Germany, Russia & China felt the need and already have a single point military advisor (equivalent of CDS) integrating all the three forces – Army, Navy & Air Force.

Honourable Prime Minister, Shri. Narendra Modi finally announced the creation of the Office of the Chief of Defence Staff on August 15, 2019. General Bipin Rawat was formally appointed as the first CDS on 1st January 2020. However, very unfortunately, his life was cut short after a tragic chopper crash in the Nilgiri Hills in Tamil Nadu in December 2021. Apart from the General, his wife and 11 others were on board the ill-fated helicopter. Lt General Anil Chauhan (retired) has been appointed the new CDS.



General Anil Chauhan



Did you Know

Ever Wondered why the Indian Army, the Navy and the Air Force have different Saluting Style ???

The **Indian Army** reveal their **Entire palm** signifying that they are **unarmed** and that they are **trusted** for. As the **Sailors Hand** would be greasy and dirty, they salute with their palm facing downwards. The **AirForces** salute with their **palm at a 45 Degree Angle** showing their **Progress towards the Sky**.

KEY CHALLENGE FOR INDIAN DEFENCE FORCES

The Indian military is the second largest in the world, in terms of number of personnel. But this description does not make it as powerful as what such a portrayal should signify, in terms of its capacity to undertake military operations optimally in the multi-domain, technology dominated battlefields of the future. We just have not been able to keep pace with the sophisticated weaponry system developed by many other countries. We are therefore heavily dependent on imports for our various defence needs including fighter aircrafts, submarines, helicopters, armoured fighting vehicles, guns, artillery etc, spending valuable

foreign exchange. We are indeed the world's largest buyer of defence equipment, importing from Russia, the US, Europe, Israel and South Korea.

Paradox – It is however paradoxical that India has done reasonably well in developing Space & Nuclear technology – it is counted one amongst the leading countries in the world. A plausible explanation for India's technological self-sufficiency in those areas is the lack of external help available from other developed countries. Since each country has historically been highly secretive about its own space & nuclear technology, it possibly forced India to develop its own.

But as far as defence requirements is concerned, enough and more global companies have been very keen to expand their business selling arms & ammunition to us. There are numerous middlemen who lobby with government & defence officials to supply weaponry system to India. Defence procurement has indeed been infested with corruption at various levels. Also, flanked by highly volatile neighbours – Pakistan & China, India constantly has a sense of insecurity, thus continuously trying to strengthen its defence capability, a fact further exploited by the middlemen.

It is also imperative to note that these countries typically do not sell their latest technologically superior weapons, but only those that are in the phase out stage, but which are still far superior to what India can potentially build on its own. It is extremely disappointing that we remain dependent in this space, even after 70 years of us gaining Independence.

It is only now that the Indian Government under the '**Make in India**' initiative is focusing its efforts on increasing indigenous defence manufacturing and becoming self-reliant. DRDO (Defence Research & Development Organization), a government organization charged with military's research & development along with certain Public Sector Units (PSUs) like Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) and Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL), Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited (MDL) are taking concrete steps in this direction. Over the last three years since 2015, India has been able to unveil certain new technologically advanced products manufactured domestically like the Tejas Light Combat Aircraft and Anti-submarine torpedo named 'Varunastra'. Hope it is atleast now the dawn of a new era, for the Indian Armed Forces.

Much time, money, energy and labour have already been wasted chasing and preferring imported material from the West, that in turn has stunted and reduced the potential growth of India's military air technique and technology. It's time to wake up and prepare to take on the world.



“Unless India stands up to the world, no one will respect us. In this world, fear has no place. Only strength respects strength.” ~ Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam

(Acknowledgement – Articles available electronically on Indianarmy.nic.in; Indianairforce.nic.in; Indiannavy.nic.in; Wikipedia.org)

Let's do these exercises

a. Correct the statement and rewrite

1. The soldiers lead the army at various level, while the officers form the backbone.
2. India is focusing on improving technical capacity of its first indigenous fighter plane- MIG-29
3. INS Vikramaditya-the only aircraft carrier which it purchased from Britian for 2.35 billion dollar and commissioned it in 2013.

b. Write the full forms of the following abbreviations

- | | | | | |
|--------|-------|-------|--------|--------|
| 1.COAS | 2.NDA | 3.CAS | 4. CNS | 5.CDS |
| 6.DRDO | 7.HAL | 8.BEL | 9.MDL | 10.DMA |

c. Complete the sentence

1. The highest attainable rank in Indian Airforce is _____.
2. Indian Navy Day is celebrated on _____.
3. India is currently building its own indigenous aircraft carrier _____.
4. The highest attainable rank in Indian Army is _____.
5. The Queen of the Armed Force is _____.

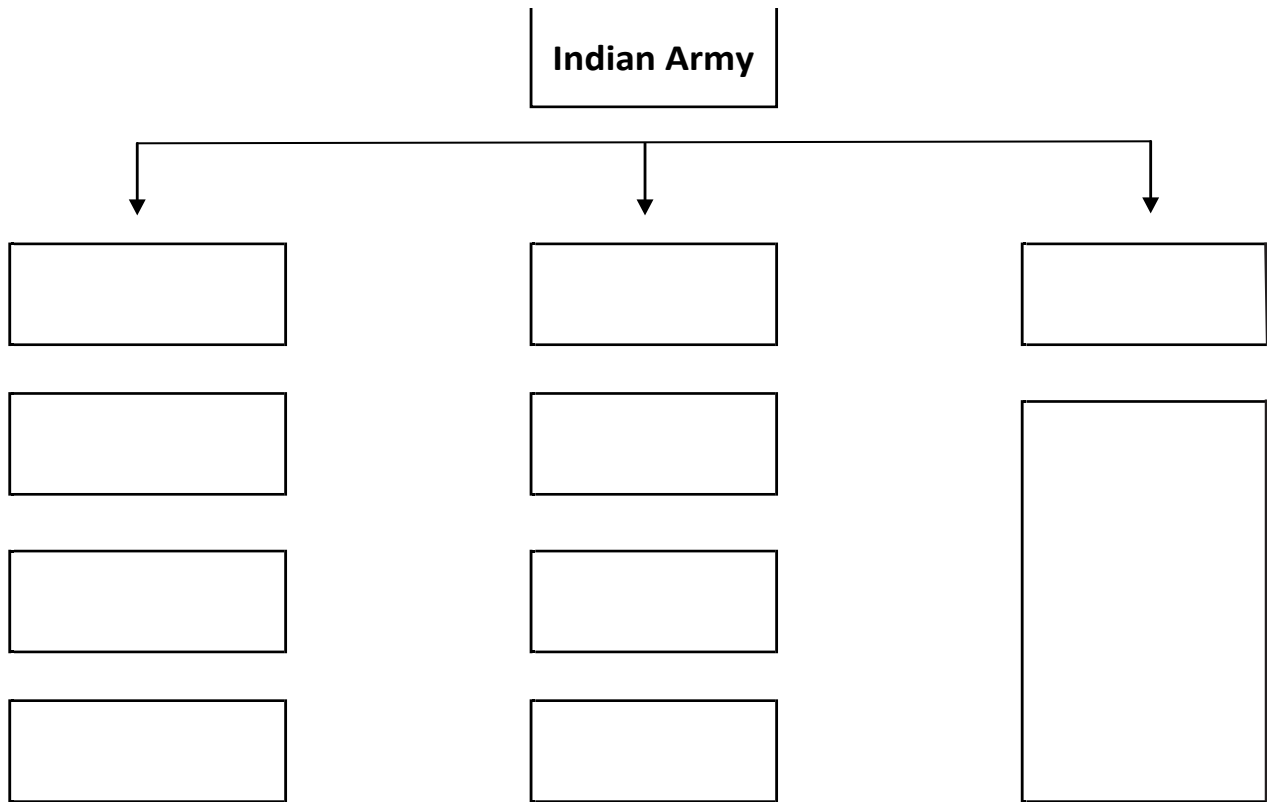
d. Name the following

1. Two brave sons who were awarded the “Field Marshal”
2. The Chief of the Naval Staff
3. Stations from where the Indian Navy operates
4. The best air fighter plane of Indian Air Force
5. The first Chief of Defence Staff

e. Answer the following

1. Explain the sub divisions of combat Arms.
2. What is the motto of Indian Army?
3. Explain the types of Aircrafts in Indian Air Force with specific uses.
4. Describe an aircraft carrier.
5. What is the motto of Indian Air Force?
6. Which is the most sophisticated naval vessel of Indian Navy?
7. What is the motto of the Indian Navy?
8. What is the purpose of operational command and functional command?
9. What is artillery?
10. Elucidate the functions of Supporting Arms.

f. Complete the following flow chart to show the operational divisions in Indian Army.



Activity

Find out the various regiments of the Indian Army and their war cry.
Contemplate on how the war cry motivates the soldiers in a crisis.

EVALUATING RELIGIOUS RITUALS – 1

Expected learning outcomes

Students:

- approach religious rituals with an open mind.
- understand the 'Varna' system as described in the Vedas

*Agasti was close to becoming an atheist. He was not interested in any of the religious practices. His **nani (grandmother in Hindi)** was noticing the change in her grandson over the last year. One day they had an interesting chat.*

Nani – Agasti, do you believe in Ishvar?

Agasti – Nani, there are so many religions with different kinds of rituals and practices within each. Also within a particular religion, there are so many sects and sub-sects. It is all so confusing.

Nani – I agree with you, Agasti. Unfortunately, religion is the most significant reason for misunderstanding amongst humans. People do not hesitate to kill each other over it. There is so much of conflict amongst religious leaders themselves.

Agasti – It is like people fighting with each other over who has a better friend!

Nani – Also, over the years, our relationship with Ishvar has become fear-based. We often hear this: “If you do not do this, Ishvar will punish you; or his soul will not rest in peace etc.”

I can, to an extent, understand your mindset. With all this confusion, the younger generation is losing faith in Ishvar.



Agasti – Yes, nani. We just do not know what is right or wrong.

Nani – Let me present to you a logical four-step framework to evaluate any religious belief or ritual.

Agasti – That will be very helpful.

Nani – The most critical litmus test is to check if the ritual being preached is ‘**Universally Applicable.**’

Agasti – What does this mean?

Nani – How many people live on this planet?

Agasti – About 750 crores (7.5 billion).

Nani – So, the ritual prescribed should be such that all 750 crore people can practically follow it in their everyday lives. Only then it can be the absolute truth and a message of the Almighty. For Ishvar, all human beings are equal whether they stay in a remote village of Kerala or Nagaland or live in Uganda in Africa.

Agasti – Can you elaborate?

Nani – For instance, if there is a ritual that one has to only go to a particular place of worship in any city, or take a dip in a specific river, it just cannot be physically followed by all the 750 crore people. Indeed stampedes do happen when there is a large congregation of devotees, leading to the death of many. For instance, in 2013, 115 people were killed and over 100 injured in a stampede during the Navratri festival at Ratangarh Mata temple in Madhya Pradesh.

Nani – The ecological balance of the place would be destroyed if all 750 crore people were to visit it even once in their lifetime. The infrastructure of no place on Earth can cater to all 750 crore people visiting it. It is also logistically impossible. Therefore, this cannot be the absolute truth!

Agasti – This sounds quite logical.

Nani – One should be able to pray to Ishvar in any part of the world because Ishvar is present everywhere. The worshipper need not travel to any particular location. Ishvar is right within you and He is also beside you when you need the strength to face life. When He is anywhere and everywhere, why travel long distances to worship Him? But to gain this maturity, to realise Ishvar, it takes time and consistent practise with utmost devotion.

Nani – Moving on, the second litmus test is whether the religious practice promotes ‘**Equality between people.**’ If not, you need to question its validity. For Ishvar, all Her children are equal as far as worshipping Her is concerned. Can you think of an example wherein religious practices differentiate people based on their economic status?

Agasti – Yes nani. Often when we visit famous religious shrines, there are long queues out there. But if we pay a certain amount, we can jump the queue and gain darshan of the deity quickly. There are indeed multiple payment slabs.

Nani – Not only that Agasti. If you pay a higher sum, you can also go nearer to the deity for darshan. This just cannot be what Ishvar wants from us humans. Indeed, a few devotees recently approached the courts objecting to this practice being followed in many temples. The High Court judge clearly ruled saying: “Irrespective of paid or unpaid devotees, ‘darshan’ of the deity shall be provided from the same distance to all.”

Agasti – That’s right. A person cannot gain exclusive access to Ishvar just because he is rich.

Nani – Ishvar treats Her children as equals. She provides all of us equally with sunshine, air, peace and happiness through meditation etc. It is we human beings who have built boundaries out of vested interests and ignorance.

Nani – Another area of concern is gender inequality. Even today, women are discriminated against in many places of worship. In many cases, they are denied access to certain parts of temples including the inner sanctum. Also, there is a belief in sections of the society that women should not chant the Vedic mantras including the Gayatri mantra. This is definitely a wrong notion. It is rather strange that we worship so many female deities but consider women inferior from a religious standpoint. It is widely proven that women in Vedic times were actively involved in all religious practices.

Agasti – Oh nani! We have missed one major kind of discrimination that is largely found in many places – the caste-based differentiation. There are so many temples wherein people belonging to certain castes are not even allowed access to worship.

Nani – Yes. Caste has indeed been a very sore point in our society over the last few centuries. The caste system being followed based on birth is entirely flawed. It is sad that even today we have not been able to overcome it. Even now, we find so many instances wherein people belonging to certain castes are denied rights at temples which people from other castes enjoy. For Ishvar, there is no upper or lower caste.

The Vedas only talk about ‘Varnas’ based on the job that a person does. Vedas do not advise any kind of discrimination based on the caste.

Agasti – Varnas? What are they nani?

Nani – What do you want to become when you grow up Agasti?

Agasti – I have a flair for teaching. I have been helping five poor children in my locality, with Maths & Science, since last two years. They generally come to my house over the weekends. I would like to be a Physics teacher when I grow up, as Physics is my favourite subject.

Nani – Good! So, being an entrepreneur, your father comes under the “Vaishya Varna” but if you become a teacher in future, you will be categorized under the “Brahman Varna”. There is absolutely no rule in the Vedas that a Vaishya’s son cannot be a Brahman or vice-versa. Just like you, different people have different interests in what they want to do or what career they want to pursue.

Agasti – So, how does the Varna system work?

Nani – Vedas classified people according to their profession as Shudras (involved in manual hardwork); Vaishyas (undertake and run businesses for the benefit of our economy); Kshatriyas (administer and guard the country, even sacrificing their lives); Brahmanas (learn and teach). Each Varna is important in its own way, dependent on the other. For instance, people who manually work hard on our fields, grow foodgrains without which none of us can even survive. Without active trade in a society, we will not be able to procure our daily necessities. We need brave soldiers - to protect us from enemies and teachers - to help all of us learn.

Remember, we are all born equal. Based on our interest and inclination, we choose one profession over the other. It is completely up to each one of us whether we want to be a Shudra, Vaishya, Kshatriya or Brahman.

Agasti – This sounds fair and logical nani. Now, I clearly understand the Varna system mentioned in the Vedas.

Let's talk about these



1. List the first two tests under the four-step framework to evaluate religious beliefs or rituals.
2. What are the different ways in which people are differentiated in various religious places?
3. How has caste inequality crept into temples?
4. How does one's economic status influence a person in the religious places?
5. Discuss the difference between the varna and the caste system as is being practised today.

Let's do these exercises



a. Tick the correct answers:

1. Ishvar is present at specific (**places** / **everywhere**).
2. Women in the Vedic period (**did** / **did not**) actively participate in all religious practices.
3. (**Ishvar** / **Human beings**) have built boundaries out of vested interests and ignorance.

b. Fill in the blanks:

1. The Vedas talk about _____ based on the job that one is passionate about and is interested in doing.
2. If a ritual cannot be practised at the place you are residing in, it fails the most important litmus test of _____.
3. Over the years, our relationship with Ishvar has become based on _____.
4. Ishvar treats all of us as _____ as we all are her _____.

c. Write 'T' for true and 'F' for false:

1. The ritual of taking a dip in a particular river can be physically followed by 750 crore people.
2. Caste-based discrimination still exists in our society wherein people belonging to certain castes are denied equal rights at temples, which other castes enjoy.
3. Women have the right to chant the Vedic mantras including the Gayatri Mantra.
4. The High Court judge ruled that irrespective of paid or unpaid devotees, 'darshan' of the deity shall be provided from the same distance to all.
5. Ishvar differentiates between people.

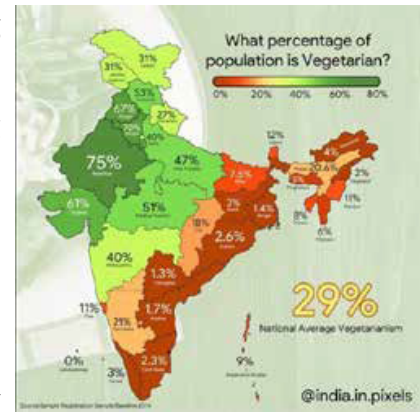
Let's have fun



Design a poster to stop inequalities between people in religious practises using various captions and slogans.

16

However, over the last one decade there is an increasing realization that we need to reduce meat consumption due to diverse reasons – avoiding animal cruelty, preserving environmental resources and leading a healthier life. Vegetarianism is expanding in several countries around the world including Europe and United States.



The debate on vegetarianism however continues. Vegetarianism is often linked to religion or caste, which is an absolutely illogical way to evaluate this very significant topic. The concept of vegetarianism is indeed universal in nature, rather an important aspect of ‘Dharma’ which is applicable to entire humanity. We will further explore this concept rationally using the three types of Pramaans or evidences – Pratyaksh (Based on our direct observation); Anumaan (Estimation based on our own critical analysis); Shabd (Advise of Shaastras & personalities whom we emulate).

I. Unimaginable Animal Cruelty

We casually go to a supermarket and pick up meat which is neatly packed & arranged in racks, or relish the tastefully presented non-veg dish on our plates at a dine-in restaurant. However, we do not realize the amount of pain, discomfort and torture that the animals and birds undergo before they are slaughtered for our food, with absolutely no legal protection from cruelty.



Let us take the case of chicken, possibly the most eaten non-veg food in India. Today, there are two types of chickens raised: “broilers,” or chickens raised for meat, and “layers,” or hens raised to lay eggs.



A broiler chicken begins her life in a hatchery, where thousands and thousands of eggs are incubated and hatched. The chick is separated from the day she is born and never gets to see her parents.

The birds are kept cramped in cages which are often stacked one over the other with hardly any space to move around. Imagine the droppings (excreta) of the birds falling down on the other birds in the cage below!



Now, if the chicks are kept in such terrible living conditions, they are bound to get frustrated and aggressive while jostling for space. They are likely to hurt each other with their beaks. Therefore, within days of being born, they undergo the process of 'Debeaking' wherein their beaks are mercilessly cut with a blade.

These birds are born with the instinct to not eat after sunset, i.e. once it is dark. They are therefore kept in artificially lighted conditions round the clock so that they continue to keep having food. They are injected with steroids which increases their appetite. The chicks therefore grow very swiftly.



The industry which aims to maximize profits, is only focused on the growth of flesh on their tiny bodies, more around the chest and the thigh region. Imagine, a new born baby being overly fed and made very obese without any concern for the overall development of the body, including bones. These obese chicks, living in filthy conditions develop numerous infections including broken bones as they are simply unable to support the unnatural and imbalanced growth of the remaining body.

The chicks never see the light of day or feel the fresh air. They spend their life packed tightly with other birds, suffering numerous health issues. They are finally transported to the butcher shop, often hung upside down, and kept in crates there, ready to be slaughtered anytime a customer walks in. They also undergo 'scalding', wherein they are dipped in hot water which makes it easier to remove their feathers.



Generally speaking, these birds can live for 6-8 years. But in the poultry industry, the lives of broiler chickens are cut drastically short to about 4 months, though they can appear full-grown due to their steroid based accelerated growth.

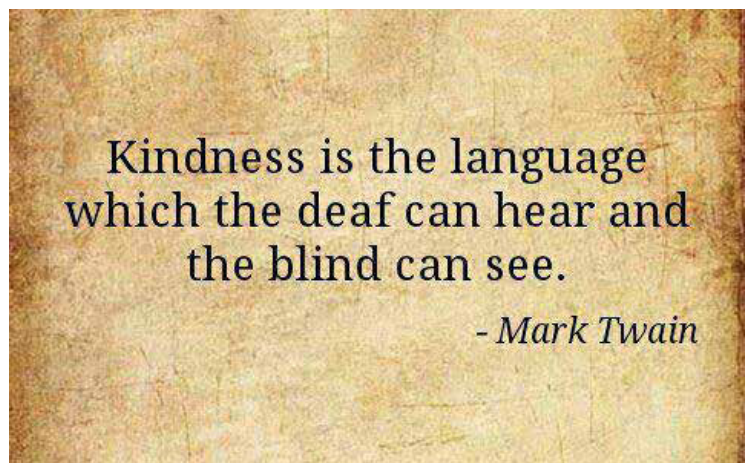
What about eggs? Many people opine that eating eggs is fine as no life is lost in this case. But, there is definitely ‘potential’ for life therein. Also, have you ever noticed how all birds zealously guard their eggs? They are so emotionally attached to the eggs, in which they see their own offspring. Humans typically torture the hens to ensure that they produce as many eggs as possible. They also often indulge in practice of ‘Forced molting’, wherein food and water is completely withdrawn for 7–14 days, making the hens mercilessly starve in a dark room. This helps in reducing food grain cost, and increases profitability of the egg producers.



Claiming to be at the top of the food chain has become a popular justification for eating meat products and an affirmation of our ability to violently dominate everything and everyone. Yet justifications for needless violence that draw on notions of power and supremacy are based on the philosophy of “Might makes right” — the principle behind the worst atrocities and crimes of human history. If these filthy animal farms and slaughter houses had glass walls, most of us would never touch meat. These animal farms are indeed nothing short of ‘concentration camps’ set up during World War II by the Nazis.



Essentially, there is absolutely no value for the ‘life’ in animal or the bird. Their bodies are treated like lifeless machines wherein food grains are converted into raw flesh. But remember all these beings are inquisitive, interesting individuals who value their lives, solve problems, experience fear, pain and joy. They love their babies exactly the way we humans nurture our own little ones!



II. Disproportionate Use of Natural Resources

Even today, one in nine people (~ 80 crores) on Earth suffer from chronic hunger, due to shortage and unaffordability of food.



The two key inputs required for food production is adequate land and water. Now, have you wondered about the amount of water required to produce one kg of the highly nutritious banana fruit? It is 790 liters of water. For apples, it is 820 liters. Looks quite high, isn't it.

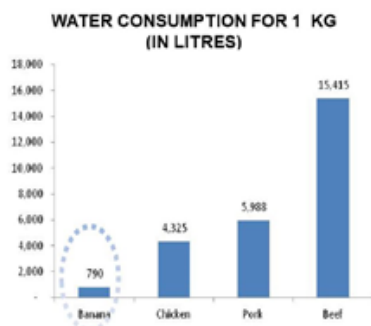


To put it in further perspective, we humans need about 150 liters of water for our other everyday needs, like drinking, bathing, cleaning, washing etc.

Now, how much water you think will be required for 1 kg of chicken meat? It is 4,325 liters! And for beef it is a whopping 15,415 liters of water. Why do you think that compared to banana, 5.5 times of additional water is required in case of chicken meat?

It is a simple logic – We human beings may weigh only 60-70 kgs, but we consume almost 675 kgs of food every single year, i.e. 1.8 kgs every single day. Similarly, these birds also consume fair amount of food grains during their lifespan.

On an average, if the bird consumes about 4.5 kgs of food grains, you will be able to get about 1 kg of chicken meat. Remember that when the bird is slaughtered, we only extract the flesh around the chest and the thigh region for our consumption, making only 60% of her body weight available as edible meat.



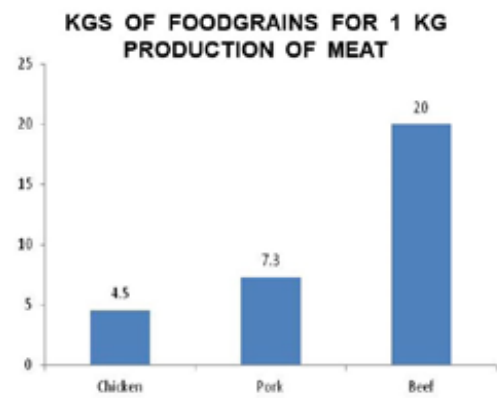
Thus, apart from water directly required by the bird for drinking, copious amount of water and land is required to produce the 4.5 kgs of foodgrains.

It is therefore not surprising to observe that while the price of 1kg of banana is Rs. 30-35, the price for 1 kg of chicken is Rs. 200-250.

It is indeed interesting to note that if all humans turn vegetarians, our overall need for land and water required for food will come down very significantly. It can ensure food security ensuring that no one suffers from chronic hunger. On the other hand, if more of us turn

non-vegetarians, we will be exerting greater pressure on our limited natural resources. Luckily, in a highly populous country like India, even non-vegetarians do not consume meat 3 times a day, 7 days-a-week unlike their counterparts in other parts of the world. If this situation was to change, we could be staring at a disaster.

Highly prosperous countries like China are today worried about their food security compared to India, primarily because of the need to feed meat-based diet to their huge population. Chinese President Xi Jinping has labelled food security a 'top national priority' amid a growing importance to feed China's 1.4 billion people, constantly encouraging the population to cut down on daily meat intake. Hong Kong has adopted the 'Go Green Monday' initiative wherein they promote meat free diet on atleast Mondays!



Have you thus wondered why we can't seem to feed the world's hungry? It is not because there isn't enough food; current agricultural capacity, based on current technology, exists to feed as many as 10 billion people. The Earth's population is 'only' about 8 billion. The big question really is: If we want to feed everyone, what would everyone need to eat?

III. High Carbon emission

The difference in emissions between meat and plant production is stark – to produce 1kg of wheat, 2.5kg of greenhouse gases are emitted. 1 kg of beef, meanwhile, emits 70kg of emissions. On an average, it takes 11x as much fossil fuel to make one calorie from animal protein as it does to make one calorie from plant protein. Why is there such

a significant increase in carbon emissions?

The answer partially lies once again in the amount of food grains that the animal or bird needs to eat in order to convert it into meat.

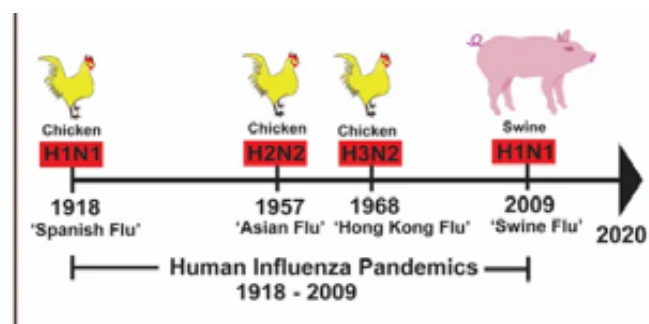


In addition, it is to be considered that the moment the animal is slaughtered, the meat has to be refrigerated, i.e. stored at temperature of 3 - 4 degrees Celsius. The meat is also transported in refrigerated trucks, kept in freezer at the supermarkets and is promptly put in the refrigerator once purchased by us and brought back home. Compare this complex supply chain to that required for vegetables and food grains that can be easily transported in ordinary vehicles at room temperature.



Thus, by eliminating or reducing our meat consumption, we can very significantly do our bit for the impending climate change crisis.

IV. Cause for numerous Diseases



We routinely come across the news about outbreak of Bird flu (H5N1 virus) & Swine flu (H1N1 virus) across different parts of the world, often leading to abrupt killing of scores of chicken and pigs as their meat becomes dangerous for human consumption. Appended is a newspaper headline dated Feb 18, 2024, calling for

culling of birds and destroying of eggs in the bird-flu affected areas of Nellore, Andhra Pradesh.

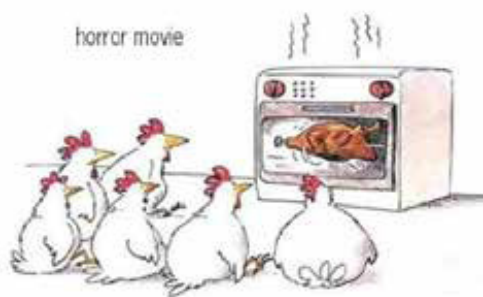
Bird flu: Andhra Pradesh officials cull more birds, destroy eggs in Nellore

TNN | Feb 18, 2024, 09:09 AM IST



TIRUPATI: Officials culled hundreds of birds and destroyed huge quantity of eggs in the bird flu-affected areas of Nellore on Saturday. Notices have been served to restaurants and roadside eateries not to serve chicken dishes. Special check posts have also been set up to curb the transport of poultry birds.

These animals and birds often carry various kind of infections for which they are routinely treated with antibiotics. The widespread use of antibiotics contributes to the development of antibiotic-resistant bacteria. Also, remember, they are injected with steroids to ensure accelerated growth.

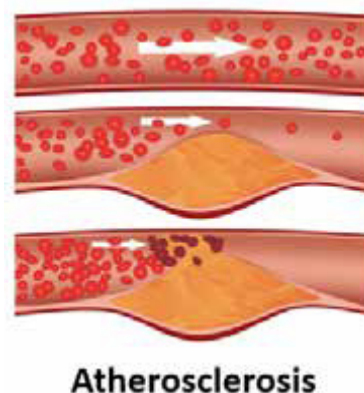
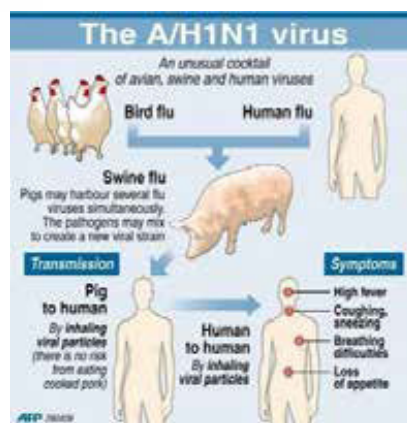


In addition, they undergo immense fear and stress just before they are killed as they see their own companions being slaughtered mercilessly. Imagine suddenly facing a fearful situation like narrowly escaping a serious accident - we can feel the release of stress hormones like cortisol and adrenaline in our body.

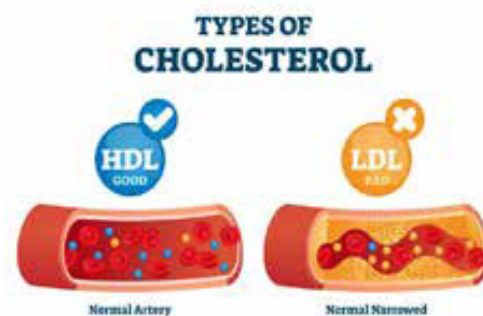
Now, all these harmful chemicals and substances are transmitted to humans through consumption of meat, leading to many kinds of diseases amongst us humans.

Cardiovascular diseases

Consumption of red meat and processed meat is linked to an increased risk of development of cardiovascular diseases. This association is primarily attributed to the high content of saturated fats and cholesterol. Saturated fats raise levels of LDL (Low Density Lipoprotein) cholesterol - “bad” cholesterol and lowers HDL – (High Density Lipoprotein) - “good” cholesterol. Elevated LDL cholesterol is a major risk factor for atherosclerosis,

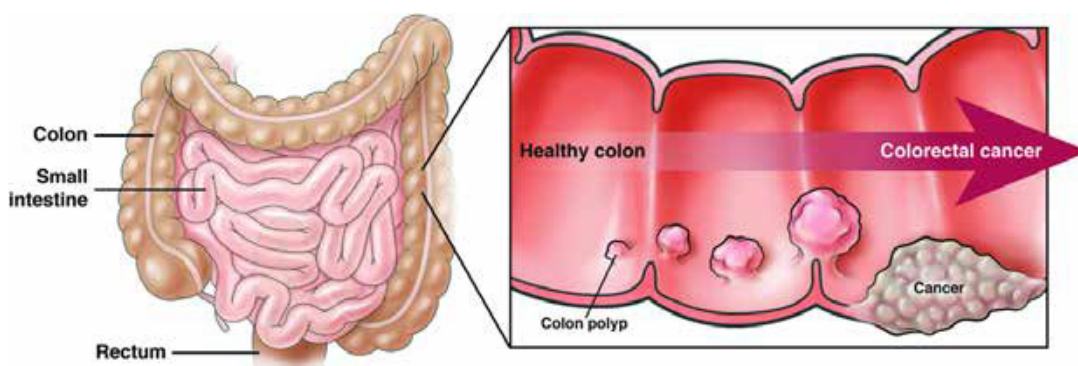


a condition characterized by the build-up of plaque in the arteries, which can lead to coronary artery disease, heart attacks, and strokes. High intake of saturated fats is associated with weight gain (Obesity), insulin resistance (Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus), and, all of which are components of metabolic syndrome. Compared to plant-based foods, non-vegetarian foods generally contain lower amounts of dietary fibre, antioxidants, vitamins, and minerals.



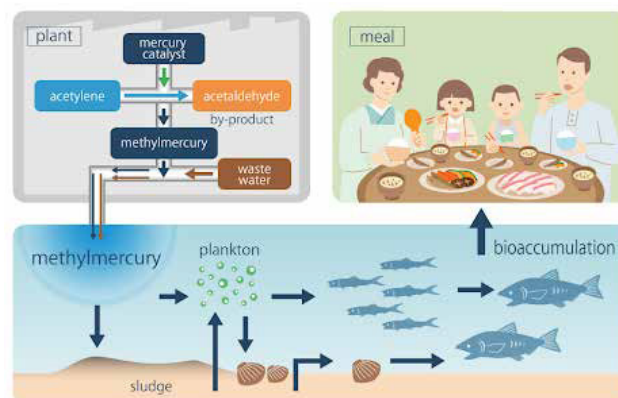
Increased probability of certain types of Cancers

Some studies suggest a correlation between the consumption of processed meats and certain types of cancer, particularly colorectal cancer. The mechanisms behind this association are not fully understood but may involve compounds formed during processing or cooking, such as nitrites and heterocyclic amines. Additionally, consumption of charred or grilled meats has been associated with an increased risk of cancer due to the formation of certain carcinogenic compounds.



Minamata disease - Case Study (Japan | 1956)

Interestingly, certain heavy metals such as mercury, lead, and cadmium become increasingly concentrated as they move up the food chain by the process of Bio-magnification. This means that organisms higher in the food chain tend to accumulate higher levels of these substances compared to those lower in the food chain. When humans



consume meat, they may inadvertently ingest these accumulated contaminants, which can lead to neurological damage, developmental disorders, kidney damage, and cardiovascular issues. One such incidence of bio-magnification happened in the Minamata City of Japan in 1956, caused due to consumption of fish and shellfish contaminated by methylmercury compound discharged from a chemical plant leading to central nervous system damage.

Note: There are few additional aspects to learn, which will be discussed in the lesson - Why Vegetarianism? - 2.

Let's talk about these

1. How does consuming meat increase the burden on natural resources?
2. Why are human beings susceptible to various diseases due to consumption of meat?
3. Is consumption of eggs justified? Substantiate your answer.
4. What are the ways in which the poultry industry exerts cruelty towards hen? Do you think there is a need to stop this cruelty? Explain.
5. Why is there much higher level of carbon emission to produce a calorie of animalbased protein?

Let's do these exercises

a. Fill in the blanks

1. Hong Kong adopted _____ initiative to promote meat-free diet.
2. The three types of Pramaans are _____, _____ & _____.
3. _____ crore animals and birds are slaughtered for food every single day.
4. Industries adopt the process of _____ to increase production of eggs.
5. Among the Indian states, 75% of _____ population is vegetarian compared to only 1.3% in _____.
6. _____ liters of water is required to produce 1 kg of beef; Only _____ liters of water is required to produce 1 kg of Apple.

b. Write 'T' for True and 'F' for False

1. If all humans turn vegetarians, our overall need for land and water required for food will rise significantly.
2. Minamata Disease was caused due to consumption of pork.
3. Humans are placed at the top of the food chain which eventually justifies the consumption of meat.
4. On an average, it takes 11x as much fossil fuel to make one calorie from animal protein as it does to make one calorie from plant protein.
5. The annual per capita meat consumption in US is around 3.2 kg.

Rishi Patanjali prescribes the eightfold path known as Ashtanga Yoga as the components of the Yogic journey.. The term Ashtanga is derived from the Sanskrit words “Ashta” (eight) and “Anga” (limbs).

Amongst the eight limbs of Yoga, the first two namely the Yama and the Niyama, represent a series of ‘right living’ or ethical rules as prescribed by the Vedas.

While “Yama” relates to laying the guidelines for:

- a. Ahimsa - Non violence
- b. Satya - Truth
- c. Asteya - Non-stealing
- d. Brahmacharya - Control over one’s senses
- e. Aparigraha - Simple living

“Niyama” facilitates understanding of :

- a. Shoucha - Purity of body and mind
- b. Santosh - Contentment
- c. Tapa - Emotional stability
- d. Swadhyaya - Introspection or study of the self
- e. Ishvar Pranidhaan - Unconditional surrender to Ishvar

‘Shoucha’, the first of the five Niyamas described in Patanjali’s Yoga Sutras is, which translates to cleanliness or purity. Shoucha emphasizes both External and Internal cleanliness as an essential element of spiritual practice.

I. External ‘Shoucha’

Shoucha | Personal | Basic hygiene

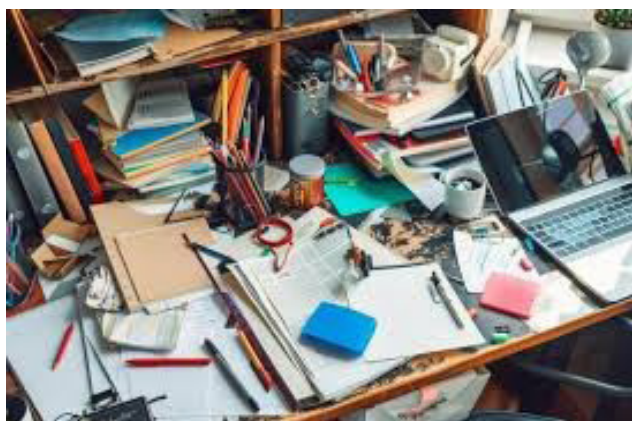
At the most basic level, Shoucha begins with physical cleanliness which includes regular bathing, wearing clean clothes, and grooming practices like trimming nails, keeping hair clean, and maintaining oral health. Apart from keeping away germs and thereby diseases, basic personal hygiene boosts our self-esteem.

Shoucha | Personal | Aasanas & Aahaar

Shoucha also includes regularly performing Asanaas (Yogic postures) and purification practices like Jalneti (nasal cleansing), Dhauti (internal cleansing) etc. which not only cleanse the body but also help remove toxins and blockages, supporting the free flow of energy or prana throughout the system. It also includes consuming pure water and eating only sattvic (pure, fresh, and wholesome) aahaar (Food). Consuming junk food even though hygienically prepared will not be considered as 'Shoucha'.

Shoucha | Personal | Clean-living & Work space

Practicing Shoucha extends to keeping our living and workspaces clean and organized, including areas like cupboards and washrooms. A tidy, well-maintained environment fosters a peaceful atmosphere that not only supports spiritual growth but also boosts productivity in daily life. Cluttered or dirty spaces, on the other hand, can contribute to stress, anxiety, and a sense of being overwhelmed. Research has shown that people living in clean, organized spaces tend to feel less stressed and are better able to focus. Such environments promote a sense of calm and order, enabling clearer thinking and improved concentration.



Interestingly, Shoucha also applies to decluttering digital spaces. In today's digital age, devices like smartphones, laptops, PCs, and tablets have become essential for managing both personal and professional tasks. With the growing accumulation of data—documents, multimedia, software, and personal notes—



it is crucial to maintain an organized system. A cluttered desktop or disorganized folder structure can create visual stress and lead to distractions. Maintaining a clean and structured digital environment reduces stress, enhances focus, and provides peace of mind by ensuring easy access to important files and preventing the anxiety of losing valuable information.

Shoucha | Society | Environment

Cleanliness also extends to the environment around us. While many of us maintain high standards of personal cleanliness, we often neglect public spaces, carelessly littering in parks,



stations, airports, roads, and multiplexes. Practicing responsible waste disposal, preventing littering, and participating in community cleanliness initiatives contribute to a healthier and more harmonious society.



Avoid over-cleanliness

Practicing Shoucha can also be a therapeutic activity which contributes positively to mental well-being.

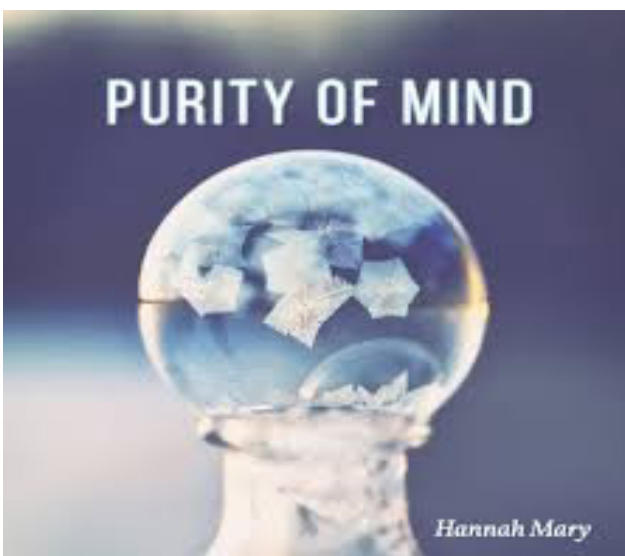
However, moderation is key—excess of anything can be harmful, and Shoucha is no exception. Some individuals develop Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD) related to cleanliness, characterized by an intense fear or obsession with contamination, germs, or dirt. This often leads to compulsive behaviours, such as excessive cleaning or washing, aimed at reducing the anxiety triggered by these fears and can also cause inconvenience or discomfort to those around us.

II. Internal ‘Shoucha’

Shoucha | Personal | Mental & Emotional

While external cleanliness is important, Shoucha also emphasizes the purity of the Mind (Mana), which is easily influenced by the environment, people, and the constant influx of sensory inputs. To maintain purity of thought, one must guard against negative tendencies such as greed, lust, laziness, anger, anxiety, and fear. In today’s age of social media and information overload, it is crucial to be mindful of what we consume. Limiting exposure to negative or harmful media and instead engaging with positive and educational content can greatly contribute to mental and emotional purity.

Practices such as meditation, studying the Shaastras, reading inspiring books, and engaging in self-reflection (Swadhyaya) can help cleanse the mind of negativity. Additionally, activities like Pranayama, journaling, or spending time in nature promote mental clarity, inner peace, and emotional balance.



Let's talk about these



1. What is Shoucha according to Rishi Patanjali?
2. Name the two limbs of Ashtanga Yoga that focus on ethical living.
3. Give two examples of external Shoucha.
4. How does Shoucha help in daily life?
5. What is sattvic aahaar, and why is it important in Shoucha?
6. Write a short note on internal Shoucha?

Let's do these exercises



a. Tick the correct answers:

1. Shoucha means (**outer beauty / cleanliness or purity**)
2. Washing hands and brushing teeth is (**internal shoucha/external shoucha**)
3. Watching too much negative media (**affects internal purity/improves knowledge**)

b. Fill in the blanks:

1. The term Ashtanga is derived from Sanskrit, where Ashta means _____ and Anga means _____.
2. The first two limbs of Ashtanga Yoga are _____ and _____.
3. Performing Yogic postures like _____ and internal cleansing practices like _____ and _____ are part of external Shoucha.
4. Littering public spaces harms the environment. Practicing _____ waste disposal supports community Shoucha.

Let's have fun

List out from your current lifestyle habits and note down:

- a) 3 things you do (or want to start doing) daily for Internal Shoucha (mind, emotions, digital consumption).
- b) 3 things you do (or want to start doing) for External Shoucha (body, surroundings, food).

Internal Shoucha	External Shoucha

FOSTERING VEDIC VALUES - 7

INSPIRATIONAL POSTER



Coin a caption _____



Coin a caption _____



Coin a caption _____



Coin a caption _____

NOTES:

