

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

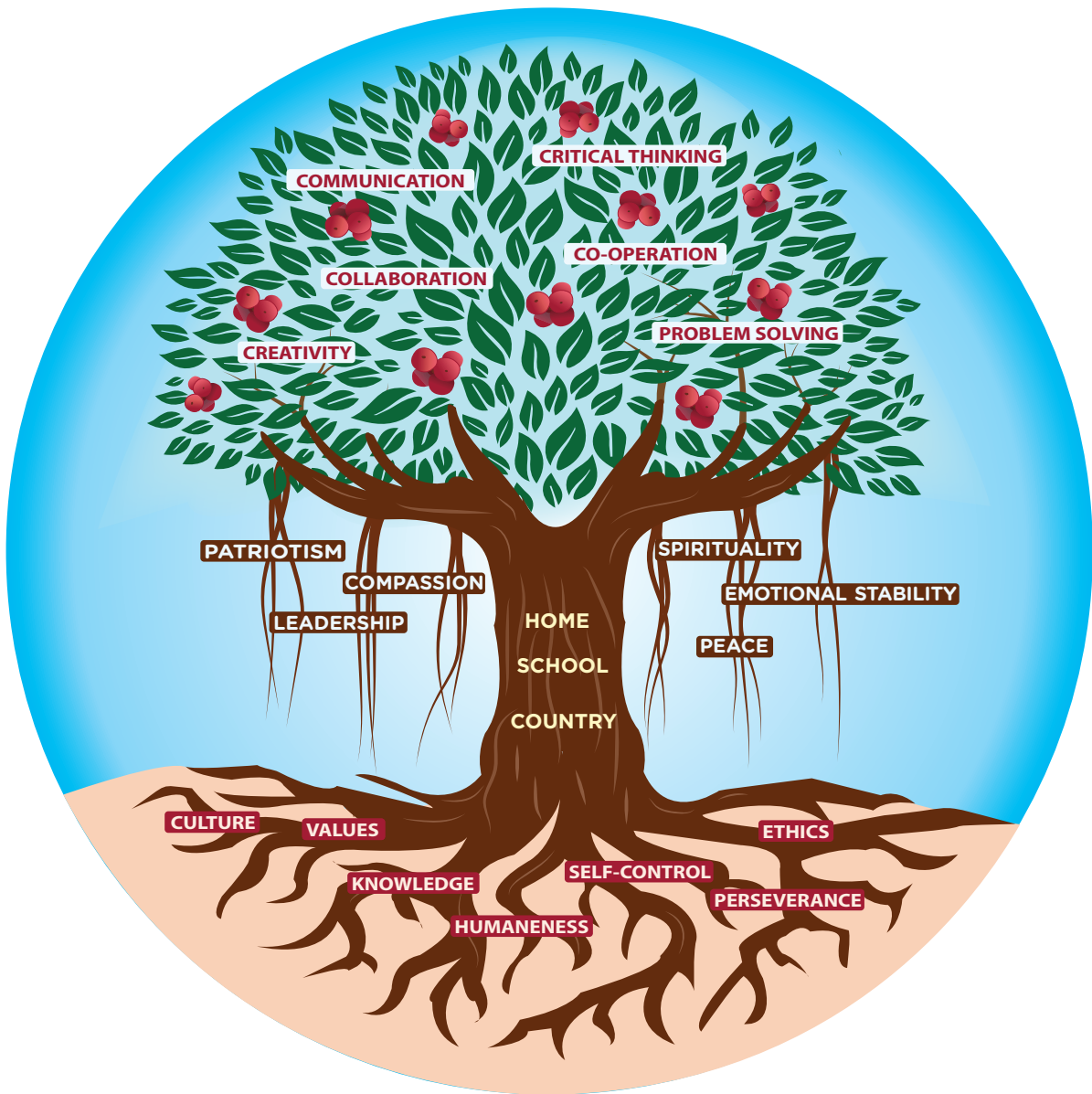


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The Learning Tree





DESIRES – 1

Expected learning outcome

Students understand that desires are never-ending

*Kavya was very fond of shoes. She already had four pairs of shoes and was pestering her **thakurda** (grandfather in Bengali) to buy another pair. Let's read on and find out what happens...*

Thakurda – Kavya, you are obsessed with shoes, aren't you?

Kavya – Yes, thakurda. I just love to wear different kinds of shoes. They look great with my different dresses.

Thakurda – Hmm...we all tend to have so many desires. Have you wondered why we want to satisfy our desires?

Kavya – Because we feel happy.

Thakurda – Ok, if you were to buy this additional pair of shoes, how long would it make you happy?

Kavya was confused.

Thakurda – You will be quite excited the first time you wear it. When you wear it for the second time, you will not be as excited as the first time around. The third time the excitement will reduce further. Your excitement will keep diminishing quickly, and soon it will become yet another pair of shoes in your wardrobe.

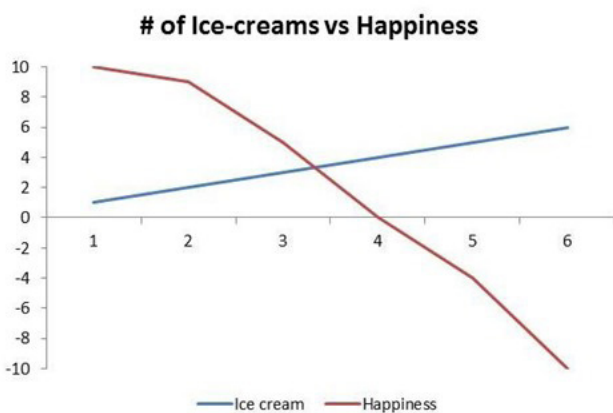
Kavya (after some thought) – I agree. I can recall a similar experience with the last pair of shoes that I purchased six months ago.

Thakurda – This is also applicable for say, ice cream, something I know you like as well.

Kavya – Yes, I especially like the chocolate flavour.



Thakurda – You will really look forward to having the first scoop of ice cream. If I offer you the second and third scoop, you will still enjoy it but not as much as the first one. If I then ask you to have the fourth scoop, you probably will still have it but will not really enjoy it. This indicates ‘Law of Diminishing Marginal Utility,’ that is your utility for a product declines as you have more of the same.



Kavya (laughingly) – And, if you were to offer me the fifth scoop, I will possibly vomit. It will become a punishment for me!

Thakurda – Also, I am sure you will agree that happiness from all eatables lasts only for a few seconds. It is the tongue that tastes the food and sends signals to your mind, which directs it to your soul. Your soul feels a sense of happiness because the taste is to your liking. However, once the food enters the food pipe and into your stomach, there is no further sense of enjoyment. Infact, if you have over-eaten junk food, you will have an uneasy feeling for the next few hours. Your body, a machine, will find it difficult to digest the food leading to acidity, thus giving your soul a sense of unhappiness.

Kavya – Yes! This does happen when I overeat. I realise later that I should not have done so. But then I cannot do much about it at that moment.

Thakurda – Interestingly, when a similar situation arises next time in a party, you tend to forget your earlier experience and once again overeat. You go through the same uneasiness. This cycle continues because we are not able to restrain our minds.

Thakurda – Coming back, if I were to offer you the same chocolate ice cream after a couple of days, you will once again enjoy it.

Kavya – That’s true.

Thakurda – Our various senses have a limited capacity to consume. We soon get tired. You just cannot have the fifth scoop of ice cream on the same day. But after a break, we once again have an urge to consume. This process keeps continuing forever during our lifetime. Indeed, there is a very relevant shloka,



भोगा न भुक्ता वयमेव भुक्ताः
तपो न तप्तं वयमेव तप्ताः
कालो न यातो वयमेव याताः
तृष्णा न जीर्णा वयमेव जीर्णाः

Bhogaa Na Bhuktaa Vayameva Bhuktaah
Tapo Na Taptam Vayameva Taptaah
Kaalo Na Yato Vayameva Yaataah
Trishna Na Jirnaa Vayameva Jirnaah

Meaning: *We could not consume everything but instead got consumed ourselves; we could not engage in any 'tapa' (penance) but instead got 'burnt' ourselves. Time did not elapse, but we are on the verge of being elapsed. Our desires did not get old, but we have got old.*

Thakurda – Let us consider a three-year-old child. He has never seen a gulab jamun. Now, if a gulab jamun is kept in front of him along with many other dishes, will this child be immediately attracted to it?

Kavya – Probably not.

Thakurda – Yes. He may not be attracted. On the other hand, imagine another three-year-old child who has been eating gulab jamun almost every month since last one year. The moment he sees the gulab jamun, he would insist on eating it.

Kavya – Yes, this is because he has experienced it before.

Thakurda – Remember, every time you fulfil a desire, there is an 'impression' left on your mind. This is called '*Samskaar*.' Whenever you see an object, your previous 'impressions' or '*Samskaars*' get invoked, and you start craving for the particular object.

Thakurda – So, we can deduce that desires are never-ending. Every time you fulfil your desires you further reinforce your 'impressions' or *Samskaar*. After some time, when the situation arises again, your '*Samskaars*' will once again attract you towards fulfilling your desire. There is another shloka :



न जातु कामः कामानां उपभोगेन शाम्यति।
हविषा कृष्णवर्त्मव भूय एवाभिवर्धते॥

Na Jaatu Kamah Kaamanam Upabhogena Shaamyati
Havisha Krishnavartmeva Bhuya Eva Abhivardhate

Meaning: Desires do not vanish by continually fulfilling them. They only grow more intense as you keep yielding to them. It is like adding fuel to the fire; the fire becomes even more intense.

Let's talk about these

1. What is Samskaar?
2. What happens when you overeat?
3. Recollect an instance, where you exercised restraint and was happy about it later.

Let's do these exercises

a. Fill in the blanks:

1. Every time we fulfil our desire, there is _____ left on our mind which is called _____.
2. The 'Law of Diminishing Marginal Utility' states that _____.
3. The shloka beautifully explains that we cannot consume everything but instead _____, we cannot engage ourselves in any tapa but instead _____, time did not elapse but _____ and our desires did not get old but _____.
4. Our tongue tastes the food and sends signals to our _____ which directs it to our _____ through which we feel a sense of joy, if the food is to our liking.



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

1. Desires vanish by continually fulfilling them instead they grow more intense on doing so.
2. In a situation where we have over-eaten junk food, we feel uneasy because our body finds it difficult to digest the food leading to acidity.
3. Desires are like a virtuous cycle.
4. When we see a 'familiar object of our liking', our Samskaars get invoked, and we start craving for that particular object.
5. Your mind does not long/crave for something that you have not experienced.
6. Wealth can make us happy always.
7. Consumption of tasty food gives everlasting happiness.

Let's have fun

Everyone is bound to have desires in life. To help you to understand yourself in a better way, make a list of your desires and check whether fulfilling them would enrich your life in the next five years.

Let's discuss

Eat to live rather than live to eat – Benjamin Franklin. Write a paragraph on the essence of the statement.



2

PANCHA MAHA YAJNYA – AGNIHOTRA

Expected learning outcome

Students understand the rationale behind Agnihotra

Nani (maternal grandmother in Hindi) was explaining the Pancha Maha Yajnya to Agasti. Meditation is the first and the foremost Maha Yajnya. Let's read on and find out the next one!

Nani – The second prescribed Yajnya is 'Deva Yajnya' i.e. Agnihotra also known as 'Hawan' or 'Homam'. As per this, one must perform Agnihotra twice daily at sunrise and sunset.

Agasti – What do you do as a part of Agnihotra?

Nani – In this, you light a small fire in a copper pyramid of a specific shape, using firewood and / or cow dung cakes. You also offer pure cow ghee and samagri. **Samagri** is a mixture of various dried herbal roots and leaves. It includes black sesame seeds, barley, camphor, rose petals, sandalwood powder, jaggery, tagar (a type of sugar) nagkesar, agar, jatamasi, nagarmotha, shatavari (herbal plants), turmeric etc.



Samagri

All the above ingredients are offered in the blazing fire which disseminates them into their micro form, in the air, to purify the environment besides activating the air as they are disinfectant and germicidal agents. It is interesting that almost all the ingredients that we offer in the fire are also used to treat various kinds of diseases in Ayurveda.

Agasti – Does the pyramid have to be made only of copper?



Nani – Copper and gold are the two metals prescribed for the pyramid used for Agnihotra fire. Since using gold is impractical due to high costs, it is advisable to have a copper pyramid. Both gold and copper are known to have healing properties.

Agasti – But, nani, instead of burning cow ghee in Agnihotra, would it not be better if it was offered to a few poor children?

Nani – I am glad you are trying to think logically.

Nani – Let me ask you a question. Many times, when your mother fries chillies in the kitchen, all members of the house immediately start sneezing. Have you wondered why?

Agasti – The essence of the chillies spreads everywhere.

Nani – Similarly, when you offer cow ghee and samagri to the fire, the essence of ghee and various herbs spreads everywhere. We all benefit by inhaling it. Indeed, even medically, inhalation is one of the quickest and most efficient forms of delivering medicines to the human body.

Agasti – Which firewood should we use for Agnihotra?

Nani – The firewood is known as **Samidha**.

Nani – It is prescribed that you should use samidha from only one of the three trees—Peepal, Mango or Palash. There is a scientific logic behind every stipulation. For instance, Peepal tree is proven to be a great source of oxygen. It purifies the surroundings and kills harmful bacteria.



Samidha

Agasti – So, is it right to conclude that these ingredients (cow ghee, herbs etc.) benefit comparatively a much larger number of people when offered to ‘Agni’?

Nani – Yes, that is right. Let me also narrate to you a historic incident in this context.

Agasti – Sure, nani.

Nani – Have you heard about the Bhopal Gas tragedy?

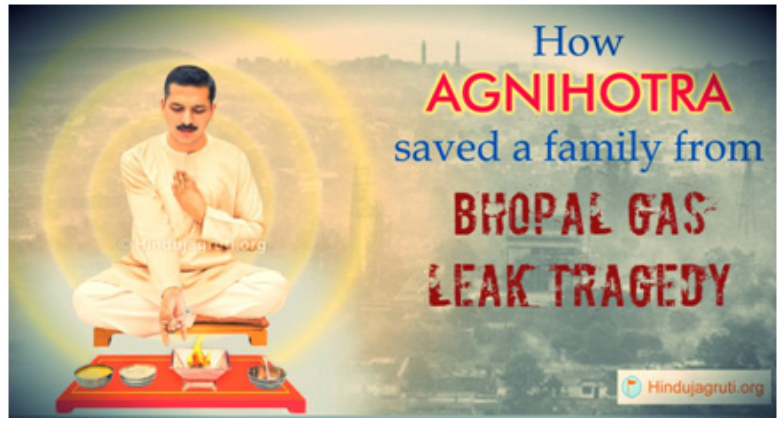
Agasti – I have read about it. Poisonous gas leaked from a factory in Bhopal because of which many people were killed.

Nani – It was one of the biggest industrial disasters in this world till date. It took place in Bhopal, India on the night of December 2, 1984. Methyl Isocyanate (MIC) gas leaked from



the Union Carbide Factory, causing great havoc. It was past midnight and people were asleep when it happened.

MIC spread rapidly, and people started coughing, feeling chest pain and a burning sensation in the eyes. People came out to the streets and ran helter skelter. Many were trampled in the panic that followed.



Yajnya is a Proven Antidote to Pollution

S.L. Kushwaha, a teacher, aged about 45 years, woke up at 1:30 a.m., on hearing his wife Triveni vomiting. Soon he and his children began feeling uneasy. Looking out of their home they saw people fleeing in panic. One of them told Kushwaha of the gas leak in the Union Carbide Factory about a kilometre away. They decided to join the crowd and run when Triveni suggested: “Why not perform Agnihotra?” After a quick deliberation, they decided to do so. Astonishingly, within 20 minutes the symptoms of MIC gas poisoning subsided.

Agasti – Wow! This must have been a miracle.

Nani – No Agasti, it was not a miracle. It was a rather a simple scientific process. The gas that emanated from Agnihotra (the essence of cow ghee and herbs) enveloped the area and kept the poisonous gas away. Agnihotra is a proven antidote to pollution.

Indeed there was the family of M.L. Rathore (33). He lived with his wife, four children, mother and brother near the Bhopal railway station. Rathore also started performing Agnihotra and the entire family was saved.

It was such a massive tragedy – 3,800 people lost their lives on that fateful night.

Agasti – If it is just a scientific process, what is the need to chant mantras along with it?

Nani – Technically, you need not. Even if you do not chant the Vedic mantras in Sanskrit, the chemical reaction remains the same. Everyone around will benefit from the gaseous essence that is generated. The reason why Vedic mantras are also prescribed is for it to be a deeper spiritual experience. Almost every mantra, ends with the words “इदं न मम”, (*idam na mama*) which means – ‘This is not mine’. In this world, which is driven by consumerism and selfishness, we pray that whatever we are offering to the sacred fire is for everyone around – not only for us. It will benefit the entire family, neighbours and other people in the locality.



Agasti – Also, I have noticed that every mantra begins with Om and ends with Swaha (स्वाहा).

Nani – Yes. By chanting ‘Om’, we invoke Ishvar. Swaha, literally means ‘well said’.

Nani – Agnihotra brings families together. It is typically performed with people sitting on all four sides of the copper pyramid as a team. Indeed, it is a great way for people to celebrate all occasions in life – birthday, anniversaries (birth, death, wedding), house warming and so on.



Agasti – So, I can still perform Agnihotra, though I may not know all the mantras?

Nani – Absolutely, you can also do the Agnihotra by chanting any one mantra like the Gayatri Mantra or for that matter any other prayer in any language.

Agasti – What if one is not able to procure samidha and samagri?

Nani – Well, you can possibly use just cow ghee and dung. Indeed, in many parts of India and abroad, people perform Agnihotra using only these two ingredients.

Agasti – I now understand the rationale behind Agnihotra. I will definitely make an effort to not only learn it well but will also strive to perform it regularly in life.

Let's talk about these

1. Write a short note on Bhopal Gas tragedy.
2. Name a few components used in the preparation of Samagri.
3. Share the experiences that you might have had while performing Agnihotra.

Let's do these exercises

a. Tick the correct answers:

1. The first important Pancha Maha Yajnya is (**Agnihotra** / **Meditation**).

2. When we offer ghee and samagri to the Agni, its essence spreads (**everywhere / nowhere**).
3. Agnihotra is a proven antidote to (**pollution / purification**).
4. The gas which leaked from the Union Carbide Factory was (**Sulphur tetra fluoride / Methyl Isocyanate**).
5. Rathore's family escaped the gas tragedy because they (**performed Agnihotra / used air purifiers**).

b. Fill in the blanks:

1. The samagri offered in the fire disseminates into micro form to _____ the environment besides activating the air as _____ agent.
2. "Idam na mama" in Sanskrit means _____.
3. The ingredients of samagri are good _____.
4. We chant Vedic mantras during Agnihotra because it gives _____.
5. Swaha means _____.

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

1. A few families performed Agnihotra during the gas tragedy to ease the impact of the poisonous gas on the family.
2. The firewood used in hawan is known as Samagri.
3. If we don't chant the Vedic mantras in Sanskrit during the Agnihotra, the chemical reaction will not remain the same.
4. It is prescribed that one should use samidha from one of the three trees – Peepal, Mango or Palash.
5. One must perform Agnihotra twice a day at sunrise and sunset.

3

IRON MAN OF INDIA!

Expected learning outcome

Students understand why Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel is referred to as the 'Iron man of India'.

It was October 31st, 'Rashtriya Ekta Diwas' (National Unity Day) is celebrated every year to pay tribute to Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. On this solemn occasion, the teacher asked the class to stand up and sing the National Anthem.

Kaushik – Ma'am, what is the significance of the National Unity Day?

Teacher – **Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel**, popularly known as the Iron Man of India, was born on October 31, 1875, in Nadiad, Gujarat. His birth anniversary is celebrated as the National Unity Day, as he played a monumental role in keeping India united post-independence in 1947.

Sohin – What did he do precisely?

Teacher – Let us go back into history to understand the context. We will then be able to appreciate his invaluable contribution.

Teacher – Prior to 1947, India was divided into two sets of territories, the first being the territories of "*British India*", which were under direct control of the British Empire through the Governor-General of India, and the second being the "*Princely states*", which were legally controlled by the hereditary Indian rulers, with titles such as Maharaja, Raja, Nizam, Nawab etc. However, for all practical purposes, they were agents of the British.



Kaushik – It can be seen from the map, that a significant portion of the country was princely states. Why did the British allow these princely states to exist? Could they have not conquered them as well?

Teacher – That's a very good question. 565 princely states existed before 1947. These were small states with very limited powers, and they primarily helped with local administration. This worked well for the British who adopted the policy of divide and rule to control this country with a large geographical expanse.

There were indeed no more than 100,000 British nationals in India at any point of time, controlling over 38 crore people in the Indian subcontinent.

These princely rulers helped the British maintain law and order. They fully cooperated with British on matters of trade, external policies etc., which enabled the British to continue to exploit the country economically, thereby, taking away significant wealth, to their land thus fulfilling the core objective of colonisation.

Kaushik – This is very interesting. Now, what happened in 1947?

Teacher – As British were preparing to leave India, they came up with a devious plan which would leave the Indian subcontinent divided and weakened forever. They declared that each of the princely states had one of the three options: (a) Accede to India; (b) Accede to Pakistan; (c) Remain Independent.

The partition between India and Pakistan was by itself a scary proposition. Further division of the country with princely states claiming their own independence would have been catastrophic. Indian nationalists and large segments of the public feared that if these states did not accede, most of the people and territory would be fragmented. Sardar Patel was considered the best man for the task of achieving unification of the princely states with the Indian dominion. He was affectionately given the title of 'Sardar' to reflect his firm unbending leadership qualities.

Kaushik – Convincing 565 Princely states to accede to India, must have been so difficult.

Teacher – That's true. But Sardar Patel was a statesman of integrity, practical acumen and resolve to accomplish a monumental task. He asked V. P. Menon, a senior civil servant with



whom he had worked on the partition of India, to become his right-hand man as Chief Secretary of the States Ministry.



In May 1947, Patel began lobbying with the princes, attempting to make them receptive towards dialogue with the future government and forestall potential conflicts. Patel used social meetings and unofficial surroundings to engage most of the monarchs, inviting them for lunch and tea at his home in Delhi. At these meetings, Patel explained that there was no inherent conflict between mainland India and the princely order. Patel invoked the patriotism of India's monarchs, asking them to join in the independence of their nation and act as responsible rulers who cared about the future of their people. He persuaded the princes of the states about the impossibility of independence from the Indian Republic, especially in the presence of growing opposition from their subjects. He proposed favourable terms for merger, including granting of certain privileges for the rulers' descendants.

Kaushik – Just convincing them worked, Ma'am?

Teacher – No Kaushik. While encouraging the rulers to act out of patriotism, Patel did not rule out force. Stressing that the princes would need to accede to India in good faith, he set a deadline of 15 August 1947 for them to sign the 'Instrument of Accession' document. All but three of the states willingly merged into the Indian union; only Jammu and Kashmir, Junagadh, and Hyderabad did not do this.

Gaurav – What happened then?

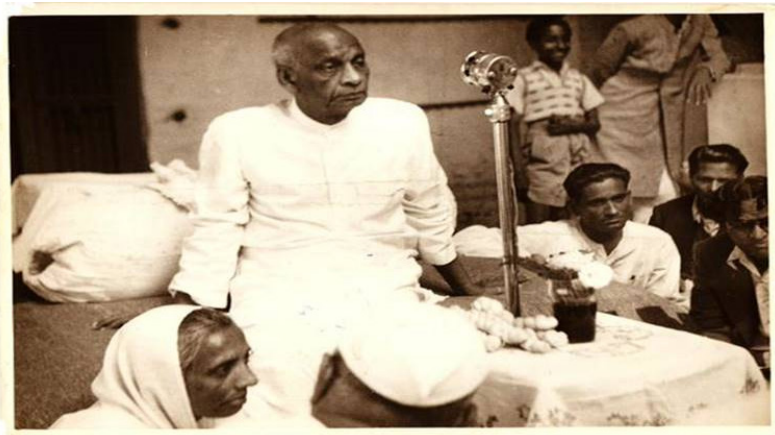
Teacher – Patel sent in the army to occupy Junagadh and Hyderabad. Both of them had a majority Hindu population though they were ruled by a Muslim ruler. Subsequently, a plebiscite (direct vote of all the members of an electorate on an important public question) was organized wherein the people of both Junagadh and Hyderabad overwhelmingly supported accession to India.

This event formed the cornerstone of Patel's popularity in the post-independence era. Even today he is remembered as the man who united India. He is, in this regard, compared to Otto von Bismarck of Germany, who took similar decisive steps in the European region in 1860s.

Sohin – What about Jammu and Kashmir, Ma'am?

Teacher – Jammu and Kashmir was a majority Muslim state but its ruler was a Hindu, Maharaja Hari Singh. He initially wanted to remain independent not acceding either to India or Pakistan. However, in early 1948 when Pakistani infiltrators attacked Jammu and

Kashmir, Maharaja Hari Singh signed for accession into India so that the Indian Army could help him resist the invasion. The matter got referred to the United Nations. At this stage, a plebiscite was offered as an option to determine the people's will, which Pakistan did not favour. Jammu and Kashmir thus remained an integral part of India as did other 564 princely states. However, Pakistani troops by then had managed to occupy a significant portion of Western Jammu and Kashmir which till date remains with them as Pakistan occupied Kashmir (POK).



Teacher – Patel's mental abilities were far ahead than anyone else in those days, and his physical strength was legendary. That is why Sardar Patel is known as the 'Iron Man of India'.

Sohin – I have heard a story about Sardar Patel's bravery, related to his childhood.

Once he developed a boil in his armpit and during those days in his village, people used to go to a quack for treatment, who would heat an iron rod and put it on the affected area. In the case of Patel, he was little reluctant as he was very young. But the young Patel asked him to do it fast as the rod would otherwise become cold. Then he did not wait for the quack to do the lashing and he did it by himself. Everyone around him was stunned!

Teacher – Yes, Sardar Patel was both, physically and mentally strong as well as hard working. His academic brilliance was proven when he was in England, and he finished his studies in just a few years. Everyone was amazed to see a young man topping every exam even without any formal education. Patel was also a strong believer of vegetarianism.

Kaushik – Sardar Patel was India's first Home Minister, wasn't he?

Teacher – Yes, he was both the Deputy Prime Minister and the Home Minister after independence. Sardar Patel withdrew from being elected as the President of Congress in 1946 at the request of Gandhiji. He would have otherwise been the First Prime Minister of India.

Sohin – Till when did Sardar Patel serve his motherland?

Teacher – Only for 3 years after independence. He passed away on December 15, 1950, due to a massive heart attack at the age of 75. Patel was posthumously awarded the 'Bharat Ratna', India's highest civilian honour, in 1991. Also, in the year 2014, it was decided to celebrate his birth anniversary as 'National Unity Day'.

Kaushik – What a fabulous life!

Teacher – Yes! You can also watch some of the documentary films on Sardar Patel to learn more about him. *Vande Mataram!*

(Acknowledgement – Articles available electronically on Wikipedia.org; Statueofunity.in)

Let's talk about these

1. What are your key learnings from the life of Sardar Patel?
2. Find out why he was given the title 'Sardar?'

Let's do these exercises

a. Answer the following:

1. Why is Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel called the Iron Man of India? Write a note on his inspiring character.
2. What was the strategy adopted by Sardar Patel to unite India at the time of independence?
3. What was the devious plan of the British before leaving India?

b. Find the meanings of the following words using a dictionary:

- 1) accede 2) fragmented 3) merger 4) proposition

c. Match the following

1.	The Chief Secretary of the States Ministry	Hari Singh
2.	Ruler of Jammu and Kashmir in early 1948	Bharat Ratna
3.	Direct vote of all members of an electorate	Vegetarianism
4.	India's highest civilian award	Plebiscite
5.	Vallabhbhai Patel was a strong believer of	V.P. Menon

d. Projects

Enact a scene from the life of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel.



ARYA SAMAJ - 2

Expected learning outcomes

Students:

- gain a holistic understanding about the Arya Samaj.
- understand that the Aryan Invasion Theory was a misconception.

*A day before, Parth had a conversation with his **bhuvaji (father's sister in Hindi)** about the Arya Samaj and its key philosophy.*

The conversation continues

Parth – Can you summarize the major focus of the Arya Samaj as proposed by Maharshi Dayanand Saraswati?

Bhuvaji – The Arya Samaj aimed to spread the true message of the Vedas. Its key focus was to translate all the four Vedas into Hindi and other regional languages, making them accessible to all, including women and certain castes that had been previously denied access by orthodox priests.

The Arya Samaj reminded people of the deep rooted wisdom of the Vedic *Rishis*. It promoted one formless Ishvar, spiritual yoga to attain Ishvar, virtuous personal conduct and integrity, universal education, as well as judging people by their actions, and not by the caste they were born into. It is in this broader social context that Maharshi Dayanand Saraswati gave a loud and clear call to the people—“**Back to Vedas.**” You will indeed be surprised to know that the words Hindu / Muslim / Christian / Jainism / Sikhism are not even mentioned in the Vedas. The Vedas are universal and the oldest books in the library of humans

Parth – That's really surprising. So, all these religions came much after the Vedas.



Bhuvaji – That is right. Therefore, the Arya Samaj is not limited to a particular religion, race, colour of skin, country, etc. In fact, anyone who is willing to work towards improving his conduct, thinking and character, in line with the Vedic principles and is ready to accept the teachings of the ancient Rishis with reasoning can become an Arya Samaji.

Since beginning, the institution has fought against social injustices especially towards women, including child marriage and the ill-treatment of widows. The Arya Samaj indeed is one of the only institutions, that has women Vedic scholars who have a status equal to men.

Bhuvaji – The Arya Samaj has been widely acknowledged as a forward looking organization whose principles looked beyond the caste of a person. Indeed, a formal act was enacted in 1937, known as the Arya Marriage Validation Act. This act authorized the Arya Samaj to conduct marriages of people belonging to different castes or sub-castes of not only Hindus, but also of those who follow other religions. The Arya Samaj was authorized to issue a valid marriage certificate under the Arya Marriage Validation Act, 1937.

Bhuvaji – The Arya Samaj is a democratic organization whose leadership can be assumed by any noble person, irrespective of caste, creed or gender. It may be of interest to know that there were 100 members on the rolls of the first Arya Samaj, founded in the presence of Maharshi Dayanand Saraswati on April 7, 1875. Swamiji, a true democrat, preferred his name to figure in the alphabetical order. The members appealed that Swamiji should serve as either the President or the Guru of the Samaj, but he kindly refused, and instead requested that he be listed as a regular member, like 99 others sitting there. He said the following:

“I have not come to preach any new dogmas or religion, or to establish a new order, or to be proclaimed a new Messiah or Pontiff. I had only brought before my people the light of the Vedic Wisdom (true dharma) which had been hidden during the centuries of India’s slavery.”

Maharshi Dayanand Saraswati was very clear that people should not start considering him to be an avatar of Ishvar. He was only a Vedic scholar who was stating what was already there in the Vedas. He did not want people to be misled into worshipping him. He therefore strongly discouraged his followers from erecting his statue in any location.

Parth – What a selfless soul!

Parth – Bhuvaji, I have read in history that the Aryans invaded the country. Are the Arya Samajis primarily descendants of the Aryan race?

Bhuvaji – No, Parth. Let us first understand that the Sanskrit word ‘Arya’ is an adjective that means *noble* or *pure*. Arya does not refer to a race, but a cultural quality as mentioned in Vedic texts. This entire Aryan Invasion Theory has been proved invalid. It was a false propaganda started by the Germans (Max Muller) and used by the Britishers to brainwash the Indians, to turn them against each other thus creating a rift among the people.

In the late 1700s, European identity was shaken when scholars discovered that Sanskrit was closely related to the European languages, though much older and more sophisticated. Rather than accepting that the Indian subcontinent had a far richer heritage where Sanskrit and the Vedic texts flourished much earlier, they came up with the theory that they were the original Aryans, who invaded India and spread Sanskrit and the Vedas.

Thus, the European quest to appropriate the highly prized library of Sanskrit’s ancient spiritual texts motivated the construction of the “Aryan” race identity. By “becoming” the Aryans, the Europeans felt that they were the rightful custodians of the massive *collection* of Sanskrit texts that were generating new breakthroughs in the humanities and liberal arts. They claimed that these Aryans from Europe had invaded India and subsequently began to intermarry with certain sections of the local population. They then also promoted the caste system to maintain their distinct identity and reinforce their supremacy.

Germans took their newly adopted Aryan identity to extremes, and most of the influential European thinkers of the time colluded. India being a colonised country under the British control was unfortunately not even made a part of the narrative. The entire theory was just dumped upon us.

Parth – So, Europeans misappropriated the Vedas and cooked up the Aryan Invasion Theory and hence created the mythical Aryan race that never existed.

Bhuvaji – That’s right. They created the story for gaining political, economical and cultural supremacy and pushing the more advanced and sophisticated Indian Vedic culture to the sideline. Modern worldwide research clearly validates this fact. It is indeed very sad that the same misconceptions continue to be promoted even today even in our education system.

Discovery of South Indian settlements pokes lot of holes in Aryan Invasion theory

Aryan invasion theory implies that current day Dravidians were pushed around 2000 BC to the South of India from Harappa

Recent excavations conclusively prove that South India has been continuously populated and had advanced civilizations for much longer than that



5000 year old settlement in Mudumal village in Telangana

1500 year old settlement in Bhitargarh -Bangladesh



Truth



3000 year old settlement in Pallisanthai Thidal in Sivaganga district of Tamil Nadu

Picture Courtesy- www.factmuseum.com

Parth – I now understand the fabricated Aryan Invasion theory. Then, who are these people who have their surname as Arya?

Bhuvaji – As discussed, many of India's problems stem from casteism, which plagues it even today. We often try to gauge the caste of a person from his or her last name and immediately form a biased opinion. Also, the caste name emanates based on the birth of the person in a particular family rather than his level of education or profession. Swami Dayanand Saraswati felt that it is best for people to have a neutral surname such as 'Arya,' i.e. a 'noble person.' Thus, none will be able to identify the person's caste from the name. He, thus advised all followers of the Vedic philosophy to adopt their surname as 'Arya'.

Parth – It is a very powerful idea to tackle this deep-rooted problem.

Parth – Bua, does Arya Samaj have a holy book?

Bhuvaji – Arya Samaj firmly believes in the supremacy of the Vedas, which is the ultimate source of knowledge. However, numerous books have been written by various scholars explaining different sub-topics in the Vedas. Swami Dayanand Saraswati has been the most prolific of writers.

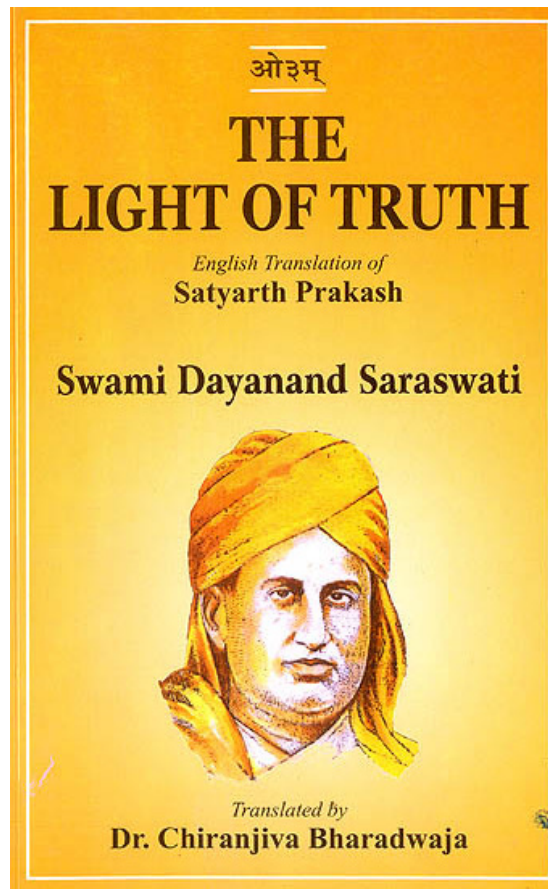


He authored over 40 books. His most famous book is: ‘**Satyarth Prakash**’ or the ‘**The Light Of Truth**’. It has been translated into more than 20 languages including Sanskrit and several foreign languages like English, French, German, Swahili, Arabic and Chinese.

Parth – Does Arya Samaj believe in temples?

Bhuvaji – Yes. Arya Samaj believes that temples should be centres of learning. People across all age groups should congregate at temples and make an effort to learn the Vedic scriptures. Spiritual talks should be organized; meditation and introspection sessions should be held; Agnihotra should be performed and devotional songs should be sung. This is a life-long learning process and temples are the most appropriate venues for facilitating it.

If you look at temples of Arya Samaj, they will be large open halls with an earmarked place for performing Agnihotra. You can see the walls adorned with photographs of great rishis and patriots. The entire Arya Samaj temple is accessible to anyone, irrespective of caste, creed or gender. Unlike most other conventional temples, there would be no idols and no inner sanctum.



Bhuvaji – You will also find 10 principles inscribed at all Arya Samaj temples.

1. Ishvar is the original source of all that is true knowledge and all that is known through knowledge.
2. Ishvar is Existent, has Consciousness and is Blissful. He is Formless, All-powerful, Just, Merciful, Unborn (does not take birth), Infinite, Perfect (has no deficiency), Beginning-less (neither has a beginning nor end), Incomparable (cannot be compared to anyone else as He is the only special One), the support of All, the Lord of all, Is Present Everywhere in each minute particle, Knows Everything, Does not age. He is Imperishable, Fearless, Eternal, Pure and Creator of the universe. He alone must be worshipped.
3. The Vedas are the books of all TRUE knowledge. It is the paramount duty of all Aryas to read them, to teach them to others, to listen to them and to recite them to others.

4. All persons should always be ready to accept the truth and renounce the untruth.
5. All acts ought to be performed in conformity with Dharma (Righteousness and Duty), i.e. after due consideration of the truth and the untruth.
6. The primary object of the Arya Samaj is to do good to the whole world, i.e. to promote the physical, spiritual and social progress of all humans.
7. Your dealings with all should be regulated by love and due justice in accordance with the dictates of Dharma (righteousness).
8. *Avidyaa* (illusion and ignorance) is to be dispelled, and *Vidyaa* (realization and acquisition of knowledge) should be promoted.
9. None should remain satisfied with one's own elevation only, but should incessantly strive for the social upliftment of all, realizing one's own elevation in the elevation of others.
10. All persons ought to dedicate themselves necessarily for the social good and the well-being of all, subordinating their personal interests. However, the individual is free to enjoy the freedom of action for his own well-being.

Bhuvaji – If you read the Ten principles, you will find that they are completely secular. They do not talk about any particular religion. Can you summarize the key messages covered in the 10 Principles?

Parth – Sure bhuvaji. Let me try.

- Supremacy of Vedas as the body of true knowledge.
- Qualities of Ishvar have been enumerated in great detail. Given the numerous misconceptions about Ishvar, it is a critical principle.
- Urges everyone to have an open mind and be ready to accept Truth. One should not get caught up in something only because it was done by our forefathers. We should think rationally and decide for ourselves.
- We should conduct ourselves in tenets with Dharma (righteousness). Also, one should subordinate personal interest for the well-being of all.
- Serving the society and ensuring the welfare of everyone is one of the core objectives of life.

Bhuvaji – Very good, Parth. You have summarized it very well.

Let's talk about these



1. Summarize the key focus of the Arya Samaj as proposed by Swami Dayanand Saraswati.
2. Highlight an instance that proves that Swami Dayanand Saraswati was a selfless soul.
3. What was the reason behind cooking up the story of Aryan Invasion Theory and did they succeed in their purpose?
4. How did Swami Dayanand Saraswati tackle the problem of casteism concerning one's name?
5. Explain the purpose of a temple according to Arya Samaj.
6. Explain the physical appearance of the Arya Samaj temples.
7. Summarize the key messages covered in the 10 Principles.

Let's do these exercises



a. Tick the correct answers:

1. The Arya Samaj aims to spread the true message of the (**Puranas** / **Vedas**).
2. The Aryan Invasion Theory has been proved (**invalid** / **valid**).
3. The (**Brahmo Samaj** / **Arya Samaj**) is indeed one of the only institutions that has women Vedic scholars who have a status equal to men.
4. The Europeans claimed that the white (**Aryans** / **Dravidians**) invaded India.
5. Anyone who is willing to improve his conduct with the Vedic principles and is ready to accept the teachings of the Rishis with reasoning can become an (**Arya Samaji** / **Arya Samaj Volunteer**).

b. Fill in the blanks:

1. The Vedas are _____ and the _____ book in the library of humans.
2. The Arya Samaj promotes _____, _____, _____ and _____.



3. When the Arya Samaj was formed the members appealed that Swamiji should serve as _____ but he refused and instead he preferred to be listed as a _____.
4. The Europeans felt that by becoming the Aryans they were the rightful custodians of _____ that were generating new breakthroughs in the _____ and _____.
5. _____ language was closely related to the European languages.

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

1. Orthodox priests provided equal access of the Vedas to all castes groups and women.
2. Arya does not refer to a race, but a cultural quality venerated in Vedic texts.
3. The Arya Samaj Validation Act was enacted in the year 1947.
4. Swami Dayanand Saraswati discouraged his followers from creating any statue of him as it would mislead people into worshipping him.

Let's have fun

Recently, archaeologists unearthed the crumbling remains of an ancient urban centre, in the quiet outskirts of the Keeladi village, in the Sivagangai district, near Madurai, Tamil Nadu. The centre, built along the banks of the Vaigai River, is believed to be equal in size and importance and older than the Mohenjo-Daro settlements. Do some research on this ground-breaking excavation of the civilization, prepare a chart work and present your work in the class.

Let's try this



Imagine you are Parth. After having spent considerable time with bhuvaji, you finally begin to get a perspective of the true Vedic principles and values as given by the Vedas. Also write on the era of darkness under the Mughal and British rulers when the Vedas which were misinterpreted and how the Arya Samaj is working on war footing to overcome this issue. Write a letter to your sister Pallavi about what you have learnt so far in the space given below.

5

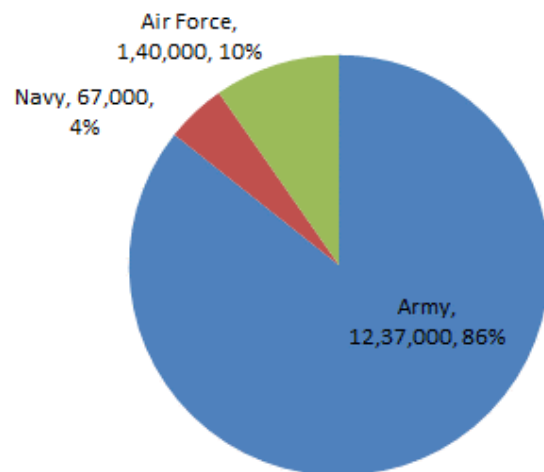
INDIAN MILITARY HISTORY

Expected learning outcome

Students gain an overview of the Indian Military history.

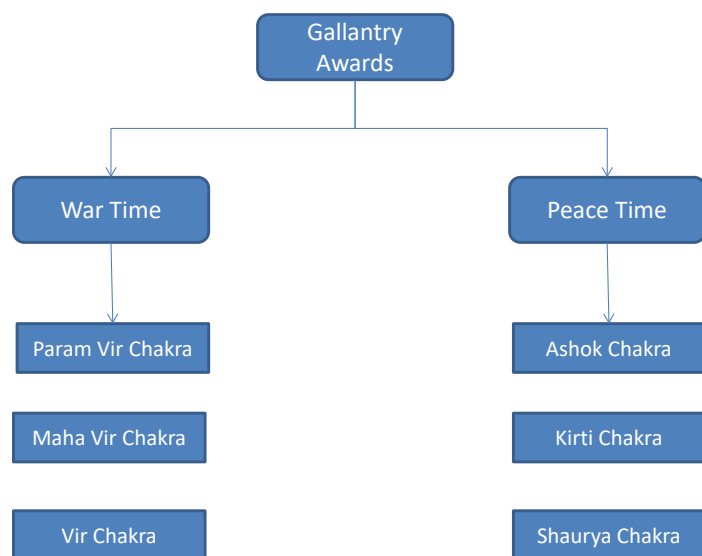
The Indian Armed Forces comprise of three professional uniformed services: Army, Navy and Air Force, supported by paramilitary organizations including Border Security Force (BSF), Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), Central Industrial Security Force (CISF), Assam Rifles, Territorial Army, Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP), etc.

The armed forces epitomize the ideals of service, sacrifice, patriotism and the composite culture of the country. With strength of over 14 lakh active personnel, it is the world's 2nd largest military force after China. The President of India serves as the formal Supreme Commander of the Indian armed forces, while the Executive headed by the Prime Minister and the chosen council of ministers is vested with the actual control.



Amongst the armed forces, the Army is the largest with over 12.37 lakh (86%) personnel, followed by Air Force at 1.4 lakh (10%) and Navy at 67,000 (4%). India spends Rs. 3,00,000 crores on its defence forces annually. Of this, approximately Rs. 1,00,000 crore is spent towards weapon systems and modernization. Rs. 2,00,000 crores is allocated towards salaries and other day-to-day running costs.

A career in defence forces promises to be one of the most prestigious and respected positions in the country. One can join the Indian Armed Forces either on completion of schooling or on completion of graduation. The three branches of the Indian armed forces jointly operate



the flagship institution National Defence Academy (NDA) at Khadakwasla near Pune which nurtures bright young minds, straight out of school, transforming them into Officers. Students aspiring to join NDA need to clear an entrance exam followed by a 5-day interview. Unlike other government institutions in India, there is no reservations based on caste or religion. Recruitment is only on merit.

Indian defence forces are very well-known for their grit and valour. Decorations are awarded to them for extraordinary bravery and courage as well as distinguished services during times of war and peace. These gallantry awards are announced twice a year - on the occasion of the Republic Day and the Independence Day. They can be categorized into:

- **War Time Gallantry Awards:** They are given during wars or battles. These awards are given for the valour shown in the battlefield in the face of the enemy. Order of precedence of these awards is the Param Vir Chakra, the Mahavir Chakra and the Vir Chakra. A total of 20 Army and one Air Force personnel have been awarded the Param Vir Chakra till date.
- **Peace Time Gallantry Awards:** These are awarded for the courage and bravery shown away from the battlefield. These awards are generally given for counter-insurgency operations, i.e. to neutralize the terrorists trying to spread violence in the country. Order of precedence of these awards is the Ashoka Chakra, the Kirti Chakra, and the Shaurya Chakra. A total of 86 Ashok Chakras have been awarded till now.



Param Vir Chakra



Ashoka Chakra

Kirti Chakra

Shaurya Chakra

Post our independence in August 1947, Indian military has fought five direct conventional wars with neighbouring countries (four with Pakistan and one with China). These are the direct conventional wars.

Year	War Against	Remarks
1947–48	Pakistan	Immediately after independence, India and Pakistan fought a bitter war, also known as the first Kashmir War. Pakistan attacked Jammu and Kashmir sending its troops disguised as tribal militia. India successfully defended the oppressive Pakistani Army and retained control over two-thirds of Kashmir including, the Kashmir Valley, Jammu and Ladakh regions. Pakistan, however, managed to gain control over one-third of Kashmir, which is today known as PoK. (Pakistan occupied Kashmir) (refer to the map given).
1962	China	China attacked India. We were unprepared and completely taken by surprise. It gave full opportunity for China to attack Aksai Chin (easternmost part of Jammu and Kashmir) and some parts of Arunachal Pradesh. India lost the war after suffering heavy casualties. India ceded to China allowing them to acquire control over most regions of Aksai Chin. (refer to the map given)
1965	Pakistan	Taking advantage of India's weakened military power after the 1962 Indo-China war, Pakistan once again tried to infiltrate into Kashmir on a large-scale with the objective of precipitating an insurgency against the Indian rule. India retaliated by launching a full-scale military attack. The 17-day war caused thousands of casualties on both sides and witnessed the largest engagement of armoured vehicles and the largest tank battle since World War II. India successfully defended its territory.

Year	War Against	Remarks
1971	Pakistan	<p>This was a direct military confrontation between India and Pakistan during the Bangladesh Liberation War in 1971.</p> <p>Bangladesh, then East Pakistan wanted to be a new Independent nation as they were not treated equally. It was 1,600 km away from the mainland- West Pakistan. Discontent had been brewing right since 1947 when Pakistan was formed. The Western Pakistan military tried to violently crush the demand for independence, leading to millions of deaths in East Pakistan. This, in turn, led to a huge influx of refugees from East Pakistan into India (West Bengal). India intervened diplomatically, but a full-scale war began when Pakistan launched pre-emptive air strikes on 11 Indian airbases on December 3, 1971, leading to India's entry into the war of independence in East Pakistan on the side of Bangladesh nationalist forces. Lasting just 13 days, it is one of the shortest wars in history. India decisively won the war. Pakistan surrendered, and approximately 93,000 Pakistani soldiers were taken as prisoners by the Indian army,. They were released later.</p>
1999	Pakistan	<p>The Kargil War was an armed conflict between India and Pakistan that took place between May and July 1999 in the Kargil sector of Jammu and Kashmir and elsewhere along the Line of Control (LoC). The cause of the war was once again the infiltration by the Pakistani soldiers and Kashmiri militants into positions on the Indian side of the LoC, which now serves as the de facto border between the two countries. The Indian operation to successfully clear the Kargil sector, was named 'Operation Vijay'.</p>

The map shows the parts of Kashmir under control of India, Pakistan and China post the 1947–48 and 1962 wars with Pakistan and China respectively.



Proxy War: Though India has not fought any full-scale direct war since 1999, our military has constantly been engaged in proxy wars. Almost every day India faces a ceasefire violation from the Pakistani side over the Kashmir issue, with firing across the Line of Control (LoC). Pakistan has been routinely trying to send militants to India to launch terrorist attacks not only in Kashmir but in different parts of the country. The Indian army retaliates by neutralizing these militants as they try to cross into India along the LoC, and also occasionally conducts surgical strikes to destroy the terrorist camps on the other side of the LoC. It is rather unfortunate that India has been continuously drawn into military conflict with Pakistan.

(Acknowledgement – Articles available electronically on Wikipedia.org)

Let's talk about these

1. Do you feel inspired and motivated to attempt the NDA entrance examination?
2. Have you ever been to Wagah Border in Amritsar? Find more about it.

Let's do these exercises



a. Fill in the blanks:

1. A career in defence forces promises_____
2. Indian defence forces are known for their_____
3. Full form of LoC is_____

b. Answer the following:

1. Write a note on
 - a) NDA
 - b) Gallantry Awards (War time and Peace time)
 - c) Kargil War
2. Describe India-Pakistan wars in detail.
3. Why do we need the 'Indian Armed Forces'?
4. 'The value of discipline in day to day life is learnt'. Explain
5. What is patriotism?
6. What is the role played by Indian Army in nation building?

ACTIVITY

Make a chart on various medal in the Indian Army. Also find out about Sena medal.

FACT SEARCH

Find out the allocation for defence in the Indian Budget.



Expected learning outcome

Students understand the three types of desires

Kavya was having an interesting conversation with her thakurda on desires. Based on Vedic philosophy, thakurda describes the different kinds of desires and the futility of chasing desires.

Kavya – Fulfilling one's desire is a vicious cycle. Our entire life is spent chasing our wants. We get momentary happiness, but it vanishes quickly without any lasting effect. It is like being on a treadmill, wherein you keep running and running but continue to remain in the same place, getting nowhere. After many years of our life's journey, we finally realize that the ladder we were climbing, was kept against the wrong wall.

Kavya – I can think of yet another analogy. Chasing desires for happiness is akin to following a mirage. You believe there is water at a distance. We keep continuously running only to realize that the water seems further away.

Thakurda – Yes. Have you heard of Alexander?

Kavya – Oh yes, the Greek king who built a large empire.

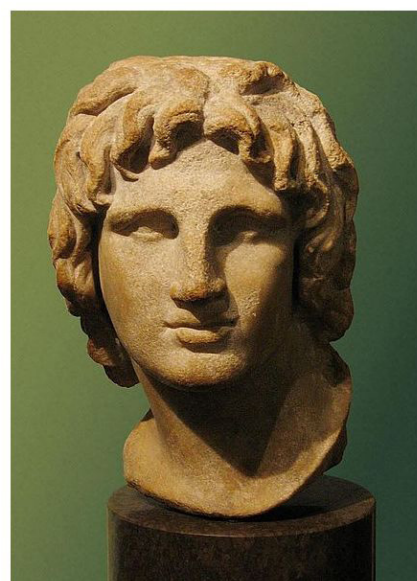
Thakurda – Alexander, after conquering many kingdoms, was returning home. On the way, he fell seriously ill. With death staring at his face, Alexander realized how his conquests, his great army, his sharp sword and all his wealth were of no consequence. He now longed to reach home to see his mother's face and bid her his last adieu. But, he had to accept the fact



that his sinking health would not permit him to reach his distant homeland. So, the mighty conqueror lay prostrate and pale, helplessly waiting to breathe his last.

He called his Generals and said, “I desire that when my coffin is being carried to the grave, the path leading to the graveyard be strewn with gold, silver and precious stones which I have collected in my treasury, I want both my hands be kept dangling out of my coffin.”

The generals there wondered at the king’s strange wishes. However, Alexander’s favourite General replied, “O king, we assure you that all your wishes shall be fulfilled. But tell us why do you make such strange wishes?”



At this Alexander took a deep breath and said, “I would like the world to know of the key lessons that I have learnt now. I want the gold, silver to be strewn on the path to the graveyard to tell people that not even a fraction of that wealth will accompany me upon my death. I spent all my life with the greed for power, earning riches but alas, I cannot take anything with me. Let people realize that it is a sheer waste of time to chase wealth. About my other wish of having my hands dangling out of the coffin, I want people to know that I came empty handed into this world and empty handed I leave.”

With these words, the king closed his eyes. Soon he let death conquer him and breathed his last...

Kavya – This is quite intriguing. We all come empty handed and leave the world in the same manner. We do not take anything along.

Thakurda – Yes Kavya. Happiness lies in experiencing internal peace and contentment. Chasing desires is a never-ending, futile exercise. Unfortunately, we are all deeply woven into this complex web.

Thakurda – Have you ever wondered what the different types of desires are? The Vedic philosophy very classifies them into three categories.

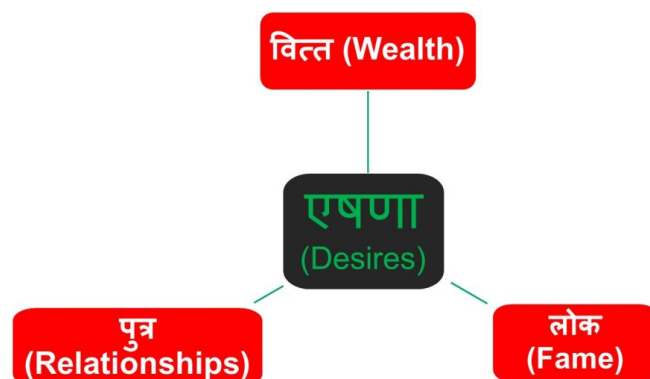
Kavya – What are they, thakurda?

Thakurda – Desires are also known as ‘*Aishnaas*.’ The three types are: (a) *Vitha* (Wealth); (b) *Putra* (Relationships); (c) *Loka* (Fame)

a) ***Desire for Wealth:*** Wealth in this context refers to all material possessions, including house, clothes, food, cars, holidays, bank balance etc. It can be understood as all those materialistic possessions that money can possibly buy.

b) ***Desire for Relationships:*** Human beings have multiple relationships- father, mother, brother, sister, grandmother, grandfather, son, daughter, friend etc. Presence of strong family bonds gives us immense comfort.

c) ***Desire for Fame:*** We all like to become famous, though we may not always feel comfortable admitting it. Fame is attractive because you believe that once you are famous, wherever you go, your good reputation will precede you. People will think well of you. You will be safe from rejection. Therefore, the idea of being famous has great appeal.



Kavya – Should we do away with all desires?

Thakurda – Ideally yes, Kavya.

Kavya – But then, how will we survive? Don't we need a house, clothes, food etc. for our living?

Thakurda – Your question is valid. There are two aspects to this:

- A. Reduce your needs: We all tend to consume far more than what we actually need in our lives. We should always try to minimize our wants. The lesser you consume, the better it is. Every time you want to purchase something, think about it – Do I really need this? Is there a better use for this money?
- B. Utilize whatever you need to, with a sense of detachment. When we say that we should not have desires, we refer to the strong sense of attachment associated with it.

Kavya – Can you elaborate further, please?

Thakurda – You may make use of various materialistic things in your everyday life as per your need. What really matters is whether you are attached to those possessions. If these possessions vanish from your life, will you get upset?

Thakurda – Let us take an example. You need to travel within a city from Point A to Point B which is very far. There is a local train available between the two points which will get you there relatively quickly and will also cost you less. Though safe, the journey will, however, cause you some inconvenience as you will need to walk to the station, stand in a queue to purchase the ticket, wait for the train to come, board a crowded train etc. Now, since you have the money, you do not want to put yourself through any inconvenience. Therefore you decide to take an air-conditioned cab which will cost you 5 times more and double the time. In this case, you are merely fulfilling your desire for physical comfort.



We need to look at various materialistic things around us, more as a tool for us to lead our lives rather than making them our core objective.

Kavya – I remember, my teacher advising us: ‘**Eat to Live**’ rather than ‘**Live to Eat.**’

Thakurda – Exactly. We should eat because we need to lead a healthy life. Food gives us the required energy to perform our daily duties. We should have a variety of vegetables, pulses, cereals fruits, dry fruits, milk, occasional sweets, etc., to keep ourselves fit. But people who consistently overeat or eat only unhealthy food, just for the taste of it, are ‘Living to eat.’ They are not doing justice to their own lives.

Let's talk about these

1. According to your understanding of the lesson where does true happiness lie?
2. What message did Alexander want to convey to the world?

Let's do these exercises



a. Tick the correct answers:

1. We come to this world empty handed and leave this world (**empty** / **full**) handed.
2. Everyone wants to become (**famous** / **infamous**) because one's good reputation follows everywhere one goes. This desire is called as (**Putra** / **Loka**) Aishnaa.
3. We need to (**maximize** / **minimize**) our needs so that we consume responsibly.
4. We should utilize things with a sense of (**attachment** / **detachment**).
5. Vitha Aishnaa refers to (**non-materialistic** / **materialistic**) possession that one (**can** / **cannot**) buy with money.

b. Fill in the blanks:

1. Happiness lies in experiencing _____ and _____.
2. There are three types of desires namely _____, _____ and _____.
3. Alexander's last desire to keep his hand dangling out the coffin indicating that _____.
4. Chasing desires for happiness is like following a _____ wherein we believe that water is there at a distance but later on we realize that it is _____.

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

1. The desire for material goods is called Vitha Aishnaa.
2. We should 'Live to Eat' rather than 'Eat to live' to lead a healthy and happy life.
3. Chasing wealth for the entire life is a sheer waste of time and energy.
4. We should use things more as a tool for us to lead our lives rather than making them our core objective.

Let's have fun



Make a list of things that you “WANT” and “NEED.” Think about how you can reduce your wants and utilize only those things that you need.

Wants	Needs

7

ANIMAL CRUELTY - 2

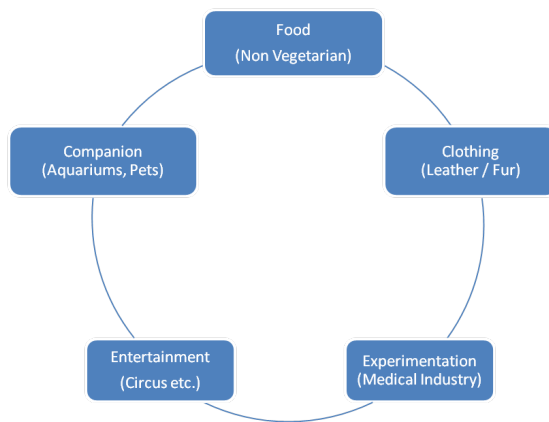
Expected learning outcome

Students become aware of the various ways by which animals are exploited

Nanamma (paternal grandmother in Telugu) was explaining to Charan the five different reasons why animals are exploited. She briefly covered cruelty involved for Food and Clothing. The other reasons are...

III. Animals used for Experimentation

Nanamma – An animal test is, any scientific experiment in which a live animal is forced to undergo pain, suffering, distress or lasting harm. It is carried out by humans to test a scientific hypothesis in a wide range of areas – Medicines, Cosmetics and other Biological research.



Countless monkeys, dogs, rats and other animals are poisoned, blinded, cut open, starved, isolated and drugged behind closed laboratory doors every day on the pretext of animal testing. Animals are infected with diseases that they would never normally contract – tiny mice grow tumors as large as their own bodies and

kittens are purposely blinded. Experimenters force-feed chemicals to animals, conduct repeated surgeries on them and implant wires in their brains.

Charan – Nanamma, can humans be so cruel and insensitive? Aren't there alternatives to animal testing?

Nanamma – There are many alternatives to animal testing which are available including sophisticated tests using human cells and tissues and advanced computer-modelling techniques, which can eliminate the need for animal testing.

IV. Animals Used for Entertainment

Nanamma – Animals are also cruelly treated in multiple ways for entertaining humans.

Animals do not want to perform painful, confusing and demeaning tricks, but animals in circuses have no choice. Trainers use abusive tools, including whips to force them to perform. Not only are elephants, horses, hippopotamuses, birds, dogs, camels and other animals often beaten by trainers, but they also suffer from loneliness, boredom and frustration from being locked in cramped cages or chained for months on end, as they travel from city to city. These animals should be in their natural habitats and raising families instead they are loaded and unloaded like furnitures into trucks and warehouses.



For instance, in their natural environments, elephants might walk up to 50 kilometres daily searching for food, yet in captivity they are almost constantly kept tied. They develop foot problems, which are very rarely treated. Restricted exercise and hard surfaces – as well as standing amidst faeces and urine – can cause elephants' toe-nails to become cracked and soft and can lead to infections.

Monkeys are trained to 'dance' through beatings and food restriction. Their teeth are pulled out by their masters so that the animals cannot defend themselves.

Charan – What about various animal sports like Kambala in Karnataka and Jallikattu in Tamil Nadu?

Nanamma – Rural people in Karnataka organize 'Kambala' – a race in a slushy paddy field, between two pairs of buffaloes, controlled by a farmer. Many of these are ancient practices wherein the animals were not subjected to any cruelty. In the traditional form of Kambala,

racing was non-competitive, and the pair ran one by one in paddy fields.

But now, it has turned into a competitive sport wherein the farmer whips the buffaloes mercilessly to make them run fast and win the race. Stakes are very high with bets placed on the buffaloes. These buffaloes are fed and taken special care of leading up to the final day of competition, only to be whipped terribly during the race to make them perform better.



Charan – And, what happens in case of Jallikattu?

Nanamma – In Jallikattu, a bull is released into a crowd of people and multiple human participants attempt to grab the large hump on the bull's back with both arms and hang on to it while the bull attempts to escape.



In ancient times, even Jallikattu was not a cruel sport. A bull is a very strong and respected animal for the farmers. The very word “Jallikattu” means ‘Embracing the bulls’ in Tamil language. In ancient days, the bulls were considered animals of great importance as the livelihood of the farmers depended on the bulls and were revered. Bulls were fed well and Jallikattu was a sport for the bulls to improve their mobility. However, once again this has become a competitive sport now wherein human beings have become utterly insensitive.

Nowadays, practices before the bull is released include, prompting the bull with sharp sticks, extreme bending of the tail which can fracture the vertebrae, and biting of the bull's tail. There are also reports of the bulls being forced to drink alcohol to disorient them, or chilli peppers being rubbed in their eyes to aggravate the bull. During attempts to defeat the bull, they are stabbed by various implements such as knives or sticks, punched, jumped on and dragged to the ground.

Charan – Shouldn't we stop engaging in all these sports?

Nanamma – The key aspect to focus on is animal cruelty. As long as the sport is practised without being cruel to the animal it is absolutely fine. However, if there is cruelty because of insensitive fellow beings, then it is best to stop engaging in such sports.



Nanamma – There is yet another sport practised by humans, which is very cruel. It is a blood sport between two cocks held in a ring. Two owners place their respective cocks that they own, in the cockpit. The cocks fight until ultimately one of them dies or is critically injured. Once again, significant betting takes place in the sport.

Charan – In many Indian marriages, the bridegroom typically arrives on a white colour wedding horse with the baaraat (procession). Is there cruelty involved in this?

Nanamma – The wedding horses do hate the entire process. When they are rented for marriages, they are made to walk for many kilometres to the venue. The horse is then ‘dressed’. The saddle on the horse is a heavy throne-like chair. The groom sits on it and the band starts at a decibel level that makes even passing humans cover their ears. The horse handler holds the horse’s tightly enough to prevent it from getting provoked at the noise and fireworks. The iron chain fitted into its mouth destroys the teeth and makes its gums bleed. The fire-lit lanterns surrounding the horse generate heat. Various relatives and friends, dancing in front of the horse, make it feel very uncomfortable. The horse is walked for a distance in a slow and in an extremely noisy parade and then finally, when the groom dismounts, it is taken to another wedding. The agony of the horse is clearly shown in the enlarged eyes and wild spin of its eyeballs and the ears held erect – all of which only happen when the horse is extremely disturbed.



It is sad that the animals are ill-treated during such joyful occasions too. It is time we mature as a society and recognise the gross injustice in these acts!

Charan – What is the best alternative, nanamma?

Nanamma – If you want something modern and polished, what about having the groom standing through the sunroof of a car? This will be much better than torturing the poor animal.

Charan – I realize that as long as people treat animals as toys, possessions and commodities rather than as individuals with feelings, families and friendships, widespread neglect and abuse are sure to continue.

Acknowledgement – partially adapted from petaindia.com.

Let's do these exercises



a. Answer the following questions:

1. Give any two reasons that prove that medical tests on animals are cruel.
2. Think of alternates to animal testing. Analyse their benefits over animal testing.
3. How are elephants affected by being held captive in circuses?
4. Explain how 'Kambala' has the custom changed over the years.
5. What does the word 'Jallikattu' mean? What was the purpose of this sport?
6. How is the bull treated now a days, before it is released for Jallikkattu?

b. Fill in the blanks:

1. An animal test is any scientific experiment in which a live animal is forced to undergo _____, _____ and _____.
2. Trainers use abusive tools, including _____ and _____, to force animals to perform in circuses.
3. Animals suffer from _____, _____ and _____ from being locked in cramped cages or chained for months on end as they travel from city to city.
4. The agony of the horse used in a wedding is clearly shown in the _____, _____ and _____ all of which only happen when the horse is extremely distressed.

8

DEMYSTIFYING DEATH – 1

Expected learning outcome

Students understand loss and grief

*When Darsh returned from school, he got to know that his **ajji (grandmother in Kannada)** suffered a heart attack and was in a critical condition in the hospital. Darsh loved his ajji who used to narrate to him numerous bedtime stories.*

Darsh visited her in the evening at the hospital. She lay unconscious and did not respond to Darsh. Unfortunately, she passed away the following morning. Darsh was heart broken. Tears rolled down his cheeks as he cried inconsolably.

The body was brought home and kept in the courtyard for relatives to pay their last respects.

Darsh – Amma (mother in Kannada), what happened to ajji? Why is she not responding to anyone?

Amma had no answer. She was also shattered. Darsh had never seen his **ajja (grandfather in Kannada)**, ever cry. But today was an exception.

Ajji's body was to be taken away for cremation. Darsh insisted that he would like to join. His father denied him permission, but Darsh who was crying profusely pleaded to come along. Ajja finally permitted Darsh to join.

The body was taken to an electrical crematorium. After the performance of Vedic rites including chanting of mantras, the body was inserted into the combustion chamber.



Darsh came home, heartbroken. A week went by. Darsh spent a lot of time sitting beside ajja. He would always see him being sad. Darsh had numerous questions.

Darsh – Ajja, where has ajji gone? What exactly happened to her body? Why couldn't the doctors make her okay?

Ajja – This is a profound question, my son! Maybe some other time...

Darsh – No, ajja, please! I want to know!

Ajja realized the inquisitive urge in Darsh.

Ajja – Ok then, listen. This body is like a complex machine.

Darsh – Machine?

Ajja – Yes, Darsh, this body is similar to, say a car, which is also a machine. This body is indeed a far more complicated machine than a car. It has a heart that keeps pumping blood continuously right since the child is in mother's womb, until the day the person dies. Can you imagine, the body has 1 lakh km long blood vessels.

Darsh – Wow!

Ajja – A car can be repaired by changing its various parts. Even if it is a very old car, you can replace the entire engine, tyres, etc. and somehow make it work.



This body, which is also a machine, can be 'repaired' by the doctors but not always. Science has made giant leaps, especially in the last two centuries. However, scientists and doctors have not been able to fully understand this complicated machine.

Your ajji was quite healthy. She had no known medical complications like diabetes, high blood pressure, cholesterol etc. However, she had a sudden heart attack, and she passed away in the hospital. Though all her other organs were healthy, doctors could not do anything because something left her body.

Darsh – What left her body, ajja?

Ajja – It is the 'Soul,' my son. It is also known as '*Aatma*' in Sanskrit.

Darsh – What is this Soul? Can I see it?

Ajja – This is the ‘consciousness.’ Once, this leaves the body, nothing can be done. There is no way that this can be brought back into the body. That’s when we say the person has died and their breathing stops.

Darsh – Do I also have a soul?

Ajja – Yes, of course. Indeed you are the soul yourself!

Darsh – I am ‘Darsh’ ajja.

Ajja – My son, Darsh is just a name given to you by your parents when you were born. It is the way the world knows you. Names are given merely for convenience. Otherwise, it will be difficult for us to manage our day to day lives and interact with each other.

But if you take a step back, you will be able to realize that you are nothing but actually the ‘soul.’ That is the real you.

To be continued...

Let’s talk about these

1. What do you think happens to a person after death?
2. List ways by which people cope with grief and loss.
3. Explain in few lines the emotions that one goes through when one’s loved one passes away.

Questions and answers

1. Compare our body to a machine and list the a) similarities, b) differences
2. Explain the purpose of the name given to each and every one of us.
3. What is soul?

Let's do these exercises

a. Tick the correct answers:

1. The soul is the (**consciousness** / **unconsciousness**) present in our body.
2. Once the soul departs from the body, there (**is a way** / **is no way**) to bring it back into the body.

b. Fill in the blanks:

1. Soul is also known as _____ in Sanskrit.
2. Science has progressed in leaps and bounds, but it _____ to fully understand our complex body as scientists cannot even make a strand of _____.

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

1. Unlike a car, our body can be repaired and brought back to working condition by the doctors at all times.
2. All of us go through grief, at some point in our lives.

Activity

Read about the different rituals related to death, that are practiced following the death of a person.

NATIVE INDIAN COWS

Expected learning outcome

Students understand the significance of the cow in providing nourishment for human beings

Atharva's **paatti (grandmother in Tamil)** was explaining to him, the various ways in which cow is useful for humans. Apart from dairy products, the cow dung is also a rich source of manure, enabling farmers to return to 'organic farming.'

Atharva was quite surprised to know about the different ways by which cow nourishes us, humans. No wonder, the Vedic literature refers to cow as 'Gaumata'. Paatti wanted to discuss another important aspect....

Paatti – Did you know that there are different breeds of cows?

Atharva – What exactly do we mean by a breed?

Paatti – A breed is a specific group of animals having a homogeneous appearance and other characteristics that distinguish it from another group of animals of the same species.

Atharva – So, does it mean that there are cows of different types?

Paatti – Yes. India historically has 37 pure cattle breeds. These have existed in India over the last several centuries. Five of these — Gir, Sahiwal, Red Sindhi, Tharparkar and Rathi — have also been known for their milking prowess.

Paatti – Let me take you back to the 1950s to explain a key development in the Indian dairy industry. India had just emerged from ruthless exploitation by the British during their 200 years of rule in India. Poverty was widespread. More importantly, we were yet to come out of the colonial mindset. Whatever the western world advised, was blindly looked up to and acknowledged.

Atharva – Paatti, I guess that is partially true today as well.

Paatti – Yes. That's right. Back then in the 1950s, we possessed amongst the world's largest cattle herd, but typically, the cows were malnourished due to limited availability of food, and therefore their milk yield was relatively low. All we should have done was to help small farmers increase the quality of cattle feed and water intake which would have given us the desired results, i.e. increasing the milk yield.

Paatti – But at this juncture, our blind appreciation for the Western world and our own inferiority complex, led us to adopt a very different approach. We were made to believe that our native breeds were inherently of very poor quality. Therefore, to increase our milk yield, they had to be cross-bred with exotic breeds from Europe. The European countries sponsored multiple overseas trips for officials from the Indian Animal Husbandry Department and showed them the 'scientific' approach being adopted by them.

Atharva – What happened then?

Paatti – They slowly and steadily introduced their own breeds in India - Jersey and Holstein Friesian (HF). Yes, there was an increase in milk output in the short term. But, we completely missed the point that native Indian breeds had adapted to Indian climatic conditions over several centuries and required minimal maintenance related to specific shelters, medicines etc. However, these exotic breeds required to be kept in very high-cost, air-cooled, all-weather shelters, and required expensive stall feeding and medical care.

This practice was followed more indiscriminately with every passing decade. Over time, it has triggered a two-pronged crisis. On the one hand, it has set off systematic destruction of the indigenous Indian cow, which includes precious breeds developed over a millennium. On the other hand, the new exotic crossbreeds have not adapted well enough to the Indian conditions. In theory, these crossbreeds are capable of very high milk yields, but their capacity suffers drastically as the cows are very vulnerable to tropical weather and diseases.

Paatti – There is another concurrent development that took place in the last few decades, which makes the entire situation even more paradoxical.

Atharva – What is that?

Paatti – In 1960, Brazil imported three cattle breeds from India: Gir, Kankrej and Ongole. They ensured proper nourishment and gradually developed a large herd that is today famous globally for producing very high-quality milk, some clocking over 60 litres of milk/day. Even the US has developed a well-known breed called 'Brahman', selectively bred from Indian breeds like Kankrej and Ongole. So, while the Indian farmers were misguided to abandon

their cows on the roads by spreading the notion that they yield less milk, other countries have developed resilient breeds from native Indian cattle.

Paatti – There were many warning signs from the beginning, but unfortunately, few took heed of them. For instance, in the 1980s, a herd of Holstein Friesians capable of 8,000-kg per lactation was bought from abroad. But once they landed in Bengaluru, the animals refused to eat. So their feed too had to be imported. When the cows were finally milked, the yield was a sad 2,200 kg. Same was the story with Danish Jerseys brought around the same time to Koraput in Odisha.

According to a senior retired bureaucrat, who was part of the ‘Operation Flood’ team in-charge of increasing milk production in the country, “policy-makers trained in the West persisted with their love of European breeds. Frequent foreign sojourns to procure cattle kept the babus happy.”

Atharva – This has been so unfortunate for the country.

Paatti – Atharva, you have still not heard the worst implication of this strategic error committed by us.

Atharva – What is that, paatti?

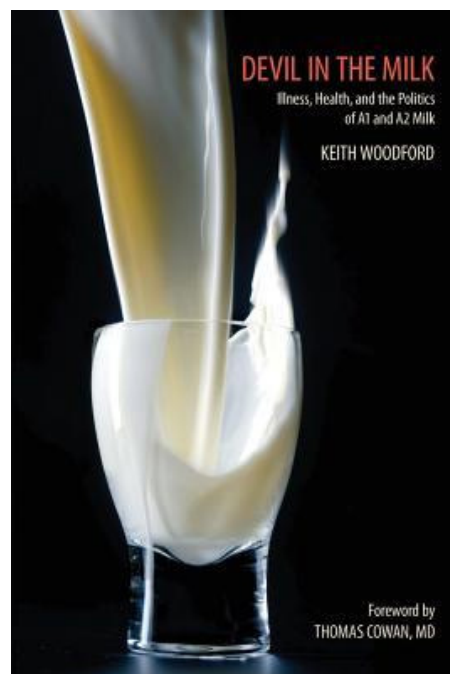
Atharva – In the last 20 years, very important research has gained ground, declaring that based on the breed of the cow, milk can be categorized into two types: A1 milk and A2 milk.

Atharva (laughing): This sounds like my school grades! A1 must be the superior quality of milk compared to A2.

Paatti – No. It is indeed the other way round. Let me explain this in detail.

As you know, milk is rich in calcium and protein. Beta Casein (a type of protein in milk) is of two types: A1 and A2. Milk that primarily contains A1 Beta casein is referred to as ‘A1 milk’ and is proven to have several harmful health effects, including diabetes, autism and heart diseases. ‘A2 milk’ is instead proven to be extremely healthy. And can you guess, which are the cows universally acknowledged to produce A2 milk?

Atharva (hesitatingly): Is it the native Indian breeds?



Paatti – Yes. Native Indian and African breeds produce A2 milk; most exotic breeds like Jersey and Holstein Friesian produce only A1 milk. There was a landmark book written in 2007 by Keith Woodford, a New Zealand Professor, called: **'Devil in the Milk: Illness, Health and Politics of A1 and A2 milk'** which details the harmful effects of A1 milk.

Atharva – So, how do we identify which is A1 milk and which is A2 milk?

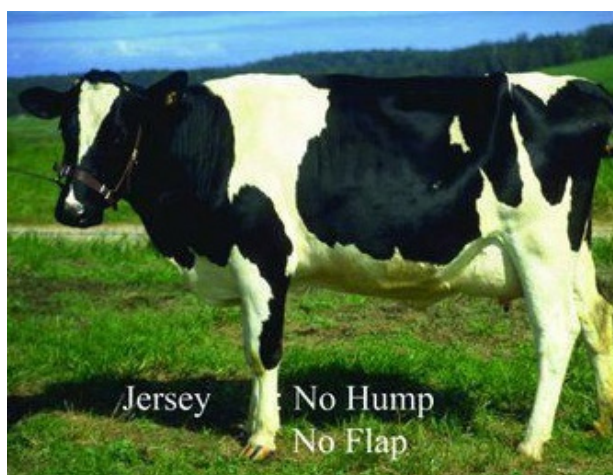
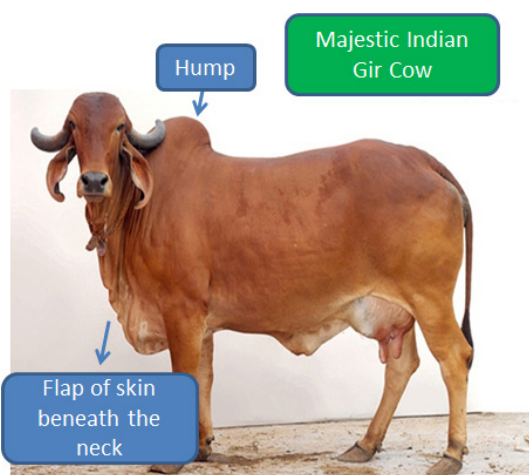
Paatti – In many parts of Europe, Australia, New Zealand and the US, A2 milk is branded separately and sold at a premium of almost 50%. Unfortunately, in India, the awareness is still low, though people are now beginning to understand the difference.

Atharva – How can we identify the native Indian breeds that produce A2 milk?

Paatti – It is easy to identify in most cases. In native breeds, you will find a hump, a rounded protuberance found on the back. Also, there will be a flap of skin beneath the neck. Both these features will generally be absent in the exotic breeds: Jersey and HF.



**A2 milk being branded and sold separately
in European Supermarkets**



Atharva – This is an eye-opener for me paatti! But then, if the world realizes the seriousness of the issue, why don't all producers change over to A2 milk immediately?

Paatti – It is a good question. But this cannot happen overnight. There are millions of Jersey, HF and other cows globally, which are currently producing A1 milk and is being sold. If A1

milk is abruptly stopped, so many companies and farmers will incur significant losses. They will just not allow this to happen. On the other hand, how will you be able to get so many A2 milk-producing cows in a short period? Developing a breed is a biological process and will take its own time.

Atharva – So, are we essentially stuck?

Paatti – Yes. That's true. But, if there is enough awareness and consumers start demanding A2 milk, the producers in India will need to change. They will then go back to our native Indian breed of cows!

THINK BOX

What do you think when you see cow on the roads?

Let's talk about these

1. Name the five pure Indian cattle breeds that are known for their milk yielding prowess.
2. What breeds of cows did Brazil and the US nourish and breed? How were they benefited?
3. What has been the impact of Western influence on the breeds of cows in India?
4. What steps can be taken to spread the awareness of A2 milk in the society?
5. How will you identify the native breeds of cows?

Let's do these exercises

a. Fill in the blanks:

1. The milk yield of a cow becomes low because of_____.
2. The two breeds of cow introduced in India by the Europeans were _____ and _____ which _____ the milk output in a short time.



3. Milk contains a type of protein called _____ whose presence in A1 milk causes _____.
4. The practice of cross-breeding has led to destruction of _____.

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

1. Since A2 milk is healthier than A1 milk, many countries brand A2 milk separately and sell it at a premium of almost 50%.
2. Holstein Friesians was capable of 8,000-kg per lactation but when bought to Bengaluru it yielded only 2,200 kg due to change in feed, and climatic conditions.
3. A breed is a specific group of animals having homogenous appearance, behavior and other characteristics that distinguishes it from other group of animals of the same species.
4. The exotic breeds adapted themselves easily in the Indian climatic conditions and required minimal maintenance.
5. Native Indian and African breeds produce A1 milk while exotic breeds like Jersey and Holstein Friesian produce only A2 milk.

c. Projects

- a. Make a chart of cows of Indian breeds. Find more information about them and share with your friends.
- b. Visit nearby cattleshed and observe how a milkman milks the cow. Speak to him, find out ways by which you can help him. Try to help him. Take your family and friends along.

DILASA – 'RAY OF HOPE'

Expected learning outcome

Students understand the importance of farmers and their everyday struggles

*“Maharashtra reports 2,414 farmer suicides in January-October (2017) period.” screamed the morning newspaper. Gaurav read the headlines and was quite shocked. He discussed this with his **tauji** (father’s elder brother in Hindi).*

Gaurav – Tauji, 2,414 farmers ended their lives in last 10 months! But why did they do so?

Tauji – Primarily due to financial problems.

Gaurav – Farmers are unable to earn enough?

Tauji – Their earning is very uncertain. They carry a huge amount of risk. The rains may fail, or there could be a pest attack due to which both quantum and quality of produce can drop significantly. At times, they may have good produce, but may end up being unable to sell it in the market for



the expected price, which reduces their earnings. Farmers also borrow money from the local moneylenders, paying very high rates of interest.

Tauji – The suicides are thus due to indebtedness, drought, crop failure and social as well as medical expenses that farmers have to incur. When the going gets very tough, they, unfortunately, take the extreme step.

Gaurav – That's very sad.

Tauji – Yes. Farmers are very important for any country. They help us produce food- our basic requirement. Staying in cities, we tend to take food availability for granted, but that is not the case. Indeed, India faced an acute food shortage during the Indo-Pakistan War in 1965. Our former Prime Minister, Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri, then appealed to all Indians to fast every Monday. Even today, 1 in 9 people on Earth go to bed hungry each night.

Gaurav – If my memory serves me right, it was Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri who gave us the slogan -‘*Jai Jawaan, Jai Kisaan*’ (‘Hail the Soldier, Hail the Farmer’).

Tauji – That is right. To understand the reason behind the plight of our farmers, let me explain to you certain key characteristics of Indian agriculture.

There are two types of farmlands – Irrigated and rain-dependent. Irrigated farms have a specific water supply source like a nearby river, from where water is channelized to the farms through pipes, primarily using electricity.

The rain-fed farms are not connected to any specific water supply source. They are completely dependent on the rains. 60% of India's area under cultivation is rain-dependent.

Gaurav – So, this creates a tricky situation. No rains imply low produce. Considering the problem of climate change, the rain pattern must also be increasingly erratic.

Tauji – Absolutely. The problem has become even more acute with our farmers ignoring simple, sustainable agricultural practices.

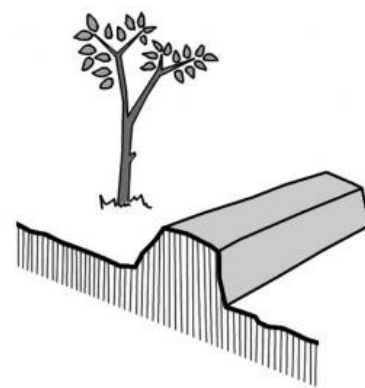
Tauji – In this context, let me tell you about a very simple, unassuming person called **Madhukar Dhas** who helped thousands of farmers in the Vidarbha and Marathwada districts of Maharashtra, rediscover these agricultural practices. He set up ‘**Dilasa**’ – an NGO in 1994, which aptly means ‘**Ray of Hope.**’

Madhukar realized that most of the rainwater that naturally fell on the fields flows away as it is a hilly terrain and the fields are uneven. Thus, based on the slope of the field, water just flows in a particular direction. Overall, not only is there a loss of water, but also, the soil gets eroded along with the flowing rainwater.

Dilasa thus adopted a two-pronged approach.



- Build small ‘bunds’ on the fields using natural material, which to an extent helps retain rainwater and allows it to percolate into the soil, thereby increasing the groundwater level.
- Apply simple physics laws based on the slope of the fields to ensure that rainwater is optimally diverted to temporary man-made storage tanks.



Bund

Also Dilasa built ‘Phads’, in areas where there is a nearby stream of water but there isn’t reliable electricity supply to transport the water. ‘Phads’ divert stream water through open channels or PVC pipes to the nearby fields for irrigation. Based on gravity, the model does



Phad Irrigation

not require electric or mechanical energy for lifting stream water. It is eco-friendly and does not require land acquisition. It is a zero-energy, maintenance-free operational model, which can be easily replicated. This method uses the topography of the land and gravity to distribute water across an area. These simple, low-cost interventions from Dilasa ensured the irrigation of thousands of acres of land.

Gaurav – Very logical approach.

Tauji – Farmers have indeed been able to substantially increase the production yield. Moreover, access to water means that farmers are also able to sow a second crop of pulses or wheat.

Tauji – This reminds me of another problem that plagues many farmers. Most of them have shifted to a single crop like cotton or maize. This allows them to make additional money for a couple of seasons but depletes the soil so much that yields drop dramatically thereafter. They also concentrate their risk. In case an unfavourable situation arises due to rains, pesticides, low market prices, their entire produce gets affected.

Tauji – Dilasa has therefore been promoting the ‘Pata’ method. The emphasis here is to revive mixed cropping pattern by cultivating legumes, cereals and green vegetables together in a row in the farm which not only rejuvenates the soil but also diversifies the risk of the farmer.

Dilasa also runs a farmer support centre to spread awareness about various Government schemes meant for the farmers. It is unfortunate that many of the farmers are not aware of the various schemes that they can benefit from. Even if they know about the scheme, they are not aware how to handle the government bureaucracy.

Gaurav – Great service to humanity!

Tauji – Yes. Dilasa has been recognized for its wonderful service at various levels. It received the prestigious **National Rural Innovation Award** for its work in water channelling. Presently, Dilasa has reached out to over 900 villages of Maharashtra State, working in close collaboration with 15 other NGOs in the area.

Gaurav – All this has been achieved by Madhukar Dhas and his team.

Tauji – Yes, Gaurav. Born in a shepherd family in Beed district of Maharashtra, he was the first person from his extended family to have even passed high school. He worked as a hard labourer to complete his post-graduation. He used to carry cement sacks to as high as 15 floors in his young days to make ends meet. However, he was proud that he could study, albeit only in a government school. He often used to joke that in their community when one turns 6 or 7, he is given a couple of goats to take care of, rather than books and a slate.

Tauji – It is amazing how a person born in a shepherd family could create so much impact, saving numerous lives. But it is also cruel that such a dedicated social worker passed away due to cancer in 2016 at a young age of 47. He left behind a message for us that one with the right intentions can do enormous good to others, even in very challenging conditions.

(Acknowledgement – Articles available electronically on Dilasa.org; Socialworkindia.in)



Madhukar Dhas

**LET'S
KNOW**

The word 'Dilasa' literally means give comfort and support to someone who is going through a bad time.

Let's talk about these

1. The plight of farmers in India .
2. The role of the society in uplifting poor farmers.

Let's do these exercises

a. Fill in the blanks:

1. Lal Bahadur Shastri gave the slogan _____.
2. Dilasa adopted a _____ approach for using rain water effectively.
3. Dilasa achieved _____ award for its work in water channelling.
4. India has two types of farmlands namely _____ and _____.

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

1. Indian farmers are mainly dependent on monsoon for irrigation.
2. Cultivation of legumes, fruits and cereals in rotation reduces soil fertility.
3. The Pata system uses topography of land and the gravity to distribute water across an area.
4. Dilasa adopted a two-pronged approach of effective usage of rainwater and application of simple physics laws to ensure water to farmers for irrigation.

c. Answer the following:

1. Why do farmers have an uncertain income?
2. What can farmers do to increase the yield?
3. Write Short Notes On:
i) Phad Irrigation ii) Dilasa iii) Pata method of irrigation.
4. Sri Madhukar Dhas is a role model to emulate. Justify.

d. Projects

Enact a play on the importance of farming.

11

PANCHA MAHA YAJNYA – PITRA YAJNYA

Expected learning outcome

Students give unconditional love to parents and grandparents

Nani was explaining about Pancha Maha Yajnya, as prescribed by the Vedas. Brahma Yajnya (Meditation) and Dev Yajnya (Agnihotra) were the first two. Find out what the next one is.

Nani – So, the third Yajnya is ‘**Pitra Yajnya.**’ What can you possibly guess by the word ‘*Pitra*’?

Agasti – Is it related to ‘Pita,’ which in few languages means ‘Father’?

Nani – Yes, that is partially right. The word ‘*Pitra*’ here refers to our elders, including parents, grandparents, teachers and other relatives. Pitra Yajnya is nothing but, we should respect and assist our elders in all possible ways, every day. It is our bounden duty.



Nani – It is rather unfortunate that as we grow up, we tend to ignore our elders. We love our parents during our childhood because they do so much for us. They provide for all comforts in life, including food, clothing, shelter, education and above all true love. However, slowly our bonding with our parents decreases.

Think about it! As a 2-year old, if you cannot see your mother even for a few minutes, you have a great sense of insecurity. You start crying, yearning to hug her and feel secure.

Agasti – Yes, nani. Indeed, the other day I was noticing the kindergarten children in our school. It was their first day. They just did not want to leave their parents. The teachers almost forcefully took them inside the class.



Nani – Soon you start growing up. In the initial years, you go home and cannot wait to share everything with your parents, regarding what happened at school. Slowly, things begin to change. You start having your own secrets. Sometimes friends become more important. Isn't that true?

Agasti – Yes, nani.

Nani – One more interesting aspect develops in you. You start judging your own parents. You start comparing them with parents of other children.

Agasti – Yes, we do tend to compare based on wealth. We compare ourselves based on the kind of things we carry to school, places we go to during our holidays, the dresses we sometimes wear to school other than the school uniform etc.

Nani – Also, we tend to judge our parents based on their education level and social status. Many children have an inferiority complex because they feel their parents are not as well educated as parents of other children in their class.

Nani – Indeed, the whole definition of being educated or not, boils down to knowing English. If our parents can speak English and if that is the mode of communication at home as well, we feel very proud. We tend to believe that we are an *educated* family!

Agasti – What you are saying is so true! This is precisely how many of us tend to think. Indeed, I must admit that many of us feel uncomfortable with our parents visiting the school for parent-teacher meetings or other functions if they cannot speak well in English.

Nani – That is a sad state of affairs. Yes, English is an important language to know in today's context but not at the cost of ignoring our own mother tongue.

Nani – Also remember, according to Vedas, only that person is educated who imbibes key human values like honesty, integrity, compassion, non-violence, patience, hardwork etc. A person who probably is a daily wage earner, is far more educated if he is 'value driven,'

compared to a doctor, lawyer, businessman or a senior bureaucrat roaming about in a luxury car and speaking English with a polished accent, but having none of these values.

Agasti – Nani, isn't this very idealistic?

Nani – Yes it may sound so. But then this is the absolute truth.

Nani – Most of us are becoming very transaction oriented, influenced by the everyday world around us. Once we grow up, finish our education and start earning, we physically and emotionally move further away from our parents. We are no longer dependent on them financially or otherwise. But they become dependent on us. They retire from their professions and keep getting older. They often fall sick and have special needs. At such times, we start seeing them as a burden. This is the ignorance that envelopes us. We fail to understand the concept of unconditional love.

Nani – When children are young, they '*stay with the parents.*' When parents get old, and children become adults, they often comment: '*My parents stay with me.*' The tacit difference conveys a lot!

Agasti – Yes nani. One day, my best friend, Ashok, was very sad in school. When I enquired, he mentioned that his grandmother was going away to stay in an old-age home.

Nani – Agasti, this is happening all around. The number of old-age or retirement homes is increasing. I am also saddened to say that the incidents of ignoring our elders is higher in so-called English speaking educated families who live in urban areas.

Nani – However, people still believe in performing numerous religious ceremonies after the death of a person. It is called '*Shraaddh.*' It is supposedly a ritual accomplished to satisfy one's ancestors.

Agasti – Oh yes! One of my friends did take leave recently. He mentioned that there is a ceremony at home as it's the death anniversary of his grandfather.

Nani – '*Shraaddh*' has evolved from the word '*Shraddha,*' originally a Sanskrit word, which means any act that is performed with all sincerity and faith.

Agasti – Is this the '*Pitra Yajnya*' as prescribed by the Vedas?

Nani – No Agasti. '*Pitra Yajnya*' is only about respecting elders and taking care of their needs when they are alive. After death, the soul leaves the body and takes rebirth based on its Karma. There is no convincing logic of having rituals after death to satisfy one's ancestors.

Nani – Old people want their children and grandchildren to spend time with them. They like to share their experiences which is greatly beneficial for the younger generation. This is what makes them truly satisfied.

Agasti – I understand nani. Also, I have another question. Can I ask?

Nani – Yes. Sure.

Agasti – At times, our elders may have wrong views. Should we simply accept it out of respect for them?

Nani – This is a wonderful question. Obviously, you first need to genuinely understand as to why their view is incorrect. In many cases, it could just be our inability to appreciate their perspective. However, if you still strongly feel that they are caught up in some superstitious beliefs, then it is fine to put forward your viewpoint, but with a sense of humility. We should always side with the truth, but not in an arrogant way.

Agasti – Thank you nani! I feel so lucky to be able to spend time with you. I am also glad my parents stay with you.

Let's talk about these

1. Do you feel that talking fluently in a particular language elevates you as a human being? What makes you think so?
2. We should always be attached to our roots and be proud of who we are irrespective of our economic status. Discuss.

Answer the following

1. What is the difference between being literate and being educated? How can we educate ourselves to be sensitive towards the feelings of others?
2. How can we show unconditional love towards our parents? Write in your own words.
3. Is it morally and ethically correct to leave our parents in an old-age home especially when they need us the most? Ponder over this and pen down your own words.



4. Elderly people need our time, love and concern only. Do you agree? How much of quality time do you spend with your parents / grandparents at home?
5. How can you make your mother / father feel special? Make a list of things which she/he likes you to do? Try to do one such thing every day to make them happy.

Express yourself!

Write about some qualities in your grandparents which inspire you to become like them when you grow up. You can use the hints given.

Hint [concern for the family- unconditional love: wisdom: kind-hearted- storytelling sessions- preparing delicious food..]

Let's do!

Visit an old-age home with your family/friends and observe how your love, concern and interaction can make a difference in their lives.

Activity

List five ways by which you can help your parents at home.

ZERO BUDGET NATURAL FARMING

Expected learning outcomes

Students:

- understand the hardships of the farmers.
- understand the harms of using synthetic fertilizers and pesticides.
- understand the differences between organic and natural farming.
- appreciate the advantages of Zero Budget Natural farming over organic farming.

Farming, especially for those with small land holdings, is a thankless, risky, and a back-breaking venture. And Indian agriculture for various historic reasons is characterized by numerous small farmers with an average land holding of only about 1.08 hectares (1 hectare = 2.47 acres). The kind of challenges that a small farmer takes on is unimaginable for any contemporary city-based entrepreneur. From a simple perspective, these challenges can be categorized as under

- **High Input costs**→Chemical fertilizers, pesticides and seeds, digging of borewells, electricity, financial capital and farm labour, make the intrinsic profitability of farming itself very low.
- **Produce risk**→Unpredictable weather (drought / excess rains), sudden pest attacks etc. can suddenly wipe out the entire produce.
- **Market risk**→Low prices for the final produce which the farmer needs to sell almost immediately in the local market itself. He is generally unable to store or transport and market it at distant places for a better price.

With the advent of Green Revolution in 1960s, Indian farmers have been overly reliant on chemical fertilizers, pesticides and hybrid seeds. Key chemical fertilizers include Urea, DAP (Di-ammonium Phosphate) & MOP (Muriate of Potash). While, it definitely led to increase

in overall production of foodgrains, there have been numerous side-effects which are now manifesting in diverse ways. Farmers are increasingly complaining of depleting fertility of soils, soil salinity and alkalinity and problems of ground water pollution. Chemicals kill the bad pests, but along with it they also decimate the friendly bacteria that are essential for the plants. They also kill the earthworms in the soil that are extremely useful for soil health. In addition, overuse of these chemical based inputs has clearly led to very negative impact on public health, with increased incidence of kidney ailments, cancer cases and non-communicable diseases. Some of these chemicals are so toxic that, at times farmers themselves become unconscious or even die while spraying them on the farms.

Also, these chemical based inputs come at a significant cost and are highly dependent on the price of the two main energy sources required for their production – coal and natural gas. Though the Indian Government has been subsidizing these inputs by bearing part of the costs (annual subsidy on fertilizer alone is expected to be Rs. 1,30,000 crores in 2022, i.e. approx. Rs.1,000 annually per Indian), there is still a significant cost that has to be directly borne by the farmer. For example, a 45-kg sack of urea actually costs approximately Rs. 450. The Government subsidizes to the extent of Rs. 180; the farmer however needs to directly pay Rs. 270 for the 45-kg sack, i.e. Rs. 6 per kg.

PROVIDING SUBSIDY

The process of providing subsidy in a large, diverse country like India can be quite complicated. For example, urea is used by multiple other industries, like chemicals, pharmaceuticals, plastics, textiles, paper etc. apart from agriculture. Government intends to provide subsidy on urea that is to be used only for agriculture, so that farmer's input costs are lower to that extent.

Unfortunately, many middlemen have been mis-utilizing the Government subsidy, by declaring to the govt. that urea is to be supplied to farmers but instead divert it to other commercial industries at a price much higher than Rs. 270 but lower than Rs. 450, thus unjustly pocketing the difference. The Indian Government is therefore contemplating introducing the 'Direct Benefit Transfer' (DBT) scheme, wherein the farmer will need to also buy the urea in open market at Rs. 450 and upon producing of receipt to the Government, the subsidy amount of Rs. 180 per sack, will be directly transferred to the farmer's registered bank account. This scheme which has already been implemented for other products like LPG cylinders, will ensure that the malpractices adopted by the middlemen are significantly reduced.

The small farmers are therefore caught in a debt trap owing to the loan taken to meet the

high cost of farming, as it demands more external inputs such as fertilisers, pesticides and water. These factors along with the inherent risk associated, has led to farming becoming a very unattractive proposition for the small farmers. Piled up with debt, farmers constantly seek loan waivers and some of those who are just unable to withstand pressure from local lenders, also end up committing suicide.

What should possibly be India's approach going forward?

ORGANIC FARMING

Over the last decade, Organic Farming has become a buzz word. The term "Organic Farming" was first used around 1940. Ostensibly prior to 1940 and the rise of modern commercial farming practices, all farming was naturally organic. In the last 80 years, all life and face of the earth has changed at a rapid rate. We now routinely and unknowingly consume chemicals, genetically modified and irradiated foods.



Organic Farming

Unfortunately, the public perception towards

Organic farming has led to a 'hype' and over-commercialization. Instead of chemical fertilizers, the organic farmers today are being marketed expensive bio-fertilizers by large companies. Also, to produce vermicompost they often procure earthworms from abroad that are high maintenance and die easily.

Also, since the quality of existing soil has already degraded significantly due to constant use of chemical based inputs, the shift over to Organic farming generally leads to an average drop in yield of about 20% for the first couple of years. Therefore, with continued substituted high input costs and lower expected yield, organic farming has today become an expensive farming practice. Therefore, there are challenges in 'Organic' farming as the world sees it today and is therefore unsustainable. Sri Lanka saw a disastrous impact on its economy by abruptly shifting to organic farming in 2020. Heavily dependent on purchase of organic fertilizers from China, Sri Lanka witnessed a sudden dip in its agricultural yield with input costs still remaining relatively high.

DID YOU KNOW?

The process of cultivating earthworms in order to convert organic waste into fertilizer is called Vermicomposting or Vermiculture. This process is done using various species of

worms that feed on the organic waste (eg: cow-dung) and produce nutrient-rich manure in the form of excreta. The excreta of earthworms are nutritious and hence the soil becomes fertile. They move throughout the soil and loosen the soil. This allows air circulation to happen inside the soil and the roots get enough space to grow and extend. The converted end product or manure is called Vermicompost. This compost is rich in Nitrogen, Phosphorus and Potassium, contains water-soluble nutrients and is an excellent, nutrient-rich organic fertilizer and soil conditioner. It is used in farming and small-scale organic farming.



NATURAL FARMING (ZERO BUDGET)

In this context, “Zero Budget Natural Farming” (ZBNF), which promotes the use of the desi (indigenous breed) cow, dung and urine for agricultural purposes, is turning out to be a promising tool to minimise the dependence of farmers on purchased inputs, such as chemical / organic fertilisers and pesticides, and reducing the cost of production, thereby making farming relatively more profitable. The concept is that the farmer should be able to produce based on inputs available in its local ecosystem rather than being dependent on large fertiliser manufacturing factories – chemical or organic based. Natural farming uses nothing that is store-bought. It primarily relies on ‘Jeevamrut’ – natural fertilisers made from cow dung and urine of native cattle species.

All that a farmer requires is a healthy native breed of cattle which produces eight to ten kilograms of dung and about the same quantity of urine a day. Jaggery and chickpea flour is mixed with this and stored in a drum in the shade. It has been found that one gram of dung from native species of cattle contained more than 300 crores (three billion) of useful bacteria in it - a treasure trove of minerals.

JEEVAMRUT FORMULA

- 2.5 kilograms of cow dung raw
- 1 litre of cow's urine
- Half kilogram jaggery
- A half kilogram of any pulse's powder - Beans, Black gram, Cowpea, Bengal gram, Red gram, Pigeon pea
- A handful of soil which is clean from chemical pesticides or fertilisers.

- 50 litres of water to dilute the mix.

All the ingredients are mixed in a large container and it is covered with a log or sack to prevent direct sunlight. The farmer has to do is stir the mixture twice a day, clockwise, and in six days fertiliser enough for one acre of land is ready.



About 200 litres of this mixture should be sprayed twice a month per acre.

The prepared solution is spread on the field. And like a spoonful of curd can convert a bowl of milk into curd, the jeevamrut does the job of spreading its goodness through the soil. It is a great nitrogen fixer and nourishes the roots of the plant.

All the nourishing ingredients are already present in the soil and the jeevamrut essentially acts as a catalyst to get them working. It does the work of a cook in a kitchen. The ingredients are all present in the kitchen, it requires someone to put them together to produce food. Jeevamrut should not be applied on dry soil as it will immediately kill the microorganisms in the mix. The soil needs to be watered before applying the mix.

Why is Jeevamrut so effective?

Dung from the *Bos indicus* (humped cow), i.e. Indian native cows is highly beneficial and has the highest concentrations of micro-organisms as compared to European cow breeds such as Jersey or Holstein. The entire ZBNF method is centred on the Indian cow. When a farmer unties his or her cow, she wanders around leaving behind dung here and there. If the dung is left where it is and if it is flipped around after a day or two, there will be pores on the underside indicating how bacteria has burrowed into it to be nourished. So, when we put jeevamrut of which cow dung & urine is a critical component, into the soil, the bacteria emerge to the surface to feed to be nourished and in turn nourishes the soil and plants.

Natural farming is based on four pillars. Jeevamrut is the key pillar. The other three supporting aspects are:



BIJAMRITA

Bijamrita (Bija means 'seed' | Amrita means 'nectar') is a treatment used for seeds, seedlings or any planting material. Bijamrita helps in protecting young roots from fungus, as well as from soil-borne and seed-borne diseases that commonly affect plants post the monsoon. In this process the seeds are coated with a special mix which is prepared using similar ingredients as Jeevamrutha - local cow dung, a powerful natural fungicide, and cow urine, a strong anti-bacterial liquid, lime and soil.

ACCHADANA – MULCHING

Mulching is the process of covering the open surface of the ground, i.e. the farm, by a layer of natural decomposable material like dry leaves, grass, paddy straw, sugarcane molasses, green manures, gunny bags, coconut leaves, peanut shells, etc. Using these natural materials as mulch, increases humus content of soil & improves overall soil quality. Mulching also helps to retain soil moisture, so less amount of water is required during irrigation. It traps surface water of the soil that would otherwise get evaporated quickly. It therefore directly conserves water. Mulching also helps to regulate soil temperature, which is beneficial for proper root growth.

WHAPASA – MOISTURE

Natural farming opposes the common belief that the plant roots need a lot of water, which is contrary to the over-reliance on irrigation in green revolution farming. It is instead strongly advocated that the roots need water vapour. Whapasa is the condition in which the soil contains both air and water molecules. Natural farming encourages the reduction of irrigation and emphasizes its usage only during noon time in alternate furrows.

The difference between Natural Farming (Zero budget) and Organic Farming is summarized below

S. No.	Zero Budget Natural Farming (ZBNF)	Organic Farming
1	No external fertilizers are used in ZBNF.	Organic fertilizers such as compost, cow dung, and vermicompost are used in organic.
2	There is no tilling and no mixing. It requires natural ecosystems.	It requires basic agro methods like tilling, intensive ploughing, mixing, etc.
3	It is low-cost farming due to the local biodiversity.	It is expensive due to the need for bulk manures.

THE STORY OF SUBHASH PALEKAR

In 1972, Subhash Palekar graduated with a degree in B.Sc in Agriculture. He returned home eager to implement all that he had learnt in college. His father, had a farm in Belora, a small village in the Amravati district, Maharashtra. He advised his father on modern techniques, and also urged him to use pesticides and chemical fertilizer. Following his advice, crop yield increased considerably — for



almost a decade. Then, by 1985 there was a drop in the yield and with each successive year it only got worse. Palekar began to study the decline. He spent three years of intense research and finally arrived at the conclusion that chemical farming was the reason for the decline. He found that using chemical fertilizer and pesticides decreased the fertility of the soil. It wreaked havoc with the ecosystem of that area and led to long term health problems for those who ate the fruits, vegetables and grain harvested in these conditions.

Palekar was shocked. He realised he needed a healthier alternative. He studied forest vegetation. **He discovered that the natural system at work in the forests allowed the vegetation to grow and take care of itself and at the same time maintaining healthy ecosystems. This was made obvious by the big trees he saw in the forests, laden with fruit. Obviously, they had not been aided in their growth by pesticides and fertilizer. These trees are proof that plants can and do grow healthily without chemical help.** Whereas in a farm, the micro-organisms that convert raw nutrients into easily digestible form have been destroyed by the pesticides and chemical fertiliser. He decided to mimic the technique in his own farm. For six years, he experimented and verified techniques. In the end, he arrived at Zero Budget Natural Farming. This is a method of farming where the cost of growing and harvesting plants is zero. There is no need for pesticides and fertilizer to grow a healthy crop.

Palekar took his findings to farmers across the country. More than 40 lakh farmers have benefited. In recognition of his work the Government of India conferred him with a **Padma Shri Award** in 2016, thus becoming the first active farmer to receive the award.

In June 2018, Andhra Pradesh announced a plan to become India's first state to practice 100% natural farming by 2024 while aiming to phase out chemical farming over 80 lakh hectares of land. Other states including Karnataka, Himachal Pradesh, Gujarat, Chhattisgarh, Kerala, Karnataka and Uttarakhand are also increasingly adopting Natural farming.

Addressing thousands of farmers at the National Conclave on Natural Farming, held in 2021, Honorable Prime Minister, Narendra Modi remarked "Natural farming will benefit the country's 80 per cent farmers, who are small-scale and have less than two hectares of land, as they spend a lot on chemical input. But using natural fertilisers will benefit them with low expenditure and more profit."

(Acknowledgement – Articles available electronically on en.gaonconnection.com; thehindu.com; tractorjunction.com)

Let's do these exercises

a. Tick the correct answers:

1. Organic farming results in **(drop/increase)** in yield of about 20% for the first couple of years.
2. Subhash Palekar was conferred Padma Shri Award in 2016 in recognition of his work on **(ZBNF/Organic farming)**.
3. ZBNF method is centred on **(NativeIndian/Jersey)** cows.
4. Jeevamrut should be applied on **(dry/wet)** soil to prevent the killing of microorganisms in the mix.

b. Fill in the blanks :

1. The key pillar of Natural farming is _____.
2. Mulching helps to retain _____ resulting in lesser water requirement during irrigation.
3. The two main energy sources required for producing chemical based inputs are _____ and _____.
4. The process of cultivating earthworms to convert organic waste into fertilizer is called _____.

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

1. Organic farming is expensive.
2. It is a good idea to abruptly shift to organic farming.
3. The average land holding of a small farmer is about 2.47 hectares.
4. Natural farming does not involve any input that is store-bought.
5. Zero Budget Natural Farming requires no tilling or mixing. It only requires natural ecosystems.

Let's talk about these



1. Why is Zero Budget Natural Farming called so?
2. How does the use of synthetic pesticides and fertilizers affect farming in the long run?
3. Natural Farming is economically more viable than Organic Farming. Justify.



DEMYSTIFYING DEATH – 2

Expected learning outcome

Students grasp the concept of after-life and to make them understand the differences between body and soul

Darsh's ajji passed away recently. Numerous questions arose in his mind around this mystery called death. Darsh's ajja was having an engaging conversation with him explaining to him the nuances...

Darsh – You mentioned earlier that this body is a machine, similar to a car.

Ajja – Yes Darsh, that is right!

Darsh – So, does a car also have a soul?

Ajja – No. This is precisely the difference between us and the car. You and I have consciousness, i.e. the soul. The car does not have one.

Ajja – You feel happy and sometimes sad as well, don't you?

Darsh – Yes ajja.

Ajja – Does the car also have these emotions – feelings like being happy or sad?

Darsh – No ajja. Obviously, a car does not feel so. It is a non-living thing.

Ajja – Absolutely. A living thing has a body and a soul. A non-living thing has only a body, but no soul. Since it is non-living, it does not have emotions either. It neither feels happy nor sad. It does not feel pleasure or pain.

Darsh – Does the soul not die, ajja?

Ajja – No Darsh. This soul is immortal. This never dies.

Darsh – So, this means ajji has not died?

Ajja – Well, both 'Yes' and 'No.' Her body no longer exists in the same form that we used to see all these years. Her body was cremated. It was converted into ashes, which was then buried. However, her soul did not die. The soul has only departed from her body.

Darsh – What is this body made up of ajja?

Ajja – This body is made up of five elements: Earth, Water, Fire, Air and Space, also known as *Pancha Maha-Bhoota*.

Darsh – What do you mean when you say that body no longer exists in the same form?

Ajja – When the person dies, we cremate the body. The body changes form by being converted into its basic elements, i.e. the Pancha Maha-Bhoota.

Ajja – Let me give you another example. There is this table. What will happen if you crush it?

Darsh – It will be broken into smaller pieces.

Ajja – You further break it down with a hammer. You then grind the small pieces. What happens now?

Darsh – It will become like a powdery substance.

Ajja – Now, you will no longer call this a table, will you? But the components that make up the table are still around in the form of powder.

Darsh – Oh yes, I remember reading in a book: *'Matter can neither be created nor destroyed. It only changes from one form to another.'*

Ajja – Absolutely. Your ajji's body changed from the form of a human body to ashes.

Darsh – Where is her soul now, ajja?

Ajja – We human beings cannot find that out. This entire world is administered by Ishvar. He decides on the next journey of the soul. The soul will be directed to the body of another to-be-born living being.

Darsh – I now understand the concept ajja.

Ajja – Have you heard about this beautiful shloka from the Bhagavad Gita? Shri Krishna counsels to Arjuna who got very emotional, looking at his relatives whom he was supposed to kill. Arjuna feared death. That is when Shri Krishna remarked:



नैनं छिन्दन्ति शस्त्राणि नैनं दहति पावकः।

न चैनं क्लेदयन्त्यापो न शोषयति मारुतः॥

(Bhagavad Gita | Chapter 2 | Shloka 23)

Nainam Chindanti Shashtraani Nainam Dahati Pavakah

Na Chainam Kledayantyapo Na Shosayati Maarutah

Meaning: *The soul can never be cut into pieces by any weapon, nor can it be burned by fire, nor moistened by water, nor withered by the wind. The soul will remain forever.*

Darsh – So my ajji's soul will remain forever.

Ajja – Yes, Darsh.

Ajja – Remember life is like a journey on a train. We spend time together with the co-passengers during the journey. As the train passes through various stations, we have travellers who board the train and alight as well. However, the journey continues!

Darsh – What are you referring to when you say that passengers keep boarding and alighting?

Ajja – Darsh, this is a philosophical way to look at life. When you were born, you were like a new passenger who boarded this train. We all welcomed you. When your ajji died, she symbolically alighted from this train. We were very saddened, but the journey still goes on. And one fine day, I will also alight from this train.

Darsh – So, you mean you will also die someday, ajja?

Ajja – Yes, Darsh. We all have to die one day or the other. Nothing is permanent. No one lives forever with the same body that gets older day by day. But our soul continues to live forever.

Darsh felt much better now. He felt relieved to know that what happened to ajji is in a way, a normal occurrence in life. Her soul is still very much alive. Only her body has changed form.

Let's understand

Recall a memory of someone who has passed away. Now imagine you can talk to them. Ask them about life after death.



Let's talk about these



1. What is the major difference between a living thing and a non-living thing?
2. What is the body made up of?
3. How does Shri Krishna explain the permanent nature of the soul to Arjuna in Bhagavad Gita?
4. Compare the journey of life to a train journey.
5. How did you feel when you came to know that the soul never dies. Discuss your thoughts.

Let's do these exercises



a. Tick the correct answers:

1. Our body is (**mortal** / **immortal**) whereas the soul is (**mortal** / **immortal**).
2. A vessel is a non-living thing because it does not have (**consciousness/a body**).
3. The beautiful mantra that explains about the soul comes from Bhagavad Gita, Chapter (**17** / **2**) | Shloka (**23** / **32**).
4. As matter changes from one form to another, ajji's body changed from the form of human body to (**soul** / **ashes**).
5. A (**living** / **non-living**) thing has emotions.

b. Fill in the blanks:

1. Our body is a combination of five elements namely _____, _____, _____, _____ and _____ forming the Pancha Maha-Bhoota.
2. The Shloka from Bhagavad Gita explains that the soul can never be cut into pieces by _____, nor can it be burned by _____, nor _____ by water, nor _____ by the wind, the soul will exist forever.
3. Shri Krishna counsels Arjuna because he got very _____ looking at his relatives on the battlefield whom he was supposed to _____.

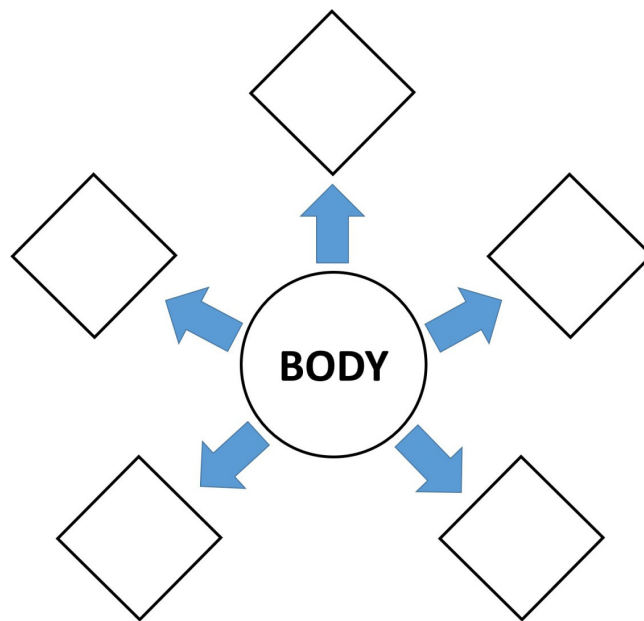
4. According to *the law of conservation of matter*, matter can neither be _____ nor _____. It only changes from _____ to another.
5. Soul never dies but once the soul _____ from the body the person is considered to be dead.

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

1. Nothing is permanent and everyone has to die one day or the other.
2. All non-living things have both a body and a soul.
3. Life is like a train journey wherein new passengers board (birth) and some passengers alight (death), but the journey still goes on.
4. The entire world is administered by Ishvar who decides the next journey for the soul.

Let's do!

Our body is made of five elements known as the Pancha Maha Bhoota. Complete the flowchart given below by filling each box with one element of the Pancha Maha Bhoota.



INDIA - CHINA BORDER DISPUTE | DOKLAM & GALWAN

Expected learning outcomes

Students:

- understand the history of Indo-China border dispute
- understand the Chinese strategy of 'nibble and negotiate'
- appreciate how the Indian Army maintains territorial integrity in the face of such intrusions
- get inspired by the courage of the Galwan Heroes
- appreciate and develop a deep gratitude for the sacrifice of soldiers

India-China relations dates back to more than 2,000 years ago. Though there have been cultural and economic ties between the two countries with the Silk Road serving as a trade route, the relationship was rather limited till the pre-1950s. A new chapter evolved after India got Independence in 1947 and the Communist Revolution took place in China in 1949. In 1951, China invaded and occupied Tibet. Geographically, Tibet had acted as a buffer between India and China for thousands of years. With China's invasion of Tibet, India and China became immediate neighbours and started sharing a very long common border.



The root cause of India-China dispute therefore lies in an ill-defined, 3,488km long border, divided into three sectors namely: **Eastern sector** which spans Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim (1346 km), the **Middle sector** in Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh (545 km), and the **Western sector** in Ladakh (1597 km). Rivers, lakes and snow-capped mountains along the frontier make it rather very challenging to define a clearly delineated border.



Therefore, since the 1950s, the relations between India and China have come under ‘severe stress’ on multiple occasions – the most significant one being the 1962 war, which India sadly lost allowing China to acquire control over most regions of Aksai Chin (Western sector). Emboldened, the Chinese came back to attack India in 1967 at the other end of the Himalayas near the Doklam plateau, also known as **Nathu La & Cho La** clashes. The Indian soldiers strongly resisted the attack and defended the Indian territory. Fortunately, this did not snowball into a full-fledged war. There was another military stand-off in 1987 in the Eastern sector, bordering the Tawang district, Arunachal Pradesh, which was triggered following India providing full statehood status to Arunachal Pradesh, a completely internal matter for India.

Pact of 1993 & 1996

India & China over the years intermittently engaged in diplomatic discussions to define the boundaries and resolve the border disputes. In 1993, both the sides managed to formally document certain key geographical locations across the 3,488 km long border (Western, Middle & Eastern sectors) which would define the boundary. This came to be known as the

LAC (Line of Actual Control). However, considering such a long border, some element of ambiguity still remained. It may be noted that LAC is different from the 776 km long **LOC**

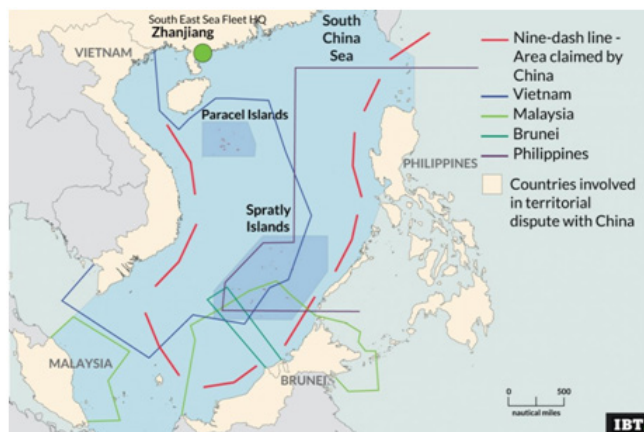


(Line of Control), which denotes the boundary separating parts of Jammu & Kashmir controlled by India and that illegally occupied by Pakistan.

In 1996, India & China signed another agreement to ensure that peace and tranquillity is maintained. Both sides **agreed to not hold military exercises at the border, above 15,000 troops**. The need to limit the combat tanks, infantry combat vehicles, guns and any other weapon system was also mutually agreed upon.

Recent Developments | 2015 – 2022

Chinese strategy -The economic global rise of China coupled with an authoritarian rule by its President Xi Jinping since 2013, has propelled China towards adopting an aggressive expansionist policy. China today has active disputes with 17 countries over its land and sea borders, including Taiwan, Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia, Brunei, Japan, Indonesia, Nepal Bhutan etc. with South China Sea being a major point of confrontation with numerous countries.



China typically engages in what is known as ‘**Salami Slicing**’ or ‘**Nibble & negotiate**’ technique. This is the process of making many small changes along the border which finally amass into a big change. It implies small, stealth military operations against neighbouring countries which accumulate over time in a large territorial gain. Such military operations are too small to lead to a war but significant enough to stump the neighbour who is not sure how and how much it should respond. A series of such actions not only accumulate territory for China but also become too frequent to attract international diplomatic attention.

China assiduously builds an extensive network of roads, highways, railway lines, air bases, radars, logistics hubs and other infrastructure at the border areas. They then overnight create a military outpost a few kilometres into the neighbouring country’s territory and station their army personnel out there. In certain cases, they also set up entire villages in the neighbour’s territory encouraging a few of their civilians to start living out there, protected by their army. China is indeed the only country which has been expanding its territorial jurisdiction post-World War II at the expense of its neighbours.

Indian response - India which is also now an emerging global power, is actively countering the Chinese by developing infrastructure (roads, bridges, airbases etc.) within its own territory at the border with China. It is also actively monitoring its border 24x7, and is thwarting any attempt by the Chinese to violate the pacts of 1993 & 1996. The two armies had one major stand-off at the Doklam plateau in 2017



– the same region that witnessed clashes in 1967. Doklam is an area spread over less than a 100 sq km comprising a plateau and a valley at the trijunction between India, Bhutan and China. It is surrounded by the Chumbi Valley of China (Tibet), Bhutan's Ha Valley and Sikkim.

This area is also known as the Siliguri corridor (chicken neck). Located in northernmost border of West Bengal, the corridor is 60 km long and 20 km wide connecting the North-East with the rest of India. It is not just an important trade route but also an important gateway to South East Asia as well. The region is surrounded by Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, and China.



In 2017, the Chinese were attempting to extend a road through Doklam in an area which lies in Bhutan. This road could potentially help China easily attack the Siliguri corridor in case of a war, thereby snapping India's access to the North Eastern states. Indian army resisted changing the status quo. Despite an intense stand-off for about 73 days, the situation was brought under control through diplomatic channels. India's approach on Doklam, under Honorable Prime Minister Narendra Modi, was widely recognized, since India boldly confronted the bullying approach of the Chinese.

2020 saw another round of escalation between the countries. Starting in April 2020, China amassed a large number of troops and armaments along the LAC in eastern Ladakh, leading to stand-offs and skirmishes at Galwan Valley, Pangong Tso (lake) and other areas. A key trigger point was India completing an all-weather 255 km long **Darbuk-Shayok-DBO (DSDBO)** road in 2019. This road the construction of which started way back in 2001, now provides

India quick access during the entire year from Leh to DBO i.e. Daulat Beg Oldie (DBO). DBO is a military airbase with an airstrip – indeed one of the highest advanced landing grounds in the world. It can be used by large military transport aircrafts like the AN-32 and the C-130J Super Hercules, thus enabling Indian defense forces to quickly reach critical supplies. West of DBO is Gilgit-Baltistan, part of the POK (Pakistan Occupied Kashmir) region and part of CPEC (China Pakistan Economic Corridor). China has therefore been apprehensive of India's strategic leverage in the region. India also constructed a road including a bridge that branches off from DSDBO road towards the Galwan Valley, upto the point that India has been patrolling. It is to be noted that **India has been building all the roads and other infrastructure well within its own undisputed territory.**

DID YOU KNOW?

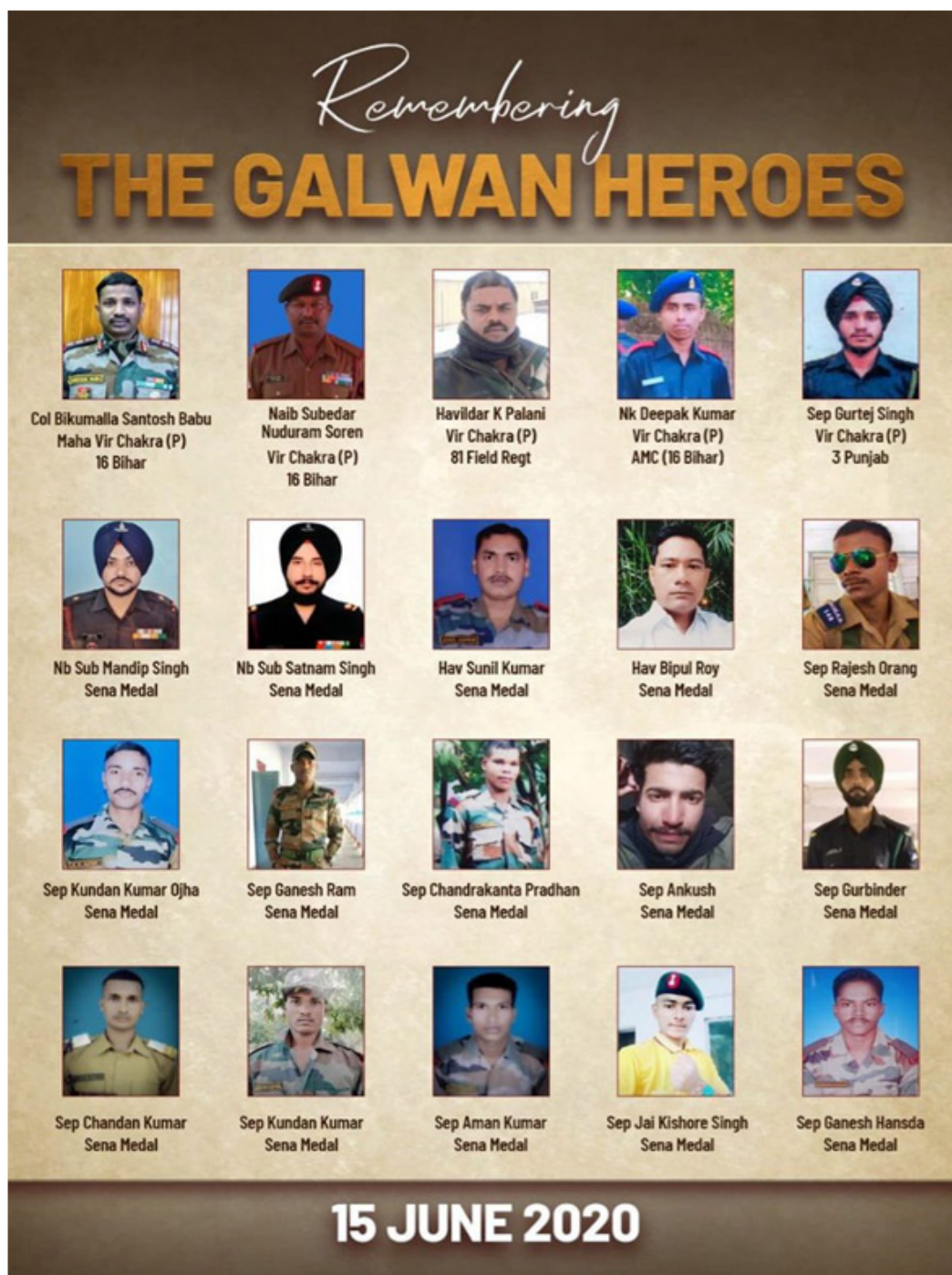
CPEC (China Pakistan Economic Corridor) is a vast network of highways and railways being built by China across Pakistan. CPEC helps connect the deep-sea Pakistani ports of Gwadar and Karachi to China's Xinjiang province and beyond by overland routes, reducing the time and cost of transporting goods and energy such as natural gas to China by circumventing the Straits of Malacca and the South China Sea.

The Chinese objected to India building this infrastructure in Galwan. This led to many rounds of talks between senior military officials from both sides to diffuse the tensions. However, suddenly on the night of June 15, 2020, hectic Chinese activities were noticed across the bridge in Galwan valley and the Indian Army decided to take up the matter with Chinese forces to ask them to respect the LAC and adhere to the position as agreed earlier during the talks. Considering the gravity of the situation, Col. Santosh Babu, who was commanding the 16 Bihar batallion, himself decided to lead the negotiations.



However, an altercation during the discussion raised the tempers leading to a scuffle. Soon the scuffle turned into a violent clash with the Chinese soldiers attacking Col. Santosh Babu and his men with deadly clubs and rods. The Indian soldiers were greatly outnumbered and the Chinese soldiers seemed to be prepared for the attack. The clashes went on for many hours during which many Indian soldiers got seriously injured. Undaunted by the violent and aggressive action by the overwhelming strength of enemy soldiers, Col. Santosh Babu continued to resist the enemy's attempt to pushback Indian troops. Despite being grievously injured, he led from the front like a true military leader to deter the vicious enemy attack. Till his last breath, he kept inspiring troops to hold ground.

Col. Santosh Babu and 19 other soldiers succumbed to their injuries and laid down their lives in the line of duty following the highest traditions of the Indian Army. Col. Santosh Babu was honoured with the nation's second highest gallantry award, "MahaVir Chakra" on Jan 26, 2021 for his extraordinary courage, leadership and supreme sacrifice. Also, five others were awarded the 'Vir Chakra', four of them posthumously - Naib Subedar Nuduram Soren, Havildar K Palani, Naik Deepak Singh, and Sepoy Gurtej Singh. The fifth one was Havildar Tejinder Singh who was grievously injured but managed to survive the brutal attack. Fifteen others were awarded the 'Sena Medal' posthumously.



DID YOU KNOW?

The Indian Armed Forces do not use the term ‘martyr’ for personnel who sacrifice their lives in the line of duty. The word ‘martyr’, which originated from the Greek word ‘martur’, has religious connotations and has been used in history to refer to the sacrifices made by people for their religious beliefs. The Indian Army instead advises use of phrases such as ‘laid down their lives’, ‘killed in action’, ‘supreme sacrifice for the nation’, ‘fallen heroes’, ‘Indian Army braves and fallen soldiers’, ‘battle casualty’, ‘bravehearts’, ‘braves whom we lost’, and ‘veer’ ‘veergati’, ‘veergatiprapt’.

China also suffered a large number of casualties, estimated at about 38-40, surprisingly much higher than India. The Galwan clash indeed turned out to be a major embarrassment for China as they just did not expect the Indian soldiers to fight back so valiantly. Even though Indian soldiers were both outnumbered and taken by surprise, they had the grit, valour and presence of mind to fight ferociously. China initially denied having any casualties, but later reluctantly announced having had a few.

Even today, the two armies continue to remain locked in a tense military standoff. Multiple rounds of military talks and diplomatic discussions have taken place. While these have led to troops pulling back from Galwan, Pangong Tso, and Hot Springs, agreement on disengagement from other friction points remains elusive. Our brave soldiers continue to protect us day and night, while expecting each one of us to also do our bit on nation-building, across various other dimensions.

“Our flag does not fly because the wind moves it, it flies with the last breath of each soldier who died protecting it.”

THE MORAL COMPASS

From a philosophical perspective, it is interesting to realize that Ishvar, the Supreme Force, did not create any of these boundaries that separates countries. It is all drawn by we humans. The Vedas strongly propagate the concept of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam (वसुधैव कुटुम्बकम्) – the entire world is one large family.

With developments across thousands of years, the Mother Earth is today divided into 195 countries with certain defined boundaries, administered and governed largely by the local population. It is best for we humans to now co-exist peacefully, being satisfied with what each country has and work hard internally to keep improving ourselves.

However, plagued by various types of desires¹, many of us continue to tread the path of 'Adharma'. Materialistic success especially tends to breed a sense of arrogance. China is a classic case – over the last few decades it has greatly progressed on economic parameters, but has developed huge arrogance and an inflated ego. True success should indeed lead to humility.

Hope the world leaders realize the concept of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam (वसुधैव कुटुम्बकम्) and learn to co-exist peacefully. Violence is senseless and a zero-sum game. But when absolutely unavoidable, one should fight ferociously to protect the dharma – the way Shri Krishna advised Arjuna to fight the Mahabharatha war.

(Acknowledgement – Articles available electronically on indianarmy.nic.in; honourpoint.in; indiaindianarmy.com; iasgyan.in; clearias.com; ibtimes.co.uk)

1 Vedas divide all our desires into three – (i) Desire for Wealth; (ii) Desire for fame & power; (iii) Desire for relationships

Let's do these exercises

a. Tick the correct answers:

1. The intense stand-off at Doklam went on for about (73/173) days.
2. Col. Santosh Babu was awarded the (Vir Chakra / MahaVir Chakra) in 2021 for his Supreme Sacrifice to the nation.
3. The Western sector of the India-China border is in (Ladakh / Leh).
4. In 1993, the formal boundary defined by India and China came to be known as the (LOC / LAC).

b. Fill in the blanks:

1. Doklam is also referred to as _____ corridor.
2. _____ invaded and occupied Tibet in _____.
3. Darbul-Shayok-DBO (DSDBO) road gives India quick access to _____ from _____.
4. CPEC is a network of highways and railways built by China across _____.

5. _____ is senseless and a zero-sum game.

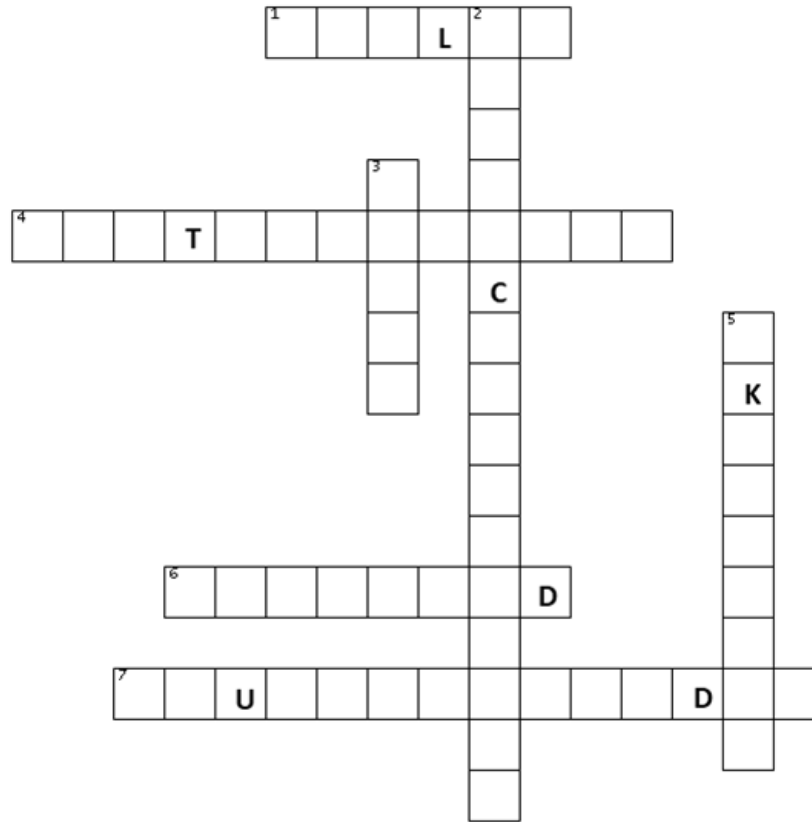
c. Answer the following :

1. Describe the 'Nibble and negotiate' expansion technique used by the Chinese.
2. Why do we need territorial boundaries?
3. Why did the Chinese attempt to extend a road through Doklam?
4. Write your views on what entails true success.
5. How has India responded to Chinese expansionist plans, especially over the last few years?

d. Debate on the following topic :

Considering our Vedic spirit of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam, is it worth for India to constantly monitor its borders and keep engaging in military conflicts with China / Pakistan?

e. Solve the crossword:



ACROSS

1. It is at the tri-junction between India, China and Bhutan
4. A major point of confrontation between China and many countries
6. This served as a trade route between China and other countries
7. This is a military airbase with an airstrip

DOWN

2. It was accorded full statehood in 1987
3. This country had acted as a buffer between India and China before it was invaded
5. China acquired control over most regions of this place after the 1962 war

JAPAN PRACTICES 'KIRITSU'!

Expected learning outcomes

Students know and learn to appreciate the Japanese' highest level of civic sense and cleanliness

Manish's tauji (father's elder brother in Hindi) used to work at Infosys, Tokyo. He visited India annually once. Manish was eager to talk to him...

Manish – Tokyo must have been great tauji! I have heard about the great infrastructure out there, especially the bullet trains.

Tauji – Oh, absolutely, Manish! Tokyo is a remarkable city. However, what I genuinely admire are the Japanese people.

Manish – What is so special about them?

Tauji – Well, their level of civic sense and discipline is unbelievable – they call it 'Kiritsu'!

Manish – 'Kiritsu' – sounds nice! I indeed recollect reading an interesting article during the last Football World Cup held in Qatar in December 2022. The Japanese fans themselves cleaned the stadium i.e. removed their own trash, after a football match!



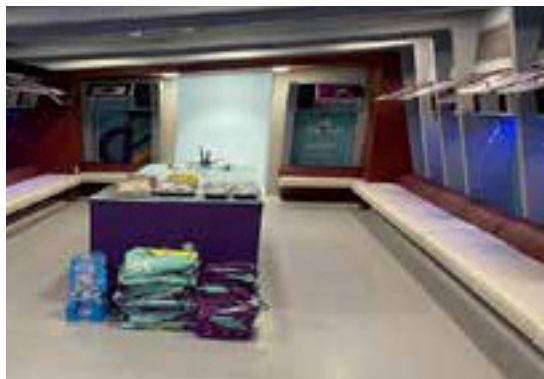
Tauji – Yes Manish. They did do so. They are extremely well-organized. The Japan Football Association also supplied blue rubbish bags to their fans.

Manish – Blue rubbish bag? Why blue?

Tauji – The idea was to 'color' the stadium with blue rubbish bags as a homage to the national squad, which is nicknamed Samurai Blue. And those bags even had 'Thank You' written on them in Arabic, Japanese, and English.

Manish – Tauji, was cleaning the stadium by the Japanese civilians a one-time affair?

Tauji – It was not just a one-time thing. The Japanese fans cleaned up their own trash after every match, even those in which their home team, i.e. Japan, had not played. This display of good manners triggered massive appreciation on social media. Many observers pointed out that such tidying up is not uncommon among Japanese fans, who are known to clean their own stadiums back in Japan as well. They were also seen cleaning up the stadium during the last World Cup in Russia in 2018. It is not just the fans, but Japan's soccer stars, too. The national team players left their locker room spotless after their surprise win against Germany at the Qatar World Cup.



Manish – It's heartening to see that even the players, despite being celebrities, follow these values.

Tauji – Not just the stadiums, it is unthinkable in Japan to throw away garbage and leftover food on the roadside. They make sure to dispose it off in the garbage bin, or if there are no bins nearby, they take it back to their homes and throw it away. Even their public toilets are absolutely clean. If it gets dirty while using, they make sure to wipe it off and flush before leaving.

Manish – Cleanliness and consideration for others seems to be a common thread in Japanese culture. It's quite admirable. But how do they manage to incorporate this value in the entire society?

Tauji – Well, they imbibe these values right from childhood. Manish, in Japan, students view cleaning as part of their everyday life and culture. They don't detest work; instead, they consider it a responsibility. The motto in Japan is simple but profound - If you use a particular space, it's your duty and responsibility to ensure its left clean.

Manish – How do students contribute in cleaning?

Tauji – The cleaning practice in Japan is called 'Gakko Soji', literally meaning 'School Cleaning by students.' Students perform various tasks from sweeping classrooms to cleaning hallways, even toilets and serving lunch to each other. The Japanese believe that a clean and orderly environment contributes to a calm mind.



Manish – That's amazing! I can't help but think about how much we complain when Maa asks us to clean our rooms. Cleaning is seen as a boring chore by most of us -- it is a task we have to do so that she gives us permission to watch TV or go out and play.

Tauji – Mastering the art of maintaining cleanliness around is an essential life skill that all individuals must be equipped with. Also, remember, if you know you have to clean frequently, you are less likely to litter the place.



Manish – Tauji, tell me more about the bullet trains in Japan. I have heard that they are very punctual.

Tauji – Yes, that is true. In Japan, the average highspeed (320 kms/hour) bullet train arrives at its final stop just 54 seconds behind schedule, and that includes delays caused by absolutely uncontrollable factors. If a Japanese train is late by five minutes or more, its passengers are issued a slip. They can show this to their boss or teacher as a very valid reason for being late.



Manish – That level of precision is fascinating. It must be hugely contributing to the overall efficiency of the country.

Tauji – Definitely, it does! Also, when you are riding the train or bus in Japan, if you speak loudly to each other or have a conversation on your phone it will be frowned upon by other passengers. If you need to make a phone call, make sure you step off at the nearest station to make the call. They also try to keep their voices down when having a conversation with friends, and often set their cell phone to Silent or Vibration mode.

Manish – That's a unique cultural aspect. It reflects a deep sense of consideration for others.

Tauji – Yes, Manish. Japanese people always display modesty and humility. When greeting each other, people also often bow to convey the message: “I am not above you. I respect you.” Bowing longer with a higher degree of angle means more respect.

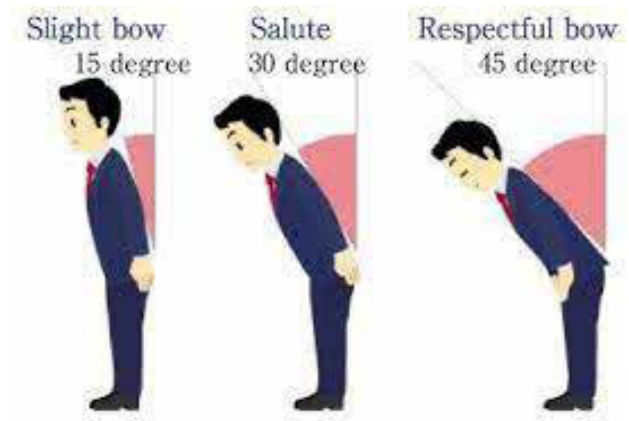
Manish – This sounds very similar to our concept of Namaste, which also means – “I bow to you”.

Tauji – Absolutely Manish. And this culture of humility and mutual respect manifests in various other ways as well. For example, I am often amazed to see that whenever there is a crowd or rush for something, the Japanese patiently form a queue and organize themselves beautifully. They do not push & shove each other scrambling for anything. Since Japan’s population lives in tightly-packed cities, people learn very quickly that in order to get something, they will have to wait. And after many years of learning this behavior - showing respect for the group by waiting quietly - the end result is a cultural custom that spans nearly all circumstances, even disaster.

Japan unfortunately lies in a highly earthquake prone region. Massive earthquakes keep striking Japan at intermittent intervals, the latest one being in January 2024. These earthquakes cause widespread destruction, leading to shortage of daily necessities. Very typically, the Japanese response isn’t to loot or steal. They dutifully line up in a queue and wait for their turn to pick up basic goods like groceries and clothes at local stores.

Manish – Fascinating. I will definitely be more patient when I am standing in a queue next time!

Tauji – You will also be intrigued to know that this civic ethos of the Japanese, saved nearly 400 precious lives when a Japanese Airlines flight, an Airbus A-350 caught fire upon landing at the Tokyo airport on Jan 2, 2024. The immediate priority was to ensure safety of



the 379 passengers including eight children apart from the 12 crew members. The crew had the presence of mind to figure out the safest door to evacuate the flyers as there were flames everywhere. They picked a door at the rear and guided the flyers to calmly walk out of the aircraft.

The mere practice of 'discipline' emerged as a key factor influencing the pace of the evacuation, with the final person narrowly escaping just before Tokyo's Haneda Airport runway was engulfed in flames. Everyone on the flight survived due to the composed response from passengers and the crew, amidst the choking smoke.

The Japanese passengers refrained from panicking, avoided opening overhead bins, attentively followed staff instructions, abstained from recording or photographing the burning plane, assisted each other on the emergency slide, and notably evacuated without their luggage – a decision lauded by experts as crucial for expediting the evacuation process. While the cabin crew's adept management of the crisis merits applause, it is the passengers' conduct that has earned them global admiration for their 'adherence to rules.'



Manish – Each one performed his 'Dharma' in this entire incident! There is a lot to learn from Japan. I will try and instil at least few aspects into my day-to-day activities.

Tauji – Absolutely yes! The Japanese term 'Kiritsu', i.e. self-discipline in various acts of life be it school, work, or social interactions, is something that all of us should imbibe.

Let's talk about these

1. Mention few noteworthy aspects that you feel is worth learning from the Japanese.
2. Imagine yourself to be stuck in an aircraft mishap. How would you react and what steps would you follow to come out of the crisis?
3. Why is maintaining cleanliness important?



Let's do these exercises

a. Tick the correct answers:

1. Geographically, Japan lies in an (earthquake / drought) prone area.
2. The average speed of a bullet train in Japan is (320 km/hr / 50 m/s).
3. The Japan Football Association supplied (yellow / blue) rubbish bags to their fans with (Sorry / Thank You) written on it.
4. Japanese always stand in a (queue / scattered manner) to pick up basic amenities during a natural calamity.
5. Japanese trains can be late by a maximum of (1 hour / 5 minutes) after which a slip is issued that can be cited as the reason of delay to the workplace.

B. Fill in the blanks:

1. As a part of Gakko Soji, Japanese students _____.
2. Kiritsu means _____.
3. While having a conversation with friends on a public transport, Japanese try to keep their voices low because _____.
4. _____ was the key factor in successful evacuation of passengers from the fuming aircraft.

C. Write 'T' for True and 'F' for False:

1. According to Japanese culture, bowing longer with a higher degree of angle means more respect.
2. When Airbus A-350 caught fire, Japanese passengers panicked, opened the overhead bins and started evacuating with their luggage in a chaotic manner.
3. Japanese believes that if they use a particular space, it's their duty and responsibility to ensure its left clean.
4. Japanese civilians cleaning the stadium after the football match was a one-time affair.
5. Mastering the art of maintaining cleanliness around is an essential life skill.

Let's have fun

Segregate the waste items given in the box to the respected color coded bins.

[Hint: Red bin - non-recyclable and non-biodegradable; Green bin - recyclable and biodegradable; Blue bin - recyclable and non-biodegradable]

Batteries, Vegetable peels, Plastic toys, e-waste, Food items, cardboard, newspaper, Needles, Syringes, Dried leaves & twigs, Chocolate wrappers, Metallic waste, Spoilt food, Pencil shavings, Pen refills



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The key objective of life is to accumulate Sukha and eliminate Dukha. While sukha represents positive states—happiness, contentment, and fulfilment—dukha refers to negative states like sorrow, dissatisfaction, and hardship. The phrase “चक्रवत् परिवर्तन्ते दुःखानि च सुखानि च” (Chakravat parivartante Dukhaani cha Sukhaani cha) translates to ‘Like a wheel, joys and sorrows revolve continuously.’ It thus reminds us of the cyclical nature of happiness (sukha) and sorrow (dukha) in human life. No state—whether joyful or sorrowful—is permanent, and both follow each other in a natural cycle. A basic example: We experience dukha (suffering) when we feel hungry; eating food brings sukha (happiness or relief); but after a few hours, dukha returns. Similarly, we feel dukha in the form of tiredness at night; restful sleep brings sukha; yet tiredness, or dukha, returns by the end of the next day.

Let us deliberate upon some key aspects around the interplay of sukha & dukha.

i) Sukha & Dukha | Intertwined

The concepts of sukha (happiness or well-being) and dukha (suffering or dissatisfaction) are often seen as intertwined through ‘contrast’.



This can be better understood by an example.

Ramesh's journey...

On a scorching afternoon, a man named Ramesh walked slowly along a dusty road, bent under the weight of a large sack strapped to his back. Sweat glistened on his forehead, dripping down his face and neck in the oppressive heat.

After what felt like hours, Ramesh spotted a large banyan tree a little way ahead, its thick branches stretching out like a welcoming canopy. Beneath its shade, a small group of travellers sat resting, chatting softly among themselves. The sight was like an oasis to Ramesh. He quickened his pace and made his way toward the tree.

Reaching the shade, Ramesh carefully unstrapped the sack from his back and let it drop to the ground. The moment the weight left his shoulders, he felt a surge of relief. His muscles relaxed, his back straightened, and he took a deep, liberating breath. The sweat on his face began to cool in the gentle breeze, and for a few seconds, he closed his eyes, savouring the

‘Sukha’, a feeling that went beyond physical relief—it was happiness, pure, unadulterated joy in having shed a burden, even if only for a little while.

As he sat down, resting his head against the trunk of the tree, he looked at the others seated around him. They were calm, chatting or looking out into the distance, but there was a difference. None of them had felt that same euphoria that Ramesh was now revelling in, that lightness and gratitude for the simple comfort of shade and rest. They had been resting under the tree for a while, and for them, the shade was merely shade, a normal part of their afternoon.



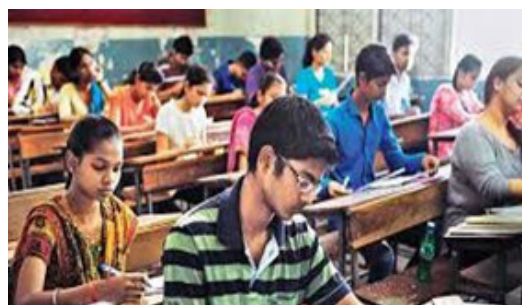
But for Ramesh, that shade was a blessing, a treasure after the long journey he had endured under the blazing sun with his heavy load. He smiled to himself, feeling a deep sense of gratitude that he knew the others could not understand. The relief and happiness he felt were uniquely his, born from the contrast between the toil he had faced and the rest he had finally found.

ii) Sukha & Dukha | Inter-changed

Often, we find ourselves confusing Sukha with Dukha and vice versa. Many things that genuinely bring happiness and fulfilment may initially appear as a source of pain or discomfort, while things that seem to promise joy can lead to disappointment or suffering.

Examinations often appear to be a source of Dukha (pain), filled with stress, anxiety, and tension. It's easy to see why many might wish for a world without exams, where the pressure is lifted, and there is no need to prepare for assessments. However, let's consider what a world without exams would actually look like.

Imagine being operated upon by a doctor who has never taken an exam, who has only attended lectures but has never been tested on his knowledge. Would we feel comfortable trusting him with our health? Or consider an engineer responsible for constructing a large bridge, who has attended classes but never had to demonstrate his understanding through a rigorous exam.



Exams, as stressful as they may seem, play a crucial role in ensuring that individuals possess the necessary skills, knowledge, and competence. They demand preparation, effort, and commitment, pushing us to deepen our understanding of a subject and apply what we've learned. Exams bring Sukha (happiness) in the form of confidence in our doctors, engineers, teachers, and other professionals who have proven their knowledge through these tests. They bring satisfaction and accomplishment, knowing we have met certain standards and can be trusted with responsibility. Thus, while exams may appear to be a source of Dukha, they ultimately bring Sukha by ensuring quality, skill, and reliability in the people we depend on.

iii) Sukha & Dukha | Different Habits & Lifestyles

Our perception of Sukha (happiness) and Dukha (sorrow or discomfort) can indeed be influenced by our unique habits, such as diet, lifestyle, and even the climate we are accustomed to. For example, someone who is used to a spicy diet might find bland food Dukha or unappealing, while someone who is not used to spicy food could feel actual discomfort or physical pain from eating it. In this way, the same food can evoke different responses based on habitual preferences.

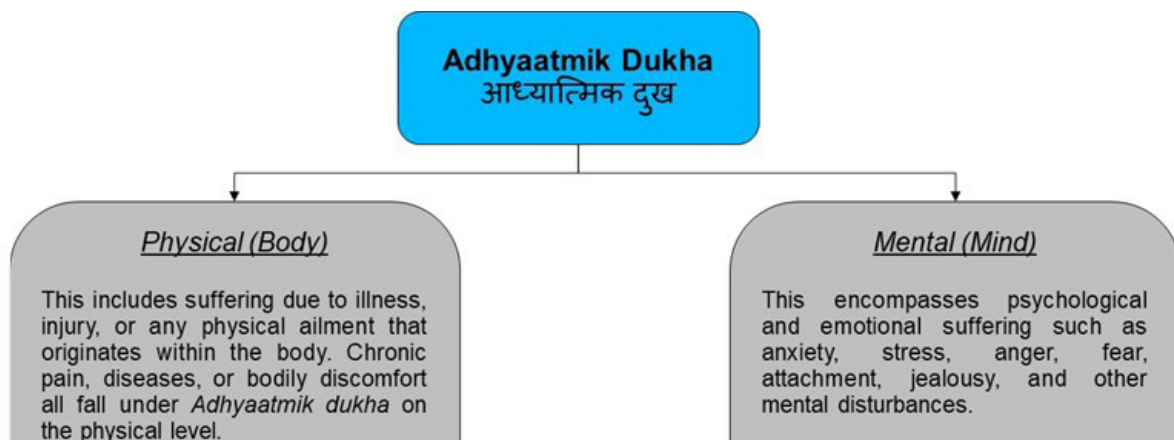


Consciously addressing/Reducing 'Dukha'

For us to bravely face Dukha, address it and even reduce it, we need to have a deeper understanding of the sources of Dukha. The Yog Darshan highlights the three types of Dukha that plague each one of us - Aadhyaatmik (आध्यात्मिक), Bhoutik (भौतिक) and Daivik (दैविक) Dukha.



i) **Adhyaatmik Dukha** refers to suffering that arises from within the individual. Most of our problems arise as we are unable to fully control our Body and Mind. This is most common source of Dukha contributing to 75% of our entire Dukha followed by 20% due to Bhoutik and 5% due to Daivik.

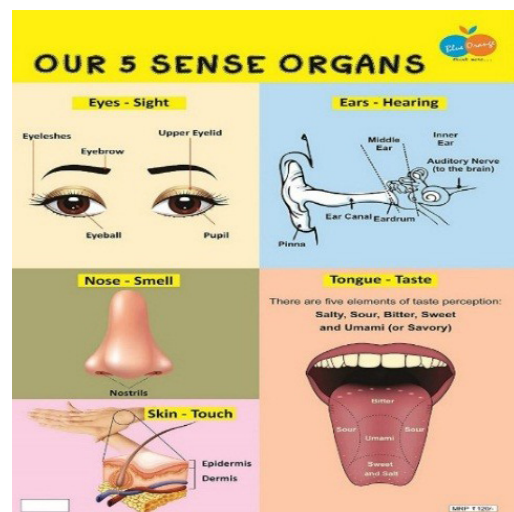


a.1. Limited ability of our sense organs to continuously consume & derive Sukha

Our sense organs—eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and skin—are limited in their capacity to provide continuous Sukha because they are inherently designed for temporary experiences beyond which it becomes fatigued or loses the ability to deliver enjoyment ultimately becoming a source of Dukha

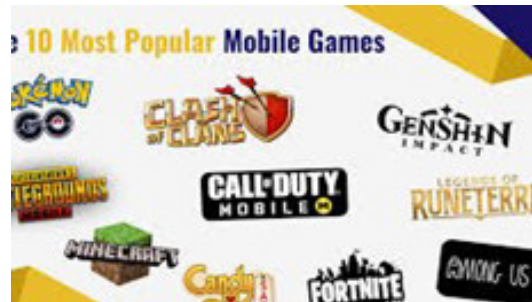
Our eyes can bring us pleasure through beautiful sights, such as nature, art, or movie screens, but only for a while. After prolonged viewing, our eyes become strained and tired, leading to discomfort and even pain.

At the start of a buffet party, the sight of delicious food creates an intense attraction, promising a form of happiness or Sukha. We imagine that indulging in it will bring us satisfaction, and we often end up taking food more than we need or even want. While our mind may still crave more, our physical discomfort grows, eventually turning the initial Sukha into Dukha—bloating, nausea, and a feeling of heaviness.



a.2. Limited ability of the ‘Vishaya’ i.e. the object to be able to provide us Sukha

This aspect reflects the insatiable nature of sensory pleasure and the constant escalation of desire. As we consume more, our sense organs become accustomed to a particular level of stimulation, leading us to crave something new, different, or more intense. What initially felt exciting or satisfying becomes routine, even mundane, after a few experiences.



The version of a game brings enjoyment for a while, but soon becomes uninteresting. Moving to higher levels same pattern can be seen in something as simple as gaming: a basic or switching to different games temporarily satisfies the craving, but ultimately leads to boredom and a search for something even more stimulating, ultimately resulting in restlessness and dissatisfaction.

b. Mental anxiety generated by anxiety, unmet expectations and emotions that create inner conflict

Our minds are constantly filled with worries, both about significant life events and even about minor, everyday situations. This tendency to worry arises from our desire for control and certainty in an inherently uncertain world.

When it comes to significant aspects of life—like exams, job, career, marriage, children, parents or old age—we worry about outcomes because these aspects impact our long-term well-being and happiness.

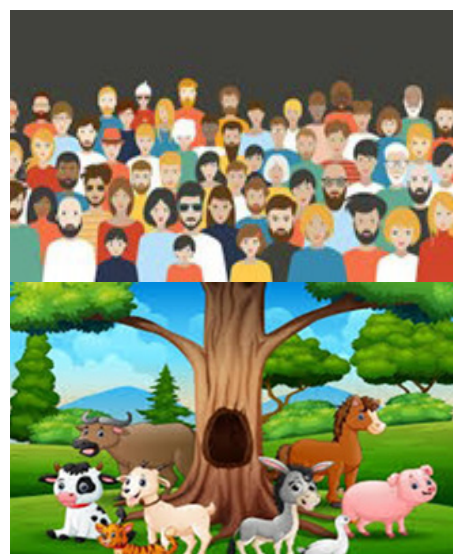
Worrying stems from a desire to control situations and outcomes, as we believe this control will bring us peace. We hope that by anticipating every scenario, we can avoid unpleasant surprises. However, this approach rarely brings the peace we seek. Instead, it creates mental clutter, as the mind jumps from one hypothetical worry to the next, focusing on endless “what-ifs” and draining our energy.



ii) Bhoutik Dukha is what is caused by other living beings around us. As long as we live in this world, Bhoutik Dukha is bound to arise. This is because we constantly keep interacting with other living beings - both humans and animals. For example, a thief stealing valuables or a dog biting. We can possibly take some precautions but just cannot avoid Bhoutik Duhkha completely.

However, there is an element of Aadhyaatmik Dukha embedded within this. It is up to us how we choose to 'react' or 'respond' to Bhoutik Duhkha.

Let us take an example.



On a busy weekday evening, a young man, Anil, was driving home in his new car, after a long day at work. The road was crowded with vehicles edging forward, everyone trying to get home as quickly as possible. Suddenly, out of the corner of his eye, he saw a cycle veering sharply to the right, attempting to squeeze between lanes. Before he could react, the cycle swerved too close and crashed into the side of his car with a loud thud. Anil quickly pulled over to the side of the road, his heart pounding. He stepped out to assess the damage, and there it was—a deep dent running along the side of his car, scraping off the paint and leaving an ugly mark.



The rider, a young man in his twenties, looked shaken but unhurt. Anil took a deep breath, feeling a wave of frustration rise within him. This was absolutely no fault of his own; he had been driving carefully, minding his lane, and yet here he was, with a damaged car and an unwelcome delay. This was 'Bhoutik Dukha'. In that moment, Anil realized he had a choice. He could either let his anger take control and confront the young man aggressively further escalating the situation. Or he could try to handle the incident calmly, understanding that things like this happen and that a dent in his car, while annoying and costly, wasn't worth losing his peace over.

For a moment, he considered the aggressive route. But as he looked at the young man's nervous face, he reminded himself that reacting with anger would only worsen the situation. Besides, getting angry wouldn't undo the damage. Instead, Anil took a deep breath and chose to respond calmly. He approached the young man with a level voice and asked if he was okay. The rider nodded, apologizing profusely, explaining that he had been in a rush and

had misjudged the space between the lanes. Anil nodded, listening without interrupting, allowing the young man to explain his side. The young man admitted fault, offering to exchange contact details to sort out the repair expenses.

By choosing calmness over anger, Anil not only avoided an unnecessary confrontation but also saved himself from additional stress. He could have easily turned the situation into an unpleasant encounter – hurling expletives, pushing, shoving or physical blows, adding to both his and the young man's frustration, further amplifying his sorrow due to lack of self-control - Adhyaatmik Dukha. Instead, by responding with understanding, he preserved his peace of mind and even found a solution to the situation.

iii) Daivik Dukha arises due to natural calamities including flood, rains, lightening, hurricanes, extreme heat, earthquake or drought – phenomena beyond human control and often perceived as acts of nature or divine forces. We cannot completely avoid this Dukha, though we can take precautions.



To be continued...

Let's talk about these



1. How does the story of Ramesh under the banyan tree explain the concept of contrast between Sukha and Dukha?
2. Explain the importance of exams using the Sukha-Dukha framework from the lesson.
3. What are the three types of Dukha described in the Yog Darshan? Give one example for each.
4. How do lifestyle and habits influence whether we feel Sukha or Dukha in daily situations?
5. In what way does controlling one's mental reaction reduce the impact of Bhoutik Dukha?

Let's do these exercises



a. Tick the correct answers:

1. What does the phrase “चक्रवत् परिवर्तन्ते दुःखानि च सुखानि च” imply? (**Once happy, sorrow never returns / Joy and sorrow revolve in cycles**)
2. Which of the following best reflects how exams relate to Sukha and Dukha? (**Exams feel like Dukha but result in Sukha/ Exams give only stress and no benefit**)
3. What is the main reason behind different people experiencing the same event as Sukha or Dukha? (**Their level of education/Their lifestyle habits and conditioning**)

b. Fill in the blanks:

1. Sukha and Dukha are said to be _____, where one gives meaning to the other through contrast.
2. The inability of our sense organs to continuously derive Sukha eventually leads to _____.
3. The story of Anil and the cyclist teaches us that Bhoutik Dukha can be handled peacefully by controlling our _____ response.



c. True or False:

1. Dukha caused by internal thoughts and emotions is known as Aadhyaatmik Dukha.. — **True/False**
2. All people sitting under the tree experienced the same Sukha as Ramesh. — **True/False**
3. A person who constantly chases new forms of entertainment may experience more Dukha due to growing restlessness. **True/False**
4. Bhoutik Dukha is completely avoidable if we stay at home and don't interact with others. **True/False**
5. Daivik Dukha includes events like hurricanes and lightning, which are beyond human control. **True/False**

Let's have fun

“Sukha or Dukha? – Move to Your Corner!”

To help you quickly identify situations as Sukha or Dukha and reflect on their own reactions in a fun, physical way.

Label two opposite corners of the classroom:

1. One as Sukha
2. The other as Dukha

The teacher will read out short, simple situations aloud.

You will walk or run to the corner you think that matches the feelings – Sukha or Dukha and also ask a few of you in each corner why you chose that side.

Sample Situations to Read:

You found Rs.100 on the road.

You got scolded for something you didn't do.

You helped a stranger and they smiled at you.

You studied hard but still failed a quiz.

You had your favourite food for lunch.

Your friend broke your pen and didn't say sorry.

You got extra holidays from school!

You lost a match but played really well.

Your teacher praised your notebook.



FOSTERING VEDIC VALUES - 9

INSPIRATIONAL POSTER



Coin a caption _____



Coin a caption _____



Coin a caption _____



Coin a caption _____

NOTES:

