The efforts to understand school education will not be complete, until the classroom practices and pedagogic processes are studied. After analyzing the policies, NCFs, and text books, an analysis of the classroom practices was essential to understand the entire school education from a human rights perspective. For this purpose, an analysis of the classroom practices has been presented here. This analysis takes its conceptual understanding from Chapter Two, where a detailed theoretical understanding has been presented to understand the classroom practices, from a human rights perspective. Classroom observation has been used for data collection for this analysis, which has already been discussed in the Chapter Methodology of Research. Interviews were, also, conducted with the school teachers, to have a better understanding of classroom practices.

An analysis of Co-curricular Activities (CCA, hereafter) is presented in this chapter. To understand the CCA, observations and interviews of the teachers were used. Since nothing considerable came out in the observations, only a brief report of the observations and a detailed analysis of CCA interviews is presented in this chapter.

The present chapter, thus, includes the following:

I. An analysis of classroom practices
   o Analysis of observations of classroom practices
   o Analysis of interviews of teachers, with reference to classroom practices

II. An analysis of co-curricular activities
   o A brief report on the observations of co-curricular activities
   o Analysis of interviews of teachers, with reference to co-curricular activities
I. **Analysis of the Classroom Practices**

To understand classroom practices, from a human rights perspective, broadly, two approaches were used. These involved detailed observations of the classrooms on the one hand, and in-depth, unstructured interviews with school teachers at the secondary level, on the other. The subsequent two sections provide an analytical account of the observations and interviews, respectively.

**Analysis of the Observations of Classroom Practices**

**The Students’ Role in the Classroom Processes:** Almost in all the classes observed, there was hardly any role of the students observed except, just being in the class and listening to the teacher. In more than half of the classes, the teachers just read the book and asked some questions. (The questions asked by the teacher have been discussed separately, later, under a different heading). There were many classes where the teacher could have engaged learners effectively in the teaching-learning-process. But, it clearly seemed that the teacher believed that the students should be silent in the class and listen carefully to whatever he/she teacher talked about. In some classes, where students asked many questions, they were asked clearly not to ask so many questions and the reason given by the teacher was that he/she had completed the syllabus. Most of the time, the teacher just read the book and merely articulated his/her own developed understanding. In some classes, even, this articulation of the teacher’s point of view was missing, as the teacher simply read the chapter in one stretch and the chapter was over. In such a situation, one cannot, even, imagine the active role of the students. The students’ participation is essential to give a class human rights based perspective, which was clearly missing in the classes observed.

**How does a Teacher Deal with Sensitive Issues, such as Caste, Class, Gender and so on?:** As these were Social Science classes, it was very obvious that some sensitive and crucial issues would emerge, during the classes. Some could be critical and some quite sensitive. It was found, in the analysis, that there were classes where issues came up, but the teacher could not or did not deal adequately with them and showed his/her insensitive behavior. In some classes, the teacher taught in such a way that no
crucial issues came up and, in others, such issues were ignored or suppressed by saying, “you ask too many questions.” For convenience, the above analysis has been discussed in four categories:

a) The inadequacy of the teacher: In certain places, the teacher failed to handle the situation and just ignored that situation. In class 6, for instance, while dealing with, ‘Understanding Diversity’, there were some issues that could have been dealt with effectively by the teacher but he did not, such as when the differences and similarities among people were asked by students, “Biharis are mostly rickshaw wala and so poor”, the other student replied, “No, that is not right” ; then a third student said slowly, “oye chup bihari” (shut up Behari) and the teacher just ignored all this, which is not appreciable. He should have stopped such an argument and should have channelized the discussion in a more positive way, which he did not.

b) The Teacher Taught in Such a Way that no Issues come up and if they did, they were Ignored and Suppressed: The analysis showed that, sometimes, the teacher taught in such a way that no issues could be raised, no matter how important the topic was. For instance, while dealing with democratic rights, the teacher taught in such a way that no issue came up for discussion. Moreover, in a multi-cultural nation like India, it is very important to provide space to the learners to discuss such issues, but he simply read the book. He just kept saying “Rights are the claims of a person towards the state.” This statement, itself, was so vague that students could not understand it and one or two questions asked by students were rejected by him saying, “you do not listen carefully in the class.” It shows the general insensitivity of the teacher towards social issues. In the same way, “The Indian Constitution” (class 8) was taught, where such an atmosphere was created by the teacher, that no student could ask anything “aap sab log yeh chapter class 6th and 7th mein bhi pad chuke hai to yahan jyada samay lagane ki zaroorat nahi hai.”(You have studied this chapter in classes 6th and 7th, so there is no need to devote more time now). Even before this, the teacher scolded the entire class badly. The entire situation became so unpleasant, that no question was asked by any student. Thus, no discussion was held.
c) **Lack of Knowledge:** It was observed that, at many places, lack of the teacher’s knowledge and understanding was the reason that crucial concepts were unclear. For instance, in 9th class, the concept of poverty was not dealt with adequately. Rural and Urban forms of poverty were discussed in a confusing manner. For instance, the teacher explained that poverty, in cites, is known as urban poverty and poverty, in villages, is known as rural poverty. But to the question asked by the students that under which category, will villages in cities come under, the teacher could not reply and said it would come under the rural category and moved on further without listening to other responses to this. How can one say such a class is based on a human rights perspective?

In certain places, the teacher’s inadequate knowledge, strengthened the students’ pre-conceived and popular notions. For instance, while teaching, ‘Understanding Marginalization’, the teacher dealt with the concerned issues very inadequately by saying that tribes did not want to be developed, they derailed trains, many died, they danced weirdly (*ajeeb sa*), they were not educated. Thus, very sensitive issues were dealt with very insensitively.

The teacher showed her insensitivity (class 7th) towards important issues. For example, the teacher said that Muslims kill the cow and Hindus worship the cow, then how can a Hindu mother allow her daughter to talk to Muslims? We cannot live without caste- she associated it with people’s identity. She said that caste was made to run the system smoothly but, later, it became birth-based. Such an unclear understanding will surely create problems for the students’ understanding. This behavior and the method of teaching were not based on a human rights perspective.

The Chapter, ‘Diversity and Discrimination’, was taught in class 6 and, for sure, it consists of a lot of issues such as gender disparity, caste based discrimination and so on. Gender, caste and poverty were discussed very superficially. For instance, regarding gender, the teacher said that men and women constitute our society, but some discrimination exists in our society. Some are relevant and some are not. What are these relevant forms of discrimination and how these forms are justified was not discussed. The teacher said that the Constitution, also, made all persons (male, female) equal. Here, the teacher’s idea seemed to be biased and was in
favor of the existing inequalities between men and women. The teacher presented a very glorified picture of equality. Instead, he could have discussed some cases of discrimination, as the lesson demanded developing a critical perspective towards inequality, which was completely missing. Doing this could have given this class a human rights perspective. Reservation was, also, discussed, with reference to SC/ST and the teacher said that reservation creates problems for the General Category people and, consequently, in society. The teacher gave a wrong concept about reservation and misinterpreted it. Such a biased understanding ruins the spirit of a human rights perspective.

**d) Misconceptions and Biased Views:** In certain places, the teacher’s own misconceptions and biased understanding became the cause of problematic teaching and insensitive responses in the teaching–learning processes. For example, in Class 9, the concept of poverty was seen as a cause of theft, and, very casually, the teacher said that poverty is one of the chief causes that drives people towards theft. The students started associating poverty with theft and pointed out to a poor student. The teacher remained silent during this conversation in class. These kinds of misconceptions given by the teachers, develop a wrong and a very problematic concept in the learners’ mind. Besides, it is, also, against a human rights perspective. While teaching secularism in Class 8, at many places, the teacher made the same mistake. For instance, he said Pakistan is not a secular state and so celebrates only Muslim festivals. Is this true? The teacher was giving the students his unquestioned understanding about secularism. He, also, tried to explain secularism from his own perspective, but failed, as he said that he had a Muslim friend and they shared everything in life. A student asked, “Will you marry your daughter to his son?” The teacher said that marriage was a different issue. Thus, the effort was not to successfully help learners understand the meaning of secularism and what is right and wrong.

In dealing with, ‘Equality in the Indian Democracy’, the teacher gave biased points related to gender equality and issues related to religion. The teacher, very loosely, dealt with issues, such as not allowing girls to go out at night was justified as, “Jamana kharab hai” (time is not good), favoring the division of work saying, “Chahe mahila bahar kam kare par khaana aadmi to nahi paka sakta” (women can work outside, but men cannot cook food), why parents stop their
children to talk to Muslims— to which she said that their parents may have had bad experiences with them.

In the Chapter, ‘Growing up as Boys and Girls’, gender should have been the central point of the chapter, but the teacher seemed to strengthen the existing understanding that men cannot cook food, they should not wash clothes, boys play cricket and girls with dolls, and so on. It is, clearly, a biased understanding about gender. She, silently, accepted that the differences in the wages was justified, as far as construction work was concerned and she justified it by saying that women cannot do the same physical work, as a man. She said that she had never seen a cricket match between men and women, so some differences did exist. She took these serious concerns very lightly. Her way of teaching did not represent a human rights perspective.

The Valmiki Basti incident and the Godhara incident have been discussed in Class 6, in the Chapter, ‘Understanding Diversity. The teacher said that, though both Hindus and the Muslims were responsible for this incident, the Muslims were more responsible. He was quite biased and he should not have given such statements in class. He even said that there was no problem in Delhi with regard to education. He discussed these issues very insensitively.

**Pedagogy and Activity:** Across the classes, from 6 to 10, the only pedagogy used is reading the book. In some classes, questions were asked, but were answered very inadequately. The teachers read the book themselves or asked a student to read the book and, then, some explanation followed, which were fraught with problems, as discussed extensively in the second theme of the analysis. There was only one class, out of the 20 classes observed, where the teacher asked the students to do some task, individually. It was class 6 and the Chapter, ‘What is Government’, was being taught. I do not know whether to call it an activity, because the students were told to write the functions of a government from the book but, individually. It could have been better, if he had asked them to discuss the functions of a government in groups and, then, shared these ideas with the class. But, this is the only class where the students were asked to do something. Otherwise, as mentioned under the first theme, the only role of the learner in the class was to just listen and ask some questions, if permitted by the
teacher. Thus, the pedagogy was only reading from the book and the students’ participation did not exist.

**Context-based Teaching-learning, with Examples:** The context is important to any subject, especially for subjects such as Social Sciences, which directly relates to the social context and originates from there. Its epistemological beliefs are embedded in the social context. That is why, contextualizing the teaching of Social Sciences becomes important.

Across the observations, some categories came up. **First,** hardly any context was created to help the learners to understand the concept; **second,** where the teacher seemed able to create the context and **third,** where some kind of context was created with examples, but the interpretation of these examples made the learning process even more problematic. The classes dealt with very crucial concepts, such as ‘Democracy and Challenges’, ‘Constitutional Design’, ‘Electoral Politics’, ‘The Indian Constitution’, ‘Key elements of a Democratic Government’ and ‘Federalism’. The teacher did not even try to relate these concepts with daily life experiences, and could not even state any examples to clear the concepts, even though an effective context-based teaching is possible with these concepts.

**There were certain classes where the teacher seemed to be unable to state any examples to develop the context to facilitate the learning process.** While teaching ‘Democratic Rights’ in Class 9, the teacher said that everyone was equal. A student asked if they were all equal, then why was his mother not able to take any decisions at home? The teacher replied that it was because she did not earn money. Another student said that, even though his mother was working, she was, still, not allowed to take any decisions. The teacher simply rejected these ideas and moved ahead. He could not handle that situation. Thus, he used his authority and moved on without any further discussion. Rejecting students’ voice does not give any class a human rights based perspective.

While teaching, ‘Understanding Marginalization’, in Class 8, the teacher did not try to take any examples or to create a context. But, some students said something about what they had observed in their surroundings, but discussed it very arbitrarily. For instance, when a student said that some ‘Adivasis’ lived near his house and their behavior was quite weird, the teacher replied in the positive that they, indeed, behaved
like that. This was a very disturbing statement by the teacher. How can a Social Sciences teacher respond in this way? It is certainly against the understanding of a human rights perspective.

**At some places the teacher tried to give some examples to create the context but the explanation of these examples, with reference to the concept, was a blunder.**

In Class 9, while teaching poverty, the teacher took an example of a poor person, but the explanation that the teacher gave was problematic. The teacher said that, generally, poor people indulge in crime and theft. The teacher was not sensitive enough, when a student pointed out to another poor student. The student said that, then, he would be a thief, too. The teacher did not say anything and even asked that poor student to say something on poverty. The student could not speak and felt humiliated. In Class 8, again, while discussing secularism, the teacher tried to build up the context, by taking his own example of being secular, as he had a close Muslim friend and he shared almost everything with him. In this way, he limited the meaning of secularism to just having a good Muslim friend and the students got this impression that, if you do not have any Muslim friend and vice-versa, you cannot be secular. The teacher, also, limited the understanding of secularism in relation to Hindus, Muslims, India and Pakistan as he said Pakistan only celebrated, Muslim festivals and India celebrated all festivals. Thus, India was secular, but Pakistan not.

In Class 7, while teaching about equality in the Indian Democracy, the teacher asked some questions to develop a context. For instance, what did equality mean? The students were, also, asked to site some examples, where men and women were equal. Such examples led students to share their experiences to create a context. But, she was not able to take these examples to a certain level of discussion. Her biased understanding (men cannot cook food, sending girls out at night is not safe as the time was not good, rules set by societies regarding men and women were right and so on) created more problems in the class. Other statements, by other teachers, were, also, very problematic, for instance, Muslims kill cows, caste is important and we cannot survive without it, men should not wash clothes; boys play cricket and girls dolls, and so on. Nowhere, did any kind of atmosphere of a human rights perspective prevail in class, as biased understanding was completely against a human rights perspective.
Diversity was, also, taught in Class 6, where the teacher took the examples of Valmiki Basti and Godhara incidents, problematically as has been discussed earlier.

**The Types of Questions Asked:** The objective of questions in a class is to understand the learners’ perspective, so that learning could be developed, accordingly. The nature of questions should be such, that the questions have the possibility to take many responses. But, unfortunately, nothing like this was observed in the classes. Most of the time, the teacher asked questions just for the sake of asking questions. Most of the questions were ‘what’ type of questions ‘what is the meaning of participation in a democracy, what is a federal system, what is government, what is the meaning of equality, what is the constitution so on. These questions were quite vague and only knowledge-based, recall type of questions. There were, hardly, any questions which promoted the thinking process. There was hardly any question which provided space for critical and reflective thinking and, if there were any, such as why is there a need for elections in a democracy, no time was given to think and reflect.

The analysis shows that, at certain places, students’ understanding-based questions were not appreciated and rejected immediately, such as while teaching about the legislature and the executive in India, in Class 10. After reading some part of the book, the teacher asked, “Who makes laws?” The students replied that the judiciary made laws. She suddenly reasoned, “*kya maine aisa kaha, kyun dhyan se nahi sunte ho*” (did I say anything like this, why do you not listen carefully). Later, in the discussion, the students got confused with the term, rules, laws and justice. When the teacher said that parliament made the laws and the judiciary did justice, then the student asked as to what the police did. Another student wanted to ask something else, but she was stopped from discussing further. It was clear that the teacher was not aware of certain concepts and dismissed the students’ way of answering and expected only a bookish answer. These kinds of classes are far from a human rights perspective, because the students’ experiences and knowledge were rejected.

At some places, the teacher could not effectively deal, with the questions asked. For instance, while discussing electoral politics, questions asked by the teacher were recall-based, and asked randomly, without collecting adequate responses. “*Chunavo ki zarurat kyun hoti hai?*” (What is the need from election?) “*Kya aap jante hai 18 saal ke sabhi log mat daal sakte hai?*” (Do you know that people above the age of 18 can
cast their vote?). But, both the questions were not dealt with adequately. Regarding the second question, the student asked as to why the age was 18 and not 17 or 19. This query was dismissed with “ye kya savaal hai, kyonki samvidhan mein likha hai ye to.” (What type of question is this. Because it is written in the constitution?). Even the question raised by the student that, “kya Chunavi partidwandita achhi baat hai?” (Is electoral competition a healthy process?), she, again, showed her lack of understanding of the concept and said it was a problem in the system. These responses ruined the entire election spirit. It seemed that she felt that elections are important, but not ‘partidwandita.’ Such an understanding does not represent a human rights perspective in pedagogy.

Very interestingly, there were, also, certain occasions where the teacher could not even, explain, further about the response he/she gave for his/her own question. While teaching about democratic rights in Class 9, the teacher asked,” what is the meaning of rights?” When no response came, the teacher answered that rights are the claims of a person to the state. But, when the student could not understand the definition, particularly ‘claims’, the teacher could not explain it to the learners in any way in order to understand the meaning of “claims” in the given definition. These types of bookish definitions are in appropriate according to a human rights perspective.

Certain questions in the classes were based on the assumption that, as something had already been given in the books in the junior classes, here in Class 8, there was no need to give more time to such concepts. In Class 8, the teacher asked, “what is the constitution and why do we need it?” When the teacher did not get any response, he said, “Do you not remember anything?” He, then, read out the book for some time and asked the students, “why do we need the Constitution?” The student replied, “shasan ko theek se chalane ke liye”( for better governance) but the teacher replied, “Did I say anything like this?”. He explained that diversity is the need of the Constitution. The question was not based on understanding. The book was the only source of the questions and answers.

Most of the time, the responses by the teacher on his/her own questions were quite declarative, with no scope for debate and discussion. If at all the ‘what’ type of questions were answered, they were presented as the ultimate truth. Most of the time,
the debatable questions were answered declaratively, as if nothing existed beyond what the teacher said. Over all, the questions asked were vague, recall-based and for the sake of asking.

**Teacher-centered and Teacher-fronted Classes:** Most of the classes were teacher-fronted and everything was decided by the teachers in the classes, from the content to the method, including what was right and what was wrong. There was, hardly, any scope in class, where one could say that some collaborative task had been placed. In almost all the classes, the teacher taught, as it he was declaring everything. It has been accepted in educational discourse that child-centered education is the best form of education. But, nothing like this was observed in the classes. Education, which is not child-centered, cannot be based on a human rights perspective. While teaching, ‘Growing up as boys and girls’, in Class 7, the teacher declared everything, instead of teaching. For example, boys do this and girls do that and so on. At some point of time, she asked the learners not to ask anything, because there was a lot to discuss and the time was insufficient. The students understanding and their experiences were not included or respected. The only participation, by the learners, was to ask some questions, now and again.

**The Teachers’ Engagement with the Class:** Most times, the teachers’ engagement with the class was just to complete the chapter. The teacher was not even bothered, whether students had understood or not. Most times, the teacher rushed to class saying that there was very little time and lots of syllabus was left. For example, in Class 8, (topic- Understanding Secularism) the teacher was in a hurry to just complete the chapter. He said nothing new in this chapter and said that “ghuma fira kar wahi batein kahi gai hai secularism ko lekar” (the same things have been said about secularism, as has already been discussed) which is not right. Thus, the teacher did not seem interested in the class. How can such classes be called based on a human rights perspective?

Some classes were complete blunders such as the class on, “Understanding Diversities”, in Class 8. The teacher announced that nobody would ask anything, until he had finished the chapter. There were no discussions, half-hearted teaching was done in the class, waiting for the bell to ring, and he showed no concern for the learner. Moreover, after reading the full chapter, in one stretch, he asked the students,
if they had any problems. A student replied they would read it at home and, then, would ask if there were any problem,. He appreciated this response and emphasized this further. He did not teach anything and said all this only to justify himself.

Sometimes, the teacher just wanted to scold the leaners, to hide his/her own inability. In Class 9, while teaching about the ‘Constitutional design’, the teacher’s engagement was very superficial, as she did not show any concern. When she did not get an answer from the students, she said, “tum log dhyanse nahi sunte ho, ye to bahut asan prashan hai”(you do not listen carefully, this is very easy), “I cannot help you people now, khud padhlena baad main, main agay padhati hu.”(I cannot help you people, read later yourself, I am teaching further). That is how she just moved ahead. Where were the human rights perspective in these classes, is a question the teacher needs to be asked.

Sometimes, the teacher did not want to say and listen to anything, beyond whatever was given in the book. The teacher’s engagement was very low in Class 8, while teaching the Indian Constitution. All the time, he just said “ye baad mein padengay”, (I will read it later) “jo kaha hai uska jawab do” (answer only what has been asked), “kya maine aisa padha hai book se” (have I read anything like this from the book), “Iski charcha baad mein karengay” (will discuss this later), These responses clearly show the teachers’ disinterest and such responses deviate from the spirit of a human rights perspective.

Over all, the engagement of the teachers, with the classes, was very superficial. The engagement was just to spend 30 minutes in class. What students have understood and learned was not a matter of concern for them. They just came to the class and started declaring things.

The Students’ Perspective towards the Teachers: It was observed that many students were not happy at the end of the class. They used to crumble “uff jaan bachi”( oh we are safe ) ( Class 10), “is teacher kokuch nahi aata” (this teachers know nothing) (class 9th). Many other responses such as these were very normal after the classes, which, shows that the students did not have a good perspective about the teachers, and it could easily be identified in such observations that the teacher was hardly concerned about the students’ learning and respecting the students’ knowledge and understanding in the class. The general statements of the teachers, such as, “you
cannot do anything”; “This is very simple, cannot you tell me even this much”, and so on shows their negative attitude. These statements were, also, against a human rights understanding and perspective. The teachers’ lack of knowledge was, also, a reason why students did not respect them. Here, respect has many connotations such as, respect associated with the teachers’ knowledge, respect associated with the students’ dignity in the class, respect associated with the students’ acceptance in the class and so on. In all the classes, generally, it was observed that the students did not respect the teachers, because of the many reasons discussed above.

**Teaching, Learning and Examination:** Teaching, leaning and examinations have a close relationship in our education system. But, the situation becomes worse when the entire teaching-leaning process becomes examination-centered or just becomes the duty, which a teacher has to do in class. In many places, during the observation, several issues, like this, emerged. In many classes, the teacher was just teaching and showed no concern for the students’ learning. The only concern was the examination. Examples can be taken from Class 9, where teaching was done just for the sake of teaching from the examination point of view, as when she said, “hum kitaab ka first part chhod sake hai kyonki usme Africa ke bare mein likha hai to hum log page 48 se shuru karte hai.” (we can leave the first part of the chapter, as it talks more about Africa, we can start from page no 48). Even the questions were traditional and she asked the students to do question nos. 1, 4, 9… Without any kind of critical and reflective process, how can any class be called based on a human rights perspective?

In the same way, in Class 8, while teaching about, ‘The Indian Constitution’, the teaching was done just for the sake of exams. Some pages were left out and the teacher said that some questions would not come in their exam, so those could be left out. There was teaching only for the exams without any space given to the learners, their knowledge, and their experiences.

From all the observations done in Class 9, exams were the main motive for teaching. Even if the motive was fulfilled, a question mark remains, as the analysis under the, ‘context-based teaching-learning with examples’, shows that lots of biases and personal perspective were used.

Not accepting the students’ experiences and knowledge and ignoring them does not include a human rights perspective in the teaching- learning- process.
In certain classes, things were said very generally and the students’ understanding was completely rejected. Very generalized statements, such as ‘there is no problem of education in Delhi’ and so on were made. He was not bothered, how a student would take his word. He did not even give appropriate attention to the students’ responses. Such an environment, in the class, is not based on a human rights perspective.

Rejection of the students’ responses was very common in most classes. In Class6, another example is, that while teaching, ‘What is the Government’, the class started with, what is a government and a very bookish meaning was given to them. ‘Government is the agency which governs the country and makes the rules for all of us. It protects our country and, also, provides many facilities to its citizens’. When a student asked, but what is the government, he replied “abhi jo bola wahi to sarkar hai.” (What is just said is the government). He blamed the student for never listening carefully. The student lapsed into silence.

The teachers’ belief that as they cannot fail students, how did it matter what they taught, was really problematic. In such a situation, they did not bother about what they were teaching, sometimes they did not even bother to refer to the books. When I, informally, asked after the class, they replied that they could not fail them at any cost, and, therefore, there was no need to deal with the entire chapter. Since they would be setting the paper, they would teach accordingly. Only a biased and incomplete understanding was given to the learners regarding gender equality, reservation and poor people. Such a blunder cannot be appreciated, in a human rights perspective based class.

Teaching-learning, in context, was not observed in any class. Most of the classes were just based on the text books and the examination. A very good example can be taken here of Class 6, (Key Elements of a Democratic Government) where the examination was the clear focus of the class. The teacher said that there was no need to do questions from the chapter, as there would hardly be any question in the exams, even though the chapter dealt with the working of a democracy. Thus, the entire teaching was just for exams. He finished the chapter in a 20-minute class. Although the meaning of participation in a democracy and the situation of the black people in South Africa was discussed, a very good and egalitarian picture of present India was presented, such as no caste-based discrimination happened, these days, in India. He
presented a half-truth, regarding discrimination in South Africa and India. As we know, this particular system still exists in many parts of India, in the rural areas, though the urban areas are, also, not an exceptions to this. Dealing with such sensitive issues very insensitively shows that, for sure, the class did not have a human rights perspective.

How the teachers decide what is right and what is wrong, with reference to certain debatable issues: It is very obvious that in the Social Science classes there will be some debates about social issues and for this, it becomes important, as to how the teachers deal with such debatable issues. Or how the teacher provides space for such debates in the classroom and channelizes the discussion in the right direction, with a proper and appropriate feedback. A very meaningful discussion could have been done in Class 10, when a student said, regarding the definition of a democracy given by the teacher “Janta ka janta ke dwara or janta ke liye shaasan” (by the people, of the people and for the people)) that since we do not rule and even do not make rules then how is our nation democratic? Instead of taking this point ahead for discussion, the teacher simply disowned the question by saying “chup karo, what do you want, to sit in the Parliament to make rules” (shut up, what do you want, to sit in the Parliament to make rules). Again, the student tried to ask, but the teacher interrupted and said,” if you will listen carefully, then you will not have many questions. We cannot waste the entire class to explain democracy. “baad mein puchh lena” (ask later).

The teacher decided what was right and what was wrong. In Class 9, while talking about political parties, she just favored the Congress openly and said, “Congress aaj bharat ki sabse badi or achhi party hai, usne vikas ke kitne kaam karwaye hai, metro etc.” (Congress is the biggest and the best party of India, has done a lot of work for development means metro so on) and talked very little about other parties. Thus, it clearly seems that the teacher was favoring the Congress party, which is inappropriate here. How can such a class be said to be based on a human rights perspective?

Some debatable issues came up in Class 9 (Democratic Rights) with reference to why women did not have any say in the decision-making, even when they were earning
and contributing to the family income. The teacher could have discussed the economic equality and decision-making effectively, but did not.

In certain classes, the content was presented in such a way, that no debate could be held in class. Some discussions could have come up from the students’ questions, but they were not properly dealt with. In Class 8 (Understanding Marginalization), there was no discussion on why tribes come to the cities and do not go back? Why do they behave differently and so on. But, the teacher did not initiate any discussion. He decided the way things should be understood in the class, which was very unfair to the students and the teaching-learning process.

The Students’ Status or Dignity in the Class: The students’ status, here, refers to how students are treated in class. Do they get proper respect or not, whether their understanding is respected or not, if their socio-cultural and economic status is respected and accepted or not. It is essential for a teacher to give due respect to the students in class, in general, and while teaching, in particular. But, unfortunately, hardly any class was found where the students were accepted or respected. Most of the time, statements such as “you do not know even this much”, “tum kuch nahi kar sakte” (you cannot do anything), “itne asaan sawaal ka jawab bhi nahi aata”,( do you not know the answer to this very simple question) “sabke sab fail ho jaoge” (all of you will fail), “tumhe kuch pata to hota nahi hai bas prashan puchhte ho” (you do not know anything and just ask questions) were very common in all the classes observed. Such statements, really, undermine the student’s ability. This was a clear rejection of the student’s existence, then where did a human rights perspective exist, is to be questioned.

A clear rejection of the students’ dignity could be seen in Class 9. While teaching poverty, a question was asked by the teacher as to what was the difference between a car driver and a rickshaw driver? A student said that, “Sir, Naresh batayega, iske papa rickshaw chalate hai” (Naresh could tell, his father drives a rickshaw). Naresh replied, “oye, chup kar pitega kya.” (Shut up, or you will be beaten). The teacher shouted at both of them and asked Naresh to tell the class about the same. Naresh stood up, but could not speak (feeling humiliated) and the students silently laughed at him. In a rude voice, the teacher said that he should not have asked him, as he knew that Naresh would not be able to answer. Thus, the students’ identity and respect in class was not maintained.
In some classes, the teacher did not bother, if the students were present or not, he just read out the book and left the class. In terms of respecting the students’ knowledge in class, hardly any student had dignity in class, as the teacher, mostly, rejected their views or ignored them. It seemed that the teacher believed that the students did not know anything and he knew everything. The students raised some important themes, as has been discussed earlier, but the teacher did not bother to give proper attention to them and simply rejected them or ignored them. This ignorance shows an ignorance of a human rights perspective.

**Feedback to the Learners:** Feedback is important for any teaching-learning process. Providing a healthy feedback makes the teaching-learning process more effective and interesting for the students. Feedback may be in any form, such as answers to the questions asked by the students, a general discussion-based feedback and so on. Unfortunately, feedback in the observed classes, were very problematic and very insensitive. The feedback was biased, as the teachers had pre-conceived notions.

We can take examples from Class 9, where electoral politics was discussed but the feedback given by the teacher was quite inadequate. The following responses will prove this inadequacy such as election competition is not healthy, “aj kal kitni dikkat aati hai Chunav main. Pratidwandita ke kaaran logo ka shoshan hota hai. To ye aj ek samsaya hai”(there are many problems in holding elections these days. Because of competition, people get exploited. This has become a problem). “All persons above the age of 18 are eligible to vote only because it is written in the Constitution,(no substantial reasons were given by the teacher, except quoting the Constitution). These kinds of responses provide inadequate knowledge to the learners, which is not appropriate from a human rights perspective.

Feedback regarding the migration of tribes, and gender equality was, also, inappropriate, as has already been discussed in the analysis. Feedback, with reference to *Godhara* and *Valmiki Basti* incidents, the problem of education in Delhi, reservation and so on were, also, problematic.

In some places, the teacher just presented a very superficial and a glorified picture. In Class 6, a learner asked who an untouchable was. The teacher replied that untouchable means those who are lower in caste. But, now-a-days, we do not believe
all these things and consider everybody equally. He just presented a glorified picture regarding untouchability and said that it did not exist any longer in India.

The Teachers’ Faith and the Attitude towards the Students’ Potentialities and Capabilities: Although not a single definition can be given of a good teacher or teaching without any debate, it can be said that it is good for a teacher to have faith in the learners’ potentialities and capabilities. This not only motivates the learners, but, also, gives them ownership of their learning. This develops the students’ faith in the teacher. But, in most classes observed, nothing like this was observed. The teacher, clearly, showed that she had no faith in the learners’ abilities; that is why, everything was just prescribed to them and, hardly, any space was given to active learning. The teacher judged the student, only if he replied correctly (a correct answer meant that which was prescribed by the teacher or the text book) to the question, otherwise the teacher did not miss any opportunity to blame the learners saying, “sab fail ho jaoge” (you all will get fail), “tumhe kuch nahi aata” (you do not know anything), “mujhe tumse puchna hi nahi chahiye tha”(I should not have asked you), “tumhe kuch pata toh hota nahi hai bas prashan karte ho, shaant raho”(you do not know anything and just ask questions, keep quiet) and so on. These lines clearly prove that the teachers did not have any faith in the learners’ abilities. Most classes were prescriptive, where the teacher used to give everything without any kind of active participation, by the learners. Almost all the classes were teacher-oriented and teacher-centered. Students’ questions, responses and experiences were rejected or ignored, which proved that teachers had no faith or belief in the learners’ abilities, potentialities and capabilities and that was why the teaching-learning process in the class was not based on a human rights perspective.

The Meaning of Discipline and Respect in Class: This particular theme emerged because the meaning of discipline in the class was observed, specifically, in two ways. First, all the students had to standup and wish the teacher, as the teacher entered the class and second, to remain quiet in the class, without asking any questions. It was clearly observed in the classes, that the more questions the student asked, the more rudely the teacher behaved. Many examples have already been given, when the teacher reacted badly on being asked a question in the class and the reason given by the teacher was to complete the syllabus.

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It was sad to observe the teacher scolding the entire class, when they forgot to stand up, when the teacher entered the class. The teacher said, “*tum logo ko pata nahi ki jab teacher class mein aate hai toh’class stand’ kehker khade hote hai, sab ke sab nalayak ho tum log*” (do not you know that, you all should standup when a teacher comes to the class. You all are fools). Such statements were really problematic and against a human rights perspective.

**Do Teachers have a Secular Understanding?:** It is quite important for a teacher to be secular in a multi-cultural and multi-religious class. It is the responsibility of a teacher to give due respect to all religions in class. The teacher should not hurt religious sentiments and, most importantly, the teacher needs to provide opportunities to the learners to develop a secular understanding about the concepts. Unfortunately, nothing like this was observed and, most of the time, directly or indirectly, the teacher showed his/her religious-biased understanding. An example has already been quoted regarding secularism in Class 8, where the teacher’s understanding was limited to Hindus and Muslims and India and Pakistan and nothing more than that. He pointed out to a student and said, “*tum batao ki tumhara dharmkya hai?”*(What is your religion?).The student replied,“*Hindu.”* The teacher again asked, “*Tumhara koi Muslim dost hai?”*(Do you have any Muslim friend).The student said, “*No.”* The teacher said, “*uff, ok sit down.”* Then, he moved to another student and said, “*tum kaho*” (you say).The student said, “*No.”* Meanwhile, one student softly said, “*iska matlab hum secular nahi hai*” (it means we are not secular). The teacher heard that child and said, “*you all do not understand what I am trying to tell you.*”(The student replied, because of the definition mentioned by the teacher in the beginning of the class). The teacher became frustrated and said, “*jaise mera ek dost muslim hai or main uske ghar jata hu or vo bhi mere ghar aata hai. Hum sath sath khaate peete hai, to main secular hu. Kyonki main dharm ke naam par antar nahi karta*” (I have a friend who is Muslim. We go to each other’s houses, we often eat together. So, I am secular, as I do not discriminate on the basis of religion). Then a student asked, “*kya aap shadi karoge apni beti ki ek muslim ke sath?”* (Will you marry your daughter to a Muslim).The teacher was stunned for a minute and, then, replied, “*shadi ek alag mudda hai.”* (Marriage is a different issue altogether) And he just skipped that discussion to the next topic, to save himself, but the students were not adequately satisfied. This is clearly not a human rights perspective-based class, where wrong perceptions were being taught.
On the same lines, Class 7 ( Equality in Indian Democracy ) can, also, be discussed here, where the teacher clearly showed non-secular understanding, by declaring that since the Muslims kill cows and the Hindus worship cows, so, the Hindus hate them, and there is nothing wrong with that. The teacher had a narrow and wrong understanding about secularism. In the same way, the teacher, in Class 6, declared that the Muslims were responsible for the ‘Godhara’ incident which showed the teacher’s non-secular understanding. It appeared that no human rights perspective existed in the classes observed.

In a broader sense, ‘secular’ means not to take favor and provide a balanced perspective, which was missing in the classes observed. Caste-based, gender-based, religion-based understanding was presented by the teachers, which was really problematic and non-secular and against a human rights perspective.

The Teachers’ Preconceived Notions: It seems that the teachers were not ready to read anything new. They wanted to only teach, what they had learnt. Even their preconceived notions created more problems, as far as knowledge about the social system and issues was concerned.

Lots of preconceived notions were being strongly favored by the teachers such as gender-based discrimination, existence of caste, reservation as a problem, non-existence of untouchability. “Some kind of discrimination is required for the smooth functioning of society” merely shows the narrow understanding of secularism (examples have already been discussed in the earlier themes). Thus, the teachers’ preconceived notions created a non-human rights perspective-based class environment.

Space for Collaborative, Critical and Reflective Thinking: Collaborative work is important in Social Science classes, where the students can learn, through each other’s perspectives. Collaborative work helps them to develop the ability and understanding to respect other’s views and perspectives, but nothing like this was observed in the classes.

Space for critical and reflective thinking was not available. Most of the time, the teacher gave information and the students just listened to them. Consequently, space for reflection and critical thinking was missing. It was the teacher’s point of view, which was the ultimate truth in the class. As mentioned earlier, there was no space for
discussion on even debatable issues. Here, too, the teacher declared everything. Therefore, in such a declarative process, how can one think reflecting about criticism on the existing practices how can one think about a human rights perspective-based teaching-learning processes?

**Analysis of Interviews of Teachers, with reference to Classroom Practices**

Broadly, the analysis has been presented in two themes. There are sub-themes under each broad theme. It was essential to know the teachers’ understanding about the concept of Human Rights first, and, then about a human rights perspective-based teaching-learning process, because their understanding about the basic concept of Human Rights would represent their pedagogic understanding based on a human rights perspective. In the first broad theme, the understanding of the teachers about Human Rights is presented and the second theme presents their understanding of a human rights perspective-based teaching-learning process.

**Themes**

1) Understanding of Human Rights and a human rights perspective
2) A Human Rights Perspective in Classroom Practices

**Understanding of Human Rights and a Human Rights Perspective**

**Human Rights for Self-development:** Most of the teachers said that Human Rights are important and essential for personal, as well as national development. The teachers said that one cannot survive without rights. They, also, accepted the importance of democracy in this regard and accepted that there were many problems in a democracy, but it is the best form of governance. In this regard, they talked about the Right to Life, the Right to Vote, the Right to Speech and so on. It was stated by the teachers that rights can only be used, if the citizens are active and take part in the political processes. The awareness that, until one is aware about one’s rights, how will the rights be used by that person was also highlighted by the teachers. In this regard, they favored Human Rights Education. One of the teachers said, “*keval Social Science*
Overall, a common understanding was shared by the teachers that rights are important for development at the individual, as, well as the social level.

Equality with Dignity: The notion of equality was favored by most teachers. Most of them (six teachers) said that equality was essential to develop an egalitarian society. Gender equality, caste-based equality, religion-based equality and so on, were favored by the teachers. Equality was defined by the teachers, as having no discrimination between human beings, whether men or women. There should be respect for each other and a space to speak, if something wrong happens to them. A teacher mentioned that he always treated his servant (who was a 15-year old girl) equally like his child. Immediately, he also said, “aapko to pata hai aaj kal servant milna kitna mushkil hai or milte hai to kitne paise maangte hai. Ye ladki bhi gareeb ghar ki hai to maaine rakh liya”(you know how tough it is to get a servant these days, and if you get one they ask for too much money. This girl is poor, so I hired her). But, he did not say as to how much he paid her. What kind of human rights does he respect when he has a 15-year old girl servant? But he justified it by saying that she was very poor.
The teachers raised issues related to women’s rights. One of the teachers said that women, in India, have many problems, even if they are educated. Initially, before marriage and, then, after marriage. She mentioned that, in the Indian male-dominated society, women have no say in anything. On the same lines, another teacher believed that Human Rights are important for many reasons. She said that Human Rights are the rights for every one, without any discrimination. In her view, “samaaj mein sabhi ka samaan honna na keval adhikaro ke liye avashayak hai balki ek samman purvak jine ke liye bhi aniwarye hai” (respect for all in society is important, not only from a human rights perspective, but it is important for a respectful life). She emphasized on women’s rights and child rights and said that these groups (women and the children) suffer more in India and faced many problems daily. She said that she was not talking, specifically, about women in Delhi, but women outside Delhi, such as in Bihar and Rajasthan, where women have to bring water from a distance of many kilometers and, then, do the entire work at home and the fields, and, yet, she did not get any respect. She said, “Unke manav adhikaron ki baat kaun karta hai? koi nahi, soche to tab jab adhikar mana bhi jata ho” (who talks about their rights? No one. Even they were not considered to have rights). She showed her anger for a male dominated society, were a woman had to fight for her rights on her own and where nobody came to her aid.

One teacher said that it was very important to respect everyone, whether they were colleagues or servants at home. Thus, getting respect is also a right or a Human Right for every human being. She said that sometimes, her Principal did not talk to her properly and behaved very rudely, which she did not like, at all. She mentioned that she always behaved properly with the students and gave them due respect. On the same lines, another teacher initiated his talk saying that, in his school, economically poor students, came to study. Thus, the teachers (most of them) had developed a kind of negative attitude towards them and did not bother much about their studies and participation in education. He said that a teacher in this school believed, “ye jhugi jhopadi ke log padte to hai nahi, keval time pass karna hai inko” (these ‘jhugi-jhopdi’ student do not want to study. They come just to pass their time). He mentioned that sometimes, the teacher in the absence of a particular student called them derogatory names much as “chuhda”, “Chamar” so on. He also mentioned that the teachers were divided into groups, based on caste. Though these groups did not function explicitly, they did exist. He said that, in some way or the other, the caste system,
even if hidden, do exist in schools. This showed that some teachers were aware that caste-based discrimination is not humane.

The teachers were very unhappy with the system and said that Human Rights were the rights of every human being and should be given to all, without any kind of discrimination and bias. She said, “ek insan ko insan maan liya jaye, wahi sabse bada human rights hai” (considering a human as a human being is the biggest human right). She emphasized the fact that there was no use of Human Rights, if they were only on paper. They must be implemented, even to the lowest level of society. She mentioned that Indian society had many problems, especially in terms of caste and class. The so-called lower caste people had to face many problems, even today. Though the Constitution has made every one equal but is it true? She said, “mujhe log aaj bhi bolte hai ki SC hone ke kaaran job mil gayi, varna nahi milti, mujhe bahot bura lagta hai par kya kare, isse behtar to na job milna hota” (till date, people say that I got this job because I am SC, otherwise I would not have. I really feel bad, but nothing can be done. It would be better I had not got the job). After having worked for so many years, she still had to face many problems. She asked me, “Kya ye Human Rights hai?” (Are these human rights?). She said that people talk more and do less about Human Rights; those who are capable of doing something do not take any initiative, as they do not need rights, as such. She was very unhappy with the entire system of government.

On asking, if our constitution provides equality to all, she replied in the positive, but the corrupt administrators created more problems in their application. Because our nation has masses of illiterate people, they were unable to fight against it and, hence, got exploited. She took a stand that we should raise our voice against any kind of exploitation, whether it concerned us or not.

Another teacher said that Human Rights were the rights of all human beings, whether men, women, or children. He said that rights were essential for everyone and had a special importance for all individuals, without any discrimination. He said that people, in India were not aware of their rights and, so, got exploited; the Indian citizens had many rights on paper but, in practice, they did not get these rights. He, also, mentioned about school education and referred to primary education particularly, and stating that, though every child had the right to be educated, how could they be when they did not have anything to eat and wear. For them, education and school was a
waste of time. He said that there were parents of students in his school who said that education would not help them. He mentioned that the school infrastructure could not support such a large number of students, in his school; there were 90 students in a class and, in some classes, more than that. No one can teach such a large number. In such a situation, where are the Human Rights of the learners to learn and where are the Human Rights of the teacher to teach?

**The Rights are the Responsibilities:** The teachers talked about responsibilities and said that only having rights is insufficient. There was a need for associated responsibilities. They said that rights and responsibilities move together. People who claim their rights, must know about the associated responsibilities. One of them said that responsibilities were more important than the claims of the rights. He narrated an incident, “ek bar parents aye or mujhse ladane lage ki is bar hamare bache ko scholarship nahi mili. Jabki maine 10 din tak wait kiya ki vo aakar le jaye. Maine fir paise jama kara diye. to ye koi achhi baat hai. Vo keval rights jaante hain, zimmedari nahi” (Once, the parents of a child came to me and shared an argument on why their child did not get scholarship. Though, I had waited for 10 days and had then submitted all the money back. Is this appropriate behaviour? They only know rights, not responsibility). He said that this was not the only incident in the school, even the students, started talking badly to the teacher and the Principal. He said that the teachers, had to apologize to students on several occasion. He, also, said that the students did not respect teachers at all. Everyone talked about rights, but not about his duties and responsibilities. Another teacher said, “agar hum ek samtavadi samaj bana de to responsibility to logo mein khud –b- khud aa jayegi” (responsibility will automatically come to people if we can develop an egalitarian society). This shows that they were quite aware of and understand the association of responsibility with rights.

**Child Rights:** The teachers talked about child rights, with reference to Human Rights. Their concern was with the rights of the poor children working in factories and homes and begging at signals. One of the teachers, very emotionally, said that children are in trouble in India. She took examples of the red light signals in Delhi and said, “kuch bhi ho yeh to sarasar anyay hai bachon ke sath kyonki unki kya galti hai. Mera to dil ro padta hai.Par ktcchh nahi karte hum. Insaniyat to hai nahi, varna kuch to karte hum” (This is injustice with children, what is their mistake? I feel very bad but cannot
do anything, we do not have humanity, or we would have done something). She said, “Is the government not aware of them? Do leaders not cross red lights? They all do but do not bother about them.”

Some teachers raised issues related to child rights, with reference to the state. They said that the state should take responsibility for food, shelter and education of each child. In this regard, they, also, talked about the NGOs, who took funds from the Government. This proved that the government was not serious about these children. Along with this, the teachers raised a legal perspective and said that such children were left in the lurch and exploited. The Indian legal system talked a lot about the child’s rights, but who really knew about the legal processes? One of the teachers said, “hum logo ko bhi nahi pata ki actually karna kya hai yadi kisi bacche ka shoshan hota hai. Hum to keval kitabo mein hi bata sakte hai or kitabe bhi aisi hai jo zarurat ki jaankari nahi deti” (We, also, do not know what to do, if any child is being exploited. We can only talk about these issues in books, and books do not provide the necessary knowledge).

Theory vs Practice: The issue of theory vs practice was raised by the teachers. Their concern was that there were many rights and laws for everyone, but people were not able to use them as they were not aware of their rights. Even if they were, the government complicated the procedure to such an extent, that a common man did not dare to ask about such rights. A teacher, clearly, said that there were two discourses of Human Rights: one theoretical and the other practical. The theoretical aspect had hardly, any concern with the practical aspect. She stated that the law said one thing and its practice said something else. According to another teacher, the gap between theory and practice should be removed, if we talk about Human Rights and work towards a more egalitarian society. But, she believed that Human Rights were for every one and should reach every one for his/her development.

Another teacher raised the issue of policies and their implementation. She said, “In the last few years, there has been a change in the social setting. Different policies have been made by the government, for different marginalized communities, for their growth and development. To what extent these polices are implemented is altogether a different thing. A teacher said that Human Rights are more related to theory, which contradicts praxis. She said that it depended on our perception, as to how we perceive
Human Rights. She said that the poor need different human rights from the rich, because their needs were different. But, she, also, said that even after this division, there were some common rights applicable to everyone and should reach everyone. Thus, the concern about the practicality of rights is clearly visible in the teachers’ discussions.

**Universality vs Relativity:** Universality vs Relativity is a very important debate in the Human Rights discourse and this was touched upon in the teachers’ discussions. Some of them said that Human Rights were universal and not relative, because of its significance. One of them argued that if Human Rights were relative, then different people would interpret them differently and no exploitation would take place. Thus, Human Rights were always universal. On the same lines, another teacher said that Human Rights were universal and we all needed the same kinds of rights across the world, whether India or America. The continuous changes in the discourse of rights had also changed society. But, this change was insufficient. He said that all must be equal without any kind of discrimination based on caste, class, region, religion, gender and so on, for a human rights perspective to exist. He said that we should celebrate all kinds of festivals in school, to impart our values and rituals to our students.

Five teachers believed that Human Rights is a very relative term and may differ from nation to nation, based on their value system and rituals. In this way, the rights, in India, would be different from the rights in the USA. A teacher strongly believed that rights cannot be universal and that they were culture-based. Most of the teachers were in favour of the fact that Human Rights are universal, but only a few talked about its relativity.

**Fundamental Rights and Human Rights:** What is the difference between Fundamental Rights and Human Rights is an important question in itself and various responses came out in the discussion. Five teachers said that there was no difference between Fundamental Rights and Human Rights, they were almost the same. Human Rights were the extended form of Fundamental Rights. In the same way, a teacher said that Human Rights were, somehow, like Fundamental Rights, and there was no difference between them. But, she mentioned that Human Rights were associated with the marginalized communities and people, like her, did not need many facilities from
the government, as she believed that she was independent. She said that they needed rights, but different kind of rights for the poor people. She said that it was very important to respect everyone, whether they were colleagues or servants at home. She said that Human Rights and Fundamental Rights were the same, but the poor needed Human Rights and she and the others like her needed Fundamental Rights. Some said that the only difference was that Fundamental Rights were constitutional, while Human Rights were general.

Four teachers said that Fundamental Rights were Human Rights, but all Human Rights had not been included in our Fundamental Rights, which was needed. One of them, also, highlighted the problem of the Right to Education and said that the Government was not making policies which could be implemented effectively. For instance, through RTE, the students took admission just for the sake of admission. They never came to school. Even if they did come, they were very irregular. They could not fail them. He said that only enrollment was taking place, neither was education nor infrastructure adequate in schools. He showed the broken windows in the school and asked if this was the Human Rights based approach of the Government. He criticized the Government by saying that it, always, took decisions in its favor and had no concern with such problems. Thus, the teacher said that it was difficult to determine whether it was Fundamental Rights or Human Rights, which did not appear mandatory for the government’s actions.

A teacher said that there was a difference between them. She said that Fundamental Rights were, somewhat, different from Human Rights. Fundamental Rights had some legal status, while Human Rights did not. She said that Human Rights were the only rights which could address, almost, every problem prevalent in society. She, especially, took examples of women and said that the working women, rarely, had any say at home, she had to work at home as well as the workplace. It has been accepted, without any question, that household work is made for women. She said that Human Rights mean that women should be given equal respect. Though both (Fundamental Rights and Human Rights) need to be respected, it was, mostly, in the form of Human Rights.
A Human Rights Perspective in Classroom Practices

The Human Rights Perspective: From the discussion, it was observed that teachers did not have much understanding about a human rights perspective. Their understanding was more about a human rights education. Some of them said that Human Rights Education must be a part of the school system. But, what is the meaning of a human rights perspective and how does one make the teaching-learning process based on it was not clear. A teacher said that Human Rights and the human rights perspective were the same. On asking if she used the human rights perspective in teaching, she did not say much and only said, “hankaartihumainsakosamaansamaajthihuorjaatapiatakbhednahikarti” (Yes I do. I treat everyone equally and do not discriminate, based on caste). She restricted her notion of the human rights perspective-based teaching only to marginalized communities and their rights. Another teacher said that she used the human rights perspective in teaching. She said that learning was the students’ prime rights and she made them learn. Her response seemed, as if she had something and was giving that to the learners. Though many teachers accepted that students should get full respect in class, most of them were unaware of the actual meaning of a human rights perspective. Their understanding was limited to Human Rights and the Human Rights Education.

Dealing with Critical and Sensitive Issues: Dealing with critical and sensitive issues is quite challenging for the teachers, at every level, and it becomes even more challenging at the school level. Some of the teachers said that it was important to be conscious, while teaching some sensitive issues. One teacher mentioned some examples, such as the Godhara incident and the attack on a Gurudwara in Amritsar and said that the students had started to discuss such issues amongst themselves and the discussion was grounded on religion-based discrimination. He said that it became very difficult for him to handle that class. Some Hindu students said that the Muslims were responsible and the Muslims students said that the Hindus were responsible. He mentioned that he had, somehow, managed to change the direction of the topic. He, also, expressed his helplessness in dealing with such issues in the class. “kitaabomeniktapanahikya kya likhi gaya hai, jinhone likha hai vo aakar padaayen to unko pata chale ki in muddo ko kaise padhana hai” (lots of things are given in the text books, those who have written these books should come to school and teach, only, then, will they come to know how to deal with these issues). He was very
uncomfortable in teaching some issues given in the Social Sciences text books. He admitted that he was very uncomfortable dealing with issues related to religion and caste. He, also, mentioned that they could not leave the students with unstructured views. Thus, a kind of meaningful orientation should be given to teachers, so that they can, effectively, deal with such issues.

In this regard, another teacher said that she paid proper attention to each and every concept and the sensitivity of the concept. On asking how she dealt with concepts sensitive in terms of gender, caste, class and religion, she said, generally, she did not discuss the issues related to religion and caste, because these were quite problematic and she could not handle such issues effectively. The students, also, did not take such discussions positively and started reacting uncomfortably. She said that the students took such issues, personally, in the discussion. Therefore, she generally, avoided such discussions. She could not mention any strategies to teach such sensitive issues.

However, one teacher said something different and added that issues such as “Babri Masjid” and “Ram janam Bhumi” were more political then social, so it had to be dealt with politically. On asking what he meant by ‘politics’, he said that ‘politics’ meant to not be judgmental. He mentioned that both perspectives should be put before the issues. But he, also, said that it was not right to leave them without any kind of concrete understanding or concrete knowledge.

Three teachers said that they never gave any kind of biased perspectives to the learners. One of them said that she never delivered any kind of biased information to the learners. She kept in mind that they had students from different social set-ups, so she dealt with it, accordingly. But, she could not suggest any method of teaching based on a human rights perspective, where she treated everyone equally.

In contrast, some said that discussing such issues created problems in the class. One of them said that it was tough to deal with sensitive issues. He mentioned that saying anything in the class about the caste, specifically, was a tough task and one had to think, many times, before speaking anything. He said, “kuch baaton ke liye to hamare paas hi jawaab nahi hai, jaise reservation. Hona chahiye, batayein to problem, nahi hona chahiye, to problem. Aisi sthiti mein to problems bahut badh jaati hai” (sometimes, we do not have answers such as, reservation should be there or not? saying yes is a problem, and saying no is, also, a problem. A situation like this increases the problem). He showed his helplessness regarding such issues. He blamed
the textbooks for inadequate subject-matter on complicated issues. Why were these issues left unclear to the teachers? He said that teachers, suddenly, become intelligent enough to teach such issues; otherwise everything was prescribed to them, because it was considered that they did not know anything.

**Equal Opportunity for Students:** All the teachers said that they provided equal opportunities to everyone in the classroom processes, without any kind of discrimination. One said that he always kept in mind that there should not be any kind of unfairness to the students, in terms of marks and other areas. He, also, said that he took care of language, and social issues, while teaching, but he could not state any example, as to what kind of language and issues he was talking about. He did not respond much when the researcher asked about a ‘human rights-based perspective in teaching.’ He only said that it should be taught at the school level. He considered it as content, but not as a perspective, which could be used in the teaching-learning process or the teaching-learning process could be based on this perspective. Another teacher said that she always tried to be fair to all students. She said that she did not have any favorite student, like other teachers. On the same lines, another teacher said that she tried to be more humane in class and treated everybody equally. She said that there were some students from the marginalized communities, but she claimed that she gave equal respect to all. She said, “mere mann mein to koi bhed bhav nahihai kisi bhi jati ya samudaye ke bache ke liye” (I do not discriminate with any child, based on any caste or community). In the same way, a teacher said that one should give due respect to students, providing them with opportunities to learn, then that would be a human rights perspective of teaching and mentioned that it was quite tough to make teaching human rights perspective-based.

**Humane Teaching:** All the teachers said that they taught very humanly. One of them mentioned using the humanitarian approach in classroom teaching. He explained this saying that teaching is a two-way process and depended upon the ability of both the teachers and students. He said that if one respected the student’s way of learning and understanding, his or her ideas, and provided space to them, then the pedagogy was based on Human Rights. He, also, accepted that his way of teaching was, unconsciously, humanitarian. He said that some students were very naughty and one had to be naughty with them, to some extent. His meant scolding, not beating. He said that, sometimes, he scolded the students, but not harshly.
**Methods of Teaching:** The knowledge of different teaching methods and using them in class is quite important for teachers. But, a majority of teachers said that they only used textbooks. They asked students to read the book and, then, explained whatever was read out. One of the teachers said that, generally, he used the textbook, but sometimes, he took some newspaper cuttings to the class to start a discussion, but that happened very rarely. He said that, sometimes, he did issue-based teaching, picking up an issue, and talking about it and related it to the topic. According to him, he did not use the so-called collaborative method of teaching such as group work, team work, because it took time and he taught them the way he, generally, did.

One teacher said that she used the textbook method. Other methods were good, but could not be used effectively, at the school level. The teachers were, also, not trained to teach this way. Thus, she found the textbook method, a good method to teach. Another teacher said that, if the book was not used the students, she thought that nothing was happening in the class. She mentioned that, if a chapter was not taught from the book, the student, also, felt that the chapter had not been covered. She clearly mentioned that the students wanted to be taught from the textbook and she justified her textbook-based teaching. Another teacher said that she, also, used the textbook method, but very effectively and enthusiastically.

The teachers said that they used the textbook because of lack of time. One said that she, generally, used the textbook for teaching, as she was already burdened with much work. It was more convenient and the best way to teach. Another teacher said, “course to khatam karana hota hai time se, varna Principal bolte hai ye kya kiya, to course khatam karna hai to yahi tarika apnana hota hai. Or tarike ho sakte hai padhane ke, par course khatam nahi hoga” (we have to complete the course on time, otherwise the principal ask what have we done. There may be many ways to teach, but the course cannot be completed with those methods).

One teacher mentioned that he used the project method, too, for teaching and said that he, generally, gave work to the students to collect some information and, then, had a discussion in the class. He felt that the students appreciated this method, but every topic could not be taught like this and time was a factor which restricted them from adopting this method.

The teachers said that the text book method could be given a human rights based perspective. One said that by giving equal opportunities to all would make it so. He
said that it became more important what kind of words a teacher used while teaching and, especially, on a human rights perspective-based teaching. Consciously or unconsciously, the teacher should not use words that would make a learner feel low and alienated. He said that teachers, generally, did not bother about what they said and used words very loosely. He believed that personal biases always influenced a teacher, but the teacher's responsibility was to make his/her pedagogy free from biases.

A teacher said, “zaroori to ye hai ki students seekh jaye. Ye sab private schools ke drame hai, varna hum bhi to padhkar aaye hai or theek thaak padhein hai. Agar sab bache hi kar sakte to hamari kya zaroorat hoti” (ultimately, learning is important. These are the ‘dramas’ of private schools, otherwise we have, also, studied well with the same method that we use to teach. If a child can do everything, then what is our need). She said that whatever method was used, it should be used effectively and she said that she used the textbook effectively.

**Punishment:** Punishment does not help the students to learn anything, moreover, it creates problem in the development of the children. Though no teacher clearly said that they beat students but...yes, to some extent, their responses say that. One teacher accepted that, sometimes, when students were out of control, he reacted and, sometimes, beat them but not harshly. He said that when students did not listen to him after all the effort. They made, what could he do, except beat them? He admitted that he did not like it, but, sometimes, he did it. He said that he would threaten to take them to the Principal (fear works). He said, “kai baar darana padta hai. Waise to sarkar ne hamare hath bandh hi rakhe hai” (sometimes it is important to threaten them, otherwise the government has restricted us). Another teacher admired the teaching during his school days and said that her teacher used to beat them, if they did not complete their work. That was a time when there was discipline, now everything was the opposite. She said, “aa j to hum kisi bache ko hath lagana to dur, kuch keh bhi nahi sakte or bache hamari sunte nahi to kaise kam chalega?” (Forget about touching, we cannot even say anything to a child when they do not listen to us, then how will it work).

**Authority in Class:** On asking what important things the teachers kept in mind when they went to class, one said that he entered the class full of attitude and with a feeling of authority. He did this because he felt that, if he would not do so, the class would
not listen to him. Therefore, to avoid unwanted behavior, he behaved thus. He, also, said that most of the time, immediately after entering the class, he asked students to write, whatsoever he wrote on the board, so that they were busy and did not make any noise in class. On the same lines, another teacher said, “main jyadatar class mein thoda raub ke sath jati hu. Par iska matlab ye nahi hai ki main authoritative behaviour karti hun. Main maanti hun ki thoda to teacher ko strict hona hi padega” (Generally, I enter the class, lording it over the students. This does not mean I am authoritative. I believe that a teacher has to be strict, to some extent). She admitted that she lost her temper and shouted at them, sometimes, if the students did not listen to her in the class, but it was very rare. She said that she, later, felt bad about her behavior.

Another teacher said that he used his authority in the class, sometimes, as he, usually, went to the class with an attitude, so that the students would be disciplined and would listen to him. He agreed that it was essential to scold the children, sometimes, and light beating was, also, essential. He said, “kabhi kabhi to maarna or dantana padta hi hai, varna sar par chadh jate hai bache or fir unko sambhalna bada hi kathin hota hai” (Sometimes, it is necessary to beat and scold them, otherwise they won’t listen and it will become tough to control them).

**The Students’ Respect**: It, clearly, came out that most of the teachers felt that the students must be respected in class and their voice should be heard. One teacher said, “bachon ki baatein sunana ek teacher ke liye bahot zaruri hai” (listening to students is essential for a teacher). The teachers said that they did respect the students by giving them equal opportunities in class. One teacher mentioned that she saw this as a reciprocal relationship, where teachers respected students and the students respected teachers. One teacher said, “Child-centered teaching is teaching based on a human rights perspective. She said, “If one will make his or her class child-centered, gradually, all rights will be respected.”

**Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation (CCE)**: Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation is an initiative taken by the Directorate of Education, for the school system. But, a majority of teachers were very unhappy with it. They said that it was not applicable within the given time, space and infrastructure. Some of them said that the pressure of work, other than teaching, hindered the successful implementation of CCE. One teacher said that CCE was a flop. Both, teachers and
students, were stuck with such work and, hence, had no time to teach and study. The students were constantly busy with projects and so on. Therefore, she felt that the students did not do rigorous study which they (the teachers) had done during their years of schooling.

The teachers’ perception regarding CCE was that it was not applicable in the present school system. One of them said, “CCE ko chhodo, aajkal keval padha lena hi apne aap mein ek jeet hai” (forget about CCE, mere teaching in the class is a victory in itself). They just accepted that it could not be implemented effectively, in the present situation.

**Discipline:** The teachers’ understanding from the discussions clearly shows that discipline is important for the class and for teaching, but no sufficient ideas or arguments were given to show how discipline could be developed, except by scolding and beating. The teachers said, “sarkar ne to hamare hath bandh rakhe hai to hum discipline kaise la sakte hai. Or jo sab ho raha hai woh to aap dekh rahe hai” (there are lots of restrictions on us, how can we maintain discipline and the rest you can see, what is happening). Another teacher said, “hum jab school mein the tab discipline hota tha, dar rehta tha ki teacher daante ya marengay. Usi ka parinaam hai ki hum aaj safal hai. Aaj to hum kuch keh bhi nahi sakte to discipline kaise ayega” (there was discipline in our school time, we always thought that teachers will scold or beat us and as a result we are successful in life. These days, we cannot even say anything, then how will there be discipline). The teachers’ idea of discipline was the same as that in the army. How self-discipline can be promoted was not discussed amongst them. They felt that beating and scolding were the only ways to establish discipline.

**The Teachers Role:** Different kinds of responses came up, with reference to the teacher’s role. The teachers said that respecting students was very important in class. One of them said that the role of the teachers was to create a child-centered classroom. But, some responses were quite different “teacher ka ye bhi role hai ki vo class mein discipline banake rakhe or iske liye thoda harsh or strict hona hi padta hai” (one of the roles of the teacher is to maintain discipline in class and, for this, one is required to be a little harsh and strict). Another said, “class maintain karna zaroori hai nahi to Principal sunate hai. Sara time to isime jata hai” (it is important to maintain discipline in class, otherwise the principal objects. The whole time goes in doing this).
Thus, the teachers had mixed reactions, where some said that making the class child-centered was the role of a teacher, while others said that it was important to do all this but, mostly, they just maintained the class decorum and could not do anything more important for the students’ learning.

In some places, the teachers said that the principal created problems, as he/she did not allow the teachers to do anything new. A teacher pointed out that the inefficiency of the school principal created problems. He said that the principal of his school was very poor in administrative skills. He needed to learn a lot with regard to dealing with parents and teachers. He was judgmental over the teaching of a teacher. He said that the Principal sometimes said, “Apne kuch nahi karwaya hai, aapke students ko kuch nahi aata” (you have not taught anything, your students know nothing). He said that it was very insulting for him and that the principal should not talk in such a manner.

Helplessness of the Teachers (sometimes lack of knowledge): The teachers said that they felt very helpless, sometimes, while teaching certain controversial issues based on religion, reservation so on. The teacher, said that they could not say anything clearly and left things, unsaid, sometimes. One said that she talked ambiguously, sometimes, to save herself. She said, “kai baar to topic ko lekar gole mole baat laini padti hai taki problem na ho jaye” (sometimes, we have to talk unclearly, so that we can avoid the problem in class). On asking what she meant by this, she shared an incident, “ek baar main festivals padha rahti thi to maine ek student se kaha kal to ‘Id’ thi, ghar par alag alag prakar ke pakwaan bane hongy, tabhi ek ladka bola meat bana hoga. And they started nonsensical arguments. Maine dono ko jaise taise chup karaya” (once, I was teaching festivals. I asked a student that, yesterday it was ‘Id’, different kinds of food must be have been cooked at your home. Suddenly, a student said that they must have cooked meat and they started nonsensical arguments. I, somehow, managed the situation). She said those were the kind of problems they faced in class. She accepted that she was biased, sometimes. She said that she was, also, biased for her Hindu beliefs and rituals, in quoting the last incident. She said that she felt no one should kill any animal, especially cows, as Hindus worship her. Consequently, she mentioned that it was, sometimes, tough to deal with the class, without one’s own biases.
One teacher said that they were not equipped with the knowledge of teaching, which was expected of them. They said refresher and other summer courses were a total waste of time, as they really did not help them at all. Therefore, they faced problems in class.

The teachers accepted that, sometimes, they failed to understand some topics confidently, because they were unaware of the facts and had no time to find these out because of lots of work.

**Conclusion**

The classroom observations and interviews, regarding classroom practices, show that there is a huge difference between what the teachers say and what actually happens in their classes. Various issues and concerns have emerged from the above analysis. Hardly any space was observed, where the students could participate actively. They are there in the school, just for the sake of attending it. The teacher’s authority seems to be supreme in class. Rejection of students’ views is, also, very common. Most of the classes were teacher-centered, where there was hardly any scope for a context-based, teaching-learning process. The examples used by the teachers were, at times, very problematic. Sensitive issues were dealt with very insensitively. The teachers’ inability and lack of knowledge was clearly visible. Their biased understanding created more problems, as far as sensitive issues were concerned. Their alienated behavior became a cause for the learners negative attitude. The classroom practices were, only, partially examination-centered. The kind of questions asked by the teachers were just recall based. It was clearly visible that teachers did not have faith in their learners’ abilities. That is why, all knowledge was given to them. No space was available for reflective and critical thinking.

The teachers’ understanding of Human Rights was very narrow, as far as a human rights perspective-based teaching-learning process was concerned. To some extent, they favored punishment. According to them, there was hardly any role for the students in the teaching-learning process. They were very uncomfortable with the “No Detention Scheme”.
II. Analysis of Co-Curricular Activities

This segment of the chapter presents an analysis of the Co-curricular Activities, with reference to a human rights perspective. As has been mentioned in the chapter, the methodology, observations and interviews were used to understand the CCA processes in School Education. Thus, the present segment discusses the analysis of both the observations and the interviews.

It is important to mention that the observations on CCA could not provide much data to understand a human rights perspective-based CCA. Thus, a brief report of the observed CCA has been presented in the first sub-section, whereas an analysis of the interviews is presented in the second sub-section.

A Brief Report on the Observations of Co-Curricular Activities

As has been mentioned, an understanding of a human rights perspective in the CCA was not explicit, due to various reasons. However, as lots of work and time had been spent in the school, in this regard, it is important to present a brief report about those experiences.

For this purpose, two schools were taken up. As per the guidelines given by the Directorate of Education, there should be two periods for the CCA, per week, in the time-table. Both the schools followed this. But, what was happening in these classes, was more interesting. If it had to be summarized in one word, “nothing”, would be the best word for it. When I interacted with the time-table in-charges, of both schools, they said, “aap bataye kab observe karna hai, hum arrange kara denge” (tell me when you would like to observe, we will arrange it for you). I was very surprised to hear that. I said that I would like to observe, whatsoever was happening in the class, there was no need to arrange anything. Finally, they gave me the time-table and I started observing the classes. But, unfortunately, everything except CCA, was happening. 11 classes were observed, with the hope that the next would be better, than the previous one.

The teachers just taught their subjects to complete the course. A teacher said, “Roz roz kya karayein CCA mein, main to iska achha istemaal karta hun or padha leta hu. Kya
fayda hoga gaane gawaker, faltu ka kaam hai. Kuch padengey to kaam ayega (what can be done daily in CCA, I make better use of and teach. What will be the use of songs, if they study it will help them).

‘Antakshari’, songs, jokes, were the common activities observed in some of the classes, which were conducted, very superficially. The teacher kept asking the students one by one, “kon kuch karke dikhayega” (who would like to do something). In some classes, the teacher said, “aap log chup chap koi kaam kar lo shor nahi hona chahiye” (do some work silently, there should not be any noise). Some classes happened just to scold the learners. After these classes, I forgot the purpose and the objective of these classes, as nothing really happened.

The cultural programmes, outside the classes, were also observed, which included 15th August, Diwali celebration and 26th January. But, these programmes were no better than what was being done the classes observed. All the three programmes started with a ‘Saraswati Vandana’, which was highly objectionable, from a human rights perspective. Dances on movie songs is questionable with reference to a human rights perspective. I, particularly, asked the time table in-charge why was only ‘Diwali’ celebrated, why not Id. He said, “Diwali to sab manaate hai, kya hindu kya muslim, hum to secular hai na” (everyone celebrates Diwali, whether they are Hindus or Muslims, we are all secular). But he could not understand a very simple argument, that a school should be secular either with all the religions or without any religion. These celebrations did not have any clear objective and the teachers chose them as per their convenience. As far as participation was concerned, only the same students participated who were capable of doing such activities. An understanding of maximum participation did not exist, especially with regard to CCA, in these schools.

**Analysis of Interviews of the Teachers, with reference to Co-Curricular Activities**

Co-curricular Activities are an integral part of the school education system. It is a clear deviation from Extra-curricular Activities, where these activities had hardly any concern with academics. The basic idea behind Co-curricular Activities is to create a bridge (or link) between academics and these activities had their epistemological role in classroom practices. Thus, to understand the teachers’ perspective about CCA,
interviews were conducted. Initially, the observations were done regarding CCA, but nothing specific came out, as mentioned earlier. Here, the analysis of the interviews conducted with the teachers, with reference to their understanding of a human rights perspective-based CCA, is presented.

Many teachers (9) showed a very narrow understanding of CCA. A majority of them were not even aware of the meaning of CCA. Five of them said that it was something to do with computers. After the researcher explained the CCA, they said, “*achha aap cultural programmes ki baat kar rahen hai*” (Ok, you are taking about cultural programmes). One of them mentioned that their school, often, organized such programmes such as the Independence Day, Diwali, Annual Day of the school and so on. He said that they did celebrate the festivals in school. The researcher asked that if the school was a secular institution, then why did they celebrate festivals? The teachers replied that secularism meant celebrating all religions. They, also, mentioned some activities they, generally conducted, such as dance, poetry recitation, singing, plays.

One teacher said that CCA meant the activities given in the textbooks. He explained that CCA stood for activities that helped in teaching the curriculum. On asking what kind of activities he used in class, he said that he used role play, slogan-writing, chart-making, displaying charts, songs and so on. But, he could not, specifically, mention how he taught a topic, with the help of these activities. He said that he rarely used such things in class. The rationale for CCA, according to him, was to make the teaching interesting, so that the learner could understand the given concept, joyfully.

Four teachers could not see any linkage between CCA and classroom teaching. They considered that CCA was more related to cultural activities, which were different from the teaching-learning process. One said that they only taught their respective subjects in the CCA periods and, hardly, any one of them did any kind of activities. It was not because the teachers did not want to, but because they were not clear about it. She said, “*itna keh dena paryapt nahi ki activities karwani hai*” (saying only that activities need to be done is in sufficient). Even the orientation, which they had attended, sidelined this issue and, therefore, the teachers were doing the same.

One said that it was important to have CCA in schools, but done properly and not half-heartedly. The students may benefit through it, but only if it is rightly planned.
and placed. The current situation was not conducive with reference to CCA. Basically, a teacher said that CCA takes place on some identified days, such as the Independence Day, the Republic Day, Diwali and so on. In his school, two periods, on Saturdays, were allotted for CCA. Generally, the teachers organized competitions in these periods. He, also, mentioned that participating in these activities was not compulsory. Only interested students participated, the rest made up the audience.

Some said that CCA was a failure in the school system. The teachers were not trained and they suggested rigorous training, because it was a very important aspect or component of school education.

They said that CCA should be a part of cultural programmes in the present system, where their busy schedule did not allow activity-based classes and such classes were only possible intermittently, not on a regular basis. If it was a part of cultural activities, then, that would be a better option.

The teachers mentioned that only the name had changed, otherwise, everything was the same. One said that they celebrated everything that they had done before. Even after my insisting several times, he could not relate it with classroom teaching. Finally, when he was clearly asked, he said that he did some activities in the class, sometimes, but it was very rare. One said, “hum to jo kuch vishesh dino mein celebrate karte hai vo hi hai CCA. Classes mein to aisa kuch karna bada kathin hai” (what we celebrate on special days are CCA. Doing anything like this in classes is tough). He, also, said that students of that school were so naughty that it was a very difficult task to discipline them. He expressed some grievances with the system and said, “hum to bas janganana or election duty ke liye bane hai. Teacher padhaye iske bare mein kaun soch raha hai. Sarkar apna kaam nikaalwa rahi hai bas. Or aap ummeed karte ho ki hum class mein chamatkaar kar de” (we are here just for duties during the census and election. Who thinks that a teacher should teach? The Government is just getting its work done and you are expecting that we should do a miracle in class). He was very upset with all the extra work, which he had to do, outside the school. He said that that work could be given to an unemployed person, as at least, they would earn something.

From the interviews it was clear that the teachers believed that CCA was a joke, because only the same students participated. The teacher chose only those students
who were capable of doing the work, because then less hard work would be required on the teacher’s part. Ultimately, he said that the teachers were not united and, because of that, the teachers faced such problems.

Three teachers said that it was the responsibility of the school and the school teachers that each and every student must participate in CCA. Not only because it was important, but because it was an integral part of one’s personality. In the CCA, some kind of spirituality was important and, again, he put forth the argument that spirituality made an individual a good human being.

The difference between CCA and ECA was not clear to the teachers. One said that both were the same and the Government used new terms, just to prove that the Government had updated itself. They were doing the same things which they had earlier done. It was like filling old wine in a new bottle. He, also, could not connect any relationship between the teaching-learning process and CCA. He said that they were two different things and had no relationship with each other. After the researcher said that there was no difference, he said that there should be some effective orientation for the teachers. Another teacher said that there was no relationship between the teaching-learning process and CCA. They were two different things in school. He said that the CCA was a part of the cultural programmes. He did not see any possibility of relating the teaching-learning process with CCA.

One said that the CCA were the same as Extra-Curricular Activities and said that the Government, all the time, played with new words and CCA was one of those new words. She accepted that they had neither changed anything after the CCA nor were they aware of that, so, the same things took place. She could not connect any relationship between CCA and classroom teaching. Her clear notion was that CCA were activities they conducted in school, on a particular day.

On asking what kind of changes the teachers wanted in the CCA, one said that it had no relevance in the school and, further, added that if it was removed from the school, it would not have much effect. It should be voluntary or removed completely from the school curriculum. They could not expect the participation of each and every one in cultural activities, as some students were more interested in studies. The participation, being mandatory, made such students suffer or “aakhir mein padhai hi kaam aati hai vo to hum sab maante hai” (ultimately studies help, we all know this). On the same
lines, one said, “first of all, I will allow all the students to participate in the programmes because only a few are allowed to do so. Secondly, I will make the attendance compulsory for all the students, as well as the teachers, and will organize good programmes.” She mentioned that she had not read the manual prepared by the Directorate of Education. She did not say anything as to what kind of human rights perspective was needed to be included in the CCA.

The interviews showed that most of the teachers had not seen the Directorate manual which talked about CCA and the activities that were required to be done or conducted, intra-school, as well as inter-school.

In the schools, two periods, continuously, were allotted to each class for the CCA. The teachers admitted that nothing happened in those classes, as they did not know what to do in those periods. Therefore, they used those periods to complete their course. They did not realize that the CCA could be a part of the teaching-learning process. Most of them did not even think about it, even though they believed that the CCA developed confidence in the learners, but nothing else.

In most schools, how and what will happen on a particular day, under the CCA was, generally, decided by the teacher in-charge and the teacher who wished to be a part of it.

The teachers mentioned that it was about performing on stage, on a particular day. One said that her school celebrated many events and festivals (Diwali, the Independence Day, and the Republic Day and so on) Besides these, she mentioned that debates and competitions used to be organized by the school. On asking if she thought that the activities conducted under the CCA had some kind of a human rights perspective or a human rights approach she said, “isme kya Human Rights hoga. Jo hota hai vo hota hai”(what is human rights in this, what has to happen will happen). She said that on Independence Day, they sang the National Anthem and other patriotic songs, “to iame kya Human Rights hoga. Ye to hota hi hai”(what human rights will there be in this?

On asking why CCA had been included in school education, one teacher said that it was important to provide opportunities to the students to develop their overall
personality. He also said that, since the students kept studying all the time, it was a move towards their recreation.

One teacher said that he always participated in the CCA and always took some responsibility on each occasion celebrated in the school. He said that the CCA, in the school, was a very good practice, not only for the learners, but for the teachers, too. He said CCA, if implemented effectively and actively, develops the learners’ personality in a completely different and positive way. Learners and teachers learned how to present themselves.

One said that he felt uncomfortable, sometimes, regarding the activities in CCA. He said that school was a secular place, so, it was not good to worship ‘Sararwati’ and so on. He said non-secular activities dismiss the school’s claim of secularism and this was not right. He said, “hame soch samajh kar gatividhiyon ko chunana chahty.” (We should select activities after giving it good thought). He said that it would be quite tough for the non-Hindu students to feel that they were a part of the school. He, again, mentioned, “aap to jaante hai schools mein ho kya raha hai. Wahi sab chala aa raha hai jo pehle hota tha. Ye badlaav itna asaan nahi hai. School mein teacher ki soch bhi aisi hi ho gayi hai. Kuch naya to padhte nahi, jo kabhi padha tha usi mein ji rahe hai” (you are aware of what is happening in schools. The same things are happening, which used to happen earlier. This change is not that simple, as teachers think on the same lines, they do not want to update themselves, and live with what they had read years ago). He said that there was a strong need for a good framework for CCA in school. Along with this, a quality Orientation Programme was, also, required for school teachers.

One teacher explained the procedure of choosing the activities to be done on any occasion. Responsibilities were divided: one would prepare the students for songs, other for a skit and others for speeches and so on. There is a CCA in-charge in the school and the person wholly responsible for the entire programme taking place under the CCA. After the division of work, the responsibility lay with the concerned teacher, who trained the students and which students would do what, then, became the prerogative of the concerned teacher.

The teachers’ views were that the CCA had very little practical relevance in schools. One said that it sounded good theoretically, but, practically, the same things were
happening again and again and nothing new took place. She, also, said that if any teacher would take the initiative for something, then principal posed a hurdle. She said that they never got enough time to prepare the students for some good programmes. When there was time, the principal allotted work. In such a situation, the teachers could not do much with the CCA. She said, “To be very honest, it is a formality taking place in schools.”

One said that it was a waste of time, the way CCA was being conducted in the school. As a concept, it was good, but the way it was being conducted was inappropriate. All the schools, he said, were doing the same. He said that the CCA was earlier called ECA. He, also, stated that there was no difference in the activities happening now. Still, the school became active during a function or programme otherwise, nothing happened. She accepted that the periods allotted to the CCA were not used appropriately.

One teacher mentioned the importance of the CCA in school. He said that the students gained confidence in the way of presenting themselves before somebody. They, also, developed linguistic skills through such programmes and learned to work in groups. But, he said that nothing like that happened in the school because the CCA needed time. Continuous work and practice needed to be done, and only, then, could the learners be properly helped.

One said that even though there was a fixed schedule for the CCA given by the Directorate, nothing was followed in school. He said that his school participated in inter-school competitions, but rarely won. It was not the students’ problems, but the school was more responsible for this, as sufficient time was not given to them and, so, they (students) were not able to perform properly. He said that the CCA was good for the child’s development, but not in the way it was, currently, being conducted.

Conclusion

This brief report about the CCA observations and an analysis of the interviews, with reference to a human rights perspective, shows that the teachers, strongly, believed that the CCA had the potentiality to develop a positive attitude, but were confused about the actual meaning of CCA. Most of the teachers, as the analysis suggests, were very uncomfortable with the CCA because of lack of time, insufficient orientation,
extra work other than teaching. The teachers showed a very narrow understanding about secularism and so favoured ‘Diwali’ celebrations in school.

The classes allotted for CCA were used by teachers to complete their syllabus. They justified it by saying, “akhir mein padhai hi to kaam aati hai” (ultimately studies helps). The main focus of participating was selective, not participation by all. Some of the teachers said that there was no difference between Extra-Curricular Activities and Co-Curricular Activities, because they were the same. Some of them said that, if the CCA would be removed from school, it would not really affect school education. Forget about a human rights perspective-based CCA, there is a serious problem even of the existence of CCA in schools.