

**The Bhagavad Gita for Values Education in Life
Orientation: Perceptions and Possibilities**

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Promoters: Professor R Sookrajh and Dr V Lutchman

DECLARATION

I, _____ do hereby declare that this dissertation, which is submitted to the university for the degree of Doctor of Education has not been previously submitted by me for a degree at any other university, and all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete reference.

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22 December 2010

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to:

**Pundit Ramluckan Tiwari and Mrs Ramkuar Tiwari
(Paternal graudparents)**

**Pundit Dwarika Tripati and Mrs Kewlapati Tripati
(Maternal grandparents)**

**Pundit Ramnath Ramluckan Maharajh and Mrs Savitridevi Maharajh
(Parents)**

**Mr Maniram and Mrs Minthri Dayaram
(Parents through marriage)**

AND

Nalini (wife)

Vaishnavi (daughter)

Thrudev and Kaarthik (twin sons)

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this research was to determine the role that the teachings of the Bhagavad Gita can play in Values Education in Life Orientation, as perceived by teachers and élite personalities. The Bhagavad Gita as a religious and spiritual text deals with the breakdown of a healthy, competent human being in a very stressful situation and his active confrontation of these challenges. Life Orientation too, requires learners to identify and confront challenges using acquired knowledge, values, skills and strategies. Values, values development and moral resurrection are goals that are common to both the Bhagavad Gita and Life Orientation. The research responds to two critical questions:

- (1) What are educators' perceptions/attitudes of the possible use of the Bhagavad Gita for Values Education in Life Orientation?
- (2) How do these perceptions/attitudes inspire Values Education in Life Orientation?

The analysis has shown that the Bhagavad Gita has contributed to the spirituality of more than half of the teachers in this survey and more than three quarters feel better for having read the Bhagavad Gita. The majority of the teachers consider it very important to focus on values in education in schools and are not in favour of values in education being compartmentalized into one subject. The teacher participants also felt that values development was the joint responsibility of parents, schools and communities. However, teachers are not in favour of referring to a single religious text - they would prefer to draw general information from all religious texts. The participants were unanimous that there are several verses in the Bhagavad Gita that emphasise the qualities of uprightness, simplicity, righteousness, and honesty. In addition, it was found that the Bhagavad Gita could make a positive contribution to the standard of morality in society. The analysis has shown that the Bhagavad Gita has found favour with scholars of other religious denominations. It has been hailed by the participants as a useful resource for Values Education in Life Orientation. The emerging insights of this study are the teacher participants' and élite personalities' understanding of spirituality and the guarded way in which the youth are viewed in society. The thesis that emerges is that the Bhagavad Gita has a deep reservoir of values for Values Education in Life Orientation; however, these values are not being imbued by the youth of today.

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Preface

Introduction

My interest in the Bhagavad Gita goes back to my childhood when as a seven year old child I was introduced to Sanskrit by my late grandfather Pundit Ramluckan Tiwari (who arrived in South Africa from India in 1911). Throughout my adult life I have been actively engaged in the cultural and religious life of the Hindu community in the greater Durban area. My involvement has included the training of Priests, teaching Hindi and Sanskrit, conducting of religious services and congregational worship, the celebration of holy days in the religious calendar and the organisation and administration of religious societies. Having had this background, I became deeply interested in the possibilities the Bhagavad Gita holds for Values Education in Life Orientation. This link between research and other interests is not unusual. According to Ausband (2006), her interest in quilting has influenced her research. She (2006) advises beginning researchers to look around for connections in their lives that can assist their research. My journeys into the verses of the Bhagavad Gita led me to the realisation that there is a reservoir of moral teachings in this magnificent scripture and that this has the potential to assist the values development of learners in schools.

In this preface, I would like to offer some suggestions about how this thesis should be read. I begin by explaining that while I have attempted to remain neutral as a researcher, it was necessary for me to take on a role of advocacy in the writing of the report. I further offer an explanation on Values Education as a discipline and its difference from values in education. In the report writing I have made extensive use of the original Sanskrit verses and their transliterations from the Bhagavad Gita, which will also be explained. The research has also made use of literature that might normally be considered to be “outdated”. However, it was crucial to this study that such texts be used, and I will offer a justification for the use of such texts.

How to Read this Thesis

I would like to admit at the outset that this thesis is not free of researcher advocacy. From time to time, I have taken on the role of advocacy in the presentation and interpretation of the data. Research can be used to inform advocacy efforts or to inform policy deliberations¹. I have advocated for the use of the Bhagavad Gita for Values Education as I believe that this can be a powerful advocacy tool to influence policy makers. Scholars, for some time now, have been making a call for researchers to recognise their own positionality in research (Jackson, 1993). However, I have also at times challenged the Bhagavad Gita as a text. This is evident from the provocative statements that I used in the focus group discussion. In this way, I was also able to maintain a degree of neutrality as a researcher.

In this study, Values Education refers to a discipline within Life Orientation. Values education forms a component of the discipline of Values Education. Values Education refers to the teaching of values and is about educating the learner in universal positive values. Values Education refers to all those processes by which teachers transmit values to learners in Life Orientation. A fundamental aim of Values Education is to promote universal values such as tolerance, love, non-violence and honesty, equity, openness, accountability, social honour (as contained in the Values, Education and Democracy document of the Department of Education in South Africa, 2000). The Bhagavad Gita upholds values of fearlessness, charity, nonviolence, truthfulness, freedom from anger, compassion for all living entities, gentleness, modesty, steady determination, vigor, forgiveness, fortitude, and cleanliness.

The Bhagavad Gita has been translated and commented upon by a great number of luminaries since it became known to human beings some five thousand years ago. It should be noted that the date of the composition of the Bhagavad Gita is not known with certainty (Jeste and Vahia, 2008). According to Zaener (1973), the Bhagavad Gita was written somewhere between the fifth and second centuries BC. Robinson (2005) on the

¹ http://www.npaction.org/article/articleprint/87/-1/{category_id}

other hand maintains that the parent text, the Mahabharata is older and that the Bhagavad Gita was inserted into the Mahabharata around 500 BC. It is not possible to include all these translations and commentaries in this study. I offer an explanation of the translations that I have used in this study.

Several translations and commentaries on the Bhagavad Gita are available (Tilak, 1935/1936²; Aurobindo, 1970³; Sivananda, 1984; Prabhupada, 1986). In this research report, the researcher utilised the translations of Prabhupada from his *Bhagavad-gita As It Is*. However, the choice of Prabhupada's translations had nothing to do with his or other translator's motives in their translations. Prabhupada's translations were chosen purely for practical reasons. His translations are available electronically. This meant that there was easy access to the translations and the Sanskrit. It is true that the several politicians, philosophers and other scholars, who have written translations on the Bhagavad Gita, have done so with some motive in mind. Tilak, a Sanskrit scholar, powerful writer, and nation builder wanted to inspire people to privilege right action over knowledge and devotion. Sivananda (1984), founder and first spiritual head of the Divine Life Society of India, wanted to provide the reader with a translation that was simple and free from sectarianism and dogmatism. Prabhupada (1986) attempted to provide a translation that privileged the will of Krishna, whom he saw as the Supreme Personality of Godhead. However, he does not detract from the fundamental values as espoused in the Bhagavad Gita.

In this research report, extensive use has been made of the Sanskrit verses of the Bhagavad Gita. The verses appear in both the Devanagari script, as well as the transliterated script. The Bhagavad Gita was originally written in Sanskrit verse using the Devanagari script. It was therefore felt that it would be appropriate to include the original verse as they appeared in the Bhagavad Gita some 5000 years ago. The use of the Devanagari script is an attempt to give this report authenticity in terms of pronunciation

² Lokamanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak served as a law lecturer and pleader in Poona (India) and was the author of several books on the Vedas. He has been described as a great Sanskrit scholar, a powerful writer and a nation builder. Even though this source is dated, its use is justified, since the Bhagavad Gita itself is an ancient scripture that is about 5000 years old.

³ An Indian nationalist, freedom fighter, English poet, philosopher and yogi.

and exactness of verses. According to Omniglot,⁴ the Devanagari alphabet descended from the Brahmi script. The word *Devanagari* is made of two Sanskrit words: *deva*, which means god, Brahman, or celestial, and *nagari*, which means city.⁵ Devanagari is therefore variously translated as *script of the city*, *heavenly/sacred script of the city* or *script of the city of the Gods or priests*.⁶

The transliterated script is included so that those who are unable to read the Devanagari script may be able to read the original verse. Transliteration refers to the process of changing letters or words into corresponding characters of another alphabet or language.⁷ The transliteration used in this report was invented in 1912 by the International Alphabet for Sanskrit Transliteration (IAST).⁸ Every verse of the Bhagavad Gita used is accompanied by an English translation. The inclusion of the English translation is to enable all readers to read and understand the verse as it is used in a particular context in the report.

In addition to the Sanskrit verses, transliterations and translations of the Bhagavad Gita, I have made use of the Sanskrit word *Shri* to refer to Krishna and other deities of the Hindu religion. Literally, the title *Shri* means majesty or holiness. When *Shri* is used as a title for one of the deities in this report, it means Lord.

I have also referred to authors and scholars whose works date back to the early and middle 1900s. The Bhagavad Gita is over five thousand years old. It has been commented on by scholars from the East as well as from the West (Sir Charles Wilkins translated the Bhagavad Gita into English in 1785⁹). Due to the ancient character of the Bhagavad Gita, it is justifiable to make reference to books that would normally be considered “outdated”.

⁴ <http://www.omniglot.com/writing/devanagari.htm>

⁵ <http://www.omniglot.com/writing/devanagari.htm>

⁶ <http://www.omniglot.com/writing/devanagari.htm>

⁷ <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/transliterate>

⁸ <http://alanlittle.org/projects/transliterator/translitTable.html>

⁹ <http://www.rci.rutgers.edu/~edbryant>

I have deemed it necessary to provide this brief explanation of how the thesis should be read so that readers would be able to read the report with as little hindrance as possible.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and Context

As stated in the Preface, early encounters with the Bhagavad Gita have been a motivating factor in this research on the perceptions and possibilities of the Bhagavad Gita for Values Education in Life Orientation in South African schools. This study focuses on teachers' and élite personalities' perceptions of the possible use of the Bhagavad Gita for Values Education in Life Orientation.

In this chapter it is argued that the Bhagavad Gita has the potential to contribute to Values Education in Life Orientation in South African schools. The focus of this study will be outlined as well as the rationale for the selection thereof. The chapter begins with a discussion of the challenges facing South Africans in general, but the youth in particular, in which it is argued that the youth are being portrayed in a particular way. This will be followed by a brief discussion of the word *Hindu* and the place of the Bhagavad Gita in Hinduism. A brief explanation of the Life Orientation learning area is then presented. The purpose of this study, a brief overview of the methodology and an overview of the chapters in this study will conclude this chapter.

Since 1994, South African society has been on a path of political, economic, and social transformation. Democracy in South Africa has brought opportunities and challenges. The needs and demands faced by the South African youth in particular offer both problems and possibilities for a successful life in the 21st Century. The youth are confronted by many rival forces that are competing for their attention. While on the one hand they are being challenged by the forces of the technocratic age, they are also on the other hand, being confronted by the problems of HIV/AIDS, sexual and verbal abuse, gender discrimination, racial tensions, and substance abuse, which constitute a serious threat to their identity. Gysbers and Henderson (2000) have indicated that youth worldwide are swiftly changing career and job sectors, are confronted by violence in the

home, school and community, have to deal with familial disintegration and divorce, are considering and committing teenage suicide, are becoming more prone to substance abuse and are experimenting with sexual activities.

Post-apartheid South Africa came with many promises, but the most significant challenges facing children in South Africa are poverty, child abuse and violence, HIV and AIDS, fragmentation of the family unit, loss of caregivers and unsafe environments (The Children's Institute, 2003). The Children's Institute (2003) has reported that many children have been the victims of aggravated assault and rape. According to the Centre for AIDS Development, Research, and Evaluation (2003), many South African females are forced to have sex and are therefore at serious risk of contracting HIV and AIDS. Sexual violence is reaching epidemic proportions (Wood, Maforah & Jewkes, 1996; Human Rights Watch, 2004). Eliasov and Frank (2001) have reported that rape and sexual abuse in schools are alarming. Reddy, Panday, Swart, Jinabhai, Amosun, James, Monyeki, Stevens, Morejele, Kambaran, Omardien and Van den Borne (2003) report that there is an increasing abuse of alcohol by learners. There are also reports of the prevalence of suicidal behaviour among learners in South African schools. Madu and Matla (2003) found that 37% of the learners in Limpopo schools had thoughts of taking their own lives. Reddy *et al* (2003) found in a national survey that 19% of learners considered attempting suicide, 15.8% made plans to commit suicide and 17% attempted suicide.

Mutual respect between teachers and learners, teachers and education authorities as well parents, is starkly absent in education, as is evident by the articles that appear regularly in newspapers. Daily, one finds reports of immoral behaviour on the part of both teachers and learners. In March 2005, Mhlongo¹⁰ reported the concern by police in Durban that there were an increasing number of learners who were carrying weapons and drugs during school hours. According to Makwabe (2009),¹¹ a 13-year-old learner bludgeoned a female teacher with a hammer in the presence of his other Grade 8 classmates. There are

¹⁰ Mhlongo, A. (2005). School, guns, drugs. *Daily News*, 29 March 2005.

¹¹ Makwabe, B. (2009). Life of fear after classroom attack. *Sunday Times*, 17 May 2009.

incidents in the education system of fraud, theft, and misuse of authority being reported on an ongoing basis. For example, Serrao (2008)¹² reports that a teacher was dismissed from the profession for committing subsidy fraud with learner's matriculation examination fees. On 4 November 2010, a student at a secondary school in Gauteng (one of the provinces in South Africa), reported that she was raped by two boys from her school.¹³ However, a few days later the 'rape victim' admitted that she had had consensual sex with the two boys. South African society is marked by violence. Violence is indeed a problem affecting the well-being of learners in KwaZulu-Natal (Zulu, Urbani, Van der Merwe, and Van der Walt, 2004).

These examples make it evident that the youth in South African schools are faced with complex challenges. While they have to become adept at making informed decisions, they will also be expected to protect themselves from abuse. Since the youth are regarded as a precious treasure of a nation, the education given to them should effectively mould and equip them for the tasks of tomorrow. It is extremely significant to education that The World Health Organization (1999) has argued for a programme of life skills in order to protect the youth from the demands of modern life, poor parenting, changing family structures, dysfunctional relationships, and decline of religion. Giroux (2001), however, is concerned that there is a generation of youth being framed as a generation of suspects. According to Giroux (2001: 149), "the growing popular perception of youth as threat to public life is connected to the collapse of public discourse, the increasing militarization of public space, and the rise of state apparatus bent on substituting policing functions for social services". Giroux (2001) makes a call for youth to have recourse to adults who need to understand the problems of youth. It is the contention of this study that the use of the Bhagavad Gita for Values Education in Life Orientation has the potential to address the many challenges facing the youth of South Africa.

¹² Serrao, A. (2008). School in subsidy fraud-fired teacher. *The Star*, 27 October 2008.

¹³ <http://www.africanscene.co.za/2010/11/so-what-is-the-jules-high-school-case-telling-us/>

1.2 The Bhagavad Gita

In this section of the chapter, a brief description of the Bhagavad Gita will be presented. This is imperative since the aim of the study is to determine the possibility of using the Bhagavad Gita for Values Education in Life Orientation. The Bhagavad Gita is reputed to be the most popular and best-known Hindu scripture. The word *Hindu* comes from the Persian word *hind* (Flood, 2005). Flood (2005) states that *Hindu* is in turn derived from the Indo-Aryan word *sindhu* meaning “ocean” or “river”. The Persian authors used the word to distinguish between Muslims and non-Muslims. Later (from the 18th century onwards), the British adopted the word *Hindu* to refer to the people of “Hindustan” – the area of northwest South Asia (Flood, 2003). According to Brockington (1981: 1):

Hinduism has such an incredible variety of expression that one cannot characterize it as a religion in the normal sense for it is neither a unitary concept nor a monolithic structure but rather the totality of the Indian way of life.

Hinduism is not founded by any single prophet or leader nor based on a single scripture (Crompton, 1971; Mishra, 1973; Flood, 2005; Sharma, 2005). Hindu literature consists of *sruti* (revealed literature) and *smriti* (based on recollection and reinterpretation of the primary experiences of the Vedic seers) (Maharajh, 1989). The Vedas¹⁴, the Brahmanas¹⁵, the Aranyakas¹⁶ and the Upanishads¹⁷ are classified as *sruti*, while the law books, the Ramayana¹⁸, the Mahabharata¹⁹, the Bhagavad Gita, the Puranas²⁰ and the Sutras²¹ are regarded as *smriti* (Maharajh, 1989).

¹⁴ There are four Vedas, the Rig Veda, Sama Veda, Yajur Veda and Atharva Veda. The Vedas contain hymns, incantations, and rituals from ancient India.

¹⁵ The *Brahmanas* are specifically ritualistic. They show how to recreate the ritual action of life itself, to portray the cosmic ritual in a few special actions.

¹⁶ The *Aranyakas* or Forest texts are used by those who left society to reside in the forest to gain spiritual knowledge (Vanaprasthas). The Aranyakas do not give us rules for the performance of sacrifices and explanations of the ceremonies, but provide us with mystic teaching of the sacrificial religion.

¹⁷ The Upanishads are a continuation of the Vedic philosophy. They elaborate on how the soul (*Atman*) can be united with the ultimate truth (*Brahman*) through contemplation and meditation, as well as the doctrine of *Karma*-- the cumulative effects of a person's actions.

¹⁸ The Ramayana is the national epic of India. The Ramayana is a moving story with moral and spiritual themes that has deep appeal in India to this day.

¹⁹ The Mahabharata is the national epic of India. The Mahabharata tells the legends of the Bharatas, a Vedic Aryan group.

²⁰ There are eighteen major *Puranas* and a few minor ones. Each is a long book consisting of various stories of the gods and goddesses, hymns, an outline of ancient history, cosmology, rules of life, rituals,

The Bhagavad Gita is the philosophical part of the epic Mahabharata (Parthasarathy, (2008). The Bhagavad Gita is said to incorporate all the ideas expounded prior to its composition, namely, the Upanishadic doctrine of the Supreme Brahman and the Personal God, the Samkhya doctrine as well as the Yoga and Vedanta philosophies. The Bhagavad Gita is a poem presented in the form of a dialogue between Krishna, the God-incarnate and the warrior Arjuna, whose refusal to participate in battle is rooted in attachment. This well-known moral address is intended to instil in the hero a sense of duty for its own sake, that is, without attachment to any rewards, and to help him to disentangle himself from the delusion into which he had fallen. The Bhagavad Gita is one of the three principal texts that define the essence of Hinduism. Tilak (1936: xxxiii), in his book *Gita Rahasya*, states that “the Bhagavad Gita has been regarded from time immemorial as one of the three prasthanas or status books of Indian Philosophy”.

According to Sivananda (1957: 12), the Bhagavad Gita consists of 18 Chapters, divided as follows: the first six deal with action, the second six with devotion, and the last six with wisdom, in keeping with the famous dictum of the Brhadhranyaka Upanishad²², *tat tvam asi (Thou art that)*. Walker (1968: 134) argues that the first section of the Bhagavad Gita points to the need for self-annihilation or the destruction of egoism by self-mortification, ascetism and the ability to see God in all; the second part explains the pantheistic doctrine of Vedanta and the revelation of the Supreme in all his glory, and the last part is an explication of the principles of *Purusha* (God) and *Prakriti* (matter), renunciation and *moksha*. Although critics and commentators are hardly unanimous with regard to the central message of the Bhagavad Gita, the poem itself summarises its teaching when it declares that people of different temperaments can pass beyond death with the aid of the Bhagavad Gita, some by meditation, others by knowledge and yet

instructions on spiritual knowledge. Hence the *Puranas* are like encyclopedias of religion and culture and contain material of different levels and degrees of difficulty.

²¹ In *Hinduism* *sutra* denotes a distinct type of literary composition, based on short aphoristic statements, generally using various technical terms.

²² It is widely known for its philosophical statements, and is ascribed to *Yajnavalkya*. Its name is literally translated as “great-forest-teaching”.

others by imitation, action or worship (Walker, 1968: 134). Sophia Wadia²³ (Tilak, 1936: xii) concurs when she writes:

Thus, the Gita is understood by each thinking soul in his own way, according to his own stage in evolution. To each the Gita offers the solution of his own problems. Thus, any deluded mortal of any community, using the lessons taught can become enlightened and immortal.

Brown (1988: xxx) states that the Bhagavad Gita is essentially a treatise on human conduct and the development of character. According to Hinnels (1972: 32), the truly spiritual person whose conduct is beyond reproach is one of tranquillity and balance. Such a person has transcended the realm of matter with all its apparent contradictions and is no longer obsessed with or agitated by her/his passions and emotions. However, such tranquillity is not to be obtained by withdrawing from the world but by living in a spirit of non-attachment within the world. This is called *karma yoga* or *Nishkama Yoga*. According to the Bhagavad Gita, a person is to undertake actions (*karma*) with an attitude of disattachment (*nishkama*), i.e. without becoming obsessed with results or rewards.

An attempt will now be made to present reasons as to why the Bhagavad Gita was chosen as a possible source for Values Education in Life Orientation.

1.3 Why the Bhagavad Gita?

Olivier cited in Prabhupada (1997: 16), a past Vice Chancellor of the former University of Durban Westville (now University of KwaZulu-Natal), once remarked about the Bhagavad Gita:

The problem, as I see it, is how to get modern man to make an in depth study of what is contained or outlined in this book, especially when he's caught up in an educational system that denies a place for this very concept or even the philosophy of it. There is either complete neutrality or just a simple rejection of these truths.

It would seem that there is indeed great merit in modern people gaining knowledge of the teachings of the Bhagavad Gita. Olivier, quoted above, is alluding to the fact that the

²³ Sophia Wadia was a member of the united lodge of theosophists and the royal asiatic society. She represented India at the International PEN Congress (international writers' congress.)

messages as contained in the Bhagavad Gita need to be made available to school going children of all religious persuasions. It was seen in the previous section that the Bhagavad Gita is a popular Hindu scripture. However, one cannot reject the teachings or messages of the Bhagavad Gita because it is known as a scripture of Hindus. Throughout the Bhagavad Gita, the words *Hindu* or *Sanathan Dharma*²⁴ do not appear. The Bhagavad Gita has become a principal text of Hindus because of its link to the Mahabharata and because Krishna, one of the incarnations of Lord Vishnu²⁵, figures prominently in it. De (2000) comments that the Gita is not a Hindu scripture even though the literal translation of Bhagavad Gita is *The Song of God*. Painadath (2002: 12), a Christian theologian, once wrote:

Though the Bhagavad Gita speaks of the self-embodying of the Divine in the course of history, the book is not written around a concrete historical salvific event or about an incarnate person. It is, rather, a didactic work with a definite vision of God's self-embodying for the sake of human salvation.

Furthermore, one should not reject the message of the Bhagavad Gita as that for Hindus only, since Western interest in Bhagavad Gita began around 18th century and continues to inspire people of all religious persuasions even up to this point in time. Steiner (2007: 1-2) commented thus:

The western world's first acquaintance with this poem came in an age in which there was little understanding for the original clairvoyant sources from which it sprang. Nevertheless, this lofty song of the Divine struck like a wonderful flash of lightning into the Western world so that a man of Central Europe, when he first became acquainted with this Eastern song, said that he must frankly consider himself happy to have lived in a time when he could become acquainted with the wondrous things expressed in it. This man was not one who was unacquainted with the spiritual life of humanity through centuries, indeed through thousands of years. He was one who looked deeply into spiritual life – Wilhelm von Humboldt²⁶, the brother of the celebrated astronomer. Other members of the Western civilization, men of widely different tongues, have felt the same.

²⁴ Hinduism is also known as Sanathan Dharma, which means eternal religion.

²⁵ The peace-loving deity of the Hindu Trinity, Vishnu is the Preserver or Sustainer of life with his steadfast principles of order, righteousness and truth. When these values are under threat, Vishnu emerges out of his transcendence to restore peace and order on earth.

²⁶ His life's work encompasses the areas of philosophy, literature, linguistics and anthropology. He led the Department of Culture and Education at the Prussian Ministry of the Interior. [<http://www.wilhelm-von-humboldt.com>]

What a wonderful feeling it produces in us when we let this Bhagavad Gita work upon us, even in its opening verses.

Such is the popularity and reverence for Bhagavad Gita, that it has been included in the famous collection *Sacred Books of the East* and it also one of the most widely read texts of the world (De, 2000: 6). According to Hunt, Oderberg and Van Mater (1974: 2):

I find myself asking why is it that such an ancient book as the Bhagavad Gita has become so popular today. I think it only proves the strength of the noble teachings that are involved in it, and that these universal principles endure even though they are expressed in different ways in the various philosophic scriptures of the world. What it all comes down to is that it is an intensely practical book, and in many ways one of the most beautiful. It helps us to understand how we can live in society and still make spiritual values the real motivation of our lives. Because what the Bhagavad Gita enjoins is the importance of the inner life; that this is what motivates us, and what motivates all life in the universe.

Painadath (2002) maintains the view that the reading of the Bhagavad Gita can help Christians and seekers of all other religions and all other cultures to discover the mystical dimensions of an integrated spirituality and to realise the transforming presence of the divine Spirit in the universe. Further, Painadath (2002: 9) suggests that during his theological studies the Bhagavad Gita played a critical role in helping him to integrate his Christian faith with the Indian mystical experience as noted in the following citation:

It has been my personal experience that the deeper I went into the mystical experience of the Bhagavad Gita, the clearer the faith-experience of the New Testament became. Both in the Bhagavad Gita and in the New Testament I pick up the message of God's love made manifest through the personal divine Lord and the promise of the transforming grace of the Lord, who leads everything to final fulfilment. Hence, as a Christian, I can listen to the words of the Bhagavad Gita from within the cave of the heart, where God incessantly reveals God self to human beings.

Again, Painadath (2002: 12) has expressed the view that the Bhagavad Gita evokes in the Christian seeker certain dimensions of God-experience that are often forgotten in the Christian communities:

A Christian who enters into the world of the Bhagavad Gita will be able to rediscover this cosmic dimension of the Christic experience of God. This is of special significance today in the global concern to promote an ecological sense based on religious experience.

Given the history of apartheid and discrimination in South Africa, the Bhagavad Gita is useful since it is critical of the existing caste structure and its ambiguous value systems. In it, Shri Krishna talks of a person's station in life being determined by the qualities he/she portrays and not the family or lineage in which one is born. One can extrapolate from here that race, class or gender do not determine one's status in life, but rather that one's station or status is determined by one's usefulness to society as a whole. In short, the Bhagavad Gita, in criticising rigid caste/class structures or artificial divisions in society, is attempting to steer us away from stereotypes and biases.

1.4 Life Orientation

The inclusion of the values of the Bhagavad Gita in the Life Orientation curriculum is useful since an inter-religious dialogue between Bhagavad Gita and the New Testament or any other religious text may lead to an inter-religious dialogue within the seeker.

According to the Department of Education (2005b: 9),

Life Orientation is an interdisciplinary subject that draws on and integrates knowledge, values, skills, and processes embedded in various disciplines...

The Department of Education (2005b: 9) also states that Life Orientation guides and prepares learners for life, and its responsibilities and possibilities. The purpose of Life Orientation is to equip learners with positive values and to guide them towards holistic development. Life Orientation is intended to ensure that a co-operative, balanced, and united world community is established. It is intended to:

...equip learners to engage on personal psychological, neuron-cognitive, motor, physical, moral, spiritual, cultural, socio-economic, and constitutional levels, to respond positively to the demands of the world, to assume responsibilities, and to make the most of life's opportunities. (Department of Education, 2005b: 9).

Life Orientation can play an important role to impart values to learners. With the diminishing role that parents are playing in the lives of the learners, the school and hence teachers, but in particular teachers of Life Orientation, may have to take over the traditional role that parents once played in the inculcating of values and morals in their

children. The importance and benefit of Life Orientation as a medium for values development becomes even more crucial when one considers the number of single parent homes and parentless homes from which learners come.

Life Orientation has the potential to empower learners. According to Curriculum 2005, the learners in the Life Orientation learning area will be enabled to understand and accept themselves as unique and worthwhile human beings and display attitudes and values that improve their relationships in family, groups, and community (Department of Education, 1997: 3).

Life Orientation is made up of what was previously known as guidance, vocational instruction, life skills education, health education, physical education, aspects of environment education, religious instruction (now religion education) and citizenship education. According to Rooth (2005), the new learning area of Life Orientation was taught in apartheid South Africa as separate subjects such as guidance and career education, life skills, health education, environmental education, physical education, citizenship education and religious instruction. The scope of the new learning area of Life Orientation includes a focus on health promotion, personal and social development, physical development, movement, and orientation to the world of work.

The Department of Education (2002: 4) describes the Life Orientation learning area as one that “aims to empower learners to use their talents to achieve their full physical, intellectual, personal, emotional and social potential”. According to the Department of Education (2003: 19), the central focus of Life Orientation is on the development of self-in-society and the vision of Life Orientation “is to facilitate individual growth so as to contribute towards the creation of a democratic society, a productive economy, and an improved quality of life in the community”.

Learners, schools, and communities in South Africa are all affected by crime and violence, sexual abuses, racism, unemployment and environmental degradation. This view is supported by Richter, Brookes, Shisana, Simbayi, and Desmond (2004), who

state that many children in South Africa are at risk of inadequate opportunities for harmonious socialisation in their communities. Lemmer (2002: 65) believes that “the decadence of a materialistic and secularized world where values and norms deteriorate increasingly and adults strive in a self-centred way to achieve material gain and personal gratification contributes to the problem”. The introduction of the Life Orientation learning area by the Department of Education is expected to assist learners to develop a sense of confidence and competence so that they can live well and contribute positively to a new society (Department of Education, 2003).

According to Mosha (2000: 10), “...the entire educational or formational system of indigenous Africa is inspired by this single paradigm: human and cosmic harmony hinges upon human moral living because all facets of the universe are interconnected and interdependent”. The Department of Education, in introducing the Life Orientation learning area, is of the view that it can assist in the development of community humanity. The Life Orientation learning area continuously refers to values in health promotion, life skills education, physical education, citizenship education, environmental education, and religion education (Department of Education, 2002). Asmal²⁷ (Department of Education, 2002: 4) maintains that “the good of our society rests on our ability to integrate all of these values into our definition of ‘South Africanness’”. The integration of values that Asmal talks of can find a place for discussion, expression, and reflection through human rights, citizenship, religion and life skills education within the Life Orientation learning area.

Life Skills education is an important part of the learning area Life Orientation and its aim is to equip learners with the necessary knowledge, skills, attitudes and values for a successful and meaningful life (Theron and Dalzeli, 2006). According to Rooth (2000: 6), “life skills are the non-academic abilities, knowledge, attitudes, and behaviours necessary for successful living and learning and enhance the quality of life and prevent dysfunctional behaviour”. Donald, Lazarus and Lolwana (1999), maintain that life skills refer to those skills, which allow learners to master life situations at home, at school or in

²⁷ Former Minister of Education in South Africa

any other context. In the South African education system, Life Skills education is an integral part of the Life Orientation learning area (Theron and Dalzeli, 2006). The Life Orientation learning area aims to “equip learners with life skills that focus on health promotion and on social, personal, physical and career development” (Theron and Dalzeli, 2006: 399).

In order to assist the personal development of individuals, it is crucial that values are promoted in the education system. Hence, Ngwena (2003) cautions that only the successful implementation of Life Orientation can enhance the practice of positive values by the learner. However, one also needs to take cognizance of the fact that educators are expected to “facilitate different value and belief systems into all learning areas across the curriculum” (Rhodes and Roux, 2004: 26). The role of the educator is integral in values promotion. Educators express those values in the content of their instruction, which they find important (Veugelers, 2000). The content of the Life Orientation learning area is such that educators have to teach values and morals. According to Green (2004: 109), educators view the school as a “moral environment” and their function as giving “moral education”. Yet significantly in research conducted among principals and Life Orientation teachers, it was found that one of the problems preventing the successful implementation of Life Orientation was the lack of proper role models in the teaching staff (Prinsloo, 2007).

One area of concern in the teaching of values in Life Orientation is that of the prescription of values. Porteus (2002) suggests that some of the dangers of the prescriptive approach to values development are, undermining of learner-centredness and critical thinking skills, lapsing into authoritarian teaching styles and hindering the development of a democratic society of informed, participative and critical citizens. It is important for teachers of Life Orientation to be aware of the dangers of the prescriptive approach, especially in the light of the way in which values were imposed on learners during apartheid education.

While educators and the values they hold onto is an important part of Values Education, learners and the values they attach importance to, is also of concern. According to Levinson (2004), one needs to take note of the discrepancy between educators and learners' values. On the one hand, teachers interviewed of their perceptions of Life Orientation implementation, mentioned their struggle to understand the life world of learners from different cultures in one classroom (Prinsloo, 2007). On the other hand, in the same study, principals stated that one of the difficulties in implementing Life Orientation in schools was the learners' lack of a value system (Prinsloo, 2007). In particular, the principals stated that most learners were careless and irresponsible towards themselves and other people. The difference in cultural background of the teachers and learners makes the inculcation of values a challenging task.

1.5 Purpose of the Study

The aim of this study is to investigate the possibilities of the Bhagavad Gita for Values Education in Life Orientation.

According to Bodhananda (2005)²⁸, the Bhagavad Gita as a religious and spiritual text deals with the break down of a healthy, competent human being in a very stressful situation and his active confrontation with these challenges. Life Orientation too, requires learners to identify and confront challenges using acquired knowledge, values, skills, and strategies (Department of Education, 2005b). The acquisition and development of values and moral resurrection are goals that are common to both the Bhagavad Gita and Life Orientation.

This study thus responds to two critical questions:

- What are educators' perceptions of the possible use of the Bhagavad Gita for Values Education in Life Orientation?
- How do these perceptions inspire Values Education in Life Orientation?

²⁸ http://www.sambodh.org/September2004/messages/gita_psychology.htm

The scope of this study is the Bhagavad Gita and its inclusion in Values Education in Life Orientation in South African schools. The focus of this study is on teachers of Life Orientation in primary and secondary schools and selected élite personalities and their views on the Bhagavad Gita and Values Education.

1.6 Overview of the Methodology

The study made use of quantitative and qualitative data collection methods. Questionnaires, interviews, and focus group discussions were used to collect the required data. The data was captured, categorised, analysed, compared, and presented in the format of illustrative figures and narrative interpretations. Details of the research methodology are given in Chapter Three.

1.7 Outline of the chapters in the Study

CHAPTER ONE: In this chapter it is argued that the Bhagavad Gita has the potential to contribute to Values Education in Life Orientation in South African schools. The focus of the study is outlined as well as the rationale for the selection thereof. It includes a discussion of the challenges facing youth in South Africa and then proceeds to provide a brief description of the Bhagavad Gita as a text within Hinduism. The Life Orientation learning area as a new introduction in the school curriculum is explained. The chapter also includes a discussion of the purpose of the study and its critical research questions.

CHAPTER TWO: This chapter includes a brief discussion of postmodernism which forms the theoretical framework of this study. It proceeds to provide an overview of the pluralist, exclusivist and inclusivist paradigms of religion. The chapter presents a review of the literature pertaining to the definition or meaning of values, Values Education and Life Orientation. Thereafter the literature relating to the need for Values Education, the impact of Values Education programmes and the role of teachers in Values Education, are reviewed.

CHAPTER THREE: This chapter presents the methods and processes that were adopted to obtain data for this study. It begins with an outline of the paradigmatic perspective from which this research was conducted. A combination of research approaches was used in this study. The research sites and strategies used to obtain the data, as well as the methods for data analysis, are then described.

CHAPTER FOUR: Chapter Four presents the data analysis. It focuses on teachers' attitudes and perceptions of the Bhagavad Gita as well as the views of the élite personalities on the Bhagavad Gita and Values Education. It thus responds to the aim of this study, which is to determine the possible influence of the Bhagavad Gita for Values Education in Life Orientation.

CHAPTER FIVE: This chapter discusses some of the insights that have emerged from this study. The emerging insights of this study are the teacher participant and élite personalities' understanding of spirituality and the guarded way in which the youth are viewed in society. The thesis that emerges is that the Bhagavad Gita has a deep reservoir of values for Values Education in Life Orientation; however, these values are not being imbibed by the youth.

1.8 Conclusion

This chapter has presented the focus, purpose and critical questions of the study. It has shown that the aim of this study is to determine the possible influence of the Bhagavad Gita for Values Education in Life Orientation. It has presented a brief overview of the challenges faced by the youth. The chapter has also shown that the Department of Education in South Africa has introduced a new learning area of Life Orientation to prepare learners to respond positively to the challenges of the world. In the next chapter, the theory and conceptual framework that informs this study will be presented and discussed. In addition a review of the relevant literature will be presented.

CHAPTER TWO

THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to review the relevant literature relating to values, values in education, Life Orientation and the Bhagavad Gita. Further it intends to explore the possibilities of using the Bhagavad Gita for Values Education in Life Orientation in South African schools. The chapter begins with a brief discussion of postmodernism, which forms the theoretical framework of this study. It then proceeds to provide an overview of the pluralist, exclusivist and inclusivist paradigms of religion. While these paradigms are rooted in the field of Christian faith theory, the choice of the pluralist paradigm is adapted to argue for an open dialogue of enrichment, sharing and cooperation in the use of the Bhagavad Gita for Values Education in Life Orientation. The chapter then presents a review of the literature pertaining to the definition or meaning of values, values in education and Life Orientation. It subsequently reviews the literature relating to the need for values in education, the impact of values in education programmes and the role of teachers in values in education. In the following section, the focus will be on the definitions or explanations of values and values in education.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

The main purpose of this section of the chapter is to establish the theoretical framework that underpins the research on the Bhagavad Gita and Values Education in Life Orientation. There will be an explanation of the concept *postmodernism*, followed by a discussion of the pluralist paradigm (as derived from public theology), as this is central to the research. The pluralist paradigm is an appropriate choice as a theoretical framework for this thesis, as it stresses that dialogue needs to be free of superiority or chauvinism and characterised by mutual enrichment, sharing, and cooperation (D'Costa, 1986). It is further beneficial as it offers a framework for a positive appraisal of the Bhagavad Gita (as non-Christian scripture). A further strength of the pluralist paradigm is that "in all

ultimate matters, truth lies not in an either-or but in a both-and" (Smith, 1972: 17). A critique of the different theories and perspectives on values in education will be also included in this section. The next section will present an explanation and relevance of the postmodern theoretical framework. Postmodernism as a theoretical framework is useful for this study as it "argues that the belief that one particular culture's view of the world is universally true is a politically convenient assumption but it has no firm intellectual basis"²⁹. The use of postmodernism as a theory further enhances this study because it steps away from modernism by focusing on meaning. For example, supporters of postmodernism began to ask questions such as: How does a text mean what it intends to convey?

2.2.1 Postmodernism – "there is no centre"

The Enlightenment period gave rise to a belief that reality can be understood through scientific models of inquiry (Meban, 2002). According to Lyotard (1984), Doll (1993) and Schiralli (1999), the scientific perspective to understanding reality has given way to a postmodern view that emphasises the social forces that shape human behaviour and understanding and questions the possibility of absolute truths. Postmodernism is not just a philosophical movement. It is found also in architecture, the graphic arts, dance, music, literature and literary theory (von Recum, 1990; Beck, 1993). In general, postmodernism challenges convention; encourages the mixing of styles and the tolerance of ambiguity; emphasises diversity and acceptance of innovation and changes. The aim of this study is to encourage the use of the Bhagavad Gita for Values Education in Life Orientation. Postmodernism with its aforementioned characteristics resonates well with the aim of this study.

One of the central features of postmodernism is that there is no centre. Jacques Derrida, a French philosopher whose work originated the method of deconstruction³⁰, has been very suspicious of philosophy's attempts to search for the absolute pure, un-compromised,

²⁹ kabeerspeakz2u.blogspot.com

³⁰ Deconstruction is an important intellectual tool in postmodern philosophy. It is a provocative method aimed at discovery and discovering ourselves. According to Levy (1988: 6), deconstruction has brought about a pivotal change in the method of reading literary philosophical and religious texts. It removes any sign of a 'fixed sense' from both literature and criticism.

unmediated foundation of human knowledge. Deconstruction is a tool in postmodernism. Derrida has been highly critical of the foundationalism of Western Philosophy and in particular that of structuralism. Structuralism maintains that "any concept of structure entails an implicit notion of a centre or fixed origin to all aspects of the structure which lies outside the structure itself but guarantees it" (Jowers, 1989: 79). When one looks at the history of Western Philosophy, one observes that it has been a substitute of one centre by another centre. Philosophies may have changed over the centuries, but the concept of a centre or origin has always remained. Centre, origin, or foundation refers to an idea from which we explain everything else. For example, the centre for the Marxists has been economics and for feminists it has been women. The problem with a foundation or centre is that one centre in philosophy replaces another - one theory replaces another and in this process, other theories become marginalised. The position that Derrida is arguing for is well captured in the following statement: "...the absence of the transcendental signified extends the domain and the play of signification infinitely." (Derrida, 1978: 280). In other words, if we think about the world in which there is no centre, the extent of play and meaning becomes infinite. The possibility of theories becomes endless, that is to say, that we start to think laterally. Postmodernism with its tool of deconstruction and its rejection of a foundation or centre is an appropriate theory for this study. Religious texts may be considered as un-deconstructable, since in many religions these texts are the 'word of God'. While Derrida may not support the religious idea of an "ultimate reality", his method of deconstruction can be very useful in the pursuance of this ultimate reality.

Deconstruction with its multiple layers of meaning at work in language enables one to carve out one's own path to the eternal abode. It allows an individual to interpret (and even criticize) religious texts in as many ways as possible, until the one path which fits in with a person's propensities and world view is found. According to Derrida (1978), one consequence of deconstruction is that the text may be defined so broadly as to encompass not just written words but the entire spectrum of symbols and phenomena. This means that the text speaks not merely the mind of the author but the context of which the author is a part. This gives a different reason from deconstructive postmodernism for finding more in a text than the author sought to put there. In this way deconstruction of the

Bhagavad Gita for Values Education allows different people to interpret it in as many ways as possible. Hence, the earlier point that postmodernism resonates well with the aim of this study.

The use of the Bhagavad Gita for Values Education has further merit when one considers that in postmodernism, non-Western traditions of scholarships are equal to the Western traditions and that they too have a contribution to make to knowledge production (Beck, 1993). Beck (1993), explains further that the postmodern idea of knowledge is that it is the product of an interaction between ideas about the world and experience of the world.

As alluded to in the introduction of this chapter, the Christian faith theory of pluralism has been adopted and adapted as a theory for this study on the Bhagavad Gita and values in education. The intention is to use this Christian faith theory of pluralism to understand the views of the teacher participants and the élite personalities on religion and in particular the Bhagavad Gita. Pluralism, as a theory, resonates with the characteristics of the postmodernism. The next section will present an explanation and relevance of the pluralist paradigm.

2.2.2 The Pluralist Paradigm – Multiple Ways of Knowing

According to D'Costa (1986)³¹, there are three main points of view regarding religion. One is exclusivism, which holds that there is salvation only for Christians. According to Hick (1980)³², Hick and Hebblethwaite (1980) and D'Costa (1986), exclusivism in public theology means that there is no salvation outside the Church. This paradigm is not suitable as a theoretical framework for this thesis because it supports a mono-faith approach to the curriculum. A strategy, related to the paradigm of exclusivism, and utilised for values teaching is religious monopolism (Stephenson, Ling, Burman and Cooper, 1998). Such a model is inappropriate for the teaching of values in education in a

³¹ Professor of Catholic Theology at University of Bristol, Great Britain from 2002 to 2006.

³² Professor of Theology and Religion who made significant contributions to religious pluralism.

pluralistic society, as it is viewed as occurring only within the framework of religious beliefs.

The second paradigm is inclusivism, which maintains that although salvation is by definition Christian salvation, it is nevertheless in principle available to all human beings. Karl Rahner (1984) expressed the inclusivist view by saying that good and devout people of other faiths may, even without knowing, be regarded as “anonymous Christians”. According to Rahner (1984), the inclusivist paradigm does not reject anything that is true and holy in other religions. In the view of inclusivism, while other religions are accepted as a means of salvation, Christianity is the best or perfect means. According to this view, the Bhagavad Gita as a religious text will be regarded as important in enhancing the salvation of humans, but it will not be the best or perfect text to do this. The inclusivist view may also accept the Bhagavad Gita as a text for Values Education in Life Orientation, but once again this will not be regarded as the best or perfect text to enhance the development of values in people in general and in learners in particular.

The third position is pluralism which states that the great world faiths, including Christianity, are valid spheres of salvation (D’Costa, 1986). This research study adopts a pluralist theoretical framework in that it calls for an open and tolerant outlook towards the possible use of the Bhagavad Gita for Values Education in Life Orientation. While acknowledging the important place and contribution of other major religious texts such as the Bible, Torah and Quran, this study argues for a legitimate place for the Bhagavad Gita in the Values Education curriculum of Life Orientation. A pluralist perspective of the possibilities of the Bhagavad Gita opens the opportunity for honest and open dialogue between people of different faiths at different levels of engagement.

This point is re-enforced by Patel and Meyer, (2010: 2), who stated that pluralism is “the active engagement of diversity to a constructive end”. They add further that this definition of pluralism can be further broken down into the three essential components of (1) respect for individual identity, (2) mutually inspiring relationships, and (3) common action for the common good (Patel and Meyer, 2010). Respect for individual identity

means that people can bring in their full identities in any dialogic situation. This component of pluralism requires a person to acknowledge the perspective of others is as precious to them as it is to the person. In arguing for the use of the Bhagavad Gita for Values Education, this study has adopted the 'respect the identity' component of pluralism. In other words, a learner of any religious or non-religious perspective should feel comfortable with the values expressed in the Bhagavad Gita. The second component of pluralism creates the space for real conversations about disagreements and differences, "with a sense that each side gains from the conversation and relationship (Patel and Meyer, 2010: 2). The third component means that relationships should be built within communities, and not just between individuals (Patel and Meyer, 2010). Adopting a pluralistic attitude towards the use of the Bhagavad Gita for values in education has the potential to create tolerant individuals and to transform communal relations in a diverse society.

Pluralism has also been defined by Pratt (2007: 106) as "more than one" or "there are many things". Pratt (2007) then refers specifically to epistemic pluralism, which suggests that there are many systems of knowledge or ways of knowing. Such an epistemic pluralist framework is relevant for this study, as it aims to present one possible way in which values in education can be taught at South African schools. Eastern philosophies (including Hinduism) have come to terms with the provisional nature of knowledge. Eastern philosophies can deal in their own postmodernism without having to give up their ideas of reality and truth. So for example, the Bhagavad Gita declares different paths to the ultimate reality or truth, depending upon what works for the individual. According to the Bhagavad Gita, there are three paths to self-realization – *gyan yoga* (path of knowledge), *bhakti yoga* (path of devotion) and *karma yoga* (path of selfless action). Radhakrishnan (1948) states that individuals are free to choose whichever path best fit their propensities. The Bhagavad Gita, like pluralism and postmodernism, deals in multiple ways of knowing, without marginalizing any way or method.

According to D'Costa (1986), John Hick has been regarded as one of the early proponents of the pluralist paradigm. Hick defended his pluralist outlook based on the

Ptolemaic and Copernican explanations. The Ptolemaic astronomers maintained that the earth is at the centre of the universe. This was eventually replaced by the Copernican view that the sun was at the centre of universe. Similarly, Hick rejected the 'Ptolemaic theology' that Christ was at the centre of the universe and accepted the idea that God is the centre of the universe. In this astronomical analogy, God is the sun, the originative source of light and life, while all religions reflect in different ways (Hick, 1980; Hick and Hebblethwaite, 1980 and D'Costa, 1986). Hick (1977: 131) has argued that "we say as Christians that God is the God of universal love, that he is the Creator and Father of all mankind, that he wills the ultimate good and salvation of all men". This therefore leads Hick to ask the question: how can salvation be available to a small minority only? This is the argument that has led to Hick's Copernican revolution in Christian theology (D'Costa, 1986), and to his conclusion (1977: 141) that, "all major world religions can now be seen as encounters from different historical and cultural standpoints with the same divine reality and thereby acknowledged as equally effective and equally valid paths to salvation".

Thus, the pluralist paradigm is also closely linked to the consensus pluralism strategy suggested by Stephenson et al (1998) as a strategy for values in education. Hill (1991: 28) states:

The aim is to make students aware of the human quest for ultimate justifications and able to dialogue with persons of different persuasion without feeling threatened or hostile, while at the same time working with them to make the democratic community function morally. It is clear that, in this model, values education, so-called, is neither religious studies nor moral education alone, but embraces both...It requires that students develop a critical awareness of the value domain and assume personal responsibility for the values they embrace.

According to Stephenson et al (1998), the consensus pluralism strategy is most suited to a democratic society. This strategy also requires a curriculum that "reflects values obtained through community negotiation and consensus regarding values and principles which are necessary in order to maintain a secular, democratic, and pluralist society (Stephenson et al, 1998: 14).

As is evident from the aforementioned, postmodernism, with its intellectual tool of deconstruction, as well as the pluralist paradigm creates an appropriate framework to

study values and Values Education within a context of Life Orientation. The next section, therefore considers the different perspectives of Values Education.

2.3 Values and Values Education as a Conceptual Framework

2.3.1 Values – A Hot Topic!

According to postmodernism, one cannot talk of purity of cultural values, since all value systems can coexist without being regarded as contradictory. The concept value is critical to this study. In the section to follow, a review of the literature on values will be presented.

Values are a hot topic! In fact, values have been such a hot topic that for years schools and educators have refused to touch them. (Galletti, 1999: 1)

What then are *values*? In the following sections the concept value, as contained in the literature, will be examined. The primary concern of this study is the possible use of the Bhagavad Gita for Values Education in Life Orientation. It is therefore critical that the literature relating to the explanation of values is reviewed.

The literature on values indicates that the definition of values has been confusing and conflicting. Historically the definition of values has changed. Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900) used values as meaning to value or to esteem something (cited in Heenan, 2000). Nietzsche's use of the word *values* was a revolution against the use of virtues (Heenan, 2000). The sociologist, Max Weber, introduced the word values into the vocabulary of modern society. Thus, values came to signify subjectivity and relativity. In other words, values became whatever the individual subjectively considered to be right or important at a particular time and circumstance. In the sections to follow, an elaboration of these definitions by different researchers will be presented.

These span the ideas from Nietzsche to Weber, as suggested by the Department of Education (2000a). They have defined values to include the desirable qualities of honesty, integrity, diligence, responsibility, compassion, altruism, justice and respect. Values, according to Nieuwenhuis (2007), is a fundamental concept in the fields of philosophy, education, psychology and the social sciences. The word *value* has its roots in the Latin *valere* – that for which it is worth striving. Nieuwenhuis (2007: 9) explained this further:

In a moment when the individual is confronted with a reality to which he or she must respond, values place an imperative on the individual to act in a manner consistent with that which he or she regards as worth striving or living for and that the individual sees as worth protecting, honouring and desiring.

Similar views were expressed in India's national newspaper, *The Hindu* (2002)³³, when it said that values refer to objects and ideas that we cherish and consider desirable. Hill (1991) agrees that values refer to beliefs to which individuals attach special priority or worth. Wringle (1998: 281) concurs when he states: "...in positive terms, our values are our judgments of approval, our pro attitudes towards the abilities, qualities and behaviours we think worthy of admiration, praise or emulation or with which we wish to identify ourselves".

However, values are more than belief. It also incorporates the worthiness of a norm or a principle embedded in a person, a group, a religion or a belief system (van Niekerk, 1999). This view is supported by Carr (1993: 33), who maintains that values are "principled preferences" and not merely expression of arbitrary liking or approval. Similarly, Halstead (1996) defines values as principles, fundamental convictions, ideals, standards or life stances, which act as general guides to behaviour or as reference points in decision-making or the evaluation of beliefs or actions. According to Muller (2004), values are conceptions of the desirable that guide behaviour over the long term. The European Values Study, according to Halman (2001), used approximations of this definition of values. It can be seen that values have a heuristic nature: they enable

³³ <http://www.hindu.com/thehindu/quest/200205/stories/2002051100420300.htm>

individuals to find things out for themselves. It can be seen from the above authors that values are desirable traits that guide behaviour.

In terms of moral beliefs and attitudes, values have been defined as either personal preferences or objective principles (Bajjnath, 2008). Preferences are subjective and principles are objective. Values such as having a big house or driving in a luxury car are examples of preferences. The objective principle refers to values that are “something to be”, for example, to be a person with good character. In this study, the objective principles conception of values is being used, as the purpose of this study is to look for possibilities of using the Bhagavad Gita to bring about people of exemplary character.

Bajjnath (2008) refers to two expressions of values – fundamental and contextual. This study will incorporate fundamental values. According to Bajjnath (2008), universal values such as love, tolerance, non-violence, fairness and equity are values at the fundamental level, while political, racial, cultural, and gender inform the values at a contextual level. This study focuses on the fundamental values of equity, tolerance, openness, accountability, social honour (as contained in the Values, Education and Democracy document of the Department of Education in South Africa, 2000). The study also focuses on the following fundamental values contained in the Bhagavad Gita: fearlessness, purification of one’s existence, cultivation of spiritual knowledge, charity, self-control, austerity; simplicity, nonviolence, truthfulness, freedom from anger, renunciation, tranquility, aversion to fault finding, compassion for all living entities, freedom from covetousness; gentleness, modesty, steady determination, vigour, forgiveness, fortitude, cleanliness, and freedom from envy and from the passion for honour.

According to Kim Suh and Traiger (1999), the parent as well as society has responsibility to educate children to take personal responsibility for their actions. They argue further, however, that schools and the schools’ curricula should also support parental teaching of character and of moral decision-making. Values Education has come to be considered a moral initiative undertaken by schools. However, it is evident from the literature that

there exist conflicting value systems for formal education. This will be discussed in the next section.

2.3.2 Conflicting Value Systems

In this section on the conceptual framework that has informed this study, a discussion of the implications of conflicting value systems for formal education will be presented. In addition, theoretical perspectives or discourses on Values Education will be discussed.

Van Niekerk (1999: 4) has identified a range of conflicting value systems, which make the task of education difficult. They are official and non-official values, conflicting value systems of adults and children, different backgrounds and different value preferences, traditional and contemporary value systems and modern and postmodern value systems. A brief explanation of each system is presented below.

- Official and non-official values

Official values are those values contained in school policy documents and the non-official values are those values deduced from real-life observations. Teachers as well as learners need to be aware of the 'underlying values systems and the split between the official and non-official set of values' (van Niekerk, 1999: 5).

- Conflicting value systems of adults and children

Badenhorst (1993: 407) has asserted that ever since cultures entered stages of transition, children have questioned their parents' values. An example of this is the values of youth during the Apartheid struggle in South Africa and that of their parents during that same time. While the parents objected to their children abandoning their education, the youth wanted to establish a socialist order before embarking on a different kind of education (van Niekerk, 1999).

- Different backgrounds and different value preferences

Van Niekerk (1999) says that a person's background and exposure to different lifestyles have led to more differences in value systems and attitudes.

- Traditional and contemporary value systems

People who have not had the opportunity to share their views with others tend to think along traditional lines. Waldrop (1992: 351-352) has written that “cultural diversity will be just as important in a sustainable world as genetic diversity is in biology. We need cross-cultural ferment”.

- Modern and postmodern value systems

According to this viewpoint, there is no such a thing as purity of cultural values – all value systems can coexist without being regarded as contradictory. One advantage of postmodernism is that a plurality of models is accepted as legitimate.

The aforementioned explanation of conflicting value systems makes one aware that the introduction of Values Education based on the teachings of the Bhagavad Gita cannot be conceptualized in a linear way, but that it has to be looked at in a non-linear way with a multiplicity of models and contexts.

The wider review of the literature shows that there are at least sixteen separate values education approaches or discourses³⁴. Based on these discourses, the National Framework for Values Education in Australian Schools differentiated these 16 Values Education discourses in terms of their orientation to education. The education orientations are conservative, liberal, critical, and postmodern Values Education discourses (Hoepper, Henderson, Hennessey, Hutton and Mitchell, 1996; Gilbert, 2004).

According to Jones (2009) in the conservative orientation to education, schools and teachers adopted an authoritative approach to values. He continues that the conservative values approach may be based on religious or secular conceptions of morality. Jones (2009: 38) states:

In all cases, values frameworks are predetermined by an exterior force – an authority – whether derived from the natural order of the universe, an omnipotent creator, or politically or culturally determined.

Students have no bearing on these values, and are not actively afforded opportunities to experiment with alternative or resistant options, analysis or reframing of their morality.

³⁴ Religious monopolism, values inculcation, character education, citizenship civics education, confluent education, *laissez faire*, moral development, values clarification, caring community, cultural heritage, peace education, social action, discursive school, ethical inquiry, values analysis and values stimulation.

Some of the methods used in conservative Values Education are direct teaching, teacher modelling and the use of rules (Jones, 2009). Some of the Values Education approaches related to this educational orientation are character education, civics and citizenship education, religious monopolism and values inculcation (Jones, 2009).

The second orientation to education is the liberal orientation. According to Kemmis, Cole and Suggett (1983), this orientation looks at the whole student in preparation for life rather than work. Jones (2009: 41) explains that according to this orientation, “students understand and engage somewhat with valuing processes and aspects of society in need of reform”. However, students are encouraged not to radically change beliefs and practices. The methodologies included in such an orientation are individual and group work, discussion and self-analysis. Jones (2009) links the Values Education approaches of confluent education, moral development, *laissez faire*³⁵, and values clarification with the liberal Values Education discourse.

Kemmis et al (1983) believe that the critical orientation to education aims to engage students more actively in social issues and action. Jones (2009) further elaborates that this educational orientation gives students an opportunity to recreate actively society’s knowledge and values. Unlike the liberal discourse, this discourse encourages radical changes to beliefs and practices. Those Values Education approaches that adopt this orientation are based on critical theories such as feminist morality (Gilligan, 1982; Noddings, 1984), and ecoactivism/passivism (Harris, Morrison and Reagan, 2002). All these approaches however, are student-centred with teachers acting as facilitators.

The conservative orientation to Values Education as well as the liberal orientation to Values Education is incongruent for this study on the Bhagavad Gita and Values Education, as it does not cohere with the postmodern idea of freedom of choice. Neither does it fit in with the pluralistic idea of dialogue free from superiority and chauvinism. While the critical orientation to Values Education may seem appropriate as a theory for

³⁵ This means ‘leave to do’. A colloquial translation would be ‘let them get on with it’.

the teaching of the Bhagavad Gita values in Life Orientation, the most appropriate theory is that of the postmodern orientation.

According to Jones (2009: 42), “the postmodern orientation is the most recent, and involves a critique of notions of truth and reality”. Jones (2009) further elaborates that in this discourse, multiple perspectives on knowledge is encouraged. Furthermore, students are encouraged to deconstruct and co-construct values in a self-reflexive way.

Having presented above the conceptual framework that has informed this study on the possible use of the Bhagavad Gita for Values Education in Life Orientation, the chapter proceeds to discuss the concept of Values Education.

2.3.3 Values Education

In this section, an outline, description and definition of Values Education will be presented. According to the National Framework for Values Education in Australian Schools (NFVEAS, in Jones, 2009), Values Education is a school-based activity intended to promote understanding and knowledge of values. Others such as Kirschenbaum (1977), Robb (1994) and Aspin (2002) have defined Values Education as a subgroup of moral education approaches promoting valuing skills or processes. Values Education is also used interchangeably with moral and character education (Metcalf, 1971; Hill, 1991; Halsted and Taylor, 2000; Wilson, 2000). This study has defined Values Education in its broadest sense as an umbrella term that includes all categories of values in education (Nucci, 1982; Beck, 1998; Mikulics, 1998; Taylor, 2000; Curriculum Corporation, 2003).

The Curriculum Corporation (2003) in Australia reported that in the past decade Values Education policies have become increasingly prominent in western countries. According to Taylor (2000), Values Education is now a legislative requirement in England. In the USA, the character education programmes (similar to Values Education) is supported by federal government grants and policies (De Roche and Williams, 1998; Smagorinsky and Taxel, 2004). The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization

(UNESCO), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the Baha'i community have also developed many values and character education programmes (Curriculum Corporation, 2003).

In a Values Education Survey (2003) which was conducted in Australian schools, the study showed that Values Education needed to address the following domains:

- Articulating the school's values in its mission/ethos;
- Developing learner's responsibility in local, national and global contexts;
- Incorporating values into all school policies and practices, including teaching programmes across key learning programmes.

Powney, Cullen, Schlapp, Glissov, Johnstone and Munn (1995) have asserted that values do not involve beliefs only, but also understanding, feelings and behaviour. In a broad sense, Values Education involves all aspects of the process by which teachers transmit values to learners. Values Education encompasses all the formal and informal means by which values may be transmitted in schools. Values Education needs to focus not only on the cognitive domain, but also on the social and emotional, which also encompasses the character of a person. Mahatma Gandhi regarded character building as the proper foundation for the education of the young and had no doubt in his mind, if the foundation was firmly laid, the children could learn all the other things by themselves (cited in Bourai, 1993). Former President of South Africa, Nelson Mandela, expressed similar views when he stated: "One of the most powerful ways of children and young adults acquiring values is to see individuals they admire and respect exemplify those values in their own being and conduct" (Mandela, 2001: 2). This argument is supported by Ryan and Bohlin (1999) who said that building character requires the addressing of the cognitive, the emotional and the behavioural – the head, the heart and the hand. According to D Bruce Lockerbie (cited in Ryan and Bohlin, 1993: 95):

It's not information, data, or facts alone I seek and try to convey; it's wisdom in dealing with these facts and wisdom in applying these facts to my dealings with nature and human nature. I'm not as interested in dispensing knowledge on how to make a living as I am in helping young people learn how to make a life...A little knowledge is a dangerous thing, but a lot of knowledge without character means disaster.

The above quotation refers to character. Character education describes the general curriculum and organisational features of schools that promote the development of fundamental values in children at school (Coeyman, 2000; Petersen and Skiba, 2001). Character education could include education in civic virtue and in the qualities that teach children the forms and rules of citizenship in a just society and secondly, education in personal adjustment, chiefly in the qualities that enable children to become productive and dependable citizens (Peterson and Skiba, 2001). In this study, Values Education also includes the notion of character education. A brief survey of character education as it pertains to Values Education follows.

2.3.4 Crisis of Character

According to Ryan and Bohlin (1993), there is rampant drug abuse, teenage pregnancies, lying, cheating and stealing in most parts of the world. There is crime and violence everywhere and unethical behaviour in business, the professions and government. There is a crisis of character. This, Ryan and Bohlin (1993) conclude is the bad news. The good news they say, is that we know what to do about it: get back to the core values in our homes, schools, business, government and in our daily lives. Haydon (1999) warns that education systems that concentrate relentlessly on raising standards of literacy and numeracy might be in danger of leaving something out.

As alluded to by Ryan and Bohlin (1993), one of the ways in which the decline of morals can be stemmed or even alleviated, will be through the introduction of Values Education. Education has degenerated into a process of information transmission. The sole objective of education has become passing of examinations. Values Education is therefore an attempt to achieve effectively the objectives of education – the development of social, moral, aesthetic and spiritual side of a person's personality.

Kim Suh and Traiger (1999) report that in a national survey of forty thousand teenagers conducted by the USA Weekend, eighty percent thought that values should be taught in

schools. Kim Suh and Traiger argue further that the mass media with its gratification of sex and violence has inundated immature minds with examples of poor behaviour and immoral character. They therefore make a call to schools to take a more active role in the teaching of values, since other institutions (such as families and religious organisations) are failing to meet their responsibilities. Heenan (2000) asserts that the implementation of an effective Values Education would help to develop civil and caring communities; reduce negative learner behaviour; improve academic performance and prepare young people to be responsible citizens and productive members of society.

According to UNESCO (1995: 7), "education is the most powerful lever for promoting tolerance, understanding, dialogue, and respect for diversity, human rights and democratic principles". The aforementioned statements on the role of education make it important for schools and teachers to promote Values Education. Miller and Sessions (2005) have asserted that the way to promote acceptance and respect for differences is for schools to include well-developed tolerance and diversity education programmes.

The declining state of morality in South Africa warrants that Values Education becomes an integral part of the curriculum. Baijnath (2008) suggests that during the Apartheid era in South Africa, there was little or no tolerance for minority groups. It therefore becomes critical that the education system in South Africa at present includes values such as tolerance and respect so that a democratic and harmonious nation is created. In this regard, Miller and Sessions (2005) state that Values Education should create opportunities for people to make decisions about when and under what conditions they should exercise tolerance or self-restraint.

The chapter will now proceed to outline some of the studies that have been done on Values Education programmes in countries such as the United States of America, England, Scotland, India and South Africa. The next section begins with a description of some non-formal studies conducted in the United States of America, and then includes a discussion of more formal studies such as that of the Living Values Education

Programme in England and the Sathya Sai Education Human Values Programme in India, United States of America and Africa.

2.3.5 The End of Education is Character

According to Walters (1997), five years after the Dayton Public Schools in Ohio introduced character education, it was found that children's behaviour had improved and that test scores rose. Weinberger (1993) also reports that after the introduction of character education programmes at Jefferson Junior High in Washington, there was a notable decline in thefts, fights and absenteeism. Ferguson and Barovick (1999: 69) reported the following regarding the Fort Foote Elementary school in Washington: "Before character education came in, kids were hostile, had bad attitudes and were very rude to classmates and adults. Now it's 100% better". The results of these studies on character education indicate a positive effect on the behaviour of learners at schools in Ohio and Washington. However, much of the evidence provided in these studies is anecdotal in nature, and not based on formal studies to gauge the impact of Values Education programmes.

The Living Values Programme (Arweck and Nesbitt, 2004) is an educational programme that seeks to provide guiding principles and tools for the development of the person. This programme has also been described as a comprehensive Values Education programme and as having a global character (Arweck and Nesbitt, 2004). The Living Values programme is endorsed by UNESCO, sponsored by the Spanish Committee of UNICEF and the Brahma Kumaris (Arweck and Nesbitt, 2004). The programme has its roots in an international project started by the Brahma Kumaris in 1995 (Arweck and Nesbitt, 2004). According to the Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University (BKWSU, 1995), the project focused on twelve universal values³⁶. The Living Values programme was a response to a call for values in a world in which children are affected by violence, social problems and lack of respect for one another. According to Tillman and Hsu (2000), the

³⁶ Peace, Respect, Love, Tolerance, Honesty, Humility, Cooperation, Responsibility, Happiness, Freedom, Simplicity and Unity.

designers of the Living Values programme consider teaching of values to children as part of the solution to the aforementioned problems. Arweck and Nesbitt (2004) conducted research on four primary schools, which had adopted the Living Values Programme. In these schools it was found that values were explicitly referred to in assemblies, in specific value lessons (physical, social and health education) and sometimes in school council meetings (Arweck and Nesbitt, 2004). According to the children spoken to by the researchers, they appreciated the values and found that values make them behave well. Arweck and Nesbitt (2004: 255) draw the following conclusion on the Living values programme in the four primary schools studies:

Each school uses values education in a way which helps to meet the statutory requirement to provide a daily act of collective worship and to promote children's spiritual, moral, cultural and social development on the one hand and fits the particular social context which the school is embedded in on the other hand.

An interesting feature of the findings of the research conducted by Arweck and Nesbitt (2004) is that there was nothing in the Living Values Programme, which was influenced by either Hinduism or Brahma Kumaris teachings. It is not necessary for anyone working with the Living Values programme to have any knowledge of Hinduism or Brahma Kumaris background or provenance.

A programme similar to the Living Values Programme is The Sathya Sai Education in Human Values (SSEHV) Programme. The SSEHV was introduced in India by the Sathya Sai Organization (SSEHV, 1995). According to Burrows (1988), the SSEHV programme introduced universal values back into the school systems so that the destructive habits adopted by many children could be reduced. The aim of the SSEHV programme is to enable schools to create an educational environment from which children can emerge as strong, healthy and wise individuals (Bajjnath, 2002). According to Bajjnath (2002), the SSEHV programme exists as a community value education programme providing free classes for children out of school hours, as well as a Values Education programme through teachers. In the following paragraphs, a report on studies of the SSEHV programmes in the United States, Zambia, India and South Africa is presented.

In 2000, Marantz conducted a case study of the SSEHV Programme in public schools in New York, Chicago and San Diego. Eighty percent of the teachers were optimistic that they could inculcate values education into their teaching techniques. Similarly, Manchishi (2000) conducted a study of the impact of the SSEHV Programme in Zambia in 1998. This study concluded that the SSEHV Programme had a positive impact on learners, teachers and parents. A similar study on the impact of SSEHV Programmes was conducted in 18 schools in Mumbai by Aswani and Pitre (2000). The main findings of this research were: (1) schools showed very good competency in Values Education, (2) learners reacted positively to value-based inputs from teachers, and (3) teachers across the schools were equally motivated and committed. In 2002, Baijnath conducted a study of the impact of SSEHV Programmes on primary school learners in Durhan, South Africa. The study showed that the SSEHV Programme was effective in bringing about character development in the learners.

While the previous two programmes presented above are associated with two neo-religious movements (Brahma Kumaris and Sathya Sai Organisation), the following research on Values Education in primary schools in Scotland was conducted by Powney et al (1995) and is not linked to any generic programme. These researchers set out to (1) explore the kinds of values taught, either explicitly or implicitly and (2) investigate teachers, learners' and parents' perceptions of Values Education. This research concluded that there was consensus among staff over the values they were teaching to their learners and that parents were aware of and shared the values being fostered in school. The above review of the literature indicates the importance of Values Education programmes in schools. There seems to be consensus that Values Education programmes have influenced positively the general character of learners and teachers.

The positive impact of Values Education programmes is largely dependent on the teacher and the school. Values Education programmes can become effective if we have teachers that are innovative and industrious. In the following section, the role of the teacher and the school in Values Education is discussed.

2.3.6 The Teacher as Transmitter of Knowledge

The literature on the role of the teacher in Values Education generally agrees on the important role of the teacher as transmitters of values (van Niekerk, 1999; Jones, 2009). Van Niekerk (1999: 8) argues that “what lives in the hearts of teachers and parents will colour their teaching or behaviour even if they remain silent about certain matters”. The role of the teacher in imparting values education to learners is important for this study. This study is an exploration of the possibilities of using the Bhagavad Gita for values education in Life Orientation. While all teachers are required to display sound qualities of leadership, management and life-long learning, there are some qualities, which are especially important for the Life Orientation teacher. Among others, the Life Orientation teacher is expected to show caring and empathy for learners and colleagues, be trustworthy and be able to keep confidentiality, and be able to guide learners towards making morally responsible decisions. The exemplary nature of the teacher is a call made in the Bhagavad Gita also. Shri Krishna says in the Bhagavad Gita (4.34, in Prabhupada, 1986: 233):

तद्विद्धि प्रणिपातेन परिप्रश्नेन सेवया । उपदेक्ष्यन्ति ते ज्ञानं ज्ञानिनस्तत्त्वदर्शिनः ॥

tadviddhi pranipātena paripraśnena sevayā , upadekṣyanti te jñānaṁ

jñāninastatvadarśinaḥ.

Find a wise teacher, honour him, ask him your questions, and serve him; someone who has seen the truth will guide you on the path to wisdom.

The example of the teacher is further emphasised in the verse 21 of chapter 3, in which Shri Krishna says,

यद्यदाचरति श्रेष्ठस्तत्तदेवेतरो जनः । स यत्प्रमाणं कुरुते लोकस्तदनुवर्तते ॥

yadyadācarati śreṣṭhastattadevetaro janah, sa yatpramāṇaṁ kurute lokastadanuvartate

Whatever action a great man performs, common men follow. And whatever standards he sets by exemplary acts, all the world pursues.

It can be seen from the aforementioned that both the Bhagavad Gita and the Life Orientation learning area makes a call on the teacher to make values livable for learners. To this end, Ngweni (2003: 201) notes: ‘if successfully implemented, Life Orientation should enhance the practice of positive values, attitudes, behaviour and skills both by the learner and in the community’.

Davies (1991: 16-17) states that teachers shape learner's attitudes and values. He comments:

...if our professional conduct does not underscore the written content of the curriculum, then we have no alternative other than to admit that even the most relevant curriculum can become totally irrelevant if the teachers concerned are not themselves dedicated and competent professionals.

In an international study conducted by Stephenson et al (1998), the teachers who participated in this study saw themselves as influencing the atmosphere and ethos of their classrooms by their own behaviour. One of the participants in this international study said that "teacher's values and attitudes will show through – teaching does not take place in a value-free vacuum" (Stephenson et al, 1998: 166). Kelsey (1993) agrees when he says that the teacher should be a model of outstanding character. This view is supported by Lynch and Hanson (1998) who suggest that what educators do in the classroom is influenced by their values and biases.

Even spiritual leaders emphasize the important role of the teacher in imparting Values Education. Sathya Sai Baba (1995: 34) stated:

The authentic human values cannot be learnt from books or from lessons given by teachers or gifted by elders. They can be acquired only by experience and example. You, the teacher, must be the example, and the children have to experience.

Sarkar³⁷ introduces an alternative education system for the new era and he calls this neo-humanist education (NHE). The NHE is an attempt to create *sadvipras* (moral educators) for the new era. NHE lies at the hub of a movement for social change with the objective of building a single universal society where all can enjoy the bounties of Mother Nature. NHE has been described as an education system that must produce not mere intellectuals but benevolent intuitionist spiritual moralists who are ready to fight against injustices and exploitation in society. In order to implement such an education system, NHE lays stress on cultivating the intellectual and moral standard of teachers who must set an example before desiring and expecting the best from their pupils.

Carr (1993) states that even if teachers do not see it as part of their role to set a moral example, it is very difficult for learners to avoid the influence of the teacher's values

³⁷ <http://nhe.gurukul.edu/about.htm>

completely. However, there seems to be mixed evidence emanating from research on the role of the teacher in Values Education. The School Curriculum and Assessment Authority (1996) in Australia reported that 78% of adults felt that teachers set a good example for young people. Yet, there is also research reported by Csikszentmihalyi and McCormack (1986) that only 9% of American teenagers considered their teachers to have made a difference in their lives.

In a review of research by Elicker and Fortner-Wood (1995), it was found that a secure attachment with a teacher was able to compensate for an insecure attachment with a parent. Hansen (1993: 23) also reported that moral meanings created in the classroom are "the expression or enactment of the person the teacher is". Shore (1996) has written that children are often influenced by the teachers whose qualities they admire. Teachers have a critical role to play in Values Education. There seems to be varied evidence on the role of the teacher in Values Education. However in this study, the focus is on the use of the Bhagavad Gita for Values Education in Life Orientation and in the next section, it will be argued why it is therefore important for teachers to adopt the universal values of the Bhagavad Gita and to put them into practice.

2.4 The Bhagavad Gita – A Grand Pedagogical Strategy

In this section a brief discussion of the Bhagavad Gita as a grand pedagogical strategy will be presented. This will be done by linking the different components of the Bhagavad Gita to different pedagogic strategies. In addition, in this section, the Bhagavad Gita's place in the *Mahabharata* will be discussed. A brief explanation of the major philosophical systems contained in the Bhagavad Gita will also be included.

The Bhagavad Gita is contained in the great Hindu epic, *Mahabharata*. The *Mahabharata* tells the story of an internecine war in ancient India between the sons of Dhritarastra and the sons of Pandu over the north Indian kingdom of Bharata (modern day India). The Pandavas believe the claim to the kingdom was stolen from them by the Kauravas. Every attempt by the Pandava brothers to regain their kingdom without war

had failed. As a result, a great battle begins among them. The Bhagavad Gita is primarily a dialogue between Arjuna, the third Pandava brother, and his charioteer, Shri Krishna. Remaining neutral, Shri Krishna allowed one side to use his army in battle, while the other side could have him as charioteer. Shri Krishna, himself, would not fight. Arjuna wants to win the throne but cannot fight his relatives. He turns to Shri Krishna, his friend and spiritual advisor and asks him the deeper questions about life. The Bhagavad Gita, consisting of 700 verses, and arranged in 18 chapters, is Shri Krishna's answer.

According to Sarbatoare (2009), the philosophy of the Bhagavad Gita is integrative. He says: "...it is an attempt to make a synthesis of diverse philosophical views expressed in varied concepts such as *Sankhya*, *Yoga*, *Vedanta*, as well as the *Upanishads* and *bhakti* ideas" (Sarbatoare, 2009: 1). There are three spiritual paths advocated by the Bhagavad Gita – *Karma Yoga*, *Jnana Yoga* and *Bhakti Yoga*. The Bhagavad Gita has been described as a metaphor of life (Tilak, 1936; Aurobindo, 1970; Sharma, 2002; Parthasarathy, 2008). The entire battle represents good against evil. The Pandavas represent the positive qualities of an individual and the Kauravas represent the negative qualities of an individual. Parthasarathy (2008) states that civil war between the Pandavas and the Kauravas symbolizes the conflict between the higher and lower natures within a human being.

The Bhagavad Gita deals with the Sankhya and Vedanta philosophies. (Aurobindo, 1970; De, 1996). There is therefore a need to discuss briefly these two philosophies. Sankhya is regarded as one of the oldest philosophical systems in India. (De 1996; Sharma, 1997). The Sankhya philosophy has been described as an enumerationist (the word Sankhya literally means enumeration) philosophy that is strongly dualist (Radhakrishnan & Moore, 1957; Sen Gupta, 1986 and Michaels, 2004). According to Sankhya philosophy, there are two realities that make up the universe – *Purusha* (consciousness) and *Prakriti* (matter) (Sen Gupta, 1986). The educational significance of the Sankhya philosophy is summarized by Bourai (1993: 91), as follows:

In Kapila's³⁸ doctrine, for the first time in the history of the world the complete independence and freedom of the human mind, its full confidence in its own powers, were exhibited.

The Sankhya philosophy maintains that the human mind has the independent power to free itself from suffering through right knowledge. The most significant contribution made by the Sankhya philosophy has been in the theory of knowledge (Bourai, 1993). According to this philosophy, there are three means of valid knowledge – *pratyaksha* (direct sense perception), *anumana* (logical inference) and *shabda* or *aptavacana* (scriptural/verbal testimony) (Bourai, 1993). *Pratyaksha* or direct sense perception is defined as:

...cognition or mode of Buddhi³⁹ which assumes the form of an object, goes out through a sense organ to an object after the intercourse of the sense organ with the object, and is modified into its form. The mode of Buddhi assuming the form of the object produces its knowledge in the self. This is perception.

In other words, perception is the direct consciousness of the objects which individuals obtain through the exercise of their senses. *Anumana* or logical inference is the knowledge that is derived about a major term from the middle term (Bourai, 1993). For example, if one experiences smoke (middle term), one can infer that there must be a fire (major term). This simply means that where there is smoke, there is fire. Any knowledge which cannot be known by either perception or inference can be obtained through *shabda* or scriptural/verbal testimony. The Sankhya philosophy states that some knowledge is the result of the testimony of ordinary trustworthy persons, while other knowledge, regarded as true knowledge, comes to us from the Vedas (Bourai, 1993). The Sankhya philosophy's relevance to education can be found in its definite methodology of instruction. The following diagram illustrates the methodology of instruction (adapted from Bourai, 1993: 104):



In terms of the application of the above 'flow diagram' to modern day education, it could be said that knowledge acquisition begins with the comprehension of the meanings of

³⁸ The sage responsible for developing the Sankhya system/philosophy.

³⁹ Mind, intelligence, comprehension.

words learnt, i.e. knowledge acquisition begins with oral instruction. The next step involves the use of reasoning which consists of the examination of the knowledge acquired. The final step in this methodology requires discussion and debate of the acquired knowledge with teachers and fellow learners. Bourai (1993) asserts that the Sankhya and Yoga systems are fundamentally parts of a common system. The discussion proceeds now to explain the Yoga philosophy.

The Yoga philosophy, which is attributed to sage Patanjali, is derived from the Sanskrit root *yuj*, meaning “to control”, “to yoke” or “to unite”. According to Prabhavananda (1986), and Rama (2008), *Raja Yoga*, *Karma Yoga*, *Gyan Yoga*, *Bhakti Yoga* and *Hatha Yoga* are the major branches of yoga in Hindu Philosophy. Chatterjee and Datta (1984) have noted a close link between the Yoga philosophy and the Sankhya school. This link between these two philosophies is explained by Zimmer (1951: 231):

These two are regarded in India as twins, the two aspects of a single discipline. Sankhya provides a basic theoretical exposition of human nature, enumerating and defining its elements, analyzing their manner of co-operation in a state of bondage (*bandha*), and describing their state of disentanglement or separation (*Moksha*), while Yoga treats specifically of the dynamics of the process for disentanglement, and outlines practical techniques for the gaining of release, or isolation-integration (*kaivalya*).

According to Jacobson and Larson (2005), the Bhagavad Gita uses the term *yoga* extensively in a variety of ways. They note that while chapter six of the Bhagavad Gita is dedicated to traditional yoga practice, including meditation, it also introduces the three prominent types of yoga – *karma* (action), *bhakti* (devotion) and *gyan* (knowledge). Parthasarathy (2004) has written that the union of the individual self with the Supreme Self is yoga. Parthasarathy (2004) continues that the yoga systems of *bhakti*, *gyan* and *karma*, have been designed to suit the three distinct categories of humans – the emotional, the intellectual and the active classes of people respectively. Sivananda (1980) agrees when he states that *bhakti yoga* is for the person of devotional temperament, *karma yoga* is suitable for a person of active temperament and *gyan yoga* is for a person of rational temperament.

The Bhagavad Gita, in chapter 12, verses 13 to 20, enumerates thirty-five divine qualities of a true devotee. Some of these qualities according to Parthasarathy (2004: 198) are: hate no being, be friendly, compassionate, forgiving, and firm-minded. Similarly, one finds in the thirteenth chapter of the Bhagavad Gita, verses 8 to 12, twenty qualities that define the path of knowledge (*gyan yoga*). Some of these qualities are humility, harmlessness, uprightness and self-control (Parthasarathy, 2004:203). The *karma yogi* (one who follows the path of action), “dedicates his life’s activities to the ideal he has set” (Parthasarathy, 2004: 205). In other words, *karma yoga* is the way of selfless service and exercise of the will. According to Gupta (2006), the Bhagavad Gita has regarded these three paths or disciplines as a means to self-realization: “irrespective of the particular discipline (yoga) one uses as one’s starting point, the ultimate goal is to become disciplined, which is having sameness and evenness of the mind (*samatvam*)” (Gupta, 2006: 388).

The primary text of the Vedanta system is the Brahma Sutra and its doctrines have been derived in great part from the Upanishads. Vedanta, is a diverse term and its meaning is not homogenous. It deals with the concept of Brahman, “the ultimate reality that is beyond all logic and encompasses not only the concepts of being and non-being but also all the phases in between” (De, 1996: 3). Vedanta was originally used as a synonym for that part of the Veda known as the Upanishads⁴⁰. However, since the 8th century the word Vedanta began to be used to describe a group of philosophical traditions concerned with self-realization and the understanding of the ultimate nature of reality⁴¹. According to Vedanta, human nature is divine and the aim of human life is to realize that human nature is divine⁴². In the paragraph to follow, the pedagogical significance of the Vedanta philosophy will be explained.

According to Bourai (1993), the aim of education in Vedanta philosophy is to draw out the latent powers and capacities of the learner or student. Vedanta maintains that

⁴⁰ <http://www.vedantaresources.com>

⁴¹ <http://www.vedantaresources.com>

⁴² <http://www.vedantaresources.com>

individuals can develop their powers by *vidya* (knowledge) and *dharma* (virtue). The pedagogic process for this involves *shravana* (listening to the knowledge expounded by the teacher), *manana* (reflecting on the meaning of the knowledge expounded) and *nididhyasana* (constant practice) (Bourai, 1993). The Vedanta system, like the Sankhya system also believes that the three sources of knowledge are perception, inference and scriptural/verbal testimony.

The purpose of education is to bring about holistic development of an individual. This means that education should educate and develop the heart, intellect and hand (Bourai, 1993; Carver and Enfield, 2006). Sivananda (1980) argues that one way of bringing about integral development is through a synthesis of the three yoga systems of the Bhagavad Gita. According to Sivananda, (1980:569), “the yoga of synthesis alone will develop the head, heart and hand, and lead one to perfection”. Bourai (1993) concurs when he says that the aim of educational philosophy is a synthetic approach. He continues, “the approach of the whole text of the Gita is in such a manner that Sankara found his '*Advaita*', Ramanuja his '*Dvaita* and *Bhakti*', Tilak found 'action and aggression'. And Gandhiji found the element of 'truth and non-violence'" (Bourai, 1993: 37).

The Bhagavad Gita has been described as a “grand pedagogical strategy” (Bourai, 1993: 37). Several reasons could be advanced for calling the Bhagavad Gita a grand pedagogical strategy. Firstly, Shri Krishna as the teacher in the Bhagavad Gita assumes full responsibility for his student, Arjuna. The dialogue between Shri Krishna and Arjuna creates opportunities for doubts and questions to be put unhesitatingly. Shri Krishna at any point, does not curb the curiosity of Arjuna. For example in the Bhagavad Gita (4.34), Prabhupada, 1986: 232), Shri Krishna uses the word, परिप्रेक्ष्येन *pariprasnena* which means repeated questioning. In order to develop knowledge, a questioning is required. According to Rama (1996), aspirants should ask questions to resolve their doubts and gain clarity of mind.

Secondly, the method of teaching in the Bhagavad Gita is said to be pupil centered (Bourai, 1993). To this end Tilak (1936: iv) has said: “Good teachers first ascertain

whether or not the disciple has been inspired with desire for knowledge and if there is no such inspiration they attempt to rouse the desire. The whole science of right action has been expounded in the Gita on this basis". When a student is motivated, he/she is likely to engage in meaningful learning. In the first line of 11.33 in the Bhagavad Gita Shri Krishna motivates Arjuna:

तस्मात्त्वमुत्तिष्ठ यशो लभस्व तasmāttvamuttīṣṭha yaśo labhasva

Therefore get up and acquire the glory (11.33), (Prabhupada, 1986:511)

Greene and Ackerman (1995) maintain that the constructivist approach to teaching and learning removes the emphasis from the teacher and content to the learner. The teacher becomes a facilitator. Kumari (2009) reminds that a facilitator does not dictate what a learner should do. Shri Krishna plays the role of a facilitator to Arjuna, as is evidenced in the end of his conversation in the Bhagavad Gita (18.63), (Prabhupada, 1986: 747):

विमृश्यैतदशेषेण यथेच्छसि तथा कुरु

vimṛśyaitadaśeṣeṇa yathecchasi tathā kuru

Deliberate on this fully, and then do what you wish to do.

In order to make a lesson or lessons more stimulating, teaching aids in the form of examples and illustrations should be used. The third justification for the Bhagavad Gita being a grand pedagogical strategy is seen when Shri Krishna cites his own examples to teach Arjuna and also concretizes and draws vivid pictures of what he wants Arjuna to be (Bourai, 1993). Fourthly, Bourai (1993) also traces the concept of recapitulation of the lesson to the Bhagavad Gita. The last verse or last few verses of each chapter are a summary of all the preceding chapters: "it is an epitome for the whole lessons. This deepens the meaning, elevates the mind and concludes the lesson at its climax" (Bourai, 1993: 38).

A fifth justification for the Bhagavad Gita's didactic nature is provided by Kumari (2009), who has argued that there are strands of constructivism in the Bhagavad Gita. According to Jonassen, (1994), constructivist-learning environments provide learning environments such as real-world settings or case-based learning. The conversation

between Shri Krishna and Arjuna, took place on the battlefield and not in an ashram or school (Kumari, 2009). A further component of the constructivist approach is the active role of the learner (Jeffrey, 2005). Several verses in the Bhagavad Gita highlight the active role of the learner. In part of one verse it is stated:

उद्धरेदात्मनात्मानं uddharedātmanātmānaṁ
raise oneself by one (6.5), (Prabhupada, 1986: 277)

and in another verse, a part of it states:

प्रयत्नाद्यतमानस्तु prayatnādyatamānastu
striving assiduously (6.45), (Prabhupada, 1986:317)

The above highlight the active role of the learner in acquiring knowledge. However, according to constructivism, knowledge is also derived through interactions where individuals create meaning through their interactions with each other and with the environment they live in (Prawat and Floden, 1994; Gredler, 1997; Ernest, 1999). The Bhagavad Gita too supports mutual learning. A part of a verse in chapter 3 of the Bhagavad Gita states:

परस्परं भावयन्तः श्रेयः परमाप्स्यथ
parasparaṁ bhāvayantaḥ śreyaḥ paramavāpsyatha
By cooperation with one another, prosperity will reign for all. (3.11), (Prabhupada, 1986: 157)

And another verse in chapter 3 states:

न बुद्धिभेदं जनयेदज्ञानां कर्मसंनिनाम् । जोषयेत्सर्वकर्माणि विद्वान्युक्तः समाचरन् ॥
na buddhibhedaṁ janayedajñānāṁ karmasagininnām |
joṣayetsarvakarmāṇi vidvānyuktaḥ samācaran |
So as not to disrupt the minds of ignorant men attached to the fruitive results of prescribed duties, a learned person should not induce them to stop work. Rather, by working in the spirit of devotion, he should engage them in all sorts of activities. (3.26), (Prabhupada, 1986: 172)

While the above verse is concerned with forbidding teaching to those who are seen as unqualified for wisdom and still attached to certain kinds of activities, special note should be taken that the verse also calls for “co-operation with one another” and “to engage them in all sorts of activities. In other words, no matter what difficulties or disabilities may exist, teachers are expected to work with learners so as to make them rise above these difficulties and/or disabilities.

Sarbatoare (2009: 1)) states that the “Gita’s teachings could be classified of moral (ethical) value, since they discuss virtue under its Indian generic name of dharma”. Gupta (2006) has reminded us though, that there is no term corresponding to virtue in the Bhagavad Gita. She continues that the Bhagavad Gita does however, provide detailed discussions of “dispositions, qualities, characteristics, and excellences that we generally associate with virtues” (Gupta, 2006: 383). Bhagavad Gita (10.4-5), (Prabhupada, 1986: 450) states,

Intelligence, knowledge, freedom from doubt and delusion, forgiveness, truthfulness, control of senses, control of the mind, happiness and distress, birth, death, fear, fearlessness, non-violence, equanimity, satisfaction, austerity, charity, fame and infamy – all these various qualities of living beings are created by Me alone.

The Bhagavad Gita is replete with moral virtues or values. The table below lists the virtues that appear in the text of Bhagavad Gita (Gupta, 2006: 385),

Table 2.1 Virtues in the Bhagavad Gita (adapted from Gupta, 2006: 385)

VIRTUE (Sanskrit)	VIRTUE (English)	CHAPTER and VERSE
Abhayam	Fearlessness	10:4; 16:1
adambhitvam	Sincerity	13:7
Ahimsā	non-violence	10:5; 13:7; 16:2; 17:4
Adrohaḥ	Amity	16:3
Acāpalam	Modesty	16:2
Adveṣa	non-hatred	12:13
Akrodhaḥ	non-anger	16:2
Aloluptvaṁ	freedom from greed	16:2
Amānitvaṁ	Humility	13:7
Apaisunam	Abseuce of fault finding	16:2
Ārjavam	Uprightness, simplicity	13:7; 16:1; 18:42
brahmacarya	Abstinence	8:11; 17:14
Damaḥ	Self-control	16:1; 18:42
Dāna	Charity	10:5; 16:1; 17:7, 20,22; 18:5, 43
Kṣamā	Forgiveness	10:4; 3:4; 16:3
Kṣāntiḥ	Patience	13:7; 18:42
Karuṇā	Compassion	12:13
Maitrī	Friendship	12:13

Mārdavaṃ	Gentleness	16:2
samaḥ sām̐ya	evenness, equanimity	2:15, 38, 48; 4:22; 5:3, 7, 18-21; 6:7, 9, 13, 29, 30, 32; 9:29; 12:13, 14, 18-19; 13:27-28; 18:54
Śāntiḥ	Peace	16:2
Satyam	Truthfulness	10:4; 16:2
Śaucam	Purity	13:7; 16:3, 7; 17:14; 18:42
Śauryam	Heroism	18:43
Saṅkalpa	Determination	6:2
Śraddhā	reverence, piety	17:2,3; 7:21
Tapah	Penance	7:9; 10:5; 16:1; 17:5, 7, 14-19, 28; 18:5, 42
Tejaḥ	Vigour	18:43
Tiṭikṣā	Endurance	2:14
Vairāgyam	Detachment	13:7; 18:52
Vinaya	Humility	5:18
Vinigrahaḥ	control, restraint	13:7

Gupta (2006) categorises the above virtues as either ‘self-regarding’ or ‘other-regarding’. She states that “self-regarding virtues are those in which the primary emphasis is placed upon one’s own self” and that other-regarding virtues are those virtues in which “emphasis is placed on the other person (or thing)” (Gupta, 2006: 386). In view of this categorisation, the virtues listed in table 2.1 above may be categorised as follows:

- Self-regarding virtues: patience, determination or resolve, self-control, evenness of mind, endurance, restraint, simplicity, abstinence, purity, heroism, vigour, truthfulness, penance or austerity, fearlessness, humility, modesty, gentleness, detachment and sincerity.
- Other-regarding virtues: forgiveness, patience, compassion, friendship, absence of fault finding, amity, non-hatred, non-anger, non-greed, reverence, charity, non-violence and peace.

According to Gupta (2006: 386), the virtues listed in table 2.1 may also be categorised as follows:

- Virtues of the Body: simplicity, abstinence, endurance, charity, gentleness, purity, heroism, vigour and non-violence.
- Virtues of Speech: truthfulness and absence of false finding.
- Virtues of the Mind: amity, modesty, non-hatred, non-anger, non-greed, humility, freedom from delusion, self-control, forgiveness, patience, compassion, friendship, evenness of the mind, determination or resolve, faith, penance or austerity, renunciation and peace.

However, Gupta (2006) also cautions that the virtues listed above cannot always fall into one category or the other as virtues are often mixed up with one another. The categorization, she avers, allows one to come to grips with the place and significance of the virtues of the Bhagavad Gita. There are similarities between the virtues of the Bhagavad Gita and that of the Values Education and Democracy document of the Department of Education (2000).

The Values, Education and Democracy document (Department of Education, 2000) calls for the promotion of the values of equity, tolerance, multilingualism, openness, accountability and social honour. Equity could be categorised as a self-regarding virtue as it corresponds to the Bhagavad Gita's virtue of evenness of mind. However, the value of equity also corresponds to the Bhagavad Gita virtues of friendship, absence of faultfinding, amity, non-hatred and compassion. In this sense then, equity is also an other-regarding virtue.

Gupta (2006) also sees a similarity between the virtues of the Bhagavad Gita and those of Aristotle. She argues that while the Bhagavad Gita sets out to achieve control of one's passions, desires and emotions through *buddhi* or faculty of discrimination, Aristotle says that this control can be achieved with reason. Gupta (2006) continues that for Aristotle this control is possible through habit, and the Bhagavad Gita recognizes *abhyasa yoga* or discipline of practice to bring about this kind of control.

According to Sharma (1999), several models for administration, management, and leadership have been based on the Bhagavad Gita. *The Business Week* (2007) reported that in many Western business communities, the Bhagavad Gita is replacing the influence of the “Art of War”. The “Art of War” is an ancient Chinese political text that described how victory could be assured in war (Duyvendak, Tzu, Yang, Tao, Yuan and Wilkinson, 1998). Bhattathiry (2004), a member of parliament in India, has argued for a combination of the Western management models of efficiency, dynamism and excellence to India’s holistic attitude of welfare of many. Bhattathiry (2004) examines some of the modern management concepts in the light of the Bhagavad Gita, which he considers to be a ‘primer’ of management by values. For example, prior to the Mahabharata war, Duryodhana (the leader of the Kauravas) chooses Shri Krishna’s large army for his help, while Arjuna chooses Shri Krishna’s wisdom for his help. This episode, says Bhattathiry, gives us a clue as to who is an effective manager.

The Bhagavad Gita has been described as reaching out to other religions. A Muslim youth from India wrote on the web site *Krishna.orgCommunity*⁴³

At the age of 17, I, as you are aware, was most fortunate to come in contact with the Bhagavad-Gita As It Is and Srila Prabhupada’s books. As I read the Bhagavad Gita and many other smaller books I began to realize that all religions were actually linked. Each religion would come due to time, place, and circumstance to elevate those particular people to the level of human beings who would begin to engage their minds on God.

Khan, the youth quoted above, continues to state that when one compares the scriptures of each religion, one realizes that there is a common link – each religion believes in one ultimate God/Reality. Furthermore, a lecturer of English at an intermediate college in Jalalpur, Faizabad (India) is reported to have undertaken the task of translating the Bhagavad Gita into Urdu verses⁴⁴. Anwar Jalapuri (the academic) is quoted as follows:

We live in a diverse society where Muslim and Hindus have co-existed for centuries. But they are mutually unacquainted with the great scriptures of another. I took up the Gita as I thought that it must be explained, read and analyzed.

⁴³ <http://krishna.org/questions-from-a-muslim-with-answers-from-khan> (Retrieved on 20 November 2010)

⁴⁴ <http://www.theindian.com> (Retrieved on 20 November 2010)

Another academic, Bint Zehera Rizvi (a Professor of Hindi from Allahabad) has already completed a translation of the Bhagavad Gita into Urdu.⁴⁵ According to Rizvi who is Muslim, one's life is incomplete if he/she does not read this heightened philosophy of life and the inner calling of self for at least once.

The preceding section has presented a snap shot of the contents of the Bhagavad Gita as well as some of its central teachings. Reference has also been made to the value of the Bhagavad Gita as a "grand pedagogical strategy" by referring to the pupil centred character of the Bhagavad Gita and the strands of constructivism found in it.

2.5 Conclusion

This chapter began with an explanation of the theoretical framework used in this study. A case was made for the pluralist paradigm as it creates the opportunity for honest and open dialogue between people of different faiths. A discussion of the conservative orientation, liberal orientation and postmodern orientation to Values Education was also presented. Here too, it is evident that this study leans towards more critical and postmodernist orientations to Values Education Development. The Bhagavad Gita was presented as a "grand pedagogical strategy", with links to co-operative learning and constructivism.

The next chapter will present an outline of the methods and procedures utilised in the accumulation of the data for this research project. It explains the research paradigm as well as the research approaches used in the study.

⁴⁵ <http://hinduexistence.wordpress.com> (Retrieved on 20 November 2010)

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter the theoretical framework of postmodernism and the Christian faith theory of pluralism was explained. In addition, a review of the literature relating to the Bhagavad Gita and Life Orientation was presented. In the chapter, an explanation of pluralism as a conceptual framework was offered. This chapter presents the methods and processes that were adopted to obtain data for this study. It begins by outlining the paradigmatic perspective from which this research was conducted. A combination of research approaches was used in this study. The research sites and strategies used to obtain the data, as well as the methods for data analysis, are then described.

This research explores the perceptions of the teachers of Life Orientation and elite personalities of the possible influence of the Bhagavad Gita for Values Education in Life Orientation in South African schools. The study was conducted with teachers of Life Orientation in the Chatsworth District of the Umlazi Circuit in KwaZulu-Natal. In addition, selected elite personalities who are experts on values, Values Education and the Bhagavad Gita, were invited to a seminar to discuss their perceptions and attitudes towards the Bhagavad Gita and its possible use in Values Education in Life Orientation. The responses of the elite personalities were elicited through specific probes, details of which will be provided later in the chapter.

3.2 Research Approach

This research project has adopted a mixed methods approach. According to Mason (2006: 13), "... research strategies should be driven by the research questions we seek to answer and part of this must involve choosing methods that are appropriate to the questions being addressed".

Creswell and Clark (2007) define mixed methods research as a method that focuses on collecting, analysing, and mixing both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study or series of studies.

This definition coheres with the views of Bergman (2008), who defines mixed method research as that which combines at least one quantitative and at least one qualitative component in a single project. This project on Values Education and the Bhagavad Gita fits this definition as it has made use of a questionnaire survey and focus group discussions to elicit the views of teacher participants and élite personalities? respectively.

According to Creswell and Clark (2007) and Bryman (2004), the mixed methods approach involves both collecting and analysing quantitative and qualitative data. In this research project, the researcher has used questionnaires and seminar discussion to collect the data, as well as the 'merge the data' (Creswell and Clark, 2007: 7) approach to analyse the data. The data relating to teachers' perceptions of the Bhagavad Gita and Values Education in Life Orientation were obtained through a questionnaire. At the same time, a seminar discussion or focus group interview was conducted with élite personalities to obtain their views on the Bhagavad Gita and its possible use for Values Education in Life Orientation. The data obtained from the questionnaire and focus groups interviews were analysed separately. Thereafter, the two data types were merged and analysed thematically. The approach used here is similar to that used by researchers on a project dealing with rural adolescent perceptions of alcohol and other drug resistance (Creswell and Clark, 2007). Moran-Ellis, Alexander, Cronin, Dickinson, Fielding, Sleney and Thomas (2006) support this process when they say that each method (in the case of this research the questionnaire and the focus group interview) may be operationalised at some distance from the other, but that the data sets may be brought together at the point of analysis, interpretation and theorizing.

It should be noted though that the two methods (questionnaire and focus group interviews) used in this study were equally important in as far as addressing the purpose of this study: looking for possibilities of the use of the Bhagavad Gita for Values

Education in Life Orientation. The approach used in this study could therefore be described as a triangulation design. Creswell and Clark (2007) maintain that the triangulation design enables a researcher to obtain different but complementary data on the same topic to understand best the research problem. Moran-Ellis et al (2006) concurs when he says that triangulation allows the researcher to know more about a phenomenon with different research methods. In the case of this research study, the questionnaire was used to establish teacher participants' views on the possible use of the Bhagavad Gita for Values Education in Life Orientation. The focus group discussion was used to establish the views of the élite personalities on the possible use of the Bhagavad Gita for Values Education in Life Orientation.

The aim of this study was to describe Life Orientation teachers and selected élite personalities' attitudes to and perceptions of to the Bhagavad Gita, as well as to understand their views regarding the use of the Bhagavad Gita for Values Education in Life Orientation. This study has focused on the meaning the participants hold about Values Education and the Bhagavad Gita. Creswell (2007) calls this participants' meaning. A further characteristic of qualitative research is interpretive inquiry, which involves the researcher making an interpretation of what he saw, heard and understood (Creswell, 2007). This study is located within an interpretive paradigm as it attempts to interpret the views of Life Orientation teachers and élite personalities on Values Education and the Bhagavad Gita.

In the interpretive paradigm, researchers attempt to understand the world in which they live and work (Creswell, 2007). Denzin and Lincoln (2005) and Clarke (2005) contend that the interpretive paradigm is an approach to qualitative research that has become interwoven into the core characteristics of qualitative research. The goal of the interpretive research paradigm is to rely as much as possible on the participants' views of a situation (Henning, Van Rensburg and Smit, 2005). In general, one can say that the interpretive paradigm aims at interpreting or understanding human behaviour, rather than explaining or predicting it (Babbie and Mouton, 2001). Within the interpretive paradigm, a phenomenological approach will be utilised as it describes the lived experiences of

participants. The phenomenon under the microscope in this study is the Bhagavad Gita for Values Education in Life Orientation. Phenomenology is not only a description of the participants' meaning, but also an interpretive process, which allows the researcher to make an interpretation (Creswell, 2007). In the case of this study, the researcher mediates between the different meanings of the participants. This phenomenological study attempts to give a description of the Bhagavad Gita and Values Education in Life Orientation through the eyes of the teachers and élite personalities who have first hand experience of Values Education and/or the Bhagavad Gita (De Vos, Strydom, Fouche and Delport, 2005).

Since the research epistemology involves an interpretive framework, it is essential to elaborate on this framework. According to Nieuwenhuis (2007), the roots of interpretivism can be traced to hermeneutics, which is the science of text interpretation. Interpretive research maintains that people make their own reality and "that there are no laws external to human interaction waiting to be discovered" (Miller and Brewer, 2003:32). Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) suggest that the individual is central in the interpretivist paradigm. This view is supported by Babbie and Mouton (2002: 28): "...all human beings are engaged in the process of making sense of their (life) worlds. We continuously interpret, create and give meaning to, define, justify and rationalize our actions". The interpretive researcher then attempts to see things from a particular individual's point of view.

The phenomenological enquiry has been described by Willis (1991) as a form of interpretive enquiry which focuses on human perception and the human experience of individual people. The form of interpretive phenomenology used in this study was concerned with both "how things appear" and how phenomena "come to show themselves to us" (Willig, 2007: 221). In this study, an interpretive phenomenology that went beyond mere description was employed. An attempt was made to reveal the underlying meaning and assumptions beneath the teacher participants and élite personalities' statements. The data obtained from the questionnaire survey and the focus group discussions were integrated into themes.

The focus group discussion with the élite personalities was an attempt by the researcher to understand Values Education and its possible link to the Bhagavad Gita from their point of view. The interpretive paradigm enabled the researcher to explore the élite personalities' views on the Bhagavad Gita and its possible use for Values Education in Life Orientation. In addition to the focus group discussion, this research project made use of a questionnaire to obtain the views of Life Orientation teachers on the possibility of using the Bhagavad Gita for Values Education in Life Orientation.

3.3 The Research Context

In order to answer the research questions⁴⁶ a questionnaire was administered in selected Primary and secondary schools in the Chatsworth District of the Umlazi Circuit in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. Furthermore, a focus group discussion on the possibilities of the Bhagavad Gita for Values Education in Life Orientation was conducted with selected élite personalities from different Hindu religious organizations in South Africa. The schools within the Chatsworth⁴⁷ District of the Umlazi Circuit in the province of KwaZulu-Natal was selected to participate in this study because of its convenience and accessibility to the researcher. The schools used in the Chatsworth District can be described as urban. The researcher wanted a cross section of Life Orientation teachers in the different primary and secondary schools in the Chatsworth District. The schools were purposively selected from a list of secondary and primary schools included in the 2006 Education Management Information System (EMIS) document. According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007), purposive sampling requires researchers to 'handpick' the participants to be included in the sample. Babbie and Mouton (2002: 166)) agree:

⁴⁶ What is the influence of the Bhagavad Gita for values education in Life Orientation? What are educators' perceptions/attitudes of the curriculum in Life Orientation? What are the implications of the Bhagavad Gita with respect to values in education?

⁴⁷ The Pegging Acts of 1943 and the Ghetto Act of 1946 gave the government the right to remove and destroy shacks in some areas. This paved the way for the Group areas Act of June 1950. In 1964, Chatsworth was opened exclusively for Indians with eleven neighbouring units consisting of 7 000 sub-economic and 14 000 economic houses. It was built as a buffer between the white residential areas and the large African township of Umlazi. (<http://www.chatsworthlive.co.za/articles.php?step=2&id=40>).

Sometimes it's appropriate for you to select your sample on the basis of your own knowledge of the population, its elements, and the nature of your research aims: in short, based on your judgment and the purpose of the study.

In purposive sampling, the participants in the study are chosen for a specific purpose. In this research project, the researcher has targeted Life Orientation teachers in primary and secondary schools in Chatsworth. The purpose of this study was to determine the viability of using the Bhagavad Gita for Values Education in Life Orientation – it was therefore important that the sample of teachers included those who were knowledgeable about Life Orientation and perhaps the Bhagavad Gita.

The personalities that participated in the focus group discussion are referred to as *élite*. According to the Concise Oxford Dictionary (1989: 312), *élite* means *select group or class*. The participants are a select group of individuals who are highly respected in academic, religious, social and philanthropic spheres of life. In particular, they are closely connected to Values Education and the Bhagavad Gita, by virtue of the religious and academic institutions that they belong to. In choosing these *élite* personalities, the researcher took into account the different Hindu movements established in South Africa, and therefore sought to be representative.

The next section explains how the data was obtained for this study.

3.4 Data Collection Plan

This study looked for the perceptions of teachers and *élite* personalities for possibilities of the Bhagavad Gita for Values Education in Life Orientation in South African schools. The schools were first selected and thereafter the principals in each school were requested to forward the questionnaires to their respective Life Orientation teachers. The data was collected in two phases. In phase one, the questionnaires were administered to educators in the different primary and secondary schools. Phase two involved a seminar discussion with *élite* personalities who were chosen on the basis of their religious and academic expertise.

3.4.1 Questionnaires

Permission to conduct the study was first obtained from the Department of Education (refer to Appendix K). Subsequently permission was also obtained from the school principals. This process was undertaken to ensure that ethical considerations were respected. The schools were also provided with a copy of the ethical clearance obtained from the university (refer to Appendix J).

The questionnaires were distributed to 49 primary schools and 22 secondary schools in the Chatsworth district. These 71 schools were randomly chosen from the schools that fall within the Chatsworth district. Primary and secondary schools were chosen because, as a Learning Area, Life Orientation is offered in the General Education and Training Band (Grades R-9) and as a new subject in the Further Education Training Band (Grades 10-12). In both the primary and secondary schools, Life Orientation is expected to equip learners with skills, knowledge, attitudes and values so that they can face the challenges of life in an informed, confident and responsible way (Department of Education, 1997, Jansen, 1998, Christiaans, 2006).

In each school, two (2) questionnaires were given personally by the researcher to the principal. In each school, the researcher explained the purpose of the study and questionnaire and requested that the questionnaire be filled out by the Life Orientation teacher, irrespective of race, class, gender or religious affiliation. The anonymity of the schools and the teacher participants have been maintained throughout the research process. Each completed questionnaire was allocated a number (such as R 47) and the report refers to these numbers rather than actual names of teacher participants. In each of the 71 schools (49 primary and 22 secondary), two questionnaires were administered. Each school was faxed a letter explaining the purpose of the study and the questionnaire, and alerting them to the dates of the researcher's school visits. On the designated date, the questionnaires were left with the school principal, with a further explanation of how and by whom the questionnaire should be completed. Arrangements were also made with the principal for a date on which to pick up the completed questionnaire. Principals were

specifically asked to get the questionnaires completed by their Life Orientation teachers, as the research was centred on the possibilities of the Bhagavad Gita for Values Education in Life Orientation. The researcher also emphasized to the principals that the questionnaire could be completed by teachers of different religious persuasions.

The questionnaire consisted of closed-ended and open-ended responses. The questionnaire was chosen as a technique to obtain structured and numerical data on a number of teachers and their attitudes to and perceptions of the Bhagavad Gita and Life Orientation. The questionnaire was found to be suitable as a data gathering technique as according to Babbie and Mouton (2001: 233), “though the term questionnaire suggests a collection of questions, an examination of a typical questionnaire will probably reveal as many statements as questions”.

The questionnaire used in this research project consisted of closed-ended questions and open-ended questions. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) maintain that closed-ended questions are useful in that they prescribe the range of responses from which the respondent may choose and that they allow the researcher to generate frequencies of response that can be treated and analysed in a statistical manner. Open-ended questions on the other hand, “enable participants to write a free account in their own terms, to explain and qualify their responses and avoid the limitation of pre-set categories of responses” (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007: 321).

The questionnaire was divided into seven sections and contained some of the following information (refer to Appendix C for the complete questionnaire).

Section A: This comprised of biographical information relating to place of residence, age, gender, marital status and education level.

Section B: This section comprised of religious affiliation of the teacher participants. The purpose of these questions was to determine the religious affiliation, religious movement and purpose for attending religious meetings of the teacher participants.

Section C: Focused on the knowledge of the Bhagavad Gita and was intended to ascertain how teacher participants first became acquainted with the Bhagavad Gita, the teacher participants' understanding of spirituality, appeal of the Bhagavad Gita and attitude towards the Bhagavad Gita.

Section D: Comprised of a set of questions on the teacher participants' access to policy documents relating to Life Orientation.

Section E: The questions in this section centred on teacher participants' understanding of the term values, whose responsibility Values Education was and the legislation of values.

Section F: In this section, the intention was to determine teachers' views on Life Orientation, methods used in teaching Life Orientation and challenges to teaching Life Orientation.

Section G: In the final section of the questionnaire, questions relating to the use of the religious texts in Life Orientation teaching were included.

The questionnaire yielded both statistical and qualitative data because it used both closed and open ended questions. For example, question C 9 and C 10 of the questionnaire are examples of a closed-ended question and an open-ended question respectively. (Refer to Appendix C for questions). The closed-ended question enabled the researcher to select from a range of possibilities, those aspects which teachers found appealing in the Bhagavad Gita. However, the follow up open-ended question gave the teachers an opportunity to express in their own words why they found some aspects of the Bhagavad Gita appealing in the context of Values Education.

3.4.2 Focus Group Discussions

As mentioned earlier this research has made use of a mixed methods approach, viz questionnaires and focus group discussions. In addition to the questionnaire survey, a focus group discussion was held on Saturday, 14 April 2007 in the Staff Lounge of the Edgewood Campus of the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal. Invitations were forwarded to academics from the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal, subject advisors of Life Orientation in the Kwa-Zulu Natal Department of Education, Spirituals Heads and representatives from

major Hindu organisations in South Africa and teachers from primary and secondary schools in the Chatsworth district. However, of these, only 5 personalities responded to the invitation.

The focus group discussion, which was conducted based on a focus group interview⁴⁸, was presided over by BM, who at the time of the seminar was Discipline Chair in Geography at a tertiary institution in South Africa. He was at that time also the President of a leading Hindu organisation in South Africa.

The participants in the focus group discussion and their profiles as at April 2007 are listed hereunder:

- PP is a retired professor of mathematics and a senior member of the Divine Life Society of South Africa. He has served previously as the President of the Divine Life Society of South Africa. PP is a keen musician who sings devotional songs and plays the harmonium.
- MKA is an Indian national. He is deeply involved in the study, research and assimilation of Vedanta and management philosophy. He conducts value-based Executive Development Workshops and Seminars for senior corporate personnel, business executives, entrepreneurs, professionals, political leaders, scientists and other professional groups.
- RP is a trained lawyer, senior devotee of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) and a senior lecturer at the Bhaktivedanta College of ISKCON (Chatsworth).
- JJ is a practising Christian who teaches in the area of Life Orientation in the School of Social Studies, Faculty of Education, University of KwaZulu-Natal.
- JR is scholar of Vedanta and belongs to the Vedanta Institute of South Africa.

The focus group discussion consisted of several probes, provocative statements and questions.(refer to Appendix F). The focus group questions were divided into themes as follows: perceptions and attitudes of the Bhagavad Gita, the Bhagavad Gita and

⁴⁸ Permission to use the actual names of the élite personalities was obtained.

morality/spirituality, values and the Bhagavad Gita, war, violence and the Bhagavad Gita and Life Orientation and religious texts.

In order to understand the perception of the élite personalities to the Bhagavad Gita as well as their attitudes to the Bhagavad Gita, they were presented with two provocative statements. The first of these statements made reference to the “contradictions” in the Bhagavad Gita, while the second made reference to the intellectual approach of the Bhagavad Gita.

Soumen De in an article entitled, *The Historical Context of the Bhagavad Gita and Its Relation to Indian Religious Doctrines* (1996:2), wrote that, “Despite its universal appeal, the Bhagavad Gita is replete with contradictions both at the fundamental level and at the highest level of philosophical discourse⁴⁹”.

The above statement is a reference to the fact that the Bhagavad Gita is actually an amalgamation of at least three orthodox Hindu schools of philosophies (details of which follow). The statement is also made in the context of the different paths (knowledge, action, devotion, meditation) that the Bhagavad Gita suggests may lead to the attainment of salvation.

The second probe that was presented to the participants deals with the issue of approaching the Bhagavad Gita out of intellectual curiosity. The probe⁵⁰ that was presented on a transparency was, “If one approaches the Bhagavad Gita solely on the basis of intellectual curiosity, he will not achieve a very deep understanding of this ancient classic”.

The researcher attempted to bring together a group of personalities that not only represented the different orthodox schools of Hindu philosophy but who have different ideologies. According to Hinnels (1972), the philosophic systems may be divided into

⁴⁹ De, S. (1996). The Historical Context of The *Bhagavad Gita* and Its Relation to Indian Religious Doctrines. <http://cawc.evansville.edu/essays/de.htm>

⁵⁰ This is a statement made by Sarah Hunt at a symposium on the Bhagavad Gita in 1974. The entire symposium transcript may be downloaded from <http://www.theosophy-nw.org/theosnw/world/asia/as-symp.htm>

orthodox schools and unorthodox schools. The six major Indian philosophies are orthodox philosophies, which have accepted the Vedas as the authority for their beliefs and practices (Beck, 2009). Since the élite personalities can be categorised into one or more of the orthodox schools of Indian philosophy, a brief explanation of three of these philosophies has been presented in Chapter Two in the literature review.

The élite informers or participants in this seminar series can easily be categorised into one or more of the above schools of philosophy, as is apparent in the description of the institutions given below.

The Divine Life Society (represented at the focus group discussion) is a religious organisation and an ashram, founded by Swami Sivananda Saraswati in 1936 in Rishikesh, India. (McKean, 1996). The Society has branches across many parts of the world, including South Africa (Morris, 2006). One of the aims of the Divine Life Society is to disseminate spiritual knowledge through the publication of books, pamphlets and magazines on the subjects of Yoga and Vedanta⁵¹. PP can therefore be described as an élite personality who subscribes to the Indian philosophical systems of Yoga and Vedanta.

Another organisation represented at the seminar was the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON), also known as the Hare Krishna Movement. This movement was founded in 1966 by A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada in New York City. (Gihson, 2002). ISKCON was formed to spread the practice of bhakti yoga or devotion to God⁵². One important aspect of the philosophy of ISKCON is the belief that the individual soul is an eternal personal identity, which does not ultimately merge into any formless light or void. It is through this particular philosophy that ISKCON differs from the monistic schools of Hinduism⁵³. According to Laderman (2003), ISKCON is a monotheistic tradition, which has its roots in the theistic Vedanta traditions. Hence, RP could be described as a representative of the Vedanta school of Indian philosophy.

⁵¹ <http://www.sivananda.dls.org.za>

⁵² <http://news.iskcon.org>

⁵³ <http://news.iskcon.org>

MKA, who was also a participant in the seminar discussion, is connected to the Vedanta Mission Foundation. MKA is staunch follower of the Vedanta school. The aim of the Foundation is to study, research, propagate and promote universal spiritual values and wisdom as enshrined in the ancient spiritual literatures. As the course director of the Foundation, MKA has dedicated himself to the study, research and propagation of Vedanta and its practical applications in life. MKA is a disciple of A Parthasarathy, the founder of the Vedanta Academy in Mumbai, India.

3.5 Data Analysis Plan

In this section of the chapter, the process involved in the analysis of the data is explained. The data obtained from the questionnaire and the focus group discussion were scrutinised so that key themes could be identified. The data analysis was done in two distinct phases. The first phase involved the analysis of the questionnaires, while in the second phase the focus group discussions were analysed.

The computer programme known as Statistical Package for Social sciences (SPSS) was used to generate the data from the questionnaire. Data were presented in the form of tables and graphs. There are different scales or level of data or kinds of numbers that a researcher can deal with in a research involving questionnaire administration (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007; Christensen, Johnson and Turner, 2007)). In this research project, the nominal scale has been used. The nominal scale simply denotes categories such as sex, age groups as well as the ordinal scale, which classifies and creates order in the data (Christensen et al, 2007). The data could also be described as non-parametric as the questions made no assumptions about the population being studied (Newby, 2010). The data obtained from the questionnaire were produced using descriptive statistics and inferential statistics, which were in turn analysed.

The questionnaire also contained open-ended questions. The responses from the teacher participants to the open-ended questions were grouped together to establish similarities and differences in responses. [See Appendix D for details of the open-ended responses.]

The focus group discussion was recorded on a digital recorder and then transcribed using a transcription kit. The recorded interview was listened to several times and the transcripts too were read and re-read to create a context for the meanings and themes. After obtaining some kind of general meaning, these were put into themes. The emerging themes from the focus group discussion were then grouped together with that of the questionnaire, and then further collapsed into emerging themes. These were then analysed qualitatively. The idea of constructing categories or themes for analysis is supported by Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007: 479):

This stage (i.e. constructing the categories) is sometimes termed the creation of 'domain analysis'. This involves grouping the units into domains, clusters, groups, patterns, themes and coherent sets to form domains.

The data from the seminar discussion and the open-ended questions from the questionnaire were analysed through content analysis. Content analysis involves the classification of words or texts into much fewer categories (Cohen et al, 2007; Christensen et al, 2007, Newby, 2010).

3.6 Conclusion

This chapter explained the methods and the procedures that were used in the collection of data for this research project. The methodological approach used in this study can be described as mixed-methods. While the quantitative research method was used to obtain statistical information on the teacher's perceptions of and attitudes to the Bhagavad Gita, Values Education and Life Orientation, the qualitative approach was adopted to understand the perceptions and attitudes of the élite personalities to the Bhagavad Gita. It was also used to explore views of the élite personalities on the usefulness of the Bhagavad Gita for Values Education in Life Orientation. The next chapter will present an analysis of the data obtained.

CHAPTER FOUR

Perceptions and Possibilities: The Bhagavad Gita

4.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to establish the perceptions of teachers and élite personalities about the role of the Bhagavad Gita for Values Education in Life Orientation. According to Bodhananda (2005)⁵⁴, the Bhagavad Gita as a religious and spiritual text deals with the breakdown of a healthy, competent human being in a very stressful situation and his active confrontation with these challenges. Life Orientation⁵⁵ too, requires learners to identify and confront challenges using acquired knowledge, values, skills, and strategies. Values, values development, and moral resurrection are goals that are common to both the Bhagavad Gita and Life Orientation.

This chapter presents the data analysis. It focuses on teachers' attitudes and perceptions of the Bhagavad Gita as well as the views of the élite personalities on the Bhagavad Gita and Values Education. It thus responds to the aim of this study, which is to determine the possible influence of the Bhagavad Gita for Values Education in Life Orientation.

Within this context, this chapter thus responds to two critical questions asked in the study:

- What are educators' perceptions/attitudes of the possible use of the Bhagavad Gita for Values Education in Life Orientation?
- How do these perceptions/attitudes inspire Values Education in Life Orientation?

In this chapter, the term '*teacher participants*' will be used to refer to teachers who participated in the questionnaire survey and '*élite personalities*' will be used to refer those who participated in the focus group discussion.

⁵⁴ http://www.sambodh.org/September2004/messages/gita_psychology.htm

⁵⁵ National Curriculum Statement Grades 10-12 (General); Learning Programme Guidelines-Life Orientation (29 April 2005).

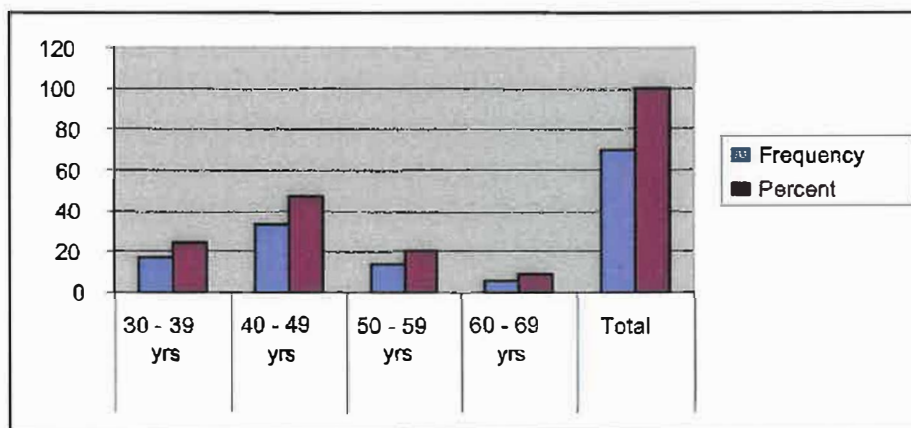
This chapter is divided into four sections. It begins with a discussion of biographical data, which includes the religious affiliation of the participants. The next section presents an inductive thematic analysis of the data, which commences with Knowledge of the Bhagavad Gita and Personal Life and then progresses to another major emerging theme, Life Orientation and the Bhagavad Gita.

4.2 Biographical Data

This section serves as an introduction to the teacher participants and elite personalities in this study. The following information in respect of the teacher participants and elite personalities is presented: age, gender, marital status, education and place of residence.

4.2.1 Age and Gender of Teacher Participants and Elite Personalities

Figure 4.1: Age Group of Teacher Participants

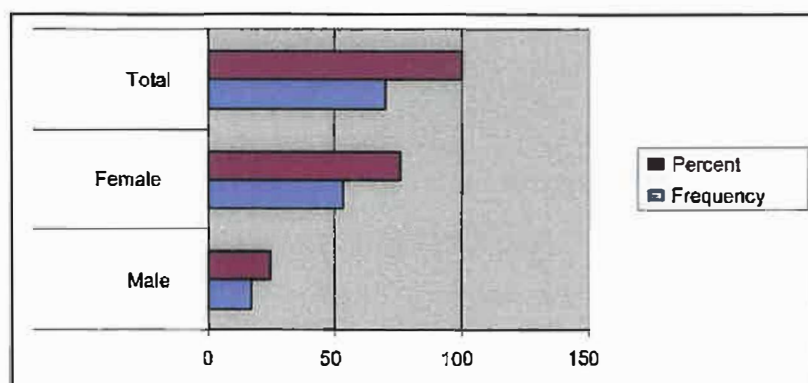


The results in Figure 4.1 reveal that 24.3 % of the teacher participants are between 30-39 years, 47.1 % are between 40-49 years, 20.0 % are between 50-59 years, 8.6 % are between 60-69 years. None of the teacher participants in this study belongs to the 20-29 year age group. The majority of teacher participants are between the ages of 40 and 49 years. This indicates that there is a perhaps a senior group of Life Orientation teachers in the Chatsworth area who have a minimum of nine to ten years teaching experience. It is interesting to note that 8.6% of the teacher participants are between the ages of 60 and 69.

Generally, teachers in South Africa retire between the ages of 60 and 65. Furthermore, in 1997, the Department of Education introduced and implemented its teacher redeployment policy (Jansen, 2000; Motala & Pampallis, 2001). The redeployment meant that teachers from more privileged schools and areas could be moved to disadvantaged schools and areas. In May 1996, the Voluntary Severance Package (VSP) was offered (Jansen, 2000). Many experienced educators, especially in Mathematics and Science took advantage of this package. In spite of several teachers opting for VSP (which resulted in teachers between the ages of 50 and 60 taking early retirement), there are still teachers above the age of 60 teaching Life Orientation.

The figure below shows the gender composition of the teacher participants.

Figure 4.2: Gender Composition of Teacher Participants



In the figure above, the gender dispersion of teacher participants in this project is presented. In terms of gender, 24.3 % are males and 75.7 % are females. The larger percentage of female teacher participants than male can be attributed to the larger number of female teachers employed within the Department of Education. According to the Education Management Information System (EMIS) of the Department of Education in KwaZulu-Natal, 69.6% of the total teaching workforce in public schools is female (Balkaran, 2007). The questionnaires for this study were administered at 49 primary schools and 22 secondary schools in the Clatsworth District of KwaZulu-Natal. The larger number of primary schools could also be a reason for the higher percentage of

female teachers. According to Carrim, Postma and Christie (2003), the student enrolment in the Bachelor of Primary Education Degree (BPrim Ed) during the period 1980 to 1999 reflected that the majority of students were female, and they attribute this to the thinking that women are viewed as mothers, nurturers and care givers.

The gender composition of the élite personalities is presented in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Gender Affiliation of Élite Personalities

Participant	Gender
BM (Academic – Chair)	Male
PP (Divine Life Society)	Male
RP (ISKCON)	Male
MKA (Vedanta Centre)	Male
JR (Vedanta Institute)	Male
JJ (Academic)	Female

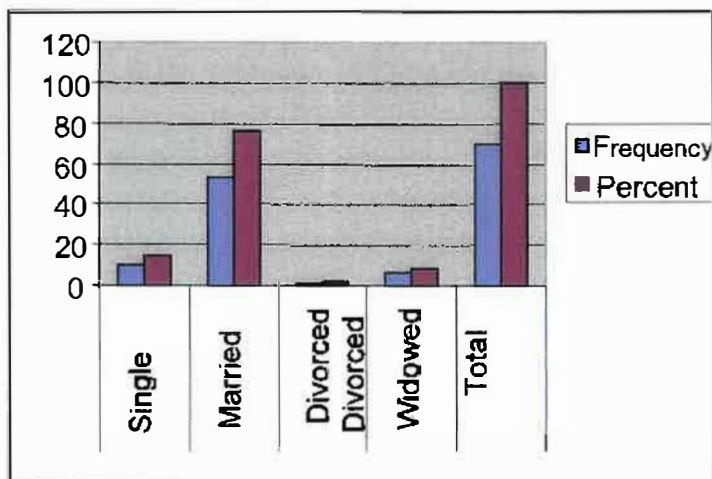
Of the 6 élite personalities (including the Chair), 5 (83.3%) are male, while only 1 (16.7%) participant is female. This was not deliberate. Invitations were extended to both male and female members of the different organisations; however, not all responded. It does, however, reflect the patriarchal structure of Hindu organisations in South Africa. The apparently biased gender composition of the élite personalities would not impact negatively on the data obtained or on the findings thereof. This is because the themes (such as contradictions in the Bhagavad Gita, war and violence in the Bhagavad Gita and the moral probity of the Bhagavad Gita) covered in the focus group discussion⁵⁶, were not dependent upon particular gendered views.

⁵⁶ Explained in Chapter 3.

4.2.2 Marriage: A Secondary Factor

Figure 4.3 below indicates that 14.3% of the teacher participants were single while 75.7 % of the teacher participants were married. The question that arises is, what is the relationship between marital status and this study? More specifically, the issue is whether there is any relation between marital status and being an effective teacher? According to a study conducted at the Southern Oregon College of Education (McAulay, 2008) ,administrators, teachers, parents and students all agreed that marital status was quite a secondary factor and entirely immaterial. Moreover, the study showed that each teacher, no matter the age, sex or marital status, had a contribution to make to the school system, and that a good school has a balance between age and youth, male and female, of single and married persons.

Figure 4.3: Marital status of Teacher Participants



4.2.3 Education Profile of Participants

In this sub-section dealing with the biographical data of the participants in this study, the education profile of the teacher participants and the élite personalities is presented.

Table 4.2: Education Level of Teacher Participants

Education	Percent
Matric	7.1
Diploma	30.0
Undergraduate	20.0
Post graduate	41.4
Other	1.4
Total	100.0

While it is generally accepted that the minimum entry level for a teacher is a three year post matriculation diploma, the above table shows that 7.1% of the teacher participants have only a matriculation certificate. It is not uncommon to find lowly qualified personnel employed by school governing bodies.⁵⁷ According to Hindle⁵⁸ (2008), there were 127 000 teachers who were either unqualified or under qualified in the education system. Hindle reported to parliament that these teachers had been appointed by schools which did not do enough to find the right teachers, and instead opted for unqualified people from their communities⁵⁹. Such teachers are employed either as relief teachers (in place of those on leave) or to reduce the teaching load of the state paid educators in their school. The learning area or subject for which the educator will be employed varies from school to school depending on priorities. In such cases, schools employ people with a matriculation certificate. This could be one possible explanation as to why 7.1% of the sample population possesses only a matriculation diploma.

In Table 4.3 that follows, the highest qualification of the élite personalities in the seminar discussion is shown.

⁵⁷ According to Sithole (1995), the school governing body (SGB) oversees the operationalisation and implementation of school policy. The SGB comprises of parents of the learners in the school, staff employed at the school and learner representatives in the case of secondary schools (Karlsson, Pampallis & Sithole, 1996).

⁵⁸ Director General of Education in South Africa 2008.

⁵⁹ Ngilwa, S. (2008). No more unqualified teachers – Hindle. *Pretoria News*, 28 February 2008.

Table 4.3: Education Level of Élite Personalities

Participant	Highest Qualification
BM (Academic – Chair)	Ph.D (Geography)
PP (Divine Life Society)	Ph.D (Mathematics)
RP (ISKCON)	B A LLB
MKA (Vedanta Center)	Ph.D (Management)
JR (Vedanta Institute)	Diploma in Vedanta Philosophy
JJ (Academic)	M Ed (Religion Education)

The personalities that participated in this seminar are referred to as *élite*. According to the Concise Oxford Dictionary (1989: 312), the word *élite* means *select group or class*. The use of the word *élite* to describe the seminar participants in this study is not unique. Stephens (2005) conducted a study which involved interviews with *élite* and ultra *élite* macro-economists, people who were experts in the field of economics. The *élite* personalities are a select group of individuals who are highly respected in academic, religious, social and philanthropic spheres of life, as is evident from the highest qualifications of each participant shown in Table 4.7 above. The term personality is used since these individuals are important public figures who occupy important positions in the religious organisations that they represent. (Refer to Chapter Three for organisational details). In particular, they are closely connected to Values Education and the Bhagavad Gita, by virtue of the religious and academic institutions to which they belong.

The chapter will now proceed to discuss the religious affiliation of the teacher participants as well as that of the *élite* personalities involved in this study.

4.3 Religious Affiliation

In this section, the teacher participants' and the *élite* personalities' religious affiliation (Hindu, Christian, Muslim, etc.), the religious movements to which respondents belong, and their attendance at religious services⁶⁰ are presented.

⁶⁰ Generally the word *service* is used to denote a religious meeting. This is a common term used quite extensively. Hence the word *service*, meaning a religious gathering at a place of worship has been used in both the questionnaire and in this research report.

4.3.1 Teacher Participants

The religious affiliation of the teacher participants is presented in Table 4.4 that follows.

Table 4.4: Religious Affiliation

Religious Affiliation	Percent
Hindu – Sanathanist/Puranic (1)	38.6
Hindu – Arya Samajist (2)	2.9
Hindu – Shaivite (3)	11.4
Hindu – Vaishnavite (4)	4.3
Hindu – Vedantin (5)	1.4
Muslim (6)	1.4
Christian (7)	5.7
Other (8)	10.0
No Specific Affiliation	12.9
Arya Samajist & Christian	1.4
Shaivite & Vaishnavite	1.4
Arya Samajist & No specific affiliation	1.4
Total	92.9
No Response	7.1
Total	100.0

It is evident that the majority of the respondents belonged to the Hindu faith. Even though only 38.6% indicated Hindu-Sanathanist/Puranic⁶¹, those who indicated Arya Samajist⁶² (2.9%), Shaivite (11.4%), Vaishnavite (4.3%) and Vedantin⁶³ (1.4%) all fall within the context of the Hindu Religion. Of the total number of teacher participants, one was Christian and one was Muslim. However, it should also be noted that 10.0% of the respondents indicated religious affiliation as other, without specifying what other is, and

⁶¹ Hindu-Sanathanist/Puranic: The Sanathanist Hindu is not centred on a particular founder. It is an open tradition that encourages a diversity of approaches. Sanathanist Hindus believe that God assumes human form from time to time and that the Vedas, the Upanishads, the Puranas, the Shastras, the Ramayana, Mahabharata and the Bhagavad Gita contain all the eternal truths of religion. The Sanathanist Hindu performs and believes in puja of deities (Maharaj, 2000: 1).

⁶² Arya Samajist: The Arya Samaj, a Hindu reform movement, was founded by Swami Dayanand in 1875. It is not a new kind of religion, nor is it another kind of religious sect. The Arya Samaj was established to spread the ancient knowledge of the Vedas. The purpose of the Arya Samaj was to move Hindu Dharma away from all the fictitious beliefs. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arya_Samaj)

⁶³ Vedantin: Vedanta, which literally means 'end of all knowledge', is a spiritual tradition in the Upanishads that is concerned with self-realization by which one understands the ultimate nature of reality or Brahman. The follower of Vedanta is called a Vedantin. (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vedanta>)

12.9% indicated no specific affiliation. One respondent indicated religious affiliation as Hindu-Arya Samajist and Christian. One participant classified religious affiliation as Hindu-Shaivite⁶⁴ and Vaishnavite⁶⁵ and one respondent indicated Hindu-Arya Samajist and no specific affiliation. The Guru (or spiritual teacher) of Swami Dayanand Saraswathi (founder of the Arya Samaj Movement) had “rejected much popular Hinduism, its innumerable gods, annual pilgrimages, image worship and other features of Puranic Hinduism” (Bishop, 1982: 52). It should come as no surprise then that one of the respondents classified him/herself as a Hindu Arya Samajist with no specific affiliation. The aim of this study is to look for possibilities of the Bhagavad Gita for values education in Life Orientation. The Hindu Arya Samajist with no specific affiliation will still be relevant to this study as the Arya Samajist accepts the authenticity of the Bhagavad Gita. The difference between the Arya Samajist’s interpretation of the Bhagavad Gita and the Sanathanist is that for the Sanathanist Shri Krishna is an incarnation of God, while for the Arya Samajist he is a highly elevated human being⁶⁶. It is proposed, however, that this will not impact negatively on the possibilities of the Bhagavad Gita for Values Education in Life Orientation.

4.3.2 Élite Personalities

In the table below, the religious affiliation of the elite personalities is presented.

Table 4.5: Religious Affiliation of Élite Personalities

Participant	Religious Affiliation
BM (Academic – Chair)	Hindu
PP (Divine Life Society)	Hindu
RP (ISKCON)	Hindu
MKA (Vedanta Center)	Hindu
JR (Vedanta Institute)	Hindu
JJ (Academic)	Christian

⁶⁴Shaivite: Shaivism is a branch of Hinduism that worships Shiva as the supreme God. Followers of Shaivism are called Shaivites. (<http://www.religionfacts.com/hinduism/sects/shaivism.htm>)

⁶⁵ Vaishnavite: Vaishnavism is a branch of Hinduism in which Vishnu or one of his incarnations (usually Krishna or Rama) is worshipped as the supreme God. Followers of Vaishnavism are called Vaishnavites. (<http://www.religionfacts.com/hinduism/sects/vaishnavism.htm>)

⁶⁶ Anecdotal evidence based on the author’s active engagement in the cultural and religious life of the Hindu community.

We see from Table 4.9 above that 5 of the 6 participants belong to the Hindu faith. However, as explained in Chapter 3, each subscribes to a particular school or several schools of Hindu Philosophy. BM is a practising Sanathanist, meaning that he subscribes to the ideas that Sanathan Dharma is an open tradition with a diversity of approaches. BM is also the President of the Sanathan Dharma Sabha of South Africa, a controlling national body for Sanathan Hindus. PP is an executive member of the Divine Life Society of South Africa. The Divine Life Society was founded by Swami Sivananda Saraswati in 1936 in Rishikesh, India (McKean, 1996). The Society has branches across many parts of the world including the Divine Life Society, South Africa (Morris, 2006). One of the aims of the Divine Life Society is to disseminate spiritual knowledge through the publication of books, pamphlets and magazines on the subjects of Yoga and Vedanta⁶⁷. RP is a member of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON), also known as the Hare Krishna Movement. This movement was founded in 1966 by A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada in New York City (Gibson, 2002). ISKCON was formed to spread the practice of bhakti yoga or devotion to God⁶⁸. One important aspect of the philosophy of ISKCON is the belief that the individual soul is an eternal personal identity, which does not ultimately merge into any formless light or void. It is through this particular philosophy that ISKCON differs from the monistic schools of Hinduism⁶⁹. According to Laderman (2003), ISKCON is a monotheistic tradition, which has its roots in the theistic Vedanta traditions. MKA is a member of the Vedanta Centre for Management and Leadership in India and South Africa. He has been involved in the study, research and assimilation of Vedanta philosophy. JR belongs to the Vedanta Institute of South Africa. JJ is a practising Christian.

4.3.3 Religious Organisational Affiliation of Teacher Participants

In response to question B 7 in the questionnaire: *Are you a member of any religious movement or organisation?*, it was found that of the total number of 70 teacher participants, 80.0 % replied in the affirmative and 20.0 % in the negative.

⁶⁷ <http://www.sivananda.dls.org.za>

⁶⁸ <http://www.news.iskcon>

⁶⁹ <http://www.news.iskcon>

The table that follows shows the results of the different faith organisations to which teacher participants belong.

Table 4.6: Organisational Affiliation of Teacher Participants

Religious Organisation	Frequency	Percent
Not applicable	9	12.9
Ramakrishna Centre of S A	4	5.7
Divine Life Society	1	1.4
Hare Krishna	4	5.7
Sai Baba	15	21.4
Radha Soami	1	1.4
Hindu Temple	24	34.3
Other	5	7.1
Ramakrishna/Divine Life	1	1.4
Hare Krishna/Ramakrishna	1	1.4
Total	65	92.9
Missing System	5	7.1
Total	70	100.0

The teacher participants belong to a wide variety of well-structured Hindu organisations like the Ramakrishna Centre of South Africa (5.7%), the Divine Life Society of South Africa (1.4%), Hare Krishna {International Society for Krishna Consciousness, 5.7%), Sai Baba {Sathya Sai Organisation of South Africa} (21.4%) and Radha Soami (1.4%). There are 34.3% who indicated that they belong to a Hindu Temple. One teacher participant indicated the religious movement as the Ramakrishna Centre of South Africa and the Divine Life Society of South Africa, while another teacher participant indicated the Hare Krishna and Hindu Temple. Even though two teacher participants indicated Arya Samajist as religious affiliation (refer to Table 4.8), none of the teacher participants indicated membership to the Arya Prathinidhi Sabha⁷⁰, a co-coordinating organisation for followers of the Arya Samaj. However, it could be possible that they belong to one of the many district branches of the Arya Prathinidhi Sabha. Of all the movements/organizations (Ramakrishna Centre of South Africa, Divine Life Society of

⁷⁰ Arya Prathindhi Sabha of South Africa: This umbrella body was formed in Durban in 1925 to bring together a number of Arya Samaj organisations that had been established in Natal (now KwaZulu-Natal). One of the aims of the APS was to encourage the establishment, organisation and consolidation of Arya Samajs and Vedic institutions in South Africa. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arya_Samaj_in_South_Africa)

South Africa, Hare Krishna and Sai Organisation), most teacher participants (21.4%) belong to the Sai Organisation. Several reasons could be forwarded. Firstly, the Sai Organisation transcends all language barriers (as do the Divine Life Society and the Ramakrishna Centre) and includes Hindus of all linguistic groups. Secondly, it subscribes to all the popular Hindu scriptures such as the Vedas, Upanishads, Epics, Bhagavad Gita and Puranas. Thirdly, it incorporates the worship of the different deities (Shri Rama, Shri Krishna, Shiva and Shakti) and it is most favourable to the philosophy of Avatar (Lord Vishnu incarnating in human form). However, the Sai Organisation maintains that Shri Sai Baba himself is an incarnation of God. According to Kasturi (2003: 1):

Bhagawan Shri Sathya Sai Baba is the Sanathana Sarathi, the Timeless Charioteer who communicated the Geetha Shastra to Adithya and helped Manu and King Ikshvaku to know it. He was the charioteer of Arjuna during the great battle between good and evil fought at Kurukshetra.

Fourthly, the Sai Organisation considers itself to be a service organisation and not a religious organisation (Unity of Faiths White Paper).⁷¹ Hence in the last decade or so, it has attempted to re-think the way it operates and has been trying to align all the major religions to its fold through the philosophy of serving human beings. Lastly, the charismatic nature of Sai Baba and the belief in Sai miracles as a divine blessing could also be a possible reason for the popularity of the Sai Organisation. The former President of the Sai Organisation in South Africa, Dr Reggie Reddy (2004: 4) expressed the view that "It [miracles] is a personal and unique occurrence for their particular spiritual evolution".⁷² To the typical Hindu, the avatar or incarnation of Rama⁷³ and Krishna stand foremost. Even though Rama assumed the role of a man and reflected the mental afflictions and agitations of a man, he is known to have performed supernatural feats. For example, according to the Ramayana, he stepped on a stone and the stone came alive in the form of a lady called *Ahalya*.⁷⁴ However, compared to the miracles of Krishna, those of Rama may look less impressive. According to Ramaswamy (1998: 38), "Krishna performed miracle after miracle to instil confidence in the minds of men that he was very

⁷¹ <http://www.srisathyasai.org.za/programs/ReadArticle.asp?ID=69>

⁷² Pillay, P. (2004). Divine Blessings: Sai Miracles in South Africa, *Post*, 17 March 2004.

⁷³ Rama was the legendary king of Ayodhya in ancient India. In Sanathan Dharma he is the 7th avatar of Vishnu. The primary source of the life and journey of Rama is the Ramayana of Sage Valmiki. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rama>.

⁷⁴ According to Tulsidas (1986: 190), Ahalya was cursed by her husband for alleged infidelity and was turned into a stone. When Rama touched the stone with his feet, Ahalya emerged.

much for them and with them to take solace and encouragement. For example, on the battlefield of Kurukshetra, as he was advising Arjuna on his duties as a Kshatriya (warrior class), he revealed his Vishwaroop or universal form. Arjuna saw in Krishna the entire universe". It can therefore be argued by the adherents of Sai Baba that his performance of miracles is no different to those performed by Rama and Krishna, and that like Rama and Krishna, Sai Baba sometimes has to perform supernatural feats to show his real superself (Ramaswamy, 1998).

The elite personalities belong to different religious movements, as detailed in Chapter Three of this study. Every attempt was made to bring together a group of personalities that not only represented the different orthodox schools of Hindu philosophy, but also those from different contexts with differing philosophical approaches. According to Hinnels (1972), the philosophic systems may be divided into the orthodox schools and the unorthodox schools. The six major Indian philosophies (Sankhya, Vedanta, Mimamsa, Vaisheshika, Yoga and Nyaya) are the orthodox philosophies, which have accepted the Vedas as the authority for their beliefs and practices (Beck, 2009). The elite personalities in this seminar series can easily be categorised into one or more of these schools of philosophy, as is apparent in the description of the institutions given in Chapter Three.

In the last sub-section of the biographical data, the teacher participant's participation in religious programmes and their views on the purposes of such religious services or meetings is discussed.

4.3.4 Divine Communion

The teacher participants were asked if they attended *satsang* or religious services (meetings), as well as the purposes for attending such religious meetings. However, before the analysis proceeds, a discussion of the meaning of *satsang* is offered.

Satsang is made up of two words, *sath* (truth/good) and *sangh* (in the company of). In the first part of verse 26 of chapter 17 of the Bhagavad Gita, Shri Krishna says:

सद्भावे साधुभावे च सदित्येतत्प्रयुज्यते

sadbhāve sādhubhāve ca sadityetatprayujyate

The Absolute Truth is the objective of devotional sacrifice, and it is indicated by the word sat.

Together these two words mean to be in the company of truth or of good people. The Vedas have pronounced on the superiority of combined action and a shared, common destiny:

समानो मन्त्रः समितिः समानी समानं मनः सह चित्तमेधाम् ।

समानं मन्त्रमभि मन्त्रये वः समानेने वो हविषा जुहोमिः ॥

samāno mantrah samitiḥ samānī samānam manaḥ saha cittameṣām ।

samānam mantramabhi mantraye vaḥ samānene vo haviṣā juhomiḥ ॥

May our prayers be one and the same. May we belong to one fraternity. May our minds move in accord, and hearts work in unison for one supreme goal. Let us be inspired for one common ideal.

(Rigveda: Mandala10:sukta 191 -- sangathana sukta)

Besides providing for a common, united society and a progressive outlook, this mantra also implies that actions which have the collaboration and support of all members of society will be just, beneficial and successful. The Srimad Bhagavatham also says सतां प्रसंगात् satām prasaṅgāt, meaning that “transcendental subject matter becomes clear in the association of the devotees” (Prabhupada, 1986: 701)⁷⁵. The main objective of *satsang* is to develop God-consciousness and to educate the participants in the tenets of Sanathan Dharma⁷⁶. Accordingly a general *satsang* may include, among others, recitation of mantras (hymns), invocation to deities, singing of bhajans and kirtans, and singing of Chalisas (vivid accounts of God’s glories). Quite often these general *satsangs* may also include discourses on the Bhagavad Gita and/or Ramayana or other primary and secondary scriptures. *Satsang* implies the company of good and truthful people, who are seeking God, or who are relentlessly pursuing the truth. *Satsang* can involve a few people, or a great many, gathered in a common purpose of spiritual advancement. Being merely in the company of virtuous, righteous human beings is a blessed experience - धन्य

⁷⁵ *Prabhupada* is a term of endearment used by his devotees. His monastic name is Bhaktivedanta Swami.

⁷⁶ Hinduism is also known as Sanathan Dharma, which means eternal religion.

घदी जोह सत्संगा (dhanya ghaḍhī joi satsaṅgā)⁷⁷ - Blessed is the time spent in divine communion.

In response to question B 9 on attending *satsang*, the results show that 72.9% of the respondents attended *satsang* or religious services. Attending a religious meeting or keeping the association of good individuals has the potential to contribute significantly to a programme of moral regeneration. However, one has to be mindful of the fact that simply attending a religious meeting or keeping the company of good individuals provides no guarantee that moral regeneration would occur. The potential for religious meetings contributing to moral regeneration depends on the kind of activities that are conducted. It was therefore important to get the respondents to indicate for what purpose they attended *satsang*. The results are shown in Table 4.7.

Table 4.7: Purpose for attending *satsang* /religious services

[Question B 10 from the questionnaire: *For what purpose do you attend these satsang/religious services?*]

Satsang Purpose	Percent
Singing	1.4
Knowledge	10.0
Prasad	1.4
Other	7.1
NA	18.6
Singing & Knowledge	1.4
Singing & Prasad	7.1
Knowledge & Prasad	5.7
Singing, Knowledge & Prasad	21.4
Knowledge, Prasad & Other	1.4
Singing, Knowledge, Prasad & Other	17.1
Total	92.9
No response	7.1
Total	100.0

There is a general understanding that *satsang* or religious services should only include the singing of the praises of God. It is evident from Table 4.6 that 10% go to *satsang* for

⁷⁷ Aranyakaanda of Tulsi Ramayana, page 874.

knowledge only; 1.4% go for knowledge and singing; 5.7% go for knowledge and Prasad⁷⁸; 21.4% go for knowledge, singing and Prasad and 1.4% go for knowledge, Prasad and other. This means that 64.1% of the respondents consider the attainment of knowledge from the *satsang* as quite important. Clearly the singing of hymns only will not satisfy the desire for knowledge. Hence, it can be concluded that the respondents in this survey subscribe to a broad understanding of the purpose of *satsang*. For example, Sivananda (1980) maintained that the study of books written by esteemed individuals also constitutes *satsang* as this signifies a holy communion with the authors. He also considers the study of scripture at some convenient time to be *satsang*. Irrespective of what that scripture might be, this kind of *satsang* has the potential of contributing to moral regeneration. Therefore, *satsang* (reading, discussion and study of scriptures, the company of saintly persons, singing the praise of God), is an important step in re-establishing morals among teachers and learners at schools.

In the above section the biographical data relating to the teacher participants and élite personalities has been discussed. This thesis is arguing for the inclusion of the values of the Bhagavad Gita in the Life Orientation and Religious Education curriculum in South African schools. This means that, in the arguments for making the teachings of the Bhagavad Gita accessible to South African learners of all religious persuasions, the views of the teachers and élite personalities of different religious persuasions, are required.

In the next section, the teacher participants and the élite personalities' knowledge of the Bhagavad Gita is discussed.

4.4 Knowledge of the Bhagavad Gita and Personal Life

Within the theme of knowledge of the Bhagavad Gita and Personal Life, several sub-themes have emerged.

Firstly, the data relating to the teacher participant's acquaintance with and awareness of the Bhagavad Gita will be discussed. Secondly, the importance of the Bhagavad Gita in

⁷⁸ Literally, it means a gracious gift, anything edible that is offered to a deity.

the lives of the teacher participants will be assessed. The third sub-theme to be discussed in this section is that of spirituality. This will be followed by a discussion relating to teacher participants' and élite personalities' understandings of the concept truth. Fifthly, the sub-theme of the appeal of the Bhagavad Gita will be discussed. More specifically, the impact of the reading and/or hearing of the Bhagavad Gita, the moral probity of the Bhagavad Gita, Values Education and the Bhagavad Gita and *bhakti* (devotion) as a value, are discussed. This theme is concluded with a discussion of the apparent contradictions in the message of the Bhagavad Gita.

4.4.1 Preservation of Heritage

In order to obtain information on their knowledge of the Bhagavad Gita and its impact on their personal life, the teacher participants were asked to indicate how they were introduced to the Bhagavad Gita as well as for how long they have been aware of this scripture.

Table 4.8: First acquaintance with the Bhagavad Gita

First Acquaintance	Percent
Grandparents	4.3
Parents	10.0
Family	4.3
Literature	11.4
Religious Organisation	4.3
Talks, Festivals, Ceremonies	5.7
Satsang	2.9
Other	2.9
Combination of all of the above	45.8
Total	90.0
No Response	10.0
Total	100.0

As indicated in Table 4.7, teacher participants were introduced to the Bhagavad Gita in various ways (45.8% indicated that they were introduced to the Bhagavad Gita through a combination of grandparents, parents, family, literature, religious organisations, talks, festivals, and ceremonies). The above statistics indicate the important role that the family

plays in the transmission of religious scriptures (18.6% - grandparents + parents + family). The followers of Sanathan Dharma (explained earlier) have faced the onslaughts from and indignation imposed by foreign rulers for many centuries. For example, according to Kane (1977: 1617):

Among the numerous civilizations and cultures that flourished in the world there are only two (namely, the Indian and the Chinese) that have survived and kept up a continuity of tradition for four thousand years (if not more) in spite of recurrent invasions by foreign hordes like those by Persians, Greeks, Scythians, Huns, Turks and notwithstanding internal conflicts and convulsions. India absorbed such people and made many Greeks, and other foreigners adopt the spiritual ideologies of India and found for them place in the Indian social fabric.

However, the inherent strength of the Sanathan culture, it is believed, helped its followers to withstand these onslaughts. According to Shukla (1989), even though the followers of Sanathan Dharma in the 19th century were unlettered, Sanathan Dharma has survived due to the oral tradition, which has preserved the religio-cultural heritage of Sanathan Dharma. "History has evinced that by virtue of this oral tradition and through literature, Hindus have carried with them their profound religious and cultural traditions to whichever part of the world they have settled" (Shukla, 1989: 163).

Similarly, Swami Chinmayananda (2006: 1) states: "Our Bharatiya⁷⁹ culture, as expressed through Hinduism, never died through all these millenniums, only because our culture had the required elasticity to embrace all the new dimensions into which our society grew during the march of time". It is therefore not surprising that 18.6% of the teacher participants indicated that their first acquaintance with the Bhagavad Gita was through their grandparents, parents and family. According to Littler (2008), parents as well as grandparents have been known to exercise a notable and positive influence on young people between the ages of 8 and 14 years. Littler (2008: 52) reports in a study:

If grandparents are regular churchgoers, then 61.0% of young teenagers are also likely to be regular attenders, with a further 18.0% attending occasionally.

The example of the grandparents, parents, teachers and elders in society is crucial in the

⁷⁹ *Bharat* is the Sanskrit/Hindi term for India. *Bharatiya* means Indian.

restoration of morality in society. The Bhagavad Gita (2: 40) says that in the ruin of the family, its ancient laws are destroyed (Radhakrishnan, 1967). This in turn leads to the whole family yielding to lawlessness (Radhakrishnan, 1967).

Teachers were asked to indicate the number of years for which they have been aware of the Bhagavad Gita.

Table 4.9: Teacher Participants' Awareness and Period of Awareness of the Bhagavad Gita

Age	Percent	30 – 39 yrs %	40 – 49 yrs %	50 – 59 yrs %	60 – 69 yrs %
0 – 9 yrs	5.7	1.5	3.1		1.5
10 – 15 yrs	10.0	6.2	4.6		
16 – 19 yrs	7.1	3.1	1.5	3.1	
20 – 29 yrs	34.3	7.7	26.2	3.1	
30 – 39 yrs	17.1	6.2	7.7		4.6
Above 40 yrs	18.6		3.1	13.8	3.1
Total	92.9				
No Response	7.1				
Total	100.0	24.6	46.2	20.0	9.2

More than two thirds (70%) of the teacher participants in this project have been aware of the Bhagavad Gita for more than twenty years (Table 4.8). These results point to the popularity of the Bhagavad Gita and that many of the teacher participants have been aware of the Bhagavad Gita for almost their entire life. This is not surprising. According to Soumen De (1996), Western interest in the Bhagavad Gita began around the 18th century and it has been included in the famous collection of Sacred Books of the East. The Bhagavad Gita has found favour with people of various religious persuasions. Sophia Wadia cited in Tilak (1936: xli), for example, has written:

The message of the Gita has a universal appeal. The Gita symbolizes the eternal struggle between the material and spiritual in every human being. Any thinking individual is capable of recognizing that the story of the Gita is the story of life... Thus any deluded mortal of any community using the lessons taught can become enlightened and immortal.

According to Valea (2007: 1), the great success and popularity of the Bhagavad Gita in both the East and West is because it does not require withdrawal from social life, or the performance of severe austerities.

The focus now turns to the importance of the Bhagavad Gita in the lives of the teacher participants.

4.4.2 The Importance of the Bhagavad Gita

In this section, the results obtained to question C 3 in the questionnaire, *How important is the Bhagavad Gita to you*, are presented.

Table 4.10: Importance of Bhagavad Gita

Importance	Percent
N/A	10.0
Not so important	5.7
Important	35.7
Very Important	41.4
Total	92.9
No Response	7.1
Total	100.0

The above table results reveal the importance of the Bhagavad Gita to teacher participants in this project: 10.0 % not applicable, 5.7 % not so important, 35.7 % important, 41.4 % very important, 7.1% no response. The valued place of the Bhagavad Gita in the lives of the teacher participants is perhaps summed up in the following words of one respondent:

R 67⁸⁰: G I T A stands for "Gita is the answer". It is a manual for life because the solutions to all our problems are contained therein.

Hunt et al (1974) has described the Bhagavad Gita as a personal book. The Bhagavad Gita is also said to be a celestial poem, whose teachings have nothing to do with religious rites, priests, or temples. It deals with the problems of life in this world. In view of the aforementioned and the fact that the Bhagavad Gita focuses on the restoration of a healthy individual who is in temporary crisis, it could be argued that the Bhagavad Gita is a manual for life. Other teacher participants held the view that the Bhagavad Gita provides enlightenment, brings one closer to God, and advocates good morals. For

⁸⁰ Each questionnaire received back from the teacher participants was allocated a number.

example, one teacher participant⁸¹ in commenting on the popularity of the Bhagavad Gita referred to God-consciousness. According to Velmans (1997), consciousness encompasses all that we are aware of, including experiences such as thoughts, feelings, images, dreams and body experiences. The data is therefore suggesting that the Bhagavad Gita makes us aware of all our experiences that come to us through thoughts, images, dreams and body experiences. The word *consciousness* is also sometimes synonymous with self-consciousness (Velmans, 1997). Webb (2008)⁸² argues that God, consciousness and soul (what he calls true self), are completely synonymous. Here again when the teacher participants refer to God-consciousness in the context of the Bhagavad Gita, they are suggesting that human beings are composed of the same essence as that which is called God (Webb, 2008)⁸³. He justifies this view by referring to the Christian scriptural injunction “love thy neighbour as thy self” (Leviticus, 19:18)⁸⁴. According to Webb, this injunction alludes to the fact that thy neighbour is thy self. This is the meaning behind the Vedic phrase “I am That”. “When personal consciousness expands, it reveals to the mediator the commonality of all people, places and things” (Webb, 2008: 4)⁸⁵. Webb is convinced that knowledge of consciousness breaks all ideological and social boundaries and that through it all, the apparent divisions in the world are rendered meaningless. Hence its universal appeal.

Another important sub-theme that has emerged from the research with the teacher participants and the élite personalities is that of spirituality.

4.4.3 Spirituality: Transcending the Realm of the Material

Spirituality formed an important component both in the questionnaire and the focus group discussion. In this section of the chapter, the views of the teacher participants, as well as that of the élite personalities, are discussed. An attempt was made to assess whether the

⁸¹ R53: Reading or listening to the Gita makes you feel closer to God. I have chanted with members who have good morals and practise the teachings of the Gita. Very good vibrations.

⁸² <http://www.eoni.com/~visionquest/library/godconsc.html>

⁸³ <http://www.eoni.com/~visionquest/library/godconsc.html>

⁸⁴ <http://www.topical-bible-studies.org/24-0003.htm>

⁸⁵ <http://www.eoni.com/~visionquest/library/godconsc.html>

teachers considered themselves to be more spiritual after acquainting themselves with the Bhagavad Gita.

A significant number (62.9%) of the teacher participants indicated that they consider themselves “more spiritual” since acquainting themselves with the Bhagavad Gita. A minority of 10% indicated that there was no difference to their spirituality. The teacher participants were asked to explain their answer to this question. The following comments taken from the questionnaire reflected the general feeling of the 62.9% of the teacher participants:

- R9: I attended a discourse given by a Puudit⁸⁶. I was told to read. It is over 22 years. I read the Gita everyday – two pages. I have been spiritually uplifted. I am able to find solutions to my problem by reading the Gita.
- R47: For years, I have been searching for the truth. I have read widely on matters spiritual. However, the Gita to me is the ultimate source of truth.
- R53: I consider myself ‘more spiritual’ because my religion/beliefs have moved from just performing ‘puja’⁸⁷ to a deeper understanding of life, death, human values, detachment from material world.

It would seem that for respondent 9, being spiritually uplifted means being able to find solutions to problems. In the Bhagavad Gita (2: 72), the reader is told that the way of spiritual life removes all forms of bewilderment. The first line of the verse states:

एषा ब्राह्मी स्थितिः पार्थ नैनां प्राप्य विमुह्यति ।

eṣā brāhmī sthitiḥ pārtha naināṁprāpya vimuhyati ।

That is the way of the spiritual and godly life, after attaining which a man is not bewildered.

(Prabhupada, 1986: 144)

Koenig (2008) has reported that spirituality is regarded as a possible source of positive mental states such as meaning and purpose of life. It is possible that when respondent 9 says that she is spiritually uplifted she could be alluding to the fact that the Bhagavad Gita has given meaning to her life. The shift in the way in which spirituality is being defined, is expressed by respondent 53 who also believed that spirituality goes beyond

⁸⁶ It refers to someone who is erudite in various subjects and who conducts religious ceremonies and offers counsel.

⁸⁷ A religious ritual performed honouring various deities.

the mechanical performance of prayer or deity worship and that being 'more spiritual' includes deeper understanding of 'life, death, human values, detachment from material world'.

The discussion of this chapter now proceeds to the views of the élite personalities on the issue of spirituality. The élite personalities were asked to define spirituality. As far as PP and JR were concerned, spirituality is closely linked to God, prayer and devotion. PP considers a spiritual person to be:

one who practices the teaching of the Bhagavad Gita.

Respondent 9 agrees as she considers herself to be more spiritual ever since she began reading the Bhagavad Gita on a daily basis. PP also maintains that:

if a person does not fix God as her/his ultimate goal, then no spirituality exists.

Similarly, for JR spirituality exists:

in the gratitude that we show to the power that exists in this universe.

RP in contrast defines spirituality as:

transcending the realm of the material or as coming out of darkness.

RP does not refer to God. MKA alludes to the link between God and spirituality when he defines spirituality as

the process of eradicating our worldly desires and strengthening the spiritual desires, then you get closer to divinity, closer to God.

Similarly, PP also refers to God in defining spirituality:

For me the definition of spirituality is intellectual curiosity. I think a spiritual person would be one who tries to practice the teaching of the Bhagavad Gita not just to read it. A person is spiritual if that person has that goal very fixed in his / her mind otherwise there is no spirituality.

RP referred to spirituality as that which inspires a person to transcend the realm of the material world. According to Hindu philosophy, the material, physical world is a temporary world. Put another way, the material world is not reality – it is an illusion. Accordingly, as long as a person remains immersed in the material or physical world, enjoying and engaging in sense gratification, there can be very little spiritual advancement. Prabhupada (1986: 311) also suggests that "a transcendentalist is supposed to give up all material activities for the sake of spiritual advancement in life".

MKA also referred to the distinction between spiritual and religious, concluding that a person may be religious but not spiritual:

A person may be highly religious but not necessarily spiritual. A person may be doing so-called material activity in the din and roar of the market place but his focus of attention is always something noble, he wants to serve people, he wants to help people. That person is far more spiritual than that person could be going to the temple, place of worship, pilgrimage but his focus is always upon what more I can get, how much more money I can get, how much more of help I can get. So he may be religious but not spiritual.

This sentiment is echoed by respondent 53⁸⁸ who sees spirituality as going beyond the mundane ritualistic worship prescribed by religion.

Koenig (2008) has suggested that traditionally spirituality was used to describe the deeply religious person. He goes on to argue that, the way in which spirituality is now defined includes the superficially religious person, the religious seeker, the seeker of well being and happiness, and the completely secular person.

Respondent 47⁸⁹ alludes to the fact the Bhagavad Gita is the ultimate source of truth. The next section interrogates the concept of truth from the perspective of the teacher participants and the elite personalities.

4.4.4 The Pursuit of Truth

The general view amongst teacher participants is that the Bhagavad Gita has helped them to develop a quest for personal and ultimate truths. While the questionnaire administered among the teacher participants did not specifically ask questions on the issue of truth, the word *truth* was either used or implied by the teacher participants in response to other questions.⁹⁰ For example, in answering the question on spirituality and acquaintance with

⁸⁸ I consider myself 'more spiritual' because my religion/beliefs have moved from just performing 'puja' to a deeper understanding of life, death, human values, detachment from material world.

⁸⁹ For years, I have been searching for the truth. I have read widely on matters spiritual. However, the Gita to me is the ultimate source of truth.

⁹⁰ Such as C 4, and C 10 in the questionnaire.

the Bhagavad Gita, respondent 47 said that after searching for the truth for several years, she found this truth in the Bhagavad Gita.

There is much disagreement among philosophers, scientists, and scholars on what the term *truth* actually means. From a religious point of view, most religious traditions have a body of doctrine that adherents of that religion view as truth. Unlike scientific truth or observed truth, religious truth often makes the claim of being either revealed or inspired by God. According to Sivananda (1980) truth is the seat of God and truth is God. According to Aurobindo (1970: 297), the Bhagavad Gita unveils the supreme and integral secret, which is the mystery of the transcendent Godhead who is in all and everywhere. Rauche cited in Ramson (2006: 158), makes the claim that truth either is “enacted” or is “historically embedded”. In other words, theories are interpretations from a particular perspective adopted by researchers.

According to the research findings of Ramson (2006), truth exists at different levels. Firstly, it may be historically or socially embedded. Secondly, truth is materially apparent, i.e. it relies on sense experience and thirdly there is transcendental truth which is not accessible by empirical science, but by a spiritual process as understood by devotees or adherents of a particular religion. This last level fits in with the Vedic concept of truth. According to the Vedas, there is a category of truth, which is only knowable through a guru, or spiritual master who is an expert in this field. However, many scholars and scientists consider the Vedic claim to divine origin mythology, and the study of the Vedas through a guru as unscholarly (Ramson, 2006). A likely question that arises is what do these scholars and scientists mean by the terms *scholarly* and *unscholarly*? A postmodernist, for example, would argue that these terms are relative. It would seem that these scholars and scientists are taking a modernistic and positivistic view to the Vedic claim. The Bhagavad Gita is a scholarly work (Tilak, 1936; Aurobindo, 1970; Jeste & Vahia, 2008). Eminent philosophers, scholars, and scientists of both the East and West have accepted the Bhagavad Gita’s idea that truth should be pursued under

the expert guidance of a spiritual teacher. Wilhelm von Humboldt⁹¹ for example, considered himself fortunate to have lived in a time when he could become acquainted with the wondrous things expressed in the Bhagavad Gita (Steiner, 2007). Similarly, J W Hauer (in Radhakrishnan, 1948: vii), official exponent of the German Faith and Sanskrit scholar gave the Bhagavad Gita a central place in the German Faith, calling it “a work of imperishable significance”.

As alluded to earlier in this section, the Vedas have extolled the virtues of a Guru in the pursuit of truth. Given that one of the aims of this study is to determine the impact of the Bhagavad Gita on values in education, and that truth is indeed a value, it is important therefore to look more closely at the Bhagavad Gita in our pursuit of truth. The Bhagavad Gita has highlighted in several places the importance of a guru and his role in the spiritual upliftment of an individual. For example, in the Bhagavad Gita (4: 34),

तद्विद्धि प्रणिपातेन परिप्रश्नेन सेवया । उपदेक्ष्यन्ति ते ज्ञानं ज्ञानिनस्तत्त्वदर्शिनः ॥

tadviddhi pranipātena paripraśnena sevayā

upadekṣyanti te jñānaṁ jñāninastattvadarśinaḥ ॥

Just try to learn the truth by approaching a spiritual master. Inquire from him submissively and render service unto him. The self-realized souls can impart knowledge unto you because they have seen the truth. (Prabhupada, 1986: 232-233)

RP referred to the need for a qualified teacher when studying the Bhagavad Gita. He explained further that when people enter any field of activity, they are bound to find contradictions. However, once they receive the guidance and teaching of a qualified expert in that field, the contradictions and confusion may disappear. RP is indeed echoing the sentiment of the Bhagavad Gita (9: 1):

इदं तु ते गुह्यतमं प्रवक्ष्याम्यनसूयवे । ज्ञानं विज्ञानसहितं यज्ज्ञात्वा मोक्षयसेऽशुभात् ॥

idaṁ tu te guhyatamaṁ pravakṣyāmyansūyave

jñānaṁ vijñānasahitaṁ yajjñātvā mokṣayase’śubhāt ॥

⁹¹ One of the great scholars in German cultural history whose life’s work encompasses the area of philosophy, literature, linguistics, anthropology and political thought. He headed the Department of Culture and Education at the Prussian Ministry of the Interior.

My dear Arjuna, because you are never nervous of Me, I shall impart to you this most confidential knowledge and realization, knowing which you shall be relieved of the miseries of material existence.

In this verse, the qualification for one to understand this message of the Bhagavad Gita is given. RP further elaborated on the above verse by saying, “If one is approaching it for genuine answers in how to overcome the maladies of material existence, here is the answer”. RP specifically refers to the qualification of one who studies the Bhagavad Gita. This is of particular interest to him, since an important aspect of the ISKCON movement is the *parampara* or disciplic succession. RP being an initiate of ISKCON is guided by the teachings of its founder Acharya, Srila Prabhupada (1997: 89), who has written, “If one wants standard transcendental knowledge, not upstart knowledge, one must receive it from the *parampara* system, the disciplic system”.

It would appear that the main protagonist in the Bhagavad Gita, Shri Krishna, is pointing to the fact that spiritual knowledge is not intended for that person whose mind is not free from jealousy. The Srimad Bhagavatam⁹² also alludes to the qualification of an individual as far as spiritual knowledge is concerned when it says that spiritual knowledge (or going back to the eternal abode - Godhead) cannot be achieved by the association of mental speculation or by academic scholars.

The aim of this study is to determine the perception of teachers and élite personalities on the possible role that the teachings of the Bhagavad Gita can play in Values Education in Life Orientation. The concern here is for general society and not just Hindu society or those who embrace the Bhagavad Gita in its totality. If one were to agree that the teachings of the Bhagavad Gita are made accessible to all, would one then agree with the views of the participants who are questioning the qualifications of those who study the Bhagavad Gita? The ‘truth’ of the Bhagavad Gita should be equally available to all, as is evidenced from Prabhupada’s (1997) commentary of the Bhagavad Gita. The views of the élite personalities are in agreement with that of Prabhupada (1997), whose argument is as follows: Transmigration is not a question of religion as religion is a kind of faith that

⁹² The Srimad-Bhagavatam is the science of Krishna, the Absolute Personality of Godhead of whom we have preliminary information from the text of the Bhagavad Gita (<http://vedabase.net/en1>).

develops according to time and circumstances. The reality is that we are spirit souls and the Bhagavad Gita gives a synopsis of how to act in this life. This is not Hindu culture. It is a scientific conception. Changing from child to boy to young man to old man is a fact and it applies to everyone. It is not a Hindu conception of religion. The implication here is that the Bhagavad Gita applies to all of humanity.

Both RP and PP have alluded to the idea of truth in their responses to the contradictions in the Bhagavad Gita. According to RP, there are “different ways” of acquiring knowledge: *pratyaksha* (direct sense perception), *anuman* (logical inference) and *shabda* (verbal testimony). In the research methodology chapter, reference was made to the three valid means of acquiring knowledge, according to the Sankhya school of philosophy. There are some truths, which are obtained by direct perception. In other words, experiences enable us to become wiser about the world around us. According to Sivananda (1980: 526), truth is the queen of values. He further suggests that other values such as righteousness, non-injury, chastity, purity, justice, harmony, forgiveness, goodness, dignity and modesty are various forms of truth. It can therefore be argued that learners in schools should be enabled to experience for themselves values such as those just mentioned. The idea of direct perception or own experiences fits in comfortably with one of the strategies suggested for the development of values in schools, i.e. *nurturing a culture of communication and participation in schools*.⁹³ The *pratyaksha* or direct perception as enumerated by the Sankhya system in the Bhagavad Gita has the potential to impact positively on Values Education in Life Orientation.

RP has referred to *shabda* or verbal testimony as a means of acquiring knowledge. *Shabda* refers to that knowledge which is revealed. This relates to epistemic theories of truth⁹⁴. Epistemic theories of truth analyse truths in terms of knowledge, belief, acceptance, verification, justification and perspective⁹⁵. Positivism, which is a kind of verification theory, advocates the use of sensory experiences to verify if something is true

⁹³ Refer to Section 4.5.2.5

⁹⁴ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Epistemic_theories_of_truth

⁹⁵ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Epistemic_theories_of_truth

or not. Scriptural knowledge is revealed knowledge or what Prabhupada (1986) refers to as “perfect knowledge”. According to RP, the person of mundane existence cannot verify this knowledge because he has limited imperfect senses.

PP’s views on truth and the Bhagavad Gita come out quite strongly when he says, “I think it is almost like an axiom that religious discourses are not meant for those who are intellectually curious”. PP expressed the view that:

The Bhagavad Gita is a book for practitioners and that the Bhagavad Gita is an example of a literature, which gives a very clear and concise direction to mankind on how to attain Godhood through the way we live, through the way we worship, our actions and the manner in which we should perform actions.

It has been seen in this section that the Bhagavad Gita has been regarded as a source of truth for the teacher participants. The élite personalities in accepting the Bhagavad Gita as a source of truth, have qualified their acceptance by stating that the pursuit of truth needs to be under the guidance of a spiritual expert. The élite personalities also alluded to the different ways (perception, logical inference and verbal testimony) in which truth could be pursued.

In the next section, the appeal of the Bhagavad Gita among both the teacher participants and the élite personalities is discussed.

4.4.5 Appeal of the Bhagavad Gita

Within this sub-theme of the appeal of the Bhagavad Gita, the data relating to the reading/hearing of the Bhagavad Gita, the moral probity of the Bhagavad Gita and values in the Bhagavad Gita, are discussed.

4.4.5.1 The Bhagavad Gita for a Modern Stressful Lifestyle

The teacher participants were asked whether they felt better for having read and/or heard the Bhagavad Gita, as well as to elaborate on their answer to this question (Refer to C6 and C7 in the questionnaire).

An overwhelming majority (75.7%) of the teacher participants indicated that they felt better after having read the Bhagavad Gita. The general feeling amongst the teacher participants who felt better for having read the Bhagavad Gita has been that the Bhagavad Gita has relevance for the present day. For example, one respondent commented (taken from completed questionnaires):

R 2: The readings & teachings although written in ancient times very relevant in today's modern stressful lifestyle. If we adhere to the rules then life can be better & lived to its full potential & purpose.

Hunt et al (1974: 2) agree when they say that the popularity of such an ancient book as the Bhagavad Gita proves the strength of the noble teachings that are embodied in it, and that these universal principles endure even though they are expressed in different ways in the various philosophic scriptures of the world.

Another respondent in the survey expressed the following view:

R 3: As a student of Mahatma Gandhi's teachings I also believe that I should let the winds of all religious teachings flow freely through my home and life but that I should not be swayed by them – whilst accepting the positive that they should offer.

This is significant, especially when one considers that many a human being is being slayed in the name of God's truth or because they have minds differently trained or differently constituted from ours (Aurobindo⁹⁶, 1970). He adds further that it is very important for human beings to admit that truth is everywhere and cannot be our sole monopoly. He also said that we need to look at other religions and philosophies for the truth and help they contain and not merely to damn them as false or criticise what we conceive to be their errors. The Bhagavad Gita (17: 15) says:

अनुद्वेगकरं वाक्यं सत्यं प्रियहितं च यत् । स्वध्यायाभ्यासनं चैव वाङ्मयं तप उच्यते ॥

anudvegakaraṁ vākyaṁ satyaṁ priyahitaṁ ca yat ।

svadhyāyābhyasanaṁ caiva vāṅmayaṁ tapa ucyate ॥

Austerity of speech consists in speaking words that are truthful, pleasing, beneficial, and not agitating to others, and also in regularly reciting Vedic literature. (Prabhupada, 1986: 693)

⁹⁶ An Indian nationalist, freedom fighter, English poet, philosopher and yogi.

These sentiments reveal an open and positive attitude towards the Bhagavad Gita. This is repeated in response to another question on the impact of the Bhagavad Gita on teacher participants' quality of life.

R 3: Having a deep appreciation of the ancient heritage into which I was born (Tamil/Saivism⁹⁷) and having toured the religious sites of South India, I am also able to appreciate literature of wider Indian context – Any discourse that helps mankind improve spiritually improves my quality of life.

The Bhagavad Gita has also influenced the teacher participants' quality of life. The Bhagavad Gita was described as enriching, fulfilling, and giving a special purpose in God's divine presence by several teacher participants in the survey. The Bhagavad Gita's influence on people's quality of life and their relationships is evident in the following responses:

R23: Improved quality of life – greater awareness of relationships – awareness of thought, words and deeds.

R53: I have learnt that God is in everything and everyone. I therefore look for the good in people and accept or try to bring about a change in myself & others.

Hunt et al (1974: 2) suggests that one reason for the popularity of the Bhagavad Gita and its influence on people's quality of life is that it is an intensely practical book that helps one to understand how one can live in society and still make spiritual values the real motivation of life. According to Rao (2002:124), Henry David Thoreau⁹⁸ had expressed the view that when he bathed his intellect in the 'stupendous and cosmogonical'⁹⁹ philosophy of the Bhagavad Gita, he found the modern world and its literature to be puny and trivial. The influence of the Bhagavad Gita on the life of Mahatma Gandhi is now well known. According to Clough (2002: 64), Gandhi once said:

When doubts haunt me, when disappointments stare me in the face, and I see not one ray of hope on the horizon, I turn to the Bhagavad Gita and find a verse to comfort me; and I immediately begin to smile in the midst of overwhelming sorrow.

⁹⁷ Tamil/Saivism: Saivism originated in India and it has a very wide appeal across the world. It is particularly strong among the Tamils whose origins can be traced to Southern India.

⁹⁸ An American author, poet, abolitionist, naturalist, historian, philosopher and leading transcendentalist.

⁹⁹ Comes from the word cosmogony which means theory of the origin of the universe. (The Concise Oxford Dictionary, 1989).

In attempting to fulfil the aim of the influence of the Bhagavad Gita for Values Education in Life Orientation, the teachers were asked to pick a selection of aspects of the Bhagavad Gita which they found appealing.

Table 4.11: Appeal of the Bhagavad Gita (Question C 9)

Appeal	Percent
Philosophy	2.9
Sound/Tune/Metre of Verses	1.4
Moral/Ethical teachings	24.3
Bhakti (devotion)	8.6
Karma (action)	4.3
Jnana (knowledge)	5.7
Other	8.6
Combination of above	32.7
Total	88.6
No Response	11.4
Total	100.0

The philosophy of the Bhagavad Gita appeals to 9%, the sound/tune/meter of the verses to 1.4%, Bhakti (devotion), Karma (action) and Jnana (knowledge) to 8.6%, 4.3% and 5.7% respectively. However, the moral/ethical teachings of the Bhagavad Gita appeal to 24.3% of the teacher participants. The following comment sums up the general feelings of the teacher participants who answered this question:

R2: In this society of moral degeneration, ever so frequently we need to find our roots to find ourselves. Read deeper than just the line of the Bhagavad Gita & you as an individual will grow & learn no matter your age.

The teacher participants also found the Bhagavad Gita appealing as it shared similarities with other scriptures of Sanathan Dharma.

R3: The translations, transliterations in English are user friendly. Similarity with the Sivapuram evident: Sivan or God is pure Bright intelligence, unspeakable Awareness, Creator or Originator, Sustainer or Dissolver. Not founded on belief of a single person or event as in Christianity (Christ)¹⁰⁰ or Islam (Mohammed)¹⁰¹.

¹⁰⁰ Christianity originated with Jesus of Nazareth, a Jewish prophet and teacher who came to believe he was the Son of God and certainly was regarded as such by his disciples. (http://history-world.org/origins_of_christianity.htm)

Shri Krishna, who is considered to be one of the incarnations of Lord Vishnu, is the central figure in the Bhagavad Gita. According to the Krishna-centred traditions of Vaishnavism, such as the Vallabha Sampradaya¹⁰² and the Gaudiya Vaishnavas¹⁰³, Shri Krishna is considered to be the Supreme God and the source of all avatars. Similarly in Shaivism, the entire creation is both an expression of conscious divinity and is no different from that divinity called Shiva. This concept contrasts with many semitic religious traditions in which God is seen as fundamentally different from the creation and transcendent, or “higher” than, the creation. In the statement by the respondent above, reference is made to the similarity of the Bhagavad Gita and the Shivapurana.¹⁰⁴ But the Bhagavad Gita has also found favour with people of other religious persuasions. Painadath (2002: 9), a Christian scholar, writes:

It has been my personal experience that the deeper I went into the mystical experience of the Bhagavad Gita, the clearer the faith-experience of the New Testament became. Both in the Bhagavad Gita and the New Testament I pick up the message of God’s love made manifest through the personal divine Lord and the promise of the transforming grace of the Lord, who leads everything to final fulfilment. Hence, as a Christian, I can listen to the words of the Bhagavad Gita within the cave of the heart, where God incessantly reveals God self to human beings.

Respondent 3 quoted earlier also alludes to the fact that Hinduism is not founded on the belief of a single person or event. This is supported by scholars such as Mishra (1973), Flood, (2005) and Sharma (2005). Hence the belief that Hinduism is not founded on the belief of a single person or event.

Closely linked to the sub theme of appeal of the Bhagavad Gita is the issue of teacher participant’s attitude towards the Bhagavad Gita (Table 4.11).

¹⁰¹ The prophet Muhammad introduced Islam in 610 A.D. after experiencing an angelic visitation.

Muhammad dictated the Qur’an, the holy book of Islam, which Muslims believe to be the pre-existent, perfect words of Allah. (<http://www.allaboutreligion.org/origin-of-islam.htm>)

¹⁰² Vallabha Sampradaya: Its founder, Shri Vallabhacharya, propounded a path of saguna bhakti which also came to be known as Pushti Marga. According to this path, the only means for liberation is total surrender at the holy feet of Shri Hari. Shelter and refuge in the name and form of Shri Krishna is the easiest way to reach the Lord and realise its Blissful Grace. This graceful devotion with mental surrender to Lord Krishna is called Pushti Marga.

¹⁰³ Gaudiya Vaishnavas: Gaudiya refers to present day Bengal and Vaishnavism means the worship of Vishnu. This is a Vaishnava religious movement founded by Chaitanya Mahaprabhu.

¹⁰⁴ Shivapurana: One of the Puranas in Sanathan Dharma which Lord Shiva is said to have related himself.

Table 4.12: Attitude towards the Bhagavad Gita (Question C11)

Attitude	Percent
Veneration	14.3
Respectful	55.7
Tolerant	2.9
Uncertain	1.4
No comment	4.3
Combination of above	14.2
Total	92.9
No Response	7.1
Total	100.0

The attitude of 14.3% of the teacher participants towards the Bhagavad Gita is one of veneration and 55.7% have great respect for it (Table 4.11). Only two individuals indicated that they are tolerant towards the Bhagavad Gita. The table shows that 14.2% expressed feelings of veneration, respect and tolerance towards the Bhagavad Gita. The attitude of veneration and respect is a clear indication of the value of the Bhagavad Gita.

In response to the question on the appeal of the Bhagavad Gita (C 10), one respondent¹⁰⁵ referred to the issue of moral degeneration. For example, Shariff and Gouin (2006) have reported on an increase in cyber violence (through text messages or video filming on cell phones, on line chat rooms, web logs and web sites), which involves substantial sexual harassment, usually of females, but online homophobia directed to males is also prevalent. The teacher participants are confident that the Bhagavad Gita can contribute significantly to a programme of values in education and character education.

The Bhagavad Gita is replete with verses on values and morals, for example (in 1: 43):

दोषैरेतैः कुलग्नानां वर्णसङ्करास्ते ।

उत्साद्यन्ते जातिधर्माः कुलधर्माश्च शास्वताः ॥

doṣairetaiḥ kulaghñānāṃ varṇasaṅkarakāraḥ

utsādyante jātīdharmāḥ kuladharmāśca śāsvatāḥ ॥

¹⁰⁵ In this society of moral degeneration, ever so frequently we need to find our roots to find ourselves. Read deeper than just the line of the Bhagavad Gita & you as an individual will grow & learn no matter your age.

By the evil deeds of those who destroy the family tradition and thus give rise to unwanted children, all kinds of community projects and family welfare activities are devastated. (Prabhupada, 1986:62)

There is a general belief that the first systematic treatise on the discrimination between right and wrong action or on morality was written by the Greek philosopher Aristotle (Tilak, 1936). However, Tilak (1936: 1) explains further that these questions had been examined long before Aristotle in a more exhaustive and scientific manner in the Mahabharata and the Bhagavad Gita. He goes on to state that no moral doctrine has yet been evolved, which is different from the doctrines metaphysically expounded in the Bhagavad Gita. Much of what is known today from a western perspective in respect of morality had already been advocated in the Bhagavad Gita by Shri Krishna. For example, Aristotle cited in Tilak (1936) had asked whether it is better to spend one's life peacefully, in philosophical meditation, and living like a hermit, or to spend it in all sorts of political activities. The answer to this question is found in several verses of the Bhagavad Gita. One such response is (5: 2):

सन्न्यासः कर्मयोगश्च निः श्रेयसकरावुभौ । तयोस्तु कर्मसन्न्यासात्कर्मयोगो विशिष्यते ॥

sannyāsaḥ karmayogaśca niḥ śreyasakarāvubhau ।

tayostu karmasannyāsātkarmayogo viśiṣyate ॥

The Personality of Godhead replied: The renunciation of work and work in devotion are both good for liberation. But, of the two, work in devotional service is better than renunciation of work. (Prabhupada, 1986: 244).

From a moral point of view, the Epicureans and the Stoics doctrine that says that the conduct of the perfect *jnanin* (one endowed with spiritual knowledge) is a standard for everybody, is also to be found in the Bhagavad Gita (Tilak, 1936: 1).

Table 4.10 (page 97) shows that 24.3% of the teacher participants found the moral and ethical teachings of the Bhagavad Gita to be appealing. In fact, the moral probity of the Bhagavad Gita was also a central theme of the seminar discussion with the élite personalities.

4.4.5.2 The Moral Probity of the Bhagavad Gita

Probity refers to uprightness or honesty. For the purposes of this study, it refers to the way in which the Bhagavad Gita is a book of upright morals. The question that was posed to the élite personalities was, what *is the moral probity of the Bhagavad Gita?* The chair, BM, qualified the use of the terms moral probity thus, “I think the question itself is meant to be provocative because the majority of people follow the Bhagavad Gita and I think from a point of detachment, intellectual detachment, secular detachment, we are trying to interrogate it”.

PP was convinced that the Bhagavad Gita was a book of morals. However, he again cautioned that one could not isolate the teachings of the Bhagavad Gita without an emphasis on its religiosity.

Not all scholars would agree that there is necessarily a link between morality and religiosity. MKA, in explaining the moral probity of the Bhagavad Gita, said: “We all would agree that the Bhagavad Gita or any other scripture for that matter upholds the ethics and values of moralities of human life simply because these scriptures are only enunciating the laws and principles of life and living”. For this élite personality, the Bhagavad Gita is a way of life since it enunciates the laws of life and living. However, this differs from Prozesky (2007), who contended that one cannot expect to establish morality by following a set of rules and codes. Prozesky’s call for experimentation with goodness probably implies an interrogation of a given set of rules and codes. In the case of Bhagavad Gita and its moral probity, one would be expected to take ownership of the moral codes and/or rules given therein, rather than blindly follow them. In the context of prescription of values, RP said that while the Bhagavad Gita prescribes the “laws of life and living”, there should still be dialogue, experience, new knowledge and critical thinking. Generally, the Bhagavad Gita is a book on morals – right conduct and good living; however, this does not prohibit any individual from “experimentation” with its “goodness”.

MKA, in justifying the value of the Bhagavad Gita as a book on morals, referred to several verses (16:1; 17:14; 18:42) that emphasise the qualities of uprightness, simplicity, righteousness and honesty.

Fearlessness, complete purity, steadfastness in knowledge and yoga, charity, self-restraint and sacrifice, self-study, austerity and uprightness ... (Prabhupada, 1986:655)

The worship of gods, twice-born, gurus and the wise and purity, uprightness, celibacy and non-injury are called austerity of body. (Prabhupada, 1986:692)

Serenity, self-restraint, austerity, purity, forgiveness, uprightness, also knowledge, wisdom and faith are characteristics of a Brahmana born of his nature. (Prabhupada, 1986:729)

According to the Bhagavad Gita (13: 7, in Parthasarathy, 2008:629),

अमानित्वमदम्भित्वमहिंसा क्षान्तिरार्जवम्। आचार्योपासनं शौचं स्थैर्यमात्मविनिग्रहः ॥

amānitvam adambhitvam ahimsā kṣāntirārjavam | ācāryopāśanam śaucam
sthairyam ātmanavīgrahaḥ ||

Humility, unpretentiousness, harmlessness, forgiveness, uprightness, service of the preceptor, purity, steadfastness, self control ...

In the verse above, we are told that humility, unpretentiousness, harmlessness, forgiveness, uprightness, service of the preceptor, purity, steadfastness and self-control are declared to be knowledge. In saying that these qualities constitute knowledge, the implication of the Bhagavad Gita is that their opposites are ignorance. According to Parthasarathy (2008), one who infuses the above qualities in one's life will become spiritually enlightened. MKA, in presenting examples of verses from the Bhagavad Gita that refer to moral possibilities, emphasised the quality of uprightness:

There are several references in the Bhagavad Gita to uprightness - the word that is used in the Bhagavad Gita is Arjavam. Arjavam is a Sanskrit word.

The quality of uprightness is also mentioned in the Bhagavad Gita. For Parthasarathy (2008), uprightness is being true to one's conscience and conviction. Parthasarathy argues further that one who follows one's conscience and conviction is able to live an upright and truthful life. In the current morally degenerate climate of fraud, incest, rape, violent killings and abuse of women and children (Mhlongo, 2005; Serrao, 2008 and Makwabe, 2009), uprightness is an important quality that every person needs to infuse

into his/her life. Prabhupada (1986) says that uprightness means that we should be straightforward to disclose the truth even to our enemies.

Some of the élite personalities also referred to “standard of morality” when discussing the moral probity of the Bhagavad Gita. RP referred to this in his contribution to the discussion on the moral probity of the Bhagavad Gita. RP was of the view that there are several individuals of the past who have led morally upright lives, based on the four pillars of mercy, austerity, cleanliness and truthfulness: “I say success leaves clues, it has certain tracks and if people have been successful and if you are following in their tracks then you are also going to be successful in the same way”.

In particular, RP refers to the ancient sages of the Vedic period who had followed a lifestyle in which there was no meat eating, no illicit sex, no gambling and no intoxication. RP maintained that by following the standard of morality which has been laid down in the Bhagavad Gita, the Vedic sages were able to attain this perfection. RP further explains this “standard of morality” in the following words: “The regulative principles enunciated in the Bhagavad Gita can be used as a yardstick and by following it, you will see that the degradation in human society will be removed to quite a large extent”.

While there is much to celebrate in the world we find ourselves in at present (one needs to consider here the technological advancements like computers, cell phones, internet etc.), there are so many developments for which the world also needs to be ashamed. As an example consider the following input from RP:

At a house meeting recently, I was told that a female teacher has fallen pregnant by one of her students. This is in Johannesburg. You are trying to lay down a standard for morality but it seems like we are producing men of the calibre of practically cats and dogs so if you really want to produce men of calibre, impeccable character and unquestionable integrity then you have got to follow people who have done it in the past.

In his comments on the moral probity of the Bhagavad Gita, MKA referred to the motive or the intentions of one’s actions as being more important than the actual action itself.

MKA referred to the instance when Krishna asks Arjuna to shoot and kill his (Arjuna's) Guru or teacher. In Sanathan Dharma, the Guru has been afforded an even greater status than God. It therefore seems somewhat paradoxical that Arjuna is being asked to kill his Guru. However, as far as MKA's explanation goes, morality lies not in the action but in the motive or the intention of the action. In this case, even though Arjuna may be committing a sin by killing his Guru, the results of this action will serve a greater moral purpose – it will save literally thousands of citizens from the tyranny and abuse of the Kauravas, on whose side Arjuna's Guru was fighting. MKA also pointed to the fact that morality is a relative concept. In his words: "What is moral for one person maybe immoral for someone else and what is moral for one person may be immoral for the same person at different times".

This section began with a discussion of the appeal of the Bhagavad Gita to Life Orientation teachers in schools. Table 4.10 shows that the moral/ethical teachings of the Bhagavad Gita appealed to 24.3% of the respondents. Similarly the participants in the seminar expressed great optimism that the Bhagavad Gita can be used to highlight values in education in schools. In particular they have referred to selected verses of the Bhagavad Gita that deal specifically with morality, the way in which the successes of the past can be used as a standard of morality and the way in which the intention is more important than the actual action as far as morality goes.

It was seen in Table 4.10 (page 97), that one of the features of the Bhagavad Gita which respondents found appealing was *bhakti* or devotion (8.6%). The next section will provide further insight into the appeal of *bhakti*.

4.4.5.3 *Bhakti* as a Value

In question C 9 of the questionnaire, the teacher participants were asked to choose from a list aspects of the Bhagavad Gita which they found appealing.. One of these aspects was *bhakti*. Of the teacher participants who found the *bhakti* (devotion) aspect of the Bhagavad Gita appealing, two commented that:

R53: Merely performing mechanical actions especially in prayer without devotion or love for God – even spending a lot of money is not as rewarding as doing things simply – but sincerely.

R1: Devotion to God is made so simple as explained in the Bhagawat Gita, offering of a leaf, fruit, flower is sufficient. Its our focus on God and action is what is of importance.

According to Luniya (1979: 404), “bhakti means belief in God and single minded uninterrupted and extreme devotion to God developing gradually into an intense love to personal God or avatar”. *Bhakti* is unmotivated devotion to God, with no desires or ambitions attached to it. The two comments above allude to simplicity in devotion. In the Bhagavad Gita (9: 26, in Prabhupada, 1986:430), Shri Krishna says:

पत्रं पुष्पं फलं तोयं यो मे भक्त्या प्रयच्छति । तदहं भक्त्युपहतमश्नामि प्रयतात्मनः ॥

patraṁ puṣpaṁ phalaṁ toyam yo me bhaktyā prayacchati |
tadaham bhaktyupahatamaśnāmi prayatātmanah ||

If one offers Me with love and devotion a leaf, a flower, a fruit or water, I will accept it.

This verse points to an important fact, that the way to God is not by means of complicated rituals, but by sheer self-giving.

Bhakti or devotion is appealing and important as a value because it attempts to remove all forms of differences between devotees. When Sabari¹⁰⁶ (a female character in the Ramayana) meets Shri Rama, the protagonist of the said text, she says: “How can I extol you, lowest in descent and the dumbest of wit as I am”? (Tulsidas, 1986: 572). Shri Rama’s response is: “Despite caste, kinship, lineage, piety, reputation, wealth, accomplishments and ability, a [person] lacking in devotion is of no more worth than a cloud without water” (Tulsidas, 1986: 572).

Since the aim of this study is to determine the perception of teacher participants and elite personalities on the possibility of using the Bhagavad Gita for Values Education in Life Orientation, *bhakti* or devotion is an important value that can contribute positively to a moral regeneration programme in schools. Devotion is a noun that comes from the verb *devote* which means “give up exclusively to God, person or pursuit” (Oxford Dictionary, 1989: 263). Perhaps somewhere in this exclusive giving up to teachers, schools and

¹⁰⁶ Sabari belonged to a wild tribe called Sabaras and she had acquired some celebrity for her piety and devotion. A sage had predicted that the Lord would visit her (cited in Tulsidas, 1986: 571).

pursuit of educational goals, lies the resurrection of our morally degraded society. In the South African context, there are constant allegations of things not working in the education system due to teacher shortages and limited or no resources. Important as these are, there is no guarantee that once these are in abundance there will be a natural positive turnaround in our education system. The education system in South Africa requires devotion or *bhakti* – the education system requires learners who are passionate about acquiring education and a teacher corps that is equally passionate to share this education.

In spite of the popularity, appeal, and reverence of the Bhagavad Gita, as explained above, the scripture is not without its controversies. The Bhagavad Gita has often been criticised for its mixed or contradictory messages by researchers (De, 1996; Doniger, 2000). In view of this, two provocative statements were presented to the élite personalities in the focus group discussion. The next section of this chapter will proceed to present the data that was obtained on the contradictions in the Bhagavad Gita.

4.4.6 Contradictions in the Bhagavad Gita

Two provocative quotations were presented to the élite personalities in the focus group discussion. The first of these made reference to the contradictions of the message of the Bhagavad Gita, while the second one questioned the validity of approaching the Bhagavad Gita based on intellectual curiosity. The first of these ‘probes’¹⁰⁷ was taken from an article (De, 1996) entitled *The Historical Context of the Bhagavad Gita and Its Relation to Indian Religious Doctrines* and this probe dealt with the issue of the contradictory messages of the Bhagavad Gita. The second probe¹⁰⁸ was taken from a transcript of a symposium on the Bhagavad Gita (Hunt et al, 1974). This probe was used to elicit the participant’s views on whether one’s approach to the Bhagavad Gita should be based on intellectual curiosity.

¹⁰⁷ Despite its universal appeal, the Bhagavad Gita is replete with contradictions both at the fundamental level and at the highest level of philosophical discourse.

¹⁰⁸ If one approaches the Bhagavad Gita solely on the basis of intellectual curiosity one will not achieve a very deep understanding of this ancient classic.

Four of the élite personalities argued that there are actually no contradictions in the Bhagavad Gita. PP argued that the Bhagavad Gita addresses entire humanity, which consists of a diverse population. Radhakrishnan (1948: 15) avers: “The question whether the Gita succeeds in reconciling the different tendencies of thought will have to be answered by each reader for himself after he completes the study of the book”. PP says:

So a single instruction cannot be given to all simultaneously because they will all have different perceptions, there are different stages of evolution, and therefore instructions will vary.

RP expresses the view that the contradictions in the Bhagavad Gita have to be understood in perspective. He refers to two perspectives – devotion and intellectual understanding. He specifically refers to verse one of chapter 3 where Arjuna asks the question:

ज्यायसी चेत्कर्मणस्ते मता बुद्धिर्जनार्दन । तत्किं कर्मणि घोरे मां नियोजसि केशव ॥

jyāyasī cetkarmaṇaste matā buddhirjanārdana! tatkiṁ karmaṇi ghore māṁ niyojasi keśava ||

Arjuna said: O Janardana, O Keshava, why do you want to engage me in this ghastly warfare, if you think that intelligence is better than fruitive work? (Prabhupada, 1986: 147)

In chapter 2 of the Bhagavad Gita, Krishna had explained to Arjuna that the path of realisation or *buddhi yoga*, was the path that would deliver Arjuna from the “ocean of material grief”. As far as Arjuna is concerned, the practice of penance and life in retirement is far better than “ghastly warfare”. MKA also refers to the contradictory messages when he refers to verses 48 and 50 (Prabhupada, 1986: 122/124) of the second chapter of the Bhagavad Gita:

योगस्थः कुरु कर्माणि संगं त्यक्त्वा धनंजय ।

सिद्धयसिद्धयोः समो भूत्वा समत्वं योग उच्यते ॥

yogasthaḥ kuru karmāṇi saṅgaṁ tyaktvā dhanañjaya |

siddhayasiddhayoḥ samo bhūtvā samatvaṁ yoga ucyate||

Perform your duty equipoised, Arjuna, abandoning all attachment to success or failure. Such equanimity is called yoga.

बुद्धियुक्तो जहातीह उभे सुकृत दुष्कृते ।

तस्माद्योगाय युज्यस्व योगः कर्मसु कौशलम् ॥

buddhiyukto jahātīha ubhe sukrta duṣkrte |

tasmādyogāya yujyasva yogaḥ karmasu kauśalam ||

A man engaged in devotional service rids himself of both good and bad reactions even in this life. Therefore strive for yoga, which is the art of all work.

In the earlier verse, Shri Krishna says “peace of mind is yoga” and then two verses later he says “dexterity in action” is yoga. However, MKA also cautions that “The philosophy is not meant to be read through, it must be reflected upon. When you do that, you find there is no contradiction”. However, while one can argue that there is harmony in the different paths of yoga enumerated in the Bhagavad Gita, individuals, as Radhakrishnan (1948) has reminded us, are free to choose whichever path best fits their propensities. This is seen in the words of PP, one of the participants in the seminar: “It is a book of *bhakti* not so much *jnana* although what Krishna says he glorifies *jnana*, he glorifies Karma, he glorifies *bhakti* and even Raja Yoga¹⁰⁹ but primarily the Bhagavad Gita is a book of *bhakti*”.

MKA expressed the view that “There is a seeming contradiction when you go through the verses of the Bhagavad Gita”. Similarly, Amarnath (2009) has argued that when a person goes through a scripture any number of times with a mind tainted by his own likes and dislikes, then he will find the same subject matter confusingly contradictory and devoid of any true merit. Mohan (2009), on the other hand, argues that everything may appear to be contradictory, if seen from all angles; however, this to him is in fact reality. Aurobindo (1970) reminds us that the Bhagavad Gita is not a weapon for dialectical warfare but a gate that opens up the whole world of spiritual truth and experience.

According to Aurobindo (1970), the Sankhya and the Yoga of the Bhagavad Gita are two convergent parts of the Vedantic truth. He maintains that Sankhya is philosophical, intellectual and analytic, and that Yoga is intuitionist, devotional, practical, ethical and synthetic. However, both systems, according to him, are concurrent ways of approaching the same Vedantic truth. Aurobindo (1970: 5) says:

¹⁰⁹ Raja means royal or kingly. Raja yoga meditation is generally based on directing one's life force to bring the mind and emotions so into balance that the attention may be easily focused on the object of meditation, or the Lord directly.

The Gita recognizes no real difference in their teachings. Still less need we discuss the theories, which regard the Gita as the fruit of some particular religious system or tradition. Its teaching is universal whatever may have been its origin”.

Aurobindo is of the view that the Bhagavad Gita is not framed or intended to support any exclusive school of philosophical thought. Aurobindo writes (1970: 6):

The language of the Gita, the structure of thought, the combination and balancing of ideas belong neither to the temper of a sectarian teacher nor to the spirit of a rigorous analytical dialectics cutting off one angle of the truth to exclude all others; but rather there is a wide, undulating, encircling movement of ideas which is the manifestation of a vast synthetic mind and a rich synthetic experience.

The views of Aurobindo presented above cohere with the views of PP, RP, MKA and JR, who have been unanimous that there is no contradiction in the message of the Bhagavad Gita, either at a fundamental level or the highest philosophical level. As mentioned earlier, the Bhagavad Gita has also been criticised for its contradictory messages concerning the issue of warfare and violence.

In responding to the fundamental complaint against the Bhagavad Gita that it was sending out contradictory philosophical messages, RP asked: “If you say there is a fundamental complaint against the Bhagavad Gita, I would first have to say what is your qualification for approaching the Bhagavad Gita and understanding it in that way”.

Sebastian Painadath (2002: 12), a Christian Missionary, has a different view:

Though the Bhagavad Gita speaks of the self-embodying of the Divine in the course of history, the book is not written around a concrete historical salvific event or about an incarnate person. It is, rather, a didactic work with a definite vision of God’s self-embodying for the sake of human salvation.

It is interesting that Painadath does not see the Bhagavad Gita as a book of contradictions, but rather as “didactic work”. Painadath also regards the Bhagavad Gita as book that can bring salvation to humanity, not just followers of the Hindu Dharma or those initiated into the *parampara* system.

MKA too, made the point that one cannot approach the Bhagavad Gita solely on the purpose of intellectual curiosity. He also cautioned that one could not approach any spiritual literature to fulfil intellectual curiosity only. While he agreed that the intellect has to participate in study of the Bhagavad Gita or any other scripture, he also pointed out that such a study must be supplemented with devotion. In the words of MKA: "The study of scripture must involve the participation of the head (*manas*) and heart (*buddhi*)".

MKA was quite convinced that if one approaches the Bhagavad Gita from a devotional aspect, there is no contradiction in it. This opinion concurs with that of Rexroth (1968), who believes that the intention of the Bhagavad Gita was the resolution and sublimation of the contradictions of the religious life in the great unity of prayer. He maintained that the Bhagavad Gita is a manual of personal devotion to a personal deity: "Unless the reader begins by understanding the devotional nature of the *Gita*, its meanings will always elude him and its overall meaning will be totally unapproachable". (Rexroth, 1968: 1).

This section has dealt with the issue of contradictions in the Bhagavad Gita. The élite personality's views on the fundamental and philosophical contradictions have been presented.

In summary then, the above sections have analysed the teacher participants' and élite personality's knowledge, attitudes and perceptions of the Bhagavad Gita. A study of Life Orientation teacher's knowledge, attitude and perceptions of the Bhagavad Gita was necessary since the aim of this study was to determine the possibilities that the Bhagavad Gita could offer for Values Education in Life Orientation. The study has shown thus far that more than half the teacher participants (75.7%) are female and that 58.6% of the teacher participants belong to the Hindu religion. Just over 70.0% of the teacher participants found the Bhagavad Gita to be important. There were also many aspects (such as philosophy, sound, tune, devotion) of the Bhagavad Gita that the teacher participants found appealing. However, the teacher participants found the moral and ethical teachings of the Bhagavad Gita most appealing. In general, the above sections show that there is respect and veneration for the Bhagavad Gita. Furthermore, it can be

seen from this section that the élite personalities are unanimous in their views that there is indeed no contradiction either at the fundamental or philosophical level of the Bhagavad Gita. As far as the élite personalities' views go, if the Bhagavad Gita is seen through the lens of a devotee, there is no contradiction. The élite personalities have also expressed the view that if one reflects upon the message of the Bhagavad Gita, rather than simply read through it, one will find no contradictions.

In the next section of the chapter, the focus of the research moves from knowledge of the Bhagavad Gita and personal life to the teaching of Life Orientation and Religious Education both in primary and secondary schools. While the preceding sections have focused on teachers' knowledge and perceptions of and attitudes towards the Bhagavad Gita, the next few sections will present and discuss the data on Values Education within the learning area of Life Orientation in schools.

4.5 Life Orientation and the Bhagavad Gita

This part of the chapter will begin with a presentation of the data on values and education. Within the section of values and education, teacher participants' understanding of values, non-violence as a value, the legislation of values and prescription of values will be discussed. This will be followed by a discussion of the teachers' access, reading and usage of policy documents related to Life Orientation and Religious Education teaching. Thereafter in the sub-theme of values and education, data pertaining to the role of parents and legislation in Values Education are presented. Within the sub-theme of values and education, a discussion of non-violence as a value will be considered. The fourth sub-theme of this part of the chapter deals with data obtained on the teaching methods used in Life Orientation. In particular, there will be a discussion of experiential learning as contained in the education policy documents of Life Orientation and Religious Education. The last set of data presented in this section will centre on the use of religious texts in Life Orientation teaching.

4.5.1 Values and Education

The questions in Section E of the questionnaire were designed to obtain information on values in education (meaning of values, parental role in Values Education, legislation of values and values in the curriculum). We will begin by looking at the data pertaining to the meaning of values.

4.5.1.1 Values: The Core of our Existence

In this section, a discussion of the data relating to teacher participants' understanding of the concepts values is presented. According to the report of the Department of Education (2000: 2), "By values, we mean desirable qualities of character such as honesty, integrity, tolerance, diligence, responsibility, compassion, altruism, justice and respect".

Kapur (1996: 90) talks of different types of values. These are spiritual values, ethical and moral values, intellectual values, social, political, economic, and business values and physical values. One teacher participant¹¹⁰ said: "Values are all that is sacred". According to Nieuwenhuis (2007: 9), value is a fundamental concept in philosophy, education, psychology, and the social sciences generally. In other words, "values form the very core of our existence".¹¹¹ Huitt (2003: 1) says that "Values are defined in literature as everything from eternal ideas to behavioural actions." One of the teacher participants¹¹² expressed similar views by saying that "values are inherent in all of us, we are born with them".

Two teacher participants wrote the following in explaining the concept *values* (question E 1):

R36: It (values) should enable people to live the way God has meant for us to live.

R51: Values are those emotions, feelings inherent in each individual, which needs to be nurtured: truth, love, peace, right conduct, and non-violence.

This is indeed the advice given in Bhagavad Gita (16: 1-3):

¹¹⁰ Respondent 2.

¹¹¹ Respondent 47.

¹¹² Respondent 4

अभयं सत्त्वसंशुद्धिर्ज्ञानयोगव्यवस्थितिः । दानं दमश्च यज्ञश्च स्वध्यायस्तप आर्जवम् ॥१॥

अहिंसा सत्यमक्रोधस्त्यागः शान्तिरपैशुनम् । दया भूतेष्वलोलुप्त्वं मार्दवं ह्रीरचापलम् ॥२॥

तेजः क्षमा धृतिः शौचमद्रोहो नातिमानिता ॥ भवन्ति सम्पदं दैवमभिजातस्य भारत ॥३॥

abhayam sattvasamśuddhirjñānayogavyavastithatiḥ । dānam damaśca yajñaśca
svadhyāyastapa ārjavam ॥1॥

ahimsā satyamakrodhastyāgaḥ śāntirapaiśunam । dayā bhūteṣvaloluptvaṁ mārdaṁ
hrīracāpalam ॥2॥

tejaḥ kṣamā dhṛtiḥ śaucamadroho nātimānitā ॥ bhavanti sampadam daivimabhijātasya
bhārata ॥3॥

The Supreme Personality of Godhead said: Fearlessness; purification of one's existence; cultivation of spiritual knowledge; charity; self-control; performance of sacrifice; study of the Vedas; austerity; simplicity; nonviolence; truthfulness; freedom from anger; renunciation; tranquility; aversion to fault finding; compassion for all living entities; freedom from covetousness; gentleness; modesty; steady determination; vigor; forgiveness; fortitude; cleanliness; and freedom from envy and from the passion for honour – these transcendental qualities, O son of Bharata, belong to godly men endowed with divine nature. (Prabhupada, 1986: 656)

The above verse lists 26 different values or qualities of a divine or moral upright individual. Included in these 26 are the values of truth, peace (*freedom from anger, tranquility*), right conduct (*self-control, freedom from covetousness*) and non-violence. One respondent¹¹³ makes reference to the value of non-violence. In fact, the issue of violence was also a central point of discussion in the focus group discussion.

4.5.1.2 Violence in the Bhagavad Gita

Prabhupada (1986: 660) says that *ahimsā* means not arresting the progressive life of any living entity. When one takes note of the horrendous acts of violence being reported in the media, one realises that the value of non-violence is crucial in our classrooms and the education system. When a principal is suspended for allegedly hiring a hitman to murder his deputy principal, he has indeed *arrested the progressive life* of so many stakeholders in his school and community (Mbuyazi, 2008)¹¹⁴. Similarly, a teacher who is dismissed

¹¹³ R51: Values are those emotions, feelings inherent in each individual, which need to be nurtured: truth, love, peace, right conduct, and non-violence.

¹¹⁴ Mbuyazi, N. (2008). Murder: principal suspended. *Cape Argus*, 25 October 2008.

from the profession for committing subsidy fraud with matriculation examination fees has also committed *hiṃsā*, since he too has *arrested the progressive life* of learners preparing to sit for the important test of their lives (Serrao, 2008)¹¹⁵. When educational officials become guilty of violence or *hiṃsā* in the education system, what can one expect from the learners? Krishna makes the claim in the Bhagavad Gita (10: 5)¹¹⁶ that he created the quality of non-violence. In explaining this verse, Swami Prabhupada (1986: 452) says:

Ahiṃsā means that people should be trained in such a way that the full utilization of the human body can be achieved. The human body is meant for spiritual realisation, so any movement or any commission which do not further that end commit violence on the human body.

However, one of the criticisms of the Bhagavad Gita has been its contradictory messages concerning the issue of warfare and violence or *hiṃsā*. A professor of divinity at Chicago University, Wendy Doniger¹¹⁷, has called the Bhagavad Gita a bad book that incites people to war and violence with God's complicity. The views of the élite personalities to Doniger's statement are presented below.

MKA feels that one cannot critique the verses of the Bhagavad Gita which use the word *fight* without understanding the context in which they are said. MKA reminded the seminar that Krishna was talking to Arjuna, the warrior. MKA also said that:

He is speaking to Arjuna a warrior in the battlefield so he used the word battle but all of us are Arjuna in that context. We are all facing challenges of the world. Just as Arjuna wanted to run away from the challenge of the world, today most people want to run away from the challenges of the world.

JR agreed with MKA when he said: "Whatever we interpret, we have to see it in context. When violence is introduced with intellectual control to overcome a greater violence it

¹¹⁵ Serrao, A. (2008). School in subsidy fraud-fired teacher, *The Star*, 27 October 2008.

¹¹⁶ अहिंसा समता तुष्टिस्तपो दानं यशोयशः । भवन्ति भावा भूतानां मत्त एव पृथग्विधाः ॥

ahimsā samatā tuṣṭistapo dānaṃ yaśo yaśaḥ | bhavanti bhāvā bhūtānāṃ matta eva pṛthagvidhāḥ ||

¹¹⁷ Scholar in Vedic Studies and Mircea Eliade Distinguished Service Professor of Divinity at the University of Chicago. She has translated the Rig Veda and Manu Smṛiti (Rao, 2002).

becomes a virtue". According to MKA, there are two contexts that one needs to understand: one is Arjuna as warrior, and the second is that all of us are Arjuna facing the challenges of the world.

MKA's first interpretation of the war or of violence being waged by Arjuna corresponds to Schweig's (2002) socio-political perspective. According to this understanding, one needs to take cognizance of the fact that Arjuna is a *kshatriya* whose duty it is to protect those who are being mistreated or abused. According to Rosen (2002), *kshatriya* is made up of two words: *kshat*, which means "hurt" and *trayate*, which means "to give protection". A Kshatriya is therefore one who protects from harm or violence. According to the prominent Hindu law giver, Manu cited in Rosen (2002), all aggressors should be killed by the protectors of the righteous. The Manu-Samhita as quoted by Rosen (2002), says:

Whether he be a teacher...an old man, or a much learned Brahmin, if he comes as a criminal in any of the above six ways¹¹⁸, a Kshatriya should kill him...There is no sin in killing one so heartless.

So the participants agreed that Arjuna was justified in using violence against the Kauravas.

MKA's second interpretation compares the people of the world to Arjuna. MKA made the point that rather than running away from the challenges of the world, the Bhagavad Gita is exhorting the human race to face these challenges head on. This interpretation could also be described as a metaphysical-theological interpretation. In fact, other scholars and commentators have also called this the allegorical interpretation of the violence in the Bhagavad Gita (Sharma, 2002; Clough, 2002; Sutton, 2002; Avalos, 2002). The allegorical interpretation of the war of the Mahabharata by MKA and JR is, according to Sharma (2002) a modern trend. He says that the interpretation of Kurukshetra being more than a geographical location became popular with commentators such as Aurobindo Ghose, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, S Radhakrishnan and Mahatma Gandhi.

¹¹⁸ According to Vedic texts the six acts for which people should be punished are: (1) administering poison, (2) setting fire to another's home, (3) stealing, (4) occupying another's land, (5) kidnapping another's wife, and (6) attacking with a deadly weapon (Rosen, 2002:15).

Aurobindo Ghose cited in Sharma (2002: 36), has written: "Life is a battle and a field of death: this is Kurukshetra". Similarly, Radhakrishnan cited in Sharma (2002: 37), writes:

The world is dharmakshetra; the battleground is a moral struggle. The decisive issue lies in the heart of men where the battles are fought daily and hourly...the world is dharmakshetra, the nursery of saints where the sacred flame of the spirit is never permitted to go out.

The views of MKA are similar to those expressed by Schweig (2002), who said that one of the Bhagavad Gita's important messages is that in life there will always be unresolvable ethical conflicts. For Schweig, therefore, the ultimate teaching of the Bhagavad Gita is that we must as human beings fight our own existential battles. MKA makes reference to facing the challenges of the world, which requires one to develop the right thought process. Mahatma Gandhi (cited in Sharma, 2002: 38) also once wrote:

The Gita is not a historical discourse. A physical illustration is often needed to drive home a spiritual truth. It is a description not of war between cousins but between the two natures in us – the Good and the Evil.

In his commentary on the Bhagavad Gita, Gandhi (Sharma, 2002) has said that one of the rules which one needs to keep in mind when determining the meaning of a shastra or holy text (such as the Bhagavad Gita) is that one should not stick to the letter of a text, but try to understand its spirit and its meaning in total context. So while the Bhagavad Gita is set within a battle, Gandhi would want us to understand the battle as only an occasion for teaching the spirit that its realisation is Brahman or the Supreme Being. Sutton (2002), however, is not convinced with Gandhi's allegorical interpretation. Firstly, Sutton feels that such an interpretation ignores the fact that the Bhagavad Gita is concerned with "real acts of violence and is seeking a resolution of the problem of karma and the righteous use of violent means" (Sutton, 2002: 86). Secondly, Gandhi's suggested mode of exegesis is an open-ended one and it therefore allows any commentator to attach any meaning to religious literature irrespective of the ideas being imparted by the text. Lastly, Sutton is not convinced that either the Bhagavad Gita or the Mahabharata intended to depict its characters as "metaphorical representations of human sentiments".

There are naturally many variations on the interpretation of the violence in the Bhagavad Gita. JR, a participant, was of the view that the war was waged to eliminate a greater evil. PP, on the other hand, warned that:

This particular topic must be approached with caution because crime and violence is two great evils in this society and if we try to use philosophical arguments to justify violence in special context then we can be treading on dangerous ground.

The above data suggest that there are indeed many different voices regarding violence in the Bhagavad Gita. This concurs with other scholars such as Upadhyaya (1969), Rosen (2002), Lerner (2006). The different views of the élite personalities point to three distinct layers of meaning in the violence in the Bhagavad Gita (Schweig, 2002). The first of these layers is the socio-political understanding, where the focus of the Bhagavad Gita is on the context of the narrative. Due to the inhumane and tyrannical treatment of the people by the Kauravas, Arjuna and his army are justified in waging war on the Kauravas, so that they can protect the subjects. The second layer is described as the ethical-philosophical understanding. This layer is found throughout the Bhagavad Gita, where Krishna through his advice develops a “profound ethical model” for the human race. Values such as self-control, non-violence, humility, forgiveness and compassion are continuously promoted throughout the Bhagavad Gita. The metaphysical-theological understanding is the third layer. Here one understands that the battle which has taken place between the Pandavas and the Kauravas is a unique one since God himself is present.

The words of Ramesh Rao (2002), from an article entitled, *Pursuing the Gita: From Gandhi to Doniger*, are perhaps useful as a concluding statement:

The “celestial song” is many layered, and one can find meanings in it depending on one’s age, understanding and wisdom. It cannot be pigeon-holed as a “pro-war” or “anti-war” treatise, much as Doniger and Gandhi would like us to believe.

This section of the chapter began with an analysis of values from the perspective of the teacher participants and progressed into a discussion of the élite personality’s views on non-violence as a value. In response to the critical question of this study, *How does the*

Bhagavad Gita impact values in education, the overall view of the élite personalities is that the Bhagavad Gita does not promote violence and warfare. The discussion will now move on to the importance of focusing on values in education in schools.

4.5.1.3 Values Permeate Life

The data presented in this section of the chapter is derived from Section E of the questionnaire, which consists of questions on the role of parents in Values Education, the legislation of values and the teaching of Values Education in schools. This section discusses the importance of focusing on values in education and whether Values Education should be independently taught. An overwhelming majority of 97.1% of the teacher participants indicated that it is very important to focus on values in education at schools. With the exception of 2.9% who did not respond, none of the teacher participants chose the categories of *not so important*, *important* and *I do not care*. This is indeed a significant result. However, where would this Values Education feature in the school curriculum?

Teacher participants were asked: *Should values education be compartmentalised to one subject?* A small percentage of 15.7% felt that it should be independently taught and 74.3% indicated that it should not. The general view of teacher participants was that values are all-pervasive and cannot be compartmentalised. Expressions such as “values permeate life”, “values are inherent in all aspects of life” were common in several responses. In particular, some of the teacher participants suggested that:

- R3: One can experience a value system in ethics as a lawyer or a value system at the knees of a parent in the growing up years of the child – values thus cannot be compartmentalised into one subject.
- R4: The educator has to be able to bring out the values in the different learning areas.
- R36: Values should be spread across all learning areas so that it can be continuously reinforced.

According to Rhodes and Roux (2004: 26), it is important for the school curriculum to focus on knowledge, skills and values. More specifically, the teachers need to facilitate different values and belief systems into all learning areas. However, they were also of the view that special attention needs to be given to the facilitation of value and belief systems

in the learning area of Life Orientation. Veugelers (2000: 37) also maintains that value education seeks to strengthen the transfer of values in education and that this should occur by means of the curriculum and the moral climate in the school. According to Ryan and Bohlin (1999: 93), character education fits in everywhere into the curriculum and education seeks to help students develop as persons. Therefore character development is part and parcel of the whole enterprise.

While the results presented above related to the role of the teacher, school and curriculum in values development, what about the role of parents in this regard? The teacher participants in the survey were asked to indicate how important the role of parents was in developing values in learners

Figure 4.4: Importance of parental role in developing values in learners

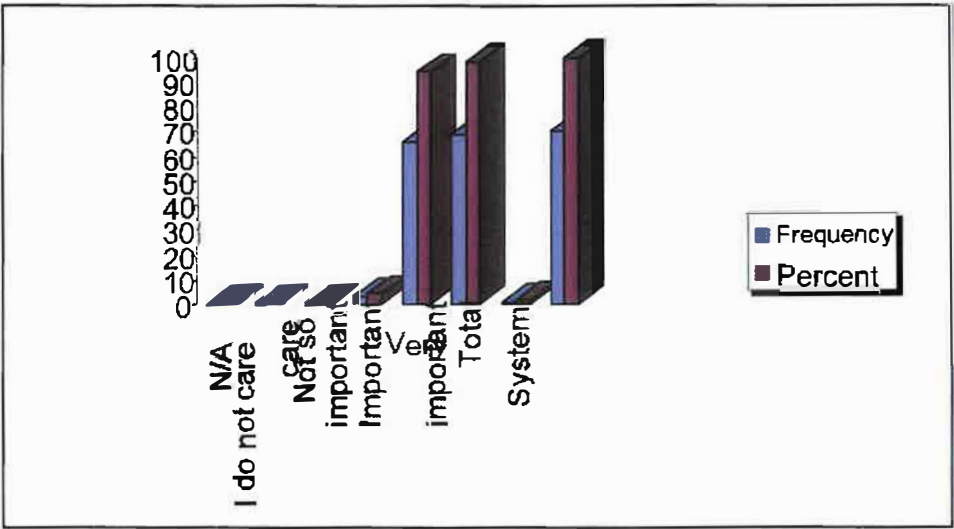
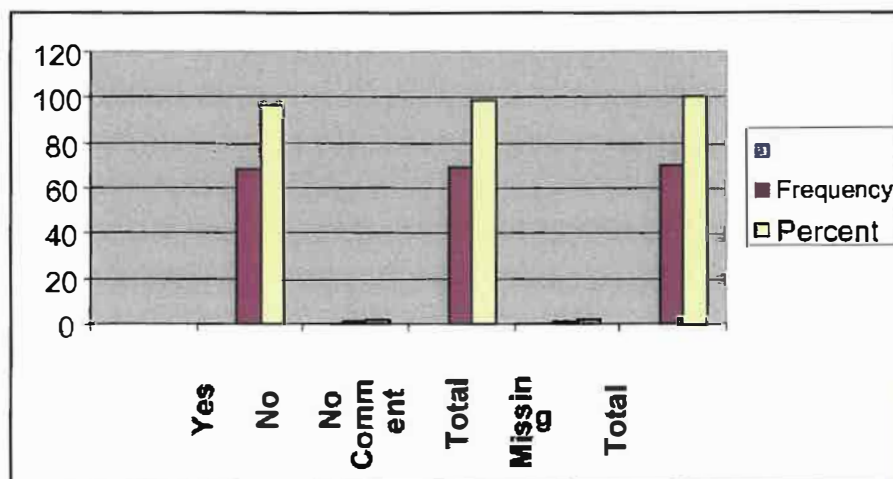


Figure 4.5: Values development and the responsibility of parents



An overwhelming 97.1% indicated that Values Education should not be the responsibility of parents only. Teacher participants felt that values are inculcated and not taught, that educators had an important role to play as role models and that society as a whole has a responsibility in values development. Traditionally, homes were primarily the places where character was built. However, according to Ryan and Bohlin (1999), this does not seem to be happening in recent times. Ryan and Bohlin (1999) further suggest that there was a time when building character was just as important as imparting intellectual knowledge. For various reasons, formal character education has been absent from public schools for several decades now. Developing character is a social act. Since character needs to be nurtured, the humans we share relationships with play a key part in our learning to become flourishing people of character. The child's family has the primary responsibility for character education. According to Glendon (1995: 2), "character and competence have conditions residing in nurture and education". Character education is a central mission of our schools. Ryan and Bohlin (1999: 141) list "six Es": Example, Explanation, Ethos, Experience, Exhortation, and Expectations of Excellence. These serve as a reminder to teachers on how to promote values development within each child, in the classroom and in the entire school environment. One of these Es is the EXAMPLE set by the teacher. On this aspect, one respondent said:

R33: Many learners see teachers as role models. As an educator one should always display good values

in addition, your attitude will be important. Educators can thus also help develop good values in learners.

Teachers involved in another study on Values Education, concur as they too emphasised the importance of proper conduct and behaviour of teachers (Bajinath, 2008). Moloi (2007) has also argued that teachers who do not practise punctuality are likely to have a negative impact on the attitudes and discipline of learners.

The data support the claims that values development should not be restricted to parents only, as other respondents said:

- R11: Some values are gained, not taught. These values can be obtained from different sources, i.e. educators, religious leaders, sports coaches, mentors and role models.
- R41: The child is influenced not only by educators but also by peers as well as adults, gurus and media. Therefore the duty of society as a whole to be responsible for development of the child.

Veugelers (2000: 40) contends that the values teachers find important are expressed in the content of their instruction and in the way they guide the learning process. Furthermore, teachers stimulate values through subject matter, chosen examples and reactions to their students.

It seems that Values Education or building character in learners is the responsibility of parents and schools. However, the media reports give the impression that teachers are failing to lead by example. It seems that teachers themselves are in need of Values Education or character building. An example of teacher's lack of values is demonstrated by a school principal in the North Coast of KwaZulu-Natal who has been accused of defrauding parents of about R400 000 in school fees (Broughton, 2008)¹¹⁹. According to Ndlovu & Mboto (2009)¹²⁰, in May 2009 five Durban teachers were suspended for allegedly copulating with pupils. These are but a few of the scenarios that appear in the media on a daily basis. One can deduce from these media reports that not all teachers may necessarily be bearers of morality. This therefore begs the question: how will teachers in the education system stimulate values in learners? One is therefore inclined to

¹¹⁹ Broughton, T. (2008). Principal accused of conning pupils. *The Mercury*, 25 November 2008.

¹²⁰ Ndlovu, S & Mboto, S. (2009). Teachers face charges of misconduct. *The Mercury*, 20 May 2009.

conclude that the Values Education provided at school needs to be re-enforced at the home and *vice versa*.

4.5.1.4 Compulsory Values Education or Incidental Learning?

The teacher participants were asked to say whether values should be legislated. The results in the Table 4.12 show that 4.3% replied in the affirmative and 27.1% in the negative.

Table 4.13: Legislation and imposition of values

Legislation and Imposition	Legislation of Values	Imposition of Values
	Percent	Percent
Yes	4.3	72.9
No	27.1	14.3
No comment	27.1	11.4
Total	98.6	98.6
No Response	1.4	1.4
Total	100.0	100.0

Those who were against the legislation of values cited the following reasons:

- R5: When something is legislated, it becomes difficult to teach and learn. Incidental, non-formal learning is very effective.
- R11: Acceptance and understanding of values is a personal choice and should not be forced on any individual.
- R47: It cannot be enforced. You need to believe in the programme in order to implement it, not because you have to. It must come from within you.

The views of teacher participants who were in favour of legislation can be summarised in the following words of one respondent:

- R30: In a country that has been taken over by American television, we are heading quickly towards complete moral decay. In order to salvage what is left and nurture it until it grows again, censor

boards, etc need to be brought back and can only be done through legislation and compulsory values education.

According to the *Department of Education* (2001b), values cannot be legislated, because if they were, they would remain rootless, and lifeless. The Manifesto makes it quite clear that vital, durable values grow from dialogue and discussion and lived experience. Adams and Waghid (2005) concur that the mere promulgation of policy does not necessarily imply its effective implementation. They illustrate this point by referring to the South African Schools' Act, which despite its existence, has not resulted in democratic school governing practices. In their view, there is need to re-conceptualize school governing practices in accordance with the notion of deliberative democracy. According to Waghid (2004: 63), "deliberation demands that teachers and students do not merely accept given educational problem definitions with pre-determined ends which need to be instrumentally engineered and controlled". Deliberation in the words of renowned African scholar, Hountondji (2002), involves 'structures of dialogue and argumentation'. The Bhagavad Gita itself talks of abhyasa yoga (6:35, 8:8, 12:9, 12:10, 18:36) which means practice.

Respondent 30 quoted above makes reference to 'censor boards', 'legislation' and 'compulsory value education'. One could argue that the legislation of values is similar to the zero tolerance policies that were introduced into American schooling during the late 1990s. Respondent 30 also referred to the influence of American television programmes. According to Ugochukwu (2009), there is a belief among some scholars that American produced entertainment programmes contribute to the erosion of the traditional values of indigenous cultures. These scholars, Ugochukwu says, maintain that one of the factors which contribute to erosion of a nation's culture is globalization. Yet, at the same time there are other scholars who argue that "non-American audiences are not passive dupes of the American ideology, and are capable of negotiating the messages in American produced media" (Ugochukwu, 2009: 35). According to an empirical study conducted by Ugochukwu among Nigerian senior secondary school boys and girls, it was found that American entertainment programmes resulted in 'cognitive effects' or effects on the

'knowledge of participants'. Ugochukwu found that "exposure to foreign TV programmes does not lead to changes in attitude or behaviour" (2009: 55). The impact of foreign TV programmes is a highly contested area of research. While on the one hand, "media imperialism proponents argue that there is an onslaught of foreign TV programmes in third-world countries, and that such programmes lead to negative effects or homogenization of cultures" (Ugochukwu, 2009: 55), on the other hand, the study on the Nigerian secondary school students does "not support the position that exposure to foreign TV content equals disintegration of values." (Ugochukwu, 2009: 55).

One of the conclusions that Ugochukwu draws from his study is that it is difficult for foreign TV programming to undo the effects of years of an individual's socialisation. Ugochukwu (2009: 56) says:

The socialization of individuals through family, religion and education and the impact of such socialization in maintaining cultural resistance cannot be under estimated when considering the effects of foreign media.

The teachers that made up the sample in this study were asked to express their views on whether values should be imposed in the curriculum. The question required the teacher participants to say whether teachers, and therefore schools should be compelled to include values development across the curriculum.

Of the 70 teacher participants, 72.9% felt that values should be imposed in the curriculum, while 14.3% felt that it should not. (refer to Table 4.13 on page 126). Here again are the views of some teacher participants, which clearly show the split responsibility between educators and parents:

- R2: The youth of today need help and school plays a pivotal role in their life. Adding value to the curriculum will most definitely enhance their lives.
- R11: Total responsibility should not be placed on educators. Some responsibility should be left to parents and religious leaders, etc.
- R41: School should play a major role in social change and transformation especially with regard to discipline.
- R47: As in 9 above – it is difficult to impose something which you know is going to create problems with some individuals – values education should be a natural process.

Roux and Rhodes (2004: 206) state: "Values underlie the educational process and one way of achieving the educational outcomes set out in the National Curriculum Statement and Manifesto on Values in Education is introducing different values into the curriculum".

Related to the issue of the imposition of values in the curriculum is the discussion on the prescription of values which took place in the focus group discussion.

4.5.1.5 Should Values be Prescriptive?

The élite personalities were presented with the following quotation: "Research has shown that values are not changed by prescription, but through dialogue, experience, new knowledge and critical thinking"¹²¹.

This quotation, taken from the Ministry of Education's Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy document, favours the participation of individuals in developing their values. The Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy document is a post-apartheid (post-1994) policy document framed around the principles of Outcomes-Based Education (OBE). According to OBE, the learner must be fully involved in the learning act, and not be a passive recipient of knowledge, values and skills. Hence, the Manifesto on Values, Democracy and Education supports a dialogic, experiential and critical approach to values development.

One of the participants, PP, was concerned at the focus on changing values:

The question is focusing on changing values - why should that come to the purpose of the focus? Because values are time-honoured. Is there something sacred about changing time-honoured values?

It seems then that there is not always agreement on how values should be developed.

¹²¹ Department of Education. (2001). *Manifesto On Values, Education and Democracy*. Pretoria

While a few elite personalities were of the view that values develop through prescription, others favoured more experiential approaches to values development.

PP, whose concern about focusing on changing of values was alluded to above, continued to argue that there are some things which must be “prescriptive”. He explained how he has experienced a kind of liberalised education in the last thirty to forty years, which has taken over what people have considered to be time-honoured values. PP was quite strong in his view that people are now questioning some of the time-honoured values given in spiritual texts such as the Bhagavad Gita in order to satisfy their own weaknesses or inabilities to be able to uphold those values. PP warned:

One has to be very careful in this context because when there is an erosion of values as a result of trying to view very liberal sentiments of it then one is actually guilty of desecrating something that is cherished.

RP spoke about one becoming the change one wants to see in society, a very popular quote often used by Mahatma Gandhi. He was of the view that prescription is required. This view influenced by a verse in the Bhagavad Gita which states that tolerance, control and honesty constitute knowledge; their opposites constitute ignorance. This, according to RP, is prescription. RP then went on to say that at the same time, dialogue, experience and new knowledge and critical thinking will come from people who are in that field. In other words, only one well-versed in the content of a field of knowledge will be able to critically engage with that knowledge. In clarifying his view, RP referred to time, place and circumstance:

I might want to present this teaching but not the way it was spoken five thousand years ago in the Bhagavad Gita. There's a different audience I'm dealing with, so I'm going to teach them differently according to time, place and circumstance. In that sense religion may be different but spirituality is the same.

Ryan and Bohlin (1999: 105) support the idea of dialogue:

Thoughtful dialogue is not only a powerful way to investigate a topic but also a wonderful way to foster friendships within a classroom. By engaging students in moral discourse, they learn to take moral themes seriously and to take others seriously, listening to and considering thoughtfully what each of them says.

The views of RP and Ryan and Bohlin (1999) cohere as far as dialogue and critical engagement goes. Ryan and Bohlin's suggestion of "engaging students in moral discourse" could perhaps be regarded as the motivation for the views of JJ, a participant in the seminar. JJ alluded to the issue of values clarification in her response.

Many students either don't have values or they have got values and they do something because their great grandmother did it. They have never taken ownership of it for themselves and they don't know what the implications are of those values. So often they need to clarify values and then it's through a process of value clarification whereby as an educator you would give alternatives to get them to see it from different angles and perspectives. And if they still take ownership of the same values at the end of it they are more likely to put that into practice but often in that process of values clarification they start to understand that maybe those values need to be adjusted or changed or interrogated more critically and then when they take ownership of it they can publicly and repeatedly put it into action. So the whole pedagogical process of values clarification, I think, is very useful.

According to Haydon (1997), many educators have favoured an approach where learners are encouraged to think about their values. Values clarification (referred to by JJ in the focus group discussion), Haydon argues, was popularized in the United States of America and in such an approach individuals are encouraged to identify and reflect on their own values. Values clarification, which made significant contributions to character education efforts in the 1990s, became more popular than the cognitive moral reasoning approach. (DeRoche & Williams, 2001). DeRoche and Williams (2001: 10) provide three reasons for this:

- The strategies could be used in the school curriculum.
- Teachers felt more comfortable with it (it was less theoretical).
- It had applicability to the issues of the school and the community (values could be clarified using issues of the day).

However, the popularity of values clarification was short-lived. Reasons forwarded for this was that values clarification was unable to deepen theory, expand research, develop the curriculum, and improve teacher training. (DeRoche & Williams, 2001). According to Rhodes and Roux (2004), Kirschenbaum preferred the values articulation approach to the values clarification approach. The values articulation approach allows for affirmation of

values so that they become meaningful to people and means that learners will first have to understand values before they are explained to others. Another criticism of the values clarification approach has been its promotion of relativism. Vincent quoted in DeRoche and Williams (2001: 11)) asserts that values clarification promotes relativism in the following ways:

- Sends a message to students that individuals determine what is right for them.
- It emphasizes conformity rather than development.
- The approach assumes students have the ability to discuss and decide without reference to criteria for making judgments.

From the aforementioned, it seems that some of the scholarly literature is opposed to the values clarification approach being suggested by elite personality JJ. DeRoche & Williams (2001) are of the view that character education is a more holistic approach. According to Lickona (1991), character education is about knowing good, loving the good and doing good. Ryan and Bohlin (1999) also favour character education as it requires knowledge, effort, and practice along with support, example and encouragement. From the views of the authors mentioned in this paragraph, it would seem that there is a link between values in education and character education. According to RP, "The accumulation of habits builds character and as a result of that character you are going to inculcate certain values".

RP gave the example of Swami Prabhupada (founding Acharya of ISKCON), who through his example of chanting was able to positively influence hippies, politicians and professionals in New York into accepting Krishna Consciousness.

It was purely because of the example. So in other words what I'm saying is with values, you got to become the change you want to see in society.

Ryan and Bohlin (1999) agree that the example people set is important in building character as people are not born with either good or bad habits. Instead they pick up good or bad habits. Developing character is a social act and since character needs to be

nurtured the humans we share relationships with play a key part in our learning to become flourishing people of character (Ryan and Bohlin, 1999).

The general consensus to the question of developing values is that this happens most effectively through dialogue, experience and critical thinking. While PP favours prescription and expresses some concern about changing time-honoured values, RP is in favour of engaging with the values that we would like to instil in learners. JJ's suggestion of values clarification, though not as popular as it used to be, does involve some degree of dialogue and critical thinking.

In the next section of this chapter, the data relating to philosophical issues on Life Orientation, teaching methods used in Life Orientation, the link between values and Life Orientation, support and training received in Life Orientation and challenges faced in Life Orientation will be presented.

4.5.2 Life Orientation

In this section the data relating to teacher's views on the Life Orientation learning area, the teacher's access and use of policy documents related to Life Orientation and strategies to support values development, will be discussed.

4.5.2.1 Teacher Participants' Views on Life Orientation

According to the Department of Education (2005b: 9)¹²² "Life Orientation is an interdisciplinary subject that draws on and integrates knowledge, values, skills, and processes embedded in various disciplines...". The teachers who participated in the questionnaire survey were asked to describe what Life Orientation meant to them. While the responses varied, the idea that Life Orientation involved personal development and that it equipped learners with positive values was a common theme in the responses. The

¹²² Policy document of the Department of Education; forms part of the National Curriculum Statement for Grades 10-12 (General).

Department of Education (2005b: 9) stated that Life Orientation guides and prepares learners for life, as well as life's responsibilities and possibilities. The following respondent's explanation of Life Orientation concurs with the explanation given in the Programme Guidelines:

R51: Life Orientation means the equipping of learners with positive, spiritual, moral, ethical values inherent in all and using this to guide them towards holistic development for responsible adolescent living/life.

In seeking a definition of Life Orientation in the lives of learners, it was noted that all responses signalled the idea of ensuring a "co-operative, balanced and united world community in the future". Life Orientation is intended to "equip learners to engage on personal psychological, neuron-cognitive, motor, physical, moral, spiritual, cultural, socio-economic and constitutional levels, to respond positively to the demands of the world, to assume responsibilities, and to make the most of life's opportunities" (Department of Education, 2005b: 9).

Responses to attitudes towards Life Orientation were varied. Many teacher participants expressed a sense of fulfilment in teaching Life Orientation. The diminishing role of the working parent was also alluded to in expressing the importance of Life Orientation:

R4: Parents are working and sometimes do not spend enough time with their children.

R53: Parents don't always have the ability or time to talk to their children on various issues – can be done in Life Orientation lessons.

The above views of the teacher participants point to the importance of Life Orientation, especially as a means to impart values to learners. The diminishing role that parents are playing in the lives of the learners suggests that the school and hence teachers, but in particular teachers of Life Orientation, may have to take over the traditional role that parents once played in inculcating of values and morals in their children. The data also suggest that the importance and benefit of Life Orientation as a medium for values development becomes even more crucial when one considers the number of single parent homes and parentless homes from which learners come.

4.5.2.2 Teaching of Life Orientation

In this section of the chapter, the data relating to the teaching of Life Orientation and the grades in which Life Orientation are taught will be presented. The teachers were expected to indicate whether they taught Life Orientation and Religious Education. Ninety percent of the teachers in this survey were teaching Life Orientation in schools. Although a request was made to school principals that the questionnaire should be completed by teachers of Life Orientation, 10% of the respondents indicated that they were not teaching Life Orientation.

Table 4.14: Teaching of Life Orientation and Religious Education

Teaching	Teaching LO	Teaching RE
Yes	90.0	18.6
No	10.0	81.4
Total	100.0	100.0

All those who indicated yes to teaching Life Orientation and Religious Education were asked to indicate in which grades they taught these learning areas. The majority (90%) of the respondents teach Life Orientation from Grades R to 9, while 10% teach it at secondary school level (Table 4.14). This could be attributed to the fact that questionnaires were distributed to 49 primary schools and 23 secondary schools.

Table 4.15: Grades of Life Orientation Teaching

Grades	LO %	RE %
G R - 9	90.0	17.1
G 10 – 12	10.0	81.4
Not Applicable		1.4
Total	100.0	100.0

According to the Life Orientation National Curriculum Statement for Grades 10-12 (April 2005), the key to successful teaching in Life Orientation relies heavily on the

teaching approach chosen by the teacher. In the following paragraphs, a presentation of the data relating to teaching methods used by teachers in Life Orientation is included.

Teachers were asked to indicate the teaching methods that they used in Life Orientation. Some of the common teaching methods listed by teachers surveyed in this project are Storytelling, Media (newspaper, television), Life Situations, Group work, Peer teaching, Dramatisation/Role Play, Use of learner's personal experiences, Demonstration, Practical and Project Work. These methods also feature in a list of examples given in the Life Orientation National Curriculum Statement for Grades 10-12 (2005: 15-16).

Experiential learning¹²³ is one example of an approach that can be used in the teaching of Life Orientation: "In experiential learning, learners practise life skills in the classroom and reflect on these experiences". (Department of Education, 2005b: 15). According to Borzak (1981), experiential learning involves a direct encounter with the phenomena being studied. Experiential learning focuses on the learning process of the individual. An example of experiential learning is going to the zoo and learning through observation and interaction with the zoo environment, as opposed to reading about animals from a book.

Twenty seven percent (27.1%) of the respondents indicated that they had heard of experiential learning as contained in the Life Orientation education policy documents. The respondents also stated that they used this method in their teaching. Thirty-five percent (35%) of the respondents did not come across this method and 18% indicated that they do not use this method in their teaching.

Teacher participants were asked to provide in the questionnaire some 10 values that they felt should be included in Life Orientation teaching. The values listed by the teacher participants were universal ones such as honesty, courtesy, charity, responsibility, accountability, respect, tolerance, compassion, appreciation, honour, dignity, trustworthiness, kindness, love, truth, equity, humility, and altruism. This is an interesting response from the teacher participants. We saw earlier in this chapter that less than 50.0% of the teachers are familiar with the values of equity, tolerance, diversity, openness,

¹²³ A teaching approach suggested in the National Curriculum Statement for Life Orientation.

accountability, and social honour as contained in the Manifesto on Values, Education, and Democracy. So it seems that the teacher participants are familiar with the values of equity, tolerance, diversity, openness, accountability and social honour, but are perhaps unaware that they are contained in the policy document.

4.5.2.3 Policy Documents

An area of concern was teachers' access, reading and use of education policy documents such as The Teacher's Guide for Developing of Learning: Life Orientation; National Curriculum Statement; Learning Programme Guidelines: Life Orientation; National Policy on Religion and Education; Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy and Values in Education: Programme of Action. All are important documents whose content relates directly to the teaching of Life Orientation. It is therefore necessary to gauge whether teachers in fact have access, read and use the aforementioned documents.

Table 4.16: Access, Reading and Use of policy documents

Access, Reading & Use		Teacher's Guide	RNC S	Learning Programme	National Policy (RE)	Manifesto	Programme of Action
Access	Yes	85.7	90.0	34.3	20.0	14.3	18.6
	No	14.3	10.0	65.7	80.0	85.7	81.4
	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Reading	Yes	87.1	81.4	25.7	15.7	12.9	14.3
	No	12.9	18.6	74.3	84.3	87.1	85.7
	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Use	Yes	64.3	65.7	17.1	7.1	1.4	4.3
	No	35.7	34.3	82.9	92.9	98.6	95.7
	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

It is evident from Table 4.15 that 85.7% have access to the Teacher's Guide and 90.0% have access to RNCs. Similarly, a significant number of teacher participants have read and used the said documents in their teaching. In contrast, less than 50.0% of the teacher

participants have either had access, read or used the Learning Programme Guidelines, National Policy on Religion and Education, Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy and Values in Education: Programme of Action documents. In a study conducted recently in an urban, township and rural school, it was found that 72.6% of the respondents were not familiar with the document Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy (Baijnath, 2008). This means that the teacher's task of promoting values in the classroom is compromised, since the document which contains information on democratic and universal values is not familiar to teachers. According to Jansen (1999), there is an expectation that the proclamation of policy in itself would transform an education system in a rational, linear and uniform way. Jansen further suggests that this is an unrealistic expectation since policies operate in a complex and dynamic society. The successful implementation of policies requires attention to the availability of resources, regular monitoring and evaluation of implementation in classrooms. According to the Education Plus 2000 (2002: 30), "all parts of the education system require robust quality assurance systems, including benchmarking and regular evaluation".

The policy document, Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy, calls for the promotion of the values equity, tolerance, multilingualism, openness, accountability and social honour. The teacher participants were asked in the questionnaire to indicate whether they were familiar with each of the values of equity, tolerance, multilingualism, openness, accountability, and social honour.

Table 4.17: Familiarity with values

Familiarity	Equity	Tolerance	Diversity	Openness	Accountability	Social Honour
Yes	37.1	41.4	35.7	34.3	32.9	31.4
No	58.6	54.3	60.0	61.4	62.9	64.3
Missing	4.3	4.3	4.3	4.3	4.3	4.3

We note from Table 4.16 that less than 50.0% of the teacher participants were familiar with the values of equity, tolerance, diversity, openness, accountability and social honour. These results are of some concern since the above values are universal ones that

transcend all religious, cultural, race and class barriers. It should also be noted that the above values were determined by the Working Group on Values in Education¹²⁴ in a climate of anxiety about the need for moral regeneration.

4.5.2.4 Restriction of Values Education

The teacher participants were asked if Values Education should be restricted to one subject (Section E of the questionnaire – E 3 and E 4). The general view indicated by the teacher participants was that values education is all-pervasive and can therefore not be restricted to one subject. An overwhelming 91.4% expressed the view that values should not be restricted to Life Orientation. Reasons given were similar to those given earlier: ‘values permeate life’, values are inherent in all aspects of life’ and that ‘values should be spread across all learning areas’.

Interestingly, in a study completed by Baijnath (2008), urban, rural and township school teachers expressed the view that the Life Orientation school subject provided the best opportunity to teach values. It was their perception that values should be taught in the Life Orientation periods. However, one needs to keep in mind that the teaching of values needs to be included across all subjects in our schools. According to Rhodes (2003), this has been the call made in both C2005 and the National Curriculum Statement.

4.5.2.5 Strategies to Support Values Development

The teacher participants were asked to indicate whether they had found any strategies or resources that could support them in values development. About 64.3% found useful strategies or resources to assist them in the development of values in Life Orientation. A list of sixteen (16) strategies or resources taken from *Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy*, was presented to the teacher participants. Table 4.18 lists the strategies or

¹²⁴ According to Kader Asmal (2001), former Minister of Education in South Africa, the idea of a document on values and democracy started as a passage conversation. The Ministry of Education was working on a document dealing with religion education and had no broader frame of reference to locate this important discussion. The Minister then asked Wilmot James to assemble a small group of diverse thinkers to produce something for the Ministry to consider.

resources:

Table 4.18: Strategies or resources to support values development

Nurturing a culture of communication and participation in schools	1
Role modelling: Promoting commitment as well as competence among educators	2
Ensuring that every South African is able to read, write, count and think	3
Infusing the classroom with a culture of Human Rights	4
Making arts and culture part of the curriculum	5
Putting History back into the curriculum	6
Introducing religious education into schools	7
Making multilingualism happen	8
Using sport to shape social bonds and nurture Nation-building at schools	9
Ensuring equal access to education	10
Promoting anti-racism in schools	11
Freeing the potential of girls as well as boys	12
Dealing with HIV/AIDS and nurturing a culture of sexual and social responsibility	13
Making schools safe to learn and teach in and ensuring the rule of law	14
Ethics and the environment	15
Affirming our common citizenship	16

The Department of Education (2001b) policy document makes it quite clear that one cannot legislate values. The document expresses the view that if values were legislated they would remain rootless and lifeless. It is for this reason that the Department of Education (2001b) sets out sixteen key strategies or approaches for ‘seeding the values’ of the Constitution in young South Africans, through the educational system, in the belief that they will ‘germinate in time, become rooted, and flourish’.

Strategies or resources or approaches 1, 2, 7, 8, 13 and 14 (refer to Table 4.18) were the most popular ones as 61.4% indicated familiarity with these. Each of these strategies (1, 2, 7, 8, 13 and 14) will be elaborated upon. According to the Department of Education

(2001b) dialogue is considered to be an important strategy in South African schools. Strategy 1 (Nurturing a culture of communication and participation in schools) deals with improving channels of dialogue. Kader Asmal, Minister of Education from 1999 to 2004, expressed the following view at the Saamtrek Conference in February 2001: "Values cannot simply be asserted; they must be put on the table, be debated, be negotiated, be synthesized, be modified, and be earned. And this process, this dialogue, is in and of itself a value - a South African value - to be cherished."

The Department of Education (2001b: 27) states that it is "a truism that children learn by example". Role modelling: Promoting commitment as well as competence among educators, is the second key strategy presented in the *Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy*, which proved to be popular among the teacher participants in this survey. At the Saamtrek conference in February 2001, former President of South Africa, Nelson Mandela, said that parents and educators or politicians or priests who say one thing and do another send mixed messages to those in their charge. This second strategy requires educators who must be both competent and committed. In other words, in addition to being a learning mediator, an interpreter and designer of learning programmes, a leader, administrator and manager; a scholar, researcher and lifelong learner; an assessor and a learning area specialist,¹²⁵ the educator is also expected to internalize the ten fundamental values of the South African Constitution and to act as role models for students.

Strategy 7 (familiar to 61.4% of the teacher participants), which is introducing religious education into schools, is based on the idea that religious education is not engaged in the promotion of a religion but is a programme for studying religion in all its forms, as an important dimension of human experience and a significant field in the school curriculum. This is especially relevant in the South African secular context.

In the Tirisano programme, former Minister of Education, Kader Asmal, said that dealing with HIV/AIDS "is the priority that underlies all priorities, for unless we succeed, we

¹²⁵ Norms and Standards for Educators promulgated by the South African government in 2000.

face a future full of suffering and loss, with untold consequences for our communities and the education institutions that serve them” (Department of Education, 2001b: 66). Dealing with HIV/AIDS and nurturing a culture of sexual and social responsibility (Strategy 13) is intended to seed the values of the Constitution in young South Africans.

According to Xaba (2006), “Effective teaching and learning can only take place in a safe and secure school environment”. This is why Strategy 14 (refer to Table 4.18), making schools safe to learn and teach in and ensuring the rule of law, has been prioritised in the *Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy* policy document.

As mentioned previously, there are sixteen approaches that have been suggested to seed the values of the constitution in young South Africans. Only those strategies which proved to be popular with the teachers involved in this survey have been explained. An explanation of the remaining ten strategies can be found in the *Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy* policy document.

Teachers were then asked to indicate which of the sixteen strategies mentioned in Table 4.18 were used by them in developing values in their learners. Approaches 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8 and 9 (refer to Table 4.17 on page 138) were used by the majority (78.6%) of the teachers. Even though strategies 7, 13 and 14 were popular among teachers (see Table 4.18), these were not included as the strategies used by teachers.

Life Orientation was introduced as a new subject with Curriculum 2005 and it became a compulsory Further Education and Training (FET) subject for Grades 10-12 in 2007. Hence, teachers will need much support and training if they are to achieve the outcomes set in the policy documents on Life Orientation. An area of interest in this study was the quality of support and training that Life Orientation teachers are receiving.

4.5.2.6 Support and Training

Teachers were asked in the questionnaire to indicate what support have they received in Life Orientation teaching. The results are as follows:

Table 4.19: Support received in Life Orientation teaching

Support	Percent
School	1.4
Colleagues	11.4
Subject Advisors	2.9
Workshops	14.3
Other	2.9
All	1.4
School & Colleagues	7.1
School & Workshops	2.9
Colleagues & Subject Advisors	1.4
Colleagues & Workshops	8.6
Subject Advisors & Workshops	4.3
School, Colleagues & Workshops	14.3
School, Colleagues, Subject Advisors & Workshops	12.9
Total	85.7
No Response	14.3
Total	100.0

With the exception of colleagues (11.4%); workshops (14.3%); school, colleagues and workshops (14.3%), and school, colleagues, subject advisors and workshops (12.9%), support received from other sources is below 10.0%. Only 2.9% of the support received was from subject advisors. While the questionnaire has made use of the term *subject advisors*, the term currently in use in the South African education system is *Education Specialist*. The role of the Education Specialist is to oversee the curriculum in particular school subjects or learning areas, as well as to support the teaching and learning of that particular school subject or learning area.

The teacher participants were also asked to indicate whether they attended workshops on Life Orientation. The results show that 62.9% of the teacher participants in the survey

attended Life Orientation workshops while 34.3% did not attend. One respondent, employed by the governing body of the school said:

R2: Cannot discuss in depth due to not having been to the workshops. Considering I am a GB¹²⁶ educator. Only state paid educators go to workshops – unfortunately.

According to anecdotal evidence¹²⁷, teachers employed by the governing body are afforded the same rights as state-paid educators. There is no discrimination as far as governing body employees are concerned, especially in the attendance of workshops. It is therefore disturbing that a school does not allow a governing body educator to attend a workshop since ultimately the learners of the school are the ones who benefit from the educator's participation in such activities.

About 39.0% indicated that they attended a workshop once on the introduction of the Revised Curriculum (Table 4.20).

Table 4.20: Frequency of Life Orientation workshops

Frequency	Percent
Once a year	20.0
Once a term	8.6
Once at the introduction of the Revised Curriculum	38.6
Never	8.6
Other	7.1
Once a year & Once at the introduction of the Revised Curriculum	2.9
Total	85.7
No Response	14.3
Total	100.0

The questionnaire survey was administered in the Chatsworth district, and there was a discrepancy as far the frequency of the workshops was concerned, though one would have expected some consistency here. The table below shows that 20% of the respondents indicated that workshops took place once a year, while 8.6% indicated that it

¹²⁶ Governing Body

¹²⁷ Conversations with principals from Chatsworth schools

occurred once a term. This discrepancy could be attributed to several factors, one being that within the Chatsworth district, schools fall under the jurisdiction of different clusters.

Table 4.21: Presenters at the workshops

Presenters	Percent
Subject Advisors	25.7
Fellow Teachers	22.9
Lecturers from Universities	4.3
NGOs	2.9
Other	8.6
Subject Advisors & Fellow Teachers	5.7
Subject Advisors & NGOs	4.3
Fellow Teachers & NGOs	4.3
Subject advisors, Fellow Teachers & Lecturers from Universities	2.9
Subject Advisors, Fellow Teachers & NGOs	1.4
Fellow Teachers, Lecturers from Universities & NGOs	1.4
Total	84.3
No Response	15.7
Total	100.0

Subject advisors (25.7%) and fellow teachers (22.9%) were the ones who mostly presented at the workshops on Life Orientation (Table 4.21). The use of fellow teachers as presenters at Departmental workshops is a common practice. The Department of Education has adopted a cascade model to disseminate important information to educators. In the cascade model, teacher facilitators are trained and they in turn train small groups of teachers who disseminate the new ideas into and across their schools (Jansen, 2000: 35).

Since workshops are an important communicating tool for the Department of Education to share important information with educators, the teacher participants were asked to indicate how important attendance at Life Orientation workshops were. The results are shown on Table 4.22.

Table 4.22: Importance of attending Life Orientation workshops

Importance	Percent
N/A	4.3
Not so important	1.4
Important	25.7
Very important	61.4
Total	92.9
No Response	7.1
Total	100.0

It is evident from Table 4.22 that 61.4% of the respondents found it very important to attend Life Orientation workshops, while 25.7% indicated that it was important to attend. As mentioned, one of the means that the Department of Education has of passing on curriculum information to its teachers is through workshops. It is extremely important for teachers in the different learning areas to attend workshops, or they will not be able to keep abreast of the latest developments in their particular learning areas.

While one realises the importance of attending Life Orientation workshops, the question that arises is, *How useful have teachers found these workshops?* Since this is one of the chief ways that the Department of Education has to communicate with its teachers, the teacher participants in this survey were asked to indicate the usefulness of the Life Orientation workshops.

Table 4.23: Usefulness of Life Orientation workshops

Usefulness	Percent
N/A	20.0
Not so useful	11.4
Useful	28.6
Very useful	24.3
Total	84.3
No Response	15.7
Total	100.0

The general feeling among teacher participants was that the workshops were “not well organised.” The teacher participants also expressed disappointment in the selection of presenters at these workshops:

- R5: Workshops held by districts or circuit facilitators were most boring. Participants had to devise methods and strategies. Nothing concrete was given by the facilitator.
- R11: The workshop gave no clear indication of what is expected. The facilitator regurgitated the RNCS document – which educators have already went over in school.
- R12: Sometimes they were not well organised. The facilitator was not well equipped to handle the workshop.

Within this theme of teaching of Life Orientation, respondents were asked some questions on the *Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy*. Table 4.23 shows the results to the questions:

- Are you familiar with this document?
- If yes, have you had access to this supplement?
- If yes, do you use this in your Life Orientation teaching?

Table 4.24: Familiarity, Access and Usage

	Familiarity	Access	Usage
Yes	4.3	4.3	4.3
No	84.3	2.9	1.4
Do not know	5.7	84.3	84.3
Not applicable	0	0	0
Total	94.3	91.4	90.0
Missing	5.7	8.6	10.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

It is evident that 84.3% of the teacher participants in this survey are not familiar with the *Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy*. Familiarity, access and usage of the *Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy* are essential in the current immoral climate in the country.

The next section focuses on the challenges faced in the teaching of Life Orientation.

4.5.2.7 Challenges

According to the teacher participants and the élite personalities, one of the major challenges facing the youth is the issue of their sexual behaviour. One teacher participant said:

R7: Problems in shaping sexual behaviour. Guiding moral choices – because the environment that the learners come from is totally different from mine and the school environment.

In the focus group discussion, RP referred to an incident in which a female teacher had fallen pregnant by one of her students. RP stated:

Clearly, this is not a good example of character building or “becoming the change” we want in society.

This incident and the problems of sexual behaviour referred to by Respondent 7 above points to another important value, certainly important as far as the teachings of the Bhagavad Gita and the HIV/AIDS pandemic are concerned. This is the value of celibacy.

MKA, one of the élite personalities, explained the challenge of the youths’ sexual behaviour by referring to the concept of *brahmacharya*:

Brahmacharya means Brahmani Chariti ithi - he who moves on the path of Brahman is Brahmacharya.

In Hinduism, Brahman refers to God. That person who is pursuing God (Brahman) is a *Brahmachari*. According to MKA, when a person pursues divinity, self-control is important. MKA explained further that celibacy is not merely restricted to restraining from the physical pleasures; it also means controlling all the ten senses. MKA maintains that one who controls one’s sexual indulgence should be able to control any other sense. MKA’s views are supported by Alter (1994), who contends that while a *Brahmachari* is expected to remain celibate, he is also expected to control all his senses through diet, exercise and rest. In fact, it has been said that in order to control the senses (and this includes maintaining celibacy), one has to carefully manage what and how one reads, where and how one sleeps and what to wear. In this regard, Alter (1994: 48) argues that

“Brahmacharya is a way of life that is focused on sexuality but includes a much broader spectrum of activities and concerns.”

RP made the point that the Hindu scriptures abound with the tremendous benefits of remaining celibate. MKA expressed the view that not only was it essential for learners to practice celibacy, but that it would be beneficial for every individual to practise celibacy:

Celibacy is one of the most central principles of Sanathan Dharma.

MKA continued that the justification for this can be found in the Hindu system of Ashrama.¹²⁸ According to Sivananda (1980), celibacy is absolute freedom from sexual thoughts and desires. Sivananda (1980) stated that one cannot expect to enjoy good health and a successful spiritual life without celibacy. The Bhagavad Gita has given great prominence to the concept of celibacy. The message of controlling one's senses, which is an important teaching of the Bhagavad Gita, is closely linked to celibacy. According to a line of verse eight of the Bhagavad Gita (8: 11),

यदिच्छन्तो ब्रह्मचर्यं चरन्ति yadicchanto brahmacaryam caranti

Desiring perfection, one practices celibacy. (Prabhupada, 1986: 376)

For Saraswathi (1982), to be a *Brahmachari* means that one has to eat simple food, live simply, and engage in the simple exercise of walking. Alter (1994: 51) writes on the importance of diet:

Diet is perhaps the single most important variable. According to clearly defined and predictable ratio, food is transformed into blood, blood into flesh, flesh into fat, fat into bone, bone into marrow, and marrow into semen.

Shastri (n.d.:50) also sings the praises of food or diet when he says that the celibate or *Brahmachari*'s food should be of the purest quality, since “pure food produces pure truth, and pure truth produces pure wisdom”.

In view of the above, as well as the alarming rate of increase in cases of rape, incest and abuse, celibacy is an important value that needs to feature prominently in our education system. However, this is not a simple matter of asking learners and educators to rid

¹²⁸ The four ashramas or orders or periods of religious life are *brahmacharya* (celibate student), *grihastha* (householder), *vanaprastha* (retired householder) and *sanyasa* (ascetic or renunciate).

themselves of sexual thoughts and desires. There needs to be concerted and prolonged efforts from all facets of society to expose especially the young to the benefits of semen retention. The founder of the Yoga system, Maharshi Patanjali, states in one of his Yoga aphorisms:

After becoming an *urdhvareta* (a yogi who has accomplished perpetual sublimation of semen) through yoga, a yogi becomes all powerful. That yogi alone can realize the supreme truth.

All people, but especially learners at schools and students at university, need to be advised that the purpose of *brahmacharya* is to build a resilient store of semen so that the body can radiate an aura of vitality and strength (Alter, 1994). Shivananda (1984: 10-11) also highlights the benefits of semen retention when he says,

The more a person conserves his semen, the greater will be his stature and vitality. His energy, ardor, intellect, competence, capacity for work, wisdom, success and godliness will begin to manifest themselves, and he will be able to profit from a long life...To tell the truth semen is elixir.

In addition to explaining the benefits of *brahmacharya*, the élite personalities felt that the youth should also be given scientific methods for the preservation of celibacy. Methods such as drinking a glass of cold water to pacify the sexual desire or abandoning solitude or a bath of cold water generally suggested in the literature on the preservation of celibacy, have been suggested by Alter (1994). In Northern India, for example, popular and technical literature on *brahmacharya* is published. (Alter, 1994). According to Alter (1994), booklets, pamphlets, and medical manuals are printed and distributed to advocate the merits of maintaining celibacy. It is this kind of prolonged and concerted efforts that was alluded to earlier.

It was mentioned earlier also that the task of encouraging celibacy, especially among the youth, brings with it several challenges. According to RP, if one were to consider the current state of morality in our country, celibacy is a far-fetched concept. As far as he can see, asking people to remain celibate is asking them to give up the only kind of pleasure they know. Shastri (n.d.:29) expressed similar sentiments when he wrote,

As a form of entertainment, cinema is a great enemy of modern society. It is full of obscene, erotic, and indecent images which enter the sub-conscious, lie dormant, and then result in night-emissions.

Alter (1994) too, like the teacher participants and élite personalities, has criticised modernity for the sexually decadent ethos and institutional structures it has created. He has included everything from toiletries and co-education to hair styles and family planning as part of the ethos and institutional structures of modernity.

The preceding pages have presented the data relating to the teaching of Life Orientation. Issues such as teaching methods, values in Life Orientation and challenges faced by Life Orientation teachers were discussed. In the next section, the data relating to use of religious texts in Life Orientation are presented.

4.5.3 Life Orientation and Religious Texts

The aim of this study is to determine the perceptions of teacher participants and élite personalities for the possible use of the Bhagavad Gita for Values Education in Life Orientation. The teacher participants in this questionnaire survey were asked several questions relating to the use of religious texts, in general, and the Bhagavad Gita in particular.

4.5.3.1 Learning Materials

More than half of the teachers (56.0%) refer to learning materials and other learning facilities in their teaching of Life Orientation. Some of the commonly used learning materials, which the respondents listed in the questionnaire, are videos, TV, textbooks, case studies, magazines and educator's guides.

In keeping with the theme of learning materials, teacher participants were specifically asked if they refer to or use any religious texts in the planning and teaching of Life Orientation. The results show that 28.0% of the respondents referred to religious texts in the planning and teaching of Life Orientation and 29% did not. The teacher participants indicated the following religious texts, which they referred to in their Life Orientation teaching: *Back to Godhead* (a monthly magazine of ISKCON), Books from the Divine

Life Society, and stories from the Bible, Quran and Watchtower/Awake (publications of the Jehovah's Witness Movement). It is evident from this that a diversity of teaching material from religious sources is used in the teaching of Life Orientation.

4.5.3.2 The Bhagavad Gita and Values Education

Table 4.25: Reference and Exposure to Bhagavad Gita in preparation

Preparation	REFERENCE TO	EXPOSURE TO
	Percent	Percent
Yes	51.4	54.3
No	5.7	7.1
No comment	34.3	30.0
Total	91.4	91.4
System	8.6	8.6
Total	100.0	100.0

We see from the table that 51.4% of the teacher participants indicated that reference should be made to the Bhagavad Gita in the preparation and presentation of Life Orientation. However, this was perhaps to be expected, since 58.6% of the teacher participants in this survey indicated their religious affiliation as Hindu. Similarly, 54.3% of the teacher participants felt that learners of all religious persuasions should be exposed to the teachings/messages of the Bhagavad Gita, and 7.1% expressed the view that there should be no exposure to the Bhagavad Gita. It would seem that reference to a single religious text such as the Bhagavad Gita is contested and that drawing general information from all religious texts is the approach that is preferred. In justifying their position, respondents said:

R11: We teach in a multiracial and multicultural society. So reference to one religious book is not acceptable. Contentious. Too many fires to put out if religious texts are brought in. General information on each religion is preferred.

Those who are against the idea of referring to the Bhagavad Gita have said that religious knowledge cannot be enforced and that it goes against religious tolerance. The feeling amongst these teacher participants was that reference to religious texts is too time-consuming and that there was insufficient time to use all religious books. However, those

in favour of using the Bhagavad Gita felt that rather than emphasising the text itself, the teachings and its relevance to life should be highlighted. Teacher participants indicated that reference to the Bhagavad Gita would serve the purpose of helping learners to appreciate and understand the message/teachings and not of telling learners what to believe. These teacher participants also hold the view that the Bhagavad Gita can assist in the moral regeneration of society in general. There is a sense amongst these educators that the Bhagavad Gita's theme of doing "your duty" has a universal appeal:

R66: The Gita need to be treated as a text of literature as well. One of the main themes of doing "your duty" are important to all of mankind. South Africa speaks of Social transformation – this is only possible if the social change is accompanied by moral regeneration.

Some of the teacher participants made reference to LO2 (learning outcome) in their responses. According to the *Revised National Curriculum Statement Grades R-9: Teacher's Guide for the Development of Learning Programmes: Life Orientation* (2003), learning outcome 2 (LO2) has social development as its focus area. It refers to the outcome where a learner is able to demonstrate an understanding of, and commitment to, constitutional rights and responsibilities and shows an understanding of diverse cultures and religions (emphasis added). Their view was that children of all religious persuasions should be exposed to the teachings/messages of the Bhagavad Gita since this will assist in the achievement of learning outcome (LO 2).

The élite personalities too were asked to identify those values from the Bhagavad Gita which could be most beneficial to learners of Life Orientation. In addition, the élite personalities were asked to comment on the use of religious texts, and in particular, the use of the Bhagavad Gita in Life Orientation lessons.

PP was of the view that the values of equanimity and equal vision deserved to be included in Life Orientation lessons on values. In the Bhagavad Gita (12, 18), Krishna says that the person who is alike to friend and foe is indeed very dear to God. In fact, verses 18 and 19 clearly expound the virtues of equanimity and equal vision. In life, one is bound to meet a variety of persons. While some of the people will be friendly, others

may be hostile or harmful. These values of equanimity and equal vision sit quite comfortably in a society committed to fairness, equity and social justice.

However, there is no guarantee that inclusion of the values of the Bhagavad Gita in the Life Orientation curriculum will produce positive results. There are increasingly competing demands being made on learners in school. One of these, in the words of one of the élite personalities, is the marketing of ideas and ideologies.

The chair of the seminar, BM, reminded the élite personalities that there was often a tug-of-war between spiritual development and material culture. He alluded to the fact that the focus of learners at schools is turning to flashy cars, designer clothes and the latest cell phones. He also spoke of the manner in which television, newspapers, e-mails and the Internet are marketing ideas and ideologies and therefore proving to be much more attractive than the values of equanimity and equal vision.

MKA too, referred to the focus of education as a challenge to values development in schools: "Today's education seems to focus so much on intelligence that even parents are very excited if the child comes out of the university with flying colours."

Several eminent scholars have criticised modern education for its insistence on developing the cognitive aspects of the child. Mahatma Gandhi, for example, was clear that the first place in education should be given to the culture of the heart, i.e. to the building of character (Bourai, 1993). He has no doubt that if character building as a proper foundation for education was firmly laid, then children could learn all other things by themselves (Bourai, 1993).

PP referred to the diminishing role of the parent in the life of their children. MKA expressed the view that values start at home. He said: "The role of the school is to re-enforce the values that the child picks up in the home." However, the discussion that ensued suggested that MKA's views needed to be seen in the context of the kind of homes from which the majority of the learners come. Many learners in South African

schools come from single parent homes, or homes in which there are no parents. Where there are parents, many are battling to put food on the table, leaving very little time for parent-child interaction. These situations obviously increase the responsibility of the school to produce citizens who are morally upright. It is in this context that JR said: "It means that the high school curriculum may have to be changed or may need some adapting."

Perhaps the "change" or "adaptation" that is being referred to above is the possible introduction of religious texts as a source for Values Education.

The élite personalities were asked to elaborate on the idea as to whether reference should be made to any religious texts in the planning and teaching of Life Orientation, and in particular whether the Bhagavad Gita could be used as a text in Life Orientation.

One of the élite personalities, MKA, called scriptures an "instruction manual", equating them to guides that one receives when one purchases an electronic item. Dependent on the brand of item purchased, one will have to obtain the appropriate instruction manual. Similarly, in order to operate in life, one would require the appropriate scripture: "If you are a Hindu you have to study the Bhagavad Gita, if you are a Christian you are required to study the Bible."

However, the above élite personality also stressed that one ought not to be closed-minded about studying scriptures. According to MKA, fanaticism resulting in refusing to study the scriptures of religions other than one's own is destroying the catholicity of religion today. Another élite personality, JR, also expressed support for the study of scriptures in Life Orientation. He too warned against any kind of narrow mindedness regarding the study of scriptures of the different religions. JR described the refusal to study the scriptures of other religions as absurd as insisting on being treated by a doctor of one's own religion: "So in that situation it is absurd as saying that as a Hindu, I will only be treated by the doctor of my religion and therefore if the medicine comes from a Christian

doctor, I will not take it". JR also referred to his institution's programmes on personality development in the corporate sector:

When we take the message of the Bhagavad Gita to schools on personality development – we do not make references to scriptures because children of all religions were there. If it is beneficial to an individual, just give it – don't say it has come from this book or that book.

The above section has presented the data relating to the use of the Bhagavad Gita for Values Education in Life Orientation. While a little more than half the teacher participants indicated that learners should be exposed to the Bhagavad Gita and that reference should be made to the Bhagavad Gita in Life Orientation lessons, about 30.0% of the teacher participants made no comment. Teacher participants felt that learners could be made to appreciate and understand the message of the Bhagavad Gita without being indoctrinated into any specific beliefs, while others were of the view that reference to religious books was a time-consuming exercise and should as far as possible be avoided. The élite personalities were unanimous in their call that the Bhagavad Gita could be used for Values Education in Life Orientation.

4.6 Conclusion

This chapter began with an introduction to the two critical questions raised in this study. The first of these questions related to the educators' perceptions of the possible use of the Bhagavad Gita for Values Education in Life Orientation. The analysis has shown that the majority of the teachers are aware of the Bhagavad Gita, with many being aware of it for more than twenty years. It has also shown that the Bhagavad Gita has contributed to the spirituality of more than half of the teachers in this survey and more than three quarters feel better for having read the Bhagavad Gita. The majority of the teachers consider it very important to focus on Values Education in schools and are not in favour of Values Education being compartmentalized into one subject. The teacher participants also felt that values development was the joint responsibility of parents, schools and communities. However, teachers are not in favour of referring to a single religious text - they would prefer to draw general information from all religious texts.

The second critical question was concerned with how these perceptions inspire Values Education in Life Orientation. A few conclusions may be derived. The participants were unanimous that there are several verses in the Bhagavad Gita that emphasise the qualities of uprightness, simplicity, righteousness, and honesty. In addition, it was found that the Bhagavad Gita could make a positive contribution to the standard of morality in society. The analysis has also shown that while the Bhagavad Gita shared similarities with other scriptures of Hinduism, it also found favour with scholars of other religious denominations. It can be seen from this chapter that the participants were unanimous in their views that there is indeed no contradiction either at the fundamental or philosophical level of the Bhagavad Gita. As far the participants' views go, if the Bhagavad Gita is seen through the lens of a devotee, there is no contradiction. The participants have also expressed the view that if one reflects upon the message of the Bhagavad Gita, rather than simply read it, one will find no contradiction. The participants disagree with those who consider the instruction of Krishna to Arjuna to "fight" as encouragement to solve differences through violence. Here again the participants have pointed out that one cannot comment on the "war" in the Bhagavad Gita without understanding the context in which this dialogue between Krishna and Arjuna took place. The Bhagavad Gita has been hailed by the participants as a useful resource for Values Education in Life Orientation.

The next chapter includes a discussion of some of the insights that have emerged from the study. The insights are explained through a model of spirituality that has been adopted and adapted from a medical model of spirituality. The insights pertain to: (1) teacher participants' and élite personality's perceptions, assumptions and understanding of spirituality, (2) spirituality and subjective self-fulfilment, and lastly, (3) the demonising of our youth in terms of youth popular culture.

CHAPTER FIVE

EMERGING INSIGHTS, THESES AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1 Introduction

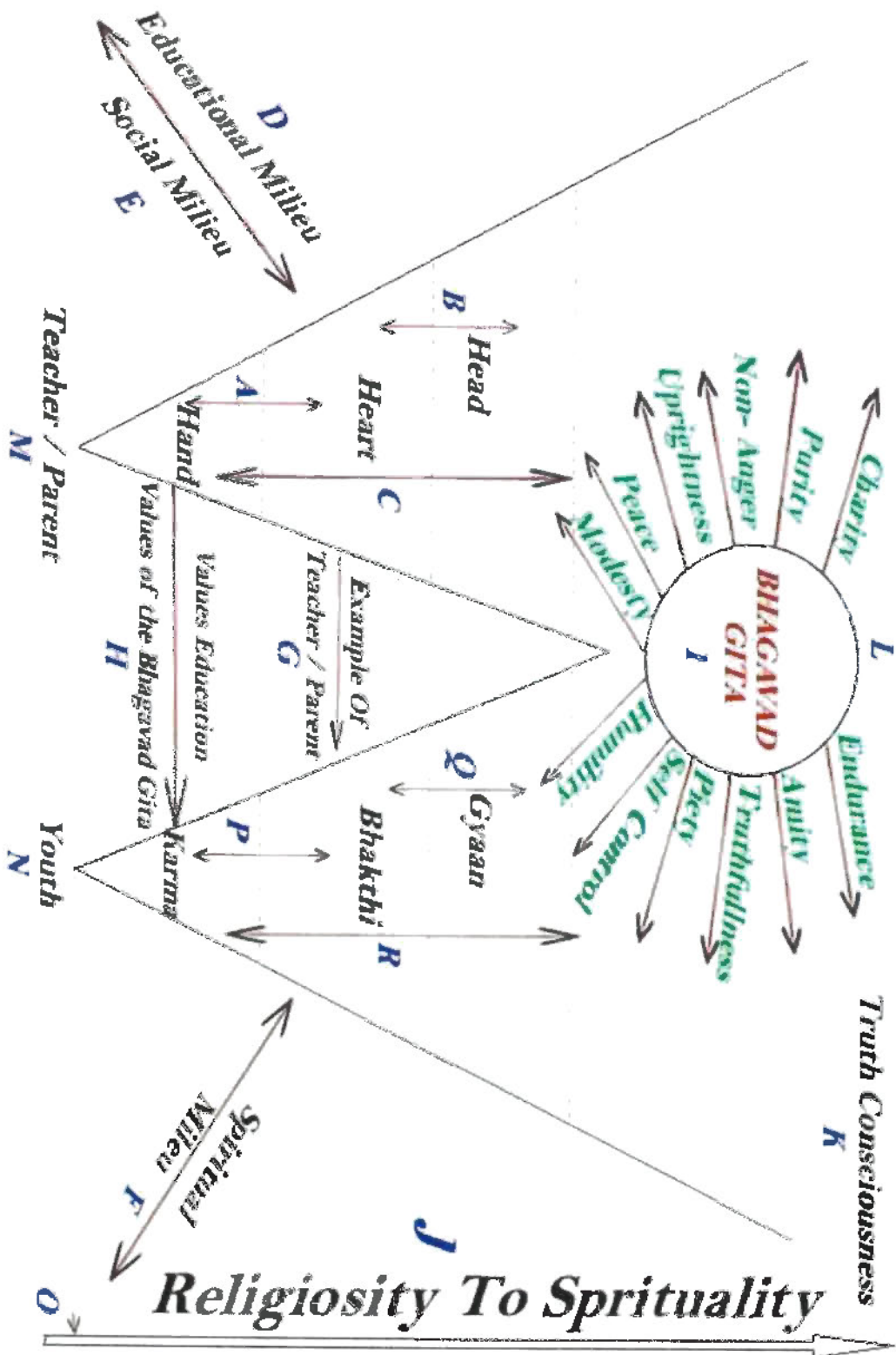
The purpose of this study is to determine the possibilities of the Bhagavad Gita to contribute to Values Education in Life Orientation. In the previous chapter, an analysis of the data obtained was presented. The significance of the data was also discussed extensively. The two primary sources of data were the teachers of Life Orientation in selected primary and secondary schools in the Chatsworth district of the province of KwaZulu-Natal in South Africa, and selected élite personalities who are experts in the field of Values Education and religion. The data obtained from the questionnaires and focus group discussions were collapsed into emerging themes, which were analysed qualitatively. Tashakkori and Tedlie (1998: 397) refer to the qualitative analysis of quantitative data as “qualitizing”.

This chapter will proceed now to present and discuss some selected insights that have emerged from this study. The insights will be explained through a model of spirituality that has been adopted from the 3 H (head, heart, hands) and BMSEST (body, mind, spirit, environment, social, transcendent) models of spirituality in multicultural whole-person medicine (Anandarajah, 2008). This model is used to drive the thesis of this study. According to Anandarajah (2008), the BMSEST model provides a conceptual framework for the role of spirituality in the health care context. Anandarajah (2008: 1) adds that “the 3H and BMSEST models suggest a multidimensional and multidisciplinary approach based on universal concepts and a foundation in both the art and science of medicine”. In the BMSEST model of Anandarajah, the physician interacts through spiritual counselling, cognitive therapy and medication to develop and rectify the health of the patient. In Life Orientation, it is the teacher/parent who interacts with the youth to develop values necessary for a meaningful life. In adapting the 3 H and BMSEST model of Anandarajah, a suggestion is being made that a multidimensional and multidisciplinary approach emerging from the data can be used in the development of Values Education for the

youth. The emerging insights which give rise to the thesis of this study are the teacher participants' and élite personalities' understanding of spirituality and the suspicious?? way in which the youth are viewed in society. The thesis that emerges suggests that the Bhagavad Gita is a deep reservoir of values for Values Education in Life Orientation. However, these values are not being imbibed by the youth (see the broken lines marked O in Figure 5.1.). The 3 H and BMSEST model has been adapted to explain the data obtained from the teacher participants and élite personalities on the possible use of the Bhagavad Gita for Values Education in Life Orientation. Furthermore, the 3 H and BMSEST model will be adapted to explain how the Bhagavad Gita has the potential to push the boundaries beyond religiosity to spirituality and ultimately truth consciousness (refer to J and K on Figure 5.1). It will also show that an interaction between the teacher/parent as an example of a moral being and the youth faced with the challenges of a declining morality has the potential to create a spiritual milieu for the youth/learner (refer to G, H and F on Figure 5.1). The teacher participants also felt that values development was the joint responsibility of parents, schools and communities. Arrows D and E on Figure 5.1 show the influence of the educational and social milieus.

In the model (Figure 5.1), the universality of the Bhagavad Gita is placed at the centre with its various values (see Arrow I in Figure 5.1). There are several verses in the Bhagavad Gita that emphasise the qualities of uprightness, simplicity, righteousness, and honesty. These and other values are shown to be permeating towards the youth (Arrow L in Figure 5.1). The two pinnacles are represented by the teacher/parent (as the individual – M on the figure) and the youth (as the individual – N on the Figure). Both the teacher and the youth are made up of intellect, hand and heart (Arrows A, B and C on the figure). There is constant interaction between the intellect, hand and heart of the individual (teacher/parent and youth) resulting in wholeness of the individual. The intellect, hand and heart that constitute every individual can be associated with the categories of *gyan* (knowledge-intellect), *karma* (action-hand) and *bhakti* (devotion-heart: see Arrows P, Q and R on the figure]. The model also shows that there is interaction between the educational milieu and the teacher/parent (Arrow D on the figure). The teacher/parents are also influenced by the social milieu (Arrow E on the figure). The teacher taking into

Figure 5.1



Into account the influences of the educational and social milieu interacts with the learner through the Values Education that is derived from the Bhagavad Gita as well as through his example (Arrows G and H on the figure), to develop the intellect, hand and heart of the youth. In this process the teacher, with the aid of the values espoused by the Bhagavad Gita, attempts to push the youth beyond religiosity towards spirituality. This is shown by the spiritual milieu on the right side of the model (refer to F on the figure). The purpose of the interaction between teacher and youth is shown by the vertical line (J on the figure), at the end of which is truth consciousness (K on the figure). The data suggest that spirituality is pushed beyond religion and detached from “its moorings in historical religious tradition and is redefined in terms of subjective self-fulfilment” (Koenig, 2008:349). This self-fulfilment can be reached through the different pathways suggested in the Bhagavad Gita. The Bhagavad Gita’s enumeration of the paths *gyan* (knowledge), *karma* (action) and *bhakti* (devotion) coheres with the aforementioned view of spirituality for self-fulfilment. The Bhagavad Gita teaches that one could adopt any one of the above paths in their spiritual development. The path that a spiritual aspirant chooses will depend on his/her own temperament and propensities. The élite personalities concur with Parthasarathy (2004) that these three paths are corresponding to three distinct categories of humans – the intellectual (*gyan*), the active (*karma*) and the emotional (*bhakti*). This therefore points to the fact that the Bhagavad Gita can serve as an important tool in the development of a person’s spirituality, irrespective of the person’s religious affiliation. No matter what religious grouping a person falls into, all human beings are made of an intellectual, active and emotional temperament. While the intellectual may predominate in one individual, another may be dominated by the emotional temperament. The data suggest that the Bhagavad Gita ought to be equally appealing to all different individuals since it regards these three paths (*gyan*, *karma* and *bhakti*) as a means to self-realisation. To this end, Gupta (2006) states that no matter what the starting point is (*gyan*, *karma* or *bhakti*), the ultimate goal is sameness and evenness of mind (shown through the vertical line in the model). The data also suggest that spirituality is an active and vital connection to a force/power/energy, spirit or sense of deep self. Thus children need to be aware that there is more to life than the material (Elton-Chalcraft, 2002). The model also indicates that human beings are essentially spiritual beings (Nikhilananda, 1974; De Klerk-Luttig,

2008). The purpose of the model is to show that “we have to see ourselves as spiritual beings having a human experience – rather than human beings who may be having a spiritual experience” (Dyer, 1993: 310). The thesis of this study (which is abstracted from the data) is that while the Bhagavad Gita has a conglomerate of values (refer to L on the figure), these are not necessarily being accepted by the youth (refer to broken lines marked O on the figure). The Bhagavad Gita has a sophisticated set of values; however, there is a chasm or lacunae between the values on offer and the inability of the youth to translate these values into actionable items. While it has been argued that the Bhagavad Gita is a grand pedagogical strategy (Bourai, 1993), the youth have not caught on to the values contained therein. The Bhagavad Gita may be universally accepted as a possible use for Values Education in Life Orientation, but its popularity has yet not found favour with the youth, as indicated by the perceptions of the teacher participants and élite personalities.

Another key insight that emerges from the data collected was the teachers’ support of values and Values Education against the challenges faced by youth. This is shown in the model as the social milieu. The social milieu is made up of, among other things, violence, crime and promiscuity. For example, a newspaper in Durban, South Africa, reported that an increasing number of learners were carrying weapons and drugs to school (Mhlongo, 2005). According to Wood, Maforah and Jewkes (1996), sexual violence is reaching epidemic proportions and Eliasov and Frank (2000) have reported that rape and sexual abuse in schools is alarming. Reddy, Panday, Swart, Jinabhai, Amosun, James, Monyeki, Stevens, Morejele, Kambaran, Omardien & Van den Borne (2003) report that there is increasing abuse of alcohol by learners. In understanding the above, I borrow from Giroux (2001), who warns against the process of demonising the youth. He feels that there is an increasing refusal by society to understand the problems of the youth. Giroux (2001: 8) says:

Most importantly, what critics take up as a youth problem is really a problem about the corruption of politics, the shrivelling up of public spaces and resources for young people, the depoliticization of large segments of the population and the emergence of a corporate and media culture that is defined through an unadulterated authoritarian form of kinship that is masculinist, intolerant and militaristic.

Giroux has made a call for people to understand how youth produce and engage in popular culture. This means that the young people of a generation do not live in any kind of historical, political or economic vacuum. Rather than demonising the youth, teachers and parents need to understand and help the younger generation to “navigate a complex and rapidly changing cultural landscape” (Giroux, 2001: 152). If one has to decrease the chasm that exists between the plethora of values contained in the Bhagavad Gita and the youths’ acceptance of these values, then one would have to agree with Giroux (2001), who is not in favour of passing sweeping laws. Instead, Giroux (2001) prefers that work be done with the youth so that an investment can be made in their economic and social well-being.

The inclusion of the teacher/parent as an individual in the model suggests that in order for teachers/parents to support learner’s spirituality, teachers/parents themselves need to be spiritual (Elton-Chalcraft, 2002). The teacher participants as well as the élite personalities have suggested that “educational leaders should be most attuned to their own spirituality” Starratt (1995: 196). This means that the teacher/parent has to be an exemplar or role model to the learner. Elton-Chalcraft (2002) asserts that the moral side of spirituality can be appealing for teachers who are not religious. The model argues that one could easily be morally upright and yet not religious. Prozesky (2007: 134) notes that spirituality has a vital contribution to make towards morality. He writes,

One of them comes from the creative energy so strikingly evident in spirituality, with its ability to yield novelty and refreshment. Applying this selfsame creativity to ethics means moving away from believing that rules and codes is the proper vehicle for morality, except as provisional devices or for the young who are not yet ready for moral creativity. Everyday the world produces new developments and most of them involve important ethical problems. A solidly conservative approach is not going to be able to meet them. Instead, we are going to have to experiment plentifully with goodness if the struggle for a world with a future is to be won.

Prozesky’s advice to “experiment” is also captured in the words of Elton-Chalcraft (2002: 325): “what I argue is that there is not some ‘right’ or ‘consensus’ spirituality which we hope our children will develop but rather that teachers can offer opportunities for all kinds of different spiritualities”.

5.2 Conclusion

Chapter One of this thesis began with a description of the challenges being faced by the youth (who are the target audience for Values Education in Life Orientation), in order to provide a background and context for this study. This chapter also described the aim of the study, which was to investigate the possibilities the Bhagavad Gita for Values Education in Life Orientation. The report then proceeded in Chapter Two to provide a review of the literature relating to the Bhagavad Gita, Life Orientation and Values Education. In particular, this chapter presented arguments in favour of postmodernism as a theoretical framework for this study. It was also seen in this chapter that the data obtained was analysed through an adaptation of the Christian faith's theory of pluralism. Chapter Three explained the research approach of mixed methods research and the appropriateness of this approach for the study. In addition, the suitability of the interpretive paradigm was explained. In Chapter Four, the data obtained from the teacher participants and the élite personalities were presented and discussed. This was done by collapsing the data from the questionnaires and the focus group discussions into themes and sub-themes. The findings of the study are summarised in the following paragraphs.

This study set out to answer two questions. The first of these questions is: *What are educators' perceptions of the possible use of the Bhagavad Gita for Values Education in Life Orientation?* The data show that most of the teacher participants have been aware of the Bhagavad Gita for most of their lives. Many teacher participants felt spiritually evolved after being exposed to the teachings of the Bhagavad Gita. While most teacher participants were in favour of focussing on Values Education in schools, they felt that this should be done across the curriculum of the school and that it should be the joint responsibility of the parents, teachers, school and communities, the idea being that only a sustained effort at values development could bring about any kind of moral regeneration. Most teachers were not in favour of referring to a single religious text. They maintained that it would be more beneficial to draw general information from all religious texts.

The second critical question that was probed in this study was: *How do these perceptions inspire Values Education in Life Orientation?* The consensus among the participants was that there are possibilities for the Bhagavad Gita to contribute towards a programme of Values Education in Life Orientation.

One of the limitations of this study is that the majority of the participants, both teachers and elites are affiliated with Hindu traditions. However, note should be made that the school protocol did not allow the researcher direct access to the teachers of Life Orientation. The candidate therefore had no control over the fact that more than 90% of the teacher participants were Hindus. Secondly the focus of this study was the Bhagavad Gita and not any other religious text. It would be difficult therefore to appropriate any generalisations to any other text.

This chapter presents the insights and conclusions of this study. Teachers of Life Orientation and the elite personalities have a broad and open understanding of spirituality which they feel has the potential to extend the youth beyond religiosity. However, they also maintain that the youth are easily influenced by their material surroundings and are therefore seen as a 'generation of suspects' (Giroux, 2006: 149). The thesis that emerged is that there is a perennially valid set of values available in the Bhagavad Gita which has the potential to contribute to a programme of Values Education among the youth. However, these values are not being abstracted and extracted by the youth. The data show that the values of the Bhagavad Gita remain elusive and even ethereal to the youth.

In conclusion, it has been seen in this study that the Bhagavad Gita has the potential to contribute to a programme of Values Education in Life Orientation. However, the Bhagavad Gita has to be made practically accessible to the youth in the classroom. The Bhagavad Gita has been described as a grand pedagogical strategy. For this to become a reality in the classroom, there is need for pedagogic methods to be developed to take the set of values found in the Bhagavad Gita into the classroom. According to Section 31 of the Constitution of South Africa, persons belonging to a cultural, religious or linguistic community may not be denied the right, with other members of that community to form,

join and maintain cultural, religious and linguistic associations and other organs of civil society. When the values of the Bhagavad Gita are taught in the context of understanding each other, creating harmony between each other, amongst different groups, that focus of education is most valuable because it has the potential to contribute to democratic education, to create harmony among people living together and to inter-personal understanding. It is in this context that it can be taught, not in a context in which there will be proselytising. It is for this reason that this research makes the recommendation that a mechanism is developed to teach the values of the Bhagavad Gita through a subject like Life Orientation.

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APPENDIX A

LETTER OF CONSENT (QUESTIONNAIRE)

THE BHAGAVAD GITA: POSSIBILITIES FOR CURRICULUM TRANSFORMATION IN VALUES EDUCATION IN LIFE ORIENTATION

Dear Mr/Mrs/Ms _____

I am Lokesh Ramnath Maharajh, a PhD student in Education at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Edgewood, Pinetown. I reside at 26 Himandra Road, Nagina Township, Mariannhill. I am lecturer in Philosophy of Education at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Edgewood, Pinetown. As part of the requirement for the completion of the PhD research project, I would like you to kindly complete the attached questionnaire on the Bhagavad Gita and curriculum transformation in Life Orientation in South African schools. I am undertaking this research for a PhD in education in order to provide a clear vision of the Bhagavad Gita as a way of life and a view of life, and what it has to offer a programme of curriculum transformation in Life Orientation at South African schools.

The data from the questionnaire will be used only in the research project that I am doing. It will not be used for any other purpose without your consent. I wish to assure you that your name will be protected and not be used for advertising or any of your information given to discredit you and the school where you are working. All the information will be kept and treated as highly confidential as well as protected during the write up of the research report.

The duration of your involvement in this research project is the time that you take to answer the questions in this questionnaire. There may be a follow-up interview conducted to gather richer information from you. Therefore I request that all your answers be as honest and sincere as possible, while also keeping in mind the need to express your answers as clearly and as accurately as possible, as your answers may serve as inspiration and encouragement to other teachers who are teaching Life Orientation at South African schools.

There are no restrictions to any answers of the research questions. There is no financial reward involved in the filling out of this questionnaire. I ask only for your honest answer to each research question.

Since I consider your participation in the questionnaire survey as voluntary, I would like you to note that you are free to withdraw your participation at any time you desire and for any reason you give. I will respect your decision to withdraw and promise that this withdrawal will not any way be considered as degrading your profession as a teacher.

Please find attached to this letter a declaration form for you to sign, confirming that you agree to the contents of this document, the nature of the research project and your willingness to participate and answer the questionnaire.

Thank you very much for your participation in this research project. Should you need further information regarding this research project, please feel free to contact the project supervisors, Prof Reshma Sookrajh on 031-2607259 or email, at Sookrajhre@ukzn.ac.za, or Dr Veena Lutchman on 031-2607533 or email at Lutchmanv@ukzn.ac.za.

Respectfully yours,

Lokesh Ramnath Maharajh

Contact nos: 031-7062891 (home), 031-2603422 (work)
072-4356968 (cell)

Email: maharajhl@ukzn.ac.za

APPENDIX B

DECLARATION OF CONSENT

I _____ (full name of participant) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I consent to participating in the research project.

I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time, should I so desire.

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT

DATE

APPENDIX C

QUESTIONNAIRE (TEACHERS OF LIFE ORIENTATION)

THE BHAGAVAD GITA: POSSIBILITIES FOR CURRICULUM TRANSFORMATION IN VALUES EDUCATION IN LIFE ORIENTATION

○ GENERAL INFORMATION

1. Place: _____

2. Age Group: _____

0-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70+
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

3. Gender:

MALE	FEMALE
1	2

4. Marital Status:

SINGLE	MARRIED	DIVORCED	WIDOWED
1	2	3	4

5. Education:

5.1	Matriculation	
5.2	Diploma (Specify)	
5.3	Undergraduate (Specify)	
5.4	Postgraduate (Specify)	
5.5	Other (Specify)	

A. RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION

6. Religious affiliation:

Hindu – Sanathanist/Puranic	1
Hindu – Arya Samajist	2
Hindu – Shaivite	3
Hindu – Vaishnavite	4
Hindu – Shaktha	5
Hindu – Vedantin	6
Muslim	7
Christian	8
Other (Please specify)	9
No Specific Affiliation	10

7. Are you a member of any religious movement or organisation?

YES	NO	N/A
1	2	3

8. If yes, please specify below:

N/A	1
Ramakrishna Centre of S A	2
Divine Life Society	3
Hare Krishna	4
Sai Baba	5
Radha Soami	6
Chinmaya Mission	7
Arya Pratinidhi Sabha	8
Hindu Temple	9
Other (Please specify)	10

9. Do you attend satsangh/religious services at this organisation?

YES	NO	N/A
1	2	3

10. For what purpose do you attend these satsangh/religious services?

Singing	1
Discourses	2
Knowledge	3
Prasadh (blessed offerings)	4
Other (Please specify)	5

B. KNOWLEDGE OF BHAGAVAD GITA AND PERSONAL LIFE

[This section is intended to gauge/check your knowledge, attitude and perceptions of the Bhagavad Gita. If these questions are not relevant to you then kindly move on to the next section]

1. How did you first acquaint yourself with the BHAGAVAD GITA?

Grandparents	1
Parents	2
Family	3
Friends	4
Literature	5
Religious Organisation	6
Talks, Festivals, Ceremonies	7
Film/Video	8
Satsangh	9
Scripture	10
Other (Please specify)	11

2. For how many years have you been aware of the BHAGAVAD GITA?

0 – 9	1
10 – 15	2
16 – 19	3
20 – 29	4
30 – 39	5
40+	6

3. How important is the BHAGAVAD GITA to you?

N/A	1
I do not care	2
Not so important	3
Important	4
Very Important	5

4. Do you consider yourself “more spiritual” since acquainting yourself with the BHAGAVAD GITA?

YES	1
No	2
N/A	3

5. Explain your answer in 4 in the space provided below.

6. Do you feel better for having read/heard the BHAGAVAD GITA?

YES	1
No	2
N/A	3

7. Explain your answer in 6 in the space provided below.

8. What is the impact of the BHAGAVAD GITA on your quality of life?

9. What appeals to you most about the BHAGAVAD GITA?

Philosophy	1
Sound/Tune/Metre of Verses	2
Moral/Ethical teachings	3
Bhakthi (devotion)	4
Karma (action)	5
Jñāna (knowledge)	6
Svadharmā (allotted duty)	
Other (Please specify)	7
N/A	8

10. Explain your answer in 9 in the space provided below.

11. What is your attitude toward the BHAGAVAD GITA?

Veneration	1
Respectful	2
Tolerant	3
Unfriendly	4
Indifferent	5
Uncertain	6
No comment	7

12. Do you have a personal copy of the BHAGAVAD GITA?

YES	1
No	2
N/A	3

13. If yes, in which language?

English	1
Sanskrit	2
Other (Please specify)	3

14. If yes, how did you acquire it?

15. Where and how do you keep it?

16. At which of the following times do you seek solace from the BHAGAVAD GITA?

At time of illness	1
When death occurs	2
At ceremonies	3
At time of mental problems	4
At time of distress (caused by hostile agencies)	5
When in fear	6
When in doubt	7
At all times	8
No comment	9

o **EDUCATION POLICY DOCUMENTS**

1. Do you teach

1.1	Life Orientation	Yes	No
1.2	Religious Education	Yes	No

2. In which grade/s do you teach?

		Grade	
2.1	Life Orientation	R- 9	
2.2	Religious Education	10- 12	

3. Do you have access to the following policy documents?

3.1	Revised National Curriculum Statement Grades R-9: Teacher's Guide for the Development of Learning Programmes Policy Guidelines: Life Orientation	Yes	No
3.2	Revised National Curriculum Statement Grades R-9 (Schools): Life Orientation	Yes	No
3.3	National Curriculum Statement Grades 10-12 (General): Learning Programme Guidelines: Life Orientation	Yes	No
3.4	National Policy on Religion and Education	Yes	No
3.5	Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy	Yes	No
3.6	Values in Education: Programme of Action	Yes	No

4. Explain your answer in 3 in the space provided below.

5. Have you read any of these documents?

5.1	Revised National Curriculum Statement Grades R-9:Teacher's Guide for the Development of Learning Programmes Policy Guidelines: Life Orientation	Yes	No
5.2	Revised National Curriculum Statement Grades R-9 (Schools): Life Orientation	Yes	No
5.3	National Curriculum Statement Grades 10-12 (General): Learning Programme Guidelines: Life Orientation	Yes	No
5.4	National Policy on Religion and Education	Yes	No
5.5	Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy	Yes	No
5.6	Values in Education: Programme of Action	Yes	No

6. Which of these documents do you use in preparing your Life Orientation/ Religious Education lessons?

Revised National Curriculum Statement Grades R-9: Teacher's Guide for the Development of Learning Programmes Policy Guidelines: Life Orientation		1
Revised National Curriculum Statement Grades R-9 (Schools): Life Orientation		2
National Curriculum Statement Grades 10-12 (General): Learning Programme Guidelines: Life Orientation		3
National Policy on Religion and Education		4
Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy		5
Values in Education: Programme of Action		6

7. Are you familiar with the following as extracted from the *Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy*:

Equity		1
Tolerance		2
Diversity		3
Openness		4
Accountability		5
Social Honour		6

8. Please explain the following values as you interact with them in Life Orientation.

Equity
Tolerance
Diversity
Openness
Accountability
Social Honour

C. VALUES AND EDUCATION

1. What is your understanding of values?

2. How important is it to focus on values in education at schools?

N/A	1
Not so important	2
Important	3
Very important	4
I do not care	5

3. Should values education be compartmentalised to one subject?

YES	1
No	2
No comment	3

4. Explain your answer in 3 in the space provided below.

5. How important is parental role in developing values in learners?

N/A	1
I do not care	2
Not so important	3
Important	4
Very Important	5

6. Should values development be the responsibility of parents only?

YES	1
No	2
No comment	3

7. Explain your answer in 6 above.

8. Do you think that values should be legislated?

YES	1
No	2
No comment	3

9. Explain your answer in 8 in the space provided below.

10. Do you think that values should be imposed in the curriculum?

YES	1
No	2
No comment	3

11. Explain your answer in 10 in the space provided below.

D. LIFE ORIENTATION

[The following questions relate to philosophical issues on Life Orientation.]

1. Describe what Life Orientation means to you.

2. What, in your view, is the purpose of Life Orientation at schools?

3. How does your personal philosophy (own beliefs and ideas) of Teaching and Learning, influence your decision-making when preparing for and teaching Life Orientation?

4. What are your feelings towards Life Orientation as a learning area?

[The following questions relate to teaching methods used in Life Orientation.]

5. What is your philosophy of teaching of Life Orientation as a learning area?

6. What teaching methods do you use in Life Orientation?

	1
	2
	3
	4
	5

7. Have you heard of experiential learning as contained in the education policy documents?

YES	1
No	2
No comment	3

8. If yes, what is it?

9. Do you use this in teaching Life Orientation?

YES	1
No	2
No comment	3

10. Explain your answer in 9 above.

[The following questions relate to values and Life Orientation.]

11. What values should be included in Life Orientation?

	1
	2
	3
	4
	5
	6
	7
	8
	9
	10

12. Do you think that values education should be restricted to Life Orientation only?

YES	1
No	2
No comment	3

13. Explain your answer in 12 in the space provided below.

14. Have you found any resources/strategies particularly useful in supporting values development in Life Orientation?

YES	1
No	2
No comment	3

15. If yes, what are they?

	1
	2
	3
	4
	5
	6
	7
	8
	9
	10

16. Which of the following strategies/approaches to developing values are you familiar with?

Nurturing a culture of communication and participation in schools		1
Role modelling: Promoting commitment as well as competence among educators		2
Ensuring that every South African is able to read, write, count and think		3
Infusing the classroom with a culture of Human Rights		4
Making arts and culture part of the curriculum		5
Putting History back into the curriculum		6
Introducing religious education into schools		7
Making multilingualism happen		8
Using sport to shape social bonds and nurture nation building at schools		9
Ensuring equal access to education		10
Promoting anti-racism in schools		11
Freeing the potential of girls as well as boys		12
Dealing with HIV/AIDS and nurturing a culture of sexual and social responsibility		13
Making schools safe to learn and teach in and ensuring the rule of law		14
Ethics and the environment		15
Affirming our common citizenship		16

17. Which of the following strategies/approaches do use in developing values in your learners?

Nurturing a culture of communication and participation in schools		1
Role modelling: Promoting commitment as well as competence among educators		2
Ensuring that every South African is able to read, write, count and think		3
Infusing the classroom with a culture of Human Rights		4
Making arts and culture part of the curriculum		5
Putting History back into the curriculum		6
Introducing religious education into schools		7
Making multilingualism happen		8
Using sport to shape social bonds and nurture nation building at schools		9
Ensuring equal access to education		10
Promoting anti-racism in schools		11
Freeing the potential of girls as well as boys		12
Dealing with HIV/AIDS and nurturing a culture of sexual and social responsibility		13
Making schools safe to learn and teach in and ensuring the rule of law		14
Ethics and the environment		15
Affirming our common citizenship		16

18. Research has shown that “*values are not changed by prescription, but through dialogue, experience, new knowledge and critical thinking*”. What is your view on this?

[The following questions relate to support and training received in Life Orientation]

19. What support have you received in your Life Orientation teaching from:

School	1
Colleagues	2
Subject Advisors	3
Workshops	4
Other (Please specify)	5

20. Have you attended workshops on Life Orientation?

YES	1
No	2

21. How often have these Life Orientation workshops been organised?

Once a year	1
Once a term	2
Once at the introduction of the Revised Curriculum	3
Never	4
Other (Please specify)	5

22. Who are the presenters at these workshops?

Subject Advisors	1
Fellow Teachers	2
Lecturers from Universities	3
NGOs (Please specify)	4
Other (Please specify)	5

23. How important is it to attend Life Orientation workshops?

N/A	1
I do not care	2
Not so important	3
Important	4
Very important	5

24. How useful have these Life Orientation workshops been?

N/A	1
Not so useful	2
Useful	3
Very useful	4

25. Please elaborate on your answer given in 24 above?

26. What other training did you receive regarding the implementation of the Life Orientation Curriculum?

27. Did this training help your teaching of the Life Orientation Curriculum?

YES	1
No	2
No comment	3

28. Could you please elaborate on your answer given in 27 in the space provided below.

29. Please list some of the support that you have received to integrate values into your practice of teaching Life Orientation?

	1
	2
	3
	4
	5
	6
	7
	8
	9
	10

30. The Department of Education has prepared a special supplement of the *Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy*.

- 30.1. Are you familiar with this document?

YES	1
No	2
Do not know	3

- 30.2. If yes, have you had access to this supplement?

YES	1
No	2

- 30.3. If yes, do you use this in your Life Orientation teaching?

YES	1
No	2

[The following questions relate to challenges faced in Life Orientation]

31. What are some of the challenges you face in teaching Life Orientation?

32. How do you cope with these challenges?

E. LIFE ORIENTATION AND RELIGIOUS TEXTS

1. Do you use learning materials and other learning facilities while teaching Life Orientation?

YES	1
No	2
No comment	3

2. What teaching materials and learning facilities do you most commonly use when teaching Life Orientation?

	1
	2
	3
	4
	5

3. What other teaching materials and learning facilities do you consider necessary or important to teach Life Orientation successfully?

	1
	2
	3
	4
	5

4. Do you refer to/make use of any religious texts in your planning and teaching of Life Orientation?

YES	1
No	2
No comment	3

5. If yes, which ones?

	1
	2
	3
	4
	5

6. Do you think that the Bhagavad Gita should be referred to/made use of in your preparation/presentation of Life Orientation lessons?

YES	1
No	2
No comment	3

7. Explain your answer in 6 in the space below.

8. If your answer to 6 above was yes, what aspects of the Bhagavad Gita would you consider useful in the preparation/presentation of Life Orientation lessons?

	1
	2
	3
	4
	5
	6
	7
	8
	9
	10

9. Do you think that children of all religious persuasions should be exposed to the teachings/messages of the Bhagavad Gita in Life Orientation lessons?

YES	1
No	2
No comment	3

10. Explain your answer in 9 above.

THANK YOU

APPENDIX D

EXTRACTS FROM QUESTIONNAIRE (TEACHERS OF LIFE ORIENTATION)

C. KNOWLEDGE OF BHAGAVAD GITA AND PERSONAL LIFE

4. Do you consider yourself “more spiritual” since acquainting yourself with the BHAGAVAD GITA?

5. Explain your answer in 4 in the space provided below.

Q9: I attended a discourse given by Pundit S D Maharaj. I was told to read. It is over 22 years. I read the Gita everyday – 2 pages. I have been spiritually uplifted. I am able to find solutions to my problem by reading the Gita.

Q47: For years I have been searching for the truth. I have read widely on matters spiritual. However, the Gita to me is the ultimate source of truth.

Q53: I consider myself ‘more spiritual’ because my religion/beliefs have moved from just performing ‘puja’ to a deeper understanding of life, death, human values, detachment from material world.

6. Do you feel better for having read/heard the BHAGAVAD GITA?

7. Explain your answer in 6 in the space provided below.

Q2: The readings & teachings although written in ancient times very relevant in today’s modern stressful lifestyle. Adhere to the rules & life can be better & lived to its full potential & purpose.

Q3: As a student of Mahatma Gandhi’s teachings I also believe that I should let the winds of all religious teachings flow freely through my home and life but that I should not be swayed by them – whilst accepting the positive that they should offer.

Q7: It has helped to make the trials in life easier. If such spiritual souls had to endure such difficulties, then man has no excuse. I see the trials as part of a journey towards spiritual enlightenment.

Q53: Reading or listening to the Gita makes you feel closer to God. I have chanted with members who have good morals and practice the teachings of the Gita. Very good vibrations.

Q67: G I T A stands for “Gita is the answer”. It is a manual for life because the solutions to all our problems are contained therein.

8. What is the impact of the BHAGAVAD GITA on your quality of life?

Q2: Great – A role as a human being has a higher purpose. Each person needs to find his/her special purpose in God's divine presence. My life has been enriched and fulfilled with the B G in it.

Q3: Having a deep appreciation of the ancient heritage into which I was born (Tamil/Saivism) and having toured the religious sites of South India, I am also able to appreciate literature of wider Indian context – Any discourse that helps mankind improve spiritually improves my quality of life.

Q9: Stable family. Tremendous progress in my life. Straightforward – helped me in thinking, reasoning and my quality of life has improved.

Q17: The ability to question your actions, thoughts and deeds. Self-control, patience, understanding and tolerance are very important values in life.

Q23: Improved quality of life – greater awareness of relationships – awareness of thought, words and deeds.

Q53: I have learnt that God is in everything and everyone. I therefore look for the good in people and accept or try to bring about a change in myself and others.

9. What appeals to you most about the BHAGAVAD GITA?

10. Explain your answer in 9 in the space provided below.

Q1: Devotion to God is made so simple as explained in the Bhagawad Gita, offering of a leaf, fruit, flower is sufficient. Its our focus on God and action is what is of importance.

Q2: In this society of moral degeneration, ever so frequently we need to find our roots to find ourselves. Read deeper than just the line of the BG and you as an individual will grow & learn no matter your age.

Q3: The translations, transliterations in English are user friendly. Similarity with the Sivapuranam evident: Sivan or God is pure Bright intelligence, unspeakable Awareness, Creator or Originator, Sustainer or Dissolver. Not founded on belief of a single person or event as in Christianity (Christ) or Islam (Mohammed).

Q53: Merely performing mechanical actions especially in prayer without devotion or love for God – even spending a lot of money is not as rewarding as doing things simply – but sincerely.

E. VALUES AND EDUCATION

1. What is your understanding of values?

Q1: Values are special qualities a person has which make a positive impact on the people around him/her.

Q2: All that is sacred and brought down through generations. Values allow you to live a life of dignity and honour. Without values life loses its true purpose.

Q3: Values are the imperceptible truths handed down from generation to generation.

Q4: Values are inherent in all of us, we are born with them. We can't teach values but find ways of bringing it out from within. Values are guidelines to correct behaviour.

Q11: Values are your ethics, your outlook on life, your morality. Your tolerance, acceptance, your beliefs.

Q36: Values are both moral (ethics) and spiritual. It should enable people to live the way God has meant for us to live.

Q47: Values form the very core of our existence – we have identified the 5 basic human values of truth, righteousness, peace, love and non-violence. These values are inherent in all beings and need to be brought out.

Q51: Values are those emotions, feelings inherent in each individual which needs to be nurtured: truth, love, peace, right conduct and non-violence.

3. Should values education be compartmentalized to one subject?

4. Explain your answer in 3 in the space provided below.

Q3: Values permeate life. One can experience a value system in ethics as a lawyer or a value system at the knees of a parent in the growing up years of the child – values thus cannot be compartmentalized into one subject.

Q4: Values are inherent in all aspects of life and can be found in all learning areas. The educator has to be able to bring out the values in the different learning areas.

Q36: Values should be spread across all the learning areas so that it can be continuously reinforced.

6. Should values development be the responsibility of parents only?

7. Explain your answer in 6 above.

Q11: Some values are gained not taught. These values can be obtained from different sources, i.e. educators, religious leaders, sports coaches, mentors and role models.

Q33: Many learners see teachers as role models. As an educator one should always display good values and your attitude will also be important. Educators can thus also help develop good values in learners.

Q36: No, most of a child's life is spent in school (5yrs – 18yrs). Values should be instilled at school to emphasise or reinforce what was taught at home.

Q41: The child is influenced not only by educators but by peers as well as adults, gurus and media. Therefore the duty of society as a whole to be responsible for development of the child.

8. Do you think that values should be legislated?

9. Explain your answer in 8 in the space provided below.

Q5: When something is legislated, it becomes difficult to teach and learn. Incidental, non-formal learning is often very effective.

Q11: Acceptance and understanding of values is a personal choice and should not be forced on any individual.

Q30: In a country that has been taken over by American television, we are heading quickly towards complete moral decay. In order to salvage what is left and nurture it until it grows again, censor boards, etc. need to be brought back and can only be done through legislation and compulsory values education.

Q47: It cannot be enforced. You need to believe in the programme in order to implement it, not because you have to. It must come from within you.

10. Do you think that values should be imposed in the curriculum?

11. Explain your answer in 10 in the space provided below.

Q2: The youth of today need help and school plays a pivotal role in their life. Adding value to the curriculum will most definitely enhance their lives.

Q11: Total responsibility should not be placed on educators. Some responsibility should be left to parents and religious leaders, etc.

Q41: School should play a major role in social change and transformation especially with regard to discipline.

Q47: As in 9 above – it is difficult to impose something which you know is going to create problems with some individuals – values education should be a natural process.

F. LIFE ORIENTATION

1. Describe what Life Orientation means to you.

Q2: It means teaching others to be more aware of life around you. Not to be self-absorbed. It means living what you teach. Setting examples, being aware of other people and the world around you. It means life is short – live your best one now – you don't get a second chance.

Q21: For me it is largely an opportunity to bring out values in children (I make use of a lot of material from my education in human values) lessons which I use with children after school hours. I also enjoy the physical education component with them.

Q51: Life Orientation means the equipping of learners with positive, spiritual, moral, ethical values inherent in all and using this to guide them towards holistic development for responsible adolescent living/life.

2. What, in your view, is the purpose of Life Orientation at schools?

Q2: To educate learners that life has deeper meaning, purpose, that they are worthy beings and they should be aware of their true potential as human beings. LO helps our kids see themselves as very capable individuals.

Q5: To prepare the child to lead a fulfilled life this is complete and balanced in all aspects.

Q21: To ensure a more co-operative, balanced and united world community in the future.

3. How does your personal philosophy (own beliefs and ideas) of Teaching and Learning, influence your decision-making when preparing for and teaching Life Orientation?

Q53: I believe that every child that passes through my hands must benefit positively from my beliefs and ideas. There must be a change for the better in his maturity/attitude.

4. What are your feelings towards Life Orientation as a learning area?

Q1: I really enjoy teaching it. In the past I have seen how learners have changed positively. Learners depend a lot on educators for guidance; this is mainly due to the fact that their parents spend very little time with them.

Q4: It is vitally important. Parents are working and sometimes do not spend enough time with their children. Children are been influenced by peers, TV, movies. They might not have the necessary and correct information and skills to make informed decisions for themselves.

Q11: It is excellent because as an educator you are instilling in the learner life skills situation so when the learner leave school he/she will be able to adapt in the real world.

Q21: There are too much of issues under one umbrella. One has to take care of P E which is a large learning outcome as well as other areas of importance like guidance, health and right living all in 11/2 hours.

Q53: A subject that is absolutely essential in these times. Parents don't always have the ability or time to talk to their children on various issues – can be done in LO lessons.

5. What is your philosophy of teaching of Life Orientation as a learning area?

Q11: Life Orientation is about educating the learner to adapt to life situations. Diversity should be clear when teaching LO.

12. Do you think that values education should be restricted to Life Orientation only?

13. Explain your answer in 12 in the space provided below.

Q21: Values are inherent in the learner and in all learning. Educators must seek out opportunities to manifest them.

24. How useful have these Life Orientation workshops been?

25. Please elaborate on your answer given in 24 above?

Q2: Cannot discuss in depth due to not having been to the workshops, considering I am a GB educator. Only state paid educators go to workshops, unfortunately.

Q5: Workshops held by districts or circuit facilitators were most boring. Participants had to devise methods and strategies. Nothing concrete was given by the facilitator.

Q11: The workshop gave no clear indication of what is expected. The facilitator regurgitated the RNCS document, which educators have already went over in school.

Q12: Sometimes they were not well organised. The facilitator was not well equipped to handle the workshop.

31. What are some of the challenges you face in teaching Life Orientation?

Q7: Problems in shaping sexual behaviour. Guiding moral choices – because the environment that the learners come from is totally different from mine and the school environment.

G. LIFE ORIENTATION AND RELIGIOUS TEXTS

6. Do you think that the Bhagavad Gita should be referred to/made use of in your preparation/presentation of Life Orientation lessons?

7. Explain your answer in 6 in the space below.

Q11: We teach a multiracial and multicultural society. So reference to one religious book is not acceptable.

Q12: Contentious. Too many fires to put if religious texts are brought in. General information on each religion is preferred.

9. Do you think that children of all religious persuasions should be exposed to the teachings/messages of the Bhagavad Gita in Life Orientation lessons?

10. Explain your answer in 9 above.

Q11: One cannot force religious knowledge on a person. It must be a personal choice. It cannot be prescriptive.

Q12: Goes against religious tolerance – too time-consuming to explain. Use of 1 religious text and no time to use all religious holy books.

Q21: The text itself should not be emphasized but rather the teachings and its relevance to life. It is fine to quote the source of the message but the Gita should not be used in isolation. Rather quote various religious texts that draw one's attention to the same message.

Q33: If a message is derived from an extract of the book (BG) is received to children from all religious persuasions the message is being transmitted and not religious beliefs. Here one is not telling learners what to believe but helping them to appreciate and understand the message/teachings.

Q47: Being in a multicultural school, there could be problems as it can be construed as indoctrination. However, as the Satya Sai School with its philosophy of unity of faiths most major religious texts are quoted from, from time to time.

Q55: To achieve LO2 you need to understand diverse cultures and religions.

Q56: To achieve learning outcome 2 and to understand the diverse culture and religions in South Africa.

Q66: The Gita need to be treated as a text of literature as well. One of the main themes of doing "your duty" is important to all of mankind. South Africa speaks of Social transformation – this is only possible if the social change is accompanied by moral regeneration.

APPENDIX E
INVITATION TO SEMINAR

Lokesh Maharajh
School of Education Studies
Edgewood Campus
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15 March 2007

Please find attached an invitation to a seminar on the Bhagavad Gita.

I will call you in a day or two to confirm your participation in this seminar.

Yours faithfully

.....
Lokesh Maharajh

PhD TOPIC

**THE BHAGAVAD GITA AND CURRICULUM TRANSFORMATION IN LIFE
ORIENTATION**

I am Lokesh Ramnath Maharajh, a lecturer in Philosophy of Education in the School of Educational Studies at the Edgewood Campus of the University of KwaZulu-Natal,
As part of the requirement for the completion of the PhD research project, I would like to invite you to participate in a seminar on the Bhagavad Gita and curriculum transformation in Life Orientation in South African schools. Given your expertise in the subject, I do believe that you are ideally suited to be involved in this discussion. The suggested date/time for the seminar is Saturday, 14 April 2007 from 9:00am to 1:00pm. The venue will be the Edgewood Campus of the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

I am undertaking this research for a PhD in education in order to provide a clear vision of the Bhagavad Gita as a way and view of life and what it has to offer towards a

programme of curriculum transformation in Life Orientation at South African schools.

The CRITICAL QUESTION that I hope to address is:

**WHAT ARE THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE BHAGAVAD
GITA WITH RESPECT TO VALUES IN EDUCATION?**

The purpose of this seminar is to:

- ✦ To determine your views on the Bhagavad Gita
- ✦ To further determine your views on the implications of the Bhagavad Gita for values in education in the school curriculum

The data from the seminar will be used only in the research project that I am doing. It will not be used for any other purpose without your consent. I wish to assure you that your name and that of your institution will be protected. All the information will be archived and treated as highly confidential as well as protected during the write-up of the research report.

The duration of your involvement in this research project is the time that you take to answer the questions in the seminar. There may be a follow-up interview conducted to gather richer information from you. Therefore I request that all your answers be as honest and sincere as possible, while also keeping in mind the need to express your answers as clearly and as accurately as possible, for your answers may serve as inspiration and encouragement to teachers who are teaching Life Orientation at South African schools.

There are no restrictions to any answers of the research questions. There is no financial reward involved in your participation. I ask only for your honest answer to each research question.

Since I consider your participation in the seminar as voluntary, I would like you to note that you are free to withdraw your participation at any time you desire and for any reason you give. I will respect your decision to withdraw and promise that this withdrawal will not in any way be considered as degrading your profession.

Thank you very much for your participation in this research project. Should you need further information regarding this research project, please feel free to contact the project

supervisors, Prof Reshma Sookrajh on 031-2607259 or email at Sookrajhre@ukzn.ac.za,
or Dr Veena Lutchman on 031-2607533 or email at Lutchmanv@ukzn.ac.za .

Respectfully yours,

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APPENDIX F

Probes and Questions used in Focus Group Discussion

PERCEPTIONS AND ATTITUDE TO THE BHAGAVAD GĪTĀ

What are your comments around the following academic statements:

- Soumen De¹ has stated that *“Despite its universal appeal, the Bhagavad Gītā is replete with contradictions both at the fundamental level and at the highest level of philosophical discourse”*.
- In a symposium on the Bhagavad Gītā, Sarah Hunt² commented that *“If one approaches the Bhagavad Gītā solely on the basis of intellectual curiosity, he will not achieve a very deep understanding of this ancient classic”*.

THE BHAGAVAD GĪTĀ AND MORALITY/SPIRITUALITY

- How would you define spirituality?
- What are your views on the moral probity of the Bhagavad Gītā?

VALUES AND THE BHAGAVAD GĪTĀ

- Research has shown that *“values are not changed by prescription, but through dialogue, experience, new knowledge and critical thinking”*³. What is your view on this?
- In Verse 3, Chapter 12 of the Bhagavad Gītā, we read *“But those who fully worship the unmanifested, that which lies beyond the perception of the senses, the all pervading, inconceivable, unchanging, fixed and immovable – the impersonal conception of the Absolute Truth – by*

¹ De Soumen. (1996). The Historical Context of *The Bhagavad Gita* and Its Relation to Indian Religious Doctrines. <http://eawc.evansville.edu/essays/de.ht>

² Hunt S, Oderberg IM & Van Mater I. (1974). The *Bhagavad Gita*: A Synposium. <http://www.theosophy-nw.org/theosnw/world/asia/as-symp.htm>

³ Ministry of Education. (2001). Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy

controlling the various senses and being equally disposed to everyone, such persons, engaged in the welfare of all, at last achieves Me”⁴.

Comment on this verse, especially in the light of getting the youth to go beyond the religious discourse.

- In the Vedic system of knowledge, students, from the very beginning are taught to vibrate OM and learn the ultimate impersonal BRAHMAN by living with the spiritual master in COMPLETE CELIBACY. What is your view on celibacy? Is it essential for students to practice celibacy?
- Verses 8-12 of Chapter 13 declare that humility, simplicity, cleanliness, self-control, renunciation of the objects of sense gratification, absence of false ego is knowledge and that besides these, whatever there may be is ignorance. Comment on the values that are proposed or implied herein.

WAR, VIOLENCE AND THE BHAGAVAD GĪTĀ

- A professor of the Chicago University, Wendy Doniger⁵, has called the Bhagavad Gītā a bad book that incites people to war and violence with God’s complicity. Please comment on the value violence as a central theme in the text.
- In the Bhagavad Gītā we find that Arjuna is explicitly and repeatedly told, *“get up, O Arjuna, with a resolve to fight”, “get ready for the battle”, “fight, O Arjuna”, “remember me at all times and fight”, “fight dispassionately”, etc.* But on the other hand, virtues like *non-violence (ahimsā)*, *non-anger (akrodha)*, *peace (śānti)*, *forgiveness (kṣamā)*, *amity (adroha)*, and *compassion to beings (dayā bhūteṣu)* are enumerated as essential possessions of a righteous man. Is this a contradiction in the message of Krishna? How do we reconcile (if at all) these somewhat opposing messages of the Bhagavad Gītā?

⁴ ISKCON. (1984). Bhagavad Gita as it is.

⁵ Vaishnava News. (2002). <http://www.vnn.org/world/WD0211/WD09-7624.html>

LIFE ORIENTATION AND RELIGIOUS TEXTS

- Can you identify some of the values that can be engaged with in the school curriculum?
- Can you comment on the importance of focusing on values in education at schools?
- Do you think that reference should be made to any religious texts in the planning and teaching of Life Orientation? Elaborate.
- What aspects of the **Bhagavad Gītā** would you consider useful in the preparation/presentation of Life Orientation lessons?

APPENDIX G

Explanation of Nyaya, Vaisheshika and Mimamsa Schools of Indian Philosophy

For purposes of completeness, the three schools of Nyaya, Vaisheshika and Mimamsa, which are not prominent or explicitly expounded in the Bhagavad Gita, will be briefly explained here¹.

	NYAYA	VAISHESHIKA	MIMAMSA
FOUNDER	Gautama	Kanada	Jaimini
MEANING	Literally means recursion. This is a school of logic.	Literally means atom-eater. Particularity.	Literally means investigation.
OVERVIEW	Its contribution to modern Hindu thought is its methodology. The methodology is based on a system of logic.	It espouses a form of atomism – all objects in the physical universe are reducible to a finite number of atoms.	Deals with the enquiry into the nature of dharma. Its core tenets are ritualism, anti-ascetism and anti-mysticism. Strongly concerned with textual exegesis.
EPISTEMOLOGY	Knowledge is either apprehension or consciousness. Accepts four valid means to obtain knowledge: perception, inference, comparison and verbal testimony.	The only valid means of obtaining knowledge is perception and inference.	The five valid means of knowledge are perception, inference, comparison, verbal testimony and non-apprehension.
THEORY	Its methodology of inference involves a combination of induction and deduction by moving from particular to particular via generality. Use their system of logic to prove the existence of God.	The earth, water, fire and air are made of indivisible atoms.	Knowledge of dharma is in verbal cognition.

¹ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/>

APPENDIX H
TRANSCRIPT OF FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION

LRM: With respect to its contribution to values in education. So there is documentary analysis which I will be doing of the related literature on the BG. Another way in which I thought I could achieve this aim is to invite scholars like yourselves and to elicit your responses on certain aspects of the BG and so this is why this seminar is being held here today. I am going hand over now to Prof Brij Maharaj who is HoD Geography at the University. He is also President of Sanathan Dharma Sabha so you can see he is linked to the Gita and he is also an academic and he will facilitate the proceedings for today. Over to Brij...

BM: Thank you Lokesh. Good morning to all. I know we are actually trying to support Lokesh... This is going to be fairly informal. We have got some time constraints. So from time to time we will be changing the focus. Lokesh will change transparencies... What is important is that this is going to be recorded because we are going to transcribe it. This is why whenever you speak, if it is to going to be Prof Poobalan Pillay, you've got to say Poobalan Pillay. If you speak ten times before you speak???... otherwise Lokesh is going to have a real nightmare. Are there any issues of clarification before we proceed? Everyone knows what's happening. We are going to start and what I will do is... we are trying not to interfere with the recording. I may just signal non-verbally that we moving on to the next question and Lokesh will then change the transparency. First he focuses on Perceptions and Attitudes towards the BG. And we want some response to the statement that is on the transparency.

PP: Maybe I can make a small start to this. To a neophyte anything can be regarded as contradictory. Especially if one doesn't understand the essence or the basis of the teachings of BG. By the way, my name is Poobalan. Different teachings will apply differently in different circumstances. A good example is... that comes to mind is something that I have read in the Gospel of Swami Sivananda. On a single day somebody asked him in the morning about garlic and he told that person garlic is very bad for you. And that afternoon somebody else by some chance asked him a similar question. He said

garlic is very good for you. But that is not a contradiction. The point was that for the first person garlic was bad because he had some kind of a problem – a health problem which for which garlic would have had negative consequences and for the second person who was practising meditation...Swami Sivananda said garlic is not good for you because for the purpose that you are doing something it is not good for you. So these kinds of what is apparently contradictory need not be contradiction. It all depends on the circumstances or the background to which the question is being phrased and of course for the people for which it is being addressed. And in that context the BG is addressing entire humanity which consists of a diverse population. So a single instruction cannot be given to all simultaneously because they will all have different perceptions and there are different stages of evolution and therefore instructions will vary. I will stop here and maybe take up a little later.

RP: Raghav. First of all I don't know who Soumen De is and what his background is. There's two ways to approach this. As he mentions there himself at the highest level of philosophical discourse. So there are contradictions on the highest level of philosophical discourse but it has to be understood in perspective if one is approaching the BG with devotion but not purely from an intellectual understanding. Just like in the third chapter of the BG, the first verse Arjuna says O Janardan, why do you want me to engage in this ghastly warfare if you think that intelligence is better than fruitive work. So in the next verse he goes on to say that my intelligence is bewildered by your equivocal instructions. See this wasn't the intention of Krishna to speak in an ambiguous way, but because he was playing the part of a conditioned soul his understanding appeared to be like or the instruction which was coming from Lord Krishna appeared to be controversial or ambiguous to him. So Krishna began to explain that to him further in that third chapter. So it is quite interesting, I just want to make the point with regards to the contradiction... when I received this piece of paper from Lokesh Prabhu, the second part wasn't there, so for me it was a little bit of a controversy in terms of who this person was and what the actual kind of contradiction is. It is very vague, it's very vague and you can't...you see the BG is a very mystical book; you can't just poke your nose into it without some kind of preliminary understanding and background information. So if people wish to approach

it from man's intellectual standpoint, he is definitely going to be baffled in his understanding of this. And this is what happened here to Arjuna he asking this question notice at the beginning of the third chapter when already something like 80 verses have already been spoken, so because he was playing the part of a conditioned soul and a conditioned soul basically has four defects the four defects he has the tendency to make mistakes, he is invariably an illusion, he has a cheating propensity and basically he has imperfect senses. So someone approaching it from that angle is bound to see the BG as being completely incomprehensible. What I like there is where says that at the highest level philosophical discourse there is contradiction but it is embellishment rather than a flaw. Just like we'd see that you'd say that Krishna when he was in this planet he married so many thousands of ladies, he had 16108 Gopis you know, he built palaces for them in Dwarika and the place is only that big but yet he built a palace which was two square miles for each of the Gopis. So there appears to be a contradiction, but you have to understand it from the material perspective and the spiritual realm. In the spiritual realm time comes to stand still and therefore the past times are within that ambit. In the material world everything works according to time. So according to that, if it is you say there is a fundamental complaint against the BG, I would first have to say what is your qualification for approaching the BG and understanding it in that way. If you are purely approaching from an intellectual standpoint you are going to be baffled. But if you understand it from the devotional aspect then Krishna also says in the BG from me comes knowledge, remembrance and forgetfulness. He gives you the understanding for which you can assimilate this very powerful subject matter.

MK: I am MK member of the Sri Lankan parliament, representing the National Tamil Alliance. I am on a world tour. Going round the world telling them why we are dying, why we are crying, so that the world must come to know. I have been, I was in Durban, I was in France, and I was in Holland, I was in Switzerland, I was in Malaysia, I was in London, now I am here in South Africa. I am told that SA is a soil that has all this history of liberation struggle. So the early period of Gandhi, the early 20thC...Somebody spoke of contradictions. In Thirukural we get three chapters. One is called virtue, other one

called polity and other one deals with love. In the chapter called virtue it speaks...to display...to the enemy, to do good for all the evil he has done. That is in a chapter called virtue. But when it comes to running a state, he makes it very clear that violence is also being accepted. If people cannot understand my rationalisation or the Gandhian philosophy according to different contexts. If they cannot be brought a change we are not but, we are crushing the sugar cane then only the juice will come out. The people can't see reason. The best way is teach them the language they understand. That to defined in another verse. They cannot be changed eve.....A man speaks of complete compassion in the virtue chapter. Jesus Christ whom we consider as a greatest personality of turning one cheek for the other, but when there was some unwanted disturbance in the Church...don't make this a market place. Prophet Mohanmad says in one hand we take the Qur'an and in the hand we take sword. There are different interpretations. Even the case of Mahatma Gandhi there were women being butchered and raped and Gandhi advocated non-violence. When the women complained he said don't you have the knives to create the kind of fear in the minds of your enemies. Even Nelson Mandela was often charged as a terrorist and after being released he was with the American president. American President - you have been in favour of non-violence. He took the pistol from his pocket and said if there is a need we have to take up arms. In that context I see BG. BG we have Krishna and Pandavas showed extreme patience but when they reached a point where the Kauravas were not prepared to listen to reason and they appealed by calling for five homes when nothing was considered then Lord Krishna advised Arjuna take the bow and arrow. There is a desperate remedy for a desperate situation. We the Tamil Eelam, draw inspiration from BG. There is a limit to our patience. There is determined calculated move to virtually wipe us out from the face of the earth. We draw inspiration from BG.

MKA: I am Angajan. I fully endorse what the two speakers said earlier. There is a seeming contradiction when you go through the verses of the BG and there only seem???. When you go to a deeper understanding of the literature you would find that there was no contradiction as it were. As a Dr Poobalan mentioned that this knowledge has to be taken contextual - meaning that the philosophy is meant for one's self development, so what is applicable for one intellectual may seem contradictory to somebody else and a good

example of what is narrated. Now...the BG where the, one can...on the other side is action. Now it is for whom is the question, for a person who is a Karma Yogi for him the course of action is the need for liberation. Whereas for a Gyaan Yogi Knowledge is important, so for whom is the question? It's like there is no standard the medicine for all diseases. So if you ask a doctor what is the best medicine in the world, there's no such thing as the best medicine in the world, it is for what disease is the question and when you use that medicine. So depending upon what problems that humans are going through that there must be applicable. And of course not only the BG, even throughout the Mahabharata itself there is a lot paradox, contradictions, paradoxes and another often reason why the paradoxes seem to be deliberately created only to make people think when these literatures...any Hindu literature, any literature for that matter, there is a built in reflection that that is you know deliberately instilled, so that an intelligent student, when he goes through a study of the scriptures, when he sees the contradictions, that is when he pauses and think now what is he saying? A person of this calibre couldn't be saying something what he said few verses before and something else different. There must be a different meaning for example in the second chapter of the BG, verses 48, Lord Krishna says, Evenness is Yoga and two verses later dexterity in action is Yoga. On one hand, he says peace of mind is Yoga, everyone keeps your mind peaceful – that is Yoga. Then he says dexterity in action – perform action. But if you go into the depths of it, you will find that the contradictions only seem, it definitely creates for the people to think, and otherwise we go on mechanically reading without reflecting upon the real benefits of the scriptures...is divine. Then you would reflect upon it. So when Soumen De gave mention that if it is through this listening contradiction but it is not, the philosophy is not meant to be read through, it must be reflected upon. When you do that you find there is no contradiction.

JR I am brother Jairam from the Vedanta Institute, South Africa. As is my...the contradiction that the person who is talking about is only because it is not qualified to study the scripture and you find this in many other scriptures, apparent contradictions for example, you get in the bible, Lord Jesus says I will save you and on the other side he says what you sow you shall reap, Ask and though shall receive and you get another

verse that says make no vain interpretations for thy heavenly father knows what you are in need of. Now this must all be understood in context and for the person, who is finding contradictions in the Gita, he should also study the perception, the understanding of other scholars and if he reads books by Swami Chinmayananda, and commentary on the Gita and Swami Parthasarathy and Chidananda, he would see the logical sequence of God. So if anyone who is not quailed and he believes that he is qualified to study the scriptures and he gets deep into the scriptures and he will find himself in a tangle. He will get a verse from the scriptures that which says when you enter materiality you entering darkness and when you enter spirituality you entering blinding darkness, now how will anyone explain such a verse? You need a qualified teacher, in any field of activity when people are not qualified, they will find contradictions, they will find difficult areas but when you get a qualified teacher, he explains everything and then the person who is studying or learning will see the logical sequence of God. Like in this verse that says when you enter materiality, you entering darkness and if you enter spirituality you entering blinding darkness. What they are really saying here is when you are on the spiritual path, the path itself is so alluring that you get caught in the path itself and forget the goal. So in and through the path you take, every path has a goal. You must not forget the goal. So I would say it's lack of depth of understanding and lack of qualification that makes one to perceive the contradictions of the man up there, it's a projection of the ignorant mind. Thank you.

BM: We move on to the next question.

PP I think it's almost like an axiom that religious discourses are not meant for those who are intellectually curious. It is meant for practitioners and the BG is for me, its one of the finest examples of literature which gives a very clear and concise direction to mankind on how to attain Godhood through the way we live, through the way we worship, our actions and the manner in which we should perform actions, dealing with devotional different states of mind that we have, different gunas and the different forms of yoga. It is meant for people who want to attain god, it is not a textbook for discussion and to inculcate contradictions and to make analysis because one can only understand the

Gita by practice alone. One has to be a Sadhaka and one has to practise the teachings of the Gita and the more one practices, the more one gets a clearer understanding of the Gita. You know in our scriptures it also says we must practise swadhyaya. Daily scriptural reading you read and you can read the same 18 versus – we should read it all our lives. WHY? Because each time you read it, depending on your state of evolution, you will find a new insight into the slokas which are given. Your perception changes, the books are the same, but ones perception of it changes and this deep understanding that we are speaking about is one that comes with practice and it comes with spiritual sadhana and one has to practise the teachings of the Gita and try to see god in all and try do smaran and one practises it then the teachings of the Gita become very much more loser as one goes on. We all of us we are still in a state of certain mind, in a state of darkness as far as spiritual light is concerned and the Gita is a text book which gives us direction in how to perceive towards that goal. It is a book of Bhakti not so much Gyaan although what Krishna says he glorifies Gyaan, he glorifies Karma, he glorifies Bhakti and even Raja Yoga but primarily the BG is a book of Bhakti.

RP: The true...there are different ways of acquiring knowledge, you know you have pratyaksha which is direct perception, Anuman which is logic and then you have Shabda. Shabda is basically which is something revealed, it is not so much your intellectual capacity will able to reach, its like a dwarf trying to catch the moon, its not possible and its very difficult like that so in these three ways of acquiring knowledge you have basically what two approaches, which is called the descending approach and the ascending approach. Example is given that if you don't know who your father is, the ascending process will be to go to every man and to ask him are you my father, so in that case even if he says, Yes I'm your father, there's no way to verify it. That's the ascending process its fraught with discrepancies you might not get the correct answer, there's difficulties in that approach, that is basically what is trying to approach it from an intellectual stand point, he is bound to be backwards but yet at the same time you have the descending approach which is called the Avaroha Panth approach which is descending; it means that you just simply want to know who you father is, you go to your mother and you ask you mother and your mother will say this is the one and you whole

enquire is finished in a few seconds basically. so now it is quite interesting because you see the ninth chapter of the BG, Lord Krishna gives the qualification for one to understand this message and he says before he goes on to say that this is the most secret of all secrets, he says that this is Raj Vidya It is the king of all knowledge and it is the most secret of all secret because it is giving direct perception of the self by self realization but in the first verse he's giving the qualification of the person who disqualifies himself from actually understanding the subject matter. He says my dear Arjuna because you are never envious of me I shall impart to you this most confidential knowledge and realisation knowing in which you shall be relieved of the miseries of material existence. In other words, if one is approaching it for genuine answers in how to overcome the maladies of material existence here is the answer. If you are approaching it from an intellectual curiosity, well read Mills & Boons, any damn book will be the same thing, you are reading out of intellectual curiosity, it's not going to get you anything, so if you really want to understand the subject matter, it requires now this type of mood of humility and also kind of seeing for yourself that I am envious in so many areas of my life, I am envious and what is the proof that I am envious? You see God has no competitor; when you want to compete with God you simply doubt this material world and you are making a kind of attempt to enjoy like him, so you come down here and try to imitate his position but you see the mess you get out...thirty, fifty years later you see that you in a absolute mess and that is why, Krishna, Arjuna went to Krishna, he was saying in the beginning that you see I'm speaking like a learned man. Krishna tells him, you are speaking like a learned man but you are mourning for that which is not worthy of grief so he says, now my soul confused about my duty, I surrender unto you, please instruct me. Unless one comes to this point he is going to get back there's no question about it. Thank you.

JJ I'm Janet Jarvis. and I would like to suggest that perhaps they should inform each other that it is out of the Bhakti, the devotion that one seeks knowledge which then informs the practice and they shouldn't necessarily have to be exclusion to one another but inform one another. The second comment is that just listening to what you said, it makes it sound like it is almost impossible ever to get to the bottom of the lot, okay. And

what Krishna is actually saying to Arjuna and I want to say how can we extract from this something which is going to be relevant as a text within a life orientation program, where you have a diversity of different cultures and people who have never even heard of a BG, so at some point I would suggest that it is right, it's not about intellectual curiosity but surely there must be some and they are practical issues which are arranged in this whole thing, even this thing of contradiction which actually isn't contradiction depending on the contextualisation of the situation, can speak into life experience of people of even other faiths, and perhaps that is what we need to, I don't know if this is the right place or time in your discussion to bring up that where at some point rather than getting involved in the whole philosophical thing, which actually as you say you can read eighteen verses for the rest of your life you may still not get all that is in it. That is for a devotee who is looking for the ultimate intrinsic meaning etc. etc., but how would it then apply in a classroom situation because if a look at the topic of your PhD you relate in directly to life orientation and if I read through your questions, you are not just going to be speaking to Hindu children, you've got a background, an audience, you are going to be speaking to the whole range so, I think what has to happen is that apart from the Hinduism of it, is to draw out what is the life applicable things that are being taught through the BG and that whole interaction between Krishna and Arjuna, I'm going to stop now, now but that whole thing of devotion, the whole thing about seeking knowledge and how that drives out darkness, someone spoke about darkness just now and evil and actually sometimes that means almost a contradictory behaviour in terms of achieving the end, I just think maybe at some point for me to ground the whole thing otherwise it can get lost.

MKA: If one approaches the BG solely on the purpose of intellectual curiosity it is right ...that one doesn't approach the BG or any spiritual literature for that matter merely to fulfil the intellectual curiosity of course the intellect has to participate in study of the Bhagavad Gita but that study must be supplemented with devotion. See we have two equipment, the mind and intellect manas and budhi. The philosophy of the BG appeals to the intellect the budhi. But that intellectual approach has to supplement with devotion Bhakthi only then, so when there is a participation of the head and heart manas and budhi that is when our personality blossoms into a progressed human being. In fact in the

seventh chapter in the BG verse sixteen, Lord Krishna enunciates the four types of seekers of the knowledge of the BG. He says the first type is Artharti - means wealth, seekers of material wealth so therefore the BG is good to any spiritual activity for that matter, go to the temple, study Gita, and study scriptures for material acquisition that house, bigger homes, better car and they are called Artharti. And the second type is called Samarth - people who are disturbed, stressed very agitated, they approach the BG just to find some relaxation, some kind of piece of mind, so we don't study the BG merely for material wealth nor do we study the BG to find some sort of peace and the third types of seekers who study the BG he calls them Jigyasu, that is the people who just want to quench their intellectual curiosity, let's see what the BG has to say, let's see what this is all about, let's see what the Bible has to say, let's see what the Vedas have to say, so they just go through this knowledge just to quench their curiosity, they are not clearly going into the depth of understanding the message of the scriptures. They want to prove their curiosity so that's not the approach one made to when it comes to the study of the scriptures and then the fourth type he says in the sixteenth verse of the chapter seven he says, Gyani - he is using the word that is probably one of the contradictions, the same word in the BG used in different context has diametrically opposite meaning. So in this context here he's using the word Gyani to mean a person who approached the BG for the purpose of self-development and eventually to find union with God; that is the only purpose of the message of the script and of course incidentally the philosophy of the BG do bring about material success, peace of mind all that is a by product so when you pursue the ultimate purpose of study of the scriptures which is self-development eventually God realisation, you find all these other aspects are taken care of, you find the material wealth, you find peace of mind. It's not only the BG even the Bible says the same thing. You seek the kingdom of heaven, everything else will be added onto you so one doesn't approach the BG merely to fulfil intellectual curiosity, it has to be supplemented with a deep sense of devotion, surrender and if you approach the intellectual curiosity, we will be merely quibbling with words and a lot of people do that. They get into in the spiritual lobby or intellectual lobby and they discuss. They don't get into the study of it just for self-development just to show the other people how much they know they get into that kind of discussion. So that is not the purpose of proceeding it has

to be with devotion, feeling, bhavna. So when there is a devotion what happens is the area that you don't understand we shelve it like, for example, in the previous discussion we found the contradiction, when there is devotion for the knowledge, we don't reject it outright at the moment I can't understand let me shelve it probably someday sometime I will be able to understand the meaning of it. So we shelve it and you come back to it. So there has to be a devotion and an intellectual curiosity.

SL Can I add something. BG is different for so many scholars in different forms. In the case of Indian freedom struggle we find Lokmanya Tilak interpreted BG totally different from what Gandhi interpreted. He justified an arm struggle to and quoted the BG to prove it Gandhi believed in non-violence-he interpreted BG to prove that it inspires him for non-violent struggle. This is all on record. Then we find Iqbal said my personality is a bundle of contradiction. Many of us say many things and tomorrow we might change it, fortunately all what we say is not recorded therefore they escape. The sentence which caught my mind is intellectual curiosity. In Tamil we have got enough devotional songs to say that we cannot realise God by arguments and rationalisations. You cannot argue and said this how this not God. It is something which has to be felt and realised. And Einstein the greatest scientist when he went on analysing the neutrons and protons is it, I am unable to proceed further, something blocks me, I do not know what. That what we say is the soul atma or call it any name – that something that we cannot comprehend beyond a point. It cannot be easily comprehended. Then we find, when we speak of intellect I am also again reminded about what Iqbal said he lighted the heart with the flame of intellect and rubbed grease on the touchstone of heart. For life to have fulfilment, mere intellect approach will not take us far, mere emotional appeal can also mislead or be...by people who are questionable in their conduct. We would use the word harmonious blending of intellectual activity and plus the heart and another thing that appeals to me - you do your duty irrespective of the consequences, you wont expect only reward then you can never be involved in action. We as Elam Tamil say we do not know where we are and where we are going, but we know what we are doing is right. The duty of God to look after me. My duty is to serve. Do your duty, do not worry about the consequences so we can do a lot of parallels among the intellectuals sayings, the great

minds agree irrespective of the age, or the climate or the environment factor. On the whole, to me BG is a source of inspiration for all what I am doing. Thank you

JR I am brother Jairam from the Vedanta Institute. There are two types of intellect. One is called the gross intellect and the other is called subtle intellect. Now if you have a gross intellect it can relate only to the terrestrial realm and with that type of intellect if you go into the BG with that type of curiosity, you will not have a deep understanding of the senses but if you have a subtle intellect, background as spiritual tendencies with that type of intellect if you dive into this scripture of the BG you will have a deep understanding and you will benefit. So it all depends on your background if you have spiritual tendencies and have a subtle intellect then with that type of intellect you can penetrate or if you studied the BG you have a deep understanding but if you have the gross intellect with no spiritual tendencies in you, you will not have a deep understanding of this scripture. Thank you

BM: I am reminded by those who know more than I do that we are moving towards a lot of consensus, that's nice, but I also think people should be able to disagree as well. We are not looking for consensus.

RP I just want to ask a question. Actually I was also kind of wrestling with that dilemma in one way, because we want to see how the whole thing come down to a level of, how we can use a transcending bodily designation or whatever you call it in to a common platform where everyone can benefit from the BG. My understanding is that he is asking these questions because these are the questions are going to come up and might, people might reject the book purely because that there is contradiction so rather we iron it out before, like what are the common things I think which is basically coming up later is about violence. And I know many people reject the BG because obvious reasons and understanding this principle of violence in perspective so I myself have written a manual in terms of life orientation skills, on how we can use different aspects of the BG in the context basically where everyone can benefit from it, so I'm just waiting for that time where we can get on the platform and discuss how we can use it in that context but I

think now it is important to as a innocent onlooker, basically looking into the BG, I don't know if you read the BG but just looking at it from the perspective of what does this book have to offer in terms of the perspective of education in the broader context, like that. And I think I like what he is doing because I can see that there are certain controversies that need to be ironed out before we can show how it can actually be used as a text in really helping the curriculum so I'm hoping for that theme to develop as we go on. But looking at Lokesh Prabu's questions, I can see that there are many things that if we don't answer prior to basically getting onto that platform, there is going to be difficulties later, so I don't know if I am right or wrong but I think that's what the crux of the thing is.

BM Some of the tensions need to be resolved to some extent. But we must have the contestation before we have the resolution. Could we move on to interpretation of spirituality. I am not sure if we are going to define spirituality.

MKA Spirituality as the very word suggests is the pursuit of the spirit within, in the BG he calls it the self, the Atma, the God principle within. Apart from the material equipment, every human being is a combination of spirit and the matter. Spirit is the God principle, the Atma within the spirit or soul if you want to call it and the material equipment are the body, mind, intellect and the ego. Now how would you define spirituality what does spirituality. When you are catering to your spiritual development that is spirituality but what does spirituality if your focus of attention is only upon pampering your physical pleasures, emotional joy, intellectual excitement and the ego's excitement. If you focusing only upon the body, mind, intellect and the ego and its worldly pleasures then it is oppose to spirituality whereas when you are in the world as a family man, as a business man, professional, you may be doing activities which the...Body mind but in the process your focus of attention is only upon the spirit the Atma, the God principle within then you are practicing spirituality. In that process, what happens is our negative emotions, desires wane away. So spirituality is the process of eradicating our worldly desires and strengthening the spiritual desires, then you get closer to divinity, closer to God. So that is the way which we would define spirituality in the Vedantic context.

SL We define spirituality again. In Tamil we call...And when we speak of morality we say...or Dharma. Though we are in this world we always attached to this world. We are here because of past sins. But this is not the world for us to stay on unless we have a spiritual vent of mind your behaviour pattern can even descend to a level of brutality. Your spiritual attachment or spiritual attainment is a must and morality, I will call it inseparably interlinked with spirituality. When we speak of Gautama Buddha they said he is...the concept of God or...All the people who are belonging to the Buddhist religion they are worshiping him. As Radha Krishna once said, inspite of his trepidation regarding the concept of God he himself is being verified as God. I think that kind of desire for some supreme being guiding our destinies. We are only of intellectual plain, we cannot find the solution to the problem, and I again repeat harmony blending of spirituality and intellect. Leave aside one...Superstition is bad but bigotry is worse So I'm in agreement with this thinking it must be a harmony blending then we can lead a perfect life within the imperfect human mould.

RP How to define spirituality...I would define spirituality as that which inspires in one the desire to transcend the realm of the material. Having said that it means that there is basically two sides to the coin, darkness – light, material – spiritual and our Vedic injunctions are all in the form of Sutra. A sutra is an elaborate statement which is condensed, so one of the sutras is...In other words come out from the darkness into the light. So spirituality basically means coming out from the darkness which is a perverted deflection of the spiritual sky in this material world and come back to understand your original constitutional position in relation to the supreme. Thank you.

PP I think most of the previous speakers have covered the general definition of spirituality although it's something that I don't think. For me the definition of spirituality is intellectual curiosity. Sorry about that, but I am somehow diverse right now. I think a spiritual person would be one who tries to practice the teaching of the BG not just to read it. The teachings being that we must strive to remember God at every moment, strive to take all our actions and offer it to the feet of the Lord, strive to perform actions without

expectations of fruit and offer it to God. It's very difficult to actually practise it but the whole purpose of life is to realise God and spirituality is, for me a person is spiritual if the person has that goal very fixed in his/her mind otherwise there is no spirituality.

JR This is brother Jairam. Spirituality is acknowledging the power which is activating the microcosm and the macrocosm and expressing our gratitude through prayer and devotional practice which is an awareness that beyond names and forms, all of us are one, hence maturity is keeping the welfare of all the cards are living a life of service and sacrifice, full of virtue and human dignity.

S Something very short, I just want to say, we talk about spirituality so much, I think what is to me in my humble opinion, I think one needs to be equal visioned. If you have an equal vision in life, looking at everything equally irrespective of who, what and how but if you have that vision that is equal, we describe Bhagwan who looks at us like that, you know God never discriminates between people, we cannot be God, but I am saying reading the BG or any other scripture that describes the glories of God, needs to give us an understanding where one needs to have equal vision in life, and I think if one reaches that stage of life, there actually nothing you need to attain after that, again in my humble opinion. Because if you are equal visioned then of course nothing is different from you or anything or anyone. Thank you .

SL In the case of Aurobindo and Krishnamurthy, they were considered intellectuals and spiritual leaders. But in the case of Raman Mahesh and I find it difficult to call them intellectuals. But all the intellectuals were at their feet to draw inspiration. If not for Vivekananda coming onto the scene, the greatness Ramakrishna may not have been known in all the world. And Vivekananda won't be Vivekananda if not for the spiritual imbibed from Ramakrishna. Two classic cases. From my point, please I stand to correction. Ramana Maharshi and Ramakrishna by no clarification call them as intellectual but they are the kind of spiritual message they gave to the world thanks to people who succeed them. Krishnamurthy and Aurobindo, they are of a different plain combining intellectual attainment and spirituality. I am here to learn as it is.

BM Some of the greatest intellectuals are those who have had no titles.

MKA Just one more point to add in the context of defining spirituality, its important for us to distinguish between being religious and spiritual. A person may be highly religious but not necessarily spiritual. I like to reinstate what brother Jayram said that it is a continuous awareness of the presence of divinity in and through all transactions of life, right from morning to evening, whatever activities that we do, one aspect of your mind, has got to be conscious of the divinity which is pulsating in every aspect of the world, the spiritual part that is. Of course if you want to be recognised outside, we see it outside manifesting but if you want to identify it you've got to go within, you develop spirituality and you define that divinity within, so it is a constant attunement to the presence of divinity, for example, if you look at a fruit or if you look at how one atom of spermin develops into a human being like you and me, I mean if you see the miracle that's taking place there, there has to be presence of spirituality – divinity there or how a seed develops into a giant oak tree, presence of divinity, brilliant expression of divinity so a continuous awareness of divinity in and through all transactions of life. This very often a religious person may miss it. A person may be doing so called material activity in the dinner load of the market place but his focus of attention is always something noble, he wants to serve people, he wants to help people. That person is far more spiritual than that person could be going to the temple, place of worship, pilgrimage etc. but his focus is always upon what more I can get, how much more money I can get, how much more of help I can get, how much more...So he may be religious but not spiritual.

LRM We know that the BG is a book of morals and values and so I just want to elicit what we think about the BG as a book that values. As a book that values uprightness and honesty.

BM I think the question itself is meant to be provocative because majority of people follow the BG are and I think from a point of detachment , intellectual detachment, secular detachment, we are trying to interrogate it. So I think it's not meant to be,

shouldn't be seen to be offensive etc. I should have made that point at the beginning and maybe if we go earlier you refer to contradictions, sometimes if the contradictions are taken literally then you'll argue that to the lay person Lord Krishna is giving incorrect junctions.

MKA We all would agree that the BG or any other scripture for that matter upholds the ethics and values of moralities of human life simply because these scriptures are only enunciating the laws and principals of life and living. Whether you call it BG, you call it Vedas, you call it Dhamapadas, you call it Bible, Quran - each one of them are only enunciating the laws of light and living, so it only says you as a human being, you've got to adhere to the values and principals and laws of life and living. If you want to live a peaceful and harmonious living and progressing life, spiritually as well materially. So it just upholds the moral uprightness probity you call it. In fact there are several references in the BG, the uprightness, the word that is used in the BG is Arjavam. Arjavam is a Sanskrit word. When I got the email I went through the BG to my studies to find out how many areas where we use the word uprightness. He seems to use the word, the specific word uprightness probably more than a couple of times. In the chapter thirteen verse seven, he emphasises uprightness, chapter sixteen verse one he emphasise uprightness, chapter seventeen again verse fourteen, chapter eighteen verse forty two, these are the areas where he emphasises uprightness, and in the twelfth and thirteenth chapter of the BG, where in the twelfth chapter he enunciates thirty five qualities of a Bhaktha or thirty five values of a Bhaktha, and in the thirteenth chapter he deals with twenty values of Gyani - both these contexts he used the word uprightness, Arjavam. So uprightness or upholding your values principals, moralities in any field of activity, wherever you are. I mean its quite obvious that it is a literature on human values and laws of life and living. Laws are universal meaning at all times, to all people and all places, that is a universal law.

SL He has given me the food for thought further. If a person is a learner he's to be dealt not because of his academic achievements, he's agreed to stand up and fight for a cause You don't have the right to have assertiveness in you. All what you are learning

becomes meaningless. Then at the end of the chapter he says all your knowledge goes waste unless you are going to surrender yourself to the Lord, so all knowledge is subject to the feet of the Lord. Call it by any name that is material... You have to be unrighteous, you cannot succumb to any pressure moves and there is all I said or not sing praise of questionable elements only sing in praise of Lord and we will not succumb to anybody on this earth but we shall only subjugate ourselves to the feet of the Lord. This is with me, I quote in different places so all are Tamil devotional songs all speak of up righteousness, you can't say I'm a religious leader and succumb to any pressure mode. The quality of assertiveness is part of morality, part of reality, you cannot succumb to any pressure from any side, they know you as a real moral man then you are really the disciple of the Lord. I think that may be applicable in all the religious groups, uprightness.

RP: I think there is a famous axiom. So basically there's one famous verse in the Srimad Bhagvatham where it says that Narada, Asita, Devala and Vyaasa attain perfection by following this path, in other words, you see there's a strict...you got to see by the result, something has to be judged by the result so these great personalities, no one is going to argue with me that Narada, Vashista, Devala and Narada are like really carrying men of impeccable character, very, very astute, very learned, very devotional and by following the standard of morality which has been laid down in the BG in a synopsis, they were able to attain this perfection, so we looking at morality and we looking at before regulative principles which is enunciated in the BG, which can be used as a yardstick and by following it, you will see that the degradation in human society will kind of be removed to quite a large extent and that is no meat eating, no illicit sex, gambling and no intoxication and the four principles of any pious life will mean mercy, cleanliness or sanity and truthfulness, so they've actually found that to the extent that the simple activities when the bar goes up, then these Godly qualities of mercy, cleanliness or austerity, truthfulness, up righteousness, honesty goes down and we see it. The result of it, even though man has made an advancement in so many fields, there is a thin prick in the social body at large, as a result of which people can go to war over less important issues, so where is the advancement? You are trying to lay down a standard for morality but it seems like we are producing men of the calibre of practically, cats and dogs so if

you like really want to produce men of calibre, impeccable character and unquestionable integrity, then you have got to follow people who have done it in the past, see what they have done and basically you can see. I say success leaves clues, success leaves clues, it has certain tracks and if people have been successful and if you are following in their tracks then you are also going to be successful in the same way.

PP: BG is a book on morality, I think we have just chosen two words which hardly says anything about the enormous emphasis on virtue if you look at this verse has been quoted with certain discourses, humility, unpretentiousness, non-injury, forgiveness, uprightness, service of the teacher, purity, steadfastness, self control, constancy in self knowledge, non-attachment, non identification of the self and constant even mindedness. The emphasis on even mindedness, the balance equanimity, that is all the primary lessons of life and how to deal with life problems that you want to make an application of the BG to life orientation skills, but at the bottom of all this there must be that constant devotion, you cant isolate the teachings of the BG without the emphasis on its religiosity. And that would be a crime, if you just purely think of it, just the moral without understanding that all the actions must be surrendered eventually, that everything must be surrendered to the feet of God and God is the goal of human life then one would actually be speaking completely against that underlying emphasis of BG is.

D: I find it very interesting, what I am curious about is that we are all discussing BG, but I am reading this aid here and it states there in the study I want to research the implications of the BG with respect to its possible contribution to values in education, a further aim of the study to assess the possible influence of the BG for curriculum design and the third aim of the study involves an investigation into educators' perception and attitude of the curriculum in life orientation. From an educator's point of view we must also consider the diversity of the student that we have in our school, their standards, for example uprightness and honesty, how would you tell an eight year old boy who hasn't had a meal in three days that he is wrong in stealing the apple, okay fine, you and I know what is right and wrong but we talking about teaching a child, is that child ready for BG knowledge, that is the question we need to ask ourselves and which direction is he going

in, which direction is his family going in, which direction is the world going in, which direction is this community going in. All that has to be considered before we decide we should offer Gita knowledge or not, because I can't offer Gita knowledge to you if you are not interested in reading it, if you are not interested in accepting it, so yes I think that it is going to be very difficult and has to be watered down and I don't think our students are humble enough to accept this, we must not think about our students as university student also, also look at our students from the grade five and grade six and grade seven, like they are young and they are reckless, so we have to take a lot into consideration before we decide BG can be used in our curriculum and what adjustments we have to make before we offer it to them. Thank you.

BM We are attempting to bring it down to multi-cultural society concepts and I think they are coming back to the issues later.

JR The Gita should not be taken literally. The Gita is talking about the negative and positive forces constantly at war within us and without us in the world. Whichever area of life we must stand for which is good for all, stand for justice, if violence is necessary to remove a greater violence, we must not fear to apply violence with intellectual console to affect the positive result for the well-being of all that seems to be quintessence the sense of the message of the BG. And in chapter twelve and thirteen Lord Krishna gives almost sixty-five qualities how one can live up to the prestige and dignity of the human being. Thank you.

S: I just have one question, maybe the gentlemen in the front can help me here, why is so difficult to lead a life of up righteousness and honesty because you find that in society today especially we talk about we should be producing people who move up and not cats and dogs, you know we talked about Prabhu in front talked about that. What is important that when you are trying to lead that type of life or you are treading on that path; you are totally alienated by society. It won't affect you if you are really truly on that path, but why is this happening today in society? You know many of us had the opportunity of listening to the BG, not necessarily reading it, and I have had the good

fortune of listening to it quite often from a little girl and as I grew up I started reading it, but it's not easy for me to understand because you really need a spiritual person to teach it and make you understand, but it's difficult. I find that we come across many obstacles in life, not obstacles as to something but somebody is in front of you, someone is on either side of you not allowing you to tread on his path because you are totally alienated. Why is it becoming more and more difficult yet we know that we have the BG there, from time immemorial it is there for us, but this a question I would like to if it is possible to be answered.

SG Can I please attempt to answer that question. My name is Sajeel Maharaj. I am of the belief that the reason why people are feeling like this is because everybody is not aware, if a child taught from a young age what is morality and maybe we should consider introducing the morality aspect of BG first at school level or educational level and Bhakti the final aspect would be like putting icing on the cake. So maybe we should look at not introducing the BG at its entirety at school level or initial level but let's start with morality because it is morality that will make a better society and it is morality that will make people understand, that person is practising ahimsa, sathyam, tyag, shaanti, apashunam, - why is he doing it? Because it is a moral thing to do, it is the correct thing to do but if you don't know that it is the correct thing to do, you will look at that person and say what is he doing, everybody else is doing B why is he doing A? So maybe Lokesh Bhai should look in the direction of possibly, questioning whether certain aspects of the BG should be introduced initially and of course Bhakti, Yoga would be like putting the icing on the cake.

RS Can I say something? We are assuming that morality is a homogenous term. How do students out there and youths understand morality? We have a very sanitized conclusion of it. What are the perceptions as practitioners and scholars? How do you think morality is perceived by the youth today, the scholars and maybe the teacher that can help us as well. What is considered moral by us and necessary moral by them and *vice versa*. So we have very sanitized idea of what morality is and what Lokesh is trying

to do is sort of trying to unpack the concept of moral probity and how it seems to be understood by the youth of decadent society.

SG I think we need to look at it when something is going wrong in this country, a law is passed and whether you like it or not you follow the law. Now morality is something to me that influences every person's character and the way we live so when you make a law, whether people like it or not you've got to abide by the law, similarly when you give morality to the youth or those that are young, it's not whether they like it or not. It is what is going to be successful and make this a better place for all of us to live, so I don't think that we should delve too much on that as to whether it would be accepted or not. We are doing the right thing and like this Bhaiji has said, we do our duty and whether you accept it or not is up to you and I think it is our duty as educators as well as learned people - those of you who are sitting here, is to look at giving this. Why not give morality, we give our kids education, we gave them food, why not give them morality and morality is given to us beautifully in the BG.

BM: I think there is a difference about enforcement. In the law of enforcements, there are law enforcers. Morality you have got to enforce it yourself and I think that is where there is the real tension and we can follow that up later. Lokesh has been very generous and he has arranged some snacks. He believes that we have worked very hard. So now it's almost quarter to eleven we will have a break for fifteen minutes and come back.

MKA: The right and wrong. The right and wrong, moral or immorally we are objective. In fact this aspect I have not come across anywhere else than in the BG and Mahabharata has been highlighted. One of the paradoxes very often people talk about is how Lord Krishna asked Arjuna to shoot his own Guru, in our Hindu tradition Guru is placed above God alright and Lord Krishna is asking Arjuna to shoot his own Guru; now you find such glaring paradoxes highlighted in the Mahabharata only for you feel right and wrong is only in the intention. It is not in the actions but it is in the motive, in the intention. William Shakespeare also said the same thing nor action is right and wrong it is the thinking that makes it so. It is the motive behind the action that is right or wrong, moral

or immoral. So the Arjuna's intention to wage the war of Kurukshetra is not to kill the Kauravas or his own Gurus or Pitamaha or Bhishma or whatever, his intention was to save the country from the forces of the evil Kauravas. The intention was not to kill but to save them. So morality and what is moral for one person maybe immoral for someone else and what is moral for one person maybe immoral for the same person at different times. For a child to live at the expense of society he is moral, nothing wrong with it. To live at the expense of society is immoral. One is supposed to contribute to society. So it is subjective, it is relative. So it has to be looked at in context as to when we define the morality.

BM: Now let's move on to the huge question. We will have some space at the end for some of the general questions that have been asked. We are focusing on values and the BG.

PP: The question is focusing on changing values why should that come to the purpose of the focus? Because values are time-honoured. Is there something sacred about changing time-honoured values? And I think that really should be the focus.

LRM: This is the quotation that I have taken from the values and education policies that document from the department of education. Janet?

JJ: Many students either don't have values or they have got values and they do something because their great grandmother did it. They have never taken ownership of it from themselves and they don't know what the implications are of those values. So often they need to clarify values and then it's through a process of value clarification whereby as an educator you would give alternatives get them to see it from different angles and perspectives and if they still take ownership of the same values at the end of it they more likely they are to put that into practice but often in that process of values clarification they can see that there is specially if you put the shoe on the other foot type of thing, they start understanding that maybe those values need to be adjusted or changed or interrogated more critically and then when they take ownership of it can publicly...And

put it repeatedly into action then there's more chance in a change taking place but all that has happened through dialogue, through maybe case studies, through discussing experience, by the teacher being able to pose alternatives - have you thought of it from this way, what is this etc., etc. So to whole pedagogical process of values clarification which I think is very useful.

BM: Thanks.

PP: Can I just come back again? This could be a complex situation. I can probably... what I am about to say but I think there are certain things and I agree with gentlemen that spoke earlier on I think that there are some things which have got to be prescriptive. My own perception of values is that in the last thirty or forty years, there is a kind of liberalised education that has actually taken over what people considered as time honoured values. That there are certain fundamental values for instance which we described in the BG are all spiritual text. People are now questioning these things and in order to satisfy their own weaknesses or inabilities to be able to uphold those values. To approve of that, and I think one has to be very careful when in this context, because when there is an erosion of values as a result of trying to view a very liberal sentiments of it then one is actually guilty of desecrating something which is cherished.

JJ ...and the other thing is I've seen there are many people who have been prescribed values and what happens is, they tend to rebel against those and so the whole idea is to get them to come on board and for them to take ownership of values for themselves even of those prescriptive values to see the value in those values to give one want to put them, because we've got a situation here where there are many students who have been brought up in a specific way, they have these prescriptive values but they are not living them by any means what so ever in fact the opposite is happening and it's a huge concern, we were talking about it just now. If you look at the values in the BG, I want to know why are the Hindu students on this campus by large not living by them, why are there not koeksisters at every possible opportunity. It worries me because there is a disparity and that's not within Hinduism across faiths where morality in emanates from the belief

system its prescriptive in a sense but unless those children who now become young adults take on ownership of those values for themselves, they are not likely to actually live them out and then actually the whole thing falls apart so it's not a case of liberalism but it's a case of interrogating values to help them take ownership of them and to see values within those values if I can put it that way. Does that make sense?

PP: As long as values are not being compromised in order to prove a specific.

JJ: It's not about compromise we are talking about understanding of...and a particular value like honesty can mean something very different in different cultures in different people that are another huge problem. We've got the manifesto here...on democracy and rights, and it speaks about values which lead to the implicit and explicit in the whole curriculum and in terms of life orientation etc. and those are a starting place where you take one like Europe or think which ever one, ok, they are different interpretations and that is the problem. There is commonality but there is also a huge disparity. So to get to clarifying, what does it mean, Why is it different for you and the whatever and do you have the whatever. How do we find some kind of commonality? It's a huge issue but we can philosophise it as much as we want...but our society is actually falling apart, you actually feel it by the Indians...and there needs to be some way that we can come together from our various religious perspectives or whatever it may be to try and...regenerate...our society.

BM If I could just remove my chairperson's hat. I was resisting to do that. I want to refer to two contexts, I think the macro contexts, we look at the philosophical paradigm, that includes a lot of research in theology, humanity, social sciences is post modernism. And in postmodernism everything is relative, there's nothing that is sacred and absolute. And if you relate the postmodernism paradigm to values and religion, you can just take one institution. An institution that is sacred in all religions is marriage and we all know that, that institution has now become very relative because you now have partners, live-in relationships, people with different orientations, etc., etc. and looking at our society and

clearly this thesis is rooted in a social context. We came from the anti-apartheid struggle, were a lot of the students are now in Edgewood, for example, were thought that when you saw a police vehicle you must throw a stone. You rebelling against the old order. Now having come through that process of rebellion, we are still stuck in that mode. Furthermore under apartheid, looking at the black family, there were no black families. There was no families. You had the father going through as a migrant labour. The mother is struggling to eek out a living in a rural area. So who transmitted values? Values were forced through the narrow Christian Calvinist curriculum. The 76 riots was a rebellion against Afrikaans as a mode of instruction. Now our problem as a society in transition is almost, we've made a political transition. But in terms of values etc., we have stopped in that old order. And I really think that's what we are grappling with. Who transmits the values and we now factor in AIDS, which means humans in the post-apartheid era, they going to struggle to reconcile the family because parents are dying and older siblings are now rearing younger siblings and someone, Veenaji referred to basic instincts coming into play purely for survival. I'll stop there.

SL Talking of statements of what you call, about means and ends or what you call. we say suddenly...Values said how could you justify Lord Krishna advising Arjuna to shoot his own guru? So in Sanskrit we call "****TAMIL*****"?? you are not worried about personality, fight against....vice therefore Dronacharya gurus are highly respected, highly valued. They were on the wrong side, therefore they had to fight it out. That is ...something unavoidable...Lord Rama killing Bali in the hideout, it was not a direct confrontation. It's an eternal controversy whether Lord Rama was right in killing Bali. Whether it's good or bad is not the subject, Bali's conduct - what he did was not a straight confrontation. Now in education, the Indian freedom struggle we find, Subashchandra Bose seeking the help of Hitler and Mussolini, they were war mongers but still he had against British regime there's a need to align even with the devil to achieve object. Gandhi an embodiment of non violence did compromise by saying they prepared to back World War II if Britain will agree to grant us independence. So Gandhi's case, Subashchandra Bose case, Rama and Bali, then the issues he raised over Arjuna and the Guru, so in Sanskrit you call...It's not individuals, it's personalities

involved, and the fight against wisdom. The type of virtue or wise. Words we use in different languages. The meaning is same, we have....therefore when then Gandhi says means and ends are to be equally important but even Gandhi compromised when it came to achieve independence. I don't blame him. The circumstances he said that. I want to be enlightened by all the intellectuals here, the spiritual leaders.

BM Ok, thanks for that. Any other comments on.....intervention? In our country, in the post-apartheid era religion has failed us.

JR: It is true that values are not changed by prescription and through dialogue. Anyone's actions does not change, the action is based on their perception and conviction. So to dialogue, data comes in. So data changes perception. Perception changes conviction. Conviction changes action. So based on that, it is true that dialogue, experience and new knowledge and critical thinking will form the basis of changing one's perception hence having effect on the conviction and thereafter action. So it is true, I agree that change cannot come through prescription but through dialogue, experience and new knowledge. Thanks.

RP: This is a nice story by...that was once approached by a mother and the mother asked the spiritual master to tell or the guru or kind of a spiritual leader whatever it is. The mother asked the leader to tell her son to not eat sweets. So the spiritual master said come tomorrow and I'll tell him. So the next day the mother took the child to the teacher and the teacher told the child, "Don't eat sweets". So the mother got very confused because he could have actually said the same thing yesterday, so she asked him, "Why didn't you just tell him that yesterday?" So the teacher said "Because I was eating sweets myself yesterday". The principle being, you see that I just want whole thing in converse. You looking at values. You looking at character and you looking at habits. So the accumulation of habits builds character and as a result of the character you going to inculcate certain values. So it is, it's like in other words, they not going to take to it. Virtue hasn't actually failed us. It is that people haven't imbibed the spirit of the letter. In other words for people to see this guy is absolutely impeccable. I want to give you an

example, you know when the Hari Krishna movement started, Shri!a Prabhupada who was the founder was 69 years old. He went to America, old man with a walking stick. In the middle of a hippie's scene in New York City, he sat in the park and he chanted the holy names of Lord Krishna, taught the BG and so many young boys and girls actually some of them absolutely brilliant, you know some scientists, PhDs very likely, children, sons of millionaires came and joined. It was purely because of the example. So in other words, what I'm saying is with values, you got become the change you want to see in society. Otherwise it's not going to happen. You see like I'm saying, you know guys, get together, come lets do it. Lets try to make a difference, especially when we talking about moral degradation amongst the kids, I mean their students. And I'm going to say you know what guys don't smoke, this is not going to help you and I'm smoking myself. So it's not going to go down but they say you know what you are, this guy Raghava is absolutely amazing, look at his character, look at who he is. I want to go, I want to be with him, I can learn something from him. So we basically got to become the change we want to see in society. And I think that values, you see it is not correct when you say that research has shown that values are not changed by prescription. You see prescription is required, later on I mean if you look at Lokesh's work, he says tolerance, self-control, honesty, these are all constitute knowledge. Whatever else there is constitutes ignorance. So that's prescription. It's telling you, here's it, this is it for you, this is morality. Anything else outside of this ambit will constitute ignorance. Now that's prescription but yet at the same time, dialogue, experience and new knowledge and critical thinking will come from people who are on that field like if, if Reshma called me to be present at one of her meetings on education, I would say I don't know what you are talking about. But now so it means that, the person must have some experience on that side, it's like when the saviours of Myna Charania met for 1000 years sacrifice. The guy, the Shaunaka Rishi who was asking the questions, was so qualified and the speaker was also qualified in that particular field. So otherwise it's going to be the blind leading the blind. I don't know, hit and miss, I think we should do this, we shouldn't do like that but when it's like there was a world authority, the proof of it is that he started this whole world wide movement. In fact it is 10 years. And what did he do right? So if you observe his character, if you observe his teachings, he did certain things and if you actually repeat

that, you are going to be successful on that level. Just like I said that if you want to learn to bake a cake. Don't go to a butcher, provided the butcher is not a baker. But you can improve your golfing skills if you go to Tiger Woods. In other words, what I'm saying is that success can actually be learnt. There are guys who are successful, even though there's the whole world may show that religion is not successful. But there are few examples of guys who are very, very successful. Pure devotees of the Lord, you know, Paramahansas, Mahabhagavats, there are examples. If you go to India you'll find them. So they are showing by the example guys, like I want to become...I was having a chat with Janet during the break and Janet was asking me some like amazing questions and I wanted to tell you...like another level would ever come out that they??? period??? stopped. And I was thinking "God, this is it", and then I came back to my chair and sat, "No, If you want to be, if you want to make the change there, you got to become the change after you imbibe the teaching which is there in the BG". So the values are prescriptive, it is there in the Gita, you follow it, the success will be there but the dialogue expresses a new knowledge and critical thinking is required for time, place and circumstance. Time, place and circumstance, I might want to present this teaching but not the way it was spoken five thousand years ago in the BG. There's a different audience I'm dealing with, so I'm going to teach them differently according to time, place and circumstance. In that sense religion may be different but spirituality is the same. Just like if Jesus spoke, he came and taught at a certain time a teaching and his teaching was morality. Do not covet your neighbor's wife, WHY? Because at that time people were doing those things. So you have to start from that premise but the BG starts from the premise where mundane morality is already taken for granted. And he is teaching Arjuna from the principle of you not the Soul AHAM BRAHMASMI ???so therefore according to time, place and circumstance, dialogue experienced a new critical thinking whatever it is will be required. But the values in terms of it being prescriptive will be an absolutely strong foundation for us to, as a referral point of what we should use for the success of our propagation.

PP: If we are discussing the BG as a, as a source to use for life orientation skills. Then this is not one of those lessons. There are several verses from the slokas in the BG which

can be used but they have to be, you have to think about them carefully and select them. I was speaking to brother Jairam during the break and we were speaking about the same thing. And you cannot take those verses which are very difficult to comprehend. There are some of them which will only be comprehended after many, many readings and after a lifelong of practice but there are others which are straight forward and direct and those versus can be used. But this is not one of them.

RP: I'll go what we can accomplish, how this basically fits in because it is a very highly philosophical question. I mean if you looking at Krishna's answer two verses after this, he directly says that he becomes a swift deliverer from the cycle of birth and death. Like really delving into the texts of the Gita, I don't mind really, it's a very a nice verse but in terms of what we are discussing today, do you want to exhaust that now? Or do you want to consider that at some other time? Or maybe...

BM Sorry it's linked to the next question...deals with the youth and celibacy so I mean we have controlling of the senses.

RP: Aha...

BM There is a continuity maybe...

LRM Actually the second question follows from that...so maybe we should do the both of them together.

RP: You see the current paradigm in the way things are at the moment, it is like celibacy is going to be too far fetched....already there's so much degradation in moral turpitude. So you asking people to basically give up this things and these are the only kind of pleasures they know. Where at the same time according to the scriptures, there is some tremendous values in celibacy. It develops the brain substance, in fact it is said that Vedic students in days of yore were what is called Srutida. The Srutida was, you would hear the subject matter once, and he would remember it but now it is said that in

excessive loss of semen basically what happens is the, intelligence actually becomes dull. They can't assimilate the subject matter. So if you want to like as I say celibacy, you see, in fact I'll make a statement which will sound so absolutely radical that if students have to hear this they'll get like completely flustered. They'll think this guy is from, from the previous ages. Actually if you think there's so much enjoyment in losing semen, there's more enjoyment in not losing it according to the sages. So basically it means that there's certain enjoyment from not losing semen. But these guys don't have experience of that because it's like sex is for breakfast lunch and supper, kind of thing...we coming to that point today. So if want to introduce like celibacy, in regards to what we talking up there in terms of controlling the senses, being equally disposed to everyone. You see how it works, you see a *Vachu vengā manusakunda vega, jiva vega mudara prasta vega* means that you first control the tongue, when the tongue is controlled the belly is automatically controlled. And when the belly is automatically controlled, the genitals is automatically controlled. But it starts with the tongue. If you put anything to your mouth, you going to have a problem with your tummy before long and your genitals is going to be pushing you all the time for release, for enjoying. So it basically means, what you saying it's like a ????, I was just giving an example to Janice during the break. During high tide, the waters from the ocean enters into the river, and during low tide the waters from the river enters into the ocean. So the spirituality is to become so strong that the Shakthi or strength which they get from the practice of the spiritual life actually overcomes whatever enervates which might be there. I just want to do this slightly allude to what you were saying earlier in that way. That's the way you can overcome them because Martha Jig is asking the question, it seemed like you not getting anywhere. Nothing seems to be happening, but we, you see, the fibre of spiritual practice has to be so strong. One spiritual master gave the example that if you got a tripod, with a small burning candle and on the tripod you got a pot of rice up there, you know you not going to cook the rice. For it to basically, for something to happen the fire must be strong enough. So in that way when spiritual practices becomes strong enough it will certainly push back the tide which is coming from the entrance of the material energy. And the proof of the pudding is actually in the practice. I know, you know I've been practising for 25 years from the time I basically joined Krishna consciousness and I've seen by direct perception,

experience I can see that there is a difference. I used to do all these very same things. Sitting on campus, you know all the Hari Krishnas are coming now boy, I know they give out nice persadh so I go there at two o' clock just for the persadh kind of thing! You know but not interested in the philosophy or anything of that sort. Exactly like the way.....and girls and Ooohhh, it was like all the big fun type...you know like that. And suddenly you come here and you hear this guy say, no meat eating. What? No illicit sex, no gambling, no intoxicating. But this is where everything erodes. When you start doing these things you see the very fabric of society, erodes. If you want to build that integrity, don't do those things and the four legs of religiosity will automatically grow. Mercy, Austerity, Cleanliness and Truthfulness. Where's those qualities, we don't have it. Even the teachers, even the students are seeing the examples in the teachers. In one instance I was recently went to a house preaching and the lady was telling me that she was a teacher and she was telling me that the teacher has now fallen pregnant. This is actually a true story, she's fallen pregnant from, by one of her students. This is in Johannesburg, so I thought wow, ok, now these are the teachers. So everything is coming down to like a level monetary gain. Let's do it because there's some monetary gain but not because I want to do it. If you coming from a place of this is what I've been put in this planet to touch people with my words, action by my teaching. In terms of say like what you are doing. You like religious orientated. I want to become this example and then people say, wow Janet, I want to follow. You see they eventually going to do it. Thank you

BM I think very important that you add to that and say.....to a certain level they present a talking in abstraction. Either a very harsh interior context that's consumption-orientated or the one term that I really.....is used in all the literature right now is a concept called globalization where we all are being influenced by certain material, market-orientated culture, that's driven by money basically. My colleague is Ashwin Desai, he spoke of us all being driven or governed by greed and wanting more and also wanting that which we cannot even afford. Which then pushes you into breaking value systems.

JJ Fidelity - in other words, if you are so devoted to God, whoever you may consider him to be, if you are so in love with him, you will want to live by his tenants tenets?? or

the values that he prescribes in order to please him. And in fact if you don't do that you are committing adultery, spiritual adultery and so spiritual fidelity should be, could be one of the things that actually drives people to actually live by the tenants of their particular faith. But again, and I know we talking about it in this context here but again to put that across to learners in the classroom is another story and that's where the problem comes in.

MKA: I'm trying to look at these two words.....coming from this word, especially in the light of taking the youth to go beyond the religiousness. Now the beauty of the BG is that it is applicable for spiritual development, for god-realisation. The same principle is applicable in the worldly acquisition also, to achieve success in the world. That's the beauty of that. Where if you go to university, or a youngster in a school tell him about the god achievement of god-realisation, etcetera, there may be few who will be inspired but it's the majority of them who are not really tuned to it. Now to them also the word is applicable. The truth is that if you go to a school, college or any institution, ask them that you want to achieve success, almost everybody wants to. Alright, interested in wanting to become a doctor, another person want to become a businessman, a third person want to become a...a forth person want to become a pilot. Everyone of them has got an aspiration and ambition, a goal to achieve. To them also this word is applicable. Even if you are perusing a material success, through the right means that is still on the spiritual path, you follow the spiritual value, achieve material success, you on the spiritual progress. So how would talk to a youth in a university or school about these words. We'll say it's imperishable. It's indefinable, unmanifest, etcetera, like for example, you take the word unmanifest, the thing with a youngster who wants to become millionaire, to him the achievement of million is not manifest. A student who wants to become a doctor or achieve PhD in a particular branch of study, that is not manifest to him but now he has to conceive the unmanifest now alright, so it feeds to....that is what is called vision. Vision is the ability to see what the physical eye cannot see, the material object is perceptible alright, but the goal that you want to reach is unmanifest, it is imperceptible, alright and it is imperishable in the sense that joy that you get out of it is sustainable. It's lasting, whereas the pleasure that is aspiring for is instant gratification. See a youngster, the

young mind is constantly gravitating towards instant gratification alright. Now there, there is something lasting happens, gratification, when you fulfil your goal, when you fulfil your mission in life, what we are aspiring, what we are calling is, it is a very gratifying feeling compared to instant gratification, so it may seem unthinkable now, me, becoming a doctor? Especially when you compare himself to other outstanding achievers in the world. He feel that no, I don't think it's impossible for him to achieve it. It seems impossible for him to achieve it, it's unthinkable or omnipresent??? Right word??. So there are so many verses that can be interpreted in a worldly sense also and then if you want to achieve that goal, then the next verse gives us a prescription. How do you achieve that goal? He says, having well-restrained group of senses, sense control or mastery all you senses and emotions is the key to success in any field of activity, you ask a sportsman, you ask a businessman, you ask a professional, anybody unless you maintain a basic control of your personality, your indulgence in activity. You won't achieve anything, it's a common law and regarding everything equally, rejoicing in the welfare of all beings, meaning see what happens is, very often when you're aspiring for success and you find somebody else is also aspiring for the same success that you are aspiring for, you feel jealous about the person, envious about them. You don't...very often we don't like somebody else achieving the same aspiration as you have. Rejoicing in the welfare of all beings.....engage in the welfare of all, you know. Now I'm happy if you are achieving the same goal that I'm aspiring for. Very often we don't. So when we feel envy of jealousy, that again destroys our inspiration alright, so if you are not aspiring for success in the world or if you aspiring for g? see above God realisation you must enjoy seeing other people's success also. So these negative emotions and lack of mastery of the senses, you know sense indulgence, dissipates our vitality, our wants and energy. And then the second point is the celibacy, what is said on celibacy. Is it essential for students to practice celibacy? It is essential for every human being, not only for students, even married person, you know celibacy. Now celibacy is most often interpreted as restraining from sex gratification, all right. Now you tell a married couple, celihacy...do I need to, can I not enjoy the physical pleasure. Now as a married person, I mean it seems...to him, but there also the what is important is that for a householder they go through the experience alright. Whereas a non-married, you ought not to go through that, that's the

Hindu philosophy, alright. Now, when you got through the physical gratification where is the mind? See Hindu's philosophy supports has got a brilliant system where they can take the mind away from the indulgence of the pleasure...I'm talking about as a marriage person alright. So you could be going through it but your mind could be upon something you want. Even when an...is going through sexual pleasure, when his mind is upon something divine, the offspring that come out of that union also bound to be positive. Be it the thought that a couple, at the time of conception, at the time of gratification of sexual pleasure, is so important. I not going to get into details of what Hindus systemised. Very often we don't think that for a celibacy for a married person, even though he is going through a physical pleasure but he is restraining the mind whereas for a student celibacy of course means physical restraining also. That's why Hinduism, the growth of the human being is very systematically devised. That you first year, first probably 20 years of your life, you go through Brahmachariya. The Sanskrit word for celibacy is Brahmachariya. So Brahmachariya means Brahmani Chariti ithi, Brahmanchariya, he who moves on the path of Brahman, is Brahmachariya. So when you are pursuing Brahman, Brahman means divinity, god in Hinduism. So when you pursue divinity or even the worldly pursuit, the self-control is so important. So it's not merely restricted to restraining from the physical pleasures. Celibacy should also mean controlling all the senses or the ten senses. In fact that's why, the celibacy it is emphasised. Celibacy, means of process of control, now, if you can control your sexual indulgence, then you can control any other sense. Simply because, in the sex gratification, all the ten senses participate. Don't ask me how, alright...

[LAUGHTER ALL AROUND]

...So, now, so if you are able to restrain that, you are able to control, mastery over all ten senses. So throughout the scriptures, the celibacy or Brahmachariya is continuously emphasised. Doesn't mean, that only restraining from indulgence in the sex gratification. It means control our eating habits, control our talking habits, control our viewing habits, control our everything, including our breathing habits, Pranayam. So that control is essential every human being and especially for students. Particularly because they are

going through that institution of Brahmachariya and having gone through that then they are of course move into the Grihastashram and corresponding to the four stages of life. Brahmachariya, Grihasth, Vanaprastha and Sanyasa. The Veda also builds a system such a way that the Veda has got four parts, the first part of the Veda is relating to the Brahmacharis and the second part of the Veda relates to the Grihastha household, the third part of the Veda addressed the Vanaprastha...and of course the fourth part of the Veda is for Sanyasa, renouncing. So it has to be all ten senses have to be mastered then you are practising Brahmachariya. I mean there's no question whether it is essential for students to practise celibacy, it is of course quite obvious. And especially in today's context. It's absolutely essential because as RP mentioned that when you restrain the semen alright, it is very, very potent and the research shows that power itself transforms into a spiritual vitality when you restrain it. Unconquerable indulgence in you know even in animals, it's true like certain, like cows and bulls. There is a restraint from the hulk from mating because of becoming tired faster. They lose their energy and vitality. So when you restrain the indulgence, the very semen itself transforms itself into a spiritual power. You can increase your concentration capacity and of course so many other benefits out of this. So it is absolutely essential for any human being not only from reduction or restraining from the sex indulgences but controlling every indulgence. Only then we can focus on being whole.

SL: May I add something? In point form. What you are saying is totally endorsed by us in our Tamil literature we get what we call Thirukural. Control your wife. Then there's a person called Thiru mula thiru...says whenever you spoke of semen because in an uncontrolled manner the next generations will be beyond redemption.

BM Can I add a dimension, in our context there's a reality that young people in high school, university, are sexually active. There's a reality that we have that reality, really...AIDS and in the current...the introduction of sex education, with reference to condoms, etcetera, you know can we stick to this position saying they...this is what the scriptures say, and then we have the reality of a very rampant disease and I can compare it to the Catholic Church who are sticking to abstinence rather than use of condoms.

PP: If I may, I think the bottom line, it seems to me that these two verses are, you have to see them in context because we are speaking about the particular issue namely whether BG can be used in life orientation skills. And there's a tremendous emphasis on AIDS in all facets of education. Even in mathematics, where you know, they try to bring in AIDS somewhat artificially, but everywhere you know there's an emphasis on AIDS because it's a real problem. It's a problem that the whole society is facing and now this, what Lokesh is proposing here is, that is there some contribution that makes this a very real problem and he chose that rather abuse sentence there in order to, in order to justify the emphasis on celibacy as a means to solving these problems and I think the question of abstention is from...abstention is the one that we will must stick by and in that respect the two gentleman who spoke very well on the subject, where they used very strong arguments for abstention and celibacy as a means to actually counteract AIDS. The way the government is going it's pathetic because this business of Love Life and the use of condoms and encouraging sex as though is it something that you cannot do without and you can still continue to enjoy sex and continue to try and stem AIDS, it is wrong the way that we are going but I think on spiritual view its fine we have to go through this way.

MKA When you freely distribute condoms, you kind of endorse, you protect yourself, I mean the seems to be the message but I don't know if there is any effort that has been made in order to educate the youngsters simply saying abstain, how do you abstain? See, when you abstain, what do we do with that temptation, what do we do with that pressure, how do you dilute there's no education upon these aspects. Simply saying abstain, I mean you tell an alcoholic abstain from alcohol, anybody knows that you don't need the government to tell us that, we don't need an educated person to tell us that but then how do we abstain that technique is not been given out. It goes to what we spoke earlier that in terms of values by merely prescribing the values then I am going to live it isn't it, but we need to go about educating them. Those are temptations for a youngster, it is said basic instinct for a human being but that is to be used rightly for the right reasons for the right time. Now when the pressure comes in the wrong time in the wrong place, what do we

do, how do we control how do we gain mastery over it. That has not been educated you know, I don't know what exactly is the discussion of the content of the sexual education or whatever they go through, I don't know if there is any idea that introduces it and how do we control it and I haven't come across anywhere else except in the Hindu scripture where they talk about what do we do with this?

SL: The government point of view is not that all of us are spirituality inclined. If you look at normal human being behaviour we are using condom others to control not to give a cure.

BM I know our brother from Shri Lanka who started with...

SL ...

R I don't know if I should say that I have never spoken in forum like that before but you got to question the validity of that lady's professorship if she can make such a naïve conclusion. I mean even myself with the basic understanding know that there is more to BG than just take out your arrow shoot at the enemy and kill him, because if you look at BG in context of all Hindu scriptures we talk about the paach shatru. The enemies that are within, those are more important than the enemy's without, so this lady is speaking from an absolutely ignorant point of view. I am sorry to use that harsh language but that's the only conclusion that I can come to and dangerous like this when people start making statements.

SL: if you say that I am coming from SL why...violation also leads to violence and...we Tamils have no alternatives to resist violence...Wipe us out. What takes place is genocide, what did we do to the question, there is no love in holding the weapons, there is no love to kill somebody and be killed in turn. At the same time we see when we worship the Hindu deities, it can be a single deity. Whether it be Lord Krishna, whether it be Kali, whether it be Lord Shiva...it symbolizes the need to fight evil. All the deities are hiding weapons, there is a need to conquer evil and we Tamil people have no alternative.

I won't be here to discuss this subject if I had been killed by this time...only at a philosophical level I am asking what is the alternative that we have? When a worm is crushed it will turn, we don't tell the worm why it should turn...when a worm is crushed it will turn, you don't tell the worm why it turns? Should learn...

JR Whatever we interpret we have to see it in context when violence is introduced with intellectual control to overcome a greater violence it becomes a virtue. You take a surgeon performing an operation, he also cuts the patient, he cut somebody up but it is all intellectually governed and it effects a positive result and you take a robber who is stabbing somebody, its quite different, his cutting is quite different, so in the same way when you value what Lord Krishna is asking Arjuna to do, to fight. That war was waged to eliminate a greater evil. One person with an AK47 is shooting hundreds of people and if you have a gun and you shoot that person, your killing becomes a virtue so we have to see it in context. Thank you.

BM Any other comments on this theme?

PP: I think this particular topic must be approached with caution because crime and violence are two great evils in this society and we try to use philosophical arguments to justify violence in special context then we can be treading on dangerous ground. The whole problem should be overlooked.

BM It is about violence to uphold dharma and righteousness.

JJ Jihad.

PP: From their view they are doing absolutely nothing wrong.

JJ Jihad on another level although it was a physical battle it's about spiritual welfare, essentially isn't it and it's about overcoming battling against one selves.

BM That's the point that Rohith made.

JJ Yah and Jihad, in its purer senses is about that as well.

BM I think that if you want to. I'm sure Jihad is not coming in to the study...the reality with globalization is now the contestation of the ideology and religion and fundamentalism. So, I don't think that's relevant here but I think, as intellectuals and scholars think about it.

PP: At all times the motive and intention must always be underlined.

BM I think that there's selective interpretations. I mean if you take one clause selectively and say ah, the BG...about violence or Jihad means...that's a real problem.

JR Yes...if you don't tie it up with the whole of what they are saying totally.

MKA Even in the BG, about a dozen times Lord Krishna used the word fight - Yudha. Yudha is the Sanskrit word that he used probably, some of the references are right in the chapter one, verse 9, 23, 33, chapter 2 about four times he said...Fight, chapter 3, verse 30, chapter 8, verse 7, chapter 11, chapter 18, you know about a dozen times he continuously...so when a superficial reader, the lady went in...a professor. We probably understanding the context, see Lord Krishna was talking to Arjuna, a great warrior. And sage Vyaasa deliberately chose the characters to create the situation to convey a particular philosophy that Arjuna, a warrior is in the battlefield and about to fight the warriors he has to overcome the emotions and he couldn't fight and in context, Lord Krishna was trying to motivate Arjuna to wage the war of Kurukshetra. He is speaking to Arjuna a warrior in the battlefield so he used the word battle but all of us are Arjuna in the context, we are all facing challenges of the world; just as Arjuna wanted to run away from the challenge of the world, today most people want to run away from the challenges of the world isn't it. Now ask anybody when I conduct the workshop on the management leadership based on the BG, I asked this question, do you look forward to Monday

morning or Friday afternoon, almost 10 out of 10 people are waiting for Friday afternoon, isn't it so, we want to run away from the challenges, we don't want to face the challenges, so when Lord Krishna says faith, fight, meaning fight the challenges of the world, you know, you've got to, everyone of us, morning till evening, we are all fighting the challenges of the world. The process of life is meeting challenges, without challenges life is no life, right from birth to death you are all fighting and meeting challenges so when you fight the challenges you got to fight the challenges with the right values, with right feeling, emotion so therefore the second topic, the first here is fight Arjuna, fight this dispassionately and then he says fight outside, meaning meet the challenges, when you meet the challenges, what should be your inner state, actively working outside, a businessman very actively in the world doing his business, what should be his mind, there must be peace of mind, there must be serenity, forgiveness, you ought not to get angry with your competitor or anybody; when you are driving on the road to work, somebody cuts the lane, tend to get angry, upset and when you do that, what happens to business? That spoils your entire day, isn't it. So you got to fight the challenges that is in the outside but your mind have the sense of serenity, peace akrodha, no anger. You know, all these positive values so there are two contexts we have to understand, one is Arjuna a warrior we are speaking to, all of us Arjuna facing the challenges of the world, when you face the challenges of the world, you have got to develop the right thought process not the negative emotion. So anybody can have that misconception, probably the professor there in the context, may not have gone into deeper study, might have not gone into the backdrop of the BG and what context was given. I mean even to understand the BG 701 verses you need to understand the entire Mahabharata in context, you know only then complete the implications. Especially the first chapter, the innumerable names and all that in fact I know many people when they read the first chapter of BG they put it down because the first chapter is only names after names after, I mean who wants to know all these names and names are not the names we hear in common, very confusing names, so as the Bible and when you read the old testament almost similar you know. Sages have deliberately created this scriptures in such a way that only a person who has got a drive will overcome the initial impediment and they being to realise the deeper meaning, so the violence, in fact Jai Ram mentioned that the apostle of non-violence Gandhi mentioned to

create a small violence to avoid a big violence is still non-violence. I mean it has happened in the history the great fire of London. They had to blow up the building with two people inside to stop the fire from spreading, I mean isn't that violence, destroying people but to save the city or whatever. So it is intention as the professor here mentioned. The motive or intention that matters.

SL ...we can never be...when there is a problem to be faced.

D I want to quote Wendy who called BG a bad book that insights people to war and violence...go back down the page, we find that Arjuna is explicitly at the beginning told get up, fight Arjun, fight, fight, what we are trying to...Is that we are not talking about the first world war and second world war, we are talking about a control battle where two parties...and the targets where both the parties, not women and children...but it is controlled violence if I can use that term, controlled violence. There was a time the battle started and the battle ended, so everything was controlled and it was in a specific spot if I say its not the first world war or the second world war so Wendy...in my opinion, didn't actually read the BG, she must of just read a few bits and pieces from here and there and she in my opinion she is actually looking for errors and are easily found, if you want to look for errors you can find faults in everybody.

BMideas and ideologies and clearly those who have started the...maybe try to...

PP: Equanimity and equal vision.

S I think I just want to talk about Angajanji spoke about control earlier on. When you look at what's happening in especially at school level, or tertiary level, whatever it might be, we find that, students or the youth of today go into so much of frenzy, they want to achieve something for example, no celibacy. They not practising that. When you look at wanting to get money, wanting to buy a new car, wanting to do something, you get into a frenzy. I want this, I want to go for it. Now if control is taught at the very beginning, the desire is the root of all human sufferings, if control is taught at the very

beginning of a child's life and taken on to later stages of the child, you find that slowly but surely everything else latches on like a chain, you know a link of a chain. It comes on to you because you've learnt now, I need to control myself. The word restraining, if I may just say I think that Reshmaji, was just saying you know we not having any disagreements. I don't like the word restrain, restrain is when you look at your pet at home, see if somebody who is an outsider comes home, you put a restraining hand on that and you try to control that. Now control is a word that I like to use because when you restrain and you remove it, it's going to run forward and get hold of the person that is intruding, right or entering your property. So when you learn to control something then mastery over it, it's easier. When the levels are removed it's like a time bomb, so controlling is the most important aspect. I think values that we need to teach at tertiary or school level because it is difficult, children are in a frenzy. We, when Raghavjee earlier talked about the fire. I'm going to use the frenzy now, when I think about frenzy, I think that frenzy is someone who gets excited, agitated but I like to use the frenzy and say you need to get frenzy about learning what is right. I mean that is where you can become...you can use the word frenzy. But getting into frenzy for everything that is not really important in life affects the life of a person or a child. So teaching one control at an early age is important.

BM I think that there are competing demands, when you say almost a marketing of ideas and ideologies of which values and religion form one small portion and the other is about...the material culture that is very prominent and everything spiritual is, you know, quite small. I am very interested when teachers are saying, you know listen we are not only being teachers, we are parents because you are getting kids that are coming from all walks....with no parents, no meals...weak or poor parenting. So the question is where does you know the values start and we said values start at the home. The foundation the school sets.....keep the values they know now, in proportion, values are not starting at home, it means that the high schools curriculum may have to be changed, need some adapting. That's what intellectuals should be doing, maybe saying, we need to go back to the grindstone.

MKA Can you identify some of the values that indicate what we...I won't give a discipline of the values but to direct the attention to specific sections that is not clear. Whereas a few sections...In the 12th chapter of the BG, verses 13 to 20 give the 20 values of the Bhaktha, now when you say Bhaktha, if you take those values you don't have to be a devotee of Krishna or Rama or anybody is applicable. 20 values of the Bhaktha. Chapter 13 again, verses 8 to 12, gives 20 values for personality...Of course Chapter 16, verses 1 to 3, 25 qualities of a divine person, 26 for a divine person. If you look at these three chapters 12 talks about 20-35 qualities on Bhaktha, Chapter 13 talks about 20...Jnanin, Chapter 16 talks about 26 qualities of a...those are values...I know that quite a few values are overlapping, but those are specific 1,2,3,4,5 values. The 3rd Chapter is dealing with Karma Yoga, he is talking about the Art of right action alright and in Karma Yoga the verse 50 of the BG is giving us a graphic description as to how the actions work. Anybody, if you're a businessman, a professional or a housewife or a student the use of graphic descriptions so that if we not think about the future, how we not think about the future...Don't worry about what happens in the past and so forth and second aspect can you comment on the importance on values in education, absolutely. Now why is it so important? Because today in education as I seem to understand focusing upon the intellect, a child goes through fifteen years of school education, college education university education a whole lot of information in his mind and majority of the things have not been used in his life, survey shows that also sixteen years of learning you use less than 2 per cent of the knowledge in the...life so what history has proven that people who are successful in the world, and successful human beings spiritually are the people not necessarily people who are the intelligent academically but people with the right value system but today's education seems to focus so much on intelligence that even parents. Parents are very excited if the child comes out of university with flying colours you may find that the child may get a good job, lot of money but then you loose that values, when the more money comes and not only that when they get married they don't have a happy married life not talk about stress and other you know details, not talk about ...blood pressure and blood sugar and you know, constipation...and so forth. So all these complications, now the philosophy of scripture studies are proven time and time again that when you understand these values, number one, it is...business can be cured alright

and you develop a sense of serenity in peace of mind so the values systems are so crucial and you think...In India we have value education, in the value education period those are some spiritual teachers, the teacher comes and calls me...and most of them listen most of the time...And know nothing about it so there has to be a systematic value that has to be identified with your dream and instilled in a such a way that it is enjoyment because children can...now how does learning in education help them, the law states that the right value system brings the right mental attitude. You know when you use the right value system...we can't go and tell the students change your attitude, now what course of the attitude is the right value system, so when we instill the right value system naturally sort of what to see is change of attitude; so when the attitude changes, the formula that I have learnt a while ago is that performance, performance is P, P is equal to A into S into K, I will call this ask principle where A stands for Attitude, S stands for skill and K stands for knowledge. In the academic education, they emphasise should be more upon knowledge and skill S and K, attitude is neglected then you find people very often when I meet elderly people in South Africa some of them have achieved incredible success but then you have the very high qualification or whatever, they have through...difficulties and challenges in spite of all that they emerge victorious as an individual, I am not talking about anybody but many people you can say, I am just saying they are successful in the world why because their thinking, so it is the right value system helps us to think differently, when you begin to think differently, when you believe to think differently you find the world changes because as your thoughts are so the world. So the value education helps us to think differently and then you find the way forward. The third aspect is do you think the reference should be made to any religious texts...in the...and teaching of life orientation, every religious scripture because every. What is the role of scripture, scriptures play the role of an instruction manual. When you buy a gadget and that particular gadget had an instruction manual, so human being is highly complex machinery, you need an instruction manual alright if you buy a Phillips product you need a Phillips instruction manual, you can't use Sony instruction manual, similarly if you are a Hindu you are required to study BG, you are Christian you are required to study the Bible but one ought not to be closed-minded that I am only a Hindu, I don't study Bible, I am only a Christian, I don't look at BG. I mean that is the fanaticism that is destroying the

catholicity?? of religion today. Oh by all means but there is no reason that you look down upon any other faith or religious text because each one of them are an instruction manual alright religious faith has to be consulted and looked into and identified the values and inculcates in the form, what aspects of the BG can be useful in direction and again what I mentioned in Chapter 2, another section is Chapter 2 verse 54 to 72 deals with self-development is one of the most fascinating sections of the BG - it is popularly known as Sthita Pragya. That is qualities of self-development, verse 54 to 72 and Chapter 3 and Chapter 13 all that had been referred earlier, a reference guide, I go to the....again...the youth think the BG in it's original text...the aspect...to make mistake...now we chose the subject...we want to come and say that a very practical...they approach is you know very practical and down to earth. You know speak to people, doesn't matter if you are Hindu, you are Christian you are Muslim. In fact recently, a gentleman a Christian, very liberal, very broad minded, asked me and I gave him the copy and a few days later he called me back and said.....so when you read the four verse, there is a very systematic and practical approach to it.

BM Thanks for the massive response.

JR Can you identify some of the values that can be engaged in. Angajan covered quite a bit of it and I think it would be more appropriate for me to tell you, to make reference to certain books when I was in Rishikesh, India, Swami Chidananda, the President of the Divine Life Society before I leave India, he asked if I can get these books...but I was unable to get it. He said there is a special book published, Gita for Students, Gita for Housewives, Gita for the Corporate world, Gita for Professionals and that will give you much more material. If we had to go into the depth of it now, it would take a lot more time. There are specific verses in the Gita that are who teaches students, how, when they function of likes and dislikes and do what they like to do and don't do what they ought to do in life, what will life be. And you can locate that, here's a student that followed this lifestyle...here's a student that followed what he ought to do and how was he able to do what he ought to do and how the next person will be able to do what he like to do. The Gita teaches you how to strengthen your intellect. Use the descriptive path

to control things of value in the mind, how to develop the intellect and how to control the intellect and to also show us how to sharpen the intellect and how to make the intellect available at the time of action. So all these things are part of the Gita and if you go into the topics of some specialists who take out these particular verses and relate it to the day to day life in the life of a student and how we can legalize these message of the Gita in their life as a student. And can you comment on the importance it?

It's our mind are the products of our education. And you are making the mind what you got from your environment, from the books you read, from the company you keep so it is very important because often you say...you ask this question to yourself. Ain't the person wanting to do the right thing but he does not have the capacity to do it, he does not want to do it, but something within him compels him to do it and he tells you himself, I don't want to do it but, I can't do without it. Now what is it that led to that situation? So we have a positive thought bank and a religious thought bank and the process of education and the environment in which you are brought up, it is a positive thought bank, is very less and the religious thought bank is more, then obviously your whole life will move in that direction because in the Grahnamvasta: if you sow a thought you will reap the desire. If you sow a desire you will reap action. If you sow an action, you will reap a habit.

QUESTIONNAIRE (TEACHERS OF LIFE ORIENTATION)

THE BHAGAVAD GITA: POSSIBILITIES FOR CURRICULUM
TRANSFORMATION IN VALUES EDUCATION IN LIFE ORIENTATION

A. GENERAL INFORMATION

1. Place: Burhan

2. Age Group:

0-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70+
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

3. Gender:

MALE	FEMALE
1	2

4. Marital Status:

SINGLE	MARRIED	DIVORCED	WIDOWED
1	2	3	4

5. Education:

5.1	Matriculation	
5.2	Diploma (Specify)	
5.3	Undergraduate (Specify)	B. Com
5.4	Postgraduate (Specify)	
5.5	Other (Specify)	

B. RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION

6. Religious affiliation:

Hindu - Sanathanist/Puranic	1
Hindu - Arya Samajist	2
Hindu - Shaivite	3
Hindu - Vaishnavite	4
Hindu - Shaktha	5
Hindu - Vedantin	6
Muslim	7
Christian	8
Other (Please specify)	9
No Specific Affiliation	10

7. Are you a member of any religious movement or organisation?

YES 1 ✓	NO 2	N/A 3
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8. If yes, please specify below:

N/A	1
Ramakrishna Centre of S A	2
Divine Life Society	3
Hare Krishna	4
Sai Baba	5 ✓
Radha Soami	6
Chinmaya Mission	7
Arya Pratinidhi Sabha	8
Hindu Temple	9
Other (Please specify)	10

9. Do you attend sathsangh/religious services at this organization?

YES 1 ✓	NO 2	N/A 3
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10. For what purpose do you attend these sathsangh/religious services?

Singing	1 ✓
Discourses	2
Knowledge	3 ✓
Prasadh (blessed offerings)	4
Other (Please specify)	5

C. KNOWLEDGE OF BHAGAVAD GITA AND PERSONAL LIFE

[This section is intended to gauge your knowledge, attitude and perceptions of the Bhagavad Gita. If these questions are not relevant to you then kindly move on to the next section]

1. How did you first acquaint yourself with the BHAGAVAD GITA?

Grandparents	1 ✓
Parents	2
Family	3
Friends	4
Literature	5
Religious Organisation	6
Talks, Festivals, Ceremonies	7
Film/Video	8
Satsangh	9
Scripture	10
Other (Please specify)	11

2. For how many years have you been aware of the BHAGAVAD GITA?

0 - 9	1
10 - 15	2
16 - 19	3
20 - 29	4
30 - 39	5 ✓
40+	6

3. How important is the BHAGAVAD GITA to you?

N/A	1
I do not care	2
Not so important	3
Important	4
Very Important	5 ✓

4. Do you consider yourself "more spiritual" since acquainting yourself with the BHAGAVAD GITA?

YES	1 ✓
No	2
N/A	3

5. Explain your answer in 4 in the space provided below.

It sets out the standards for correct living.

6. Do you feel better for having read/heard the BHAGAVAD GITA?

YES	1 ✓
No	2
N/A	3

7. Explain your answer in 6 in the space provided below.

A wealth of knowledge and lessons.

8. What is the impact of the BHAGAVAD GITA on your quality of life?

Able to see things as not perma

9. What appeals to you most about the BHAGAVAD GITA?

Philosophy	1 ✓
Sound/Tune/Metre of Verses	2
Moral/Ethical teachings	3 ✓
Bhakthi (devotion)	4 ✓
Karma (action)	5
Jiāna (knowledge)	6
Svadhārma (allotted duty)	
Other (Please specify)	7
N/A	8

10. Explain your answer in 9 in the space provided below.

I am captivated by Arjuna's devotion and love for God.

11. What is your attitude toward the BHAGAVAD GITA?

Veneration	1 ✓
Respectful	2
Tolerant	3
Unfriendly	4
Indifferent	5
Uncertain	6
No comment	7

12. Do you have a personal copy of the BHAGAVAD GITA?

YES	1 ✓
No	2
N/A	3

13. If yes, in which language?

English	1 ✓
Sanskrit	2 ✓
Other (Please specify)	3

14. If yes, how did you acquire it?

Grandparents.

15. Where and how do you keep it?

Book shelf.

16. At which of the following times do you seek solace from the BHAGAVAD GITA?

At time of illness	1
When death occurs	2
At ceremonies	3
At time of mental problems	4
At time of distress (caused by hostile agencies)	5
When in fear	6
When in doubt	7
At all times	8 ✓
No comment	9

D. EDUCATION POLICY DOCUMENTS

1. Do you teach

1.1	Life Orientation	Yes ✓	No
1.2	Religious Education	Yes	No ✓

2. In which grade/s do you teach?

		Grade	
2.1	Life Orientation	R- 9	✓
2.2	Religious Education	10- 12	

3. Do you have access to the following policy documents?

3.1	Revised National Curriculum Statement Grades R-9: Teacher's Guide for the Development of Learning Programmes Policy Guidelines: Life Orientation	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
3.2	Revised National Curriculum Statement Grades R-9 (Schools): Life Orientation	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
3.3	National Curriculum Statement Grades 10-12 (General): Learning Programme Guidelines: Life Orientation	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
3.4	National Policy on Religion and Education	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
3.5	Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
3.6	Values in Education: Programme of Action	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>

4. Explain your answer in 3 in the space provided below.

<p>Added Received documents through workshops. Studying for my PGCE thus it requires me to be acquainted with the Manifesto values.</p>

5. Have you read any of these documents?

5.1	Revised National Curriculum Statement Grades R-9: Teacher's Guide for the Development of Learning Programmes Policy Guidelines: Life Orientation	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
5.2	Revised National Curriculum Statement Grades R-9 (Schools): Life Orientation	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
5.3	National Curriculum Statement Grades 10-12 (General): Learning Programme Guidelines: Life Orientation	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
5.4	National Policy on Religion and Education	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
5.5	Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
5.6	Values in Education: Programme of Action	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>

6. Which of these documents do you use in preparing your Life Orientation/ Religious Education lessons?

Revised National Curriculum Statement Grades R-9: Teacher's Guide for the Development of Learning Programmes Policy Guidelines: Life Orientation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	1
Revised National Curriculum Statement Grades R-9 (Schools): Life Orientation	<input type="checkbox"/>	2
National Curriculum Statement Grades 10-12 (General): Learning Programme Guidelines: Life Orientation	<input type="checkbox"/>	3
National Policy on Religion and Education	<input type="checkbox"/>	4
Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy	<input type="checkbox"/>	5
Values in Education: Programme of Action	<input type="checkbox"/>	6

7. Are you familiar with the following as extracted from the *Manifesto on Values, education and Democracy*:

Equity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	1
Tolerance	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	2
Diversity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	3
Openness	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	4
Accountability	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	5
Social Honour	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	6

8. Please explain the following values as you interact with them in Life Orientation.

Equity	Basic Right of every S. African.
Tolerance	Learners understand the purpose of tolerance and how to solve problems by merely being tolerant.
Diversity	Being able to interact with fellow S. Africans understanding people are the same although their colours are different.
Openness	Being able to speak about fears, merely being able to follow the Charter the Right to freedom of speech.
Accountability	Being or taking responsibility for your own actions.
Social Honour	To make learners aware of their social standing in society. They make up society. With their action transformation will begin!

E. VALUES AND EDUCATION

1. What is your understanding of values?

Values lie latent within a person. Everyone
 are born with values. You cannot teach
 them. You allow it to unfold from a person
 through life experiences and daily activity.

2. How important is it to focus on values in education at schools?

N/A	1
Not so important	2
Important	3
Very important	4
I do not care	5

3. Should values education be compartmentalized to one subject?

YES	1
No	2
No comment	3

4. Explain your answer in 3 in the space provided below.

Every learning area must include
 values so that the learner is constantly
 aware and it becomes part of their
 life.

5. How important is parental role in developing values in learners?

N/A	1
I do not care	2
Not so important	3
Important	4
Very Important	5

6. Should values development be the responsibility of parents only?

YES	1
No	2
No comment	3

7. Explain your answer in 6 above.

Think of a triangle.
Teacher + child + parent
must work together

8. Do you think that values should be legislated?

YES	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
No	2
No comment	3

9. Explain your answer in 8 in the space provided below.

The future of the world depends
on a value based education. To reap
the rewards of a peaceful nation
one has to educate learners using
value based methods.

10. Do you think that values should be imposed in the curriculum?

YES	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
No	2
No comment	3

11. Explain your answer in 10 in the space provided below.

Since I teach other learning areas, I
know that it can be incorporated into
other learning areas quite successful.

F. LIFE ORIENTATION

[The following questions relate to philosophical issues on Life Orientation.]

1. Describe what Life Orientation means to you.

Educating learners on a moral and
value based learning. Developing a
learner holistically. It guides &
prepares learners for life and its
possibilities.

2. What, in your view, is the purpose of Life Orientation at schools?

It equips learners for a meaningful and successful living in a rapidly changing and transforming society. It is concerned with the social, personal, intellectual, physical, emotional & spiritual growth.

3. How does your personal philosophy (own beliefs and ideas) of Teaching and Learning, influence your decision-making when preparing for and teaching Life Orientation?

It blends well. My moral and value based teachings greatly influence my lessons.

4. What are your feelings towards Life Orientation as a learning area?

~~Excellent~~ An exciting way to go. The government has not lost hope in the future of our country. Only through values can our society, nation and world change.

[The following questions relate to teaching methods used in Life Orientation.]

5. What is your philosophy of teaching of Life Orientation as a learning area?

Life Orientation is value based so it's perfect for our school system.

6. What teaching methods do you use in Life Orientation?

Group work	1
role plays	2
case studies	3
Drama / videos	4
Sharing experiences	5

7. Have you heard of experiential learning as contained in the education policy documents?

YES	1
No	2
No comment	3

8. If yes, what is it?

Through experience we learn different lessons.

9. Do you use this in teaching Life Orientation?

YES	1
No	2
No comment	3

10. Explain your answer in 9 above.

Sharing experiences.

[The following questions relate to values and Life Orientation.]

11. What values should be included in Life Orientation?

Our school is value based we	1
use about 86 different values and	2
the 5 basic values	3
	4
	5
	6
	7
	8
	9
	10

12. Do you think that values education should be restricted to Life Orientation only?

YES	1
No	2
No comment	3

13. Explain your answer in 12 in the space provided below.

All lessons at our school are value based.

14. Have you found any resources/strategies particularly useful in supporting values development in Life Orientation?

YES	1
No	2
No comment	3

15. If yes, what are they?

The Sai organisation runs a	1
Education in Human Values	2
course. This comprehensive ^{diploma} equips	3
you with the relevant ^{practical} knowledge.	4
required for life Orientation. It	5
basically allows the values to	6
unfold as the learner goes through	7
the journey of life.	8
	9
	10

16. Which of the following strategies/approaches to developing values are you familiar with?

Nurturing a culture of communication and participation in schools	1
Role modeling: Promoting commitment as well as competence among educators	2
Ensuring that every South African is able to read, write, count and think	3
Infusing the classroom with a culture of human rights	4
Making arts and culture part of the curriculum	5
Putting History back into the curriculum	6

Introducing religious education into schools	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	7
Making multilingualism happen	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	8
Using sport to shape social bonds and nurture nation building at schools	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	9
Ensuring equal access to education	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	10
Promoting anti-racism in schools	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	11
Freeing the potential of girls as well as boys	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	12
Dealing with HIV/AIDS and nurturing a culture of sexual and social responsibility	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	13
Making schools safe to learn and teach in and ensuring the rule of law	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	14
Ethics and the environment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	15
Affirming our common citizenship	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	16

17. Which of the following strategies/approaches do use in developing values in your learners?

Nurturing a culture of communication and participation in schools	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	1
Role modeling: Promoting commitment as well as competence among educators	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	2
Ensuring that every South African is able to read, write, count and think	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	3
Infusing the classroom with a culture of human Rights	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	4
Making arts and culture part of the curriculum	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	5
Putting History back into the curriculum	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	6
Introducing religious education into schools	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	7
Making multilingualism happen	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	8
Using sport to shape social bonds and nurture nation building at schools	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	9
Ensuring equal access to education	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	10
Promoting anti-racism in schools	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	11
Freeing the potential of girls as well as boys	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	12
Dealing with HIV/AIDS and nurturing a culture of sexual and social responsibility	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	13
Making schools safe to learn and teach in and ensuring the rule of law	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	14
Ethics and the environment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	15
Affirming our common citizenship	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	16

18. Research has shown that "*values are not changed by prescription, but through dialogue, experience, new knowledge and critical thinking*". What is your view on this?

The human values are within an individual. We just help to bring them out. For eg. Love, Truth, Right Conduct, Peace and Non Violence. All children know about these value. We help to blossom these values.

[The following questions relate to support and training received in Life Orientation]

19. What support have you received in your Life Orientation teaching from:

School	1
Colleagues	2
Subject Advisors	3
Workshops	✓ 4
Other (Please specify)	5

20. Have you attended workshops on Life Orientation?

YES	✓ 1
No	2

21. How often have these Life Orientation workshops been organised?

Once a year	✓ 1
Once a term	2
Once at the introduction of the Revised Curriculum	3
Never	4
Other (Please specify)	5

22. Who are the presenters at these workshops?

Subject Advisors	✓ 1
Fellow Teachers	2
Lecturers from Universities	3
NGO's (Please specify)	4
Other (Please specify)	✓ 5

23. How important is it to attend Life Orientation workshops?

N/A	1
I do not care	2
Not so important	3
Important	4
Very important	✓ 5

24. How useful have these Life Orientation workshops been?

N/A	1
Not so useful	2
Useful	✓ 3
Very useful	4

25. Please elaborate on your answer given in 24 above?

Repetition occurs very often. Need to change approach and material. We basically read the material and come out & explain. The facilitators do nothing.
--

26. What other training did you receive regarding the implementation of the Life Orientation Curriculum?

Nothing

27. Did this training help your teaching of the Life Orientation Curriculum?

YES	1
No	2
No comment	✓ 3

28. Could you please elaborate on your answer given in 27 in the space provided below.

N/A

29. Please list some of the support that you have received to integrate values into your practice of teaching Life Orientation?

The human values programme	1
Internet - Manifesto on Values	2
Education and Democracy.	3
	4
	5
	6
	7
	8
	9
	10

30. The Department of Education has prepared a special supplement of the *Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy*.

- 30.1. Are you familiar with this document?

YES	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
No	2
Do not know	3

- 30.2. If yes, have you had access to this supplement?

YES	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
No	2

- 30.3. If yes, do you use this in your Life Orientation teaching?

YES	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
No	2

[The following questions relate to challenges faced in Life Orientation]

31. What are some of the challenges you face in teaching Life Orientation?

The correct time allocation is not given and other teachers are doing the Physical Education. It also is treated as an easy subject and not given its rightful place on the time table. For eg. Given both periods are the last period when the learners are tired.

32. How do you cope with these challenges?

Stimulating lessons.

G. LIFE ORIENTATION AND RELIGIOUS TEXTS

1. Do you use learning materials and other learning facilities while teaching Life Orientation?

YES	1
No	2
No comment	3

2. What teaching materials and learning facilities do you most commonly use when teaching Life Orientation?

I visit the library quite a bit.	1
Use of internet and personal experiences work wonders.	2
	3
	4
	5

3. What other teaching materials and learning facilities do you consider necessary or important to teach Life Orientation successfully?

Current happenings.	1
	2
	3
	4
	5

4. Do you refer to/make use of any religious texts in your planning and teaching of Life Orientation?

YES	1
No	2
No comment	3

5. If yes, which ones?

All religious text to bring about diversity in my lessons.	1
I have been to every place of worship and I'm not afraid to use any scriptures, because I believe all God's are one and the same.	2
	3
	4
	5

6. Do you think that the Bhagavad Gita should be referred to/made use of in your preparation/presentation of Life Orientation lessons?

YES	1
No	2
No comment	3

7. Explain your answer in 6 in the space below.

It has alot of values and ways of solving problems also handling conflicts. The learners are not on that level though. They are not interested in that.

8. If your answer to 6 above was yes, what aspects of the Bhagavad Gita would you consider useful in the preparation/presentation of Life Orientation lessons?

Arguna's conflict - Mind	1
The actual war. Conflict with brothers.	2
Losing then ones you love	3
Coping with death	4
Karma - Reincarnation	5
God's Love - Selfless	6
Surrender	7
Mind Control - Meditation	8
Sense control.	9
	10

9. Do you think that children of all religious persuasions should be exposed to the teachings/messages of the Bhagavad Gita in Life Orientation lessons?

YES	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
No	2
No comment	3

10. Explain your answer in 9 above.

Provided they appreciate the teachings. Students are influenced by various outside influences. They don't like to talk about religious teachings. Parents here play a role. They allow them to listen to modern music and western movies. Ideally it would be great to do so.

THANK YOU

2006-09-21

APPENDIX J
ETHICAL CLEARANCE APPROVAL



RESEARCH OFFICE (GOVAN MBEKI CENTRE)
WESTVILLE CAMPUS
TELEPHONE NO.: 031 - 2603587
EMAIL: ximbap@ukzn.ac.za

12 SEPTEMBER 2006

MR. LR MAHARAJ (981205010)
EDUCATION

Dear Mr. Maharaj

ETHICAL CLEARANCE APPROVAL NUMBER : HSS/06436

I wish to confirm that ethical clearance has been granted for the following project:

"The Bhagavad Gita and curriculum transformation in life orientation"

Yours faithfully

Ximba

.....
MS. PHUMELELE XIMBA
RESEARCH OFFICE

PS: The following general condition is applicable to all projects that have been granted ethical clearance:

THE RELEVANT AUTHORITIES SHOULD BE CONTACTED IN ORDER TO OBTAIN THE NECESSARY APPROVAL SHOULD THE RESEARCH INVOLVE UTILIZATION OF SPACE AND/OR FACILITIES AT OTHER INSTITUTIONS/ORGANISATIONS. WHERE QUESTIONNAIRES ARE USED IN THE PROJECT, THE RESEARCHER SHOULD ENSURE THAT THE QUESTIONNAIRE INCLUDES A SECTION AT THE END WHICH SHOULD BE COMPLETED BY THE PARTICIPANT (PRIOR TO THE COMPLETION OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE) INDICATING THAT HE/SHE WAS INFORMED OF THE NATURE AND PURPOSE OF THE PROJECT AND THAT THE INFORMATION GIVEN WILL BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL.

cc. Faculty Research Office (Derek Buchler)
cc. Supervisor (Prof. R Sookraj, Dr. V Lutchman)

APPENDIX K
APPROVAL TO CONDUCT RESEARCH



PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL
ISIFUNDAZWE SAKWAZULU-NATALI
PROVINSIE KWAZULU-NATAL

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
UMNYANGO WEMFUNDO
DEPARTEMENT VAN ONDERWYS

Tel: 033 341 8610
Fax: 033 341 8612

Private Bag X9137
Pietermaritzburg
3200

228 Pietermaritz Street
Pietermaritzburg, 3201

LOKOHHOVISI

PIETERMARITZBURG

HEAD OFFICE

Umsis: Sibusiso Alwar

Reference:
Inkomba: 0174/06
Verwysing:

Date:
Usuku:
Datum: 05/06/2006

To: **Lokesh Ramnath Maharajh**
School Of education Studies
University of KwaZulu-Natal
Edgewood Campus
Private Bag X03
Ashwood
3605

E: APPROVAL TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

Please be informed that your application to conduct research has been approved with the following terms and conditions:

That as a researcher, you must present a copy of the written permission from the Department to the head of the Institution concerned before any research may be undertaken at a departmental institution bearing in mind that the institution is **not obliged to participate** if the research is not a departmental project.

Research should not be conducted during official contact time, as **education programmes should not be interrupted**, except in exceptional cases with special approval of the KZNDoE.

The research is not to be conducted during the fourth school term, except in cases where the KZNDoE deem it necessary to undertake research at schools during that period.

Should you wish to extend the period of research after approval has been granted, an application for extension must be directed to the Director: Research, Strategy Development and EMIS.

The research will be limited to the schools or institutions for which approval has been granted.

A copy of the completed report, dissertation or thesis must be provided to the RSPDE Directorate.

Lastly, you must sign the attached declaration that, you are aware of the procedures and will abide by the same.

For **SUPERINTENDENT GENERAL**
KwaZulu Natal Department of Education



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IHLOKOHHOVISI

PIETERMARITZBURG

HEAD OFFICE

quiries:

ibuzo: Sibusiso Alwar

vrae:

Reference:

Inkomba: 0174/06

Verwysing:

Date:

Usuku:

Datum: 06/06/2006

List of Schools where Research will be conducted:

- | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1) Alencon Primary | 2) Astra Primary |
| 3) Ays Primary | 4) Beacob Ridge Primary |
| 5) Cavendish Primary | 6) Coedmore Primary |
| 7) Crescentridge Primary | 8) Crestview Primary |
| 9) Crossmead Primary | 10) Dawnridge Primary |
| 11) Depot Road Primary | 12) Elora Primary |
| 13) Erica Primary | 14) Everest Primary |
| 15) Evergreen Primary | 16) Excelsior Primary |
| 17) Fairhaven Primary | 18) Falcon Park Primary |
| 19) Gitanjali Primary | 20) Glenheights Primary |
| 21) Glenridge Primary | 22) Glenview Primary |
| 23) Greenvale Primary | 24) Isipingo Hills Primary |
| 25) Isipingo Primary | 26) Lotus Primary |
| 27) Malvern Primary | 28) Marianpark Primary |
| 29) Merryhill Primary | 30) Montford Primary |
| 31) Moorlands Primary | 32) Motala Primary |
| 33) Northdene Primary | 34) Oceanview Primary |
| 35) Orienthill Primary | 36) Orissa Primary |

- | | |
|------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 37) Parklands Primary | 38) Parview Primary |
| 39) Pinewood Primary | 40) Roseheights Primary |
| 41) Sathia Sai Primary | 42) Seven Hills Primary |
| 43) Shallcross Primary | 44) Silverglen Primary |
| 45) Summerfield Primary | 46) Summit Primary |
| 47) Sunbeam Primary | 48) Sunnyvale Primary |
| 49) Truro Primary | 50) Apollo Secondary |
| 51) Arena Park secondary | 52) Asoka Secondary |
| 53) Brindhaven Secondary | 54) Chatsworth Secondary |
| 55) Crossmoor Secondary | 56) Damarosa Secondary |
| 57) Glenover Secondary | 58) Kharwasthan Secondary |
| 59) Marklands Secondary | 60) Meadowlands Secondary |
| 61) Monterena Secondary | 62) Newhaven Secondary |
| 63) Protea Secondary | 64) Risecliff Secondary |
| 65) Savannah Park Secondary | 66) Shallcross Secondary |
| 67) Southlands Secondary | 68) Westcliff Secondary |
| 69) Wingen Heights Secondary | 69) Witteklip Secondary |
| 70) Woodhurst Secondary | |



for **SUPERINTENDENT GENERAL**
KwaZulu Natal Department of Education