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**Translating MDG 3:  
Gender, Empowerment and the Adolescent Girl in  
Maharashtra, India**

**A thesis  
submitted in fulfilment  
of the requirements for the degree  
of  
Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science and Public Policy  
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by  
LALITGAURI NANDEDKAR**



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## **Abstract**

This thesis is an exploration of Millennium Development Goal (MDG) 3, tracing its path from a global aspiration to its translation into a developing world context. Adopted in 2001 by the United Nations, the eight MDGs represented a global effort to address issues such as poverty, health, social injustice and environmental degradation. Goal 3 specifically was aimed at gender equality and women's empowerment. Despite an extensive scholarship on the MDGs in general and on the specific issue of women's empowerment in the development context, there has been little scholarly attention directed at the place and role of adolescent girls in the context of gender equality and empowerment. Similarly, there is a critical need to examine how policy formulated at the global level is translated into local contexts and with what consequences. This research undertakes a qualitative, in-depth, small-scale case study of a gender empowerment programme located in rural Maharashtra, India, to examine how a broad goal of gender empowerment is translated into a UNICEF-funded local programme for adolescent girls.

The absence of adolescent girls in the gender and development and feminist scholarship has meant that existing feminist analytical frameworks are inadequate for this study. Hence, I draw on a range of scholarship on Third World feminism, the women, culture and development paradigm, the social relations framework, as well as on youth and citizenship to develop an adolescent girl and development perspective. Deploying this perspective as an analytical tool serves to provide a fresh insight into how Goals conceptualised at the global level translate to influence policy affecting the lived realities of adolescent girls in rural India.

The empirical case study, grounded in feminist qualitative research methodology, employs this perspective to undertake a thematic analysis of primary documents and transcripts of interviews and focus groups to illustrate how themes and ideas about empowerment, responsibility and development play out in the neoliberal context of development in India. In deploying this framework, the thesis seeks to understand how well-intentioned programmes, such as the *Deepshikha* programme in rural Maharashtra, often become the site of neoliberal development initiatives that maintain rather than challenge power structures. In addition, it

explores the implications of excluding adolescent boys from development interventions.

The analysis demonstrates that while the *Deepshikha* programme offers many avenues to political, social, economic, and personal empowerment for adolescent girls, it is not without its contestations. Embedded in narratives of self-responsibilisation, adolescent girls are burdened by multiple pressures in their daily lives. Although often socially perceived as a person of lesser value, the adolescent girl, nonetheless, becomes an object of investment through which she is meant to uplift herself. The thesis examines how, through processes of volunteerism and instrumentalism embedded in notions of the active citizen, the adolescent girl fulfils her duties within family and community while continuing to challenge established hierarchical and structural forms of power.

This research is significant as there is a paucity of academic scholarship on adolescent girls in the development context. It demonstrates how the translation of a global policy initiative, MDG 3, into a local empowerment programme affects the dynamics of gender relations, with specific reference to adolescent girls and boys in rural Maharashtra. It also contributes to a critical scholarship in the area of gender and development that explores the structural and hierarchical oppression that adolescent girls face and the implications this has for their communities.

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## **List of Abbreviations**

AGDP	Adolescent Girl and Development Perspective
AGG	Adolescent girls group
ANM	Auxiliary Nurse Midwife
ASHA	Accredited Social Health Activist
BDO	Block Development Officer/Official
BRGF	Backward Region Grant Fund
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
GAD	Gender and Development
GOI	Government of India
HDR	Human Development Report
ICDS	Integrated Child Development Services
IDT	International Development Targets
IGO	Intergovernmental organisations
IMF	International Monetary Fund
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MWCD	Ministry of Women and Child Development
NABARD	National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development
NAM	Non-aligned Movement
NAREGS	Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NT	Nomadic tribes
OBC	Other Backward Classes
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
SAP	Structural Adjustment Programmes
SC	Scheduled Castes
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SHG	Self-help group
SIS	Social Inclusion Strategies
SOWC	State of the World's Children
ST	Scheduled Tribes

UN	United Nations
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WB	World Bank
WCD	Women, Culture and Development
WID	Women in Development
WAD	Women and Development
WTO	World Trade Organisation

## **Glossary of Terms**

<i>Anganwadi</i>	village childcare worker
<i>Adivasi</i>	tribal/indigenous person
<i>Deepshikha</i>	adolescent girl empowerment programme
<i>Gaopatil</i>	head of Adivasi village
<i>Gram panchayat</i>	local village council whose members are elected
<i>Gram Sabha</i>	group of all adults living in a village or cluster of villages
<i>Jayanti</i>	a celebration of a birthday (religious, political figure, etc.)
<i>Jilha</i>	administrative district
<i>Kishori</i>	adolescent girl
<i>Nirmal gram</i>	toilet/sanitation programme
<i>Paan</i>	a betel leaf preparation that is chewed
<i>Prerika</i>	adolescent girl volunteer-facilitator
<i>Sarpanch</i>	head of local village council
<i>Tai</i>	older sister/term of respect used to address older female
<i>Taluka</i>	administrative block
<i>Varga</i>	class
<i>Zaathi</i>	caste





# **Chapter 1**

## **Introduction**

In an address to the International Women's Health Coalition in 2004, the then Secretary-General of the United Nations (UN) Kofi Annan spoke of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG)<sup>1</sup> and, in particular, of the MDGs' relevance to girls and women and the communities in which they live:

Study after study has taught us that there is no tool for development more effective than the education of girls and the empowerment of women. No other policy is as likely to raise economic productivity, lower infant and maternal mortality, or improve nutrition and promote health, including the prevention of HIV/AIDS. When women are fully involved, the benefits can be seen immediately: families are healthier; they are better fed; their income, savings, and reinvestment go up. And what is true of families is true of communities and, eventually, whole countries.<sup>2</sup>

This oft-quoted statement was made well into the fourth year of implementation globally. The origins of the MDGs lie in a series of conferences during the 1990s, culminating in the United Nations Millennium Summit in 2000. Described as having led to 'an unprecedented focus on human well-being, human development and human poverty,' as measured through human development indicators (Vandemoortele, 2011, p. 10), the MDGs were widely accepted as a framework to achieve poverty reduction and improve the lives of communities worldwide (Black & White, 2004; Vandemoortele, 2011; White & Black, 2004). The MDGs originated in a set of goals termed 'International Development Targets' (IDT) adopted by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in 1996 (Development Assistance Committee, 1996). Through a process of negotiation and debate at the global level, the International Development Targets were amended and signed by the 191 member states of the UN under the framework of the Millennium Development Goals at the Millennium Summit in New York in September 2000 (Feeny & Clarke, 2009, p. 3; Parks, 2009). The

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix 1 for a full list of the MDGs.

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.un.org/press/en/2004/sgsm9118.doc.htm>

MDGs comprised eight goals, with 18 specific targets and 48 indicators, aimed at poverty reduction to be achieved by 2015 (United Nations, 2003). Specifically, the MDGs encompassed three fields thought to influence poverty reduction: ‘economic well-being, social development and environmental sustainability and regeneration’ (White & Black, 2004, p. 3). Table 1 illustrates the three themes from which the MDGs originated.

**Table 1: Themes for the basis of MDGs**

Theme	Objective	Source
Economic Well-Being	‘The proportion of people living in extreme poverty in developing countries should be reduced by at least one-half by 2015’	Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action (1995)
Social Development	‘There should be substantial progress in primary education, gender equality, basic health care and family planning’	Articulated as compilation of outcomes from the following four conferences: Jomtien Conference on Education for All (1990), endorsed at Copenhagen Summit on Social Development (1995) and Beijing Conference on Women (1995), Cairo Conference on Population and Development (1994).
Environmental Sustainability and Regeneration	‘There should be a current national strategy for sustainable development, in the process of implementation, in every country, by 2005, so as to ensure that current trends in the loss of environmental resources...are effectively reversed at both global and national levels’	Rio Conference on Environment and Development (1992).

Adapted from White, H., & Black, R. (2004). Millennium Development Goals: A drop in the ocean? In R. Black & H. White (Eds.), *Targeting development: Critical perspectives on the Millennium Development Goals* (p.4). London, United Kingdom: Routledge.

As a framework for policy development and implementation, the MDGs appeared to offer an unprecedented opportunity for collaborative action. Firstly, they brought together disparate policy actors in the development field – governments, non-governmental organisations (NGO) and donor and development agencies – to negotiate a tentative consensus about the fundamental causes of and potential solutions to poverty. Secondly, and importantly from the perspective of this thesis, the MDGs required collaboration between global and local actors to achieve these goals successfully for communities worldwide.

It is these features around global-local interaction that make the processes of MDG development and implementation worthy of study. In many ways, what was enacted has been a form of policy translation, where ideas collated in one (global) site are reinterpreted and diffused in another (national and local) context. The MDGs, in such a perspective, are, therefore, not an immutable set of goals taken on wholesale but, rather, quite the opposite. They have been open to change, embodiment, mutation, and hybridisation, depending on the ‘meaning’ contexts wherein they are embedded. Indeed, the diversity of programmes on a global level created for MDG implementation illuminate the complexities of daily life for women, men, girls and boys. Acknowledging the multi-layered existences of individuals within their communities brings to the foreground the configurations (Bhavnani & Bywater, 2009) of race, caste/class, ethnicity, gender, age, education, religion and location – elements which should be integrated into any development intervention and the policies in support of a particular programme. Policy success and failure, therefore, go beyond achievement of objectives and measures to a wider, more dynamic recognition of transformation of local practices in discourses, norms, ideologies and rhetoric. In the current socioeconomic environment, local practices, in turn, are embedded in a broader discourse of neoliberalism (see Chapter 3) with its hallmarks of cutting government funding in social sectors and encouraging market-friendly approaches to ensuring successful development initiative delivery at the local level. Some of these initiatives include volunteerism and targeting of adolescent girls as the ideal, neoliberal subjects able to peer-teach and, thus, deliver empowerment programmes as well as monitor government-funded schemes. It is, therefore, the analysis and understanding of this process of translation that forms the basis of this research.

The key questions that drive this research, then, include probing what is lost and gained in the process of translation from the global to the local; how policies and projects implemented at the local level are imbued with local cultural norms and values; how local agents of development deconstruct a global concept to reconstruct a viable programme agenda; and, if and how, such an agenda is translated into potentially culturally-sensitive strategies and initiatives to engage

and empower local communities, thereby contributing to poverty reduction and social change.

This thesis examines these broader questions of policy translation in the specific context of gender equality, empowerment programmes and adolescent girls in the rural Indian context. Through an examination of the way culture, values and ideologies are interwoven in policy implementation and development interventions, this research seeks to gain specific insights into how policy formulated at the global level translates into local practice with reference to the goal of gender empowerment (MDG 3). Particularly in developing country contexts, but also elsewhere, issues of gender are shaped by localised interpretations derived from a diverse array of influences, such as traditions and norms on the role of women and men, and, in the case of my research, adolescent girls and boys in the development space (see Chapters 7 and 8). In the case of the MDGs and this research, what were envisaged as goals at a global level were likely to be actively reinterpreted in particular local and gendered contexts by key policy actors such as intergovernmental agencies, local policy officials, programme participants and local non-governmental organisations (NGO).

The thesis maps the process of policy translation from global policy development to localised implementation of a gender project in the state of Maharashtra. In, particular, the thesis, explores how policy actors, such as intergovernmental agencies, donor governments and NGOs in this development setting, translate and interpret the goals of an empowerment programme and their implications for adolescent girls. It is through the policy actors' perspectives and their interpretations of the lived experiences of adolescent girls that we are able to examine how culture influences policy informed by neoliberal values articulated at the local level. Therefore, this research examines not only how the movement of policy from the global to the local level is mediated through culture, but indeed how policy informed by neoliberal values is articulated in the rural Maharashtrian context to reshape cultural practices. It is in this interactive process of translation that policy 'is made to mean something in its new context' (Clarke, Bainton, Lendvai, & Stubbs, 2015, p. 9). We are able to, therefore, apply a policy

translation perspective to the MDGs and pose questions around instances and sites of translation. Most importantly, through this perspective we may illuminate how global discourses of development policy, embodied in the MDGs and influenced by a neoliberal discourse, translate into local contexts. Furthermore, we may understand the impact of culture, norms and values in shaping the interpretation and implementation of the MDGs with specific reference to gender empowerment. In pursuing these objectives, this thesis proposes to explore the implications of the MDGs for the development project by examining the extent to which the ‘Goals’ approach heralded a new way of doing development.

### ***Background to the MDGs***

The MDGs were formally adopted at the UN Millennium Summit in New York from 6-8 September 2000 (Feeny & Clarke, 2009). In 2001, the *Road Map towards the Implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration* was agreed upon as a final document expanding on the existing International Development Targets that comprised three general goals, including nine targets and a set of nine general indicators that addressed poverty and social injustice, maternal and child health, and environmental degradation (United Nations, 2001). The MDGs as global aspirations attracted both praise for the specific focus on each of the eight goals, but also criticism for being overly ambitious and unrealistic (Antrobus, 2006; Bond, 2006; Feeny & Clarke, 2008; Vandemoortele, 2009, 2011).

The MDG framework used country data from 1990 as a baseline from which to measure indications of progress towards goals, targets, and indicators (Elizabeth, 2008). The approach sought to take account of ‘the initial conditions’ (from 1990) within country-specific circumstances and embed those conditions as benchmarks for later MDG achievement (Vandemoortele, 2011, pp. 16-17). Progress on any particular MDG, therefore, was to be assessed by identifying how that country’s success in improving human development indicators had progressed against the ‘initial conditions’ (Vandemoortele, 2011, pp. 16-17). It was significant that the approach to measuring the achievement of the MDGs was located within national interpretations of goals, which are embedded in local cultural contexts. In

providing for localised understandings of global targets, there appeared to be a higher level of local ownership of the policy initiatives to achieve these targets (Stone, 2012). This was a key factor in Third World<sup>3</sup> countries endorsing the UN-mandated goals, as it allowed those countries to adapt goals and targets to their own specific contexts, integrate them into national development plans, and work with international organisations and/or intergovernmental agencies in the development of local policies to achieve them (Feeny & Clarke, 2009).

Policy translation at the local level, then, is not restricted to policy officials and local authorities alone, but includes the participation of multiple actors, including intergovernmental organisations, NGOs and others. The MDG approach appeared to initiate the engagement of numerous and often dissimilar actors - government agencies, NGOs, intergovernmental agencies - in the development of programmes and interventions. This opened a space for collaborative action, as well as competition, between those directly and indirectly involved in the interpretation of a goal and the development programme to achieve it (Chapters 6 and 7).

However, challenges remained in the overall reporting mechanisms and measurement frameworks of the MDGs at the local level. Locating the measurement of the achievement of targets within local interpretations of goals has resulted in challenges associated with measurability. For example, one of the weaknesses of the MDG approach is the scope for multiple interpretations of outcomes in the local context (Bond, 2006; Feeny & Clarke, 2009; Vandemoortele, 2011). White and Black, in their examination of 'why international targets matter', point to the possibility of contradictions,

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<sup>3</sup> I struggle with the term Third World as it connotes a behemoth, a monolithic object which encompasses countries from around the world, primarily in Asia, Africa, Latin America, the Caribbean and the Middle East. It does not allow for differences in culture, lifestyle, economic activities, spiritual and linguistic traditions, and so on. I understand that the term Third World is steeped in political and economic histories post World War II. However, I attempt within this terminology to differentiate and locate my work within specificities of time, location and history. For further information on terminology refer to Shohat (1992). Throughout the thesis, I use the terms 'Third World', 'developing countries', 'South', 'majority world', and 'industrialising countries' interchangeably. Likewise, I use the terms 'First World', 'developed countries', 'North', 'West', 'minority world', and 'industrialised countries' interchangeably. These terms are contested. The debate they elicit will not be addressed here.

inconsistencies and varied interpretations in problem definition, policy objectives and evaluation frames (White & Black, 2004, pp. 12-16). They observe, for example, that defining the objectives of policy in terms of outcomes is complex and the product of input from multiple actors.

This research, therefore, rather than seeking to replicate the measurement of specific outcomes and adherence to targets and indicators, strives for a broader, more in-depth understanding of the dynamics associated with the translation of global policy aspirations into the localised implementation of gender projects. The MDG framework provides an opportunity to assess development policy and its implementation with the input of multiple actors. This leads to questions about the implications of the involvement of diverse partners (international, regional, local) in the translation of global policy and how culture infuses policy with meanings to foster development in the local setting.

### ***Research Focus***

The global community has pursued initiatives to fight poverty and social injustice, improve maternal and child health, and combat environmental degradation through the MDGs, and specific governments have generated potential solutions that make sense of these in their own contexts. The objective of this project is to study the translation of one goal, MDG 3, from broad policy into a gendered and cultured local context. Goal 3 focuses on supporting gender equity, education for young women, waged employment and the political representation of women. The active interpretation of Goal 3 will be explored in this thesis to examine how local understandings of culture and gender contribute to policy and development interventions for the empowerment of adolescent girls and young women. The focus of the research is on the following key questions:

- (1) How is development policy created at the global level, as exemplified by the MDGs, translated and reinterpreted within local context?
- (2) How do values, principles and culture contribute to the reshaping of the MDGs with respect to gender empowerment?



In seeking to address these questions, the research specifically examines an initiative in the state of Maharashtra, a central western state in India. The programme involves educating adolescent girls and young women to broaden their knowledge of the self and their rights and to become more aware of societal and political opportunities for effecting wider social change within their own communities. I locate adolescent girls within the development space as well as explore neoliberal influences on the engagement of adolescent girls in the current development agenda in rural Maharashtra. As this development intervention is designed to empower adolescent girls and young women, I explore the meanings of empowerment not only in the scholarship but also in its translation in the rural Maharashtrian context. Empowerment, grounded in notions of social justice, embodies equity and agency as goals, and attempts to educate individuals (in the broadest sense) so that they may effect social change. In addition, empowerment is ‘seen as a process and not an outcome’ (Parpart, Rai, & Staudt, 2002a, p. 11), which renders it a dynamic construct. The translation of policy relevant to empowerment programmes within the development context, therefore, needs to be examined in its local political, social, historical and economic specificities. As a development aspiration, exemplified by MDG 3, moves across jurisdictions and spaces, then, it must be assembled and reassembled to fit into its new home (Clarke et al., 2015). We may, then, ask what the implications are of diverse partners (international, regional, local) collaborating to create potentially culturally-sensitive and gendered translations of global policy in order to foster gender empowerment in a local setting.

### ***Theoretical Approach***

In examining the dynamics associated with policy making at the global level to achieve gender empowerment and development at the local level, the thesis draws on theories of policy translation and on Third World feminist approaches to development. The emerging scholarship on policy translation recognises that the dynamics associated with taking a policy goal from one context and pursuing it in another is a complicated, demanding process of policy creation and knowledge production (Clarke et al., 2015; Stone, 2012; Chapter 2). Policy translation is a process that involves the deciphering of meanings and nuances where ideas are

filtered through different levels of government by different policy actors (Lendvai & Stubbs, 2007). The study of policy translation focuses on knowledge production across national borders, regional boundaries and local precincts, and seeks to take into account actor reflexivity, and the process of building bridges among numerous actors (Clarke et al., 2015; Lendvai & Stubbs, 2007). Stone refers to the process as involving 'reflexive learning' and 'bargaining and social interaction' respectively (Stone, 2012, pp. 487-489). One of the outcomes of policy translation, given its inferred collaborative nature, is the establishment of 'transnational governance and giving shape and substance to new policy spaces' (Stone, 2012, p. 496). Accordingly, the interactions between policy actors such as intergovernmental agencies and non-governmental organisations as well as programme participants becomes the impetus for shaping and moulding policy appropriate to local circumstances. The focus on the reflexive nature of the process allows for the examination of the voices and opinions of multiple actors as well as the silences and ideas left unexpressed by participants in the process (Clarke et al., 2015; Freeman, 2009).

The focus, therefore, of much analysis of policy translation is the location of the translation and the implications for the local context. This enables in-depth inquiry into the relationships among actors, the power struggle between those negotiating the meanings different actors assign ideas, and the reflexive nature of translation in critically analysing policy. Much like empowerment,<sup>4</sup> policy translation is an on-going process, 'a continuous process, never independent of the societal distribution of power' and is as much about critically understanding who are the actors involved, their agenda and motivation, as it is about which actors are silenced or ignored and why (Callon, 1986; Johnson & Hagstroem, 2005, p. 365). The focus on policy translation involves, therefore, examining constellations of actors and sub-actors in the policy translation process, recognising the fluidity of the translation process, including 'knowledge production, meaning-making and claims-making that are taking place in multiple, including transnational spaces' (Lendvai & Stubbs, 2007, p. 188).

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<sup>4</sup> See Chapter 4 for a detailed exploration of the concept of empowerment

The thesis, therefore, is focussed on addressing questions of policy translation as they relate to development, empowerment and gender. In order to do so, it is important to understand how women and empowerment are conceptualised and constructed in the broad scholarship on women/gender and development. My thesis is informed by a Third World feminist theoretical framework which acknowledges multiple and intersecting points in women's lives (race, ethnicity, place, and patriarchy, for example) and explores women's lives in postcolonial environments. Feminist movements have focussed on women in First World and Third World countries albeit with differing perspectives (Lorber, 2012). Liberal and radical feminism tended to ignore the intersecting concepts of multiple oppressions (in addition to patriarchy) and configurations (Bhavnani & Bywater, 2009) in the complexities of women's lives. They also disregarded Third World women's agency, location within a patriarchal and postcolonial system as well as the converging effects and layers of ethnicity, caste, class, religion and place (Mohanty, 1988, 2003a; Narayan, 1997; Narayan & Harding, 2000).

Conceptually, Third World feminism centres the woman of colour and examines her daily life in relation to her local, temporal, and spatial specificities (Mohanty, 2003a; Mohanty, Russo, & Torres, 1991; Narayan, 1997; Narayan & Harding, 2000). Further, it makes visible the heterogeneity of experiences of Third World women, rejecting the notion of the Third World woman as one-dimensional (Alexander & Mohanty, 1997; Mohanty, 2003a; Mohanty et al., 1991). Hence, as we explore policy movement across jurisdictions and spaces, we may examine how heterogeneity of experiences of 'citizens in the making' and those 'becoming' citizens is reflected in a new generation of Third World women (see Chapter 4). These are the critical aspects of Third World feminism on which I draw as part of the analytical framework I employ. It is possible and desirable within a Third World feminist framework to acknowledge local specificities while widening the lens to recognise universal aspects of struggle and to encourage cross-border networking (Herr, 2014; Mohanty, 2013).

Still, Third World feminism (like other feminisms<sup>5</sup>) pays no particular attention to adolescent girls and their location within their families and communities. Indeed, training the gender lens on how policy is translated to enable and empower the rural adolescent girl of colour allows for reflection on how policy actors interpret her position in relation to herself, her family and others in the community. Gender and development paradigms can, thereby, be extended to acknowledge, and more importantly, to include a valuable perspective on development which is often missing. The adolescent girl is embedded in her daily life with its configurations of ethnicity, gender, caste/class, age, and location. Through a study of policy translation and how culture and values shape localised notions of empowerment, we are able to examine where and how positive and critical junctures meet and diverge in policy translation and development.

In addition, we may explore how (post)neoliberal values, in turn, shape local understandings of culture and gender. Indeed, we are able to examine how adolescent girls may become conduits to development as they are made the focus of the market-driven, economics-oriented development agenda. At the global level, adolescent girls are ‘worthy of investment’ (Koffman & Gill, 2013; Chapter 7), and at the local level they may be responsible for community-based initiatives through volunteerism and a narrative of ‘self-responsibilisation’ (Chant, 2016a, 2016b; Romani, 2016; Sharma, 2006; Chapters 6 and 7). Noting these possible translations of gender empowerment from the global to the local level, the idea of focussing on an empowerment programme for adolescent girls and how culture infuses meanings of empowerment into local policy may offer a fresh perspective on understandings of MDG 3 in the rural Indian context. Equally as important, we may observe how (post)neoliberal values affect local culture and shape perceptions of the hardworking adolescent girl.

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<sup>5</sup> For a discussion of different types of feminisms see, for example, Lorber (2012) and Mohanty (1988, 2003). For a discussion of feminisms and development see, for example, Marchand and Parpart (1995); Mohanty, Russo, and Torres (1991); Narayan (1997); and Cornwall, Harrison and Whitehead (2006).

To offer a deeper and richer analysis of policy translation with respect to MDG3 and adolescent girls requires going beyond Third World feminism alone. Therefore, as I explicate in Chapter 4, I draw on multiple theoretical and analytical frameworks to develop the adolescent girl and development perspective. This perspective draws not only on Third World feminism, but also on aspects of the women, culture and development (WCD) paradigm (Bhavnani, Foran, & Kurian, 2003a) as well as citizenship frameworks, adolescence frameworks, and Kabeer's social relations framework (Kabeer, 1994). The development of this new framework allows for multiple levels of analysis and will aid in gaining a deeper understanding of a broad global goal and its translation in a local context which would not be possible with the use of just one framework.

### ***A Case Study of a Gender Empowerment Project***

India, the largest country in South Asia, has an estimated population of 1.21 billion inhabitants (Government of India, 2011). The United Nations, through implementation of the MDGs, has focussed on strategies to eliminate extreme poverty and its consequences and support broader human development initiatives. Although India and the MDG framework are discussed in development scholarship (Elizabeth, 2008; Feeny & Clarke, 2009; Government of India, 2011; United Nations Development Programme, 2007), little or no attention has been paid to an examination of specific goals within a local context and how the translation of policy at the local level contributes to social change. Additionally, the UNDP has centred its activities on seven key states (see Chapter 5) 'with low rates of human development, gender disparity indices and high proportions of scheduled castes and tribes'<sup>6</sup> (United Nations Development Programme, 2007). Maharashtra is not in this list. Yet, it is a state in which income and gender disparities may be observed in rural and urban contexts. Further, inequalities in Maharashtra have been understudied with relation to MDGs, adolescent girls, empowerment and policy translation.

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<sup>6</sup> The terms Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Castes refer to historically oppressed tribes and castes as recognised in the Indian Constitution. See Ranade (1990).

In seeking to answer the research questions, the thesis draws on an in-depth qualitative case study of a UNICEF-funded and endorsed development programme aimed at the education and empowerment of adolescent girls and young women in rural Maharashtra. UNICEF has been active in India since 1949 and is the largest of the UN network of organisations worldwide. According to the UNICEF India website, 'UNICEF is fully committed to working with the Government of India to ensure that each child born in this vast and complex country gets the best start in life, thrives and develops to his or her full potential.'<sup>7</sup> In its 2011 State of the World's Children report, entitled *Adolescence: An Age of Opportunity*, UNICEF India noted that while much has been achieved with regards to ameliorating poverty among children below ten years of age, adolescents, especially girls, remain at high risk for poverty indicators including lack of education, early marriage and all forms of discrimination.<sup>8</sup> UNICEF places the number of adolescents in India at '243 million accounting for a quarter of the country's population' (UNICEF India Country Office, 2011).

This empirical case study is focussed on adolescent girls and the *Deepshikha* life-skills programme founded in 2008 by UNICEF in partnership with the Government of the State of Maharashtra, local non-governmental organisations and Barclays Bank. The purpose of *Deepshikha* is to educate and empower adolescent girls, individually and collectively, to recognise and actively participate in local issues affecting young women and their communities. The qualitative research building the data for this study involved face-to-face, in-depth interviews with participants involved in the project, who were located at the global, national, state and local levels, participant observation of *Deepshikha* training sessions, and an analysis of relevant official documents. Thematic analysis was used to investigate meanings of development, gender and empowerment within global and local spaces, and illuminate how these were translated into 'on-the-ground' programmes.

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<sup>7</sup> <http://www.unicef.org/india/overview.html>

<sup>8</sup> [http://www.unicef.org/india/reallives\\_6786.htm](http://www.unicef.org/india/reallives_6786.htm)

## ***Chapter Organisation***

The thesis is organised in the following manner. Chapters 2, 3 and 4 provide reviews of the relevant scholarship on key theoretical concepts that form the basis of literature important for the discussion in the analysis of substantive chapters. Chapter 2 discusses the field of policy studies with an overview of policy diffusion, policy transfer and policy translation as these frameworks relate to development, with an emphasis on policy translation. Chapter 3 discusses the brief history of development post World War Two, including multiple development and women/gender and development paradigms. The subject of adolescent girls in the development space provides a relevant discussion to the young women and their location within the development agenda from a broad perspective. In addition, the chapter provides a discussion of the origin of the MDGs and in particular MDG 3. Chapter 4 addresses the meanings and interpretations of empowerment, its resurgence as a buzzword and why the theme of empowerment remains important in UN development paradigms. Further, Chapter 4 provides an overview of the adolescent girl and development perspective, a theoretical and analytical framework, which draws on multiple scholars to develop an appropriate framework for examining the collected data. Chapter 5 outlines the research methodology deployed in this thesis, including an overview of methods used.

The second half of the thesis, that is, Chapters 6, 7 and 8 respectively, focuses on the substantive analysis of the collected data. Chapter 6 is an examination of the primary data with reference to the adolescent girl as the subject of development broadly and the object of investment specifically. Chapter 7 provides an in-depth analysis of the adolescent girl as the agent of development and change, following her investment and upskilling. How this plays out in the rural Maharashtra context may have both positive and adverse consequences for the adolescent girls as they undertake roles in volunteerism and other unpaid labour as expressions of active citizenship. As this thesis focuses on policy translation with respect to an empowerment programme for adolescent girls and their role in development, it is timely and relevant to discuss the gender dimensions of development

interventions. Chapter 8 provides a discussion of citizenship as it relates to adolescents and particularly to the implications of adolescent girls' activism in public spaces. In addition, the chapter demonstrates how adolescent boys appear to be an untapped source of energy in community work, in development programmes and household duties, and often remain absent in development programmes and interventions. Assumptions of boys' laziness, insincerity and lack of interest in 'developing' themselves furthers a narrative and stereotype of boys which may be inconsistent with what boys actually want or need. 'Bringing men in' (Cornwall, 1997, 2000; White, 2000) to the development space is in itself contested; however, it is worth exploring whether and in what ways policy may support adolescent boys to become companions and supporters of adolescent girls in the development space. Chapter 9, the final chapter of the thesis, reflects on the key findings, identifies the significance of these findings, and offers some pathways to future research.

### ***Delimitations***

The objectives of my research are limited to MDG 3, and the focus is on one illustrative case in Maharashtra to assess MDG 3 with respect to policy translation in a gendered and cultured context. There are two reasons for this. Firstly, an extensive research in development studies demonstrates the links between girls' and women's education and empowerment and the overall improvements in human development indicators. The quote at the beginning of the chapter by the former UN Secretary General expresses this sentiment as well as any. Thus, in many ways, MDG 3 serves as a proxy for the overarching goals of good development, while providing some clear boundaries to the research project. Secondly, limiting the scope of this research to Goal 3 serves the additional, practical purpose of having a manageable research project that may be completed within the timeframe of doctoral study. I now turn to Chapter 2 and a discussion of policy translation and its significance for this thesis.





## **Chapter 2**

### **Policy Translation and Meaning-Making in the Development Space**

#### ***Introduction***

This research is focussed on examining the process of translating global objectives, as expressed in MDG 3, to achieve gender empowerment and development at the local level. The thesis, therefore, draws on the emerging scholarship on policy translation, an approach that is concerned with understanding the knowledge production and policy creation processes associated with taking a policy idea or goal from one context and pursuing it in another (Clarke et al., 2015; Stone, 2012). The movement of policy ideas across different levels of government is a process that involves the interpretation of meanings and nuances by different policy actors (Lendvai & Stubbs, 2007). The policy translation perspective draws our attention to these processes of knowledge production that occur both within jurisdictions and across national borders, and in particular to the reflexivity of policy actors engaged in that process. The notion of policy movement as a linear, one-way process – an item to be delivered by one entity in order to be received by another – is rejected in the policy translation paradigm. Instead, the perspective draws attention to the interactions between policy actors, be they intergovernmental organisations, governments, or non-governmental organisations, as they seek to exercise influence over policy design (Stone, 2012). Within this interactive process, policy is not so much transferred as translated, it is disassembled and re-assembled as it moves from one location to another, and in the process of movement ‘it is made to mean something in its new context’ (Clarke et al., 2015, p. 9). It is, thus, an appropriate perspective to adopt for the study of interactions among multiple actors as expressed in the translation of MDGs in the development field.

This chapter, therefore, aims to lay the conceptual and theoretical foundations for the study of the policy process, illustrated via the implementation of MDG-related development programmes, as a form of policy translation. It begins with a review

of the theoretical antecedents to and subsequently explores definitions of policy translation. Notably, the notion of policy translation has been influenced by the 'interpretive', 'linguistic' and 'argumentative' turns in public policy (Clarke et al., 2015, p. 17). These 'turns' are, variously, forms of critique of the rational-linear model of the policy process, and the chapter will review the key insights from these theoretical developments as they relate to policy translation. In addition, the chapter will briefly refer to the bodies of scholarship of policy transfer and policy diffusion as examples of the rational-linear model that have been applied to the movement of policy across different jurisdictions within a positivist perspective.

The primary focus of the chapter, however, remains located in understanding the framework of policy translation as an effective and appropriate means of examining the MDGs and their movement across jurisdictions, borders and spaces. In examining the local implementation of the MDGs, and in particular paying attention to specificities of a postcolonial landscape such as India, it is necessary to take account of the different forms of power (from above and below), including societal and institutional structures, which shape the translation process and the construction of meanings. A policy translation approach seeks to understand the exercise of power between those who have voice and those who are silenced (Clarke et al., 2015, p. 45; Tymoczko, 2006).

Therefore, an appropriate approach to understanding the dynamics of power and the pathways of knowledge production is to embrace a dialogical approach. The dialogical approach offers a two-way communication avenue between colonised and coloniser, exploring the flow of ideas, challenging both dominant and subversive knowledge production paradigms (Clarke et al., 2015, pp. 39-40; Mohanty, 2013). A policy translation approach, therefore, disrupts, interrupts and engages multiple sites and intersections of policy actors within a new, contextualised policy space (Clarke et al., 2015, p. 52; Kingfisher, 2013). For this thesis, therefore, the process and study of policy translation with respect to development, empowerment, and gender presents an opportunity to explore multiple voices of the translation process. It is the policy translation approach, therefore, that pays attention to the interpretive and critical processes of policy

movement and allows for the capture of complexities of culture and meaning in a local context. The next section discusses the theoretical antecedents of policy translation, that is, policy diffusion and policy transfer.

### ***Policy Diffusion and Policy Transfer***

A vast scholarship exists which provides various accounts to understand policy movement and its conceptual and theoretical foundations. The policy diffusion and policy transfer frameworks provide an understanding and analysis of the role of policy within local, regional, national and transnational spaces. In particular, they attempt to understand ‘decision-making instances characterized by technical complexity and uncertainty’ (Dunlop, 2009, p. 289). Each framework rests on its own set of theoretical underpinnings, yet both paradigms share a common factor which is to understand the ‘policy-making process’ (Dolowitz & Marsh, 2000; Fischer, 1998; Peck, 2011, p. 773; Staudt, 1998; Stone, 2012). Policy diffusion and policy transfer as theoretical antecedents provide the background to understanding the emergent paradigm of policy translation. As will become evident in the discussion below, both policy diffusion and policy transfer models are insufficient to explore how culture influences policy making and implementation at multiple levels. In contrast, policy translation provides a more nuanced and subtle framework in drawing out concepts of meaning, power and culture as they relate to the MDGs. I first turn to a brief discussion of the key elements of a policy diffusion approach and then move on to a discussion of key policy transfer elements.

#### **Policy Diffusion**

Policy diffusion is widely studied in the US federal model and has been described as a system in which ‘policy change occurs by osmosis; something that is contagious rather than chosen’ (Stone, 2012, pp. 484-485). Peck offers a comprehensive analysis of policy diffusion often articulated as ‘competitive federalism’ in the United States in which wealthier, larger (in geography and population), more like-minded states in terms of policy-making (‘such as New York, Massachusetts and California’) are compared with less-resourced states (such as ‘Mississippi, Nevada, Wyoming’) ‘lagging behind’ (Peck, 2011, pp. 775-

776). As a policy is developed in one geographical area, it takes on shape and moves beyond state borders to be reshaped in another state. The ‘initial conditions’<sup>9</sup> for policy diffusion within a federated system may include but are not limited to the following indicators: i) established communication networks between state bureaucracies, ii) adjacent states’ abilities to ‘share innovations’, iii) innovative and forward-thinking states initiating policy which is eventually ‘adopted’ by slower states, and iv) a top-down approach to policy adoption and innovation as set out by federal government (Stone, 2012, p. 484; see also Berry & Berry, 1999 and Peck, 2011). This method of interaction observed domestically in inter-state policy diffusion in the United States, for example, is paralleled in the application of the policy diffusion paradigm in an international context.

In a global context, policy diffusion is defined broadly ‘as a process through which policy choices in one country affect those made in a second country’ (Marsh & Sharman, 2009, p. 270; see also Braun and Gilardi, 2006; Simmons and Elkins 2004). Policy diffusion across international borders is characterised by (economically strong) nations’ desire to remain globally competitive (and dominant) and not to be ‘disadvantaged’ by poorly articulated policy from other (economically weak) states (Cao & Prakash, 2011, p. 113; Stone, 2012, p. 485). In other words, policy diffusion appears to imply a transmission of knowledge through a one-way avenue.

Critics note, however, that there appears to be either limited or no engagement with the results of the policy diffusion model but rather ‘a fascination with the conditions for transfer rather than the content of new policy’ (Marsh & Sharman, 2009; Stone, 2012, p. 485). This contributes to the apparent weaknesses in the diffusion model which may include issues of suitability, appropriateness of policy movement, and ‘understand[ing] moments of rupture, transition, and transformation’ (Peck, 2011, p. 791). The result is policy creation and diffusion

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<sup>9</sup> I employ Vandemoortele’s (2011) use of the description ‘initial conditions’ as it relates to the Millennium Development Goals. Vandemoortele uses the term initial conditions to refer to 1990 in-country statistics as benchmarks of human development indicators which were to be used as a baseline for determining success rates for MDGs within a given country.

which may not conceptually and practically be useful for the ‘new’ local circumstances. The policy transfer model, for example, was a response to these kinds of weaknesses and attempted to address excluded or missing questions around appropriateness left unanswered by the policy diffusion model.

### **Policy Transfer**

Evans refers to ‘policy transfer analysis [as] a theory in which knowledge about institutions, policies or delivery systems at one sector or level of governance is used in the development of institutions, policies or delivery systems at another sector or level of governance’ (Evans, 2009, p. 244). Unlike policy diffusion that tends towards a fascination with the mechanics of policy movement, conceptual frameworks around policy transfer appear to grapple with what has been transferred – knowledge – but often display deficits in the understanding of systems and processes in which policy transfer takes place (Dolowitz & Marsh, 2000, p. 7). The study of policy transfer is located across different expressions of transfer and may include but is not limited to ‘[...], convergence (Bennett, 1991), diffusion (Majone, 1991), emulation (Howlett, 2000), policy learning (May, 1992), [...] and lesson-drawing (Rose, 2005)’ (Evans, 2009, p. 244; Evans & Davies, 1999). Policy transfer is, therefore, located on a continuum or linear spectrum moving in opposing directions – to the left towards ‘lesson-drawing’ (Rose, 1991) and to the right towards ‘coercive transfer’ (Dolowitz & Marsh, 2000, p. 13; Rose, 1991; Stone, 2012, p. 485). Understanding the fluidity of movement along the ‘continuum’ between lesson-drawing and coercive transfer could aid in explaining policy success and failure. The movement scale of policy transfer developed by Dolowitz and Marsh focuses on seven key questions, including ideas around engagement, knowledge transfer, lessons learned and processes of transfer related to ‘success or failure’ (Dolowitz & Marsh, 2000, p. 8). Unlike the policy diffusion scholarship, policy transfer literature considers not only moments of success within the transfer process but examines policy failure defined as ‘uninformed transfer, incomplete transfer and inappropriate transfer’ (Dolowitz & Marsh, 2000, p. 17; May, 1992). Policy transfer while offering insights into state-structured policy designs requires exploration of political systems and the realities and circumstances of states into which policies are transferred (Prince, 2010, p. 169).

A key focus of this approach is how easy or problematic it is to transfer policy effectively from one location to another.

In his analysis of the process of 'lesson drawing', as a form of policy transfer, Rose notes the importance of the need to take account of the 'present' situation and of understanding 'bearings in time and space' (Rose, 1991, p. 4). In other words, there can be no unconditional transfer of policy but an informed and tailored method of policy transfer. One of the keys to an informed and responsible policy transfer is defining key policy issues within the appropriate cultural context. Policy success or failure, therefore, would rely heavily on the appropriate measures taken to include social and cultural factors when transferring policy (Evans, 2004). There appears to be an element of translation in the transferral in that policy is not transferred from one location to another directly but rather shaped to the needs of the community to which the policy is being transferred (Dolowitz & Marsh, 2000; Rose, 1991; Schneider & Ingram, 1997). Stone notes that 'the transfer framework has been depicted as 'second generation' development of study after the work on the US federal system', clearly moving beyond the policy diffusion paradigm (Evans, 2009; Stone, 2012, p. 486).

The policy diffusion and policy transfer approaches offer illustrations of attempts at understanding policy movement that can be located within a positivist approach to studying policy. In the positivist tradition, scholars sought to examine public policy from a so-called neutral or objective position, seeking to exclude belief and value systems in the quest to examine data in a neutral and 'scientific' manner (Fischer, 1998; Yanow, 2000, 2004, 2007) – but failing to recognise that positivist approaches were imbued with values, too. In contrast to this approach, scholars of the postpositivist tradition argue that such neutrality is impossible, and that the study of public policy needs to take account of the worldviews and values of actors, the way these frame the definitions of problems and the promotion of solutions, and are central to policy-making processes. This approach emphasises the need to examine the meanings (and struggles in competing meanings), values and beliefs each actor or group of actors assigns to a specific policy (Fischer, 1998; Mathur & Mathur, 2007, p. 613; Yanow, 2000, 2004). The study of policy

movement across jurisdictions, from this perspective, would seek to take account of the interpretations, meanings and value systems and beliefs of the various actors engaged in policy processes (Fischer, 1998; Simon-Kumar & Kingfisher, 2015; Yanow, 2000, 2004, 2007). Policy translation, therefore, with its focus on unpacking nuances in policy and gaining a deeper understanding of instances of translation in a postpositivist tradition can, therefore, be positioned as an alternative approach to positivist, rational-linear models of policy transfer and policy diffusion. For this thesis, therefore, the policy translation paradigm, as a conceptual framework, is a more appropriate location within which to consider and study how a global Goal, in this case Millennium Development Goal 3, has been interpreted and implemented in local context.

### ***Policy Translation***

The Millennium Development Goals (MDG) provide an example of moving beyond policy transfer towards policy translation (Stone, 2012, p. 485). Although the MDGs were arguably defined either quite broadly or narrowly (depending on one's perspective and one's ability to successfully advocate for a particular policy), the goals provide a framework within which each signatory country should develop and implement policies. How the policies are 'transferred', however, should not and must not end with transferal of knowledge, skills or technical support. Policies are not 'finite and finished' (Clarke et al., 2015, p. 15) as they move from one location to another. The process of creation as a policy proposal moves from one location and is reinterpreted and reassembled in another location is dynamic – not static. Therefore,

policy [is] always in the making, or under construction. As it moves from one place to another, from one site to another, from one level to another, it is revised, inflected, appropriated and bent in encounters of different kinds. A policy, then is never a completed object (Clarke et al., 2015, p. 15).

The study of policy translation is concerned with the analysis of the 'fluid, dynamic and messy processes' of policy movement 'to reveal processes of re-representation and reordering' (Clarke et al., 2015, p. 16). We can, therefore, say that 'translation [...] is not a one-way process', and that 'it is this dialogue



between the different possibilities of the world that is the true insight that a translation frame offers' (Clarke et al., 2015, pp. 60-61). Policy translation foregrounds exploration of meanings of policy in contrast to rational, positivist policy studies approaches (Clarke et al., 2015, p. 18; Lendvai & Bainton, 2013).

Policy translation as a framework, therefore, seeks to understand the dynamics associated with the movement of policy across different levels and types of government. Its focus is on understanding policy as 'a meaning-making process' (Clarke et al., 2015, p. 17; Stone, 2012; Yanow, 2004). The approach draws on what has been referred to as various 'turns' developed in the policy studies literature. The 'turns' are grounded in several disciplines in the humanities and social sciences and there are at least five 'turns' to which Clarke et al (2015) make reference. In this section, I explore the argumentative turn and the interpretive turn in more detail below. However, I refer here briefly to the other three 'turns': linguistic turn, discursive turn and the cultural turn.

Firstly, the linguistic turn, grounded in the exploration of connections between philosophy and language, was primarily attributed to theoretical and analytical frameworks in the humanities (Fraser, 1995). The body of literature produced in the tradition of the linguistic turn included that of structuralists (for example de Saussure) and poststructuralists (for example Butler, Foucault, Derrida). Secondly, the discursive turn placed importance on discourse, conversation and meaning-making in the creation of language (Dijk, 2008; Howarth, 2010). Finally, the cultural turn centred culture as the primary point of investigation in meaning-making in public policy (Clarke, 2004; Clarke et al., 2015). Certainly, elements of these three turns are featured in the argumentative and interpretive turns. For example, the discursive turn, much like the argumentative turn, centres language and discourse in its study of policy. While I engage with language, I do not specifically undertake conversation analysis nor do I pay particularly close attention to speech patterns or inflection in creating meanings as is the case in the discursive turn. Likewise, while language is, indeed, important in determining meanings, I do not use the linguistic turn in the analysis chapters. Culture, while a cornerstone of this study, is defined differently in this thesis. While I recognise

that culture and the specific cultural context is very important in shaping understandings of policy actors at global and local levels, I have explicated that the use of ‘culture’ in this thesis specifically means *lived experiences* as located in the scholarship of Bhavnani et.al (2003a, 2009, 2016) and Chua et.al (2000). I now turn my attention to a deeper discussion of the argumentative and interpretive turns.

The argumentative turn recognises the importance and centrality of language, discourse and values in policy-making (Fischer & Forester, 1993; Fischer & Gottweis, 2012). Postpositivist policy scholars within the argumentative turn, for example, aim to unpack the policy process, focussing on how policy is reshaped and reframed (Bacchi, 2009; Fischer, 1995). As a critical response to positivism that sought to separate values, inquiry, and culture, and investigate theories independent of context, postpositivism sought to ‘turn from the traditional understanding of scientific proof or verification to a discursive, contextual understanding of social inquiry’ (Fischer, 1998, p. 130). The argumentative turn embraces not only a ‘contextual understanding of social enquiry’ but seeks to illuminate this understanding by scrutinising, for example, culture and gender. This includes an interrogation of space and time as spatial and geographic borders convey and lend meaning to cultural contexts (Fischer, 1995).<sup>10</sup> Likewise, fields of policy can be interrogated beyond isolation using a lateral approach to investigation, striving for ‘thinking outside the box’, blurring the borders between distinct policy fields and encouraging cross-pollination of ideas at multiple levels (Bacchi, 2009).<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> I will be addressing space and time later in the chapter.

<sup>11</sup> As an example, Fischer’s four-level approach to policy analysis encourages a multi-faceted approach to policy evaluation in that multiple layers are subjected to interrogation thereby exposing the core of a policy. This enables a thorough investigation of the policy and contributes to a more holistic evaluation. In the first level of evaluation, outcomes and objectives (and their corresponding subordinate levels) are examined, assessing among other factors appropriateness of the policy. The second level of evaluation allows for the inclusion of cultural and value-based examination of policy including its usefulness for society as a whole and recognition of the tension created by those values and cultural norms. See Fischer (1995).

The interpretive turn, rooted in the work of Clifford Geertz and cultural anthropology, acknowledges the importance placed on symbols to interpret meanings in policy-making (Geertz, 1973; Yanow, 2000, 2007). Anthropologists active in policy research and analysis contend that policy processes ‘and the critical analysis of those processes’ surrounding policy making are important for understanding the impact of a policy (Wedel, Shore, Feldman, & Lathrop, 2005a, p. 31). They assert that many anthropologists today examine policy processes which incorporate multiple levels of policy-making, including those policies which transcend national borders and affect policies within the state (Wedel et al., 2005a, p. 32). The anthropology of policy perspective does not privilege policy at the decision-making level or other elite levels of executive power over decisions and processes at the local level – be they ‘factory floor or locality’ (Wedel et al., 2005a, p. 34). Therefore, the perspective comprehensively examines how power is mapped through existing hierarchies and structures. Moreover, this perspective does not ask ‘what is policy’ but rather ‘what do people do in the name of policy’ (Wedel et al., 2005a, p. 35). A key argument in the interpretive turn is that policy is not developed in a ‘linear process’ but instead is infused with ideas from local influences (institutions and structures) to create policy tailored to a particular situation/location (Wedel et al., 2005a, p. 38). As policy is fashioned by local players it is created, assembled and re-assembled (Clarke et al., 2015) through the result of joint action and negotiation between government and non-government players, such as NGOs, private organisations, business community, etc. (Lendvai & Bainton, 2013; Lendvai & Stubbs, 2007; Stone, 2012). Thus, policy evolves and is re-defined as it progresses through multiple levels.

The various ‘turns’ in methods of inquiry in the social sciences and humanities, insofar as policy studies is concerned, have been a response to the limitations of positivist approaches to policy analysis. Much of the history of public policy analysis has been shaped by a positivist approach in which methods of inquiry replicated those prevalent in the natural sciences. From this perspective, rigour and quality of research were benchmarked against the standards of neutrality and the ability to replicate results (Yanow, 2000, p. 7). This contributed to the situation, during the 1970s, in which most policy analysts in the development field

were trained in positivist methods, concentrating on ‘technical tools of decision-and cost-benefit analysis’ (Yanow, 2000, p. 7). These tools created supposed ‘experts’ in the development field, from an analytical perspective, but such experts rarely had an intimate or familiar knowledge of the local area, customs or value systems (Yanow, 2000, p. 7). An emphasis was placed on those with purported professional expertise (academic or technically-acquired knowledge) rather than those possessing intimate knowledge of local circumstances, structures and relationships (Yanow, 2004). At the turn of the millennium researchers began to understand that examining local relationships and gathering relevant local knowledge provided valuable information for ‘translating’ local policy processes, in which value was placed on contextualised meanings of policy (Yanow, 2003).

A policy translation approach, then, draws our attention to the dynamics of meaning-making when a policy idea moves, and in so doing, it enables an understanding of power and institutions (Clarke et al., 2015, p. 19). As Clarke et al. note:

[M]eanings matter because they are a point of contestation, and it is the analysis of this contestation that is important. Meanings are inextricably linked with forms and relations of power and authority and are implicated in the making and remaking of social worlds. Policy, then, can be conceived as a particular setting in which meanings are made, installed, naturalised, normalised and, of course, contested (Clarke et al., 2015, p. 20).

Shore et al. note this as moving beyond Yanow’s (2006) invitation to examine ‘how a policy means’ and, instead, to explore how policies mutate ‘as they enter into relations with actors, objects and institutions in new domains’ (Shore, Wright, & Però, 2011, p. 20).

The dynamics of space and temporality are also important in understanding policy movement. Challenging notions of space and boundaries (with respect to nation-states) adds an important dimension to studying policy movement. While much of the policy studies literature involves the study of policy as ‘national phenomena’, meaning that it is only located in one place in one time (Clarke et al., 2015, p. 21),

the idea of bounded policy (related to the rational-linear models) is being challenged (Clarke et al., 2015, p. 22; Kingfisher, 2013). Recent events touching on space and time affecting regionalism (Trans-Pacific Partnership), globalisation (international Climate Change conferences) and cross-border policy (immigration in the European Union) are all instances of larger policy movements or policy 'flows.' Importantly, these flows have the potential to disrupt and unsettle existing policy (Clarke et al., 2015, p. 20; Kingfisher, 2013).

As policy moves across space and time, different facets of the policy idea are either hidden or brought into focus. Within these spaces of policy change, it is not only policy that is interrupted, 'the places where such policies come to rest [...] are remade or reshaped by this new arrival' (Clarke et al., 2015, p. 25). Unlike the rational-linear models which draw attention to delivery and receipt modes of policy articulation, policy translation is much more dynamic and explores beyond so-called departure and arrival points (Clarke et al., 2015; Kingfisher, 2013; Lendvai & Bainton, 2013). It is in giving attention to the process of spatial contextualisation, language and time, among other factors, that scholars of policy translation have sought to map the translation and assemblage of policy and not merely to study its newest iteration of implementation (Clarke et al., 2015, p. 26; Kingfisher, 2013; Simon-Kumar & Kingfisher, 2015).

### **Policy translation and assemblage**

The vocabulary of assemblage and translation, therefore, offers potential to accommodate and reflect the new ideas that emerge, enhance and advance contextualised theoretical and methodological approaches to the study of policy movement (Clarke et al., 2015, p. 35). Applying the policy translation approach to the study of policy movement is enhanced whereby policy translation may be understood as a process of assemblage as it moves through different levels and sites of government (Clarke et al., 2015, p. 31; Kingfisher, 2013, pp. 15-16). Drawing on the work of Scott (2004) and Deleuze and Guattari (1988) for their definition of assemblage, Clarke et al. note that as policies are unpacked, critiqued and reassembled within the process of translation, there is a 'bending and blending' of concepts (Clarke et al., 2015, p. 35; Lendvai & Stubbs, 2007).

Formative elements may or may not fit nicely with one another, but it is in the exploration of multiple ideas, intersections and interconnections that policy translation reflects the dynamics of policy movement (Clarke et al., 2015, p. 32).

Ideas of assemblages and translation offer a way into seeing how the production and reproduction of knowledge enables certain agendas to emerge while others are actively silenced (Clarke et al., 2015, p. 52).

As noted earlier, multiple ‘turns’ in the policy studies literature have contributed to the development of theoretical frameworks for the study of policy translation. Translation, then, is much more than simply the movement of an idea from one context to another. It is, rather, an opportunity to expand on a particular meaning in one context and to re-interpret it in another context. Moreover, translation relies on active interpretations and re-interpretations in new contexts to make sense of policy movement from one context into another, embracing disruptions and interruptions to interrogate new sites of power and make visible the process of bargaining and negotiation. These attributes mark the significance of policy translation as a theoretical and analytical framework for understanding policy movement.

## ***Conclusion***

The field of policy studies has increasingly moved away from rational-linear (positivist) models of policy movement to translation models which encourage re-interpretations and re-shaping of policy while welcoming disruptions, interruptions and a multiplicity of movements. Previous positivist models of policy movement, that is policy diffusion and policy transfer, explored a rational, linear, straightforward transfer of policy. It is, therefore, appropriate and important to consider policy translation as an alternative conceptual, methodological and analytical path to understanding policy movement which remains ‘unfinished’, necessitates thinking around agents and agency, and endeavours to make distinctions (and understandings of those distinctions) around ‘outcomes’ and ‘intentions’ (Clarke et al., 2015, p. 34). Policy translation, as a more nuanced approach, takes in a range of perspectives and grapples with

contestations, paradoxes, multiplicities as well as time and space concerns, which is particularly relevant to this thesis as it explores meanings, values, and beliefs within a postcolonial context. Encouraging a dialogical approach to understanding policy movement discourages a monological perspective that privileges, for example ‘colonising’ sites of power (Clarke et al., 2015, p. 39). Instead, there is a view to exploring colonial or global perspectives in relation to subaltern or local standpoints. The resulting discussions of disruptions, interruptions and transformations trace a path towards the re-interpretations and re-negotiations of global policy as it moves and ‘lives’ in its new space. The assembling and re-assembling of policy which takes place in translation offers new viewpoints in understanding various ‘turns’ in policy translation and the implications of those meanings. Hence, in the fluidity and hybridity of generating new knowledge, policy travels across time and space and is infused with relevant, contextualised meanings.

We can, therefore, apply a policy translation perspective to the Millennium Development Goals and pose questions around instances and sites of translation. Engendering the translation of policy, then, may illuminate how we observe adolescent girls emerge as active agents (or passive recipients) of policy translated to assist in their education and empowerment. Further, we may explore if the MDGs as global aspirations are influenced by the dominant neoliberal economic context as we examine how power is manifested within institutional structures at the local level. Indeed, we see that a policy translation framework provides a means through which we may study how culture influences policy in its localised forms. The interpretive and critical approaches embedded in a translation framework allow for an exploration of culture and values as policy ideas flow from a global aspiration and are interpreted into a localised empowerment programme for adolescent girls.

The next two theoretical chapters explore development and empowerment with respect to policy translation. In addition, the adolescent girl and development perspective is introduced in Chapter 4 as a fresh theoretical and analytical

framework within which to examine policy movement and the translation of MDG 3.





## **Chapter 3**

### **The Modern Development Agenda, the MDGs and Gender and Development Paradigms**

#### ***Introduction***

This chapter traces the path of the modern development agenda and explores the nature of development within a postcolonial context. Modernisation and dependency, two theories born out of the period following the Second World War, were theoretical antecedents to newer development paradigms such as human development and alternative development. The Millennium Development Goals (MDG) are a contested part of the history of change in the modern development agenda and emerged at a time in which the modern development agenda was being challenged. Fiercely debated in their effectiveness and suitability to differing local contexts and evolved from numerous global human development and population conferences, the MDGs emerged at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in an environment of state-led and United Nations-initiated discussion and debate (Antrobus, 2006; Black & White, 2004; Bond, 2006; Vandemoortele, 2011; White & Black, 2004). In reviewing the relevant scholarship in development studies, this chapter has four objectives: 1) to offer a brief review of the history of modern development post-1945 into the new millennium; 2) to provide a discussion illuminating the Millennium Development Goals, in particular Goal 3 and its relevance to the modern development project; 3) to discuss how the subjects of women and gender have shaped development paradigms, and finally 4) to locate the (adolescent) girl in development discourse.

#### ***Beyond 1945: Modernisation and Dependency***

Questions of power, structural oppression, gender and race were fundamental to and underpinned the modern development project which originated with the collapse of European colonial structures across the globe after the Second World War. Post-1945, the term ‘development’ became more widespread and its usage commonly associated with *modernisation* in which economic growth was the

driver in achieving development and the foundation for progress of non-economic factors (social, political and cultural structures) consistent with Western development paradigms (Huntington, 1968; McKay, 2004; Parpart, Rai, & Staudt, 2002b; Rai, 2008, p. 182; Rostow, 1990; Scott, 1996). The presumption was that once the economy had been shaped according to capitalist principles, the improvement or enhancement of social and political structures would follow. These factors would then contribute to the modernisation and subsequent social development of a country as it ‘grew’ and became stronger economically (Parpart et al., 2002b; Rostow, 1990; Scott, 1996).

The backdrop of the 1950s and 1960s with high economic growth in North America and Europe gave a sense of how ‘development’ should function (with some European countries that had suffered total devastation being highlighted as ‘economic miracles’ after financial infusion from the Marshall plan) (Rostow, 1990). For example, Britain was seen as a beacon of progress in Europe favoured by many factors socially, geographically and politically. What Rostow failed to note is that the epoch of the 17th and 18th centuries was a period of colonisation by Britain and other European powers of many countries of the world. Colonialism stripped once flourishing societies of their prosperity and reduced them to severe economic and social deprivation. Women is not a term used in Rostow’s writing, but, as Kurian (2000) argues, Rostow’s analysis is imbued with masculine values, and, therefore, gendered (Kurian, 2000).<sup>12</sup>

Hence, capitalist economic growth as key to development underpinned the founding of large inter-governmental financial institutions,<sup>13</sup> specifically the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development or the World Bank group (WB), both created in 1944 (Escobar,

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<sup>12</sup> Rostow defines traditional societies as ‘grouping the whole pre-Newtonian world; the dynasties in China; the civilization of the Middle East and the Mediterranean; the world of Medieval Europe’ (Rostow 1990, p. 5). Rostow outlines his ‘five stages of economic growth: the traditional society, the preconditions for take-off, the take-off, the drive to maturity, and the age of high mass-consumption’ (Rostow 1990, p. 4). For a more detailed discussion of Rostow’s five stages of growth refer to Rostow (1990).

<sup>13</sup> Also termed Bretton Woods Institutions

1997, p. 86). With the collapse of dominant colonial structures, governments of developing nations focussed on opportunities at political independence post World War II. In the process, developing states negotiated an interesting, albeit thorny, relationship between themselves and former colonisers and administrators.<sup>14</sup> Unlike the re-vitalisation of the West-West relationships immediately post-World War II, the governments of newly independent and industrialising countries of the majority world aspired to 'develop' to the economic, social and cultural 'standards' of the West (Asante, 2009; De Senarclens, 1997). However, the agenda of modernisation, primarily located in the practice-oriented sphere of development (Jaquette, 1982; Scott, 1996), disregarded local cultural norms and values and characterised these as impediments to valuable, capitalist economics-driven development (Rostow, 1990). Shedding traditions and adopting policies for pure economic growth (informed by an ideology of market capitalism as opposed to communism) was seen by both First World and many Third World nations as a relative guarantee for economic prosperity (Escobar, 1997, 2008; Rist, 2002). However, many countries of the non-aligned movement (NAM), such as India, Egypt, and Indonesia, sought to build a network of countries which embraced an alternative to capitalist economics-driven growth. They worked towards the formation of a 'Third World Alliance' and actively resisted issues such as neo-colonialism, adopting socialism with significant checks on the free market system (Willetts, 1978). This was until the introduction of economic reforms and trade liberalisation on a global scale (Chari & Corbridge, 2008; Escobar, 1995). In contrast, former colonial powers were seen to have societies that were open, approachable and amenable to capitalist economic growth models without the cultural, economic or political barriers associated with countries in Asia, Latin America and Africa (Rostow, 1990).

The linear orthodoxy of modernisation was challenged by a Marxist-informed dependency model of development, which characterised a relatively small core of

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<sup>14</sup> This is not to say that the relationship between coloniser and colonised was not already thorny, complex and exploitative. Emerging nations were grappling with independence, their own postcolonial structures and their particular visions of development.

economically developed First World nations encircled by a relatively large exploited periphery, the Third World (Cardoso, 1977; Cardoso & Faletto, 1979; Escobar, 1995, 2008; Grosfoguel, 2000). Dependency theory, originally conceptualised by Raul Prebisch in the 1940s, examined an ‘unequal exchange’ between First World and Third World nations, particularly in the area of trade relations (Love, 1980, p. 46). Dependency theory in the 1960s was particularly well-articulated and developed in the context of Latin America. It challenged the replacement of European colonial powers with that of North American capitalist powers in the form of banks and economic development programmes which came to be seen as a new expression of colonialism or imperialism (Cardoso & Faletto, 1979; Escobar, 2008; Love, 1980). Yet, not ‘development per se but only *dependent* development (or underdevelopment)’ as a response to modernisation was critiqued in dependency theory (original italics, Nederveen Pieterse, 1998, p. 345). Development or ‘underdevelopment’ was a key element behind a new type of colonialism/imperialism in the aftermath of World War II (Escobar, 1995, 2008; Palma, 1978; Saldana-Portillo, 2009). An imbalanced (re)distribution and (re)exploitation of resources were the primary features of dependency theory to the advantage of rich nations, fostering an alliance of dependency of poor states in the ‘periphery’ on wealthy nations in the ‘core’ (Cardoso & Faletto, 1979; Nederveen Pieterse, 2010).<sup>15</sup>

In both modernisation and dependency theories, however, gender and, to a large degree, culture remained invisible. As noted above, the principles of modernisation theory rendered cultural attributes as obstacles to be overcome in the pursuit of economic development (De Senarclens, 1997; Scott, 1996). Different but equally detrimental, culture in the dependency model was reduced to unequal global economic relationships characterised by the absorption of former colonies into world markets via their colonisers who enjoyed an advantageous and influential position (Cardoso & Faletto, 1979; Escobar, 1997, 2008; Jaquette, 1982). Both models, however, were conceptually unmindful of the diversity of

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<sup>15</sup> For a deeper discussion of dependency theory refer to Cardoso (1977), Palma (1978), Love (1980) and Grosfoguel (2000).

the Third World and viewed it as a homogenous group with no acknowledgement of differing local circumstances in countries in Asia, Latin America or Africa (Nederveen Pieterse, 1998; Schuurman, 2000).

### ***1980s and Beyond: Structural adjustment and neoliberalism***

Modernisation and dependency theories fell into a metanarrative of mainstream development thought which retained the First World as the standard of development and foregrounded economic growth and capitalist markets as drivers of progress. Both modernisation and dependency paradigms did little to effect institutional change in developing countries. By the 1980s, marketisation and privatisation of developing (and developed) economies were indicators of neoliberalism and neoliberal policies attributed to the dominance of New Right ideology as championed by US President Ronald Reagan and UK Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher (Escobar, 2008; Hunt, 2004; Pomerantz, 2011; Rahnema, 1997; Sachs, 1997). These ideologies were often referred to as Reaganomics in the US context or Thatcherism in the UK (Peck, Theodore, & Brenner, 2010, p. 98). Neoliberalism was characterised by deregulation, ‘rolling back’ of social welfare programmes, privatisation of state-held assets, and severely curtailing access to public goods such as education and health care (Brown, 2006; Martinez & Garcia, 1996, p. 2; Mohanty, 2013; Nederveen Pieterse, 1998, p. 350; Ong, 2006; Oza, 2006; Sharma, 2008; Wilson, 2015). The ascent of neoliberalism saw a perpetuation if not an expansion in the application of market economic policy at the core of development work (Escobar, 1995, 1997; Hunt, 2004; Sachs, 1997; Schech & Haggis, 2000). The era of neoliberalism, although associated with the 1980s and structural adjustment policies imposed by the IMF and World Bank, continued into the 1990s and beyond.

The decade of the 1990s brought a distinction ‘between two forms of mainstream development – “New York” (UN) and the “Washington Consensus”’, the former as part of the human development stream and the latter as part of structural adjustment (Nederveen Pieterse, 1998, p. 345). The Washington Consensus, grounded in ‘free-market economic theory’ became the basis for ‘ideological

rationalization for globalization and contemporary state “reform” (Peck & Tickell, 2002, p. 380). Policies created and implemented by the Bretton Woods Institutions and the World Trade Organisation, in other words Washington Consensus-style policies, were representative of a next phase of mainstream development which included so-called ‘pro-poor growth’ and structural adjustment programmes (SAP) (Kakwani & Pernia, 2000; Killick, April 1995). The strategies created to assist the poor in poverty reduction called ‘pro-poor growth’ were defined as

strateg[ies that] entail[...] the removal of institutional and policy induced biases against the poor, as well as the adoption of direct pro-poor policies (Kakwani & Pernia, 2000, p. 4).

Strategies could include addressing institutional biases based on ethnicity, caste/class, race or gender (Kakwani & Pernia, 2000, p. 4). Policy-based biases could include poor quality housing and access to infrastructure and utilities, or disparities in expenditures in rural or urban locations (Kakwani & Pernia, 2000, p. 4). The intensification of ‘pro-poor’ strategies in the 1980s was a result of the refocus on the debt crisis in developing countries and an application of market economic policies. The debt crisis became an exercise in restructuring monetary policies in developing economies which ‘favoured debt repayment over poverty reduction’ (Chari & Corbridge, 2008, p. 262; Remenyi, 2004). In such policy restructuring the poor were disproportionately affected by, among other things, poor quality housing, lack of jobs and access to education (Kakwani & Pernia, 2000).

Critics of mainstream development saw donor agencies and advocates, among others, focussing solely on the economic sphere of development without taking into account ‘agency of the people’ (Kabeer, 2003, 2005a; Nederveen Pieterse, 2010). It was at this time that human development and alternative development<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> ‘The strength of alternative development is a regard for local development and agency from grassroots groups and social movements to NGOs. With local development comes a concern with project failure, cultural diversity and endogenous development. The disaffection with the state in alternative development resonates with neoliberal misgivings about state failure and this conjuncture contributed to the great wave of NGO-ization since the 1980s’ (Nederveen Pieterse, 2010, p.184)

emerged as options to mainstream development. Offering an alternate approach to the SAPs and the disadvantages that SAP-supported policies inflicted on the poor, Sen's *Commodities and Capabilities* approach explored fundamental capabilities of an individual and what was done, actively, with those capabilities (Nussbaum, Sen, & World Institute for Development Economics Research, 1993; Sen, 1985, 1992, 1999). Sen's capabilities framework, grounded in a rights-based approach,<sup>17</sup> was later expanded on by Kabeer who explored *agency, resources and achievements* with a specific gender lens, outlining the importance of a gender component in articulating conceptual frameworks within development work (Kabeer, 1999, 2003).

However, human and alternative development frameworks came with their own sets of assumptions and limitations and in many aspects were co-opted by mainstream development. For example, policy frameworks created by some NGOs, originally thought to be an alternative to mainstream, economics-focussed policy planning as they were seen as bottom-up processes infused with local knowledge, were absorbed into mainstream development via intergovernmental agencies active in the development industry (Nederveen Pieterse, 1998). The result was a convergence of elements of human development (such as the Human Development Indicators for assessing social markers such as well-being, poverty and education rates) and alternative development<sup>18</sup> (such as participation and environmental sustainability) which were mainstreamed (Hettne, 1995; Nederveen Pieterse, 1998, pp. 348, 359; Nussbaum et al., 1993). Political activists and grassroots movements, therefore, looked to address the deficiencies in development that an economically-biased perspective perpetuated. There was a growing focus on incorporating issues addressing gender empowerment, children's rights, human rights, healthcare and the environment to name a few.

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<sup>17</sup> For further scholarship on rights-based approaches see Cornwall and Nyamu-Musembi (2004); Gready (2008); Gready and Ensor (2005); IDS Bulletin (2003); Sen (1999).

<sup>18</sup> Nederveen Pieterse (1998, p. 343) notes that the concept of alternative development is varied and can be found under multiple classifications such as 'appropriate development, participatory development, people-centred development, human scale development' and so on. In addition, 'elements relevant to alternative development are developed [...] under specific headings, such as participation, participatory action research empowerment, citizenship' and so on.



The challenging of fundamental development principles permeated transnational organisations and their policies as well as national, regional, and local power structures (Sheth, 1997; Simmons, 1997). A comprehensive and critical overview of mainstream, alternative and post-development thought illustrates the importance of exploring grey areas of each set of development agendas so as to understand the strengths and weaknesses of each paradigm (Nussbaum, Glover, & World Institute for Development Economics Research, 1995).

Beyond human and alternative-development, post-development thought urged locally-driven initiatives in response to local development challenges and emboldened resistance to ‘economic globalisation’ (Rahnema, 1997; Sachs, 1997). Indeed, Craig and Porter (2006) note that ‘post–developmentalists had dismissed Development as a pernicious discourse, a grand modernizing and colonial narrative reflecting and serving Eurocentric interests’ (Craig & Porter, 2006, p. 2). However, critics warned that post-development hindered a view beyond the local which, in some instances, may have neglected global influence and complexities on local issues (Rahnema, 1997; Sachs, 1997). In essence, post-development may have presented a critique of development but offered no solutions (Nederveen Pieterse, 1998, p. 365).

By the 2000s, despite a focus on improving human development indicators, the influence of neoliberal policies on development practice had not waned (Black & White, 2004; Nederveen Pieterse, 2010). Advocates of neoliberal policies pursued liberalisation of trade policy and marketisation of economies of developing countries with the intention of allowing market forces to regulate the economy (Craig & Porter, 2006; Nederveen Pieterse, 2010; Porter & Craig, 2004).

Challenging this metanarrative of market growth and economic progress (predominant in Western advanced capitalist economies) to the detriment of populations struggling with social and economic inequalities, environmental destruction and diminishing resources, and gender- and caste-/class-based violence (among other social inequities) is a contribution this thesis attempts to make. I do not infer that advanced economies do not face their own struggles.

Certainly, multiple bodies of literature across political science, development studies and other disciplines, illustrate inequities and wealth gaps not just between rich and poor countries but increasingly within countries as well (Arora-Jonsson, 2013; Kothari & Minogue, 2002; Nederveen Pieterse, 1998, 2010). In an age of globalisation and interdependent economies we have cause to pause and think of how questions around the development project address social inequities and structural oppression within a postcolonial context.

### ***Millennium Development Goals***

The Millennium Development Goals emerged on this backdrop of neoliberalism and was reflective of what some scholars refer to as ‘post neoliberalism’ or ‘inclusive liberalism’ (Craig & Porter, 2006; Larner & Craig, 2002; Peck et al., 2010; Peck & Tickell, 2002; Porter & Craig, 2004; Tickell & Peck, 2003). The Millennium Development Goals were codified in the Millennium Declaration, articulating the outcomes of global conferences throughout the 1990s on the ‘environment, economic well-being and social development’ (Black & White, 2004). The Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action from 1995 determined the boundaries for MDGs related to ‘economic well-being.’ The deliberations and outcomes of four conferences led to the MDGs framework relating to ‘social development.’ These were the Jomtien Conference on Education for All (1990), Copenhagen Summit on Social Development (1995), Beijing Conference on Women (1995) and the Cairo Conference on Population and Development in 1994. The MDGs encompassing goals, targets and indicators around ‘environmental sustainability and regeneration’ were generated from the Rio Conference on Environment and Development in 1992 (Black & White, 2004, p. 4). One of the primary tenets of the MDGs was to effect a significant reduction in poverty worldwide, hence Craig and Porter (2006) refer to these as ‘Poverty Reduction’s Millennium Development Goals’ (Craig & Porter, 2006, p. 4).

The MDGs, then, located within the context of ‘well-being, social development, and environmental sustainability,’ dovetailed with the ‘Social Inclusion Strategies (SIS) of Third Way governments and local councils, where it appeals to the enormous diversity of organizations working in “partnerships” around social

exclusion, social development and wellbeing' (Porter & Craig, 2004, p. 388; Simon-Kumar, 2011; Tickell & Peck, 2003).<sup>19</sup> In a development context, such strategies were key in formulating the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP) which tied developing country governments to large international financial institutions, including the World Bank and IMF, and to donor agencies such as the United Nations network (Craig & Porter, 2006; Porter & Craig, 2004, p. 388). Indeed, the PRSP's focus would include

promoting economic *opportunity* through global market integration, and enhanced social and economic *security* and *empowerment* through innovative governance arrangements for local delivery of health, education and other poverty-reducing services (Craig & Porter, 2006, p. 4; original italics; see also Peck, Theodore and Brenner (2009) and Porter and Craig (2004).

The question, then, is if the Millennium Development Goals, indeed, heralded a new form of partnership between the governments of developed and developing worlds in achieving broad human-centred development goals. The Millennium Development Goals, at first glance, appear to represent a movement towards partnership and negotiation in the development project to determine action to address poverty globally and locally. A former UNDP administrator commented:

The Millennium Development Goals have had a catalytic effect on the global development debate, largely because of their simplicity and measurability – and thus accessibility. Anybody can understand them, grasp that they matter, judge whether or not his or her country and the wider world is doing enough to achieve them, and take action if they are not. They are a bottom-up, grass-roots, pocket-book development agenda, firmly focused on the bread and butter of political life everywhere (Brown, 2004, p. xiii).

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<sup>19</sup> For further reading on social inclusion strategies and Third Way governments refer to Peck, Theodore and Brenner (2009), Porter and Craig (2004), Larner and Craig (2002) and Simon-Kumar (2011).

Brown noted that while obstacles existed within the MDG framework which could hinder achieving goals and targets by 2015, the adoption of the MDGs worldwide had undoubtedly created a space in which development policy and continuing challenges could be addressed (Brown, 2004). Governments of both the developing and the developed world endorsed and accepted the UN Millennium Declaration to incorporate and adapt goals, targets and indicators to their specific national policy schemes, implementing local policy to bring about change on a wide range of indicators (Feeny & Clarke, 2009). This, in large part, was a consequence of country ownership of policy initiatives, and what Stone describes as a people-centred approach to policy (Stone, 2002).

Although the MDGs were accepted by nation-states as a framework to achieve progress in battling poverty, hunger, and environmental degradation, their implementation was criticised by both scholars and activists (Antrobus, 2006; Bond, 2006; Mohanty, 1995). Criticism was levelled against the agendas of the global conferences held in the 1990s on social justice, human rights, the environment and women in which the seeds for the MDGs were planted (Mohanty, 1995). Along with outlining the ‘shortcomings’ of the MDGs, scholars examined the role of the IMF and WB as well as the World Trade Organisation (WTO) in subsequent MDG-related documents such as the Monterrey Consensus<sup>20</sup> and during the Doha round of talks<sup>21</sup> (Bond, 2006; Vandemoortele, 2009, 2011). The result was a critique of the approach taken by global financial institutions towards poorer countries in development policy. The crux of Bond’s argument, for example, illustrated the innate bias of global financial institutions and donor government power towards First World countries and the strangle-hold such

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<sup>20</sup> The Monterrey Consensus refers to a meeting of the United Nations Financing for Development Conference in March 2002 in Monterrey, Mexico. The objective of the gathering was to gain broad consensus on the mechanisms to be used to reduce poverty and address achieving the MDGs. Instead, scholars note that it was a meeting which underpinned market-driven development policies which were detrimental to developing countries, including biased trade agreements and unfair fiscal policies (see Soederberg, 2005 and Sachs, 2005).

<sup>21</sup> The Doha Round also known as the ‘Doha Development Agenda’ had a troubled beginning in 2001. In subsequent negotiations during World Trade Organisation talks, countries of the Global South once again found themselves at a disadvantage against larger, industrialised nations in reference to, among other things, trade liberalisation (see Bond 2006; Francois et.al. 2005).

financial institutions had (and arguably still have) on developing countries. Bond, for example, notes that the Monterrey Consensus was meant to create ‘deeper integration of developing countries into the global financial system, and combining World Bank, IMF, WTO and donor government powers [...]’ (Bond, 2006, p. 343). This could have been interpreted as a potential partnership in misfortune for developing countries. Hence, many argued that the United Nations had failed in its mission to serve poor people, and instead, perpetuated the neoliberal power hold of the First World over the Third World (Antrobus, 2006; Bond, 2006; Mohanty, 1995).

Within the MDG framework, much of the groundwork achieved was in capacity-building of national, regional and local governments to support policy planning and implementation in local development initiatives (Government of Maharashtra, 2002b; United Nations Development Programme, 2007, 2010). Yet, the MDGs were formulated ‘without the participation of civil society organisations, including women’s rights organisations’ (Association of Women in Development (AWID), 2013, p. 1). The MDG framework, therefore, replicated for many the ‘top-down approach’ to development, privileging already influential and dominant Western governments and ‘international financial institutions’ (Association of Women in Development (AWID), 2013, p. 1). The assumption of know-how and expertise in Western countries left few opportunities for nations of the Global South to participate in decision-making processes (Association of Women in Development (AWID), 2013).<sup>22</sup> This sustained the neoliberal and neo-colonial framework of privilege and power of economic development over other development indicators and ‘maintained the inequitable model of economic and market-driven growth as the key to progress’ (Association of Women in Development (AWID), 2013, p. 1; Rostow, 1990). As an AWID publication noted:

The assumption was, and still is, that wealth generation is a prerequisite to progress in human development and wellbeing (Association of Women in Development (AWID), 2013, p. 1).

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<sup>22</sup> In the previous chapter, I noted Yanow’s (2003, 2004) ‘interpretive turn’ in contextualising and understanding that policy creation and planning should be located within the context of local knowledge.

Despite critiques of the MDG framework, scholars note that the MDGs have ‘contributed to more cross-sectoral work’ (Vandemoortele, 2011, p. 11), and individuals functioning in once separated sectors are beginning to understand the benefits of ‘cross-cutting themes – encourag[ing] us to think about links *across* areas’ (Bacchi, 2009, p. xx). Hence, a successful view beyond 2015 would include a move away from the ‘donor-centric view of the MDG-agenda’ (Vandemoortele, 2011, p. 13), calling for a shift from focussing on Western countries and what they believe is right, good or fair for developing countries including how much or how little foreign aid should be given. Vandemoortele asserts ‘it is high time to de-aid the MDG agenda’, and that

the post-2015 framework cannot be another exercise in donorship. A new international agenda for development must emerge from a genuine partnership among equals, not one that is dominated by rich countries or that is formulated from a donor-centric, [money-metric] perspective (Vandemoortele, 2011, p. 21).<sup>23</sup>

This section has provided a broad overview of the MDGs generally. The next section addresses Millennium Development Goal 3 specifically.

### ***MDG 3 – ‘to promote gender equality and empower women’<sup>24</sup>***

The third Millennium Development Goal (MDG 3) articulates the commitment to empowering women and closing the gender divide in education, remuneration and political participation. MDG 3 provides the fundamental backbone in this thesis for the analysis of gender empowerment and the path of policy movement as policy is assembled and reassembled to ‘fit’ into new spaces. While I recognise that waged employment in the non-agricultural sector (Indicator 11) is important

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<sup>23</sup> Exploring the post-MDG agenda (Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)) is outside the purview of this thesis. One of the consequences of the criticism of the MDG agenda is the inclusion of civil society organisations in decision-making and policy-making within the new SDG agenda. I make note here to inform the reader that the multi-dimensional framework of the MDGs includes a discussion on different forms of donor aid. For a broader discussion on the debate around donor aid, see Hunt (2004); Kingsbury (2004).

<sup>24</sup> <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/>

in providing the basis for economic and financial resources, which in turn may affect women's empowerment, that discussion is beyond the scope of this thesis. Likewise, I recognise that women's political participation (Indicator 12) is one component in contributing to women's empowerment, but this also remains outside the purview of this thesis. I engage, albeit peripherally, with the ideas around adolescent girls' political participation or involvement with *panchayats* (local councils) in their communities (see Chapters 6 and 7).

**Table 2: Millennium Development Goal 3**

Goal 3	Target 4	Indicators
Promote gender equality and empower women	Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education preferably by 2005 and to all levels of education	9. Ratios of girls to boys in primary, secondary and tertiary education 10. Ratio of literate females to males of 15-24 year-olds 11. Share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector 12. Proportion of seats held by women in national parliament

Adapted from [http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/mdgoverview/mdg\\_goals/mdg3/](http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/mdgoverview/mdg_goals/mdg3/) and [http://www.alliance2015.org/fileadmin/user\\_upload/MDGs.pdf](http://www.alliance2015.org/fileadmin/user_upload/MDGs.pdf)

Table 2 is an outline of MDG 3 as formulated in the Millennium Declaration which, as stated previously, comprises a total of eight goals with 18 corresponding targets and 48 indicators. MDG 3 is articulated as Goal 3 with Target 4 (indicating that the previous three Targets were distributed between Goals 1 and 2) and Indicators 9-12 (denoting that Indicators 1-8 were distributed between Goals 1 and 2).

The UNDP defines women's empowerment as 'empowering women and girls with more choices and more freedoms' and that empowerment of women and girls is 'crucial to achieving a better future for all' (Sen, 2012). The UNDP builds its definitions and work on evidence-based, empirically-researched meanings of

empowerment as a foundation for informed policy research, implementation and evaluation. Expressions, like ‘localising the MDGs’, reinforce notions of accountability and governance which are expressions of translation in striving to meet the Goals within national and local contexts. For example, in reviewing the address of the UNDP administrator to the Local Government Forum Conference in Kampala, Uganda in May 2013,<sup>25</sup> it is evident that part of the buy-in at the local government level is ensuring that local bodies are empowered to understand and act on the needs of their communities within local political and policy-making structures. In other words, local negotiating and re-negotiating of policy is important for making policy relevant and applicable in its new home. ‘To empower local governments and their associations to fully realise their potential as key agents of change and development’ (Clark, 2013) is an important objective in creating partnerships for empowerment. As the UNDP Administrator commented:

Getting local government recognised in such high level discussions matters. It means that when UN Member States come to determine what the renewed global development agenda and sustainable development goals will be, the important role of local government in driving the development should be affirmed. That empowers local government (Clark, 2013).

This indicates the importance of creating empowerment programmes not only with the participation of local women’s groups and women’s activists but to adopt measures for oversight and accountability that extend to local government. Partnership with local NGOs has the potential to provide a reference for appropriate planning mechanisms and evaluation methods which are culturally-specific and relevant. A system of checks and counter-checks within decision-making processes, then, should lead to ownership, responsibility and accountability within the local context (Bisnath, 2001; Kabeer, 1999). Only then

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<sup>25</sup> UNDP Administrator Helen Clark’s full speech is available at <http://www.uncdf.org/en/node/1841>



can ‘values which inform definitions and measures of empowerment [be] sensitive to the domain of possibilities in which women are located’ (Kabeer, 1999, p. 462).

Despite the Goals originating out of debate in global conferences, the MDGs have been met with criticism from scholars, activists and civil society organisations. One of the criticisms of the MDGs is the broad framework within which they have been crafted (Antrobus, 2006; Association of Women in Development (AWID), 2013; Bond, 2006; Vandemoortele, 2011). A second criticism addresses the inadequacy of the mechanisms of measurement that have been systematised into the framework. The targets and indicators (as mechanisms of measurement) may not be relevant to all countries or regions and may not reflect hidden conditions that impede the process of attaining the Goals (Antrobus, 2006; Longwe, 1998; Unterhalter, 2005a, 2005b; Vandemoortele, 2009). In addition, post-development and other scholars have labelled the MDGs generally as the West’s way of furthering western globalisation, capitalism and sustaining economic, gender and other inequalities (Escobar, 1995; Rahnema, 1997; Sachs 1996 in Unterhalter, 2005a, p. 114). Nevertheless, Unterhalter notes with respect to MDG 3:

The somewhat arbitrary way in which this MDG has been framed, and the impossibly short time span allocated for its realisation, can elicit two responses: either a charge of cynicism and incredulity or a response that invites discussion, debate and further investigation (Unterhalter, 2005a, p. 112).

The disappointment in the expectations of what the Millennium Development Goals (could) have achieved is undeniable. Intentions, goals and targets attached to MDG 3 have underperformed in many regions of the world (The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development / The World Bank, 2004, 2005, 2010, 2011). Part of this under-performance is related to a lack of change in institutional structures that reinforce gender inequality in the public realm and in the private sphere. For example, according to Kabeer, the lack of any tangible, measureable let alone articulated goal with regards to violence against women and girls is a clear indication of the lack of lateral thinking in creating the Goals (Kabeer, 2005a). It may be indicative of a sign that MDG 3 and empowerment reflects the

neoliberal model of development. That is, ‘empowerment becomes a function of rational exchange; girls trade educational access, formal market participation and the amelioration of basic needs for political investments in structural transformation’ (Switzer, 2013, p. 350).<sup>26</sup>

In the post-MDG environment national and global leaders are reminded by local NGOs of their pledges to develop a development framework which honours universally-accepted standards of human rights, dignity, environmental sustainability and equality (Spielfoch, 2013). The Sustainable Development Goals, consequently, which now include the voices of civil society as well as government agencies and international organisations, builds on the spirit and the conceptual framework of the MDGs. The SDG framework offers an opportunity to improve upon the MDGs, provided governments, NGOs, and civil society endeavours are genuine, relevant and timely.<sup>27</sup> Returning to the context of the MDGs, however, both women and gender, in the context of theoretical frameworks informing development policy, have played a role in understanding development paradigms and formulating policy since the 1970s. The next section offers an overview of the evolution of women/gender and development paradigms.

### ***Women and Gender in Development Paradigms***

In developing country contexts as elsewhere, issues of women and gender are shaped by localised interpretations derived from notions of family and kinship, tradition and values, geography and knowledge. Ester Boserup’s influential work *Women’s Role in Economic Development* made a significant contribution to the construction of the Women in Development (WID) paradigm (Boserup, 1970). In her study, Boserup noted that women were not only on the periphery of development projects but often entirely absent from the discourse surrounding waged employment and women’s empowerment (Bhavnani et al., 2003a; Boserup, 1970; Kurian, 2000). This led to the ‘Women in Development’ (WID) approach

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<sup>26</sup> See Chapters 6 and 7

<sup>27</sup> A full discussion of the Sustainable Development Goals is outside the purview of my current work. I address the Sustainable Development Goals briefly in the concluding section of this thesis.

that sought to integrate women into the development project – both at staff levels within development organisations and within locally-based interventions (Staudt, 1997). Much of the WID scholarship, however, focussed on women's activities in the economic sector maintaining that women's empowerment through development meant access to resources such as 'education, healthcare, technology and other material resources' (Kurian, 2000, p. 67). The WID approach underpinned by the linear concept of development as embodied in modernisation theory situated women clearly in the 'liberal development model' which excluded notions of culture in local contexts (Kurian, 2000, p. 67; see also Jaquette, 1982). By the mid-1970s the WID model had further evolved to the WAD approach or Women and Development (WAD) paradigm.

The WAD paradigm underpinned by Marxist-feminism was grounded in strands of Marxist theory endeavouring to understand the unequal economic relationship between rich nations and poor countries and the continual dependency of the latter on the former (Bhavnani et al., 2003a; Cardoso & Faletto, 1979; Kurian, 2000; Rathgeber, 1990). As in the WID model, a key argument in the WAD paradigm was where and how women were situated in the economic sphere. While the WAD paradigm rejected capitalist agendas, its premise gave primacy to the economics of the household, placing women regardless of marital status within the confines of home and hearth and excluding the role of tradition, emotions and ideology in women's empowerment (Kurian, 2000; Rathgeber, 1990; Stromquist, 1995).

By the 1990s and early 2000s, the Gender and Development (GAD) paradigm had evolved from its antecedents WID and WAD. Economic participation of women, waged occupations, and non-agricultural employment were integrated into discussions of women's role in development. In addition, the GAD paradigm broadened the critical lens from 'women' to 'gender' and sought to 'look for the potential in development initiatives to transform unequal social/gender relations and to empower women' (Canadian Council for International Co-operation 1991:5 in Bhavnani, Foran, & Kurian, 2003b, p. 5). And yet, while the focus of the GAD approach aimed to examine issues of empowerment, key elements such

as ‘power, conflict and larger social and cultural issues’ remained outside the model (Bhavnani et al., 2003b, p. 5). The GAD paradigm continues to inform much of the United Nations network agencies’ work in the developing world on issues around gender, empowerment and development (United Nations Development Programme, 2014).

A newer and emergent paradigm termed women, culture and development (WCD) seeks to explore the lived realities of women in non-economistic and non-materialistic ways. In addition, the WCD paradigm makes use of configurations as a means for analysis, acknowledging multiple complexities in a woman’s life (Bhavnani et al., 2003a; Bhavnani, Foran, Kurian, & Munshi, 2009; Bhavnani, Foran, Kurian, & Munshi, 2016; Chua, Bhavnani, & Foran, 2000). I will explore this paradigm further as it relates to gender, empowerment and development in Chapter 4 as I draw on specific concepts from WCD to develop an analytical framework for this thesis. This section has provided a brief summary of the relevant women/gender and development paradigms since the 1970s. The emergence of the adolescent girl as a focus in development discourse is explored in the subsequent section.

### ***The (Adolescent) Girl in Development Discourse***

The gender and development scholarship broadly categorises women in two groups: (i) women and (ii) women and children (Croll, 2006, p. 1285; Grosser & van der Gaag, 2013). The focus in both categories in the general scholarship is on women and their place in economic development within the private and public spheres. The women and children category emphasises women’s familial duties in the private realm and, in particular, explores women’s traditional roles as carers and nurturers. Often this space is confined to literature on maternal and child health, reproductive and sexual health, morbidity and mortality. In the case of girls, Grosser and van der Gaag have noted that ‘[...] in development circles, “girls” were a neglected sector of the population, often simply a category filed somewhere under “women” or “children” (Grosser & van der Gaag, 2013, p. 73; see Croll 2000; 2006). Within the development agenda and for the purpose of this

thesis, the constructs of the girl child and the adolescent girl are important to understand interventions based on policy designed to improve conditions for both the girl child and the adolescent girl. A discussion of the girl child and the adolescent girl serves to extend the gender and development scholarship to include a segment of the population which, thus far, has received less attention.

In broader terms, the construct of the child emerges from the United Nations document *Convention on the Rights of the Child* from 1989 (United Nations, 1989). According to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child which entered into force in September 1990 Article 1 (1) states: 'For the purposes of the present Convention, a child means every human being below the age of eighteen years unless under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier' (United Nations, 1989). Children appear, albeit in limited capacity, in policy documents about education as early as 1975.<sup>28</sup> However, it is not until two decades later that the construct of the girl child emerges within the development discourse in a dedicated section (L) of the Beijing Platform for Action in 1995 (UN Women, 1995; United Nations, 1996, p. Chapter 1 v.L. The Girl Child). This is the first official document in which the girl child is identified, acknowledged and recognised as a member of a group requiring special care and attention.

The adolescent girl as a member of a group worthy of financial and other support made a first appearance in 1997 during a conference in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia on 'Adolescent Girls and their Rights', called by the Expert Group of the UN (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 1997). The meeting was the first of its kind to dedicate time and resources to understanding the construct of the adolescent girl and her particular circumstances within the family and society. The October 1997 gathering was one in which substantive, essential information was collected and prepared to inform sessions around the topic of the adolescent girl during the Commission on the Status of Women's 42<sup>nd</sup> session, 2-13 March 1998. In addition, it was a vehicle for providing mobilisation and discussion

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<sup>28</sup> <http://www.unicef.org>

around ‘the Commission's debate on "the girl child"’ whose outcomes were to inform ‘accelerated implementation of the [Beijing] Platform in this area’ (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 1997).<sup>29</sup>

The Millennium Development Goals as a global platform for action make reference to adolescents in the age range of 15-24 years.<sup>30</sup> Adolescents are found in Goal 2/Target 3/Indicator 8; Goal 3/Target 4/Indicators 9 and 10; Goal 6/Target 7/Indicators 18 -20; and Goal 8/Target 16/Indicator 45 which are primary education (Goal 2), gender equality and empowerment (Goal 3), combatting HIV/AIDS and other diseases (Goal 6), and sustainable global partnerships (Goal 8) respectively (United Nations, 2003, pp. 1-2).

UNICEF, the United Nation’s child advocacy agency, defines adolescents globally as young persons between the ages of 10-19 or 11-20, subject to the particular piece of documentation. UNICEF India designates the age of adolescence to be ‘young people between the ages of 10 and 19’, [who] account for nearly one quarter of the total population’ (UNICEF, 2011, p. Foreward). Consequently, there remains a very broad spectrum of age boundaries for adolescents globally and within countries. There is indeed overlap in the age ranges, policies and programming for the girl-child and the adolescent girl. Table 3 captures the adolescent-focussed MDGs.

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<sup>29</sup> The discussion of the construct of the adolescent girl and of implementation of supporting programmes was embedded in a broader conversation around the Beijing Platform for Action and the drivers to accelerate progress according to challenges and issues laid out in the Platform. These were articulated within the ‘broad social, economic and human rights’ context (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 1997). The Beijing Platform’s Girl Child document (Chapter IV/Section L) is extensive and outlines the discrimination against female children from conception through the life cycle to old age and widowhood.

<sup>30</sup> For a complete overview of the Millennium Declaration see [http://www.alliance2015.org/fileadmin/user\\_upload/MDGs.pdf](http://www.alliance2015.org/fileadmin/user_upload/MDGs.pdf)

**Table 3: Adolescent-focussed MDGs**

<b>Goal</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Indicator</b>
Goal 2 – Achieve universal primary education	Target 3 - Ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling	Indicator 8 - Literacy rate of 15-24 year-olds
Goal 3 – Promote gender equality and empower women	Target 4 - Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education no later than 2015	Indicator 9 - Ratios of girls to boys in primary, secondary and tertiary education Indicator 10 - Ratio of literate women to men, 15-24 years old
Goal 6 - Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases	Target 7 - Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS	Indicator 18 - HIV prevalence among pregnant women aged 15-24 years 19 - Condom use rate of the contraceptive prevalence rate 19a - Condom use at last high-risk sex 19b - Percentage of population aged 15-24 years with comprehensive correct knowledge of HIV/AIDS 19c - Contraceptive prevalence rate 20 - Ratio of school attendance of orphans to school attendance of nonorphans aged 10-14 years
Goal 8 - Develop a global partnership for development	Target 16 - In cooperation with developing countries, develop and implement strategies for decent and productive work for youth	Indicator 45 - Unemployment rate of young people aged 15-24 years, each sex and total

Adapted from <http://www.unmillenniumproject.org/goals/>

The government of India has defined a child as a human being to the age of 18 as per the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, yet the state makes provisions for lowering the age to 16 years for girls’ ‘sexual consent (not defined for boys); 14 years for compulsory education girls and boys; 18 years for girls and 21 years for boys for marriage; and 14 years for girls and boys for labour with regards to

shipping, transport, cigarette and factory work among other labour positions' (Ministry of Women and Child Development, 2001, pp. 45-46). Many of these laws exist only on paper and their implementation and/or monitoring is seriously lacking. India's National Youth Policy (NYP) draft document from 2012 defines youth accordingly:

4.1.1 The National Youth Policy document of 2003 covers the age group of 13-35 whereas the NYP 2012 aims to cover the age-bracket of 16-30 years. However, it needs to be recognised that all young persons within this age-group are unlikely to be a homogeneous group, sharing common concerns and needs and having different roles and responsibilities. It is, therefore, necessary to divide this broad age-bracket into three subgroups: The first sub-group of 16-21 years also covers adolescents whose needs and areas of concern are substantially different from youth under the other age-groups. The second sub-group of 21-25 years includes those youth who are in the process of completing their education and getting into a career. The third sub-group of 26-30 years comprises of young women and men most of whom have completed their education, including professional, and are, more or less, settled in their job and in their personal life (Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, 2012, p. 5).

In keeping with the 2012 National Youth Policy of India's adolescent upper age limit of 30 years, the interviewees in my field research setting were young women between the ages of 15-25 years (*Deepshikha* programme participants include adolescent girls and many gender and field coordinators).<sup>31</sup> This will be discussed in the research methodology and substantive analysis chapters later in the thesis.

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<sup>31</sup> Clearly youth-hood is age-based in the literature and in government reports and must be contextualised using indicators to include gender, caste, class and race in differing country analyses. See Kumar (2013).



## ***Conclusion***

This chapter has provided a brief review of development thought from the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century through the 2000s, including the emergence of the MDGs as a development agenda born out of multiple international summits during the 1990s. Earlier development models' exclusion of women as a key cornerstone in development theory gave rise to scholarship grounded in the WID and WAD paradigms. The GAD paradigm later cemented a shift from 'women' in development to 'gender' in development paradigms, exploring the nature of social relations between women and men in the development context. The codification of the MDGs in 2000 under the Millennium Declaration brought visibility to 'gender' articulated in MDG 3 – 'to promote gender equality and empower women.' The MDGs were, in the first instance, a demonstration of partnership-based development, albeit in a limited capacity. While some have reproached the United Nations for not appropriately articulating MDG 3 and dismissing continued structural and gender-based violence against and barriers to women and girls, there has been some progress with regards to achieving MDG 3. A constant and continuing obstacle to fully measuring and evaluating the reach and significance of MDG 3, its targets and indicators, remains a lack of reliable and above all sex-disaggregated data at local and often national levels. Some of the deficiencies in the MDG framework, including a lack of addressing pressing issues for adolescent girls in particular are, for example: ignoring children in conflict areas, child marriage, child/human trafficking (including abduction for commercial sex work, prostitution, etc.), children with disabilities, and child labour. In addition, issues confronting older women, such as land and property rights and inheritance (including inclusion of widows' rights) have remained hidden along with broader discussions of rights of indigenous peoples (e.g. Scheduled Tribes and Castes in the Indian context).

The above list is by no means exhaustive and is not meant to criticise or to reduce the successes or progress that implementation of the MDGs at local level have made in communities worldwide. It is an observation of what needs to be addressed when assessing the MDGs and progressing beyond 2015. Many of these

issues are being discussed online in global e-based platforms and offline in community-based discussion groups.<sup>32</sup> The MDGs appeared to offer a shift in the development agenda as they emerged from ongoing and thematically-focussed discussions during the human development conferences in the last decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. However, a critical review of the MDGs illustrates that a change in the development paradigm has been limited as programmes and policies have been embedded not in people-centred approaches to development but rather with deference to economic growth models which place financial and market affairs in the foreground.

The MDG framework, therefore, has been located between top-down development approaches á la SAPs and IMF-related programmes, on the one hand, and the reportedly bottom-up consultative, participatory approach of the SDGs. Within the MDG framework, MDG 3 has at a minimum fostered discussion on the best approaches to achieve its targets and indicators at the local level. For my thesis, MDG 3 offers an interesting scope for analysis in four ways. Firstly, policy initiatives designed to assist adolescent girls in their development as full-fledged active citizens need to be appropriately translated to capture cultural nuances and local specificities. Secondly, the terminology in the MDG framework as a whole and in MDG 3, in particular, only broadly refers to adolescents. There is no mention of adolescent girls. The needs of adolescent girls should be included in a more detailed, country-specific conceptual and practical framework. Thirdly, for this to happen, adolescent girls need to be acknowledged at policy-making levels as an intrinsically important and integral group in society who potentially fulfil not only their own needs but those of family and community as well. Finally, structural bias and oppressive practices must be challenged in support of adolescent girls – that is, there is a need to disrupt the status quo and actively engage with social issues questioning gender relations, stereotypes and ascribed roles.

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<sup>32</sup> <http://www.worldwewant2015.org/>

The story of resistance, power, resilience and agency is deeply embedded in the history of development.<sup>33</sup> In reviewing the history of development post World War II we clearly observe notions of nation-building, identity-building and struggles of power among and within nations. We discover moments of resilience, agency and resistance against narratives influenced by multiple models of development. Various development models from modernisation to (post) neoliberalism have proposed to ‘uplift’ communities in the name of advancement. While these models may have had theoretical underpinnings which informed policy structure and implementation, the paradigms lacked acknowledgement of people’s agency. It is only until the Millennium Development Goals, and certainly only to a limited degree, that policy in development was infused with local meanings and values and embedded in local context. While criticism remains of the overall MDG framework, methods of measurability and accountability, and the accuracy of positive policy outcomes, the MDGs have allowed and, to a great extent, generated a space for debate and discussion with respect to development in its broadest meanings. Gender, as articulated in Goal 3, was the first goal of its kind dedicated to gender awareness and the position of women. Adolescents, and adolescent girls, in particular, remain on the fringes of the MDG agenda. Therefore, we need to examine questions of what effect Goal 3 has had on the lives of adolescent girls in rural Maharashtra, India, including the sites of disruptions and interruptions which make MDG 3 applicable to the *lived experiences* of adolescent girls. As development paradigms and lenses have changed, it is important to explore how the space for adolescents, and for adolescent girls, in particular, has been affected by neoliberalism and its influence on policy-making. We may, then, examine how adolescent girls have the potential to become active agents in the modern development agenda (see Chapters 6 and 7).

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<sup>33</sup> I draw attention here to the ‘dialogical’ approach of Clarke et al who advocate for multiple voices in the postcolonial development context acknowledging voices of colonial or global perspectives in relation to subaltern or local standpoints. See Chapter 2 for further information and refer to Clarke et.al. (2015).

I have, thus far, reviewed the relevant bodies of scholarship in policy translation and development. The next chapter explores the theme of empowerment, offers a review of the relevant literature, and positions empowerment with respect to policy and adolescent girls. In addition, I introduce conceptual ingredients, drawing on the work of several development and policy scholars, to create the adolescent girl and development perspective. This perspective is used to analyse how policy creation and implementation has affected the local contextualisation of an empowerment programme for adolescent girls in rural Maharashtra, India.



## Chapter 4

### Empowerment, Contested Meanings and a New Framework

#### *Introduction*

For many academics, feminist activists and social justice groups, the definition of empowerment within the Millennium Declaration was too bounded and narrow to sufficiently encompass its many facets and interpretations, which rendered the term superficial and meaningless (Batliwala, 2007; Batliwala, Rosenhek, & Miller, 2013; Kabeer, 2005a). In the development context, the term empowerment evokes ideas and images associated with particular groups in society, such as women, girls, disadvantaged/disenfranchised and/or marginalised groups. How empowerment is defined, and consequently constructed, is embedded in particular political, historical and social contexts (Afshar, 1998a). Much of the challenge around the articulation of empowerment within the Millennium Declaration has been in finding a shared definition of the term across wide and varied contexts. This, in turn, has focussed a spotlight on the inadequacies in defining appropriate measurements for successful translation of MDG 3 in local contexts. Yet, this seeming ambiguity might indeed have opened up spaces in which community groups, policy actors and others could debate, re-define and re-claim the meanings of empowerment for their own communities and certainly within their own country contexts. The strength of *empowerment*, therefore, may lie in each group's ability to define the contours of empowerment and determine measures of success suitable for its own purposes. Thus, despite definitional challenges, the term may unintentionally hide its strength and malleability in conforming to different actors' needs, demonstrating that although empowerment is an all-inclusive word it can be reclaimed to fit country conditions (Batliwala, 2007; Batliwala & Dhanraj, 2004). This chapter, therefore, aims to do two things: 1) discuss the multi-dimensional term empowerment; and 2) introduce the analytical framework I term adolescent girl and development perspective that is deployed in the substantive chapters. I begin with the examination of the term empowerment.

### ***What is Meant by Empowerment?***

Empowerment as a concept is found in feminist scholarship within academic and activist-based research literature spanning several decades (Batliwala, 1994; Batliwala, 2007; Boserup, 1970; Kabeer, 1999; Moser, 1989; Peppin Vaughan, 2013; Rowlands, 1998; Sharma, 2008; Stromquist, 1995; Unterhalter, 2005a, 2005b). Interpretations of empowerment originally focussed on general economic empowerment and women's place within economic structures in developing countries. In the previous chapter, I discussed that modernisation and dependency theories fell into narratives of mainstream development thought in which women and culture were invisible. It was later when alternative and human development paradigms (or elements therein co-opted by mainstream thought) became options to mainstream development that the literature demonstrates an engagement with ideas around women, gender and culture, and to a degree, empowerment. Developing country contexts were assumed to be patriarchal, which imposed, as a rule, male-centred constructs and policies to influence the private and public domains of women's lives, thereby hampering women's access to education, income-generating activities, resources and participation in the political process (Afshar, 1998b; Bhavnani & Bywater, 2009; Bisnath, 2001; Boserup, 1970). Women's (economic) empowerment, therefore, became (and arguably still is seen as being) the key to creating context-specific strategies for poverty reduction.

The evolution of the WID, WAD and GAD paradigms illustrated the trajectory of thought from women's economic empowerment to political and social empowerment as imperatives for overall development and prosperity in a Third World context. The UN-network of agencies has employed, for example, the GAD paradigm for several decades. Hence, within the MDG framework grounded in a GAD paradigm, MDG 3 carried dual objectives in combatting poverty: firstly, it addressed the need for gender equality in education that is, creating opportunities for learning for both girls and boys in primary and secondary education. Secondly, MDG 3's indicators allude to empowering women for the sake of increasing knowledge and education for women to make informed choices for themselves (individually and collectively) and to educate and empower women for the betterment of society as a whole (Kabeer, 2005a). Kabeer refers to

this as the ‘intrinsic and instrumental values’ of educating women respectively (Kabeer, 2005a, 2013).

In the expansive body of literature on empowerment and despite the differences in meaning to different actors there are ‘four generally accepted aspects of empowerment’ (Mosedale, 2005, p. 244):

firstly, to be empowered one must have been disempowered, secondly, empowerment cannot be bestowed by a third party, thirdly, definitions of empowerment usually include a sense of people making decisions on matters which are important in their lives and being able to carry them out and finally, empowerment is an ongoing process rather than a product (Mosedale, 2005, p. 244).

Clearly, the idea of having been disempowered as a prerequisite to becoming empowered relates to the word ‘power’ itself. Indeed power, and those who are able to execute power to influence policy movement and its (re)interpretations, for example, plays a role in many contexts, including in the development context (Clarke et al., 2015). In power structures, and, in particular, structures which reinforce existing power relations of men over women, empowerment is obstructed by perpetuated views of male dominance over women (Longwe, 1998).<sup>34</sup> Male control over household finances (despite a woman’s earning an income) and general decision-making affecting family and household are examples (Longwe, 1998; Moser, 1989).

Secondly, empowerment is not granted by one party to another. There is no endowment of empowerment but rather the act of claiming empowerment comes through action and sustained effort (Mohanty, 1995). Therefore, UN agencies or NGOs cannot deem women empowered but rather ‘can create conditions

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<sup>34</sup> In the Indian context, as perhaps in other contexts, there is most certainly violence against women perpetrated by women. These ingrained forms of violence are embedded in a patriarchal system that devalues the female throughout her life cycle, although older women in some instances in the Indian context may wield power over younger women, for example, mother-in-law over daughter-in-law. As Menon notes, however, gender eclipses age so that sons may be more powerful than mothers-in-law (Menon, 2012; see also Mosedale, 2014).



favourable to empowerment' for women (and other groups) to grasp empowerment on their own (Mohanty, 1995; Mosedale, 2005, p. 244). Thirdly, decisions on and about empowerment are usually undertaken by women themselves made possible with relevant empowerment strategies and education supporting the individual who in turn supports the collective (Kabeer, 1999; Longwe, 1998; Mosedale, 2005). Finally, that women's empowerment is a process and not an outcome is widely recognised (Bisnath, 2001; Kabeer, 1999, 2005c; Mosedale, 2005, p. 244; Stromquist, 1995). Hence, empowerment is not a final destination but a persistent struggle towards gender equality and addressing social justice issues on a continual, reflective basis. Likewise, policy translation, as discussed in Chapter 2, is also always 'unfinished', and in a constant process of shifting, shaping and interpreting to fit into new spaces (Clarke et al., 2015, p. 34). Therefore, meanings of empowerment and interpretations of policy translation are both fluid and 'unfinished', require contextualisation in their assemblage and reassemblage, and must be mindful of time, space and place.

In addition to economic empowerment, scholars acknowledge broader definitions of empowerment which include, for example, political representation of women (Batliwala, 2007; Kabeer, 1999; Mosedale, 2005; Stromquist, 1995, 2002). Women's political representation is integrated into MDG 3 under Indicator 12 (see Table 2, p.46). Batliwala, for example, critically reviews the term empowerment, calling it a 'buzzword' usurped by political organisations to restrict women to two avenues through which they may articulate empowerment – self-help groups (SHGs) and quotas for women in local political representation (Batliwala, 2007, pp. 561-562; Cornwall, Harrison, & Whitehead, 2007).<sup>35</sup> Conceptually, empowerment is linked to notions of political participation as well as to two other elements: 1) broader education initiatives and 2) interventionist strategies of international agencies, multinational organisations and local NGOs (Dawson, 1998; Himmelstrand, 1997; Rai, 2002; Unterhalter, 2005a; Villarreal, 2009). Firstly, with respect to education, Longwe debates the question of

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<sup>35</sup> Other scholars have also labelled empowerment a buzzword. See for example Mosedale (2005, 2014) and Rist (2007).

schooling and education for girls (Longwe, 1998). She draws a distinction between schooling and education in which schooling potentially upholds gender stereotypes, while education, on the other hand, challenges the norms of patriarchal structures (Longwe, 1998). It is then through education that women may organise as a collective to transform systems and structures in wider society. Therefore, for Longwe, empowerment by definition must embody and trace the movement from individual consciousness to a course of collective action (Longwe, 1998, p. 21).

Secondly, Batliwala notes that neoliberalism as a mantra for economic growth and consumerist 'results-based' development programmes has been detrimental to women's path towards empowerment (Batliwala, 2007, pp. 562-563). Interventionist programmes shift the focus of what the priorities of the development agenda should be, that is women and community-organised or community-led approaches to social change, to the quantifiable, donor-funded and donor-implemented programmes (Batliwala, 2007). This reflects the struggle in the development industry in defining the term empowerment and how it is used, misused or infused with meanings to underpin an organisation's or agency's ideology and agenda (Cornwall & Brock, 2005; Dirlik, 1999; Kabeer, 1999; Mosedale, 2014, p. 1122; Nederveen Pieterse, 1998).

It is crucial, therefore, to contextualise the meanings of empowerment. As Afshar notes:

The debate on empowerment must be widened to balance different cases, and contextualised to illustrate specificities. The term itself must be evaluated, and its definition in terms of the ability of the individual to maximise her utility must be challenged. The focus on the individual and her particular circumstances may easily undermine communal activities and goals. Empowered women are not necessarily those women who wish to or can separate their personal and familial needs (Afshar, 1998a, pp. 1-2).

Afshar's comments on personal and familial needs is linked to 'choice' or the 'ability to choose' (Kabeer, 1999). The ability to make informed choices and to have a range of alternatives within those choices presupposes the ability to recognise, understand and act on the range of choices. This in turn relies on power and the ability to determine the types of choices being made – e.g. those choices essential for survival or those choices playing a more subordinate role e.g. 'quality of life' (Kabeer, 1999, p. 437). Kabeer's framework on empowerment centres on *resources, agency and achievements* and how the three elements are interlinked in the empowerment process (Kabeer, 1999, p. 435; 2005c, p. 13). Each of these elements has a foundation – that of choice. Empowerment through *resources* (that Kabeer sees as pre-conditions) is the ability to access 'material resources in the more conventional economic sense, but also the various human and social resources which serve to enhance the ability to exercise choice' (Kabeer, 1999, p. 437). Availing of the human and social resources may include not only tapping into familial relationships but exploiting opportunities beyond the private domain to cultivate relationships in wider societal networks (Kabeer, 1999, p. 437). This may be understood as investing in social capital. *Resources* are thus the material and non-material assets which enable women to participate in group endeavours, open bank accounts in their own names and start small financial ventures (Kabeer, 1999). Bearing in mind that Kabeer structures her framework on the daily lives of women in the development context, one would need to adjust, re-frame and re-negotiate what the metrics of measurement for empowerment for adolescent girls would entail. In contrast to women, adolescent girls generally do not have access to financial resources in the rural Indian context. They are unable to open bank accounts or take out small loans independently. Therefore, what resources may mean to women must be re-interpreted for adolescent girls.

The second feature of empowerment is *agency* (that Kabeer sees as process), that is, 'the ability to define one's goals and act upon them' (Kabeer, 1999, p. 438). Mohanty has been influential in 'locat[ing] agency as the characteristic deserving emphasis rather than an implicit focus on victimhood' in her critique of Western feminist thinking on Third World women (Deo, 2012, p. 150). In fact, Mohanty addresses the myth of a homogenous Third World woman and foregrounds the

visibility of 'Third World woman as a contested category' (Deo, 2012, p. 150; Mohanty, 2003a, 2003b; Mohanty et al., 1991). In these contestations, and in particular in a postcolonial and neoliberal context, how is agency constructed and demonstrated? The question to ask generally is whether agency is exercised and, if so, how does it work as a transformative instrument? For example, a transformative form of agency is a woman's ability to inquire, understand, and think critically about her position within the structure of family, community and society (Kabeer, 1999). The 'transformative forms of agency' should, therefore, be expressed not only in struggling against pressing 'immediate inequalities' but in acknowledging the potential to alter established patriarchal structures for enduring, sustained change (Kabeer, 2005c, p. 16). As Kabeer notes with regards to the MDGs:

It is only through the mobilisation of women, particularly poor women, who are primary stakeholders in all of the MDGs, but particularly the MDG on women's empowerment, that policy makers can be held accountable to ensure that the MDGs are followed through in the spirit of the international movements and meetings that gave rise to them (Kabeer, 2005c, p. 22).

Kabeer, in her critique of MDG 3, suggests that the MDGs must ensure that women's agency is about mobilising as a group as well as understanding gender constructs within family, community and society. Additionally, women's *agency* within the MDG framework must afford avenues to not only question policies but to hold policy makers to account, thereby challenging institutional forms of power. Recognising, but more importantly, understanding socially constructed relationships in both the personal and public spheres, is the first step that can afford women the opportunity to define and act upon their own goals.

How is agency articulated in the context of development and adolescent girls? A brief review of neoliberalism and its effects on the developing (and developed) world illustrates policies which include 'rolling back' of social safety nets, privatisation of state assets, deregulation, and privileging of the individual over

the collective.<sup>36</sup> Within this context of hyper-individualism, personal responsibility and capitalist economic growth, the development project required finding individuals who were worthy of investment and, therefore, beneficiaries of international funding (Chant, 2016a; Murphy, 2012; Wilson, 2011; see Chapter 6). The adolescent girl emerged from this discourse as a worthwhile investment as ‘educating girls quite possibly yields a higher rate of return than any other investment available in the developing world’ (Murphy, 2012, p. 1; Summers, 1992). Through this investment, girls would be educated to take on challenges (health monitoring, education, and sanitation as examples) that should have been addressed by local, state and national governments (Chant, 2016b; Murphy, 2012; Romani, 2016; Wilson, 2008, 2011, 2015). This context is specific to subaltern, rural girls as opposed to middle-class, urban girls (Romani, 2016, p. 377).<sup>37</sup>

The potential commodification of girls in the development context affecting their empowerment and their right to exercise choice is evident here. If agency, then, is about exercising choice, how are choices to exercise agency made by adolescent girls within a prescribed field of development indicators such as health, education and sanitation, when many of these choices may be defined by NGOs, UN agencies and national governments? In other words, we need to understand the nature of choice and agency for adolescent girls and how policy may support or hinder aspirations and the ability to exercise choice. Therefore, drawing on Mohanty’s critique of Western feminism’s positioning of Third World women as victims, we may note that it is in the notion of the dynamic, changing and transformational ‘girl’ that we encourage a vision of adolescent girls ‘not as victims in need of rescue [but rather] as actors in struggles against their oppressions’ (Rai, Parpart, & Staudt, 2007, p. 18).

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<sup>36</sup> See Chapter 3 for a discussion of (post)neoliberalism and development.

<sup>37</sup> I note here that not all rural girls are subaltern or poor and not all urban girls are middle-class. The term subaltern is originally found in the works of Antonio Gramsci, and in particular, in his work on cultural hegemony (Morton, A., 2007). It has been located in postcolonial scholarship and can be found in the works of Guha and Spivak (1988), see also Morton, S. (2007). I draw on the term subaltern to mean those individuals who are marginalised, oppressed and considered of low status within a community.

The final element of empowerment in Kabeer's framework is *achievements* (that Kabeer sees as outcomes) – the transformative nature of which lies in women's ability both to think critically and assess programmes designed to enable women to create and recognise choice (Kabeer, 2005c). 'Choice' is linked to concepts of inequality and creating appropriate measurements for interventions and programmes (Kabeer, 1999, p. 437). This refers to the measurement mechanisms put in place by donor agencies, government agencies and other bodies tasked with quantifying and evaluating results of so-called empowerment programmes. In other words, women's education provides the driving force behind their participation in planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of relevant interventionist programmes from state-level, national-level, international agencies or NGOs. Kabeer comments:

By definition, indicators of empowerment cannot provide an accurate measurement of changes in women's ability to make choices, they merely have to indicate the direction and meaning of change. Disembedded from their context, indicators can lend themselves to a variety of different, and contradictory, meanings. Given the value-laden nature of the concept of women's empowerment, there is a danger that analysts opt for those meanings which most favour their own values regarding what constitutes appropriate choices for women (Kabeer 1999, p. 461).

Women's *achievements* as a category, like *agency*, shares characteristics with adolescent girls. While women's achievements focusses on critical thinking and assessment skills for evaluation of programme interventions, adolescent girls' achievements could focus on connecting adolescent girls groups (AGG) for the benefit of structured linkages across local and regional borders. The adolescent girls groups have the potential to contribute to regional, state and national planning schemes (see Chapters 6 and 7). Along with resources, agency and achievements, Mosedale proposes a fourth and fifth dimension to the framework. A fourth dimension is that women need 'to challenge gender roles as part of any collective struggle they are in' (Mosedale, 2005, p. 252), and that by doing so is to understand the gendered role women play towards seizing 'empowerment' as

women.<sup>38</sup> Fifthly, the framework is extended to include a vision of ‘redefining and extending the limits of what is possible’ (Mosedale 2005, p. 252). Consequently, women need to think beyond themselves as individuals and imagine the ability to exercise choices for women not only now but in the future as well.

Several scholars, thus far, have provided analytical frameworks for their respective articulations of empowerment (Batliwala, 1994; Batliwala, 2007; Kabeer, 1999; Mosedale, 2005; Wilson, 2008, 2015). In addition, Stromquist’s framework provides a support structure for the generally accepted definitions of empowerment as discussed above. The framework reflects on four components of empowerment, that is, ‘cognitive, psychological, economic and political’ empowerment (Stromquist, 1995, pp. 14-15). Cognitively, women must critically examine the ascribed roles for themselves and the men in the wider community, train critical-thinking skills around gender roles and understand their subordination in society (Mosedale, 2005, p. 248; Stromquist, 1995). Psychologically, women need to develop self-confidence, self-esteem and an understanding that they are able to effect change in their communities (Mosedale, 2005; Stromquist, 1995). Economics-driven growth and development has underpinned most empowerment strategies over the past four decades, that is, the idea that economic and financial independence may lead to more decision-making capabilities and self-sufficiency for women (Mosedale, 2005; Stromquist, 1995). A critique of economic independence as a desirable outcome and silver bullet of empowerment initiatives may lead to women’s double burden of balancing employment commitments (whether formal or informal) within the public sphere and attending to the needs of the family or other obligations in the private sphere. A potential further dimension, a so-called ‘triple burden’ on women suggests imposing a third element of community activism to women’s already full lives (Moser, 1989, p. 1801; see also Goodkind and Deacon, 2004; Afshar and Barrientos, 1999; see Chapter 6).

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<sup>38</sup> Mosedale comments that this is not to reject women’s multiple roles as ‘farmers, workers, etc. and [their] choice at times to work with together with men to improve their mutual situation’ (Mosedale, 2005, p. 252; see also Wilson 2008).

Finally, the political component of empowerment refers to women's ability to mobilise effectively and organise in groups for transformative change (Mosedale, 2005, p. 248). Bisnath notes that Monkman extends Mosedale's (and Stromquist's) framework by adding a potential fifth component, a 'physical element – having control over one's body and sexuality and the ability to protect oneself against sexual violence' (Bisnath, 2001, p. 13). Clearly, empowerment must be contextualised socially, politically and culturally to make sense of local interpretations and expectations.

The next section introduces a framework for how we may attempt to understand how policy creation and implementation is influenced by knowledge production in a local context. The framework seeks to map the influence of local understandings of empowerment on a life-skills empowerment programme for adolescent girls.

### ***The Adolescent Girl and Development Perspective***

While there is a vast literature on women and their location within the development agenda, adolescent girls are either missing or referenced within contexts of education or sexual health. There is a growing scholarship on adolescent girls and development as I will demonstrate in Chapters 6 and 7 of this thesis. While many frameworks are useful for understanding one or two aspects of the lived experiences of adolescent girls, they are missing generally from feminist theorisations which appear inadequate for analysing policy movement, development, empowerment and gender in rural India. I draw, therefore, on multiple scholars to develop an analytical framework which addresses the *configurations* (Bhavnani & Bywater, 2009) in an adolescent girl's life as they are shaped by localised policy implementation. I propose the adolescent girl and development perspective which may be used to examine and analyse how policy actors' interpretations of adolescent girls' lived realities affects policy influencing an empowerment programme in rural Maharashtra, India.

Seri Wendoh's piece, for example, appropriately entitled 'Too young to be women, too old to be girls', illustrates the tension in the lives of adolescent girls who inhabit an in-between place – neither child nor adult (Wendoh, 2013).



Wendoh's study focuses on sexual and reproductive health in Liberia and Sierra Leone, telling the story of adolescent girls on the fringe of society and 'the development agenda but more specifically of health interventions targeting young people' (Wendoh, 2013, p. 157). One of the key elements discussed in Wendoh's piece is the ability to exercise agency which lies in the principle of self-determination and the ability and opportunity of adolescents to 'speak and act on their experiences' (Wendoh, 2013, p. 160). According to Wendoh this fosters peer-learning and peer-education and 'empowers [...] peers by enabling them to share and exchange information' (Wendoh, 2013, pp. 160-161). Peer-teaching and learning make up the backbone of the *Deepshikha* programme which I discuss in detail later in the thesis.

Identity construction and citizenship become important in reconceptualising a suitable framework within which to examine adolescence, empowerment and development, and how policies affecting adolescents are translated (Hall, Williamson, & Coffey, 1998, p. 310). Are adolescent girls members of a group – from a political and policy perspective - with a positively constructed identity (Schneider & Ingram, 1993; Singh, 2007)? Because adolescent girls are often rendered silent and invisible there is little knowledge in the scholarship about their being members of a desired group. Yet, their behaviours as a group may be associated with positive, social behaviour and, therefore, they may as a collective embody attributes of a desirable group which would make them 'worthwhile' investments in policy discourse (Schneider & Ingram, 1993). This collective identity, however, is not a permanent or static status as adolescents 'are also in a stage of life in which they find themselves as emergent identities' (Hall, Coffey, & Williamson, 1999, p. 505).

The so-called 'collective identity construction' is one means of including and simultaneously excluding individuals from a community (Lister, 2003, p. 44; Stammers, 2005, p. 64). This might be within nation-state borders, referring to tribal and non-tribal peoples, groups of people across class and/or race lines or groups of individuals based on age (e.g. children and youth), disability, sexual orientation or gender (Arora-Jonsson, 2013; Kabeer, 2005b; Lister, 2007a, 2007b;

Williams & Invernizzi, 2008). It is what Lister refers to as the denial of 'possession of rights and duties within a state', that is 'the sociological level of exclusion and inclusion' (Lister, 2003, p. 44).<sup>39</sup> Inclusivity, however, goes beyond articulation of those excluded. It actively makes an argument for including those individuals or groups who have been excluded and/or marginalised. Therefore, in this framework, I offer a fresh perspective on how to include the adolescent girl in exploring gender relations in the private sphere and the public realm as it relates to policy translation, empowerment and development. A visual diagram of the perspective is offered in Figure 1 towards the end of this chapter. The following sections serve to explicate each component of the adolescent girl and development perspective.

### **Third World Feminism**

Western feminist thought (in particular liberal feminism and radical feminism) has often universalised and homogenised Third World women's experiences. In these standardised views, intersecting concepts of multiple oppressions (in addition to patriarchy) were ignored and as a consequence the theoretical and methodological models for researching women in the Third World disregarded women's agency, location within a patriarchal and postcolonial system as well as the converging effects and layers of ethnicity, caste, class, religion and place (Mohanty, 2003a; Narayan, 1997; Narayan & Harding, 2000).<sup>40</sup> The works of Third World feminist scholars (Mohanty, 2003a, 2003b; Mohanty et al., 1991; Narayan, 1997; Narayan & Harding, 2000), therefore, are meaningful and significant in framing the theoretical foundations of this thesis.

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<sup>39</sup> In this paradigm the other half to the sociological level of exclusion is the 'legal level' of exclusion which includes the denial of 'legal status of membership of a state, as symbolised by possession of a passport' (Lister, 2003, p.44). This would exclude those groups or individuals who were either not born within the borders of a nation-state or were not able to claim citizenship through birth.

<sup>40</sup> While these elements certainly are important factors in any analysis of the circumstances and situation of Third World women, Menon cautions that the very term 'woman' builds a matrix of complex, intersecting components (Menon, 2015, p.10). Therefore, a Third World woman in India, for example, may be a rural, village day labourer struggling to meet her practical and strategic needs (Moser, 1989). She may, however, equally be an academic, an educated woman waging an intellectual battle within the Indian academy (Menon, 2015, p.10).

I draw on concepts in Third World feminism and what Mohanty terms ‘women-of-color epistemology’ (Mohanty, 2013, p. 980) to draw attention to agency, ethnicity, caste/class and place of adolescent girls. Additionally, a Third World feminist framework may be used to highlight the position of the adolescent girl of colour, in particular, the South Asian girl in this research and recognise the heterogeneity of experience. Mohanty’s seminal works ‘Under Western Eyes’ (1988) and *Feminism Without Borders* (2003) engage with Third World feminism, unpacking Eurocentric, universalised and often stereotyped views of Third World women (Mohanty, 2003a, 2013). In particular, the work challenges a

monolithic construction of the third world woman in feminist literature. Arguing for cultural and historical differentiation in the representation of third world women, Mohanty argues against the collapsing of subaltern lives into one essentialized saga of oppression (Shome & Hegde, 2002, p. 265; see also Mohanty et al., 1991).

Self-critical reflections on her own works as well as political, anti-racist and anti-imperialist activist scholarship within the US academy (where she is based) led Mohanty to engage with notions of transnational feminism<sup>41</sup> (Mohanty, 2013). While her work was originally produced within the socioeconomic and political contexts of Third World feminist academics in the US and (in solidarity) with feminist scholars in the Global South, Mohanty’s work has been used in political, social, and cultural contexts as diverse as Mexico, Sweden, and Palestine (Mohanty, 2013, pp. 981,983, 986). A Third World feminist framework may, therefore, illuminate policy translation which transcends borders, and yet is acutely sensitive to ‘local conditions in their historical specificity’ and recognises agency and voice (Deo, 2012; Herr, 2014, p. 6; Mohanty, 2003a, 2003b; Mohanty et al., 1991) in working towards transformational change. I draw, therefore, on the idea of historical specificity and location in my research.

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<sup>41</sup> I do not engage specifically with transnational feminism which advocates transformational change across borders and jurisdictions with the support and strength of broad transnational feminist networks and linkages. For further discussion see, for example, Baksh and Harcourt (2015); Mohanty (2013); Harcourt (2013); Moghadam (2005); Grewal & Kaplan (1994).

## **Women, Culture and Development**

The women, culture and development (WCD) paradigm dovetails with Third World feminism and centres Third World women in its examination of ‘lived experiences’ (Bhavnani et al., 2003a; Bhavnani et al., 2009; Bhavnani et al., 2016; Chua et al., 2000). The WCD model aims to use *crossroads* that are more fluid and less constrained in their interactions, so-called *configurations* in which ‘the idea of configurations suggests activity and graceful movement with a consequent attribution of agency to the subjects of the configurations’ (Bhavnani & Bywater, 2009, pp. 53-54), agency being the power exercised by an individual or community over her/their circumstances. Therefore, in the pursuit of deeper understandings of policy translation in this thesis, multiple heterogeneous crossroads of age, gender, rural living, caste, class, ethnicity, adolescence, citizenship and empowerment are examined as they interconnect and flow into and out of each other.

The WCD model promotes the study of configurations which takes note of agency while defining culture as lived experiences.<sup>42</sup> Specifically, the WCD paradigm defines culture as

lived experiences and struggles – the interrelationship between production and reproduction, and the making visible of women’s agency – [...] while we know the importance of economic, political and social structures in shaping women’s lives, we also consider it necessary to centre the relationship between production and reproduction and to ensure that women’s agency is visible (Chua et al., 2000, p. 823).

Culture is seen, then, not in terms of national borders or in notions of a country’s heritage but rather as

inherent in all relationships and [which] offers a non-economistic, yet still material, way to produce knowledge and to present different strategies for making struggle and social change (Bhavnani & Bywater, 2009, p. 62).

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<sup>42</sup> Bhavnani et al. draw on Hall’s (1986, 1992) notion of culture as lived experience. For a discussion see Bhavnani et al. (2003, 2009) and Chua et al (2000).

Likewise, the term 'women' is not solely restricted to the exploration of women with the marginalisation of men but rather

because women are a foundation from which we can illuminate the circumstances of all people's lives, including men's lives. To focus on women within development in this way offers prospects for seeing the lives of people as more tangled and therefore as richer than has hitherto been suggested. Thus, the WCD paradigm applies to both women and men (Bhavnani & Bywater, 2009, p. 62).

Hence, in this research the importance of gender and gender relations in understanding the complexities of adolescent girls' lived experiences is a critical factor in examining policy translation and its relevance to local communities. As with Third World feminism, the WCD model does not make mention of adolescent girls and their location within the development context. However, I draw on the elements of agency, culture as *lived experience*, women (in this case girls) as 'gendered' that is in their relation to men (and boys), as well as heterogeneity as configurations to examine MDG 3 and its translation in the Maharashtrian context.

### **Social Relations Framework**

As noted above, Kabeer's *Resources, Agency and Achievements* framework is a significant contribution in setting the boundaries of a discussion around notions of empowerment. As a feminist economist, Kabeer has contributed not only to the scholarship on women's economic empowerment, but indeed to a broader understanding of women's non-economistic means to achieving empowerment, that is a holistic sense of well-being (Kabeer, 1994). As with most existing frameworks, adolescent girls are not explicitly articulated and are often assumed to be located under the umbrella of 'women.' I draw, therefore, on Kabeer's social relations framework (1994) and apply it to adolescent girls and their location in order to examine institutional sites of power and how gender relations that is, interaction between adolescent girls and boys, make these sites of power visible.

The social relations framework is a tool with which programme planners may understand institutional dynamics of power. These manifestations of power may be found in formal public institutions such as ‘state, market and community’ but may also be located in the private sphere (Kabeer, 1994, p. 280). Accordingly, the framework looks to address ‘human well-being’- the ultimate goal of development - in which ‘human resources are one of the key means for achieving this goal’ (Kabeer, 1994, p. 279). It is, then, the interaction between human beings in this sense, whether in the public or private realm, which becomes the focus for understanding where power is located and how it is deployed to influence or persuade individuals, families, communities and so on. These interactions lie within specific crossroads of age, gender, ethnicity, caste/class, etc. It is in the deconstruction of these crossroads that we may begin to analyse how power is articulated and employed. Through the social relations framework there is scope to examine gender relations as referring

specifically to those aspects of social relations which create and reproduce systematic differences in positioning of women and men in relation to institutional processes and outcomes. Gender relations are therefore interwoven into the broader set of social relations structuring the division of resources and responsibilities, claims and obligations between different social groups of women and men within any given society (Kabeer, 1994, p. 280).

For this reason I draw on the social relations framework as this thesis explores gender within the context of rural Maharashtra and the implications for policy translation within a localised setting, and, as such, gender relations in the private realm and in public spaces, such as community and markets, play a significant role.

### **Citizenship and Becoming**

Similar to the terms development and empowerment (see Chapter 3 and above respectively), citizenship is a contested and multi-dimensional term (Hall et al., 1999, p. 503; Lister, 2003). The scholarship on citizenship is vast and spans ideas from historical meanings of citizenship to gendered citizenship and notions of

children's and youth citizenship (Hayward, 2012; Isin & Turner, 2002; Kabeer, 2005b; Lansdown, 2005; Lister, 1991, 2003, 2007b; Marshall, 1950; Said, 1994; Williams & Invernizzi, 2008). Classical concepts of citizenship encompassed two main themes – liberal citizenship and civic republicanism (Lister, 1997; Marshall, 1950). Liberal citizenship was embedded in individualist notions of citizenship in which citizens were able to exercise their rights by 'pursuing their own individual interests' (Lister, 1997, p. 32). Civic republicanism, in contrast, encouraged citizenship in which individuals did not pursue their own goals, but rather deferred to a sense of 'civic duty' and 'the common good' in which the public sphere became the place for engaged political action at the collective level (Lister, 1997, p. 32). It is, then, in the notion of citizenship as engagement in the political at the collective level that I draw on Lister's notion of active citizenship. It is in this space that agency is illuminated as an attribute of citizenship. Lister (1997, p.35) notes:

Citizenship as participation represents an expression of human agency in the political arena, broadly defined; citizenship as rights enables people to act as agents.

At the global level, institutions and intergovernmental organisations, such as UN agencies, engage with broad notions of citizenship based on the work of T.H. Marshall.<sup>43</sup> Children, in Marshall's definition, were not considered citizens with full rights and obligations and were instead conceptualised as 'citizens in the making' (Marshall, 1950, p. 25). So, while children had the right to be protected from harmful conditions, they did not have a clear right to education as children; they had the right as an 'adult citizen to have been educated' (Marshall, 1950, p. 25).

In contrast, Hayward offers a more nuanced understanding of children's citizenship and its manifestations based on a child's location in the Global North or South (Hayward, 2012, pp. 3-4). While acknowledging inequalities of

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<sup>43</sup> <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/social-and-human-sciences/themes/international-migration/glossary/citizenship/>

opportunity and wide gaps in rates of wealth and poverty affecting children in countries in the Global North,<sup>44</sup> children in the Global South must contend with issues which reflect the complexities in their lives, including, for many, receiving an education, having sufficient food and clean drinking water, as well as surviving in areas of conflict (Hayward, 2012, p. 4). Indeed, Hayward makes the case for acknowledging children's opinions and for recognising children's agency in determining the best solutions to issues directly affecting children (Hayward, 2012, pp. 64-67). Finding solutions to these basic survival issues, then, may be embedded in concepts of active citizenship, which is made up of three primary elements: 'participation, rights-based development and good governance' (Clarke & Missingham, 2009, pp. 955-956). These elements create the backbone to active engagement at the individual and collective levels with the ultimate aim of transformational change within greater society (Clarke & Missingham, 2009; Onyx, Kenny, & Brown, 2012).

Active citizenship, however, has been criticised for a focus on volunteerism and the burden this adds to women's (and consequently adolescent girls') already full lives (Afshar & Barrientos, 1999; Bronstein, 1982; Goodkind & Deacon, 2004; Moser, 1989; see Chapter 7). For adolescent girls this is not only a triple burden but could conceivably be a quadruple or even quintuple burden along with familial duties, wage-earning, pupil responsibilities and peer-teacher obligations. Whereas volunteerism may provide a legitimate means of providing essential services such as health and education provision to rural communities (Kumar, 2012, 2013), for many critical scholars, volunteerism can be masked under 'participation and participatory development' which is seen as imposing or forcing a 'tyranny of participation' (and implications of power) on rural villages and their communities (Cooke & Kothari, 2001; Hailey, 2001; Kothari, 2001).

It is, therefore, essential to first discuss the construct of the adolescent girl and her (active) citizenship. The implementation of development interventions for

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<sup>44</sup> For example, see Arora-Jonsson (2013) for a discussion of inequalities, wealth and poverty in the context of Sweden.



adolescent girls was grounded in a broader context of the Beijing Platform for Action<sup>45</sup> and the drivers to accelerate progress according to challenges and issues laid out in the Platform. These were articulated within the ‘broad social, economic and human rights’ context (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 1997). The Beijing Platform’s Girl Child document (Section L)<sup>46</sup> is extensive and outlines the discrimination against female children from conception through the life cycle to old age and widowhood. The first post-Beijing UN-agency meeting on adolescent girls took place in Ethiopia and focussed on concerns that

adolescent girls are particularly vulnerable, physically and psychologically. They are often treated as inferior and socialized to have low self-esteem. They may receive conflicting and confusing messages on their gender roles and may be denied the same opportunities as boys. Many at the onset of puberty, or even before, are considered adults and face early marriage, premature pregnancy, denial of educational opportunities and coercion into commercial sex work. The adolescent girl often falls between the cracks of her family’s understanding, her community’s support and her government’s programmes (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 1997, p. 2).

In this statement there is no clear indication of how the adolescent girl is viewed in terms of her citizenship, yet implicitly she lacks the status of citizen. This is evident in the manner in which the document pays particular attention to adolescent girls and their lack of access to government services and programmes. Broadly, citizens, or those acknowledged to be citizens, are generally situated in the purview of government schemes. Adolescent girls ‘fall through these cracks’ due to the lack of their recognition as citizens.

Citizenship, in this thesis, is examined within the boundaries of adolescents’ age and lived experiences in Chandrapur district in Maharashtra. Consequently, I draw

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<sup>45</sup> <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/platform/>

<sup>46</sup> <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/platform/girl.htm>

on the concept of ‘evolving capacities of the child’ (Lansdown, 2005, p. ix) which refers to children and youth and their rights as embedded in Article 5 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the provision of ‘directions and guidance, provided by parents or others with responsibility for the child, [who] must take into account the capacities of the child to exercise rights on his or her own behalf’ (Lansdown, 2005, p. ix). The *capacities* concept takes into account children from infancy to adulthood and allows for children’s developing ability to cognitively understand situations and processes and make decisions for themselves as they mature (Lansdown, 2005, p. xiii).

The *evolving capacities* document, supported by UNICEF, notes children, and by implication adolescents, have the right to be protected, but they also have the right to make decisions affecting their lives within the framework of *evolving capacities* (Lansdown, 2005, pp. 23-24). This is a clear affirmation for the concept of agency in children’s citizenship as noted by Hayward (2012). Lansdown’s work, therefore, has been instrumental in establishing a structure that recognised child and adolescent agency as central to rights and obligations of the child and adolescent citizen. The *evolving capacities* document created at the intergovernmental/global level has contributed to an understanding of the rights of children and adolescents and may be attributed to acknowledging their cognitive (reasoning and analytical skills), emotional, psychological and social capabilities at different phases of life (Lansdown, 2005, pp. 16-20).

The key concepts of the document cover six areas which include i) the nature of the relationship between children and parents; ii) the evolving capacities and development of the child; iii) a rights-based approach; iv) respect for the evolving capacities of a child within a country’s legal framework; v) ‘approaches to assessing evolving capacities’; and vi) ‘creating environments to promote, respect and protect children’s evolving capacities’ (Lansdown, 2005, pp. ix-xi). The idea of the evolving capacity is ‘new in international law [and] has profound implications for the human rights of the child’ (Lansdown, 2005, p. ix). Like many of the international conventions, including the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against

Women, and the Beijing Platform for Action, the *Evolving Capacities* is a document embedded in a human rights approach to citizenship (Kabeer, 2005b; Lister, 1991, 2003; Stammers, 2005). The idea of *evolving capacities* may be linked to scholarship by Uprichard, for example, who discusses children as ‘beings and becomings’ (Uprichard, 2008, p. 303).

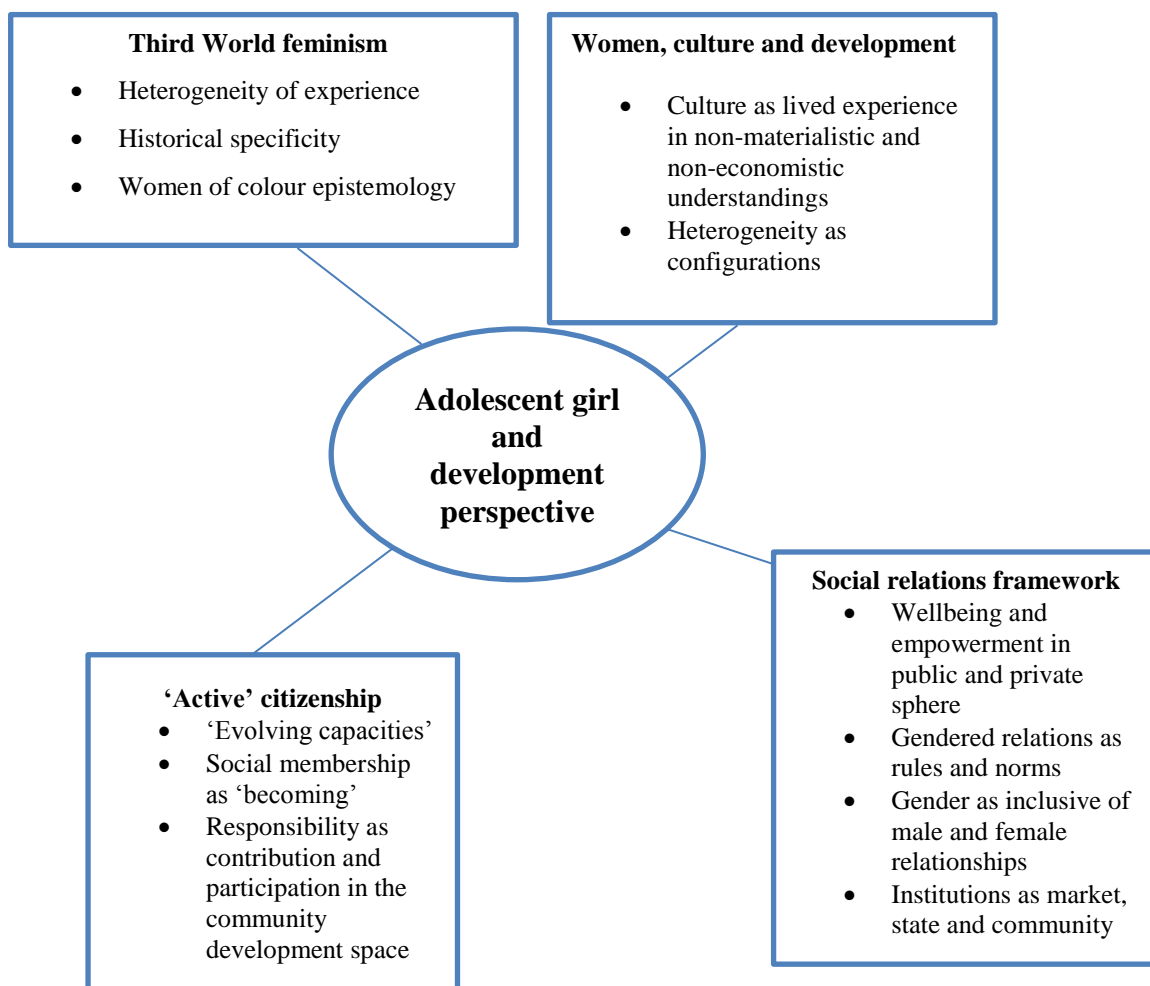
While Uprichard does not write specifically about children and citizenship, she makes relevant points around children’s ‘empowerment and agency’ and connects this to ‘the notion of children as knowledgeable agents ‘being and becoming’ active agents in the world [which] is especially important in terms of how we construct children as participatory agents more generally’ (Uprichard, 2008, p. 310). ‘Becoming’, therefore, is linked to concepts of evolving capacities and ‘citizens in the making’ (Lister 2005 in Clutton, 2008, p. 172; Lister, 2005); Marshall, 1950). While this approach aims to embed children and their rights in the present, it may inadvertently place young people in a position of aspiring to become citizens (Kumar, 2013, p. 33). The result of this is an assumption that once the young person has achieved adulthood (18 years of age) s/he will have achieved full citizenship status. As I discuss later in the thesis, women, minorities, poor and other vulnerable groups have often been denied full citizenship status despite being of legal age. Perhaps a more suitable understanding of youth citizenship, therefore, is one more closely aligned with empowerment, that is, citizenship as a ‘process not an outcome’ in which one continues to struggle and challenge traditional notions of citizenship beyond entry into adulthood (Lister, 2003, p. 6; Moser, 1993). Hence, active citizenship may be understood, in the context of adolescence, as one in which belonging or social membership is framed as ‘becoming’ that is, understood as on the path to becoming full-fledged citizens. Further, active citizenship entails responsibility as contribution and participation in the community development space.

To conclude I draw on aspects of the above four frameworks - Third World Feminism; women, culture and development; the social relations framework; and citizenship - to create the analytical framework of the adolescent girl and development perspective for examining the translation of MDG 3 into a local

empowerment programme for adolescent girls. The concept of agency is in the foreground and provides a link to join elements of all four frameworks into one cohesive framework.

Figure 1 below illustrates the adolescent girl and development perspective.

**Figure 1: The adolescent girl and development perspective**



## ***Conclusion***

This chapter has reviewed the term and manifestations of empowerment in the relevant literature as it relates to development and policy. I note that while Millennium Development Goal 3 is articulated as an empowerment goal there appear to be two important elements to understand its translation with respect to this thesis. First, the purpose of this thesis is not to measure national, state or local achievements against the empowerment goal. Rather the purpose is to understand how empowerment has been translated within policy movement across jurisdictions and borders, how the actors involved have infused values and meanings in their understanding of policy and how MDG 3's translation has affected local implementation of an empowerment programme as it has been assembled and reassembled (Clarke et al., 2015; Mosedale, 2014, p. 1116; Stone, 2012, 2017).

Secondly, policy translation in this thesis employs a specific example of empowerment as it relates to interventionist programmes for adolescent girls. That is, it is a specific place, time and geography which frames understandings of policy translation. Accordingly, as Third World feminism and, increasingly transnational feminism, note, it is important to understand the universal aspects of policy translation through the illustration of a specific example (Khagram & Levitt, 2008; Moghadam, 2005; Mohanty, 2003a, p. 503; 2013; Mosedale, 2014, p. 1120). As a result, building transnational and cross-border feminist networks assist in gaining a deeper understanding of broader feminist struggles (which acknowledge multiple configurations) (Harcourt, 2013) while recognising the importance of localised collective efforts. In drawing on multiple frameworks to create the adolescent girl and development perspective, we see it is possible and desirable to acknowledge local specificities while widening the lens to recognise universal aspects of struggle and to encourage cross-border networking. In deploying the AGDP, then, we may examine multiple aspects of policy actors' interpretations of policy movement. Hence, we are able to explore more deeply how notions of active citizenship are influenced by neoliberal values and how institutional relationships are reflected in localised cultural contexts. Therefore, within the context of empowerment and development, we can ask questions that

are specific to the location and situation of policy makers, NGOs and adolescent girls in rural Maharashtra while appreciating shared experiences in other locations.

One of the key indicators of empowerment that we are able to draw from the literature is the ability to exercise agency. Therefore, in the second half of the thesis, that is, in Chapters 6 and 7, I explore how agency emerges in the context of my study and what constitutes the borders of agency. In addition, I examine if and how adolescent girls are restricted to certain forms of agency as they are located within an empowerment paradigm defined by a UN agency. Further, interventions and empowerment programmes take place within a market-driven development agenda making it important to understand what effect a neoliberal approach to development with ‘individual responsibility’ may have on collective struggles to challenge power structures. Finally, in the fluidity of configurations (caste, class, subaltern voices, rural living, adolescence, culture and gender), we may then explore how empowerment programmes and their policies influence adolescent girls and their engaging with their local communities. The following chapter explores the research methodology and methods employed in data collection and analysis in this thesis.



## **Chapter 5**

### **Methodology**

#### ***Introduction***

Adolescent girls – not quite girls and not quite women – have only recently drawn the attention of feminist scholars who wish to understand and examine the place of adolescent girls not only within the family but within broader contexts of community and nation. This research, therefore, addresses a specific gap in the gender and development literature and illuminates how policy translation affects an understudied and often marginalised group within the broad context of the Millennium Development Goals.

In the previous chapter, I offered the rationale and justification for developing a new framework, grounded in feminist scholarship, for examining adolescent girls within the development project – the adolescent girl and development perspective (AGDP). It provides the necessary analytical framework within which to examine the collected data and answer questions to provide a critical perspective on the role of MDG 3 and how its aspirations have been translated into an empowerment programme for adolescent girls in rural Maharashtra, India.

Feminist research places high value on knowledge and understanding in research which leads to transformational change and places ‘gender as the categorical center of inquiry and the research process’ (Hesse-Biber, 2014, p. 3). This chapter provides an overview of the methodology and methods of analysis in answering my research questions, in particular, how local values and meanings shape interpretations of MDG 3 in the rural Maharashtrian context. The first section of this chapter explains the ontological and epistemological underpinnings of the study and makes the case for adopting a feminist qualitative research approach. It also offers a discussion of my place as a researcher. The second section explores the case study site, the origins of the programme under examination and the demographics of the interview participants. The third section is dedicated to the methods used in data collection and analysis.



## ***Ontology and Epistemology***

Ontology may be considered as the ‘external influences or “realities” that impact on and are part of the research process’ (Wickramasinghe, 2010, p. 73). It refers to the structure through which we are able to determine the epistemological stance of a particular piece of research, the questions to be considered, and methods of data collection and analysis appropriate to the research (Grbich, 2007). Epistemology may be considered the science of ‘knowledge production’, which in the Western context, may be understood as a gendered and a ‘masculine’ form of knowledge ‘which prevented women from acquiring and producing it’ (Anderson, 1995, p. 50). In contrast, feminist epistemology endeavours to understand ‘the ways gender influences what we take to be knowledge’ (Anderson, 1995, p. 50). Gender, however, in this study is not the only dimension affecting the lives of adolescent girls. As noted in the analytical framework of the adolescent girl and development perspective, multiple configurations affect the daily lives of adolescent girls in rural Maharashtra. Therefore, a feminist epistemology which makes visible the configurations of an adolescent girl’s life and her interactions with family, community members and beyond contributes to broader understandings of ‘meaning-making processes’ at multiple levels (Wickramasinghe, 2010, p. 74). In order to make sense of these processes and to underpin the principles of feminist research epistemologies, Jayaratne and Stewart note the following points for consideration: 1) that research undertaken needs to consider how it may affect ‘women’s lives’ (in this case adolescent girls’ lives) and has the potential to do so positively; 2) that the questions posed and the methods adopted render the analysis appropriate and useful for the participants and researcher; 3) that the researcher be aware of potential pitfalls and challenges posed in both quantitative and qualitative research; 4) and that the research should be accessible and disseminated through appropriate channels (Jayaratne & Stewart, 1991, pp. 101-103).<sup>47</sup> It is my hope that this research, therefore, offers a fresh perspective on understandings of adolescent girls in rural settings, how policy is translated

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<sup>47</sup> The extended list of considerations which includes, for example, quantitative research methods, time and effort placed in research and possible political analysis of data may be found in Jayaratne and Stewart (1991).

through empowerment programmes and, indeed, executed through a neoliberal development agenda and the implications for the adolescent girls, their families and communities in light of such interventions. In order to contextualise these questions, I discuss my research setting and outline my collection and analysis of data, including relevant documents, demographics of interview participants and need for observation of training sessions. In the data collection and analysis subsection later in the chapter, I explain my use of thematic analysis to engage with interview material, documents and other expressions of sociocultural knowledge. The following section, however, discusses my choice of grounding this study in feminist qualitative research.

### ***The Case for Feminist Qualitative Research***

This research is a small-scale, qualitative, single-case study project which examines how Millennium Development Goal 3 has been translated into a local context. The study was undertaken in a natural setting (Yin, 2009) and benefitted from access to physical, social and cultural indicators to allow for recording of ‘thick descriptions’ (Geertz, 1973; Schwartz-Shea & Yanow, 2012). The aim was not to seek quantitative data which measures the number of girls educated or the statistics on women in political representation. Rather, in conducting face-to-face interviews and deeper discussions, I sought insights into the concepts of how global development aspirations have been assembled and reassembled to accommodate multiple actors and their interpretations of multiple realities – complementary and competing. The research participants were located at the global, national, state and local levels.<sup>48</sup> That is, multiple sites of knowledge production were accessed to contextualise and understand the narratives of global Goals as they manifest and ‘fit’ into local sites.

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<sup>48</sup> The interview with the UNDP administrator (who normally sits in New York City, NY) took place in New Zealand during a visit to her home country. The interviews with UNDP India head office staff took place in Delhi. UNICEF India’s State of Maharashtra office staff who were responsible for and affiliated with the *Deepshikha* programme were interviewed in Mumbai and assisted in on-site visits and facilitation of local interview partners in rural Maharashtra.

In order to carry out this research, to underpin its relevance for adolescent girls and their communities, and to contribute to a wider scholarship in gender and development, I chose to undertake this research from a feminist perspective for two reasons. First, this research is grounded in Third World feminism which highlights women's agency, in the case of this thesis, adolescent girls' agency, and pays attention to historical specificity and heterogeneity of configurations. Therefore, we may explore policy translation and how it manifests in an empowerment programme for adolescent girls by mapping the advent of the MDGs and their historical significance in the broader development agenda. We may then examine how a global aspiration, such as MDG 3, is infused with local values and meanings as it moves across space and time and manifests in a localised context. In addition, we may explore sites of power both within the private and public spheres by examining social dynamics and a perpetuation (or otherwise) of gender and other inequalities (Fonow & Cook, 1991; Hesse-Biber, 2014; Ramazanoglu & Holland, 2002). What constitutes feminist approaches and methods may be dependent on the feminist tradition wherein the research lies (such as liberal feminism, Marxist feminism, radical feminism and so on), that is, there is no specific method or framework which stakes a claim as exclusively feminist (Ramazanoglu & Holland, 2002). Second, this small-scale, qualitative research study focuses on an empowerment programme designed to provide adolescent girls with skills and knowledge they may use to empower themselves, their families and their communities. It is the feminist perspective which illuminates how we may understand multiple perspectives, including from institutional sites of power how such programmes are implemented, who is involved in their design, and what indicators constitute success of the programme for participants and providers.

Qualitative research may mean many things to many people, but, Denzin and Lincoln offer an 'initial, generic definition: Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible' (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 3). Qualitative research, therefore, is embedded in social inquiry and 'ways of knowing' (Anderson, 1995), and in the case of feminist qualitative research, this

relates to ‘paying close attention to the specificity of women’s individual lived experiences’ (Hesse-Biber, 2014, pp. 4-5). In addition, while there are a variety of methods to qualitative research (which I discuss below), a significant point of qualitative research is researcher reflexivity. Feminist qualitative research, in particular, draws attention to the researcher, her specific social location and notions of power in relation to herself and her research participants (Olesen, 2005, pp. 250-251; Ramazanoglu & Holland, 2002, pp. 118-119). It is important, therefore, that the researcher be aware of her position and how it may affect access to research sites, interview participants, and gatekeepers (Grbich, 2007; Hesse-Biber, 2014; Lindlof & Taylor, 2011). I discuss this aspect of my research as an insider/outsider researcher in the next section.

### ***The Insider/Outsider Researcher***

In recognising myself as a person of Indian origin with knowledge of many, but most certainly not all, Indian customs, values, norms and attitudes, I actively and self-critically examined the experience of my ‘Indian’ self within this field research site. Acknowledging my contribution (as interviewer and researcher) and the interviewee’s contribution to the dialogue which took place within a specific setting,<sup>49</sup> I experienced vigorous and lively discussions which provided deeper insights into my research questions and fostered an environment of mutual respect and consideration. In other words, negotiating a very fluid area of identities not just as a woman of Indian heritage but as a researcher, someone who, compared to the *Deepshikha* participants and trainers, for example, comes from a place of relative privilege, was a constant source of reflection.

My ability and necessity to speak with gatekeepers like UNICEF or local NGO-directors placed me (as compared with the *Deepshikha* trainers and participants) in a different power relationship to those organisations. I did not experience the dynamics (at least not overtly) of negotiating power nor did I feel a sense of mismatched power relations when gaining access to or speaking with people in

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<sup>49</sup> These settings were, for example, office complex, small meeting room, city location, village location, individual or group discussion, etc.

relative positions of power: Academics, UNICEF and UNDP staff or local policy officials. In contrast, the *Deepshikha* trainers and participants, compared with my position as researcher, were indeed in positions of greater power as it related to the ‘local knowledge’ I was seeking. Although I was able to communicate in Marathi (the local language), I relied on translators/interpreters to assist in understanding the local dialect and vocabulary used by Gond-speaking people in rural Chandrapur. Gonds live in both Chandrapur and Gadchiroli districts (see Map 3 below) and are *adivasis*, that is, tribal people. In these cases, I relied on a translator who assisted me with interpretation as local language was sprinkled with idioms or terms typical of Gonds. It was a means of re-assurance that I had correctly understood what the individual had said to me. Translation, therefore, goes beyond movement of policy and may include translating, that is, making linguistic sense of policy or questions (Clarke et al., 2015; Freeman, 2009). While my focus in policy translation is not linguistically-based, nonetheless, care needed to be taken while interrogating notions of well-being, gender, empowerment, and development in Chandrapur district. I now turn to the research site.

### ***Research Site – India, Maharashtra and Chandrapur***

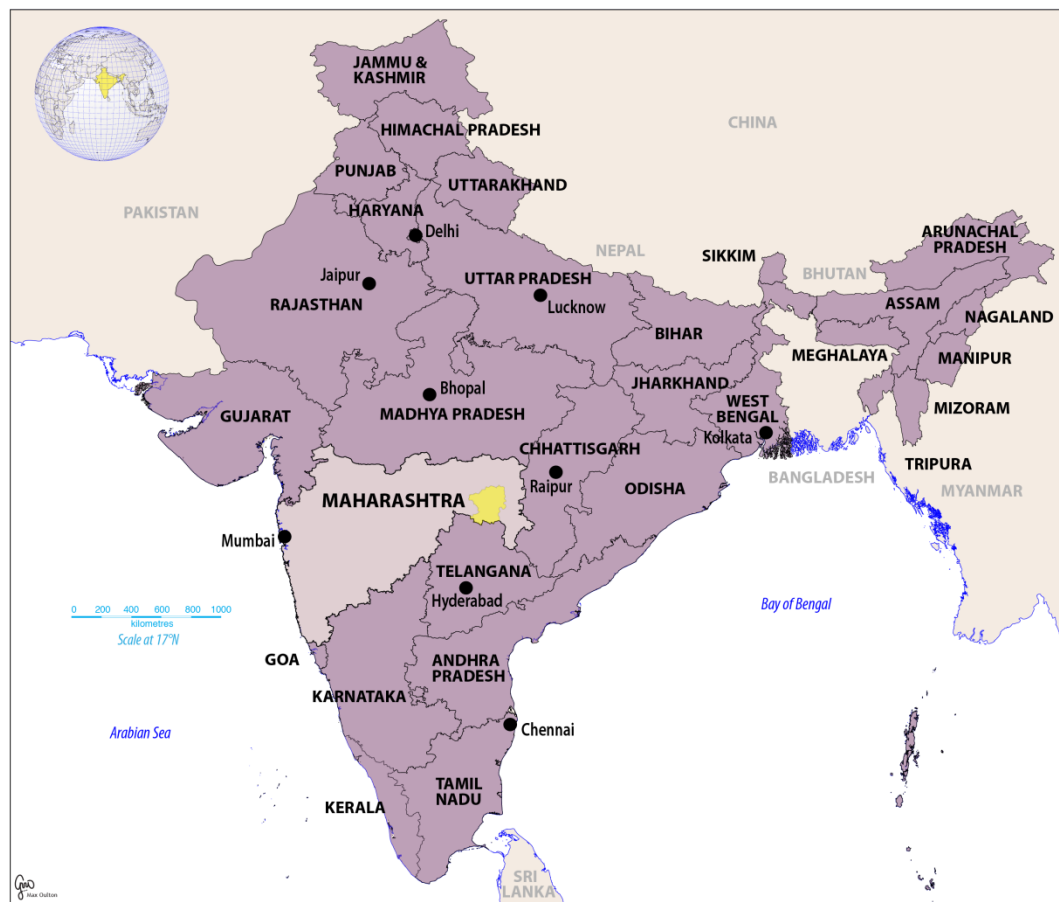
India, with a population estimated at 1.21 billion<sup>50</sup> in 2011, is one of the fastest growing economies in the world and from 2004 to 2007 enjoyed “growth rates exceeding 8 per cent” annually (United Nations Development Programme, 2007, p. 2). Yet, nearly half the population has been left untouched by the benefits of increasing prosperity as “42% of the population [exists] below Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) of USD 1.25 per day” (United Nations Development Programme, 2010). The UNDP, therefore, working in cooperation with the Department of Economic Affairs of the Indian Ministry of Finance, developed a United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) for India 2008-2012 (United Nations Development Programme, 2007). This programme was centred on seven key states – ‘Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh – [states] with low rates of human development, gender disparity indices and high proportions of scheduled castes and tribes’ (United

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<sup>50</sup> <http://censusindia.gov.in/> 2011

Nations Development Programme, 2007). Focussing on such states however, that are traditionally seen as disadvantaged, without looking at failure or success stories in other parts of the country can condemn depressed or underdeveloped areas to low success rates. While direct comparisons need to be avoided, understanding success or failure within a regional or local context can assist in other parts of the country as communities adapt strategies, infuse them with their own cultural meanings and negotiate power relationships (and structural oppression) at the local level. The research setting or fieldwork site was limited to one district in one state in India, a state which has thus far been understudied and as a consequence underrepresented in scholarly development literature – Maharashtra.

**Map 1: India Highlighting State of Maharashtra**



Source: Map drawn by Max Oulton, Cartographer, University of Waikato, 2016

Maharashtra is a central-western state in India, spanning from the Arabian Sea on the west coast to the Deccan Plateau in the interior. The state's largest city, its capital, and India's financial capital, is Mumbai. According to the 2011 Government of India Census, Maharashtra had a total population of 40.8 million people made up of a rural population of just over 21 million and an urban population of roughly 19.8 million.<sup>51</sup> The population of Chandrapur district, the case study site, is as follows: total population is 87,554 and of that the rural population is 50,247 and the urban population is 37,307 (see Table 4 below). Chandrapur district, the case study site, is located in the eastern interior of Maharashtra bordering Yavatmal, Wardha, Nagpur, Bhandara and Gadchiroli districts as well as the state of Telangana (see Map 2, p. 95 and Map 3, p.96). The population of the state lives primarily in a rural environment. Chandrapur district, although heavily industrialised, is more rural than urban. Rural Chandrapur district is traditionally home to disadvantaged and marginalised groups such as scheduled tribes and castes. Table 4 below summarises the population figures.

**Table 4: Maharashtra and Chandrapur District Populations at a Glance**

Maharashtra total	Maharashtra rural	Maharashtra urban	Chandrapur [C] district total	[C] rural	[C] urban
40,891,000	21,036,000	19,855,000	87,554	50,247	37,307

Source: [http://www.censusindia.gov.in/2011census/population\\_enumeration.html?drpQuick=&drpQuickSelect=&q=Maharashtra+population](http://www.censusindia.gov.in/2011census/population_enumeration.html?drpQuick=&drpQuickSelect=&q=Maharashtra+population)

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**Map 2: State of Maharashtra Highlighting Chandrapur District**



Source: Map drawn by Max Oulton, Cartographer, University of Waikato, 2016



**Map 3: Chandrapur District**



Source: Map drawn by Max Oulton, Cartographer, University of Waikato, 2016

The UNICEF project I studied as illustrative of the policy translation of MDG 3 is located in Jiwati block in Chandrapur district<sup>52</sup> in Maharashtra, a rural setting traditionally home to disadvantaged groups such as scheduled tribes and castes, also known as *adivasis*. Eastern Maharashtra – Chandrapur and Gadchiroli districts – borders an area marked by the presence of an anti-state political movement known as the Naxalite<sup>53</sup> movement or Maoist movement which arose in response to deeply oppressive social, economic and political conditions across many states in India. The Naxalite movement active in this area - and across central, eastern and south-eastern parts of India – has been seen by some as a terrorising force for tribal villagers. The tribal population is often caught in the crossfire between state forces, e.g. police, and Naxal guerrillas, each group

<sup>52</sup> Blocks and districts are administrative units. Districts are made up of multiple blocks and, in moving up the administrative hierarchy, the state is made up of multiple districts.

<sup>53</sup> For further information and history about the Naxalite movement in India refer to Gawande (2011) and Pandita (2011).

alleging villagers' affiliation and cooperation with the other. As a result police often respond with indifference to specific acts of violence from Naxalites against the local population. Set against this background, villagers and adolescent girls, in particular, remain vulnerable.<sup>54</sup>

### ***The Origins of the Deepshikha Programme***

The origins of the *Deepshikha* programme lie in a former senior UNICEF Maharashtra Official's (UN1) engagement with programmes for adolescents while heading a UNICEF office in an eastern state of India. This was in 1986, at least twenty years before the creation and implementation of *Deepshikha* in Maharashtra (UN1, 2012).<sup>55</sup> It was the first time that an organisation had sought to target adolescent girls, and train and encourage them to take up community-based activities to address issues in daily village life (UN1, 2012). This prototype of the *Deepshikha* programme included training sessions in a residential-style environment in a primarily *adivasi* region of the state (UN1, 2012). The programme did not endure as there were numerous concerns, including inadequate education and training of local facilitators as well as a haphazard approach to training of adolescent girls. In some instances, there was such upheaval within communities that the continuation of the programme caused dire consequences for many of the girls and their families (UN1, 2012). We can, therefore, appreciate that some form of education or empowerment programme for adolescent girls is not a new concept, yet the gap between a first attempt at intervention and a more

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<sup>54</sup> The preceding paragraph was published in a paper I wrote entitled 'From gender empowerment to inequalities among adolescents: An emerging strategy for Goal 3 in the post-2015 MDG agenda' November 2012 during the UN Global Thematic Consultation 'Addressing Inequalities' (Nandedkar, 2012).

<sup>55</sup> While it is unusual to include interview material in a methodology chapter, this information was not available in official documents and was only available through access to the senior male UNICEF official in Maharashtra. I found this information significant as it demonstrated a need for adolescent girl empowerment programmes. However, it became clear that inadequate planning and training of staff caused, in some cases, more harm than good. Reflection on this process of planning, implementation and execution contributed to the 2008 iteration of the adolescent girl empowerment programme. Information on interview participants is to be found under the heading Data Collection and Analysis, subsection Interview Participants.

professionalised, holistic initiative is roughly two decades. As a senior female UNICEF official (UN2)<sup>56</sup> commented in an interview

empowerment and adolescents is not a new concept. It is something that has always been felt, but people were not ready to invest. With investment we are trying to consciously approach it [adolescent girl programme], so it has to be part and parcel of the development approach' (UN2, 2012).<sup>57</sup>

The *Deepshikha* life-skills programme, therefore, is distinctive in its aims to address multiple facets of empowerment – social, political and economic – through a cross-sectoral approach rather than a focus on single-sector initiatives (such as health, nutrition or education) (UN1; UN2, 2012; UNICEF, 2004, 2007, 2011; UNICEF State Office for Maharashtra, 2009a, 2009b, 2009c).<sup>58</sup> *Deepshikha*, founded in 2008 by UNICEF, is a project set up in a tripartite partnership with the Government of Maharashtra, local non-governmental organisations<sup>59</sup> and Barclays Bank. *Deepshikha* aims to empower girls through a life-skills education programme administered through the use of local trainers, local mentors and peer-to-peer facilitators. The project seeks to educate and, thereby, empower girls to actively participate in crafting responses to social issues affecting young women and their communities. The programme operates through the identification and training of *prerikas* or adolescent girl volunteer-facilitators, who complete a training course covering diverse topics such as 'health, sex and gender issues and children's rights' (UNICEF State Office for Maharashtra, 2009a, 2009b, 2009c). Young women are encouraged to finish 40 sessions at which time they should retain essential skills to establish so-called Self-Help Groups (SHG) which provide support and assistance for girls in the long-term including the set-up of modest banking schemes for business ventures and access to funding for

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<sup>56</sup> UN2 was a senior female programme official with UNICEF Maharashtra in Mumbai. She offered extensive insight into the programme.

<sup>57</sup> For a deeper discussion of adolescent girls as investment see Chapter 6.

<sup>58</sup> The government of India has supported multiple interventions for adolescent girl and empowerment programmes albeit in sectoral initiatives. For a sample see Sambodhi (2014).

<sup>59</sup> These are not indicated/named on the UNICEF website.

healthcare or education (UNICEF State Office for Maharashtra, 2009a; see Chapters 6 and 7).

The programme's trainer manual documents that the intervention was designed 'to empower adolescent girls with knowledge and skills to be equal partners in the development of their communities' (UNICEF State Office for Maharashtra, 2009a, p. 2). For UNICEF India, programmes for adolescent girls are an important element in their overall development planning and implementation. India had an estimated adolescent population of over 240 million in 2011 (UNICEF India Country Office, 2011, p. foreword). These adolescents, both girls and boys, are seen as the drivers and stakeholders in youth activism for the common good. A UNICEF India document notes, 'they deserve our attention as they hold the key to breaking entrenched cycles of poverty, inequity and deprivation' (UNICEF India Country Office, 2011, p. foreword). Combatting poverty and inequalities, according to UNICEF India, may be done with the appropriate skills training, knowledge and support so that adolescents may become 'the next generation of leaders and [...] move India forward' (UNICEF India Country Office, 2011, p. foreword).

The *Deepshikha* programme under the auspices of the 'Building Brighter Future' programme was partially funded by Barclays Bank with a 'total budget of USD 1.68 million' (Sambodhi Research & Communications, 2014, p. 13). The programme's specific goal was

to successfully develop low-cost and replicable strategies that succeed in empowering adolescent and young girls and through them address the issue of gender in development that leads to ensuring an equitable and sustainable development environment and accelerates progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals (Sambodhi Research & Communications, 2014, p. 15).

This quote from the *Deepshikha* Evaluation Report of the first phase of the *Deepshikha* programme implicitly suggests that adolescent girls take up collective responsibilities and duties towards achieving broader development

goals (Sambodhi Research & Communications, 2014). Therefore, according to senior UNICEF official (UN1), the purpose of the *Deepshikha* empowerment programme for adolescent girls was to teach, support and strengthen adolescent girls individually so that they may work more strongly as a group for community development:

We have created groups, supported them [adolescent girls] into group activities, savings, and now entrepreneurial training programmes where they become a collective, a critical group within the community which is going to impact on all aspects of village life (UN1, 2012).

UNICEF, the United Nations Children's Fund, has been active in India since 1949 and is the largest of the UN-network of organisations worldwide. In its 2011 State of the World's Children report entitled *Adolescence: An Age of Opportunity*, UNICEF noted that while much has been achieved with regards to ameliorating poverty among children below ten years of age, adolescents, especially girls, remain at high risk for poverty indicators including lack of education, early marriage and all forms of discrimination. UNICEF places the number of adolescents in India at '243 million accounting for a quarter of the country's population' (UNICEF India Country Office, 2011, p. Foreword).

### ***Deepshikha* programme modules**

The *Deepshikha* programme is divided into three teaching modules. Each module is taught within a specific time frame in a residential camp-style environment (ten days for Modules 1 and 2; five days for Module 3). The adolescent girls and young women share a common space for eating, sleeping and learning. Following the first teaching module each young woman, now known as a *prerika* or adolescent girl volunteer-facilitator, returns to her village. She is tasked with forming an adolescent girls group (AGG) within 30 days of her return and to begin peer-teaching the first module. After a period of 60-90 days, she departs for the training camp to undertake module two. The same process is repeated for module three (UNICEF State Office for Maharashtra, 2009a, 2009b, 2009c).

The first ten-day training module explores ideas of the self and the body, coming together as a group, the status of girls and women, and sex and gender among other topics designed to teach the girls and young women about themselves individually and collectively (UNICEF State Office for Maharashtra, 2009a). The second ten-day training module builds on the first and develops knowledge in areas such as reproductive and sexual health, HIV/AIDS, self-help groups (SHGs) for girls and women, and fosters facilitation and negotiation skills. Additionally, the module familiarises the adolescent girls with concepts of financial literacy (UNICEF State Office for Maharashtra, 2009b). The third and final more compact five-day training module, building on modules one and two, encourages and develops entrepreneurial and business skills. Teaching material in each unit within each module is delivered in a variety of methods from role plays, songs, and written work to artistic, creative work to accommodate different learning styles (UNICEF State Office for Maharashtra, 2009c). Upon completion of these modules, the new *prerika* is supported by her mentors – the gender and field coordinators – when she returns to her village.

#### **Demographic tables of *Deepshikha* programme participants**

The following three tables (5, 6 and 7) provide an overview of the villages, adolescent girls and *prerikas* in three blocks in Chandrapur district. All three tables were compiled by UNICEF Maharashtra.

**Table 5: Deepshikha Data Chandrapur District**

<b>Deepshikha Data - Chandrapur District (2012)</b>					
Sn	Details	Blocks			
		Nagbhid	Jiwati	Chandrapur	TOTAL
1	Number of villages	117	165	101	<b>383</b>
2	<i>Deepshikha</i> reached in villages	109	165	101	<b>375</b>
3	Village population	129,546	63,544	124,882	<b>317,972</b>
4	Adolescent Girl Population	7,831	3,846	8,403	<b>20,080</b>
5	Adolescent Girls reached under <i>Deepshikha</i>	3,417	3,705	2,815	<b>9,937</b>
6	<i>Prerika</i> Trained	191	195	174	<b>560</b>

Table 5 provides a general overview of Nagbhid, Jiwati and Chandrapur blocks within Chandrapur district. The table is an outline of 1) the number of villages in each block with a total for the district; 2) the number of *Deepshikha* programmes in villages in each block; 3) the total population of all villages in each block; 4) the number of adolescent girls in each block; 5) the number of adolescent girls who have been reached, that is who have been exposed to the *Deepshikha* programme; and 6) the number of trained *prerikas* for each block.

**Table 6: Caste of *Prerika* and Adolescent Girls in Three Districts**

<b>Caste of <i>Prerika</i> (Volunteer-Facilitator) 2012</b>					
	<i>Prerika</i>	Nagbhid	Jiwati	Chandrapur	Total
1	General	1	3	9	13
2	NT	10	38	19	67
3	OBC	71	19	36	126
4	SC	55	67	70	192
5	ST	54	68	40	162
	<b>TOTAL</b>	191	195	174	560
<b>Adolescent Girls (General) 2012</b>					
1	General	23	386	123	532
2	NT	94	743	113	950
3	OBC	1,759	326	1,256	3,341
4	SC	773	724	808	2,305
5	ST	768	1,591	483	2,842
	<b>TOTAL</b>	3,417	3,770	2,783	9,970



Table 6 provides an overview of the breakdown of caste affiliation (where reported) of *prerikas* (upper section of Table 6) and adolescent girls generally (lower section of Table 6) in Nagbhid, Jiwati and Chandrapur blocks in Chandrapur district. In both sections of the table under caste affiliation General refers to unreported caste affiliation. NT refers to nomadic tribes. OBC refers to Other Backward Classes. SC refers to Scheduled Castes and ST refers to Scheduled Tribes. These caste identifiers refer to historically oppressed tribes and castes as recognised in the Indian Constitution (see Ranade, 1990).

**Table 7: Education level of Adolescent Girls in Three Districts**

	<b>Education level (2012)</b>				
	<b>Adolescent Girls</b>	<b>Nagbhid</b>	<b>Jiwati</b>	<b>Chandrapur</b>	<b>Total</b>
1	Never attended school	-	154	10	<b>164</b>
2	till 4th std	6	439	15	<b>460</b>
3	5-7th std	74	1,379	526	<b>1,979</b>
4	8-10th std	1,486	1,425	1,412	<b>4,323</b>
5	10-12th std	1,074	351	736	<b>2,161</b>
6	Graduation and other (12 + )	775	19	116	<b>910</b>
	<b>TOTAL</b>	3,415	3,767	2,815	<b>9,997</b>

Table 7 provides an overview of the education level of adolescent girls generally without a breakdown of those taking up *prerika* duties. Std indicates standard which is, for example, 4<sup>th</sup> grade in the US context or Year 4 in the New Zealand context. Graduation and other (12+) refers to those girls and young women beyond high school matriculation but with no further breakdown of graduate, postgraduate or vocational training qualifications. The interview discussions with senior UNICEF officials revealed that most *prerikas* had at least an 8<sup>th</sup> standard

education. This is confirmed by the number of girls who have completed 8<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> standard of school as per Table 7.

### **Who are the actors in the *Deepshikha* programme?**

There are roughly four sets of actors involved directly with the *Deepshikha* programme. The first group is the adolescent girls themselves along with their group leaders called *prerikas*. The *prerika* is the first point of contact for individual adolescent girls within villages as she is the adolescent-girl volunteer organiser, leader and facilitator/trainer of an Adolescent Girls Group (AGG). She calls meetings, disseminates information and organises action groups on specific topics within the community (for example, sanitation, village sweeping, maternal and child health, immunisation).

The second group is located at the state level – UNICEF Maharashtra. The influence of the state office permeates to the village level via the programme trainers and gender and field coordinators active at district, block and village levels. The gender and field coordinators provide direct, on-the-ground support for *prerikas* in the villages. They facilitate discussion, offer assistance in planning adolescent girls meetings and are essential support staff who help newly-trained *prerikas* negotiate with local families and *panchayats* as well as general troubleshooting. UNICEF and associated staff, therefore, support the *prerikas* in the three-module education framework. The *Deepshikha* programme trainers are young women coached and taught by an education and training organisation affiliated with UNICEF in Maharashtra to build capacity among the local population for decentralised local planning and to train *prerikas* in the skills of the *Deepshikha* programme.

A third group is made up of local non-governmental organisations (NGO). These organisations work not only with the adolescent girls as partners in the *Deepshikha* programme, but they also have parallel priorities in government-led local and district planning initiatives. Their priorities often centre on government-

supported health schemes<sup>60</sup> within the village which is led by the *gram panchayat* or local village council. The *gram panchayat* is tasked with the most basic of village level planning and is expected to create an action plan for village level development.<sup>61</sup> The *gram panchayat* is headed by the *Sarpanch* and supported by a Deputy *Sarpanch* (Maharashtra State Board of Secondary and Higher Secondary Education Pune 2007, pp.61-62).

A final group of actors engaged with the adolescent girls at the block level are the Block Development Officials. The official at this level while not immediately involved in training and education of adolescent girls recognises the potential of the girls in her/his block and encourages and supports their participation (where appropriate) in the *Deepshikha* training. Peripherally, UNDP affects the *Deepshikha* programme and in turn the adolescent girls. UNDP's priorities lie primarily in government capacity-building which in turn is meant to assist in people capacity-building at the local level.

### ***Data Collection and Analysis***

I conducted fieldwork in India from March – June 2012. Prior to departure I spent much of my time undertaking secondary desk research, contacting prospective interview participants (academics, UN-network staff members, NGOs, etc.) for

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<sup>60</sup> There are many government-funded schemes in India such as Integrated Child Development Scheme or Ministry of Women and Child Development programmes which are designed to support village level health or education projects. In addition, the Ministry of Youth Affairs has sport programmes for adolescents.

<sup>61</sup> The action plan is believed to aid in the next higher level of planning for the block. In Maharashtra the *Panchayati Raj* or rural local government is divided into three levels. The pinnacle of the three-tiered structure is the *Zilla Parishad* tasked with overarching planning and development of the district (Maharashtra State Board of Secondary and Higher Secondary Education Pune 2007, p.55). The next level down is the *Panchayat Samiti* which 'functions at the block (*taluka*) level' (Maharashtra State Board of Secondary and Higher Secondary Education Pune 2007, p. 59). The head of this mid-level group is the Block Development Officer (Maharashtra State Board of Secondary and Higher Secondary Education Pune 2007, pp. 60-61). The smallest and most basic democratic unit is the *Gram Sabha* made up of local people who come together to discuss local village issues. Their mandate was strengthened by the 73<sup>rd</sup> constitutional amendment in the early 1990s (Maharashtra State Board of Secondary and Higher Secondary Education Pune 2007, p.64). Each level of the administrative structure is tasked with different duties.

discussions at the national, state and local levels and reviewing the policy studies, development, and empowerment literature. It was during this time that I interviewed the UNDP administrator (on the Millennium Development Goals in an international context) on the occasion of her visit to New Zealand. In addition, I interviewed the then director of UNICEF New Zealand to gain a better understanding of UNICEF's work generally and in relation to the Millennium Development Goals. UNICEF New Zealand prioritises the Pacific Island states for NZAID and other government-aid schemes. Before undertaking any interviews, I first applied for and received human research ethics approval. A copy of the Participant Information Sheet and Participant Consent form may be found in Appendix 2 and 3, respectively.

## ***Methods***

### **Interviews**

Prior to interviewing individuals or groups in the field, I gathered and reviewed relevant literature on the theoretical and analytical frameworks – Third World feminism, the WCD paradigm, citizenship, adolescence and the social relations framework – to aid in creating questions. The aim of the interviews was to understand the lived experiences and ways of meaning-making, while acknowledging women's agency and making sense of women's struggles. A sample of the interview questions is included in Appendix 4. Each set of interview questions was tailored to the interview participant to gain a fuller understanding and better appreciation of their location, their understanding of certain terms (such as empowerment or well-being), including the meanings each participant or group of participants ascribed to the terms, and the importance of their role in the *Deepshikha* empowerment programme.

### **Interview participants**

I completed 24 audio-recorded interviews and 7 short snapshot audio-recordings from villages and *Deepshikha* training sessions on a digital voice recorder. I conducted face-to-face, semi-structured, in-depth interviews and employed a catalogue of questions as prompts for discussions to avoid a question-answer environment. Interviews were conducted with senior and mid-level UNICEF staff

in Mumbai, senior and mid-level UNDP staff in Delhi, academics at two universities in Delhi, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in Chandrapur district, *prerikas* (adolescent girl volunteer-facilitators), *Deepshikha* programme gender and field coordinators, journalists, and MBA students all in Chandrapur district. The interview with the senior male UNICEF staff member came through a recommendation from the senior female UNICEF staff member who suggested that I would be able to receive deeper background information on the origins of the programme if I contacted him. It was an unplanned but very fruitful interview.

Interviews with UNICEF staff, UNDP staff, MBA students as well as Indian academics were conducted in English. My original list of interview participants did not include MBA students. The two young women I interviewed were participating in business-placement programmes in Nagbhid block through their home institution in Mumbai. As they were present at the time of the interviews in Nagbhid, I found it useful to interview the students on their perspectives of the entrepreneurial work they did with adolescent girls. Interviews with *prerikas* (adolescent girl volunteer-facilitators), gender and field coordinators, block development officers, journalists and NGO heads were conducted in Marathi (local language). Both English and Marathi interviews were recorded onto a digital voice recorder and transcribed by me, providing written manuscripts for analysis. The interviews in Marathi were translated and then transcribed by me. Where appropriate I have inserted the original Marathi-language quote in Devanagari script with an English-language translation in the analysis chapters (see Chapters 6, 7 and 8).

Access to UNDP staff in Delhi was facilitated through one of my supervisor's UN contacts in New York City, New York. Access to the UNDP administrator was arranged through another supervisor's contact at the University of Waikato, New Zealand. I was able to contact UNICEF staff in Mumbai via email and arrange appointments with appropriate experts. As a gatekeeper UNICEF Mumbai provided assistance in facilitating access to project sites, training sessions and other field visits. I was able to access and coordinate appointments with knowledgeable academics via email prior to departure and subsequently through

mobile phone contact during my research visit. In addition to the interview participants, field work provided the opportunity for visual documentation of the *Deepshikha-Prerika* training session. After obtaining consent from programme participants and trainers, I took over 20 photos at one such session.

All interview respondents were presented with a form for their signature after I explained the purpose and significance of the research (Appendices 2 and 3). They were then able to give informed consent and were given the option to opt out of the interview and research study altogether. None of the interview participants chose this option. All respondents were guaranteed anonymity for their participation in the interviews. For the participants who either had rudimentary knowledge of English or who could not speak or read English, I translated the form into spoken Marathi and obtained their informed consent via an audio-recording. All of the recordings are kept by me and are secured to ensure confidentiality and anonymity of participants and their responses. The interview participants have been organised into an alphanumeric coding system which can be seen in Table 8 below.

**Table 8: Alphanumeric codes India field research March-June 2012**

<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Code</b>
UNICEF	Senior Male Staff State Office for Maharashtra	Mumbai	UN1
UNICEF	Senior Female Staff State Office for Maharashtra	Mumbai	UN2
UNICEF	Female staffer State Office for Maharashtra	Mumbai	UN3
UNICEF	Male Field Officer State Office for Maharashtra	Chandrapur	UN4
UNDP	Female Senior Staff	Delhi	UN5
UNDP	Mid-level Male staff	Delhi	UN6
UNDP	Administrator	New York	UN7
UNICEF	<i>Deepshikha</i> programme <i>Prerika</i>	Jiwati	PR1
Women's NGO	Female Director	Chandrapur	NGO1
Local NGO	Male Director	Jiwati	NGO2
Marathi Language Newspaper	Male Journalist	Chandrapur	J1
Marathi Language Newspaper	Male Journalist	Chandrapur	J2
Training Organisation	Female <i>Deepshikha</i> trainer/gender coordinator	Chandrapur	T1
Training Organisation	Female <i>Deepshikha</i> trainer	Chandrapur	T2
Training Organisation	Male <i>Deepshikha</i> trainer	Chandrapur	T3
City Administration	Male senior official	Chandrapur	PO1
Block administration	Male Block Development Officer	Jiwati	PO2
Local NGO	Male Youth coordinator	Jiwati	YC1
Local NGO	Female Gender/Field Coordinator	Jiwati	GFC1
Local NGO	Female Field coordinator	Nagbhid	GFC2
MBA student, Mumbai	Female NGO intern	Nagbhid	I1
MBA student, Mumbai	Female NGO intern	Nagbhid	I2
JNU	Female Academic	Delhi	AC1
JNU	Female Academic	Delhi	AC2

### **Interview analysis and Nvivo Software**

In my research, therefore, I transcribed all interviews, both English and Marathi, from audio-recordings to written texts using time stamps. For Marathi interviews, I translated from Marathi (audio) into English (written) using time stamps to assist in organising translated text. In this way, I was able to view a written transcript in English, review the time stamp and find the appropriate original Marathi statement in the audio-recording. English-language interviews were also transcribed using time stamps for ease of reference. This assisted in analysis of interviews for thematic analysis (see below).

I uploaded all written transcripts and the accompanying audio-recordings to Nvivo, a data management software system. As part of the research methodology for my thesis I incorporated the use of Nvivo software as a qualitative research and data management tool. Nvivo functions assist the researcher in finding connections, coding for them, and employing other tasks while analysing data. The purpose of using Computer-Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS) is to stimulate a richer analysis of data and extract ideas and concepts which have been left hidden in the information (Sinkovics & Alfoldi, 2012, p. 817). Apart from this, the software allows for transparency in research methodology, coding, and analysis as each stage of the process is recorded (Edhlund, 2011). The ‘trail of evidence’ (Yin, 2009) is used in bolstering the ‘trustworthiness’ of the data as each phase of analysis is logged (Sinkovics & Alfoldi, 2012, p. 817). While the software does not substitute the researcher’s competency to draw analyses and conclusions, as a research tool it supports the researcher in further reflection of the data and encourages high standards of quality in data interpretation (Sinkovics & Alfoldi, 2012).

I used Nvivo to begin an initial organisation of nodes for sorting the transcripts. For example, I had eight main nodes with multiple subnodes. I used this method of organising interview transcripts to gain an initial understanding of terms used in the interviews. I then was able to use the terms to begin an initial sorting of themes and ideas which emerged from the transcripts. From there I was able to



organise the interview transcripts into groups of actors and begin the analysis of specific themes which began to emerge from the data. This was a multi-level approach to analysing the interview transcripts which were rich in detail. I provide a sample of nodes in Appendix 5.

### **Documents**

I gathered a range of documents (approximately 20 in total), including official UNICEF documents on the *Deepshikha* programme (3) and UNICEF State of the World's Children (SOWC) reports (5). In addition, I assessed official documents from UN agencies such as Human Development Reports (2) at country and state levels as well as the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1) and the Beijing Platform Section L which addresses the Girl Child (1). Further, I collected a *Deepshikha* evaluation report (1) as well as the Maharashtra Citizen Charter (1) and India's First Periodic Report (1) on citizenship. Table 9 provides an overview of the documents I examined. Apart from the undated Maharashtra Citizen Charter, the documents were published from 2000 – 2014.

**Table 9: United Nations and other Documents**

<b>Name of Document</b>	<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Year</b>
Millennium Declaration	United Nations	2001
<i>Deepshikha</i> Trainer Manuals 1, 2 and 3	UNICEF	2009 (all)
State of the World's Children (SOWC)	UNICEF	SOWC 1999: Education  SOWC 2004: Girls, Education and Development  SOWC 2007: Women and children: The Double Dividend of Gender Equality  SOWC 2010: Child Rights  SOWC 2011: Adolescence: An Age of Opportunity
Human Development Report	United Nations Development Programme	Human Development Report Maharashtra 2002
Human Development Report	State of Maharashtra	Human Development Report Maharashtra 2012
<i>Deepshikha</i> Evaluation Report	Sambodhi Research & Communications	2014
Maharashtra Citizen Charter	State of Maharashtra	No date
UNDP Vision Statement 2014-2017	United Nations Development Programme	
India's First Periodic Report	Ministry for Women and Child Development	2001
United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child	United Nations	1989
Beijing Platform for Action Section L Girl Child	United Nations	1996
Adolescent Girls and their Rights	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs	1997
Evolving Capacities	UNICEF/Lansdown	2005
Thematic Issue before the Commission: The role of men and boys in achieving gender equality	United Nations Economic and Social Council	2004

### **UN Human Development Reports**

The United Nations Development Programme publishes *Human Development reports* (HDR) which are either country- or region-specific. The UNDP published a state report for Maharashtra, India in 2002 (Maharashtra Human Development Report), focussing on topics such as gender issues and education (Government of Maharashtra, 2002a, 2002b) with a more recent report in 2012 (YASHADA, 2014). The Maharashtra HDR 2002 gender issues chapter highlights the status of women in Maharashtra and covers a wide range of topics from female/male sex ratio to circumstances surrounding widows and single women, violence against and trafficking in girls and women and health-related issues. In addition, there is a discussion of women's economic position within and outside the household and in political representation such as the *panchayati raj* (local council) system in rural Maharashtra.<sup>62</sup> A section on schooling in the Maharashtra HDR offers an overview of the level of women's education, however, for specific statistics and education-related topics there is a separate chapter on education; A lengthy list of 'gains' and 'gaps' outlines on-going work, successful outcomes and significant deficits in gender equality and empowerment.<sup>63</sup> In comparison to the UNDP Human Development Reports, UNICEF's reports appear to shed more light on the circumstances of children and adolescents in India.

### **UNICEF State of the World's Children Reports**

UNICEF, as a member of the UN network of organisations, has its own set of documents, monitoring and reporting for children around the world. The UNICEF *State of the World's Children* (SOWC) reports published since 2004 underpin my research. UNICEF's priorities lie in working with governments to achieve successful outcomes of programme implementation in the area of equity in children's education and health. These programmes, according to UNICEF, need to be embedded in country frameworks and owned by governments in order to be

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<sup>62</sup> For a broader discussion see United Nations Development Programme (2002). Human Development Report Maharashtra 2002: Chapter VII Gender Issues.

<sup>63</sup> United Nations Development Programme (2002). Human Development Report Maharashtra 2002: Chapter VI Education.

successful. For an explanation of further documents analysed for the thesis refer to Appendix 6.

### **Observation**

During fieldwork in India, I strived to maintain transparency as a researcher informing interview and observation participants of my presence and intention. I received informed consent from interview participants on every occasion and observed a number of individuals and groups during this stage of data gathering. Refer to Appendices 2 and 3 for Participant Information and Informed Consent forms. Gathering data in the field – both through interviews and observation – was vital for my outlining a structure to the research and establishing context both culturally and socially. Unlike laboratory research, these observations took place in a ‘natural setting’ without artificial boundaries (Denscombe, 2007).

According to the observation methods and development fieldwork literature (Denscombe, 2007; Scheyvens, 2014; Scheyvens & Storey, 2003; Silverman, 2010), there are four main elements of observation which the researcher should follow: 1) understanding the situation as a whole at the field study site; 2) gaining specific and ‘focussed knowledge’ for a particular action or event once a level of confidence and comfort in the field site has been achieved; 3) moving from the ‘focussed knowledge’ to ‘special observations’, highlighting ‘unexpected or contradictory’ actions; and 4) the researcher attempting to ‘identify issues and problems which participants themselves regard as crucial (Denscombe, 2007, p. 219). The point is to observe instances which indicate how members of the setting see things – their views, beliefs and experiences’ (Denscombe, 2007, p. 219). Field notes and audio-recordings of group sessions with *Deepshikha* participants and programme trainers as well as individual interviews with UNICEF officials and local NGO staff were, therefore, critical components in providing an overall picture of the *Deepshikha* project. Documenting observations and processes in field notes in a timely fashion was crucial to maintaining the overall integrity and validity of the gathered data (Denscombe, 2007; Flick, 2006; McNabb, 2004; Scheyvens & Storey, 2003; Silverman, 2010).

Criticism of observation as a method is noted as the notion of the researcher as an ‘artificial’ insertion into the research setting. Although this research took place in a ‘natural setting’ (Denscombe, 2007; Holstein & Gubrium, 1995) and was a ‘naturally occurring phenomenon’ (Yin, 2009), as the programme existed before I entered and continued to exist after I departed, I was an ‘artificial’ addition to the overall situation. Through repeated visits and group discussions (these were clearly explained before interviewing or observing began as outlined in my human research ethics application), I hoped to gain an appreciation and understanding of the adolescent girls’ lives and how issues concerning them were (or were not) reflected in the localised empowerment programme. A digital voice recorder in these settings was often an ineffective tool for capturing time, place and setting. Instead, I kept a fieldwork journal and recorded impressions, observations and thoughts to supplement any recordings of interview participants. Therefore, in the situation particular to my field research site, I hoped that my personal background would be, if not helpful, at least not a hindrance to the research process.

**Photograph 1: Rajura 2012 *Deepshikha* Training Session Young women working in group during interactive session**



Rajura 2012 *Deepshikha* training session, Photo: Gauri Nandedkar

**Photograph 2: Rajura 2012 *Deepshikha* Training Session Young women engaging with facilitator during session**



Rajura 2012 *Deepshikha* training session, Photo: Gauri Nandedkar

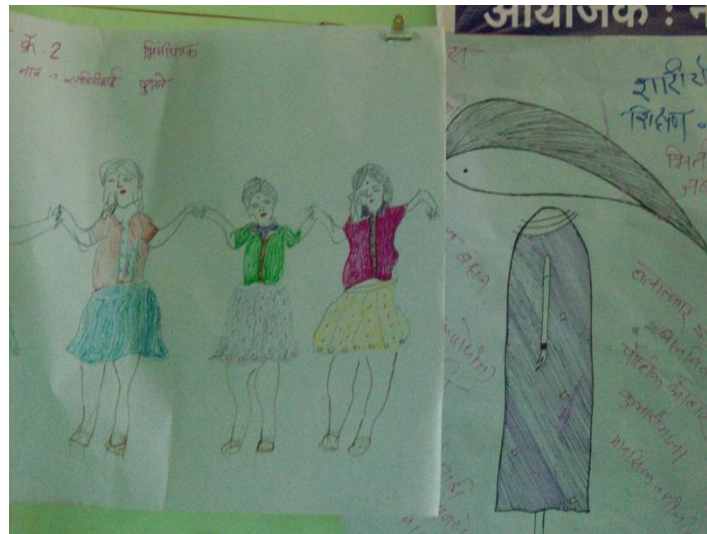
### ***Culture and Interpretive Policy Analysis***

Like many cross-disciplinary projects, this research while located in one thematic area extracts concepts and ideas from a broader body of scholarship. While this research is not entrenched in methods or ethnomethodology common in anthropology of policy (the field has made a significant contribution to policy studies and policy translation in particular), I note a discussion in the field as it relates to culture and interpretive policy analysis (Jenkins, 2007; Shore & Wright, 1997; Wedel et al., 2005a; Wedel, Shore, Feldman, & Lathrop, 2005b).

Culture features in many anthropological frameworks as well as in interpretive policy analysis (Kingfisher, 2013; Yanow, 2000, 2003). I made clear in the previous chapter that culture in this thesis refers to *lived experiences*. Yanow's use of the term 'culture', for example, is referenced in relation to 'the ontological possibility of treating collectives – communities of meaning, for example – as 'real' for analytic purposes' and for transporting 'meaning-focused, ethnographic methods from their source in cultural anthropology to the realm of policy practices' (Yanow, 2003, p. 232). This can be accomplished through the use of

artefacts (objects) and language as they relate to context-specific meanings and the actors providing those meanings to make sense of how culture contributes to policy analysis; and culture recognises the significance of ‘non-exclusively-cognitive (such as tacit, kinaesthetic, and aesthetic) knowledge’ for making sense of policy (Yanow, 2003, pp. 232-233). As Yanow notes: ‘To understand the consequences of a policy for a broad range of people it will affect requires *local knowledge* – the very mundane, but still expert, understanding of and practical reasoning about local conditions derived from lived experience’ (Yanow, 2003, pp. 236, original italics). As an example, the adolescent girls at the beginning of the *Deepshikha* training sessions did not vocalise their feelings of isolation within family and community, articulate their shyness about expressing their opinions, or acknowledge their fear of intimidation or humiliation from family members or wider community regarding accepted behaviour. The photograph below of two separate drawings done by the adolescent girls in training sessions is a visual, artistic form of expression of how the girls felt. The image on the right depicts an individual girl with head bent slightly forward in either fear or deference, reflecting the experiences of the adolescent girl prior to the programme and in the first few days of training. The image on the left depicts three girls holding hands and unifying for strength, including recognition of common and shared experiences. The picture was drawn by the adolescent girls towards the end of the 10-day training period. It is these expressions of local knowledge, including drawings, paintings and objects that may provide insights into locally accepted norms and values. We may, then, begin to understand social dynamics and elements of power structures which need to be navigated at the local level.

**Photograph 3: Rajura 2012 *Deepshikha* Training Session Pictures drawn by young women during various intervals of the training sessions**



Rajura 2012 *Deepshikha* training session, Photo: Gauri Nandedkar

Therefore, the application of local knowledge within local context is crucial to understand policy as it moves from global to local spaces. In particular, examining local knowledge allows us to explore tensions between the public and the private spheres as well as understand notions of power from above and below, contributing to a dialogical examination of power, opposition, agency and struggle.<sup>64</sup>

### ***Thematic Analysis***

In the tradition of thematic analysis, specific themes are found within the interview data which may be ‘both implicit and explicit ideas’, allowing the researcher to find themes within the transcribed interview material (Guest, MacQueen, & Namey, 2012, p. 10). Further, ‘[...] when we talk about qualitative research in the social or health sciences, we are referring to textual data generated from in-depth interviews and focus groups – which are often transcribed verbatim from audio recordings – and, to a lesser degree, participant observation notes’ (Guest et al., 2012, p. 11). The face-to-face, semi-structured, in-depth interviews I conducted with individuals and groups generally were ‘1 to 2 hours in length,

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<sup>64</sup> Refer to Chapter 2 for a discussion on dialogical vs monological perspectives.



[producing roughly] 10-40 pages per individual or group' (Guest et al., 2012, p. 11).

In studying the translation of MDG 3 and its meanings and implications, I undertook a thematic analysis of what empowerment means and how it manifests in the understandings of various *Deepshikha* programme actors and participants. During the coding phase I noted not only the word empowerment but phrases around the term as well as translated meanings of empowerment (Guest et al., 2012; Saldaña, 2009). That is, often the English word for empowerment was not used but rather descriptions of what empowerment meant to interview respondents or the Marathi word for empowerment. It was, for example, a means for finding the meta-theme (Saldaña, 2009) of *self-improvement* which could be broken down into themes of *self-responsibility* and *empowerment* (see Chapter 6). In addition, I explored metaphors such as 'standing on her own two feet' or 'walking with their heads up' which emerged from the data as a way to identify themes of empowerment from various actors in the *Deepshikha* programme (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003; Ryan & Bernard, 2003, p. 90). During the coding phase I employed Nvivo software (see above) to search for key words and phrases for an initial assessment of themes and their prevalence. In later analysis, in which I critically examined each transcript and the actor's words around a specific theme, I was able to consider *repetitions* of themes across actors and thus reinforce *validity* of themes (Ryan & Bernard, 2003, pp. 90, 103-104).

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has provided an organisational frame for the thesis. I chose to undertake a small-scale, qualitative case study approach to explore how policy movement is translated, assembled and reassembled as it travels from global sites to local spaces. The research methodology of this thesis draws on the theoretical framework explicated in the previous chapter and takes a feminist epistemological stance in the study of policy translation and an empowerment programme. Adolescent girls remain on the fringes of not only gender and development scholarship but also on the margins of understanding how policy translation affects their daily lives. In exploring what effect Goal 3 has had on the lives of

adolescent girls in rural Maharashtra, we may examine sites of disruptions and interruptions. Importantly, we investigate how MDG 3 has influenced development policy in India, in particular as it has changed, been reshaped and renegotiated in its new space.

Research on adolescent girls generally and in Maharashtra, in particular, has been limited, and my research fills this gap by providing a study of how policy and its movement from a global arena to local policy implementation has taken place. In addition, we are able to illuminate if and how adolescent girls exercise agency, find points of resistance and opposition, and engage in dialogue with sites of power and authority. The analysis of the data, therefore, should reveal or, at the least, expose the achievements and shortfalls of policy translation from the global to the local level.



## **Chapter 6**

### **Investing in Empowerment: The Adolescent Girl as Development Subject**

#### ***Introduction***

Notions of empowerment in the neoliberal development agenda may be examined more closely by investigating the nature of agency and choice as enacted by individuals and the collective, that is, the adolescent girl in her family and within the community. These notions may also be better understood by examining differences and similarities in the understandings of empowerment within a government or donor-agency agenda. Therefore, how global and local actors understand and enact empowerment may be translated differently at the state and local levels as policy moves into new spaces. In keeping with MDG 3, empowerment is a key focus of the *Deepshikha* programme. The scholarship on policy translation, development and empowerment reveals a central focus on concepts of choice, agency, resistance and engagement with power structures, both in the private and public realms. These structures and hierarchies within the private and public spheres of adolescent girls' lives may play a role in an adolescent girl's ability to exercise her rights, make choices and engage safely in community spaces. One factor which may influence the ability to express empowerment, such as making choices and exercising agency, is indeed being an adolescent girl in a rural location. This chapter examines the different ways in which the idea of *investment* is considered in the context of empowerment, that is, investing in women, investing in girls and, in particular, investing in the *Deepshikha* empowerment programme. I draw on my interviews with the UNDP administrator, *Deepshikha* programme officials, trainers and gender and field coordinators, policy officials and NGOs relevant to the intervention (see Chapter 5).

A programme like *Deepshikha* places an emphasis on investing in young women and girls through a focus on adolescent girl empowerment. This chapter explores themes which emerge from the interview data, such as notions of investing in

adolescent girls and targeted empowerment programmes, adolescent girls groups (AGG) and the potential links to women's self-help groups (SHG).<sup>65</sup> I begin with a brief overview of the UNDP and the organisation's notions of investing in women for empowerment. I then explore, in the second section, the notion of adolescent girls being worthy of investment as they are the subject of the development intervention. While investment may result in positive expressions of empowerment for adolescent girls, a critique of investing includes the potential for the commodification of adolescent girls. The third section of the chapter looks specifically at the *Deepshikha* empowerment programme for adolescent girls and examines how investment is reflected in the rural Maharashtrian context. I follow with reflections and concluding thoughts on MDG 3 and its translation in this context.

### ***UNDP and Investing in Women***

As the largest intergovernmental agency, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) operates globally, working strategically with states at the central and state government levels.<sup>66</sup> It lends support for institutional capacity-building within countries at the national level. With regards to the MDGs broadly and their achievements at the global level, UNDP's approach to investing in women has two aims. The first is changing women's *conditions*, that is, a strategic focus on socioeconomic issues, and the second is changing women's *positions*, that is, assisting women's participation in political processes (Chant, 2008, p. 186). The UNDP Administrator noted that the UNDP cannot 'do things for people, [however], we can enable people with information, facts and figures' (UN7,

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<sup>65</sup> I discuss adolescent girls groups (AGG) and self-help groups (SHG) in more detail later in this chapter and in Chapter 7. AGGs are groups of adolescent girls in villages who take up local community action drives such as village sweeping, monitoring of child immunisation schemes or other group-based activities. SHGs are traditionally understood as women's self-help groups. These are groups which serve a specific purpose in which women are provided with skills and training to address a specific community issue as a collective (maternal health, sanitation and others) and/or are mobilised to act as a community banking/lending group in the tradition of microcredit schemes. For a discussion of SHGs see Batliwala and Dhanraj (2004), Batliwala (2007), and Sharma (2008).

<sup>66</sup> <http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home.html>

2011).<sup>67</sup> The information, facts and figures, therefore, are seen to offer a means of informing oneself so that one is able to make an informed choice – a key principle to fulfilling UNDP’s mandate of empowering people.

In contributing to a change in women’s conditions, the UNDP supports two initiatives: 1) women’s access to social protection welfare schemes, and 2) women’s access to energy. Firstly, the concept of social protection for the UNDP includes ‘the idea of basic social security, [a type of] social insurance, to maintain a floor below which no one will fall’ (UN7, 2011). Investing in women, from a donor agency perspective, for example, expands possible opportunities for creating sustainable livelihoods. As the UNDP administrator noted, ‘most of the world’s women are farmers’ (UN7, 2011) and, hence, ensuring sustainable livelihoods is a priority. In Pakistan, for example, following devastating floods in 2010<sup>68</sup> the UNDP initiated what was called a ‘cash for work’ programme<sup>69</sup> facilitated through local partners which involved job creation after livelihoods were destroyed. This involved rebuilding houses, repairing farm and animal enclosures, and sewing clothes, among other things. These initiatives were supported by local partners with project funding from UNDP.

In India, issues of rural poverty and access to livelihood initiatives continue to be targeted by government schemes, which are often financially and programmatically supported by UNDP. For example, the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NAREGS)<sup>70</sup> benefitted 46 million households (UN7, 2011). Under the programme, the rural poor were guaranteed a minimum of 100 days of work per year at a minimum wage and at least 30% of workers had to be women (UN7, 2011). Priorities of the NAREGS work scheme for any particular village are set by the *panchayat* (local village

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<sup>67</sup> The UNDP Administrator is a female originally from New Zealand. I interviewed her during a visit she made to the University of Waikato in 2011 prior to my embarking on field research.

<sup>68</sup> [http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/special\\_reports/pakistan\\_floods](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/special_reports/pakistan_floods)

<sup>69</sup> <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-south-asia-11799628>

<sup>70</sup> <http://www.nrega.nic.in/netnrega/home.aspx>

council) – which ideally has 30% representation of women. The UNDP Administrator (UN7) observed that with women in the *panchayat*, it is more likely that projects on health and well-being, as opposed to infrastructure, are prioritised (UN5, 2012; UN7, 2011).<sup>71</sup> Women, thus, appear to be bolstered in the choices they are able to make for their villages and communities.

The NAREGS scheme appears to be what the Administrator referred to as a ‘hybrid – it is social protection and work’ (UN7, 2011). ‘While workers didn’t have a minimum income guarantee before the scheme, they have one now, but they must work for it’ (UN7, 2011). However, not all welfare programmes work well, especially those that are contingent on precarious factors. In some Latin American countries, for example, there is a system of conditional cash transfers<sup>72</sup> in which workers receive money in exchange for their children’s attendance at school and for their compliance with immunisation requirements (Chant, 2016b; UN7, 2011). Many children, however, are unable to attend school because of a sick or disabled parent in which case the conditional cash transfer does not take place. The system of conditional cash transfers while successful in some contexts is still contested, and the evidence appears inconclusive in its effectiveness to provide incomes to poor households (Chant, 2016b; Cornwall, Karioris, & Lindisfarne, 2016).<sup>73</sup> Such strategies and schemes are reflective of the broader work on national levels through which UNDP undertakes development work.

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<sup>71</sup> In Uganda, the UNDP worked with local partners to understand why rural women were not choosing hospital to give birth. While lack of transport was one cause, the major cause for rejection of hospital births was an assumption that women would not be able to take their placenta back home with them for burial. This tradition was very important for the women as they wished to honour their ‘cultural obligations and needs’ (UN7, 2011). When this was determined as the cause for lower rates of hospital births, measures were put into place to ensure women’s access to their placentas post childbirth. The number of women giving birth in hospital increased thereafter (UN7, 2011). The examples from across the globe – Papua New Guinea, India, Pakistan and Uganda – illustrate the focus of UNDP’s mandate to ‘empower people to make informed choices.’ Empowering women to be able to make choices for themselves and for their communities appears to be enhanced through targeted investment in women.

<sup>72</sup> <http://www.ipc-undp.org/pub/IPCWorkingPaper35.pdf>;  
[http://www.unicef.org/socialpolicy/files/Conditional\\_Cash\\_Transfers\\_A\\_Global\\_Perspective.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/socialpolicy/files/Conditional_Cash_Transfers_A_Global_Perspective.pdf)

<sup>73</sup> <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/2009/01/10298306/conditional-cash-transfers-reducing-present-future-poverty>

Social protection of minors, for example, may extend beyond economic safeguards and address particular vulnerabilities of children and adolescents, including those marginalised on the basis of caste/class, ethnicity, race or other socio-economic factors. UNICEF engages with notions of social protection as they relate to the child and adolescent, in particular addressing urgent issues such as human trafficking, exploitation, child labour, violence against children and adolescents, and other protection issues across the globe (UNICEF, 2010, pp. 21-28).

A second major focus within the UNDP framework on empowerment is access to energy, an important issue in striving towards positive gains in women's empowerment. In Burkina Faso, UNDP partnered with the government and the Gates Foundation to initiate what was called a 'multi-functional platform'<sup>74</sup> - a type of energy generator (UN7, 2011). From these platforms women were able to use electricity to cook food and carry out other domestic work. They were not bound by collecting traditional bio-energy resources such as firewood or creating energy pellets from animal dung. Children could also study at night. The access to energy brought other dimensions of empowerment to women's lives apart from appearing to 'ease [women's] burden' of domestic duties. The UNDP Administrator commented:

If the women have got more time released from the backbreaking chore which a machine could do more easily, then there is a chance of processing some of their produce to earn a little more income. In the best of these sorts of initiatives, you also see with women having more time, they want to learn (UN7, 2011).

Her comment about learning referred specifically to women's desire to either begin or continue some form of formal schooling involving literacy and numeracy skills. The comment implicitly focussed on the ability of women to improve their

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<sup>74</sup> See

[http://ssc.undp.org/content/ssc/library/solutions/partners/expo/Multi\\_functional\\_Platforms\\_for\\_Employment\\_Creation\\_and\\_Poverty\\_Reduction\\_in\\_Burkina\\_Faso\\_\\_\\_UNDP/\\_jcr\\_content/parmain/sscdownload/file.res/UNDP\\_bf\\_plateforme\\_en.pdf](http://ssc.undp.org/content/ssc/library/solutions/partners/expo/Multi_functional_Platforms_for_Employment_Creation_and_Poverty_Reduction_in_Burkina_Faso___UNDP/_jcr_content/parmain/sscdownload/file.res/UNDP_bf_plateforme_en.pdf)



*condition* (Chant, 2008, p. 186), if they had the ability and time to develop educational skills which in turn would assist in their ability to become (or remain) financially and economically independent.<sup>75</sup> Access to energy is important not only for women but also for adolescent girls who are often tasked with collecting water or bio-energy fuel sources for the family. These daily activities often fall on adolescent girls which, in effect, means schooling and other forms of education may suffer. Hence, social protection welfare schemes and access to energy are the two features of UNDP programme planning to assist women in changing their *condition* in society.

In addressing women's *position*, from the UNDP perspective, investing in women is strongly linked to providing assistance for women's participation in political processes. UN7, the Administrator and most senior UNDP official, offered several examples of technical assistance provided to local women political candidates across the globe with regards to elected positions and publicly held posts in countries as diverse as Papua New Guinea and Burkina Faso. The focus on political aspirations is linked to women working in their wider communities. UN7 commented that

the support from the UN organisations would more likely take the form of supporting women's advocacy, supporting them to build their own organisations and structures, so they could take on and advocate using whatever opportunity there is to actually be elected to the decision-making bodies (UN7, 2011).

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<sup>75</sup> UN7's comment, particularly when she refers to women's capacity to 'process some of their produce to earn a little income,' recalls the argument from Mies (1982) on the activities of laceworkers and the pressures they faced to generate incomes with artisan work. Mies noted that within a patriarchal system, such as India, there was a 'sexual division of labour' in which males were seen as active in the 'productive' sector (outside the home) and women in the 'reproductive' sector (inside the home). Mies' study revealed that this distinction was blurred among the laceworkers as the women who produced lace products were 'productive' – for the global capitalist market during their so-called leisure time – when many of their husbands were either unemployed or took up only seasonal work. The women, therefore, took on the job of producing these products on top of their familial responsibilities. The wages they earned were meagre compared to the exporter (male) who earned millions as a result of selling their goods. For further information see Mies (1982) for the original work as well as the updated version Mies (2012).

For example, in Papua New Guinea, the UNDP supported potential female candidates in their aspirations for office through upskilling and technical assistance which included learning to draft bills and policy documents for national parliament (UN7, 2011). Such assistance in drafting policy documents supports candidates who are working on broader policy platforms and working with women's organisations at the national level (UN7, 2011). Further, UNDP globally provides women with the support and technical assistance to access political participation via the electoral process in national parliaments or local bodies. In India, for example, the UNDP supported women wishing to gain elected position within the local *panchayat* which, under law, has a female representation quota of 30% (UN7, 2011; Maharashtra State Board of Secondary and Higher Secondary Education Pune, 2007; Rathod, 2014). In other words, UNDP does not work at the micro level with specific programmes and interventionist strategies, but rather works to 'build capacity' among government agencies and institutional structures.

In the broad support of capacity-building initiatives and specifically addressing gender empowerment, UNDP India works in two areas: 1) gender budgeting, that is 'mainstreaming gender into state plans and state policy' and 2) Human Development reporting (HDR) and analysis (UN5, 2012; Government of Maharashtra, 2012; United Nations Development Programme, 2002). A senior female UNDP official (UN5) in the organisation's national office in Delhi reported that the UNDP is 'a development agency, a development network and development programme [which] looks more broadly at poverty reduction and democratic governance' (UN5, 2012). One form of networking crucial to UNDP's activities is 'federating women'<sup>76</sup> across the country (UN5; UN6, 2012).<sup>77</sup> The 'federating' of women (and women's groups) takes place in the form of 'building capacity of elected women at the *panchayat* level' (UN5, 2012). Connecting

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<sup>76</sup> Federating was a term used consistently and continuously among UNDP and UNICEF officials. For the UN agencies, federating is a term used especially to describe a network of women's self-help groups across districts and borders, primarily in rural areas. The term linkage was used in a similar way to establish one group's connectivity with other groups (see Ahmed 2001; Kumar 2014; Patel 2011).

<sup>77</sup> UN5, located in Delhi, is a senior female UNDP India official. UN6 is a male UNDP India staffer who worked in the team with UN5.

women elected leaders together creates strong networks at the grassroots and block levels, contributing to shared learning experiences, peer-to-peer teaching and learning and strengthening negotiation skills (UN5; UN6, 2012). A primary reason for such strong support of women at the *panchayat* level, according to UNDP India staff, is that

women's involvement in the *panchayat* can help achievement of local development goals, bringing issues of human development to local *gram sabha* discussions, issues of health, education and livelihoods which are very, very different when you have a male *sarpanch* [head of *panchayat*] (UN5, 2012).

Women's involvement in the political process, therefore, appears to enhance their capacity for promoting holistic development goals. Beyond the political process, however, notions of empowerment are related to ownership of land and property rights. UNDP does not engage with this expression of empowerment, although, senior and mid-level UNDP officials did express concerns for women's safety when women's advocacy leads to law changes in property rights or other spheres which may contribute to an increased risk of violence against women (UN5, UN6, 2012; Chant, 2008).

Hence, at the global and national levels, we observe broader forms of human investment to reduce poverty in line with achieving the Millennium Development Goals. These forms take shape in investing in women's political participation to effect wider change within legislative bodies at central, state, and local levels. They also take the shape of investing in newer, more technologically advanced sources of energy designed to release women from the burden of backbreaking chores and to offer their children opportunities for studying past daylight hours. Finally, women and their families may participate in precarious welfare schemes designed to guarantee incomes based often on requirements that families may not be able to fulfil. While these examples provide illustrations for women, their access to the political process in formal elected bodies, and provisions for social welfare and alternate energy sources, these avenues may not be open to adolescent girls.

## ***Investing in Girls: An Overview***

As noted in Chapter 3, the adolescent girl appeared in the development literature in 1997. This was shortly after the ‘girl child’ appeared in 1995 in international development discourse as a result of the Beijing Platform for Action (Croll, 2006; see Chapter 3). It was at this point that the emergence of the adolescent girl as a potential object of investment for the development sector became clearer in project planning and implementation (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 1997). This section examines the notion of the adolescent girl and her role in the development agenda as a target of investment.

### **‘Investing in girls is smarter economics’<sup>78</sup>**

The adolescent girl in the developing world context is the embodiment of a one-dimensional, homogenised figure. In most documentation, she is economically poor, oppressed, displays limited (if any) agency, is often located in a rural setting and is either uneducated or educated only to primary school level (Koffman & Gill, 2013; Wilson, 2011). As there is a dearth of academic scholarship on adolescents, girls in particular (UNICEF, 2011, p. 3), the configurations of adolescent girls’ daily lives often meld into a standardised image of the adolescent girl. The distinctions, if any, lie in the geographical location of the adolescent girl who is primarily featured as either ‘South Asian or African’ (see Wilson 2015; Murphy, 2012). Critical crossroads and configurations in girls’ lives are often overlooked such as caste, class, ethnicity, age, indigeneity, race and religion (Bhavnani & Bywater, 2009; McCall, 2005).

The data on girls being worthy of investment is based on ‘family planning research’ and couched in economic terms which underpin the notion of good investment and a high yield return on investment (Murphy, 2012). In this financial scenario calculated by economists, adolescent girls became those individuals within the wider population who were worthy of investment. For example, in 1992, the then chief economist of the World Bank Lawrence Summers

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<sup>78</sup> In 2009, a World Bank manager stated ‘investing in women is smart economics, and investing in girls, catching them upstream, is even smarter economics’ (quoted in Koffman and Gill (2013, p.89); World Bank (2009). <http://www.go.worldbank.org/QWPUUOPVY0>

offered the calculation that each year of schooling pulls down fertility rates by 5 to 10 percent, such that \$30,000 spent on education of 1,000 girls would prevent 500 births. In contrast, a typical family planning program that spent \$65 to ‘prevent’ one birth would accomplish the same overall reduction of 500 births for the larger amount of \$33,000. Thus, education was \$3000 cheaper than contraception (Murphy, 2012).

Consequently, ‘since fertility reduction is mathematically tied to higher GDP per capita (divide GDP by population) and higher future wages, educating girls provided multiple economic returns’ (Murphy, 2012). Further, in considering the relationship between adolescent girl education, mortality and income, education could be connected to

lower mortality and higher future income. Thus for Summers, “educating girls quite possibly yields a higher rate of return than any other investment available in the developing world” (Murphy, 2012; Summers, 1992, p. 132).

This correlates with the wider UN-network discourse of ‘one to many’ (UN2, 2012) and that educating girls offers a ‘multiplier effect’ (UNICEF, 2004, pp. 44-55). Indeed, UNICEF documents five reasons for educating girls and calls this ‘a positive spiral’ (UNICEF, 2004, p. 17): 1) ‘enhanced economic development; 2) education for the next generation; 3) the multiplier effect; 4) healthier families; and, 5) fewer maternal deaths’ (UNICEF, 2004, pp. 17-20). In reviewing these terms, one may observe expressions of the functional language and instrumentalisation of adolescent girls in the development agenda (see Chapter 7 and below).

Investing in women and girls as a comprehensive approach to combat extreme poverty and attain development goals appears to be a popular method in the development context as the scholarship attests (Calkin, 2015; Chant, 2016a; Chant & Sweetman, 2012; Koffman & Gill, 2013; Switzer, 2013; Watson, Harding, & Harper, 2013; Wilson, 2008, 2011, 2012, 2015). Investing in girls, one could argue, begins with access to education at a young age (Peppin Vaughan, 2010;

Peppin Vaughan, 2013). One document in particular points to free and compulsory primary education for girls and boys between the ages of six and fourteen years in India. It enshrines the ‘Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE)’ which India codified in 2009.<sup>79</sup> The Act is grounded in a ‘rights based framework that casts a legal obligation on the Central and State Governments to implement this fundamental child right as enshrined in Article 21A of the Constitution, in accordance with the provisions of the RTE Act’.<sup>80</sup> The UNDP Administrator, for example, praised India’s efforts towards achievement of this particular Act noting that it was ‘very much a rights-based approach in India, which is very important. [The Act has] been an explicit focus on poverty and gender poverty’ (UN7, 2011).<sup>81</sup>

### **Responsibility and empowerment**

The discourse around adolescent girls and empowerment programmes, then, becomes one of empowerment and responsibility through education. Empowerment in this context does not necessarily translate to power taken away from one group (adolescent boys, for example) or individual to be given to another, but rather empowerment becomes the ‘individual’s responsibility for self-improvement’ (Batliwala & Dhanraj, 2004; Wilson, 2008, p. 86). This

empowerment approach seeks to identify power not in terms of domination over others (with its implicit assumption that a gain for women implies a loss for men), but more in terms of the capacity of women to

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<sup>79</sup> <http://mhrd.gov.in/rte>

<sup>80</sup> <http://mhrd.gov.in/rte>. The RTE Forum is a body which holds annual ‘stocktaking’ conventions on the implementation of the Act. There has been considerable critique levelled against the RTE and its implementation, including lack of compliance by a large percentage of schools, institutions continuing to discriminate against certain caste groups, and lack of orphans’ access to education due to lack of birth certificates and other official documents. See <http://www.rteforumindia.org/> for further information.

<sup>81</sup> The RTE is more strongly related to MDG 2, but I use it here as an example of a rights-based approach to combatting literacy and numeracy deficits among young school-aged children in India. In addition to the RTE Act, which focussed on girls as opposed to women, the increasing use of mobile phones, for example, offered an avenue to attack ‘gender poverty’ and invest in women as opposed to girls. While these programmes are useful for women, allow (to a degree) access to financial literacy schemes and may aid in combatting ‘gender poverty,’ they are not accessible to adolescent girls. Investing in women and girls, therefore, must be contextualised to location and place and be age-sensitive.

increase their own self-reliance and internal strength (Wilson, 2008, pp. 86-87).

Adolescent girls, therefore, are worthy targets of investment as it has become increasingly the responsibility of the adolescent girl to improve her circumstances, as well as her family's, her community's and, indeed, her nation's position in the development agenda (UN1; UN2; UN4, 2012; Kumar, 2012, 2013; Peppin Vaughan, 2010; Peppin Vaughan, 2013).<sup>82</sup> This places enormous burdens on adolescent girls who already face multiple pressures. Despite these pressures, the girl is deemed worthy of investment by governments, intergovernmental agencies, and NGOs, because her counterpart in the developing world, the adolescent male, is not worthy of investment. Murphy comments that 'the figure of the racialized young male is anxiously constituted as unruly, undisciplinable, and potentially dangerous' (Murphy, 2012; see Chapter 8). Boys, therefore, 'offer lower rates of return' on investment (Murphy, 2012). In contrast, the girl presents

rates of return [that] are so high precisely because her value begins so low. The girl is an undervalued stock for global finance and for future global economic recovery precisely because she is constituted as the "poorest of the poor" (Murphy, 2012).

The perceived low status of the adolescent girl, however, is not seen as a hindrance by development programmes to her active engagement in the community. Indeed, investments are designed not only to offer financial input into empowerment programmes for adolescent girls but to invest in education that supports the notion of being responsible for oneself and one's community (Korten, 1987). 'Self-responsibilization and empowerment narratives' (Romani, 2016), then, play a key role in many development programmes, including those targeting adolescent girls. We see, therefore, that with the acknowledgement and recognition of the adolescent girl as a human being worthy of special protection comes an increased focus on the adolescent girl as worthy of investment as well as

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<sup>82</sup> UN4 is a male UNICEF field officer. He undertakes field visits in rural Maharashtra and reports back to the main office in Mumbai. He maintains strong relationships with local NGOs in his active areas.

her role of responsibility for herself, her family and community – the ideal subject of development. As we recall from UN2's comments earlier (see Chapter 5, p.98)

empowerment and adolescents is not a new concept. It is something that has always been felt, but people were not ready to invest. With investment we are trying to consciously approach it [adolescent girl programme], so it has to be part and parcel of the development approach' (UN2, 2012)

As an example, in Romani's study of urban adolescent girls in Kolkata's red-light district, young women in an empowerment initiative gained access to a broad spectrum of programmes, including 'workshops, participatory community work and mentor relationships with middle-class NGO activists' (Romani, 2016, p. 370). While these interactions were productive, knowledge offered to adolescent girls remained limited to particular health issues such as HIV/AIDS, nutrition and anaemia, and children's and women's rights (Croll, 2006; Romani, 2016). Similar to the *Deepshikha* programme, the physical space in which these programmes were offered

served as a space for young women to explore and share what was on their mind. Over the years, some of these young women became peer supporters or field-level social workers supervising younger cohorts of children and youth in their communities (Romani, 2016, p. 370).<sup>83</sup>

The discourse of peer-teaching and learning, and responsibility for oneself and for one's community remains an important element to the sustainability of adolescent girl empowerment programmes (UN1; UN2, 2012; Korten, 1987). As both senior UNICEF officials in Mumbai noted, the *Deepshikha* programme is not a permanent programme (UN1; UN2, 2012). Therefore, for the programme to be sustainable 'girls teach their younger sisters' (UN1, 2012) so that the programme may continue into the next generation. In addition, the programme is designed to be 'one to many' (UN2, 2012) and not a 'perennial project' (UN2, 2012), so that

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<sup>83</sup> Dutt's (2005) review of an adolescent girl programme in rural Rajasthan noted the same appreciation of an adolescent girl-friendly space.



one girl may teach a group of girls who then continue the teachings and practices of the programme with a wider group of girls and so on.

The most senior UNICEF official (UN1) noted that the *Deepshikha* programme, for example, was an intervention that proved successful for many participants, their families and communities. Because of the successes, the programme was considered for wider replication throughout the state of Maharashtra and beyond. More importantly, the success of the programme (and its sustainability) was directly attributed to targeting adolescent girls:

Everyone believes this is one of the best programmes they have seen. This was the only programme for UNICEF at national level. Globally, UNICEF has sort of got into adolescent [girl] programming in a major way. They see the value of that's where the intervention has to take place if you want to sustain gains. So the model that we created here became the model for UNICEF India (UN1, 2012).

With an increasing sense of self-confidence among adolescent girls who have participated in the *Deepshikha* programme, there is an expectation from both NGOs and UNICEF that the girls engage with their communities in public spaces (UN1; UN2, 2012; Croll, 2006; Sambodhi Research & Communications, 2014). There is, however, no anonymity (as a form of protection perhaps) in the village space.<sup>84</sup> Adolescent girls are embedded in their families and communities with restricted mobility to outside interactions (see Chapter 7), including employment opportunities. Although working with NGOs and intergovernmental or government agencies might *inspire* adolescent girls to *aspire*, employment prospects for young women remain primarily in the care and nurture professions – nursing, teaching as well as ‘caretaker and cook’ (Romani, 2016, p. 376; see

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<sup>84</sup> Conversely, in a large city like Kolkata, anonymity, to a certain degree, may perhaps play a positive role in an adolescent girl's capacity for self-expression and the ability to question or challenge norms, power structures, and traditions, including to which job positions a girl may aspire. See Romani (2016). This might, indeed, play out differently in the rural Maharashtrian context.

Chapter 7; T1; NGO2; NGO3, 2012).<sup>85</sup> These professions are considered ‘respectable’ within urban spaces such as Kolkata (Romani, 2016), and I would argue that in rural Maharashtra as well, they are attractive to adolescent girls and seen as a path to potential financial security by NGOs, the girls, and their families. Yet, payment in these professions is low, inconsistent and often dependent upon the goodwill of employers. Hence, within notions of responsibility and empowerment, there appears to be a tension between the expectations of the adolescent girl’s productive role and the actual security and remuneration she can expect from such a role. The next section explores what investment in adolescent girls means and the implications for deeming adolescent girls worthy of investment.

### ***Critique of Investing in Girls***

Strategies of empowerment which include education, self-improvement and self-responsibility while positive in some aspects, as noted above, may also present challenges in the form of the adolescent girl being objectified and commodified. This may be tied generally to the overall market-driven and economically-focussed elements of neoliberalism which privatise and commodify not only products and services but people and the environment as well. As such, those entities which may be understood as beneficial for the public – the environment, education, and so on – become a commodity to be traded and seen as an investment opportunity. In other words, commodification of public goods and services may encourage consumption and revenue-generating activities disguised under the mantle of, for example, environmentalism (Conca, 2002, p. 134). Conca (2002) refers to Luke (1998) and his work on environmentalism to illustrate the commodification of ecotourism when he comments that

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<sup>85</sup> T1 is a female gender coordinator who works on training and mentoring young women to become *prerikas* in the *Deepshikha* programme. She offers continued support to these adolescent girls after they return to their villages to begin the work of creating adolescent girls groups. T1 is located in Chandrapur.

NGO3 is the male head of a local NGO whose mandate lies in economic empowerment of women. The organisation is located in Nagbhid block north of Chandrapur block. His organisation is not directly involved with *Deepshikha*; however, NGO3 was open to meeting with *prerikas* and offering support where he could.

privatizing landscapes in order to protect them, or promoting ecotourism to generate revenue for environmental protection reveal mainstream environmental NGOs to be engaged in the commodification of nature (Conca, 2002, p. 134; see also Luke, 1998).

In another example, Maniates (2002) refers to individualisation and commodification in relation to environmentalism in the United States, in particular, noting the 'individualization of responsibility' in creating strategic and conceptual responses to environmental challenges (Maniates, 2002, p. 46). While actions such as purchasing a bicycle or planting trees may initially appear to be good responses to climate threats, they, nonetheless, are solutions at the individual level. They do not tackle necessary structural changes or challenge policy initiatives at a broader societal level. Rather, the individualisation in response, while well-intentioned, prompts 'upwardly spiralling consumption' which simultaneously feeds into a discourse of commodification (Maniates, 2002, p. 65). That is, consumption is considered tolerable as long as it is 'green' (Maniates, 2002, p. 65). Thus, environmentalism in its neoliberal form is complicit in the commodification of nature, which may be traded in the market.

The environment is not the only casualty of commodification in a neoliberal agenda. In education, for example, the trend in studying overseas has become a viable, profitable option for higher education institutions seeking to attract international students and the funding they may generate. The marketing of higher education, its reliance in some instances upon corporate management styles, a perceived greater sensitivity to student interests, and the restructuring of financial models in order to sustain the economic life of the university have all added stress factors to maintaining the life of higher education as a whole (Smith, 2004, p. 69). Critics note that these added stresses may, indeed, compromise the 'integrity of the educational process,' contribute to a reduction in the number of competent faculty, and perhaps negatively shape the public's perception of higher education and learning (Smith, 2004, pp. 69-70; see also Spring, 2009). That is, higher education becomes a 'global business' in which education is the product to be traded among those who can afford it (Spring, 2009, p. 100). The emphasis, then,

is on marketing a private product rather than supporting education as a public good for the benefit of an informed society. It is in these aspects of marketisation and commodification that we see adolescent girls as a privatised investment in the development agenda.

### **The commodification of girls**

As the personification of the ideal target of investment, the adolescent girl becomes a commodity. Here, the object of investment while gendered is nonetheless stripped of all other configurations and becomes homogenised – that is a poor, oppressed girl of colour or a girl who is the passive recipient of interventions – irrespective of her caste, class, race, age, socioeconomic background, ethnicity, or religion. In the wider economics-oriented development agenda, therefore, the homogenised adolescent girl may be faced with only two choices: ‘the unproductive life and the productive life’ (Murphy, 2012). The difference in an adolescent girl’s ability to achieve the productive life is, then, tied to her level of investment and access to education. The unproductive life is one in which there is little or no choice due to lack of investment in the adolescent girl. The productive life is one in which the adolescent girl’s life is more positive, and she is more enabled in her ability to recognise and make choices due to investments made in her via education (Koffman & Gill, 2013; Murphy, 2012). Her ability, in turn, to take on and carry out responsibilities to herself and her community is enhanced through capacity-building initiatives (Romani, 2016; see above). The productive life and its perceived positive results may, therefore, be attributed to targeted investment in education of adolescent girls (Croll, 2006).

We see, then, that the adolescent girl is worthy of investment with specific notions of how the investment should result in seemingly positive returns on investment for her, her community and wider market-driven development goals - despite or because of her homogenised image.<sup>86</sup> Girls are seen as better ‘investments’ as

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<sup>86</sup> Since the mid-2000s there have been an increasing number of girl-focussed initiatives across a wide range of actors, including the ‘UN interagency task force on adolescent girls’ (UNICEF, UNIFEM, WHO, 2007)’ (p.86) World Bank (Adolescent Girls Initiative, 2008) (p.86), World Economic Forum discussions in Davos in 2009 (p.89), and the UK’s Department for International Development’ Girl Hub (2010) (p.86)’ Koffman and Gill (2013, p.86, 89).

they have a ‘higher rate of return’ (Koffman & Gill, 2013, p. 89). They have a so-called ‘higher rate of return’ as they ‘represent a more lucrative opportunity, an investment that, in the economically-oriented rhetoric, is likely to yield “higher returns”’ (Koffman & Gill, 2013, p. 89).

The commodification of adolescent girls, therefore, may be tied to the discourse of individualisation which is a key feature of neoliberalism. This feature, in turn, may have the potential to make power and access to demonstrations of power visible. This may be observed, for example, in Western discourses of girlhood which may place the First World girl in a position of ‘girl power’ in contrast to her Third World age-mate who may be the embodiment of ‘girl powerlessness’ (Kirk, Mitchell, & Reid-Walsh, 2010, p. 25). In the Western context, the idea of girl power<sup>87</sup> gained traction in the 1990s and was often seen ‘on a T-shirt or another consumer product rather than used in a formal policy setting’ (Kirk et al., 2010, p. 24). This could be seen strongly in the media throughout the 1990s via popular music girl groups such as Spice Girls who appeared to be proponents of the girl power message.<sup>88</sup> The mix of consumerism, fashion, media and a specialised idea of empowerment meant that ‘the term girl power itself [was] used in innumerable advertising campaigns for products such as clothing, accessories, cosmetics and snacks’ (Harris, 2004, p. 166). Beyond this blend of girl-oriented consumption, much of girl power programmes were concentrated on health and education initiatives as well as ‘business knowledge and self-esteem’ (Harris, 2004, p. 167). As Harris notes, ‘girl power presents itself as a discourse of young women’s citizenship status and entitlements; for example, it advocates autonomy, rights, independence, and power’ (Harris, 2004, p. 167). We are able to observe, therefore, that the marriage between consumption and commodification (whether in relation to the environment, education or adolescent girls) is strongly linked in the economics-oriented development agenda. The idea of girl power, however, may appear differently in a Third World context to which I now turn my attention.

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<sup>87</sup> For a broader discussion on girl power see Harris (2004a); Helgren and Vasconcellos (2010); Kirk, et.al. (2010); McRobbie (2000).

<sup>88</sup> <http://spicegirls.co.uk/timeline.htm>

The UN's first ever International Day of the Girl Child was founded on 11 October 2012<sup>89</sup> (Koffman & Gill, 2013, p. 86). This constituted the 'girl-powering' of development which began in 1997 with the UN meeting in Ethiopia on the Adolescent Girl (Koffman & Gill, 2013, p. 86; United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 1997). As Koffman and Gill note, 'this is not simply the "girling" of development but its "girl-powering", seeking to export the particular fusion of agency, independence, consumerism and entrepreneurialism that has become the hallmark of Western discourses of girlhood' (Koffman & Gill, 2013, p. 89). The adolescent girl in the developing world is, however, not necessarily seen as the embodiment of 'girl power' as is, for example, her counterpart the white, Western adolescent girl who is seen as having achieved empowerment<sup>90</sup> (Calkin, 2015; Griffin, 2004, p. 31; Harris, 2004; Mohanty, 1988, p. 65). For instance, Girl Effect, Nike Foundation's global girl-focussed development initiative, promotes a discourse of 'solidarity' for young, white Western girls to become active for their counterparts in the developing world (Calkin, 2015; Koffman & Gill, 2013; Switzer, 2013; UNICEF, 2011, p. 74).

During the 2009 financial crisis, 'the World Economic Forum held its first ever plenary session on adolescent girls' with leaders claiming 'that girls hold the key to ending world poverty and transforming health and life expectancy in the developing world' (Koffman & Gill, 2013, p. 84). Investing in adolescent girls was portrayed firstly as a sound and good investment which would reap rewards in terms of financial and economic development, and growth for years into the future (Koffman & Gill, 2013, p. 84). In addition, in a nod to modernisation theory which rendered culture an obstacle to be overcome (see Chapter 3), 'the Girl Effect describes young women in the Global South as competent neo-liberal

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<sup>89</sup> <http://www.un.org/en/events/girlchild/>

<sup>90</sup> Mohanty (1988) makes a distinction between the depiction of Western and Third World women. Western women (as they are already supposedly empowered to make their own decisions) are complicit in the subjugation of Third World women in comparison with the homogenised Third World woman who is still shackled to her culture. I use this comparison to illustrate the 'girl powerlessness' which exists in representations of Third World adolescent girls as oppressed and downtrodden compared to their Western counterparts who are supposedly empowered.

subjects who, while oppressed by their “culture”, have the capacity, with help, to throw off its shackles and to become successful entrepreneurs’ (Koffman & Gill, 2013, p. 90; Wilson, 2012, 2015). The help is supplied by their counterparts in the West.<sup>91</sup> Furthermore, the help received is, then, translated into education interventions endorsing narratives of responsibility and empowerment, as the adolescent girl becomes responsible for the development of herself, her family and her community. Hence, while investing in girls may be beneficial for the girls on an individual level, a critical lens needs to be placed on how the investment may potentially commodify and objectify the adolescent girl. For a more in-depth understanding of adolescent girls as the subject of development and object of investment, I turn to UNICEF and its work in rural Maharashtra.

### ***Investing in Deepshikha***

The adolescent girl as the subject of development appears to be highly sought after in the development context. Indeed, in the MDG agenda, successful translation of all MDGs appeared contingent upon the success of MDG 3 in its interpretations in in-country frameworks (see Chapter 1). Certainly, the adolescent girl as the subject of development in the rural Maharashtrian setting displays various manifestations in multiple expressions of empowerment: active political participation within the boundaries of engagement with the *panchayat*; a discourse of peer-teaching and learning; entrepreneurialism and volunteerism; and adolescent girls groups and SHGs. These demonstrations of the rural Maharashtrian adolescent girl as the subject of development fall under the umbrella of responsibility and empowerment. She is targeted as the best form of investment as she embodies the positive attributes of development and is a hard worker for herself and her community.

#### **Active political participation**

As discussed above, I provided evidence of UNDP’s work for women and their access to the political process in formal elected bodies. These avenues may not be

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<sup>91</sup> Calkin (2015) provides a relevant critique of organisations such as Girl Effect who participate in what she terms ‘post-feminist spectatorship’, fuelling ‘structural inequalities’ through saviour mentality and positioning white, Western adolescent girls as rescuers of brown or black Third World adolescent girls.

open to adolescent girls. Nonetheless, adolescent girls who have completed *Deepshikha* training are engaging with local political bodies and addressing political issues. For example, a Block Development Official (BDO)<sup>92</sup> in Chandrapur district spoke of empowerment as he observed the adolescent girls' abilities to speak in front of a gathering of block development officials (unknown to the girls) with confidence and authority on local political issues (PO2, 2012). He attributed this to the girls' participation in the *Deepshikha* programme:

[...] because of this *Deepshikha* training these girls are now coming forward in meetings and addressing us BDOs. This is not a small development. This is a big one (PO2, 2012).<sup>93</sup>

दीपशिखा प्रशिक्षण मुले , ह्या मुली आत्ता सभा मध्ये समोर येतात आणि BDOs ला संबोधित करत . हे लहान प्रगती नाही आहे . ही मोठी प्रगती आहे.

In another example, a senior male NGO official (NGO2)<sup>94</sup> commented that adolescent girls had done so much for the development and advancement of their community and noted

some of our girls have participated in the *panchayat* elections. The development of the girls has resulted in their working in the *panchayat*, *gram sabha* and so on. You can see a big difference in the girls now with the programme (NGO2, 2012).

आमच्या काही मुलींनी पंचायत निवडणुकीत भाग घेतला आहे. मुलींच्या विकास त्यामुळे पंचायत, ग्राम सभा त्यांच्या काम आणि झाला आहे. आपण कार्यक्रमातल्या मुलींमध्ये एक मोठा फरक पाहू शकतो.

Further, he (NGO2) noted that the villages in which *Deepshikha prerikas* had formed adolescent girls groups (AGG), urgent community issues were being addressed:

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<sup>92</sup> A district is made up of multiple blocks. A Block Development Official is the government authority located at the top level of a block (administrative unit) in a district. This Block Development Official is male.

<sup>93</sup> Interviews with this group of actors were often conducted in Marathi (local language). Where appropriate I have included an original Marathi quote in Devanagari script with an English translation.

<sup>94</sup> NGO2 was the head of a partner NGO in Jiwati block for the *Deepshikha* programme.



There are groups of girls working on clean drinking water or cleanliness or sanitation (NGO2, 2012).

मुलींचे गट पिण्याचे स्वच्छ पाणी किंवा स्वच्छता किंवा स्वच्छता वर काम करतात.

In other words, the adolescent girls' ability to engage with political ideas and figures of authority directly correlated to their participation in and successful completion of the *Deepshikha* programme. In addition, as the UNDP Administrator noted in her comments about the importance of women's political participation and the benefits of networking, adolescent girls in Jiwati block were gaining access to the *panchayat*, attempting to engage politically with local communities as well as taking on responsibilities of ensuring village-level basic needs were being met. Beyond these issues, as a senior UNDP official (UN5) in Delhi commented with regards to women's participation in the *panchayat*, adolescent girls were concentrating their efforts on improvements to villagers' daily lives through initiatives focussed on improving the health and well-being of their local communities. So, while adolescent girls may not have had access to central or state legislative bodies, their political engagement (after participation in the programme) took the form of interaction, communication and exchange with local village councils.

### **Peer-teaching and learning**

A female senior-level UNICEF official (UN2) referred to the sustainability and longevity of the programme in that sub-groups that were created and then linked across districts would serve as 'multipliers' for teaching new groups, indeed new generations of adolescent girls. In addition, sub-groups or sub-committees of adolescent girls were created to tackle issue-specific challenges. UN2's comments express the idea of the *Deepshikha* programme as a sustainable project as well as how adolescent girls' activism in groups affects the community.

They are now forming sub-committees (maternal health, nutrition, education, etc). It's not just for the sake of the committee but necessary for expanding the coverage, because this cannot be a perennial project (UN2, 2012).

Similarly, senior UNICEF official UN1 stated the programme was not about a long-term empowerment programme accompanying the girls through and beyond adolescence, but rather

what we need to do is that once we create that empowered group of people, link them up to various [government] programmes, so creation of leadership. So our three years should be spent in really empowering these girls (UN1, 2012).

The so-called ‘multiplier effect’ and the rationalisation of outcomes – an efficient approach as stated in the Sambodhi evaluation report (Sambodhi Research & Communications, 2014; UNICEF, 2011, pp. 44-55) – may help to contribute to the sustainability of the *Deepshikha* project and the continuation of the transformational change it worked to achieve. The *Deepshikha* programme while being ‘efficient’ is indeed embedded in a rights-based approach. That is, the adolescent girl learns about her body, her rights, delaying marriage, completing her education – everything that relates to the complexities in her daily life (see Chapter 7). That is a good thing. It is perhaps a manifestation of what Kabeer calls the intrinsic value of educating adolescent girls (Kabeer, 2005a). Alongside the moral and intrinsic value of educating girls, however, comes the instrumental value of educating adolescent girls and the ‘multiplier effect.’ According to senior UNICEF officials in Mumbai, as of 2012 the *Deepshikha* programme included about 70,000 adolescent girls. Roughly 2,800 *prerikas* were trained with approximately 2,300 functional groups in Maharashtra (UN1; UN2, 2012). Girls particularly active and engaged as *Deepshikha prerikas* were identified as potential resource persons at the *gram* level or as potential future ASHA<sup>95</sup> or *anganwadi* workers or as a *sarpanch*. As UNICEF Official UN2 remarked

we create linkages for them so they are recognised [by government ministry officials] as a *Deepshikha prerika*, so they are respected and better linked for [employment] opportunities (UN2, 2012).

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<sup>95</sup> Accredited Social Health Activist

It appears, then, that opportunities for both further paid work and sustainability of knowledge within the adolescent girls' communities and beyond within the structure of adolescent girls groups were two translations of empowerment in the rural Maharashtrian context.

In addition to access to possible paid employment and working towards the sustainability of the expressions of *Deepshikha* core concepts, the adolescent girls groups worked to combat caste and class barriers among age-mates. T2, a female *Deepshikha* trainer based in Chandrapur, observed in training sessions that

differences in caste and class were reduced through *Deepshikha*. At first we only saw ST and SC girls but now other caste girls come to the classes and the girls are mixing as well. It was a slow process, but this is one of our achievements. We don't see such a stark difference anymore between lower or upper caste or poor or rich girls. It's all due to this programme (T2, 2012).

दीपशिखामुळे जाती आणि वर्गातील भेद कमी झाला. प्रथम आम्ही फक्त अनुसूचित जाती जमातींच्याच मुलींना वर्गात पहिले, पण आता इतर जातीच्या मुली वर्गात येऊन सगळ्यांच्यात मिसळू लागल्या आहेत. ही जरी हळूहळू होणारी प्रक्रिया असली तरी आमच्यासाठी हे मोठे यश आहे. आता उच्च / कनिष्ठ जात किंवा गरीब श्रीमंत असा भेद राहिला नाही. श्रेय ह्या कार्यक्रमाला आहे.

And as T1, another female *Deepshikha* trainer in Chandrapur district, commented:

We teach the girls that they are all equals. No difference in caste (T1, 2012). आम्ही मुलींना शिकवतो कि ते सर्व समान आहेत. जातींचा फरक नाही आहे.

The *Deepshikha* programme was administered and taught, according to T2, outside of caste (*zaathi*) and class (*varga*) barriers. Female trainer T2 observed in the classes that

it used to be that the girls from OBC only did work within their own groups or part of the village or that ST or SC girls stayed within their own groups. Now we see that the girls are going beyond classes that the whole village is working together. *Zaathi* is now gone (T2, 2012).

T2 च्या निरीक्षणामधे एक बाब आली कि ज्या मुली सुरवातीला आपल्याच जातीच्या मुलींमध्ये मिसळत असत त्या हळूहळू ओ.बी.सी. , एस.सी. एस.टीच्या पर्यायाने जाती प्रथेच्या कोशातून बाहेर पडल्या.

While there was no evidence provided in terms of interview data to substantiate these claims, the significance is enormous. Acknowledging a shift in discourse to *include* instead of *marginalise* particular caste groups (which have been historically oppressed) is a significant breakthrough and representative of a desired shift in societal dynamics.

### **Entrepreneurialism and volunteerism**

In the *Deepshikha* programme, along with Modules One and Two which focus on the adolescent girl and the collective, respectively, a third Module is dedicated to upskilling adolescent girls in financial literacy and entrepreneurial skills. According to several UNICEF officials (UN1; UN2; UN3, 2012),<sup>96</sup> UNICEF's mandate does not include a focus on livelihood schemes. The *Deepshikha* programme, through its co-funder Barclays Bank,<sup>97</sup> placed an emphasis on financial skills as a means of combatting poverty. As Koffman and Gill note

poverty, as it seems, can be celebrated for the entrepreneurial capacities it stimulates. The structural dimensions of poverty remain unacknowledged, as does the potential role played by First World institutions such as the IMF in bringing about the poverty with which women (and men) struggle (Koffman & Gill, 2013, p. 90).

If one considers the location of the adolescent girl in the development agenda and her position as the subject of targeted investment, the notion of agency and the ability to exercise agency become key elements in empowerment of the adolescent

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<sup>96</sup> UN3 is a female UNICEF staffer with the programme in Mumbai.

<sup>97</sup> Both UN1 and UN2 noted that livelihoods and financial literacy were not central to UNICEF's mandate. Funding for the *Deepshikha* programme, however, was partially provided by Barclays Bank on the stipulation that entrepreneurial and financial skills be part of the learning and teaching modules. Association of Women in Development (AWID) published two papers addressing the tension between funding sources and programme initiatives. See Batliwala et.al (2013); Miller et.al. (2013).

girl (see Chapter 7). The translation of agency and what it entails in a rural Maharashtrian context looks different to agency embodied by Western adolescent girls or even girls in larger Indian cities (see Romani 2016). Agency, in the development context, may be conflated with

a specific modality of neo-liberal entrepreneurialism; the continuities between contemporary racialised representations of women and girls in the Global South with earlier representations of “productive and contented workers in colonial enterprises” (Wilson, 2011, p. 316).

In addition, agency is seen in

the way in which girls and women’s own collective struggles for social transformation are occluded in this focus upon individual agency/micro-enterprise. In these depictions, girls are “lifted out” of history and politics to be recast as individual entrepreneurial subjects (Koffman & Gill, 2013, p. 91).

In a context such as India, therefore, one might even argue that adolescent girls are provided with entrepreneurial skills which serve to constrain their agency as their choices appear limited to sewing, caretaking, cooking and other nurturing professions. While many *Deepshikha* programme participants have gone on to become childcare workers (*anganwadi*), midwives, community workers, and teachers, it is true, however, that a few girls have gone on to secure training and employment outside of traditional care positions, such as police officers (see Chapter 7). Further, many girls began small businesses in supplying stationary to fellow students in the village (see Chapter 7). While these undertakings may not be classic micro-enterprises such as the ones we think of when we hear of micro-credit schemes, they are nonetheless small businesses appropriate to the adolescent girls’ age and circumstances.

As noted in previous chapters, neoliberalism has had a steady hold on the Indian economy since the early 1990s (Oza, 2006; Sharma, 2008). Entrepreneurialism, then, is not the only aspect of neoliberalism to affect adolescent girls and their daily lives. A stark feature of neoliberalism is not only an emphasis on

entrepreneurial activities and a narrative of self-responsibility but also a ‘rolling back’ of social services. Adolescent girls, in their positions as self-reliant and responsible members of family and community, are now looked upon to negotiate, bargain with, and hold government functionaries accountable for government-funded and – initiated development schemes (UN1; UN2; UN4, 2012; Croll, 2006, pp. 1290, 1294-1295). For example, a senior UNICEF Official commented that

these girls have the opportunity to work partner with government functionaries from different departments and make sure that services are provided correctly (UN1, 2012);

and, a UNICEF field staffer (UN4) noted

that we would like to create a group that is able to monitor delivery of government services (UN4, 2012).

Provision of social services, therefore, is another means of filling in the gaps that a neoliberal state creates which, in turn, fuels a narrative of (self) responsibility (Kumar, 2013; Wilson, 2008). Therefore, one interpretation of agency as translated into the rural Maharashtrian context may be seen as adolescent girls’ inability to contribute to transformative structural change but rather their socialisation in learning ‘to move up’ in the existing system within already established power structures (Wilson, 2008, p. 86).

In the following chapter, I discuss the idea of volunteerism, and specifically why *Deepshikha prerikas* were not paid a salary. Monetary payment was not considered at all. However, certain rewards as payment were considered such as a referral or recommendation for an adolescent-girl *prerika* to become engaged in work for an NGO or other UNICEF project (UN2; T2, 2012).<sup>98</sup> This might be seen as an avenue to ‘move up’ within the system for adolescent girls who proved resourceful, cooperative and hardworking rather than a challenge to the existing system. Entrepreneurialism and provision of social services may, therefore, not

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<sup>98</sup> T2 is a female *Deepshikha* trainer based in Chandrapur and supports adolescent girls in the field as well.

only embody narratives of empowerment and responsibility, they may, indeed, serve to curtail an adolescent girl's opportunities beyond established structures in perceived respectable employment. Apart from paid employment, adolescent girls take up local community work in groups on a voluntary basis as prescribed by the *Deepshikha* programme. As each village and its needs is different, the programme does not articulate or privilege any particular community-based activity. The relevant activity must be determined by the village. Most adolescent girls are expected to engage within community as a member of an adolescent girls group (AGG). For some adolescent girls, then, notions of empowerment which entail responsibility (to family and community), undertaking entrepreneurial initiatives, and filling gaps in welfare services may constitute exhibiting attributes of good citizenship (see Chapter 4).

### **Adolescent girls groups and SHGs**

In the rural setting of Chandrapur district, adolescent girls groups are voluntary clusters of adolescent girls who have undergone *Deepshikha* training. They may be supported by women's self-help groups (SHG) in the initial stages of formation and activism, but the AGGs aspire to work on community development and lead particular community drives (sanitation, immunisation, etc.) (UN1; UN2, UN4, 2012). Self-help groups are a large part of community activism and women's SHGs, in particular, play a major role in development interventions (Sharma, 2006, 2008). Beyond the role of assisting in community activism, the interview data revealed four important points of engagement in adolescent girls groups: tapping into further work opportunities, maintaining sustainability of the *Deepshikha* programme, attempting to move beyond caste and class barriers, and accessing government funding for villages via SHGs.

Firstly, UNICEF Maharashtra expanded the concept of women's self-help groups to include adolescent girls. As female *Deepshikha* trainer T1 in Chandrapur noted

some girl SHGs were created in training module two. In some villages the SHGs were very successful, in others not (T1, 2012). T1 प्रमाणे काही

बालिका SHG भाग दोन प्रशिक्षण मध्ये स्थापित केले गेले. काही गावात SHG खूप यशस्वी झाले, दुसऱ्यात नाही.

The adolescent girls SHGs appeared to serve two purposes: providing avenues of participation in organised, community-based social improvement drives; and, of finding hard-working girls who might be given opportunities outside of volunteerism. I noted this above and in Chapter 7 in my reference to volunteering and capacity-building as incentivised in kind not cash. For example, GFC2, a female *Deepshikha* gender and field coordinator located in Chandrapur, reported being sent for a five-day microplanning training course after becoming an adolescent-girl *prerika*, delivering training modules (peer-to-peer teaching), and working hard to set up adolescent girls groups in her village. She commented about herself that

since working in the village in this role [microplanning] I have gained a lot of confidence. I feel I have much more respect from others (GFC2, 2012).

GFC2 म्हणाली की तिला 'ह्या कामात सहभागी होऊन आता बराच आत्मविश्वास आला आहे. ग्रामीण लोकही तिच्या कडे आदराने बघतात.

While the volunteer work bolstered her confidence and her perceived standing in the community, GFC2 was in effect taking up the work and filling a gap that a paid government employee should have done (GFC2, 2012). Female *Deepshikha* trainer T1, based in Chandrapur, remarked that

some of the girls in the SHGs worked very hard to do all the cultural activities, [on the occasion of] *jayanti* [celebration of the birth of Mohandas K. Gandhi], 15 August [Indian Independence Day] [in the village]. For those girls then we were able to open up opportunities from [other local] NGOs. If there was some work or other project, we would say you have this ability go there and work for this project. Not 100% but at least [with] 75% [of the girls] we would try and give them these opportunities (T1, 2012).

‘एस.एच.जी. मधील काही मुलींनी सांस्कृतिक कार्यक्रम, जयंती, १५ ऑगस्ट इत्यादी साठी जीवापाड मेहतीने कार्यक्रम बसविले. त्यांना आम्ही एन.जी.ओ. च्या मदतीने आणखीन संधी उपलब्ध करून देऊ. दुसऱ्या कुठल्या उपक्रमामध्येही



त्यांच्या क्षमतेनुसार त्यांना सामिल करू. १००% जरी नाही तरी ७५% मुलींना नक्कीच संधी देता येईल.

Women's SHGs are significant not only for linking and federating groups across districts and regions, but perhaps more importantly for accessing funding and resources:

Women's funding would be made only through the federations. So you need these. If you go to Chandrapur or any village they will tell you we have 8 SHGs, 10 SHGs (UN1, 2012).

Adolescent girls groups have supported women's SHGs so that the potential for linkages has become stronger under the SHG umbrella:

When the *kishori*<sup>99</sup> groups were formed, we introduced them to other local women's groups in the villages and asked them for their support. We slowly built up linkages among the groups (GFC2, 2012).

जेव्हा आम्ही किशोरी गटाची स्थापना केलं, तेव्हा त्यांची त्याच खेड्यातील स्थानिक महिला गटांशी ओळख करून दिली आणि मदतीची अपेक्षा असल्याचेही सांगितले. आम्ही हळहळू दोन्ही गटांत एक बंध निर्माण केला.

Federating women (and girls) is a key in administering funds for development work. As the most senior UNICEF official (UN1) noted:

At the block level there is a federation of women [...]. The funding for microfinancing and other development work will be given through that federation, empowering the women to handle their own programmes. And, [adolescent girls] could be a support system there but not the main actor. We look at all these as opportunities. So in the second phase [of the *Deepshikha* programme] we have put a large emphasis on adolescent [girl] SHGs where we are trying to federate them (UN1, 2012).

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<sup>99</sup> *Kishori* is the Marathi word for adolescent girl.

The irony of federating adolescent girls groups to access funds for development work was not lost on GFC1, a female *Deepshikha* gender and field coordinator in Chandrapur. As GFC1 recounted

the bank wasn't willing to work with the adolescent girls (GFC1, 2012).

GFC1 नी सांगितलं कि 'बँक किशोरवयीन मुलींच्या काम करण्यास इच्छुक नाही.

The adolescent girls, as part of their entrepreneurial training from Module 3 of the *Deepshikha* programme, wanted to create a book depot with stationary supplies for schoolchildren in a village 10-12 kilometres from Jiwati. The bank refused their request for a loan. Nevertheless, with the support and negotiation skills of GFC1 and numerous letters of support from the local NGO and UNICEF offices, the girls were able to buy supplies and create a depot

so no child had to pay extra money to go to Jiwati and purchase school materials (GFC1, 2012). मुली आता शाळेसाठी आवश्यक वस्तू स्वतः विकत

घेतात आणि गरजू मुलांना विकतात. त्यामुळे कुठल्याही लहान मुलाला जास्त किंमत मोजावी लागत नाही.

Although entrepreneurial activities and financial literacy are skills taught in the programme, because of the age of most adolescent girls, access to banking remains elusive. In effect, there is no structural support for adolescent girls to obtain their own bank accounts. As a result, they are unable to apply for loans. Nonetheless, creating the groups of adolescent girls for particular small-loan schemes was seen by *Deepshikha* officials as one of the strongest elements in the programme. Senior UNICEF official (UN1) remarked that education in programmes was just the beginning of an intervention, 'but then we (UNICEF) have gone beyond that. We've grouped them (adolescent girls)' (UN1, 2012). So, while adolescent girls individually and as a group become investments in order to effect change, they are not recognised by wider society or existing structures as embodying the power to make changes.

The interview data revealed that the women's SHGs and increasingly the AGGs were involved in micro-planning processes as the village-level planning scheme

must feed into the district planning scheme and upwards into the national planning schemes. The SHGs are then funded through various Government of India schemes, but there appears to be a lack of coherence in managing these schemes and follow-up on funding (UN1, 2012). A senior UNICEF Official (UN2) and the UNICEF field staffer (UN4) both commented on these schemes and the difficulty encountered in managing them. Senior UNICEF Official UN2 commented that UNICEF had

a concept of micro-planning working with community and helping them analyse, act upon and come up with an action plan for the community which is now linked into the district planning for the country, linking into the larger policy planning process (UN2, 2012).

Concepts of linking and ‘federating’ the AGGs for strength and support in driving community and cross-district initiatives was an essential element to addressing human development issues like child immunisation, nutrition and anaemia, delaying marriage and re-enrolling out-of-school girls (Sambodhi Research & Communications, 2014). As senior UNICEF Official UN2 remarked, ‘we need the horizontal linkages to be created between villages, blocks and districts and making it as a movement of adolescents’ (UN2, 2012).

With the concept of the SHGs, then, we see the proliferation of the groups as existing in the narrative of self-responsibilisation and empowerment. Whether the self-help group undertakes child immunisation drives, village cleaning, or other education or health-related initiatives, it becomes the responsibility of the SHG to see that adequate measures are undertaken to ensure the success of the scheme. This may indeed be a form of MDG 3 translation into the rural Maharashtra context. In addition, it appears that apart from the few girls who break out of traditional professions to challenge their roles in family and community,<sup>100</sup> women’s and adolescent girls’ choices of professions are restricted to care and nurture positions and voluntary work in self-help groups. How they perform within those groups (navigating social structures; monitoring and evaluating

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<sup>100</sup> See Chapter 7 for adolescent girls and police officers.

schemes) may determine their potential for working for payment within other government or donor-funded community initiatives.

An integral characteristic of the *Deepshikha* programme is to foster the creation and growth of adolescent girls' self-help groups that take on community issues with the intention of finding workable solutions to shared problems. The adolescent girls SHGs fill gaps in essential services that should be provided by the state, or the adolescent girls groups are responsible for the monitoring and delivery of government services. As Sharma writes:

the era of neoliberal governmentality is witnessing the emergence of new mechanisms of rule and proliferation of innovative institutional forms that take on governance functions formerly assigned to the state (Sharma, 2006, p. 61).

One could argue that the *Deepshikha* programme fits into this space. Indeed, Sharma comments that in her research on women's empowerment programmes, key elements (found in the *Deepshikha* programme as well) such as the creation of linkages and federations of women go back to the 1980s – a decade in which a realisation of the *position* of women (as opposed to the *condition* of women) resulted in actions designed to 'make more impact on mainstream structures [... and] not to work in isolation. So the question of linkages, networks [arose]' (Sharma, 2006, p. 66). Yet, the work that many of the women undertook in Sharma's study was undervalued. Although the work took place in SHGs, as the SHG was a voluntary model, the work was considered inferior. Sharma recounted one of her respondents' interactions with a male bureaucrat:

His comments would seem to suggest that empowerment work is less skilled and more expendable than employment in the formal structures of the state. They also hint at a neoliberal logic of government that marginalizes empowerment and poverty alleviation work, shifts it from state agencies to civil society institutions, and redefines proper state work as facilitating productive economic growth (through less intervention) (Sharma, 2006, p. 73).

When women and, in the case of *Deepshikha* participants, adolescent girls become involved in empowerment programmes, it appears that volunteer work and activity in SHGs is not only recommended but, indeed, the primary avenue through which adolescent girls may be provided with opportunities to exercise agency as they may be pathways to further paid employment. Such interventions, however, may be seen to channel adolescent girls' efforts in community-based activism into prescribed SHGs, thus bounding adolescent girls' agency.<sup>101</sup>

There are, however, ways through the avenues of SHGs to address larger questions which affect adolescent girls while simultaneously assisting in development of the village. So, while SHGs may appear to bind adolescent girls' agency in some instances, in other scenarios, girls seem to find channels through which they may express and find solutions to issues affecting their daily lives. For example, a female UNICEF staffer (UN3) in Mumbai noted that adolescent girls were instrumental in addressing issues of their own safety while improving local infrastructure. She reported that

the adolescent girls group SHG had received Rs 2000 seed money after completing their entrepreneurial training [Module 3]. Projects have involved creating an access road to the village, because it's not safe at night for girls to walk. The girls started on this project and the *panchayat* which initially was not interested in the road project later took it up [to completion] (UN3, 2012).

The female UNICEF staffer also reported girls SHGs working on projects towards improvement of water tanks and their holding capacities as well as offering other girls SHGs monies for education, medication, and so on (UN3, 2012). These were, indeed, instances of adolescent girls leveraging their membership and work in SHGs to tap into the benefits of federated and networked peer groups to improve their condition. This may not be bounded agency as referred to in the literature

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<sup>101</sup> Batliwala and Dhanraj (2004), for example, examine their own 'complicity' in thinking about empowerment programmes as avenues of true empowerment for women. In their article, they explore how women's SHGs may indeed bind agency and the tension between empowerment programmes and intentions and 'gender myths and feminist fables.'

(Batliwala & Dhanraj, 2004), but rather working within the norms and structures available to adolescent girls to be active participants in their communities.

### ***Reflections: Investing in Girls and Empowerment***

Investing in women's political participation may indeed achieve results for women political candidates and their constituencies at all levels of government and institutional structures. Adolescent girls, however, do not have access to such specific funding initiatives. Nonetheless, they are beginning to actively participate in meetings with local officials as noted in the interviews with both the Block Development Official and NGO2 in Chandrapur district. Alternative sources of and access to energy may relieve the burden of domestic chores placed on adolescent girls and women. Equally, conditional cash transfers appear to be effective in some contexts and less so in others. Clearly, the UNDP operates at a broader level and is focussed on adults, particularly women, in the development agenda. Although the adolescent girl is not visible in UNDP priorities and strategies, some of UNDP's initiatives as noted above have the potential to make a material difference to girls by contributing to a change in their conditions. This is a manifestation of the acknowledgement of girls' (and women's) lived experiences. If we refer back to the adolescent girl and development perspective (AGDP), one ingredient of the framework addresses culture as lived experiences. We may interpret this, for example, as identifying expressions of empowerment which go beyond economistic forms of emancipation. An energy-creating device, which saves time in domestic and household duties, was clearly useful in empowering girls and women (and their families) on a daily basis.

If we look more critically at the above four points in investing in the *Deepshikha* programme, we begin to see shifts in discourse and narratives which may not be apparent on the surface or which may reflect broader, more subtle changes. Firstly, girls are becoming more active within the *panchayat*, even, in some instances, being elected as *sarpanch* (head of panchayat) (UN1, 2012). While these occasions might be few, it indicates a shift in what is possible for adolescent girls. While their voices were not heard or acknowledged previously, they are engaging with the *panchayat* to effect change for the community in which they live. This

certainly does not occur in all village settings, but the discourse of change was pervasive in the interviews with all respondents. Within the AGDP, then, we may explore how adolescent girls are able to interact with sites of power. In the case of the adolescent girls in Chandrapur district, the Block Development Official reported the adolescent girls' engagement with him, his peers and the local *panchayat*. These are significant indicators of how such a programme may affect the lives of adolescent girls in a positive way. Indeed, not only engaging with but actually participating within the boundaries of a political unit like the *panchayat* is an extraordinary achievement. While this may not be the case for many or most adolescent girls, the fact that a few young women were participating in local decision-making processes was significant.

Secondly, part of the discourse of change came in the form of peer-teaching. As I discussed above, the interviews with *Deepshikha* trainers revealed significant and positive information. The fact that training sessions were being conducted as inclusive and empowering sessions is remarkable. Caste barriers were being chipped away, in the smallest but not insignificant ways. The multi-caste interactions taking place in training sessions signaled a desired change in discourse to address discrimination and inequalities based on caste preference. This aspect of the *Deepshikha* programme, as is adolescent girls' active participation in the *panchayat*, may be a translation of MDG 3 in the rural Maharashtrian context. If the goal of MDG 3 is embedded in empowering women and promoting gender equality, then the two aspects of active participation and multi-caste training sessions embody the transformational change to which broader goals aspire in local context. We see, then, how the heterogeneity of configurations, articulated in the AGDP, makes visible the acknowledgement of adolescent girls from multiple castes. This is not a collapsing of the adolescent girl as a one-dimensional, generic figure but an acknowledgement of her multiple dimensions as a young woman living in a rural environment among her peers and community. In addition, we see her exercising her rights as an active citizen. We may note here that in the AGDP framework, the notions of responsibility as participation and contribution to the community space breathe life into the actions

of adolescent girls as they exercise agency in their interactions with the *panchayat*, for example.

Thirdly, the adolescent girl appears to be an ideal entrepreneurial subject as she volunteers within her community. Certainly, with a lack of services in rural areas the adolescent girl and the AGGs may be needed to fill gaps in essential services. Alternatively, they may be needed to monitor and evaluate delivery of government services in the rural sector. In addition, with newly taught entrepreneurial skills the adolescent girl is able to provide vital resources for children within the community for their education and development. She is empowered - the ideal provider in her role of self-responsibilisation. These are well-intentioned facets to the programme. While the adolescent girl in her AGGs may provide such services, it indeed presents a slippery slope of objectifying the adolescent girl as the ideal subject of development. She is instrumentalised as she embodies the hardworking, selfless adolescent girl.

Simon-Kumar (2011) writes on citizenship within the context of Western democratic states in a postneoliberal environment. Her work, however, may be drawn upon to illustrate notions of citizenship and volunteerism within the *Deepshikha* context. Simon-Kumar (2011) refers to active citizenship within the local community and how working in this space may be seen as an opportunity to bring together local citizens in a voluntary capacity as they participate in

‘government-defined engagement strategies’ [...] feed into, and, seemingly ”co-create” policy. Citizenship [...] is ostensibly “feminized,” mapped around feminist principles of relationships and mutual dependence, and can meaningfully engage ordinary people in public governance by extending activities undertaken with their familial spaces (Simon-Kumar, 2011, p. 453).

The notion of ‘feminised’ spaces, particularly in relation to community development will be developed further in Chapter 7. If we refer to the selected active citizenship literature as referred to in Chapter 4 within the AGDP, we observe that the adolescent girls do, indeed, have a sense of self-responsibility to



uplift themselves and their communities. This aspect of active citizenship, however, as we see above while often appealing to the goodwill and positive attributes of adolescent girls, does not address structural barriers to empowerment. This sense of active participation remains an individualised expression of empowerment. We may draw here on the AGDP framework as well to identify how adolescent girls' movements within institutionalised spaces such as community may bring potential for danger. I explore this further in the following chapter.

Yet, even in such a narrative there is space for reinterpretation of what exactly an adolescent girl may achieve in working hard for community. Indeed, it may expose positive dimensions of an otherwise instrumentalised version of empowerment. For example, AGGs working in self-help groups are an important aspect of addressing community-based issues as we have seen. We have also seen, both in the cited literature and in interviews with UN officials that community issues, if left to menfolk in the community, would most likely result in government money and interventions targeted at infrastructure improvement, such as roads and sanitation. Women's input into the *panchayat* appears to shift focus from infrastructure projects to child health and education, nutrition and well-being. However, in the example provided by UN3 of building a new road, we see that the adolescent girls SHGs were able to address two issues simultaneously to the benefit of themselves and the village. It aided in the safety of girls' mobility to and from the village as well as provided for safe transport of goods to and from the rural areas. This work was initiated, according to UN3, by the adolescent girls SHGs because the *panchayat* was uninterested. Only after the project was underway, and proved to be successful, did the *panchayat* see the project to its completion. In other words, within the *boundaries* of SHGs, the girls were able to effect change which helped them while helping the community. This is in contrast to considering SHGs as *bounding* adolescent girls' agency. While such a solution is still located at the individual level, there is an attempt to address structural barriers to girls' empowerment. There is, then, certainly scope for viewing SHGs in some instances as beneficial to the girls and the community. Just as there is scope for exploring notions of wellbeing and empowerment in the public space,

acknowledging the heterogeneity of experiences of adolescent girls and examining how responsibility and participation may manifest in the context of translating MDG 3 in rural Maharashtra.

## ***Conclusion***

The adolescent girl in the development agenda appears to be a worthy target of investment as she is a member of a desirable group that possesses positive attributes. She is worthy of investment as she is the embodiment of empowerment activities and takes her 'responsibilities' seriously, now and in future. In taking her responsibilities seriously, she works towards her own self-improvement as well as that of her family and the advancement of her community. Her citizenship while codified in international and national conventions and laws remains in many instances elusive as she is unable to access information and glean meaning from it. The adolescent girl's mobility is bounded as her movement in daily life is restricted to the home, family, and immediate village. Her worth may be measured not only in economic yields and returns on investment, but in how she is able to successfully navigate entrepreneurship and increase her monetary value. Finally, the adolescent girl may play a role in quality assurance and timely monitoring of social services provided by the state and/or central government. Economies influenced by the neoliberal agenda require 'citizen participation' to fill gaps left by 'rolling back' of services. Adolescent girls are often at the frontline in filling these gaps.

This critical analysis of the adolescent girl in the *Deepshikha* programme is reflective of the complexities, contestations and slippages in meanings and translations that make up the lived experiences of adolescent girls as they negotiate the familial and public spaces around them. Empowerment programmes and policy were, and remain, economics-driven in the wider development context. Similar to modernisation theory, economic growth remains the benchmark for an individual's, indeed, a country's advancement. Yet, the *Deepshikha* programme, while embedded in neoliberal discourse of 'critical mass' and 'one to many', appears to offer life-skills that benefit the adolescent girl. In understanding and

gleaning meaning from the translation of MDG 3 from a global goal into a local Maharashtrian context, we can make the following three observations.

First, one translation of empowerment, as discussed here and further in Chapter 7, is the ability to exercise agency. Agency may be linked to notions of responsibility and self-responsibility which are embodied in the adolescent girl's ability to take care of her family and community as well as herself. We may recall that agency is the ability for an individual or community to exercise control over her/their circumstances. Within this notion of agency and more importantly within a market-driven development agenda, responsibility becomes provisioning of social services and filling gaps in welfare schemes. While these measures might be necessary for survival and serve a purpose in the everyday lives of village members, they do not address structural issues of inequality and poverty.

Secondly, most of the above-mentioned activities are undertaken by adolescent girls for no payment. Working hard and proving one's worth, however, makes one noticeable to NGOs, donor agencies and others who have power in the system. Adolescent girls, therefore, may not be able to achieve transformational change but rather 'move up' within established structures as these avenues over time may be open to them. However, working within a system may indeed only serve one purpose – to perpetuate that system without changing it. Adolescent girls, therefore, while using their knowledge and exercising their rights may be bound to a system which continues their exploitation and subjugation cloaked in the idea of *working for the common good*.<sup>102</sup>

Finally, the success of government- and donor-funded schemes might lie in the ability of women's SHGs and, therefore, adolescent girls SHGs to successfully

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<sup>102</sup> Lister (1997, p.33) notes that 'an important element of any feminist citizenship is to query establishment understandings of the "common good" and to define both citizenship and the "political" in broad terms so as to encompass the kind of informal politics in which women often take the lead and struggles of oppressed groups generally.' I would argue that in the case of the *Deepshikha* programme adolescent girls are taking the lead and, indeed, disrupting established notions of gender roles in the local context. Lister calls for 'citizenship politics [which] can be oppositional and disruptive' (Lister, 1997, p. 33) for only then are we able to see adolescent girls exercising agency.

garner interest and gather support for funding. Regardless of the sector in which a particular initiative is located (health, sanitation, education), SHGs play a critical role in obtaining funding. While SHGs are important for overall well-being of the village population, they might restrict adolescent girls' agency and the ability to pursue interests outside of prescriptive groups. One of the differences between women's SHGs and adolescent girls SHGs, however, was the knowledge of rights imparted to the girls in the empowerment programme. This perhaps enabled the girls who wished to pursue other careers to inquire about other less traditional possibilities. In addition, adolescent girls were able to engage in political discussions with Block Development Officials and *sarpanches* because of their rights education. This was not the case for women's SHGs as the literature demonstrated (Batliwala & Dhanraj, 2004; Sharma, 2006, 2008).

In the translation of MDG 3 in the rural Maharashtrian context, we observe that the adolescent girl, then, has multiple dimensions: she is worthy of investment but perhaps not worthy of remuneration; she has limited mobility but is expected to actively participate in community development; she should display aspects of good citizenship but may not necessarily understand what citizenship is; and she should possess a solid understanding of her body and how it works so she may work towards delaying marriage, completing her education, and becoming active in wider community issues.

This chapter has provided a framework for understanding the adolescent girl as the subject of development. In the next chapter I explore the adolescent girl as an agent of development. In doing so, I specifically examine the rights-based *Deepshikha* programme and what it offers the adolescent girls in broadening their knowledge of the body, their right to delay marriage and their right to an education. In addition, I explore how the *Deepshikha* programme translates policy to create adolescent girls who are not only agents of personal empowerment but agents of community development as well.



## **Chapter 7**

### **Enabling Empowerment: The Adolescent Girl as Development Agent**

#### ***Introduction***

In the previous chapter we observed how the adolescent girl is simultaneously the ideal subject of development and object of investment. We may now go further and explore her position as an *agent* of development. Her location in the (post)neoliberal development agenda may be examined more closely by investigating dimensions of empowerment such as choice, agency and resistance for individuals and the collective. Indeed, as we saw in the last chapter, (post)neoliberalism influences the global development agenda, which then articulates in particular ways in local contexts. This chapter, therefore, examines agency and empowerment in the context of the personal and the community through an exploration of the adolescent girl as an *agent* of both personal empowerment and community empowerment. It demonstrates how, in the rural Maharashtrian context, a market-driven development agenda may serve to instrumentalise adolescent girls in specific ways, such as in expectations of volunteer work. This translation of empowerment as volunteerism may reveal a shift in focus from the collective to a specific, functional focus of community development, tying into notions of self-responsibilisation explored earlier. Indeed, this could be a manifestation of how women (and subsequently girls) are treated in the ‘neoliberal global economy’ in which ‘it is women rather than men who are cast as the “agents of change” who can “lift” economies once they are primed as a “weapon against poverty” by intergovernmental agencies, donor-governments, global financial institutions and multinational corporations (Cornwall et al., 2016, p. 10).

As an intergovernmental agency, UNICEF is mandated to work with governments (central, state and local) in order to build the capacity of government agencies within and across sectors to support children and adolescents to achieve their

potential <sup>103</sup> (UN2, 2012). UNICEF India <sup>104</sup> and, in particular, UNICEF Maharashtra<sup>105</sup> works with children and adolescents at the programme level in both urban and rural settings. In unpacking notions of empowerment, I look specifically at themes which emerged from the interviews with multiple respondents. These themes, embedded in a rights-based approach, include adolescent girls' rights, volunteerism, and community. As a senior UNICEF official based in Mumbai commented on rights-based approaches:

I think the objectives [of the programme] need to be very clearly spelt out. We are looking at gender rights. We need every girl to complete her education, at least to the secondary (10<sup>th</sup>) level. A girl needs to understand her rights, what her body is, rights in every context (UN1, 2012).

The UNICEF language is reflective of broader UN(DP) discourse as the organisation uses terms like *enabling* and *building capacity* – terms which evoke notions of empowerment (Bratton, 1989; Fairclough, 2013; Udombana, 2000; UNICEF, 2004, 2007, 2011). For example, a female senior-level UNICEF Maharashtra official (UN2) in Mumbai commented that 'we are not just creating an empowerment project but creat[ing] an enabling environment (UN2, 2012). The *Deepshikha* programme in Chandrapur district focuses its efforts on reaching adolescent girls living in rural communities (many of which are *adivasi* communities) with an emphasis on education and broader life-skills training.

### ***Agents of Personal Empowerment***

The *Deepshikha* programme is clearly one which seeks to build capacity, facilitate choice and encourage adolescent girls to be active in their communities. A senior UNICEF official reported that the idea of development and empowerment meant providing adolescent girls with opportunities to develop self-esteem, which may be enhanced through service to the community (UN1, 2012). For example, UN1

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<sup>103</sup> <http://www.unicef.org/>; <http://www.unicef.org/adolescence/>

<sup>104</sup> <http://unicef.in/>; <http://unicef.in/Whatwedo>

<sup>105</sup> <http://unicef.in/StateInfo/Maharashtra/Introduction>

noted that the UNDP definition of development ‘is the capacity to make informed choices’ (UN1, 2012); therefore, in that spirit, everything should be done to support the ability to make informed choices which included training and capacity-building initiatives for individuals and communities (UN1, 2012). Further, UN1 commented, ‘[...] we need to empower communities to make decisions’ around local development (UN1, 2012).

This notion of empowerment for the community was linked to an idea of adolescent girls ‘knowing their rights’ and ‘exerting their rights, their participation in development activities in the village’ (UN1, 2012). Another senior UNICEF official noted empowerment and choice were closely linked to ‘individual, young, confident adolescent [girls] being able to speak up for their rights, able to execute their rights, their decisions’ (UN2, 2012). This was to be achieved through adolescent girls’ knowledge of their rights used to challenge traditional practices in the family as well as for the benefit of the community.

### **Challenging norms: ‘Exercising their rights’**

UNICEF’s mandate is embedded in a rights-based approach (UNICEF, 2004, p. 27; 2010, pp. 12-13, 33) and, therefore, the *Deepshikha* programme, and its emphasis on adolescent girls’ knowing and understanding their rights, is grounded in a rights-based approach. Further, as UNICEF documentation demonstrates, the rights-based approach is enhanced by a multisectoral commitment to educating/schooling girls generally which serves to move a nation towards achievement of the MDGs:

The Millennium Development Goals have set a seal on the more rights-based, multifaceted, human-centred vision of development...the Goals link progress on education, health, poverty relief and the environment with girls’ right to equality in schooling. This new approach and these Goals hold promise for the lives of girls and the fate of nations (UNICEF, 2004, p. 27).

Indeed, ‘the fate of nations’ is a heavy burden for an adolescent girl to bear and, yet, we may observe the notion of adolescent girls as instruments or functional



actors within the market-driven, economics-oriented development agenda. I explore this idea of instrument of change later in this chapter. In the rural Maharashtra context, part of knowing and understanding one's rights is to understand family dynamics and community expectations. For example, in the cultural tradition of rural Maharashtra, young women marry. The interview data showed that there was no clear questioning of the concept of marriage or that one would marry. It was a given. Yet, how and when a marriage is to take place was debated in some homes. While the adolescent girl may 'choose' her right to engage in discussion about her (eventual) marriage, her parents may equally oppose her request or argument for delaying marriage – demonstrating the power dynamics within families.

Demonstrations of adolescent girls exercising their rights, therefore, take many forms in the realities of the field. Empowerment may be translated into challenging norms and traditions within family structures or in making decisions about personal and career development. For example, empowerment for a female *Deepshikha* gender and field coordinator (GFC1) based in Chandrapur meant that girls were able to speak up for themselves within the family:

Empowerment means because of the *Deepshikha* programme girls are starting to speak up. Before, if food was brought home from the market, a larger portion was given to the boy than to the girl. Now girls are saying 'why don't we get the same amount? Why don't we share it equally?' (GFC1, 2012)

*तींनी टिप्पणी केली : 'सबळ अर्थात दीपशिखा योजने मुळे मुली आवाज उठउ लागलेत ...। पूर्वी, बाजारातून आणलेल्या अन्न सामग्री मधून मुलांना मुलींपेक्षा अधिक भाग मिळायचा . अत्ता मुली विचारतात कि त्यांना समप्रमाण का नाही मिळत? का आपण सम भाग नाही करत?'*

Nutrition and anaemia, in particular, are two health-related issues that affect the growth and well-being of adolescent girls. Therefore, challenging notions of male-biased food allocation and traditional ideas of son preference in a patriarchal

system are the beginnings of an adolescent girl's ability to exercise her rights and question family practices.

### **Control over body**

While limitations to mobility and safety as well as scepticism of voluntary work manifested in some opposition to the *Deepshikha* project, there were also pockets of resistance to training content, in particular around Module One's content – personal care and hygiene during menstruation, sexual and reproductive rights, and awareness-raising of HIV/AIDS (GFC1; T1; T2; PR1, 2012)<sup>106</sup>. *Deepshikha* gender and field coordinator GFC1 commented that

because this is an *adivasi* area, the people here think that now the girl has started menstruating she's a big girl. We have to get her married (GFC1, 2012).

ह्या आदिवासी भागातील लोकांच्यात एक विचार असा आहे की मुलींची मासिक पाळी सुरु झाली की ती मोठी झाली. आता तिचे लग्न लावून दिले पाहिजे.

I referred to this earlier as one of the reasons for a girl's early marriage. However, among *adivasi* communities there now appears to be a willingness, albeit tentative, to learn about a girl's changing body, as observed by one of the trainers during an informational session on menstruation. A female *Deepshikha* trainer (T1) remarked that

some *kishoris* brought their mothers to the meetings. So even when it comes to menstruation and cleanliness the girls are now telling their mothers what to do (T1, 2012).

काही किशोर वयातील मुलींनी सभेमध्ये आपल्या आईला बरोबर आणले. त्यामुळे त्या मासिक पाळी व स्वच्छतेविषयी निःसंकोचपणे आपल्या आईशी बोलू शकत होत्या.

Although the sessions were viewed initially with scepticism, the participants and their female relatives embraced the knowledge being taught. Trainer (T1) commented that

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<sup>106</sup> PR1 was a young woman who worked as a *Deepshikha prerika* in Jiwati block.

the mothers and grandmothers started speaking up and telling me this is a good programme (T1, 2012). T1 प्रमाणे आया आणि आज्या सुद्धा नंतर बोलत्या झाल्या आणि हा उपक्रम फारच चांगला आणि उपयुक्त आहे असं म्हणाल्या.

Acceptance of the programme, however, was based on several visits and the work of many months of relationship-building between the *Deepshikha* female gender and field coordinators, the local adolescent-girl *prerikas* and members of the village.

Interestingly, once parents (*adivasi* and non-*adivasi*) were made aware of the content of Module One, many were pleased with the knowledge-sharing that took place. The hardest communities to penetrate, in terms of acceptance and understanding of the programme, remained the *adivasi* communities (GFC1; GFC2; NGO 2; YC1; UN1; UN2; UN4, 2012). Despite initial resistance by parents to sessions on menstruation, knowledge of menstruation and puberty was the number one positive feature of the *Deepshikha* programme as rated by the adolescent girls in the Sambodhi evaluation report (Sambodhi Research & Communications, 2014, p. 44). The top three sessions which addressed an adolescent girl's lived experiences were 'puberty and menstruation' (92.3% of attendees found useful), 'self-image, knowing oneself, needs, wants & rights' (74.1%), and 'reproductive, maternal and child health' (69.6%) (Sambodhi Research & Communications, 2014, p. 44). Financial literacy (61.1%) placed sixth behind nutrition (67.2%) and disease and treatment (61.9%) respectively.

As these figures show, acquiring competency in entrepreneurial and financial skills, as assessed by the adolescent girl participants, was rated in a much lower position. The entrepreneurship module (the only five-day module) came in eighth place (53.3%) after knowledge of HIV/AIDS (57.6%) (Sambodhi Research & Communications, 2014, p. 44). Entrepreneurial skills, therefore, were not nearly as influential an element in terms of girls' assessment of their learning. Clearly, knowledge of the body and how it works was not only vital, but it played a significant role in an adolescent girl's understanding of herself and contributed to

her self-esteem and self-confidence. It, indeed, allowed her to have control of her body – a key assessment of the programme. The *Deepshikha* programme, therefore, served a very important purpose of building capacity of adolescent girls with respect to knowledge of their bodies as well as their rights. Indeed, the programme contributed to the adolescent girl's ability to exercise agency over her circumstances in a non-economistic way. Further, the programme sought to translate policies which were accessible, understandable and suitable for *adivasi* and non-*adivasi* families. In other words, the programme made a clear attempt to address the heterogeneity of experiences and configurations of adolescent girls and their families.

### **Confidence and personal growth**

The *Deepshikha* programme in Chandrapur, as in other districts in Maharashtra, is administered in partnership with local non-governmental organisations (NGO). Two NGOs working in Chandrapur district addressed separate issues in relation to the life-skills programme. The partnering male NGO director (NGO2) worked directly with the gender and field coordinators (GFC), adolescent-girl *prerikas*, adolescent girl participants, and UNICEF staff. A second male NGO staffer (YC1)<sup>107</sup> worked with adolescent boys in the village and offered support to those who questioned their lack of participation in a *Deepshikha*-style programme. The programme for the boys had no connection with the *Deepshikha* life-skills programme for adolescent girls apart from shared office space in the centre of town.

NGO2 in Chandrapur noted that prior to the start of the *Deepshikha* programme, adolescent girls

were walking with their heads down and wouldn't even say their names (NGO2, 2012). चंद्रपूरालील एनजीओ (NGO 2) च्या प्रमाणे दीपशिखा ह्या कार्यक्रमा च्या सुरुवात ला पौगंडावस्थेतील मुली न्यूनगंडा मुले स्वतः चे नाव देखील नीट सांगू शकत नसत.

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<sup>107</sup> YC1 is a male staffer at a local NGO in Chandrapur.

NGO2 reported that some 12-18 months after programme implementation, village women began noticing a positive change in the girls. Some of the changes in behaviour the women noticed were the decrease in fear to speak up for oneself and diminishing feelings of shyness. Girls were now making choices within the family structure, affecting interactions with brothers, mothers and fathers. Some of these choices involved handing a broom to a brother or discussing nutritional needs and personal hygiene during menstruation (NGO2, 2012). Women in the village began attending the *kishori*<sup>108</sup> sessions, sitting in small groups observing, and started to think they (women) could be empowered to make changes in their choices as well (NGO2, 2012).

The local NGO youth coordinator (YC1) noted that his village had both *Deepshikha* and Youth<sup>109</sup> groups. The participants in the *Deepshikha* group chose to work with the Youth group as the adolescent girls felt it necessary to keep the adolescent boys informed on issues of HIV/AIDS, personal hygiene and collective work in the community (YC1, 2012). YC1 noted that

if there was training going on and there was confusion in one group, they knew they could ask the other group for help' (YC1, 2012). YC1 नी सांगितले की, प्रशिक्षण चालू अस्ताना जर एक गट संभ्रम होता तर त्यांना माहीत होतं की इतर गटांना मदत साठी विचारू शकतो .

Similarly, a male NGO director<sup>110</sup> in Nagbhid block (another block in Chandrapur district) reported that his organisation worked on organising and fostering an adolescent-girl *prerika* network which had both *prerikas* and youth workers (NGO3, 2012). The idea behind a joint group was a choice made by the *prerikas*

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<sup>108</sup> Adolescent girls were often referred to using the Marathi word *kishori*.

<sup>109</sup> The NGOs used the term youth in this context to denote adolescent boys.

<sup>110</sup> NGO3 was the male director of an organisation unrelated to the *Deepshikha* programme in Nagbhid block. His organisation took up so-called empowerment skills for adolescent girls in relation to 'getting girls ready for marriage' (NGO3, 2012). This particular empowerment programme, unlike *Deepshikha*, focussed on adolescent girls' learning skills such as aspects of cleanliness, health, creating and maintaining kitchen gardens and so on in preparation for marriage. This time of adolescence was specifically chosen as 'newly married women have very little time' to take up training and education (NGO3, 2012).

to include young men in their network for the benefit of the wider community (NGO3, 2012). NGO3 also observed that the adolescent girls in Nagbhid block who had participated in the *Deepshikha* training programme had developed a sense of self-confidence and had made choices to support their peers in their learning (NGO3, 2012). For example, two girls from the adolescent girl group took a six-hour train journey from Nagbhid to Nagpur to secure stationary supplies for fellow students. The girls purchased the goods with ‘seed money’ from the *kishori* group and resold the products in the village, effectively repaying their small loan (NGO3, 2012). Negotiating public spaces, like train stations and bus depots, can be hazardous for girls travelling alone. During the train journey, the ticket collector asked if the girls were indeed travelling alone. As the girls were sitting in a ‘ladies-only carriage’ (quite common on trains in India), their response was that their ‘brother’ was seated in another carriage (NGO3, 2012) – a necessary lie told to maintain their own safety. Engaging in public spaces (through teaching, travelling or advocacy), in some instances, may be seen as a choice the adolescent girls make on behalf of supporting their peers and exercising their rights to mobility within the village space and beyond. The adolescent girls, thus, interpret empowerment and aspects of choice and agency by questioning fundamental attitudes within the family and community, claiming rights for the individual girl-child within the family unit and challenging prescribed roles and responsibilities in the wider social fabric of the local community. Such challenges to social traditions may, of course, raise questions of safety within family and community for some outspoken girls. I will address this later in the chapter.

### **Delaying marriage**

A result of benefitting from a broader understanding of rights may be adolescent girls challenging traditional marriage practices, including delaying marriage wherever and whenever possible. In India, marriage of adolescent girls in rural areas (56%) is nearly double of adolescent girls in urban areas (29%) (UNICEF, 2011, p. 23). The importance of delaying marriage was evident in discussions at the field site with female *Deepshikha* trainers T1 and T2. For example, trainer (T2) noted that the adolescent girls spoke of their aspirations of finishing their

education and fulfilling their potential. More than expressing vague dreams or hopes, the girls spoke to concrete issues which needed to be addressed within the family such as marriage for themselves and in some cases for their older sister. Reference to an older sister's delayed marriage addressed family structure and the hierarchy of marriage negotiations.<sup>111</sup> *Deepshikha* trainer (T2) commented:

Isn't that empowerment that she is able to sing, dance or talk? Or she'll say I won't get married now but in two years or *tai's* (older sister) marriage shouldn't be now but in two years. So she's even saying things in her own house.

ती, नृत्य गाणे किंवा चर्चा करण्यास सक्षम आहे की सबलीकरण नाही का? किंवा ती मी म्हणणार कि लग्न आता नाही , दोन वर्षांनी करीन किंवा ताईचा लग्न अत्ता नाही , दोन वर्षांनी करायचा . ती तिच्या स्वतः च्या घरात काही म्हणत आहे.

In addition, a Chandrapur Block Development Official reported that adolescent girls were often successful in delaying their own marriages or those of siblings or friends (PO2, 2012). Choosing when to get married and exercising agency, that is, determining that marriage was not an immediate desire but to be entered into later, was another positive result of *Deepshikha* training, according to the Block Development Official.

The adolescent girl, then, is not only challenging familial structures but society's expectations of her as a young woman – to be married. It is not that she will not marry. In Chandrapur *jilha* (district), it is the expectation of most families – regardless of caste, religious affiliation, level of education, etc. – that their daughters marry at a certain age. In traditional Maharashtrian families, a younger daughter may only be married once the older daughter has been married. The legal age of marriage for a girl in India is 18 years,<sup>112</sup> yet the literature reveals that

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<sup>111</sup> In many communities older sisters must marry first before younger sisters are able to marry. Therefore, in delaying an older sister's marriage a younger sister is able to defer her own marriage.

<sup>112</sup> UN1 referred to the Marriage Act in our interview in which he stated that the official age of marriage for girls is 18. This minimum age is disregarded in many communities.

many young girls must marry well below the legal age limit (UNICEF, 2007, p. 6). Poverty, death (or impending death) of a family member, and onset of menstruation are some of the reasons which may contribute to a girl's early marriage. Early marriage, however, may result in early pregnancy and childbirth often ending tragically for adolescent girls whose bodies are not yet physically mature (UNICEF, 2007, pp. 6-8; 2011, p. 23). While the adolescent girls do not reject marriage completely, they contest having to marry at such young ages. This is an exceptional accomplishment from these girls. In effect, they are asking their parents to ignore social norms and traditions which could be detrimental to the girls (and their families) in favour of delayed marriage. The ability to negotiate family structures and rigid social expectations is an astonishing feat in rural villages.

Beyond negotiating within family hierarchy and delaying marriage, some adolescent girls were actively engaged in the wider community. This, according to the Block Development Official, was one of the biggest successes for the girls and the community:

Girls are moving ahead. That is the biggest success [of the *Deepshikha* programme]. All of this education they have received is now their knowledge (*Gnyana*). Now that the girls know this they will move forward and move their village forward, definitely (PO2, 2012).

मुळीं ची प्रगती सुरु आहे. हे दीपशिखा कार्यक्रम साठी एक फार मोठा यश आहे.

ह्या प्रशिक्षण मुले आता त्यांना हे ग्यानही वाढले आहे आणि त्यामुळे तेच स्वतः

ची आणि तेच्या गाव ची प्रगती हि निश्चितच होईल.

If we, then, consider that, according to the AGDP framework, gender is inclusive of male and female relationships, we begin to understand the significance of attempts to delay marriage. While marriage as discussed above was not rejected, there appeared to be a space for potential discussion on appropriateness of age and timing. Certainly, many adolescent girls may not have had the opportunity to delay their marriages. However, the ability to engage with family structures and, indeed, societal expectations of young, single women was a positive step in an adolescent girl's ability to self-determine.



## Employment and career choices

Empowerment may also be articulated in the desire to pursue a profession that is unlikely for rural adolescent girls, that is, to become a police officer. The UNDP's definition of development and the literature on empowerment states that empowerment lies in the ability to make informed choices and decisions about one's life (see Chapter 4). In a particular instance, as conveyed in an interview with a female *Deepshikha* gender and field coordinator and an NGO director in Chandrapur district, engagement with local police prompted three adolescent girls to inquire not only about the roles and responsibilities of police personnel in the area, but to actively initiate discussion around training, employment and deployment of female police officers (GFC1; NGO2, 2012). All three girls making inquiries had completed Standard 12 (high school matriculation). The girls contemplated pursuing a career in law enforcement; however, their families deemed such work inappropriate for girls (see Chapter 6). The gender and field coordinator noted that the girls' empowerment was illustrated in two ways. Firstly, the adolescent girls had the self-confidence to participate in a discussion with active police officers about the work they do. Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, the adolescent girls expressed their desire to choose a career in the police force despite displeasure from family members. Gender and field coordinator GFC1 commented:

There were three (girls) who wanted to become police officers, but their families said that is not a profession for girls. So the families were constraining the girls. But that was their (girls') empowerment being able to do this type of programme and express their desire to become police officers (GFC1, 2012).

*तीन मुलींना पोलिस अधिकारी बनायचा होता, पण त्यांच्या कुटुंबांनी म्हटलं कि हे मुलीचं व्यवसाय नवे. त्यामुळे मुलींवर कुटुंबांचे अत्याचार आले. पण मुलींच्या सबळते मुले ते असले योजनेत येऊ शकले आणि त्यांच्या पोलिस अधिकारी हव्याचा इच्छा व्यक्त करू शकले.*

The adolescent girls engaged in conversations with the police about the life of a police officer, his/her duties and the level of education required for a career in law

enforcement. The three adolescent girls who had expressed a desire to become police officers began training after completion of high school matriculation (GFC1, 2012). Gender and field coordinator GFC1 indicated dissatisfaction, opposition and apprehension within the girls' families about their chosen employment path being inappropriate for the girls. Despite the apparent disapproval from family members, the girls were able to exert their rights, to exercise their choice and eventually begin police training.

GFC1 remarked:

That's our gender empowerment. Girls who never left the home are becoming police officers and training in places like Chandrapur city where they must be away from their families for extended periods (GFC1, 2012).

*ते आमचे लिंग सबलीकरण. ज्या मुली कधी घर सोडून बाहेर नाही गेले ते पोलिस अधिकारी बनत आणि चंद्रपूर नगरा सारखे जागेत प्रशिक्षण करत जिथे त्यांना अपल्या कुटुंबापासून पुष्कळ वेळासाठी दूर राहवा लागतं.*

### **Vignette One: Adolescent girls and a display of trust**

The complex nature of behaviour and attitudes between villagers, especially adolescent girls, and police is embedded in local context. The police represent state authority and in an area of India such as Chandrapur *jilha* (district), Jiwati *taluka* (block), the police and state security forces, in general, are viewed with suspicion by villagers. Police motives for supporting local villages or conversely interrogating local inhabitants are questioned in a geographic area bordering the so-called Red Corridor – an expanse of deep jungle and forest region in central and east India controlled by Maoist guerrillas referred to as Naxals. It is a tenuous link in which mutual respect and trust require years of relationship-building to develop. Adolescent girls, like other inhabitants of local villages, were fearful of engaging with police. The girls, however, displayed a clear understanding of the importance of the connection between themselves and the police when they offered to perform the *raksha bandhan* ceremony.

Rituals play an important role in most societies to underpin rites-of-passage, celebrate births, deaths or marriages or affirm kinship ties and relations. It was not clear from the interview how many male police officers were present in the *taluka*, but *raksha bandhan* is a culturally significant ceremony. The *raakhi*-tying ceremony is common in Maharashtra and indicates a boy's commitment to his sister in time of need. The *raakhi* is a thin or thick, often ornamentally decorated, piece of string which the girl ties around the wrist of the boy during the ceremony. If the girl is widowed, expelled from her marital household or experiences any adverse circumstances in her life, the boy affirms, through his participation in this ritual, that he will 'take care of' his sister as long as she requires his care. It ties the girl and boy in a life-long relationship. This ceremony, normally reserved for blood relatives such as siblings or cousins, was extended by village adolescent girls to male police officers, representing state forces. It is a display of trust, confidence and responsibility that places the adolescent girls in a close relationship with the police officers. The police officers in accepting this display of trust placed themselves in a 'protective' situation vis-à-vis the adolescent girls. What is striking about this event is the agency of the adolescent girls to seek an active and productive partnership with male police officers. In the celebration of *raksha bandhan*, the adolescent girls showed they are in control of their actions and aware of the significance of such an act. They gained self-respect and the respect of local villagers and police in their confidence and ability to speak and actively engage with local police authorities.

These adolescent girls were paid for their positions once they trained and qualified as police officers. Likewise, *Deepshikha* trainers (T1 and T2) were paid for their work.<sup>113</sup> The trainers have noted that although a preferred choice of some adolescent girls might be to become trained as a *prerika* (an unpaid, adolescent-girl volunteer-facilitator), the realities of everyday life required income-generating activities. For this reason, volunteering became difficult for some adolescent girls. A *Deepshikha* trainer commented that at various times adolescent girls approached her with questions of wages and their work as a *prerika*. She said she repeatedly told them that the work was on a voluntary basis and made clear, in the first instance of speaking with prospective *prerikas*, that the position was unpaid, voluntary work (T1, 2012). This may be seen as a deterrent for some adolescent girls who must think about income-generating activities, if they are to be working outside the home. Apart from income-generating activities, an adolescent girl's knowledge of her rights led to engaging in discussions within her own family as well as in the wider community. In the *Deepshikha* programme the engagement within wider community manifested in voluntary work. This section has provided an overview of how the adolescent girl is an agent of personal empowerment. The next section engages with the notion of the adolescent girl as the agent of community empowerment.

### ***Agents of Community Empowerment***

The *Deepshikha* programme's primary goal is to empower young women individually so that they may work collectively for the betterment/advancement of their communities (UN1, UN2, 2012). One could argue that the results of such interventions are two-fold: 1) to empower adolescent girls, which *intrinsically* validates and acknowledges the adolescent girl, and 2) to prepare the adolescent girls to become *instruments* of change (see Chapter 4). *Intrinsic* use may be understood as valuing and recognising the individual as a human being worthy of being educated (Kabeer, 2005a). *Instrumental* is understood to mean that educating the individual has benefits for others as she may put her knowledge and

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<sup>113</sup> One trainer noted that she had a low salary but did not comment further on how much she earned or what she felt would be an appropriate salary.

skills to use for the development of the local village, the wider community and the nation (Kabeer, 2005a; Kumar, 2012, 2013; Peppin Vaughan, 2013). The choice given to these adolescent girls is, therefore, rather contentious. While such programmes offer positive outcomes on many fronts, they simultaneously limit what the adolescent girl may achieve, prescribing specific roles for these young women. The (post)neoliberal development agenda sees adolescent girls and women as those who are ‘capable’ of reporting, monitoring and evaluating social service programmes and government-initiated schemes. Instead of government functionaries used to monitor local development schemes, ‘capable’, ‘hardworking’ adolescent girls and women are trained to take on the role of the state and ensure critical monitoring of social development programmes (UN4, 2012; see Chapter 6).

### **Feminisation of the community development space**

Community engagement appears to be key in the development process, and adolescent girls, through the awareness and exercise of their ‘rights’ and their volunteering, potentially play a key role in community development. Through the *Deepshikha* life-skills programme, for example, adolescent girls are trained to work as a group or collective to improve village life through sanitation-awareness programmes, child immunisation monitoring schemes or other health and education-related interventions (UN1; UN2, 2012). They are also expected to have the skills to negotiate with other service providers and government functionaries within the community space. According to UN1, the aim of government-initiated policy and its implementation at local level should be ‘to convert national goals into community norms’ (UN1, 2012), that is translating national development programmes into locally applicable and relevant interventions. The education of the communities, then, takes place through the adolescent girls and their adolescent girls groups who work with the wider community. While this type of frontline community work may empower adolescent girls, it also raises questions of safety within the home and in the community space as well as the instrumentalisation of the adolescent girl.

In the rural Maharashtrian family unit, adolescent girls perform many duties alongside their mothers. This is observed in many developing country contexts and is not considered unusual. This type of work, under the umbrella of the ‘sexual division of labour’ and so-called women’s work (domestic work/reproductive work/nurturing/caring and meal preparation) ‘gets lower wages and is less valued’ (Beneria, 1979; Mackintosh, 1984; Menon, 2012, p. 11; Mies, 1982). ‘Women’s domestic work’ becomes ‘naturalised’ according to gender roles and gender relations grounded in biological differences between women and men – collecting firewood and water, gardening, and ‘animal husbandry’ (Meissner, Humphreys, Meis, & Scheu, 1975; Menon, 2012, p. 13). Because this work is not paid well or at all, it is valued less than men’s work. In addition, aspects of power at play in the gendered space of the private realm may include violence if norms and traditions are challenged, and as a result, may reveal a ‘lack of choices’ (Kabeer, 2005a). Kabeer notes:

Gender often operates through the unquestioned acceptance of power. Thus women who, for example, internalise their lesser claim on household resources, or accept violence at the hands of their husbands, do so because to behave otherwise is considered outside the realm of possibility. These forms of behaviour could be said to reflect 'choice', but are really based on the denial of choice (Kabeer, 2005a, p. 14).

In another example of research in countries in South America, women interviewees spoke of added burdens of not only being responsible for domestic duties but also for earning a wage outside the home. In their pursuit of maintaining household balance and ‘defusing conflict’, many women were placing extra emphasis on being a ‘good wife’ or ‘dutiful daughter’, in particular when male members of the household felt ‘threatened’ by the income earned by female members (Chant, 2008, p. 181). Beyond income-earning opportunities and in addition to the unvalued spaces of domestic work, these women also engage in community spaces which seek their voluntary contribution – unpaid labour (Chant, 2008).

Is this, then, a type of ‘feminisation of the community development’ space in which adolescent girls carry the burden of successful implementation of volunteer-based programmes to combat poverty? Chant, for example, addresses the ‘feminisation of poverty’ and interestingly refers to the ‘feminisation of anti-poverty programmes’ (Chant, 2008, p. 165). Similar to the challenges of accessing reliable sex-disaggregated data on the achievements of the MDGs (see Chapter 3), there is a ‘dearth, if not total absence, of sex-disaggregated longitudinal panel data’ when assessing the ‘thesis of the feminisation of poverty’ (Chant, 2008, p. 169; see also Johnsson-Latham, 2004; Nauckhoff, 2004). Chant notes that

some programmes to combat poverty reproduce patterns of discrimination, since women are used as unpaid or underpaid providers of family or social welfare services, and are only marginally treated as autonomous individuals entitled to rights and benefits related to activities designed to improve their quality of life (ECLAC 2004, p.54 in Chant, 2008, p. 184).

Behind this, however, sits a deeper structural issue. The influence of the (post)neoliberal development agenda with its focus on individualisation of interventions and investment in adolescent girls takes advantage of young women’s ‘altruistic’ sense of duty to family and community (Chant, 2008, p. 186; 2016a; Wilson, 2008, 2015). Many development programmes do not question the disruption in gender relations that may occur in the wake of empowerment programmes. This is because many programmes address the ‘*condition* of poor women, [rather] than their *position*, the former referring to people’s material state and the latter to their position in society’ (original italics, Chant, 2008, p. 186), as noted in Chapter 6. This is a result of inadequate measures to addressing structural issues which maintain and perpetuate a culture of subordination of women and girls in a patriarchal and postcolonial state and a restriction of their choices in their personal, social, political and economic lives. As Chant notes:

The tendency to orient anti-poverty programmes to, and most commonly through, women has been particularly marked under neoliberal restructuring, giving rise to the conclusion that while the “feminisation of poverty” has undoubtedly had a major and positive impact in terms of GAD, it has also served neoliberal interests. Using women to achieve

more effective poverty reduction reflects an instrumentalism whereby the returns and “pay-offs” from investing in women tend to prevail over women’s rights (Chant, 2008, p. 183).

This may leave adolescent girls in a precarious position as they are located in an in-between space of childhood and adulthood. Adolescent girls are children but do not have the luxury or sense of indulgence afforded their age. They are not women, and, yet, they must take on responsibilities and roles placing them in vulnerable positions vis-à-vis local power relations.

### **Volunteerism**

Volunteering is an activity which is embedded in terms used to identify a person’s ability or willingness to ‘give back to society’ or ‘engage deeply with community.’ On many levels volunteering is the backbone of many donor- and government-funded interventions designed to involve community in local development. For example, volunteering is perceived as a way for local women to actively organise and mobilise other women in so-called Self-Help Groups (SHG) or for microcredit schemes (Ackerly, 1997; Batliwala & Dhanraj, 2004). Women become involved in these collectives for the betterment and advancement of themselves and their communities as it is the duty of good citizens to participate in a positive manner in their villages (Batliwala, 1994; Batliwala & Dhanraj, 2004, UN1, 2012; Moser, 1993). Batliwala and Dhanraj note that although volunteering may often be seen as the best way to interact with fellow villagers, especially with other women in SHGs, this avenue of interaction may in fact restrict rather than expand women’s choices as others prescribe the roles to which women may have access (Batliwala & Dhanraj, 2004; see Chapter 6).

UNICEF Maharashtra officials noted that the *Deepshikha* programme was designed to produce young women called *prerikas* or adolescent-girl volunteer-facilitators who are active adolescent girl leaders in their villages (UN1; UN2; UN3; UN4; 2012). As noted in Chapter 5, *prerikas* attend two 10-day training sessions and one 5-day training session to become volunteer-facilitators in their villages. Each training module has a specific emphasis, but generally the modules



may be summarised as follows: Module One teaches about the individual, her body and her capacity to effect change as an individual; Module Two teaches about the collective, girls working in groups, learning to negotiate and bargain as well as possible ‘federating’<sup>114</sup> of groups across blocks and districts; and Module Three teaches financial literacy and how to start a small business (UNICEF State Office for Maharashtra, 2009a, 2009b, 2009c, 2012). Training sessions are attended by potential *prerikas* on a voluntary basis and are unpaid.<sup>115</sup> Education and training as well as accommodation, meals and transport to and from the village are paid for by UNICEF and its partners. The work which the adolescent girls undertake later in the village (setting up adolescent girls groups, peer-training sessions, etc.) is strictly on a voluntary basis. The programme’s existence and survival is based on the volunteer structure and the willingness of adolescent-girl volunteer-facilitators to continue working when they return to their villages.

Some scholars have expressed reservations regarding volunteerism, noting that it adds to women’s (in this case adolescent girls’) burdens – the so called-triple burden of community work or service (Afshar & Barrientos, 1999; Bronstein, 1982; Finch & Groves, 1983; Goodkind & Deacon, 2004; Moser, 1989; Pascall, 1986). This comes in addition to the two ‘burdens’ of waged employment and household and familial duties for women (Moser, 1989). I would argue that for adolescent girls this could be considered a fourth or even fifth burden, if one considered an adolescent girl as a pupil (fourth burden) and possibly an unwaged agricultural worker, that is working a family plot (fifth burden). Indeed, Molyneux writes that women (and this could be extended to include adolescent girls)

represent an army of voluntary labour [...] These gendered assets and dispositions are being increasingly recognised by the international

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<sup>114</sup> Here the notion of federating is borrowed from the discourse of empowerment of women’s self-help groups as stated in an earlier footnote. It is employed in this context in a similar fashion, that is, to network and connect adolescent girls groups across districts and borders in a rural setting to effect broader social change.

<sup>115</sup> Adolescent-girl *prerikas* are identified in villages in several ways. The adolescent girls may self-identify as a potential participant, members of the *panchayat* may identify potential in an adolescent girl to take up this role or local UNICEF and/or NGO partner staff may identify an adolescent girl (UN2, 2012).

development agencies, but so far this has not brought significant material benefits to the women involved (Molyneux, 2006, p. 49).

A senior UNICEF official took a different view to volunteerism and noted that the idea of volunteering was foreign to many in government and in wider society in general (UN1, 2012). UN1 commented that, in fact, in India a culture of volunteering to better oneself and the wider community did not exist (UN1, 2012). And yet, UN1 reported that volunteering was indeed connected to empowerment through one's own actions serving the community, and more significantly, any knowledge and expertise gained in training (for a volunteer role) would remain within the community (UN1, UN2, UN4, 2012). Empowerment, therefore, may manifest in one's ability to serve and be useful to one's community. This example, and others I have noted above, takes place in postcolonial spaces in which power, access to power and power in negotiations and programme planning and implementation play a significant role. Indeed, when one speaks of empowerment, one must consider the role of adolescent girls and the expectations placed on them from those in power – NGOs, donor agencies and government.

### ***Critiquing Agency***

#### **Barriers in the personal space and safety issues**

*Deepshikha* trainers, gender and field coordinators, and adolescent-girl *prerikas* in the programme noted that the adolescent girl faced much pressure in her home (GFC1; GFC2; T1; T2; PR1, 2012). Pressures came from school work (if she were still in school), caring for home and family, and tending to a family agricultural plot. In addition to these duties, adolescent girls took on the responsibility of becoming a volunteer leader, peer-teaching other adolescent girls, and organising community-oriented action drives for specific government-funded schemes - child immunisation, hand-washing, and sanitation (UN1; UN2; UN4; GFC1, 2012). In this mix of responsibilities and duties, one may add the necessity of contributing financially to household expenses. This is an important component of family income as many families rely on an adolescent girl's income for survival. It was, therefore, unsurprising that in some families, adolescent girls faced pressure from parents to reject participation in a programme like

*Deepshikha*. The resistance was two-fold: firstly, parents were hesitant to allow their daughters to travel unaccompanied to a location outside the village for a ten-day training session. In rural Maharashtra, adolescent girls are often restricted in their daily movements. That is, their range of mobility might be limited to the house, collecting well water and perhaps attending school. Functions involving family gatherings or other events outside the village required male accompaniment. *Deepshikha* Trainer T1 commented:

We spoke with the *gram panchayat* to get their permission and then we approached the girls and their families. We had to explain to the parents. Sometimes only one parent gave their permission. We had to speak with the villagers, because they thought this girl is leaving the village for ten days. What is going to happen to her, to her reputation? We tried to motivate, convince them that this was an opportunity. In some villages the people were happy they were going to get a *prerika*. In other villages they were more sceptical (T1, 2012).

आम्ही ग्रामपंचायतीशी बोललो. त्यांची परवानगी घेउन गावातील मुली आणि तत्यांच्या आईवडिलांशी भेटलो. आम्ही त्यांना संझवला. काही अभिभावक त्या विषयी शंकित होते. त्यांना वाटले कि मुलगी दुसरीकडे दाहा दिवस कशी पाठवायची. पण आम्ही सर्वांना ही एक अमूल्य संधी आहे आणि ती सर्वांच्या प्रगतीसाठी आहे हे पटवून सांगितले. काही जणांनी खुशीने परवानगी दिली, तर काही अजूनही संश्रमात होते.

While opposition to the programme was found in parents' disapproval of their daughters' participation due to concerns for their safety in travelling to and from residential training centres, a second concern was voiced by parents around eventual *prerika*-related activities within the community and the lack of income-generating activities post-training (UN2; T1; T2; GFC1, 2012). A female senior-level UNICEF official noted that when opposition was encountered it was usually not from government ministries, NGOs or local policy officials (UN2, 2012) but rather from family and community. Indeed, 'resistance comes from parents or community. If girls are backing out [of the programme], it is because parents are

seeing that this is not creating an immediate livelihood' (UN2, 2012). This was noted by UNICEF staff in Mumbai and in the field (UN1; UN3; UN4, 2012) as well as *Deepshikha* trainers (T1; T2, 2012).

In a document compiled by Sambodhi Research on behalf of UNICEF in evaluating the first phase of the *Deepshikha* project (2008-2011), opposition from parents and communities was cited as one of the challenges in recruiting adolescent girls to participate as future *prerikas* (Sambodhi Research & Communications, 2014, p. 85). Most opposition was attributed to parents' concerns of adolescent girls needing to attend training sessions away from home or once they returned to their villages finding safe spaces to hold adolescent girl training sessions in the evenings or at night (UN1; UN2 2012, Sambodhi Research & Communications, 2014, pp. 43,85). Therefore, ultimately resistance in this form stemmed from the key concern of adolescent girls' safety.

In contrast, a trainer in the *Deepshikha* programme noted that *sarpanches* and members of the *gram panchayat* at the community level did not express opposition and were neither a help nor a hindrance to the execution of the programme:

They did not support it a lot, but they did not hinder it either. They said ok you people do your thing (T2, 2012).

ते खूप समर्थन नाही केला, पण बाधा नाही टाकली. ते म्हणाले ठीक आपण लोक  
आपले कार्य करू शकतो

It appears that most opposition to the programme arose out of a concern for the personal safety of an adolescent girl in travelling to and from the village for training programmes. In addition, her surroundings in the village potentially posed a threat as commuting to and from home and the meeting place, in which local *Deepshikha prerikas* held training sessions, occurred in the evening past daylight hours. The adolescent girl's mobility, therefore, is potentially curtailed in the community space.

## Volunteerism and unpaid labour

The adolescent girls were not paid for their time – not during participation in training sessions or later when attempting to organise and mobilise other adolescent girls in their communities (GFC1; GFC2; T1; T2; T3; PR1, 2012). Yet, as referred to above, an adolescent girl's financial contribution to the household was often expected and depended upon. A UNICEF field staffer noted, for example, that competing state-initiated development programmes provided remuneration for the adolescent girls:

Human Development Commission of Maharashtra has a similar programme, but they are providing 100 rupees incentive per month and 100 rupees per day for each day of training so 1000 rupees for ten-day training (UN4, 2012).

The issue of non-payment for *prerika*-related work remained a point of contention for some families. However, the assumption and perception from the perspective of UNICEF officials and some *Deepshikha* trainers and coordinators was that paid work for adolescent girls was not as genuine or not undertaken in the same spirit as unpaid work. For example, a female *Deepshikha* trainer noted

our *prerikas* knew in the beginning that they wouldn't be getting paid. That it is a volunteer position. Many of them who knew this, they did a very good job. Before the training even started they asked Madam how much payment will we get for this? So from this we understand we'll only get as much work from them that we pay for and no more. So they'll do the work, but it is perhaps with less dedication or commitment, because if someone speaks first of money, they don't really think/care about the work (T1, 2012).

आमच्या प्रेरकांना पहिल्यापासूनच माहित होते की त्यांना मोबदला मिळणार नाही. हे एक स्वयंसेवी कार्य आहे. हे माहित असूनही, काहींनी उत्तम काम केले. काम सुरु करण्यापूर्वीच त्यांनी विचारले की बाई (मॅडम) ह्याचे किती पैसे मिळतील. ह्यावरूनच आमच्या लक्षात आले होते की त्यांच्याकडून जेवढे पैसे आम्ही देऊ, तेवढ्याच कामाची अपेक्षा ठेवता येईल. ते काम करतील पण पूर्ण

समरस होऊन, जीव ओतून करणार नाहीत कारण पहिल्यापासूनच पैशाची भाषा  
करणारे कामाबद्दल विचार किंवा काळजी काय करणार?

This was echoed in an interview with a second female *Deepshikha* trainer who remarked that adolescent-girl *prerikas* did their best work if it was ‘from the heart’, and that payment might come later in the form of a paid position (in another organisation) using transferable skills learned in the *Deepshikha* programme. Other paid forms of work might include nursing, teaching, sewing or having a beauty salon (T2, 2012). These feminised positions appear to feed into what scholars refer to as ‘the sexual division of labour’ (Beneria, 1979; Mackintosh, 1984; Menon, 2012; Mies, 1982), offering girls avenues of employment which constrain them to traditional nurture and care positions. Nonetheless, adolescent girls are expected to take up positions within community development and be actively involved in the daily functions of the village.

Paradoxically, the *Deepshikha* evaluation report brings up an interesting point:

The idea behind the programme was to equip the adolescent girls with a sense of responsibility towards themselves and make them independent for their future. The idea was not to develop a parallel chain of field level workers (Sambodhi Research & Communications, 2014, p. 87).

Here we note the use in an official document of the word ‘responsibility’ (see Chapter 6) in one instance but used multiple times in the document within an individualised context with the intention (and assumption) that adolescent girls will use their newly developed skills for the betterment of community. Interestingly, the point referred to above of the purpose of the *Deepshikha* programme as stated by senior-level staffers UNICEF UN1 and UN2 was to target adolescent girls so that they could function as ‘multipliers,’ teaching other girls in their communities and in essence take up village level functions to liaise with and hold government functionaries accountable. This would, indeed, constitute

‘developing a parallel chain of field workers,’ and effectively create the possibility of a *shadow workforce* implemented under the mantle of volunteerism.

It is evident that *unpaid* positions as girl-leaders in the community caused friction among some girls and their families. Sambodhi’s evaluation report echoed the issues UNICEF officials, parents, and *prerikas* articulated with regards to incentivising<sup>116</sup> the work of the young female volunteer-facilitators. In the report, a UNICEF official was quoted as saying, ‘it is not necessary that only payment leads to better results’ with another official noting that ‘the essence of the programme would suffer if *prerikas* were incentivized. They would lose respect from the community’ (Sambodhi Research & Communications, 2014, p. 85). This was underpinned by a senior UNICEF official who noted that payment is not the key to the programme’s success (UN1, 2012). Another senior UNICEF official commented that the ‘reward’ for *prerikas* was not in a cash incentive, but rather in ‘building their capacity so that they can be better placed in terms of their bargaining power, the negotiation and communication power’ (UN2, 2012).

Conversely, when confronted with daily realities of village life for adolescent girls from those working directly with adolescent girls in the field, adolescent-girl *prerikas* and *Deepshikha* gender and field coordinators in the programme commented on the pressure the adolescent girls faced in working without payment (GFC1; GFC2; P1; 2012, Sambodhi Research & Communications, 2014). The juxtaposition of working for community in an unpaid position and at the same time learning financial skills to increase income-generating opportunities seemed inconsistent to many. A trainer from Latur district (another district in Maharashtra) was quoted in the *Deepshikha* evaluation report:

On the one hand we say that women should be empowered but then we refuse to pay them. For how long will they continue to work voluntarily? So, to get prolonged support of family members and for added motivation,

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<sup>116</sup> Incentivising/incentivised in the Sambodhi document referred specifically to monetary payment for work.

the *prerikas* deserve some financial incentives (Sambodhi Research & Communications, 2014, p. 85).

If, indeed, as a female *Deepshikha* trainer noted in the interview, ‘empowerment is a girl being able to stand on her own two feet’ (T1, 2012), then it is sustainable, paid employment and not continued voluntary work that is needed.

The decision, however, not to fund adolescent-girl *prerikas* was based on financial constraints as this would have increased the cost of the programme, as stated by UN1 in our discussion. One female UNICEF staffer (UN3) with whom I spoke said that despite being an unpaid position, young women working as *prerikas* were receiving respect from their families and communities. However, she conceded that ‘respect doesn’t give you money and bread. You need to be linked to a livelihood’ (UN3, 2012). Some trained graduates of the *Deepshikha* programme, therefore, chose to use skills obtained through programme participation to become active in their communities via paid positions such as an *anganwadi* (village child care) worker or as an Auxiliary Nurse Midwife (ANM) (Sambodhi Research & Communications, 2014). Regardless of either voluntary or paid position in community development work, adolescent girls were still expected to participate in Adolescent Girls Groups (AGG). Overall, the retention rate of adolescent girls, who continued to participate in AGGs in the *Deepshikha* programme was roughly half of participants. According to the evaluation report ‘out of 583 girls who had been a part of AGGs, 51 percent of the girls continued to be a member even now and rest of them (49 percent) discontinued in the past’ (Sambodhi Research & Communications, 2014, p. 6). Adolescent girls as *subjects* of development, clearly, appear to be worthy of investment (see Chapter 6), and, therefore supported as *agents* of development. Yet, their worth is not valued monetarily.

In addition to opposition demonstrated in safety concerns, voluntary work or in programme content, conflict was documented at village level when adolescent boys were seen to ‘disrupt’ sessions either via peeking through windows of training rooms or taunting and teasing girls as they arrived for or left from training



sessions (GFC1; GFC2; T1; T2; PR1, 2012). I examine boys in the development space more deeply in Chapter 8. The primary expressions of opposition remained the lack of wages after a long training period and the expectations placed on the adolescent girls once they returned to their villages.

### ***Reflections: An agent of development and translations of MDG3***

There are divergent expressions of empowerment in the *Deepshikha* programme and how they are translated in notions of choice, agency and opposition among UNICEF staffers, local administrative authorities, NGOs and programme actors and participants. Overall, then, one can note the following developments in the expressions of empowerment, namely: 1) that empowerment programmes may reaffirm prescribed roles for young women as traditional care-providers, nurturers and mothers in the family unit; 2) that empowerment programmes may further the national development agenda in a given country, such as monitoring and evaluation of child-immunisation programmes, maternal health initiatives and getting girl-children back into school programmes; 3) that empowerment programmes may challenge tradition but not development - that is, girls' ability to delay marriage and aspire to non-traditional jobs; and 4) finally, that empowerment programmes may challenge tradition and development – that is, challenging son preference in the home and questioning the absence of boys in the development agenda.

Over the last two chapters, we have seen how the (post)neoliberal influence on the development agenda manifests in a discourse of individualisation and responsabilisation, incorporating aspects of empowerment to improve oneself, family and community. We see, therefore, that the adolescent girl has evolved under the mantle of responsibility from a subject of development and object of investment (she now has a toolkit delivered through training modules from which to draw) to an agent of change in the development agenda. In other words, the neoliberal influence on the development intervention has affected adolescent girl empowerment programmes in significant ways. The *Deepshikha* programme, in particular, has been influenced both positively and critically in its final aim of achieving holistic empowerment for adolescent girls. One of the most positive,

useful and relevant features of the programme as rated by the adolescent girls was information delivered in Module One - the individual - which included knowledge on menstruation and puberty. This is a clear indication of the utility of the programme to positively affect the lived experiences of adolescent girls in concrete and tangible ways, embedded in a rights-based approach to empowerment. Training sessions on the body equipped the girls with a sense of autonomy over their bodies. In a context in which adolescent girls have little control over their mobility, their access to food and education, and their place within family hierarchy, autonomy over one's body and knowing how to care for oneself is a significant achievement. Indeed, the AGDP framework requires attending to an adolescent girl's lived experiences in both *adivasi* and non-*adivasi* environments. Particular care and attention was paid to those girls in indigenous communities with *Deepshikha* gender and field coordinators providing extra support to adolescent-girl *prerikas* active in those communities. In addition, the programme attended to particular norms and rules as they relate to gender relations in an area inhabited by indigenous populations.

However, what was seen as useful and positive by the adolescent girls was not necessarily understood as most useful by programme organisers who had a different set of expectations, namely, functional notions of empowerment. This took the form of the function and role of adolescent-girl *prerikas* to peer-teach, form adolescent girls groups, organise community-action initiatives and monitor government-funded schemes. All of these activities were expected to be undertaken as a volunteer, that is, as an unpaid worker. These initiatives were in addition to her caring for her family, completing domestic duties, and finishing secondary school. When we speak of empowerment, then, and in particular of enhancing choice and agency, in effect, many such empowerment programmes constrain adolescent girls' agency as their choices are restricted and their access to paid work is limited. Indeed, what is problematic about such schemes, where tensions lie, and where complexities in lived experiences within families and communities may result in threats of violence towards adolescent girls is the question of who has the power to act in gendered public spaces. Certainly, adolescent girls may be subjected to violent encounters within the gendered

private space – home is not necessarily a source of safety and comfort. Hence, while volunteering for the community is good, it marks a fine line in adolescent girls' engaging in the community, challenging and negotiating the masculine public space, and becoming a tool for the development agenda of the state. We may consider, then, how adolescent-girl *prerikas* and their peers demonstrate attributes of active citizenship as articulated in the AGDP. They are frontline workers, and participate and contribute to communities in tangible ways. Indeed, the adolescent girls from the perspective of UNICEF staffers and supporting NGOs display these attributes of good citizenship through diligence and through exercising their rights as community activists. Knowledge of rights, in this context, then, has the potential to become functional.

The public space for adolescent girls may, indeed, become a site for the feminisation of community development space. As adolescent girls are mobilised and organised to work in adolescent girls groups, they are filling specific functions of the state which may contribute to a continued undervaluing of the girl. She continues to be undervalued as her worth is measured through her activism in volunteering, that is, unpaid work. The state and intergovernmental agencies, such as, but not limited to, UNICEF rely on adolescent girls to contribute heavily to positive community development outcomes. The work in volunteering may eventuate in further employment opportunities, if the girl is deemed diligent and hardworking. So, the programmes may be seen, from a (post)neoliberal perspective, as investing in a workforce that is made up of cheap, unpaid labour from a vast army of adolescent-girl volunteers. Within the cultural context of rural Maharashtra, this is an ideal environment in which to instrumentalise the adolescent girl. Further, as adolescent girls volunteer in self-help groups, the notion of individual solutions to development issues is perpetuated – individualisation being one aspect of neoliberalism and postneoliberalism. Volunteerism and adolescent girls as instruments of change may be useful in individual situations, but such solutions do not address nor do they tackle structural barriers to adolescent girl empowerment. While perhaps demonstrating individual capacities for agency, the programme may serve to restrict agency on a structural level.

The restriction of agency within empowerment programmes may also be illustrated in senior UNICEF staffer UN2's comment of building capacity to achieve bargaining and negotiation skills as a reward or payment in kind instead of financial remuneration for work. It was evident in the data that income-generating activities and access to livelihoods was important as families often depended on the income of adolescent girls. The perceived notion that the quality of programmes would suffer because of payment or the work was not being 'done from the heart' keeps adolescent girls constrained in their ability to expand and develop. Bargaining and negotiation skills are, indeed, important but not as payment for a promise of future referral for work in a paid position. This was perhaps one reason for *Deepshikha prerikas* to search for paid employment after receiving training in positions such as *anganwadi* worker, ANM or other care positions. It is difficult for one to 'stand on one's own two feet' if agency and choice are limited.

## ***Conclusion***

This chapter has uncovered many translations of empowerment for adolescent girls. As we have seen, although UNICEF's mandate does not include support of livelihood schemes, the *Deepshikha* programme, through Barclays Bank, has introduced livelihood schemes as a programme module. Income-generating schemes, although adding to other 'burdens' which adolescent girls might face, may, indeed, offer paths to personal choice (delayed marriage or job aspirations) as families rely on extra wages for survival. Beyond a focus on economic empowerment, however, adolescent girls are trained and educated in other ways to achieve other dimensions of empowerment.

The adolescent girl is located in a complex, grey area in the development model. For the adolescent girls in the *Deepshikha* programme, specific programme elements proved extremely useful in their daily lives. Most of the knowledge of significance to adolescent girls (as noted by the girls themselves) about menstruation and puberty were not only useful but proved important in the adolescent girls' sense of self-confidence and self-esteem. This is knowledge that

was inaccessible to them prior to the programme. In addition, the adolescent girls valued the information on self, sexual and reproductive rights, and child rights. Although these skills might not be useful in an entrepreneurial, economics-driven sense, they are important for adolescent girls in understanding themselves and to what they are entitled. There appears to be no other avenue through which adolescent girls could obtain this knowledge in the rural Maharashtrian context. Therefore, in a development context such as India, policy and programmes designed to empower adolescent girls may consider opportunities for empowerment beyond material means. It is in the non-material resources and information on the self that adolescent girls may begin to exercise agency, address violence and flourish in their worth as human beings. It appears that this knowledge is indeed a translation of MDG 3 and empowerment in the rural Maharashtrian context. It is also reflective of training the lens on the heterogeneity of the adolescent girls' experiences (one of the strands of the AGDP) as indigenous and non-indigenous adolescent girls were participants in the life-skills programme.

In the complex space of adolescent girls in rural Maharashtra, patriarchal structures influence adolescent girls' abilities to exercise their rights and make choices. While interventions may seek to empower with knowledge of rights, to support adolescent girls to become strong and confident, it is important to note that these well-intentioned programme features do not in themselves tackle the structures which continue to hamper transformative change in the home and community. Adolescent girls as volunteer leaders may also be seen as a threat to masculine understandings of who holds and has the 'right' to hold power in public spaces. In addition, one could argue that volunteer work instrumentalises girls in family and community spaces. It is, however, evident as seen in the literature that neoliberalism with its focus on individualisation and 'rolling back' of social welfare programmes relies on women and adolescent girls to fulfil leadership, teaching and advocacy roles within community, leading to a feminisation of community development space. This space, because it is occupied and even perhaps led by those of 'lesser value,' may reinforce the concept of community development work as undervalued, and, hence, reflective of 'women's work.'

And yet, as the Block Development Official noted, a sign of development is that girls (through participation in the programme) are able to move themselves and their villages forward. Clearly, the space of community development work is contentious and complex. It is in these multiple interpretations by various actors that we see policy is transformed within the translation process. Ideas of rights, volunteering and safety in public and private spaces as well as questions of opposition and livelihoods are continuously revisited and re-envisioned. These translations, disruptions and interruptions in rural spaces, reveal the need for addressing power structures within family, community and the state. Therefore, a complex, nuanced understanding of empowerment is needed in the development context. It is not a case of clear distinctions but rather a finesse and culturally-sensitive translation of empowerment, which traverses multiple dimensions of empowerment that is needed in the translation of a global aspiration into a local setting.

As discussed in Chapter 6 and in this chapter, the adolescent girl does not live detached from male members of the community who may include brothers, husbands, fathers, and other relations. As we observe perceptions – and to an extent perpetuate perceptions – of adolescent girls, the same may be said of adolescent boys. As discussed in the previous chapter, investment in girls may be to the detriment of investment in boys. Yet, it appears essential to obtain the cooperation and support of boys and men in the development context for the benefit of the entire community. Therefore, the next chapter explores more closely the absence of adolescent boys in interventions and how they may be involved for a more inclusive development process. Indeed, translation of MDG 3 and its success in local implementation may need to include adolescent boys in the development space.



## Chapter 8

### Translating Citizenship: Including Boys and Empowering Girls

#### ***Introduction***

The preceding two chapters offered a deeper examination of the adolescent girl as the *subject* and *agent* of development, respectively. They demonstrated how notions of rights and exercising agency play a major role in the complex and multi-layered daily lives of adolescent girls, as do market-driven development intervention policies with a focus on ‘high returns on investment.’ In a world largely influenced by neoliberal economic policies, the translation of those policies may reveal the adolescent girl as a most appropriate neoliberal subject of the development agenda as she can be commodified and marketised as the best investment for addressing human development issues. *Deepshikha*, the life-skills programme for adolescent girls in the rural Maharashtrian context, has provided examples of multiple opportunities for adolescent girls as well as illuminating the limitations of the translation of MDG 3.

This final substantive analysis chapter aims to explore the development project from a slightly different angle. One of the subtexts of the analysis offered in the thesis thus far has been the place of masculinities and its silencing – in terms of both spaces and of male bodies. This chapter will look at the gendered implications of empowering girls to move into and claim public spaces in the context of the *Deepshikha* programme. The resulting potential for changes in gender roles, gender relations and the gender division of labour is taking place in a context where adolescent boys remain absent/invisible in the development agenda of the state. The dominant discourses on adolescent girls sees them as ‘returns on investment’ and working hard in the self-responsibilisation and empowerment narratives. Juxtaposed against this narrative are their male counterparts in the development space, who are often overlooked as useless or lazy. This chapter aims to understand the potential role of adolescent boys in development initiatives, if given the knowledge and support as well as the



opportunities to participate in a positive way in the community space. As we saw in the last two chapters, the success of achieving broader social and economic development goals may be dependent on *investing* in adolescent girls. How the investment manifests and what the implications of investment may be, are dependent on who has the power to determine the contours of investment, as we saw. Is there potential to expand on notions of investment from the perspective of UN agencies and local NGOs to include boys? This could provide a segue to inclusion of adolescent boys in the development agenda via ideas of active citizenship and contribution to the community space, both features of the AGDP.

The *Deepshikha* programme provided adolescent girls with information about their rights and how to exercise these rights as attributes of citizenship. Building on these concepts, the programme taught girls about their bodies, how to peer-teach and what avenues are available to engage in community development. Adolescent boys, at least in the context of such interventions, have been absent from these conversations. As adolescent girls begin their journey of learning within a rights-based approach, notions of citizenship are touched upon. In order for adolescent boys to share equally in responsibilities of citizenship, it is important that the notion of citizenship is examined, particularly in the context of the development project in the (post)neoliberal agenda. The next section offers an overview of a select literature on citizenship, including its interpretations by UNICEF and the state. This is followed by a synopsis of the scholarship on boys and men/masculinities and then an analysis of the interview data to demonstrate the need for adolescent boys in the development space.

### ***Developing active citizens***

According to UNICEF Maharashtra officials, the realisation of concepts of citizenship for the adolescent girls means gaining the knowledge for themselves in order to work within and on behalf of their communities while engaging with larger government systems. The responsibility of ensuring that the adolescent girls and their villages developed or progressed lay squarely with the adolescent girl as

an individual and in the collective. This discourse reflects an example of what Hayward in her research in New Zealand calls ‘self-helpers’:<sup>117</sup>

For the self-help children, good citizenship was equated with a sense of individual responsibility to take action to “fix” problems. However, in their enthusiasm it was noticeable that self-help citizens rarely challenged the underlying causes or injustices that might have contributed to a problem (Hayward, 2012, p. 30).

In the *Deepshikha* context, this was demonstrated in adolescent girls’ community-based, issues-oriented activism and reflects the element of active citizenship as framed in the adolescent girl and development perspective. It appears, then, that the work of development interventions suggests a tendency to work towards individual empowerment. Addressing structural and institutional barriers to women’s and girls’ empowerment remains a challenge. Confronting structural issues was seen by UNICEF as a possibility once groups had been established to make a difference in broader systems. Indeed, UN1 commented that

over a period of time we can impact on the system and that once empowered groups have been created [it is important] that they are link[ed] up to various [government-funded and -initiated] programmes’ (UN1, 2012).

In order to ‘link up’,<sup>118</sup> the adolescent girls, however, should be active in adolescent girls groups (see Chapter 6).

Development programmes for adolescent girls encourage notions of self-responsibilisation and volunteerism that share a joint purpose in the empowerment of young women. In Chapter 4, I provided the rationale for developing the AGDP which draws on feminist citizenship literature among other bodies of scholarship. As Lister (1997) notes, ‘it is the local rather than the national which provides the

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<sup>117</sup> Hayward (2012) borrows the term self-helpers from Westheimer and Kahne (2004) in their research from the US.

<sup>118</sup> See Chapter 6 for *federating* and linking of groups

arena for many citizenship struggles' (Lister, 1997, p. 33). Therefore, in seeking to understand MDG 3 in its translation, we may look to the rural Maharashtrian context for manifestations of that translation.

Part of the manifestation of the translation of MDG 3 is to understand how citizenship is conceptualised and contextualised in rural Maharashtra. For example, in an interview in Mumbai, a senior UNICEF official stated that one must think beyond oneself and actively engage with one's community for the advancement of self and community. This was part of the definition that UN1 held for citizenship in the rural Maharashtrian context, and he commented that it is important to

[give priority to] citizenship as a concept. Not just wanting to be an engineer, IT professional or doctor. [Citizenship] is being useful to the community. While you earn your own living irrespective of [profession], it's not just you. You have a role within your community, especially in our kind of context (UN1, 2012).

His comment 'our kind of context' could refer to any number of circumstances – the Indian context, the rural context, the development context. The comment evokes the sense of moving beyond oneself and making sure that as a citizen, one has carried out responsibilities and duties towards the community which encourage positive community development (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004). Similarly, a female NGO director (NGO1)<sup>119</sup> in Chandrapur who worked with adolescent girls in an urban setting echoed UN1's assessment of citizenship. NGO1's organisation was aware of but did not engage with the *Deepshikha* programme. In speaking of citizenship and women, NGO1 remarked:

our experience shows that female members in society do not consider themselves citizens of the nation. They can vote, but they do not think about society, only about their own family. So, our purpose is to make

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<sup>119</sup> NGO1 is the female director of a local women's non-governmental organisation active in Chandrapur for over twenty years. The NGO was unaffiliated with the *Deepshikha* programme and UNICEF.

them aware that you are a citizen of the country, and you should have your own contribution towards the development of the country (NGO1, 2012).

We may observe here the expression of contribution and development as part of the demonstration of responsibilities that a citizen should make towards her country. Likewise, a senior UNICEF official noted that the *Deepshikha* model of an empowerment programme for adolescent girls was embedded in exploring the notion of citizenship.

[We look at] the whole concept of citizenship where you look at the individual and the rights or the needs of their peers. So you're looking at a minimum of 25-30 adolescent girls in every village who are active and are able to confidently deal with development issues. The definition of the strategy is one to many (UN2, 2012).

The concept of active groups of adolescent girls was repeated by UN1 who commented that

what we need to do is create a critical mass of girls [...] who know what rights are and who work with the communities, start working in government systems, assert their rights and start making sure things happen (UN1, 2012).

Therefore, for UNICEF officials, citizenship had a prominent activist element which translated to active support of peers as well as active commitment to engaging with community issues. In this localised translation, the space of active citizenship appears to be gendered, that is, the active citizen is female. This is a clear expression of two elements of the AGDP. The first element is that of active citizenship as an adolescent girl engages with what UNICEF officials understand her contribution to the community development space may be. As noted earlier, the notion of community work is one of the primary goals of the *Deepshikha* programme. It is essential for the adolescent girl to be actively involved in addressing issues which face her community. She is, then, responsible for identifying particular challenges at the community level (sanitation, cleanliness, etc.). She is equally responsible for generating possible solutions to these challenges through her efforts in AGG work and wider village-level activities.

The adolescent girl's activism as expressed in active citizenship, an element of the AGDP, sees her as a functional tool in combatting challenges at the community level.

The second element of the AGDP is the expression of engaging with institutions and communities. Through her activism, the adolescent girl is visible in her engagement with local power structures. These power structures may be located within the public space (working in community, interactions with the *panchayat* or with other local policy officials). These power structures may also be located within the private space as adolescent girls negotiate issues of marriage and work within the boundaries of familial relations. These are interactions which make visible the gendered role of adolescent girls as active participants in both the community space and the private household.

### ***Citizenship in an Indian context***

In India's First Periodic Report on the Convention of the Rights of the Child (CRC), Article 1 notes that 'For the purposes of the present Convention, a child means every human being below the age of 18 years unless under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier' (Ministry of Women and Child Development, 2001, p. 42).<sup>120</sup> The Indian reporting mechanisms in this instance adhere to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child framework – one step in acknowledging a shared understanding for discussing the girl child and adolescent girl. In a UNICEF India document dedicated to adolescents and in particular adolescent girls, there is a clear indication of the importance of investing in adolescent girls:

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<sup>120</sup> The Government of India has an extensive catalogue of citizenship definitions and rights based on a person's status as a person of Indian origin, an overseas citizen of India, and a citizen of India by birth, descent or naturalisation. The citizenship document written in legal language refers to minors as being children under the age of 18 years. The language of citizenship is gender-biased and grammatically employs the use of third person masculine singular. This is a document which outlines the legalist framework for determining and obtaining citizenship and does not address the idea of citizenship conceptually. See [http://mha1.nic.in/pdfs/ic\\_act55.pdf](http://mha1.nic.in/pdfs/ic_act55.pdf).

Recognizing their rights, investing in their capacities and offering them opportunities is an effective way to consolidate the historic gains achieved for children in early and middle childhood (UNICEF State Office for Maharashtra, 2012, p. 1).

Further it states:

Investing in adolescent girls is a mechanism to achieve greater social mobility, reduce poverty, exclusion, and social unrest. These are also the factors that impede the smooth functioning of democracy. In summary, collective efforts are needed to ensure that adolescence does in fact become an age of opportunity for the one billion plus global citizens. (UNICEF State Office for Maharashtra, 2012, p. 2)

This statement specifically refers to adolescents as citizens, and, is by default inclusive of adolescent girls. We note here the significance of investment in order to achieve successful outcomes of development goals. As discussed in Chapters 6 and 7, investment in an adolescent girl (through a life-skills programme, for example) is a good thing. It has, indeed, the potential to increase self-confidence, provide opportunities for further training and encourage young women to pursue non-traditional occupations. Nevertheless, in assessing this passage we see that the adolescent girl becomes a ‘target’ of investment not necessarily out of intrinsically valuing her education (and her right to be educated as a human being) but instrumentally to be of use and service to her community and country (see Chapter 7). The development discourse in this passage illustrates the instrumentalisation of adolescent girls for transformational change – so much so that not investing in girls could be interpreted as possible dire outcomes for the ‘functioning of democracy.’ Such functional language is common to the international development agenda and has been from the earliest WID paradigm (Kurian, 2000, pp. 66-72; see Chapters 3, 6 and 7).

The State of Maharashtra refers to child rights as set out in a document called Citizen Charter from the Maharashtra State Commission for Protection of Child Rights. Implicitly, the rights of adolescents are included in the Maharashtra Citizen Charter as the document is grounded in the international Convention

(CRC) which outlines the age of the child to be under 18 years. There are roughly 18 ‘functions’ in the Charter which set out the work of the Commission and its general mandate. Many of the functions are dependent on reliable, usable data and its analysis for policy formulation. There appears, however, to be difficulties in collecting dependable data. This is often noted in documents related to interim country reports on progress of the Millennium Development Goals. Inadequate data collection and in particular sex-disaggregated data collection remains an impediment to creating sound policies formulated on evidence-based data (see Chapter 3).

We see, therefore, that there are multiple expressions of citizenship within global, national and intergovernmental agency interpretations. From a UNICEF perspective, the translation of citizenship as it relates to adolescent girls is located within active groups of adolescent girls knowing their rights and exercising their rights. Generally, the translation of exercising their rights is located within specific groups or collectives of adolescent girls and expressed in four ways: Firstly, girls may often be in competition with one another for limited opportunities in paid employment after having proven themselves in voluntary positions; secondly, girls remain part of the sustainability equation for the empowerment programme through their active acquisition of new group members via peer-teaching and ensuring longevity of the programme; thirdly, girls continue to mobilise peers (beyond caste and class barriers) and other village members for community-based work and ensuring monitoring and delivery of government services run smoothly; and, finally, girls support and work with women’s SHGs to ensure further resource allocation and funding to village groups as that is the preferred avenue through which government channels monies to communities (see Chapters 6 and 7). In sum, adolescent girls appear to be the embodiment of active citizenship without being acknowledged as full citizens.

### ***Boys and masculinities: An overview***

In contrast to adolescent girls, adolescent boys are seen in other, less positive ways, which do not necessarily acknowledge their rights as citizens or recognise the complexities in their stories, location and circumstances, and the heterogeneity

of their experiences. As noted earlier, academic scholarship on adolescent girls is small but growing, and there appears to be an increasing distinction between women and adolescent girls in the development literature. In particular, there is an attempt to understand the heterogeneity of their experiences and configurations and how this affects the daily lives of adolescent girls in a world marked by globalisation and (post)neoliberalism (see Chapters 6 and 7). Likewise, the literature on males and masculinities is primarily centred on work around men, with adolescent boys featuring less frequently (Connell, 2005a, 2005b; Cornwall & Lindisfarne, 1994). Indeed, while the general scholarship on males and masculinities may be growing, there is a paucity of literature on masculinities, males and development which impedes a thorough and informed discussion on how to include adolescent boys in the development space. This chapter attempts to address this gap by contributing to the scholarship on boys and development. While my research is focussed on adolescent girls, the question of inclusion of adolescent boys surfaced repeatedly in interviews with participants at multiple levels. It became clear that in the isolated environments of villages in rural Maharashtra, exploring the question of gender relations and how to engage adolescent girls and boys in the development space was timely and relevant.

Connell notes that the first ‘world-level policy document’, focussed on men and boys and their roles in promoting gender equality, stemmed from the 2004 report of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (Connell, 2005a, p. 1802). The report was based on consultations and was a follow-up to the Beijing Declaration in 1995. The document offers specific recommendations in which

governments called upon men to participate fully in all actions towards gender equality and emphasized that equal sharing of responsibilities and a harmonious partnership between women and men were critical to their well-being and that of their families, as well as to the consolidation of democracy (United Nations Economic and Social Council, 2004, p. 3).

Evidently, there is a notion that the well-being of the state is grounded in the health of families and communities, and in the broader context of society and the nation as a whole. As Connell notes, ‘moving toward a gender-equal society



involves profound institutional change as well as change in everyday life and personal conduct' (Connell, 2005a, p. 1801).

The GAD paradigm is one which still features prominently in the work of UN-agencies and informs the policies that intergovernmental agencies develop. The perceived willingness to conceptually include both women and men (as would be the case when deploying elements of the GAD paradigm) in policy planning for development interventions, however, is often undermined in that 'in almost all policy discussions, to adopt a gender perspective substantially means to address women's concerns' (Connell, 2005a, p. 1805; Cornwall, 2000; Cornwall et al., 2016). There are, therefore, two things to consider in policy planning when reflecting on the inclusion of men in the development space. Firstly, there is an assumption or stereotype of young men embodying poor characteristics such as being lazy or causing trouble within the familial or village space. Addressing these assumptions may be a first step in combatting perceived anti-social behaviour. Secondly, as we have seen in earlier chapters, men may feel threatened by women's and adolescent girls' participation in empowerment programmes. The feeling of 'emasculatation' may result in violence towards girls and women. These are serious consequences of some empowerment programmes, and more needs to be done to ensure young men do not feel 'disempowered' by young women's empowerment (Chant, 2007; Cornwall, 1997). I address both of these concerns in the next section.

### **Male socialisation and a change in structural thinking**

While a change in overall thinking is necessary to design and implement policy benefitting both women and men, or in the case of this thesis, adolescent girls and boys, there is a dilemma in 'bringing men in' to the development space as active participants (Connell, 2005a; Cornwall & White, 2000; White, 1997, 2000). Many scholars argue that feminists would resist including men (and boys) in development initiatives as this would actively divert targeted programmes and funding intended for the advancement of women's organisations, causes and movements (Batliwala, 2014; Bhasin, 1997; Cornwall, 2000, p. 20; White, 1997, 2000). However, much of the predicament of boys' inclusion lies in the

socialisation of boys and their perceived roles of ‘breadwinner’ or primary earner in the family (Connell, 2005a, 2005b; Cornwall & Lindisfarne, 1994; Cornwall & White, 2000; White, 2000). As discussed in Chapter 7, if the gendering of the community development space as one in which active involvement is undertaken only by girls, and, therefore, seen as low or no value, a male primary earner is automatically excluded from this space. That is in spite of the public space being traditionally constructed as a gendered, masculine space. Indeed, how boys are socialised within their own contextual understandings of masculinities may play a role in their ability to support the adolescent girls and women in their communities (White, 2000, p. 36). Contributing to the discussion of socialisation is the type of supportive, positive male role models available to young men who offer guidance and help in deconstructing young men’s frustrations, expectations, and contestations in their developing identities (Greig, 2009; Hall et al., 1999). Many of these male role models, in the *Deepshikha* context, could be found as staff members in local NGOs, in particular those with the training to be Youth Coordinators (see Chapters 6 and 7). Indeed, much of the conversation around young men in the development context (and elsewhere) is embedded in assumptions and stereotypes of poor behaviour, lack of direction or the ‘troublesome boy’ (Barker & Ricardo, 2005; Greig, 2009). Offering men-only and boy-friendly spaces managed by positive male role models for engagement with young men may offer one avenue to combat some of these stereotypes.

There is, however, a larger issue beyond safe spaces and role models. It is the unpacking of the adolescent boy and his identity in broader society. The approach of the ‘troublesome boy’ renders the adolescent male a one-dimensional character. Like the adolescent girl, the adolescent boy is a multi-dimensional person embedded in configurations of age, location, ethnicity, caste/class, religion and so on. Acknowledging the heterogeneity of experiences and configurations in young men’s lives, therefore, may help to disassemble the homogenous model of male identities as sole earners or troublesome. As Greig (2009) notes, confronting such models allows for a more nuanced approach to understanding male identities in relation to female identities and, indeed, to wider notions of power (Greig, 2009, p. 70). It is, certainly, in the notions of power that questions of violence and

subjugation begin to emerge. Articulation of power of some men over women is very real and manifests in physical, mental and/or emotional violence and humiliation against women (Chant, 2008; Chant & Gutmann, 2002; Cornwall, 1997; G Falabella, 1997; Greig, 2009; White, 1997). This has been documented in the literature and is a concern for those creating and implementing policy in the development context. However, manifestations of violence and power struggles occur between men as well, as the literature indicates (Chant & Gutmann, 2002; Connell, 2000; Connell, 2005b; White, 1997, 2000). These violent encounters may be the result of homophobic attacks, disgruntled younger male workers lashing out at older male colleagues, or gang violence; and, yet, there is still a paucity of research to further examine the phenomenon of ‘male-on-male violence’ (Chant & Gutmann, 2002, p. 273). Much of the violence may be attributed to a perception of loss of power or privilege. For example, Cornwall offers one explanation which seems to address the fear of some men who may feel they are ‘losing’ power and privileges:

This is not to deny the realities of male privilege, nor the acts of domination in which some men engage, shored up by institutions that further entrench their prerogative (Cornwall, 2000, p. 22).

Connell, for example, sees the articulation of power within a broader discourse of globalisation which has historical roots in colonisation and modernisation (Connell, 2005a, p. 1815; 2005b). In a development context such as India, where marks of colonialism still remain embedded in its own political, educational and social structures, the idea of the young male, or rather the idealised notion of the young male may be traced back to the notion of the good, English boy (Kanitkar, 1994). In this nostalgic version of the boy in a colonial empire, the ideal, masculine boy was exemplified in three ways: the strong athlete or ‘sporting boy’, the ‘all-white boy’ and the ‘Christian boy’ (Kanitkar, 1994, pp. 186, 189, 193). The consequences of such idealised notions were that very little space was reserved for boys who did not fall into any of these categories – irrespective of socioeconomic background or other characteristics. Certainly, in the context of colonial India, only members of the Indian elite were able to subscribe to and emulate such characteristics, as Kanitkar describes in her notes on Jawaharlal

Nehru's correspondence with his father Motilal Nehru during the son's boarding school experience in the UK (Kanitkar, 1994, p. 186; Mangan, 1981). It is through sporting prowess and physical strength that the young male is able to establish his authority and credibility within his peer group (Mangan, 1989).

Similarly, the 'all-white boy' is understood as the civilized, educated young man who is 'preternaturally mature and decisive...' in contrast to the 'native' boy who is childlike, unable to be disciplined and often hostile (Kanitkar, 1994, p. 190). Finally, the 'Christian boy'<sup>121</sup> is perhaps a combination of sporting and white boy in that he serves God and country in the name of the monarch (Kanitkar, 1994, p. 193). This short example illustrates the implicit and explicit manifestations of racism and classism within and between countries and portrays the image of the idealised boy, underpinned by literature, fiction and travel narratives of that era, as the aspiration of both colonising and colonised boys (Connell, 2005b; Kanitkar, 1994; Mangan, 1981, 1989; Richards, 1989). While today's contemporary world may portray a different order, neoliberalism and globalisation have equally subjugated men and women to continue the spiral of violence and subordination. It is these power negotiations with which contemporary societies continue to grapple. Therefore, in order to make sense of MDG 3 and how it is translated into the rural Maharashtrian context, we need to explore perceptions of young, rural men, the social locations they inhabit and how structural oppression in a patriarchal system may have detrimental effects on gender relations in the local context. As Cornwall, Karioris and Lindisfarne (2016) note, training the lens on a 'comparative enquiry' of masculinities, that is, examining multiple cultural contexts may serve to investigate 'whether particular meanings and expressions of masculinity travel or can be translated from one cultural setting to another' (Cornwall et al., 2016, p. 7). This exploration of meanings is particularly useful in a setting like rural Maharashtra in which the *Deepshikha* programme is set to be replicated in multiple districts. Adapting or changing strategies to include adolescent boys in other districts may assist in achieving the programme's

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<sup>121</sup> There can also be the Christian 'native' boy. India has a substantial Christian population dating back several centuries.

acceptance among local populations and/or drive momentum to include adolescent boys in a complementary programme.

### **Neoliberalism and masculinities**

I discussed neoliberalism and market-driven policies in the context of development in Chapter 3 as well as its effects on adolescent girls in Chapters 6 and 7. Adolescent boys and men are equally not immune to the effects of neoliberalism and marketisation in their lived experiences. As Connell notes, ‘neoliberalism is in principle gender neutral’ and rewards the individual who is the focus of policies and the architect of entrepreneurial initiatives (Connell, 2005a, p. 1815). Indeed, as some scholars have commented ‘neoliberalism worked to de-gender individuals and hold everyone accountable for their own wellbeing’ (Brodie, 2002; Kingfisher, 2002; Simon-Kumar, 2011, p. 452). As we have seen, however, the effects of market-oriented policies may play out differently for girls (and women) compared to men (see Chapters 6 and 7). Yet, neoliberalism and its effects remain the domain of men ‘of a particular character: power oriented and ruthless, restrained by little more than calculations of likely opposition’ (Connell, 2005a, p. 1815). Indeed, ‘neoliberalism can function as a form of masculinity politics largely because of the powerful role of the state in the gender order’ (Connell, 2005a, p. 1816). One need only observe that ‘rolling back’ of welfare benefits (largely benefitting women and their families), cutting state budgets for education and slashing funding for women’s and girls’ sexual and reproductive health is in itself a form of violence against girls and women, often affecting boys and men equally as harshly. Cornwall, Karioris and Lindisfarne (2016) note that ‘the term “neoliberalism” itself is contentious’ and that ‘for some, it evokes an economic order, one associated with liberalization, the expansion of free market capitalism, outsourcing and commodification’ (Cornwall et al., 2016, pp. 7-8). We have seen this in the investment and potential commodification of adolescent girls (see Chapters 6 and 7) ‘in which neoliberalism engages the production of accountable, entrepreneurial subjectivities that makes it so insidious and pervasive[...]’ (Cornwall et al., 2016, p. 8). Despite tendencies of the state to disenfranchise and marginalise young women and young men, development interventions may offer strategies to rethink addressing structural barriers to the

empowerment of adolescent girls while rejecting notions of disempowering young men in their challenges to contribute positively to the community. I now turn to an analysis of interview data for a closer look at adolescent boys in the rural Maharashtrian context.

### ***Enabling Adolescent Boys as Partners in Development***

As a postcolonial development space heavily influenced by patriarchy (Chapter 3), India has been the subject of wider political and development academic scholarship on son preference, violence against girls and women, and women's political activism in the village space (see Chapters 3, 6 and 7). There appears to be a growing body of scholarship on adolescent girls in the development context as well as an increasing body of literature on adolescent boys. Certainly, the growing scholarship on males, masculinities and development suggests with urgency that boys and men should be included in the development agenda. As academic scholarship and UN documents demonstrate, in order for development to work positively for adolescent girls, women, and indeed all people, initiatives should be inclusive of boys and men in the development space (Chant, 2008; Chant & Gutmann, 2002; Cleaver, 2002a, 2002b; Cornwall et al., 2016; Cornwall & White, 2000; United Nations Economic and Social Council, 2004; World Health Organisation, 2000).

Although this thesis has a central focus on exploring policy translation and how it affects empowerment programmes for adolescent girls, it is important and timely to discuss the inclusion of adolescent boys in order to understand the potential they bring to development interventions. As noted in this research, adolescent girls are a heterogeneous group of young women with differing configurations in their identities – age, ethnicity, caste, class, religion, and level of education. This is made visible in this research through the elements of the adolescent girl and development perspective. Adolescent boys are no less complex than adolescent girls although a tendency to homogenise young men and their identities is often the case in the literature (Chant, 2000; Chant & Gutmann, 2002; Cornwall, 1997; Cornwall & White, 2000).

While girls are ‘worthy’ of investment (see Chapter 6), adolescent boys are deemed unworthy as the perception of this group deems them ‘lazy’, ‘insincere’ and interested only in pursuing pleasure (Chant, 2000, p. 9; Chant & Gutmann, 2002, p. 278; UN3; NGO3, 2012). This feeds into the narrative of the ‘troublesome boy’ as one who is incapable of learning (Greig, 2009). As a female UNICEF staffer in Mumbai commented, the positive perception of adolescent girls is often paralleled by the negative image of adolescent boys (UN3, 2012). This is what White refers to as ‘good girl/bad boy stereotypes’ (White, 1997, p. 16; see Chant 2000). Where girls are appreciated for their ‘sincerity,’ boys are reprimanded for their ‘laziness.’ For example, one of the recurring statements in interviews with UNICEF and local NGO officials was the fact that boys were seen to be less ‘sincere’ than girls and not as driven to be engaged in community activities. Comments such as ‘the boys are not as sincere, they’ll stand around and giggle and chew *paan*’ (UN3, 2012), ‘the girls are more sincere’ (UN3, 2012), or, as a male NGO director (NGO3) in a neighbouring block noted, ‘boys are lazy’ ‘मुलं आळशी आहेत’ (NGO3, 2012), or ‘the women and girls have a sincerity’ किंवा ‘महिला आणि मुलींमध्ये प्रामाणिकपणा आहे’ (NGO3, 2012) underpinned much of the rhetoric and justification of excluding adolescent boys from development interventions.

### **Including boys**

Despite the alleged laziness of the boys, their supposed lack of sincerity or their perceived inability to participate in volunteer work, *Deepshikha* programme trainers, gender and field coordinators, and adolescent-girl *prerikas* affirmed the need for a complementary life-skills programme for adolescent boys. For most participants, the desire for a boys programme lay in the boys’ need to know about adolescent girls, their (own) bodies and the need to join together for the betterment of community.<sup>122</sup> This is an example of the programme participants

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<sup>122</sup> As I discussed in an earlier chapter, community spaces may become places of violence for young women and girls as they learn about themselves, become (possibly) outspoken and are expected to take up community activist roles. When adolescent boys are not included in this scenario, there is potential for conflict. NGO2 recounted an adolescent-girl *prerika*’s teaching experience in educating adolescent girls in her village on sexually transmitted diseases and prevention. Condoms were a topic in that session. An adolescent boy was positioned outside the

(both adolescent girls and *Deepshikha* trainers) ability to display attributes of ‘becoming’ and exercising their ‘evolving capacities.’ As we see in the AGDP framework, active citizenship in the adolescent context clearly underpins notions of young people’s capabilities and abilities to determine what is in their best interest and that of their communities. For the adolescent girls in rural Maharashtra, recognising that boys could benefit from similar training and upskilling would pave the way for potential alliances and support from adolescent boys for adolescent girls. For example, a UNICEF staffer in Mumbai reported:

there is a need for educating girls and boys. There is an imbalance and the demand [for a programme] has come from both girls and boys’ (UN3, 2012).

A senior-level UNICEF official in Mumbai expressed similar sentiments:

Now we’re trying to promote a boys’ model, because you can’t just empower girls. We need to target boys because leaving them behind is not good for the girls (UN2, 2012).

The women/gender and development literature demonstrates that parallel programmes counter the ‘women-only’ paradigm of development interventions. Women benefitted from men’s being ‘sensitised’ to ‘workshops on rights, self-esteem’ and the discussions of gender relations in the private and public spheres (Bhasin, 1997; Budowski & Guzmán, 1998; Chant, 2000, p. 11; White, 1997). Therefore, introducing information sessions for boys and making explicit such concepts may be a first step towards understanding and transforming gender relations and embedded social dynamics.

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window of the hall in which the adolescent girls were gathered. Unfortunately, due to the boy’s own ignorance, he misunderstood the subject matter. Shouting the teaching content of the session as he ran through the village, the boy caught villagers’ attention. This posed great difficulties for the *prerika* who had to terminate her lessons as she was ‘accused of ruining their daughters, of giving them incorrect information’ (NGO2, 2012).



Boys, however, in many developing country contexts remain invisible in the development agenda. Certainly, UN1 noted that the exclusion of boys in a *Deepshikha*-style programme was a conceptual fault in creating and implementing general adolescent empowerment programmes. As the senior UNICEF official noted:

I strongly believe a big mistake I made was leaving out the boys. And we are trying to compensate it in the second phase [of the programme]. We are trying to introduce the boys as well as getting into school programming rather than outside the school so that it could be a joint process where gender becomes a learning point for both (UN1, 2012).

In addition, he commented that empowerment programmes for women were a fundamental element of the development agenda and, as a result, he was able to ‘introduce the concept of [an empowerment programme for] adolescent girls [but] not [for] boys as such’ (UN1, 2012). In other words, as women have, over the last few decades, been the focus of development interventions, it was not considered an unlikely extension to include adolescent girls in their own targeted interventions. As development post World War II was gendered with a bias towards men, it became clear in the 1970s, through the work of Boserup (1970), that women had contributions to make to the development space (see Chapter 3). The focus on women in development (and its progression through to gender and development), as discussed in Chapter 3, shifted attention from male to female-driven development initiatives. Men, and consequently boys, received less attention (Chant, 2000; Chant & Gutmann, 2002; Cornwall, 1997; Cornwall & White, 2000; White, 1997).

Today, there is a growing scholarship on men and masculinities in development to address the issues of including males for a more holistic development approach. As the literature on women and development may be extended to include adolescent girls and their specific locations, so may the literature on masculinities be broadened to examine the location and needs of adolescent boys. Still, in the context of rural Maharashtra, as noted in UN1’s statement above, when boys are included in a development initiative, they are often targeted in school and not

necessarily sought after as community workers. For example, a local Block Development Official in Chandrapur observed in his block (*taluka*) that boys were not included in a *Deepshikha*-style programme but in other ways:

We have different approaches for boys. For example, we've started a sports programme for their development. मुलांसाठी दुसऱ्या विविध पध्दती आहेत. उदाहरणार्थ, आम्ही त्यांच्या विकासासाठी क्रीडा कार्यक्रम सुरू केले आहेत (PO1, 2012).

Boys, therefore, were seen as approachable within the school space as opposed to out-of-school spaces. Connell, for example, specifically addresses masculinities within the 'commercial sports' industry (Connell, 2005a, p. 1816). While school sports programmes, at least in the rural Maharashtrian context, do not have perceived or real connections to commercial sport (such as cricket in India), the sports example is still useful. Connell comments:

With its overwhelming focus on male athletes; its celebration of force, domination and competitive success; its valorization of male commentators and executives; and its marginalization and frequent ridicule of women, the sports/business complex has become an increasingly important site for representing and defining gender (Connell, 2005a, p. 1816).

Privileging competition and financial rewards and success may be a reason for young men's continual fascination with remuneration and a lack of contribution to unpaid labour. It also may be a reason for the lack of boys as volunteer leaders and participants in community programmes. In research interviews there was no mention of boys in volunteerism or engaging in the community space in unpaid work by respondents. In fact, one female UNICEF staffer in Mumbai commented

today's boy is tomorrow's earning family member. They don't have restrictions [like the girls] but pressure. For example, if you don't study, you don't get a better opportunity tomorrow, so you need to study (UN3, 2012).

This is the quintessential ‘breadwinner’ role that adolescent boys face in their emerging identities (Chant & Gutmann, 2002; Connell, 2005a, p. 1811; Hall et al., 1999). In other words, the development space, and indeed, the development agenda as a whole is gendered and reinforces not only adolescent girls’ roles but roles of adolescent boys as well. As discussed earlier, although girls’ wages are often part of family income and survival, they are not perceived as primary earners. This contributes to the perception of girls’ value being low and consequently the undervaluing of unpaid work undertaken in the gendered community space. For example, volunteer work within a UNICEF project in countries in Latin America illustrates the devaluation of women’s work in unpaid positions. As Chant reports:

UNICEF-endorsed programmes aiming to protect basic health and nutrition [...] schemes in Peru, have drawn heavily on women’s unpaid contributions. By capitalising on and reinforcing the undervaluation of female labour, this clearly does little to redress gender inequalities (Chant, 2000, p. 11 see; Moser, 1993).

Although a senior UNICEF official did not at any point in the interview devalue adolescent girls and their contribution through volunteer work to the community, the comments made underpinned the vast labour force of adolescent girls working without pay. He remarked:

No one believes that people can work without payment. We have close to 3,000 girls working without payment under this project, and most of our work is through volunteers (UN1, 2012).

Boys, however, were not addressed in this army of volunteers.

In the case of adolescent girls in the *Deepshikha* programme, part of the stated outcomes of the programme was to support adolescent girls in knowing their rights, exercising those rights and supporting them in their self-esteem with the explicit outcomes of collective organising in the public space as well as involvement in income-generating or small-business initiatives (UNICEF State Office for Maharashtra, 2009a, 2009b, 2009c). At the time of the research interviews in 2012, adolescent boys in the *Deepshikha* programme areas did not

receive this type of training. To an adolescent boy, therefore, it could be potentially threatening to have a confident, energetic, and enthusiastic adolescent girl ‘infringe’ on his territory as breadwinner or innovative thinker. Boys could then become resentful and ask why they were not included in upskilling programmes (Chant & Gutmann, 2002, p. 272). Consequences of lack of inclusion of boys in programmes, as Chant and Gutmann note, therefore, include ‘male violence against women [... and] against other men’ (Chant & Gutmann, 2002, p. 273). The authors note

flowing in part from such changes is a range of ‘lifestyle’ factors such as domestic violence which has added to a widely noted increase in ill-health among men as well as women in developing countries’ (Chant & Gutmann, 2002, p. 273)

In addition,

though still badly underfunded, programmes designed to assist women who are victims of domestic abuse now have a long history, and many of the elements involved in providing shelter and counsel to these women are better understood. With respect to male-on-male violence, however, aside from many commonplace assumptions regarding the relationship between masculinity, testosterone and violent proclivities, there is still too little scholarly research and even less programmatic work on this problem (Chant & Gutmann, 2002, p. 273).

It is evident more research needs to be done on men, masculinities and possible and perceived tendencies towards violent and threatening behaviour. One point, however, stands out in the scholarship and in the interview data thus far. Adolescent boys live their lives in complex, multi-layered existences as do adolescent girls. It is, then, important to tailor programmes for adolescent boys to the circumstances of their lives which acknowledge their heterogeneity of experiences and configurations of location, age, ethnicity, caste, class, religion and education. Deploying the adgp framework, for example, to understand how policies and programmes affect adolescent boys in their communities could offer a fresh perspective on understandings of adolescent boys in the development space.

There is potential for achieving successes in development in local communities with the inclusion of adolescent boys in interventions. I develop the following three points for consideration: 1) adolescent boys suffer from negative stereotypes, therefore, including them in interventions would allow the opportunity for re-thinking perceptions and re-shaping images; 2) including adolescent boys in interventions may ‘decrease’ the responsibility of adolescent girls to be sole owners and those responsible for community-based activities thereby sharing responsibilities and burdens; and 3) adolescent boys may benefit from men-only and boy-friendly spaces as adolescent girls have greatly benefitted from women-only and girl-friendly spaces.

### **Boys and negative stereotypes**

In the context of the *Deepshikha* programme, adolescent boys’ disruptive behaviour of loitering around meeting halls or accosting adolescent girls on their way to and from *Deepshikha* training meetings was reported by multiple programme actors and officials (UN1; UN2; T1; T2; PR1; NGO2, 2012). According to the *Deepshikha* trainers and gender and field coordinators, such negative behaviour was the result of many of the adolescent boys repeatedly vocalising their desire for inclusion in the intervention (T1; T2; GFC1, 2012). Both Trainers T1 and T2 in Chandrapur district reported boys expressing an interest in learning the content of the *Deepshikha* modules. Female trainer T1 commented that boys often noted that

we want to know what they [girls] are being taught or we should have the same knowledge as the [girls] do

एक गोष्ट लक्षात ठेवावी लागते, की मुलींना काय शिकवले जाते तेय आम्हाला माहित हवे किंवा मुलींना जे ज्ञात आहे, ते आम्हालाही ज्ञात असले पाहिजे (T1, 2012).

The knowledge being taught included the primary foundations of the *Deepshikha* programme such as adolescent girls knowing their rights and building their self-esteem (UN1; UN2, 2012).

Often after listening (through open doors or windows) about programme content, boys found the teaching elements not only interesting and informative but important for their personal growth and knowledge as well (UN1; UN2; NGO2, 2012). The annoying and disturbing actions of the young men towards the adolescent girls fell into a narrative of boys ‘being the problem’ (Cornwall, 1997, p. 12; Greig, 2009). In contrast to the ‘problem’ label, working with boys and men in the development space has the potential to open up opportunities for males to play a more active role in shaping their communities (Chant, 2008; Chant & Gutmann, 2002; Cornwall & Nyamu-Musembi, 2004; Cornwall & White, 2000). In doing so, the boys and men may ‘have a wider impact on the institutional changes that are needed for greater equity’ (Cornwall, 1997, p. 12). In addition, development programmes inclusive of women and men ‘could make gender interventions more relevant to people’s daily lives, and thereby enhance their chances of success’ (Chant & Gutmann, 2002, p. 276).

Adolescent boys would most likely value and benefit from such rights-based modules and capacity-building initiatives (Chant, 2000; Cornwall & White, 2000; White, 2000). In contrast, the potential danger of reinforcing limitations on male attendance in such programmes is women (and by extension girls) ‘having to deal with unsensitised men in their personal lives, and with patriarchal structure in both private and public arenas’ (Budowski & Guzmán, 1998; Chant, 2000, p. 11; Chant & Gutmann, 2002, p. 275). In a context like rural Maharashtra where women and men, girls and boys live together, this may have crucial consequences for familial and community relationships. As I discussed in Chapter 6, part of the neoliberal idea of investing in adolescent girls was the notion of being able to ‘catch them upstream’ (Koffman & Gill, 2013), that is, as they were growing and developing from childhood through adolescence into adulthood. In a rural environment, this might mean that development interventions should be tailored to include adolescent boys to *catch them upstream* in order to avoid ‘unsensitised men’ later in adolescent girls’ (and women’s) lives. In this process of inclusion

there is the prospect of including adolescent boys and investing in their worth both intrinsically and instrumentally.<sup>123</sup>

Both female *Deepshikha* trainers T1 and T2 based in Chandrapur expressed the need for boys to be involved in a *Deepshikha*-style programme. Both trainers were approached by boys in various villages in which *Deepshikha* training was delivered. For example, trainer (T1) was asked

why is this programme not for us? We need to know about this, tell us about this हे उपक्रम आमच्यासाठी का नाही? आम्हाला ह्येच्या बदल माहिती द्या, आम्हाला हेच्या बदल माहित असले पाहिजे (T1, 2012).

A second trainer remarked that a handful of boys were present for a training session with girls. The overall response was that

boys need this type of training as well मुलांना पण अश्याच प्रशिक्षणाची गरज आहे (T2, 2012).

A statement by one of the boys as retold by a female *Deepshikha* trainer (T2) in the training session captured the sense of self-realisation that some boys felt:

When one of the male trainers went to his village, we asked one of the participants who must have been in the 8<sup>th</sup> or 9<sup>th</sup> standard [of school] what he thought of the training. He said, I thought it was my sister's duty to fill the water, and I felt bad that I didn't help her. I thought, I'm a boy so it's not my job to fill water. But now I feel if my sister is doing it, I should help her (T2, 2012).

जेव्हा एक पुरुष प्रशिक्षक गावी गेले तेव्हा आम्ही ८व्या, ९व्या इयत्तेतील प्रशिक्षूला दीपशिखाविषयी विचारले. त्यांनी सांगितले कि प्रशिक्षण पूर्वी जर माझी बहीण घरात पाणी भरत असेल तर मी हे तिचेच काम आहे असं समझत असे. मी पुरुष आहे. मी हे काम करणार नाही. परंतु आता मी तिला मदत करतो. आता माझ्या मनात घरकामाबद्दल कमीपणाची भावना येत नाही.

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<sup>123</sup> See Chapter 6 for a discussion of *intrinsic* and *instrumental* as deployed by Kabeer (2005).

An observation in the above quote: A male trainer was sent to a village. Perhaps as the *Deepshikha* programme places a great deal of importance on attracting and retaining female trainers for adolescent girls, it might be worth investigating recruitment of male trainers for adolescent boys. An element of creating safe spaces in which adolescents can share common experiences is maintaining a female-only or male-only space (see later in the chapter). This would not indicate that topics are restricted to one sex, as the *Deepshikha* programme indicates. Adolescent boys learned about menstruation, puberty and girls' and boys' bodies generally. As a female *Deepshikha* gender and field coordinator (GFC1) remarked:

we explained to them [boys] that menstruation is not a bad thing, explain this to your brothers and fathers. Don't send your sisters to the jungle during this time. Keep them at home (GFC1, 2012).<sup>124</sup>

आम्ही मुलांना समजावून सांगितले की मासिक पाळी ही कोणतीही वाईट गोष्ट  
कशी नाही ते. हे तुम्ही तुमच्या वडलांना, भावांना समजावून सांगा. अश्या काळात  
तुमच्या बहिणींना जंगलात पाठवू नका.

Introducing and maintaining male-friendly spaces supported and guided through male trainers provides benefits for adolescent boys and potentially the young women in their lives. Likewise, scholars note that a significant number of male gender trainers and supportive male staff 'within development agencies could [potentially] have a domino effect, and work towards the destabilisation of patriarchy in institutional cultures' (Chant, 2000, p. 12; Cornwall & White, 2000, p. 5). In addition, ensuring a large number of gender-aware male staff members and trainers, representing a variety of socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds in

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<sup>124</sup> In the interviews with gender and field coordinators and *adivasi* members of the village, we received an explanation of why menstruating girls were sent to the forest. The reasons included tradition (it has always been done) and hygiene (menstruating girls should not cook or prepare food for family members). Many members of the family – both female and male – insisted that a menstruating girl retreat to the jungle during menstruation. The girls, however, often only 13 or 14 years old, were sent to the jungle alone and were expected to look after themselves, prepare a housing structure, and find food and water. In addition to daily survival, conditions for the girls included staying safe in an area which had dangerous predatory animals and poisonous reptiles.



adolescent boy-friendly spaces encourages an atmosphere ‘in which men can challenge one another’ (Cornwall & White, 2000, p. 5). Training male staff to become gender-aware and -sensitive may prove challenging in some environments in which men may feel a sense of threat to entitlement, may reject or be hostile towards female/feminist facilitators, or feel uncomfortable ‘exposing’ themselves intellectually and culturally (Bhasin, 1997).

### **Adolescent boys building alliances with adolescent girls**

As discussed in the two previous analysis chapters, (post)neoliberal influences on the development agenda promote notions of self-responsibilisation. That is, adolescent girls work towards ‘empowering’ themselves and, subsequently, organising into adolescent girls groups designed to not only tackle community-based development issues but ensuring monitoring and delivery of services from government-funded schemes. Adolescent girls, then, are potentially overloaded or burdened with familial duties, income-generating activities, and community-based health and education initiatives.

These are classic categories of the ‘triple burdens’ that (young) women face (Afshar & Barrientos, 1999; Bronstein, 1982; Moser, 1989; see Chapter 6), although, in the case of adolescent girls I would argue, these might be expanded to include school duties and working a family plot. Expanding interventions to include adolescent boys may relieve some of the pressures placed on adolescent girls. For example, Chant and Gutmann note

a major consequence of male exclusion from gender projects is the likelihood of women ending up with greater workloads and responsibility than they can actually take on (Chant & Gutmann, 2002, p. 275);

and the authors note further

targeting women has become a particularly favoured route to economic and development efficiency since the onset of debt crises and neoliberal restructuring in the 1980s (see Chapter 3; Chant & Gutmann, 2002, p. 275).

We see here that elements of active citizenship and a sense of duty might push adolescent girls to take on extra pressures on their already over-burdened lives. A combination of active citizenship and the notions of finding solutions at the individual level might serve to overextend young women who are already participating in community development at multiple levels.

**Vignette Two: An unexpected but welcome outcome of gender-sensitive training**

Most empowerment programmes designed to make women and girls aware of the concept of gender and stereotypes of men's and women's roles, both private and public, focus on educating programme participants. This is to be expected in settings in which measurable outcomes focus on the results of programmes and how participants respond to programme content. Delivery of programme content is equally important. In the case of the *Deepshikha* programme, most trainers were female and very well-trained to manage and deliver large, often challenging and sensitive quantities of information. However, in Chandrapur I interviewed a male gender trainer (T3) who had been deeply affected by the programme and its content. It was only through becoming a gender-aware/sensitive trainer that he understood how he had been socialised from childhood to think that a wife was of lesser value, was only competent enough to undertake household duties and occasionally deserved to be physically, verbally and emotionally reprimanded. In our conversation, T3 was candid and frank about his revelations of misconduct and poor treatment of his wife. Most significantly, he began to understand how this would affect their young son and his attitudes towards girls and women. Through T3's training the realities of wife-beating and humiliation became painfully apparent. In the interview, he reported his shame and disgust with himself for behaving in such a manner towards his wife. While he said he now 'beat her less' than he did before, there was, indeed, a realisation that his actions had ramifications for himself, his wife and their young son. Further, he reflected on his ability to train young girls in being gender-sensitive, if they, in turn, identified him as a source of peril. I asked him how he approached the girls. He commented 'they should see me as their older brother, uncle or cousin.' I asked how this would work if these males in the young girls' lives were potential sources of danger. He was not able to give a specific answer, but instead reflected again on how he would raise his son to be respectful and caring towards women and girls.

As the focus of such programmes is primarily on participants, rarely is there time, space or even inclination to explore how the programme and its content affect those other than participants. Similar to the adolescent girls beginning to overcome caste and class barriers as discussed in Chapter 7, trainers not just recipients of programmes become affected by empowerment programmes. This is, indeed, an enormous aspect of social development and potentially transformational in itself. In other words, the transformational change with the male gender trainer and his reflexive thinking of his own socialisation were catalysts for changing his own behavior. Such transformational change is important and at the same time often remains invisible when accounting for measurable outcomes. It is not a standard outcome but indeed a most significant result of gender-sensitive training.

As female *Deepshikha* trainer (T1) commented, teaching modules and workshops informing girls of gender equality and what it means should take place for boys as well (T1, 2012). Indeed, T1 noted that

there should be something for boys, for them both, so they can work on it [gender equality and development] together मुलांसाठी पण काही उपक्रम असले पाहिजे, आणि काही दोंघांसाठी असले पाहिजे. मग ते बरोबर [स्त्रि -पुरुष समानता आणि विकास वर ] काम करू शकतात (T1, 2012).

The supportive and caring environment that *Deepshikha* trainers and staff created was praised for the friendships nurtured and the sense of confidence instilled and developed in the girls. Interestingly, the fact that boys in some villages were not included in the programme may have inadvertently brought those boys closer together:

The other achievement is that boys have now created their own groups looking at the girls' groups. The boys are helping the girls now very nicely, so those boys who originally shut off the lights [in the hall] or teased the girls [on their way to and from training sessions] are now helping and supporting the girls (T2, 2012).

आमचे पुढचे यश म्हणजे, मुलींच्या गटाची काळजी घेणारे मुलांचे गट, मुलांनी स्वतःहूनच तयार केले. आता मुले मुलींना मदत करतात. पूर्वी जी मुले खोल्यांमधले दिवे बंद करण्याची किंवा मुलींना चिडवायची , ती आता मुलींना आधार देऊन मदतही करतात.

A male gender trainer in Chandrapur district (see Vignette Two) noted that

if we could give the boys the same training as the girls then we could change much more. Sometimes it seems one-sided only for the girls.

T3 ला असे लक्षात की, जर आपण मुलांना मुलींप्रमाणेच प्रशिक्षण दिले तर जास्त बदल घडून येईल. कधीकधी हे मुलींसाठी एकतर्फी दिसते (T3, 2012).

Consequently, building alliances, sharing experiences and partnering in transformational change is only possible when adolescent boys benefit from interventions and are seen as sharing personal and community responsibilities.

### **Learning and sharing in men-only spaces**

In the case of the participants in the *Deepshikha* programme, the adolescent girls thrived in the women-only, girl-friendly spaces. They had opportunities to share experiences, discuss common challenges, and express emotions without fear of humiliation, taunting, or teasing (UN1; UN2; UN3; T1; T2, 2012). This was the case for similar interventions with adolescent girls in rural and urban spaces in India (Dutt, 2005; Romani, 2016). Creating safe and judgment-free spaces was crucial in gaining the trust and confidence of the adolescent girls during the *Deepshikha* training programme. This same sense of trust and confidence was transferred by adolescent-girl *prerikas* to village girls when they returned home to deliver training modules and create the adolescent girls groups. The meetings were specific adolescent girl-friendly spaces in which they were able to share thoughts and experiences and articulate concerns in a supportive environment.

Adolescent boys and young men may equally benefit from having dedicated spaces in which they may freely and without judgment raise questions around being male, the common pressures they face, and masculinities in the rural Maharashtrian context. In such men-only and boy-friendly spaces, adolescent boys may explore and share their concerns of employment and perceived male responsibilities towards the family. More importantly, young men may examine their own power structures within family and public spaces towards girls, women, and other men (Chant, 2008; Chant & Gutmann, 2002; Cleaver, 2002a).

The literature demonstrates that not only including young men in interventions (that is providing them with knowledge and skills) but also securing safe, boy-friendly spaces allowed young men to discuss anxieties they faced, pressures they felt and familial and societal expectations they were expected to fulfil (Chant, 2000; Chant & Gutmann, 2002; Cornwall, 1997; Cornwall & White, 2000). As Cornwall and White remarked:

opening up safe spaces for men to express their emotions and explore the contradictions they inhabit may help break the silence that serves to shore up particular idealised masculinities that are detrimental to women, as well as to many men' (Cornwall & White, 2000, p. 3).

In addition, addressing gender identities and the role of dominance and power that men play in the lives of girls, women, and other men is an important feature in understanding an increase in violence against women and girls in private and public spaces (Cornwall, 1997, p. 11). Therefore, if young men are excluded from participation in development interventions targeting their communities, young women will be responsible not only for keeping themselves safe in public spaces (see Chapter 7), but also for ensuring their security against threatening acts within the home (Chant, 2000, p. 10; Chant & Gutmann, 2002, p. 276).

### ***Reflecting on adolescent boys in the Deepshikha context***

This thesis explores the translation of MDG 3 from its global origins to its localised manifestation of a life-skills empowerment programme for adolescent girls. In the programme's translation, we observe the adolescent girl and her lived experiences are reflected in her daily interactions with members of family and community, both female and male. What might alleviate and relieve some of her responsibilities as an active citizen and still support her ability to exercise agency may be bringing adolescent boys into the development space. In speaking with the various interview respondents, it became clear that there was a desire for partnership in the community process. Although a host of assumptions was made about boys, including alleged laziness, many boys expressed that they wanted to know about *Deepshikha* programme content and learn about rights. In deploying a translation approach to understanding gender dynamics in the rural Maharashtrian setting, we may make use of interrogating the inclusion of boys in the development space. Indeed, the advantage of the policy translation approach is to identify that in an environment like rural Maharashtra, exploring the possibilities of including adolescent boys in development interventions may achieve positive outcomes for adolescent boys and girls and their communities. In the context of

the *Deepshikha* programme, the lack of inclusion of adolescent boys in such an intervention was questioned by many participants.

From its origins, the development agenda has been gendered, that is, heavily male-biased. Planning and implementation of programmes in many developing world contexts were actively biased towards Western ways of thinking. For example, farming skills and tools were given to men although women in the African context were planting and harvesting (Saito, Mekonnen, & Spurling, 1994, p. Foreword). This was a reflection of the Western notion of farming which saw the male as the farmer. Therefore, the privileging of men for decades in the development space is what led to the analysis in the 1970s of women's lack of visibility (Boserup, 1970). This same sort of invisibility appears to be taking place, albeit in a different way, when we seek to explore the absence of adolescent boys in the current development space.

With the adolescent girl and development perspective, we may explore options that make an inclusion of adolescent boys more plausible. We may do this in the following three ways. First, the analysis in this thesis on policy translation while focussing on an empowerment programme for adolescent girls makes her relationships with those around her visible – including adolescent boys. In other words, studying community through adolescent girls anchors an analysis within the dimensions of the adolescent girl's lived experiences and exposes gender relations and social dynamics.

Secondly, in grounding this thesis in feminist epistemology, I make visible the 'ways of knowing' through the examination of policy affecting the most vulnerable member of society – the adolescent girl. The literature has demonstrated that she, because of her location, and indeed *condition* and *position*, remains vulnerable in the wider social fabric. Therefore, in order to challenge that vulnerability and to address the structural barriers to oppression that adolescent girls (and women) face, adolescent boys (and men) need to be brought into the development space as active agents. Exploring notions of active citizenship as outlined in the AGDP affords an assessment of how adolescent girls AND boys

may become active and contributing participants in community. Thirdly, in bringing in adolescent boys, then, we may succeed in challenging societal norms through building alliances. Hence, in building alliances, adolescent girls and boys see the need to explore gender relations, question ascribed roles and construct a shift in social values. For this to occur, adolescent boys and men must be involved in the development space. In other words, it is not about learning to *empower* adolescent girls in order to *disempower* adolescent boys. Rather, it is about examining power and understanding who has been socialised to *wield* power or to *yield* power.

This is significant in my research as studies on gender often focus solely on women – gender becoming the proxy for women (see above and Chapter 3). In this study there is an attempt to understand gender and gender relations and more specifically to examine this in relation to active citizenship, agency and lived experiences – all of which are conceptual elements in the adolescent girl and development perspective. More importantly, we see that culture as lived experience is dynamic and shifts and takes shape in this particular rural Maharashtrian context. How the inclusion of boys, possibly as an element in a new iteration of *Deepshikha*, assists in challenging gender relations within these rural spaces remains to be seen. As I noted in Chapter 5, the *Deepshikha* programme sites are very rural and often self-contained. India, as a vast country, and Maharashtra, as a vast state, presents many possibilities for development to reach out to potentially huge numbers of isolated communities. Therefore, a selective intervention targetting only adolescent girls has the potential to fail miserably as possible upheaval in social ties and relations may ensue. This research, therefore, seeks to visibilise the realities of gender relations and the challenges of addressing structural barriers.

## ***Conclusion***

This final analysis chapter has addressed the absence of adolescent boys in the development space and what appears to be a clear and pressing need to include adolescent boys in development interventions. Boys should not be included as an ‘add-on’ or last-minute idea, but rather serious and deep thought needs to take



place in tailoring programmes to local conditions. As with the meticulous thought process and research history which took place in creating the *Deepshikha* programme (see Chapter 5), interventions for and with adolescent boys need to acknowledge the complexities and pressures that adolescent boys face in their daily lives. Programmes ideally would not be in isolation from adolescent girls but rather in consultation with them and with knowledge-sharing initiatives which foster communication and cooperation between both sexes. This could potentially alleviate the burdens placed on adolescent girls and their need for self-responsibilisation for their families and communities. If adolescent boys worked in conjunction with adolescent girls, there could be great potential for the development space. In addition, boys' inclusion in volunteer programmes as unpaid labour might potentially serve to increase the value of community-based work in the eyes of community, donors and agencies.

Beyond inclusion in development programmes and a new envisioning of volunteer work, adolescent boys and young men may benefit from spaces dedicated to their personal growth in which they may freely express themselves, challenge notions of masculinities within their own cultural contexts and forge pathways of collaboration with adolescent girls and young women. Exploring notions of citizenship, then, that are inclusive of adolescent girls and boys, rather than marginalising one group or the other may reveal benefits for building stronger communities in the rural Maharashtrian context (and elsewhere). In this notion of collaboration and cooperation, we may find the necessary tools to translate MDG 3 for gender empowerment, in this case empowerment for adolescent girls and women without disempowerment of boys and men, and promote equality in the home and community. Policies designed to support adolescent girls in their development, strengthening their knowledge base, and building their confidence need not be to the disadvantage of adolescent boys. Indeed, a re-envisioning and translation of an empowerment goal may provide space for inclusion of adolescent boys as they develop into men.

## Chapter 9

### Conclusion

This thesis set out to explore how broad development goals created at the global level are translated and reinterpreted within local context. In particular, it sought to understand how values, meanings and culture contribute to the reshaping and interpretation of MDG 3 in the rural Maharashtrian context. The MDGs as a framework for development held for many countries, their governments, and institutions a promise of collaboration and success in reducing poverty, improving human development, and combatting environmental degradation. Part of the promise of achieving poverty reduction lay in the notion of collaborative action. That is, the MDGs were meant to bring together policy actors not only from government but also from non-governmental organisations, and donor and development agencies. This cooperative action was to become a partnership in development rather than a strictly top-down or bottom-up approach to the development agenda.

For this thesis, the features around global-local interaction made the processes of MDG development and implementation worthy of study. As policy actors contributed to the shaping and re-shaping of the MDGs, this process of interaction became one of translation in which policy movement took place across borders, regions and jurisdictions. Policy, in translation, therefore, was interpreted and re-interpreted, assembled and re-assembled as it moved from the global arena to local spaces (Clarke et al., 2015). In policy translation, then, how policy is open to meanings, changes, and mutations may be examined in how these are expressed in local cultural, socio-political and gendered contexts. We can, therefore, look beyond static measures of success and failure in numerical achievements and explore more dynamic instances of policy translation as they relate to local discourses, norms, and ideology.

The research examined questions of policy translation within the context of gender equality and empowerment. Specifically, it examined MDG 3 – ‘to promote gender equality and empower women.’ The thesis looked more closely at the *Deepshikha* life-skills education programme funded by UNICEF for

adolescent girls in rural Maharashtra, India. The thesis, therefore, explored policy translation and how actors (international agencies, donor-governments and NGOs) in this development setting translate and interpret the goals of the *Deepshikha* programme and their implications for adolescent girls. It is through these policy actors' interactions and interpretations of the lived experiences of the adolescent girls that we are able to examine how culture influences neoliberalism-inflected policy articulated at the local level. Equally, we may examine how (post)neoliberalism has played a role in influencing local culture. Notions of volunteering and responsibility, for example, have contributed to local interpretations of access to jobs, opportunities for further education and collective action. Further, this thesis examined perceptions and stereotypes of both adolescent girls and adolescent boys as they are held by policy actors (and demonstrated in the literature) in the development context.

Adolescent girls are the subjects of a small but growing scholarship which tends to paint a positive if not utilitarian and functional picture of girls. As discussed in Chapters 6 and 7, investing in adolescent girls is underpinned by the positive image of adolescent girls in the development context. The *Deepshikha* programme drew on elements of this positive image such as hard work and selflessness and, in doing so, may have contributed to the already full lives of the adolescent girls. A programme like *Deepshikha*, therefore, may rely on notions of the diligent, pliable girl in order to pursue wider community development goals. Certainly, the adolescent girls, on the one hand, were shaped to be neoliberal subjects of development as they took on notions of responsibility to self and community, undertook entrepreneurial initiatives and filled gaps in accountability of welfare schemes. These were reflected in the active citizenship element of the AGDP framework in which responsibility and contribution to community development are described as positive. While this is one aspect of a functional discourse of development often perpetuated by intergovernmental agencies, governments and NGOs, the skills in the *Deepshikha* programme, on the other hand, provided the adolescent girls with the ability to sustain themselves financially or to hold government authorities to account. We may, then, critically explore how some

aspects of the *Deepshikha* programme are contentious while simultaneously providing adolescent girls with useful skills.

There is potential to examine moments of resistance within this positive image as expressions of adolescent girls exercising agency. For instance, while the adolescent girls might have been deployed as active agents in the field, they nonetheless, in certain instances, challenged the image of the pliable, accepting girl. An example in Chapter 7 demonstrates one expression of the girls' ability to determine the boundaries of engagement with local police. The adolescent girls actively translated their interpretations of how local girls could or should engage with state authorities. It is then a policy translation lens that allows the investigation of how local culture influences policy and actions and how those actions may become expressions of resistance within local context. We also see how local culture, in this case the perceived passivity of adolescent girls, is reshaped by neoliberal policy in which girls are trained to become active, responsible citizens.

Adolescent boys are also the subjects of a small but growing scholarship exploring ideas of males, masculinities and of what it means to be an adolescent boy in the development context (Chapter 8). It is, however, in the study of how an empowerment programme for adolescent girls has affected the multiple dimensions of an adolescent girl's life, that we may expose fissures and flaws in gender relations and social dynamics. We may, therefore, interrogate the implications of the absence of boys in the development project and simultaneously explore the advantages of including adolescent boys in the development agenda. The AGDP framework provides the space for exploring gender relations within both the private and public spheres. In addition, we may explore the multiple dimensions of an adolescent girl's (and boy's) life through the conceptual elements of heterogeneity of experiences and of configurations.

As we saw throughout the thesis, the multi-dimensional term empowerment was translated in contexts specific to the location of actors, that is, at the global, state and local levels. Indeed, the translation of empowerment and MDG 3 had specific

implications for UNDP and UNICEF agencies as articulated in their mandates. Empowerment for policy officials, such as Block Development Officials, took on a slightly different meaning and was contextualised in local development spaces. Likewise, meanings and articulations of empowerment had varied and often unexpected meanings for *Deepshikha* programme participants, local NGOs, and *Deepshikha* trainers and coordinators. A short vignette in Chapter 8 offered an unexpected but welcome outcome of exposure to programme content for a male *Deepshikha* trainer. Through participation and training in the programme to become a facilitator, the male trainer reflected on his own understandings of power, particularly in the home. He was able to examine his own biases as the male head of household and determine what his future actions within his familial space would be. This was a demonstration of how the male trainer was able to infuse his own ideas and shape his new practices in the household by translating elements of the empowerment programme for his own benefit. As UNICEF officials noted, part of the desired results of participation in the *Deepshikha* programme is greater awareness of what empowerment means, how it may affect gender relations, and how newly-learned skills may be used for the betterment of community. For the adolescent girls, for example, empowerment was translated to reflect the importance of their lived experiences, such as knowledge of their bodies and their rights. For each group, then, the term empowerment and its translation reflected the group's particular social and cultural location within rural Maharashtra and within the context of the *Deepshikha* programme. These were, indeed, demonstrations of policy movement in different locations among various groups.

## ***Methodology***

My research set out to answer two key questions:

- (1) How is development policy created at the global level, as exemplified by the MDGs, translated and reinterpreted within local context?
- (2) How do values, principles and culture contribute to the reshaping of the MDGs with respect to gender empowerment?

The research undertaken was a small-scale, qualitative, single-case study project in which I sought insights into the concepts of how a global development aspiration was assembled and reassembled to accommodate multiple actors and their interpretations of multiple realities, influencing their knowledge production. I specifically chose a feminist qualitative research approach in order to embed my study in feminist epistemology and ‘ways of knowing.’ It was my aim to contribute to a discussion of policy translation and its relevance for examining development interventions affecting adolescent girls and the communities in which they live.

In crafting the AGDP framework, I drew on multiple scholars to create an analytical tool through which I was able to examine gender, policy translation and MDG 3. I noted that specific locations and particular histories are important for locating women’s struggles and contextualising women’s agency, in particular examining struggles and agency as they relate to adolescent girls. In addition, examining the heterogeneity of lived experiences and configurations of the adolescent girls’ lives offered a depth and breadth of analysis which contributes to the wider gender and development body of scholarship. Further, explorations of active citizenship and how forms of citizenship are engendered through socialisation and local knowledge were reflected in the theoretical ingredients which together created the adolescent girl and development perspective.

The adolescent girl and development perspective, therefore, offered a distinct analytical framework in which to explore the research questions and was critical to this analysis for the following two reasons. First, drawing on multiple scholars and frameworks allowed for a fuller range of analysis, incorporating multiple elements which assisted in determining how a global policy initiative is translated into a local context. Mapping the meanings of empowerment from global perspectives and agendas, as articulated in UNDP and UNICEF discourse, connects the work of both agencies across transnational borders and into country development plans. Further, we are able to observe that a particular discourse of empowerment, which includes terms like *enabling* and *building capacity*, is manifested in themes which traverse continents and regions.

Secondly, values, principles and culture – defined here as lived experiences – play a significant role in reshaping MDG 3 in a local context. This was evident in the multiple ways in which actors in the *Deepshikha* programme translated empowerment as significant and relevant to their lives. While meanings may have been distinct based on location within the programme – UN officials, *Deepshikha* programme participants, NGO staff – each manifestation of empowerment was an important articulation from the perspective of the actor. The importance of the theoretical insights of policy translation was to find that culture and values play a role in interpreting how policy is created, implemented and interpreted at multiple levels. Likewise, the AGDP in conjunction with the policy translation approach assisted in finding that policy in its different forms of translation affects culture and practice. Indeed, the neoliberal-inflected elements of volunteering, (self)responsibility and accountability shaped the paths through which adolescent girls came to express themselves as active, responsible citizens. Additionally, the AGDP assisted in examining how and why adolescent boys are often excluded from development interventions. Therefore, we see how the policy translation approach, which trains the lens on the interpretive and critical aspects of policy movement, may be enhanced through the AGDP.

Hence, we are able to explore through policy translation and the AGDP how MDG 3 in its local translation is infused with local flavours of what empowerment means, how girls and boys are socialised in specific gender roles and what the implications of activism in the gendered public and private spaces are for girls, boys and their families and communities. But, we also see how local culture shapes (post)neoliberal values in ways that may objectify adolescent girls, hold them to responsibilities of community- and nation-building while continuing to promote volunteering as potential pathways to further paid employment. The adolescent girl, then, is burdened with multiple tasks while her counterpart the adolescent boy is often left on the margins of this development space.

While my research was located within a specific development context, the adolescent girl and development perspective may have the potential to be

deployed in other developing country contexts. Adolescence is an understudied subject in many parts of the world. Adolescent girls, in particular, appear to be shaped for roles in advocacy for transformational change in many Third World contexts and, as a result, may be subjected to notions of instrumentalism and functionalism as we have seen in the rural Indian context. It would, therefore, be a sound measure of the applicability of the framework to deploy it in other developing country contexts in Latin America, Asia, and Africa. In this way, the perspective as a framework for analysis may be extended and refined, but it may also be deployed as a tool to examine the implications of policy and programme interventions on adolescent girls and their communities.

In contextualising the research questions, I discussed the research setting and approach to collecting data, including relevant documents, choice of interview participants and need for observation of training sessions. Beyond these aspects of data collection and analysis, I offered my own perspective as an insider/outsider researcher and the reflexive conversations with myself to better understand my location within the wider project. In addition, I used thematic analysis to engage with interview material, documents and other expressions of sociocultural knowledge. As research on policy movement and adolescent girls in Maharashtra has been limited, it was my aim to fill this gap by conducting a study of how policy and its movement from a global arena to local policy implementation takes place.

### ***Significance of research findings***

#### **Adolescent girl as subject of neoliberal development agenda**

Whereas women were the focus of development interventions (and arguably still are) through the 1970s and 1980s, adolescent girls have emerged more recently as the subject of the neoliberal development agenda. Positive perceptions of the adolescent girl as dutiful, hardworking, and reliable have positioned her in a narrative of self-responsibilisation and empowerment. She is the object of investment, and as such, the recipient – through development interventions – of financial investment designed to help her ‘improve her lot’ and that of her family and community. Most development interventions in this empowerment vein may



be found in the form of education initiatives meant to empower adolescent girls through education and skills-training.

In the case of the *Deepshikha* programme, this narrative was part of the overall programme design. Beyond administrative concerns of programme developers and issues of sustainability of the programme, the discourse of adolescent girls as subjects of development in the market-oriented agenda brought the following two translations of empowerment: one of investment in the adolescent girl and the second of the objectification and commodification of the adolescent girl. Once her education (that is investment in the adolescent girl) is completed, she is expected to take up the task of educating her peers. This reflects a discourse of peer-teaching and training which is meant to lead to responsibility for oneself, one's community, and to the sustainability of a particular empowerment initiative. In addition, hard-working and diligent girls were able to access further employment opportunities beyond the *Deepshikha* programme based on referral and hard work within volunteer groups – the backbone of community-action initiatives. Adolescent girls, however, were expected to monitor government-led programme delivery as well. That is, the girls were expected to have a command of bargaining and negotiation skills with which they could engage with government functionaries on delivery of local health, sanitation, and immunisation efforts. Further, adolescent girls groups were federated to support women's self-help groups as well as to access government funding schemes for village-based initiatives. A manifestation of investment in adolescent girls also included their efforts in opening small enterprises, such as a local stationary depot. These were, indeed, useful for many in the village, in particular for young students who were unable to travel outside the village to purchase stationary supplies. These elements were indicators of how adolescent girls may become instruments of the state while still effecting positive change within their communities. A small but significant positive change was a discussion of caste and class barriers which took place in *Deepshikha* training sessions. This signalled a clear desire to tackle caste-based discrimination in the wider community.

Although many of these manifestations of the programme were desirable and had positive outcomes, there is a need to examine more critical implications of the programme. Firstly, although the adolescent girl was the object of investment, she was expected to take up work in unpaid positions as an adolescent-girl *prerika* and leader of an adolescent girls group. In her work as a leader she was expected to be mobile, that is, to travel to another village for further training as well as to move freely within her own village to carry out her teaching and advocacy work. This posed potential concerns for adolescent girl safety within gendered private and public spaces. Secondly, and following on from volunteerism, questions of payment as an adolescent-girl *prerika* emerged from some young women. As noted in earlier chapters, for many, empowerment meant sustainable, paid employment and girls ‘standing on their own two feet.’ This would be difficult if there were no monetary compensation for working as an adolescent-girl *prerika*. UNICEF officials commented that as the programme’s design was based on the volunteer model payment was often in the form of kind not cash. That is, if an opportunity became known through another NGO or government-funded programme for a paid position, adolescent girls who were hardworking and reliable were often provided with recommendations and referrals to apply for such opportunities. The question, however, becomes who wins or loses? How many such positions are potentially available? Are there too many eligible girls for a limited number of positions? While these questions were not answered in this thesis, they certainly warrant further investigation, alongside analysis of the implications for communities when adolescent girls (and boys) are left out of interventions and follow-on opportunities.

### **Adolescent girl as development agent in neoliberal agenda**

Equipped with her knowledge and skills, the adolescent girl may evolve into a development agent of change. The knowledge she possessed of her rights, her body, and active community participation marked her as the potential ideal agent of change. Her efforts towards effecting change manifested in two types of translations of empowerment, that is, as an agent of personal empowerment and as an agent of community empowerment. Certainly, she was able to employ her skills in negotiating with families who wanted to arrange marriages for daughters

at a young age. In the case of the *Deepshikha* programme, adolescent-girl *prerikas* and adolescent girls groups were able to discourage parents from marrying daughters off too young and, in some cases, to persuade the families and girls to continue their schooling. In other cases, adolescent girls were able to challenge notions of the ideal form of employment for girls which usually entailed nurture or care positions. Indeed, engaging with local police to determine pathways to employment as police officers was a significant marker in the adolescent girl as an agent of change. And, as reported by the adolescent girls themselves, knowledge of their rights and their bodies gave them control over their own bodies.

As an agent of community development and empowerment, adolescent girls challenged the gendered public space, which in many development contexts (and elsewhere) is masculine. How the public space is valued and who has the right to engage in this space may determine, however, if the public space becomes feminised and, therefore, of less value. For instance, with adolescent girls claiming this space, and although it appears to be an achievement by the girls, notions of volunteerism and unpaid labour have the potential to make the public space one which is devalued. Therefore, future research may need to examine the notion of the community development space as a feminised space in which individuals of lesser value (girls) attempt to lead and shape the space.

Although, in the first instance, adolescent girls as leaders in the community development space may reveal positive features of translation of MDG 3, we also find points that are disconcerting. In particular, most interventions, while empowering individual girls to become responsible and undertake initiatives for the betterment of community, do not address or tackle structural oppression. Therefore, wider, transformational change becomes difficult. In addition, the adolescent girl must take on the burden of educating her peers and community while continuing with duties and responsibilities in her daily life. We see, then, in the translation of MDG 3 into a local context, local culture and neoliberal values as dynamic ingredients in the translation process. In other words, how local policy actors view positive attributes of the adolescent girl in development influences how policy is shaped to reflect neoliberal values. Through the policy translation

lens, then, we observe that notions of individual responsibility and active citizenship remain in the domain of individualised solutions to development challenges. Addressing structural and hierarchical changes to ensure transformative change remains elusive.

### **Development interventions and missing adolescent boys**

Addressing structural and hierarchical barriers to adolescent girls' (and women's) empowerment could begin with the involvement of adolescent boys (and men) in the development agenda. During the interview process, it became clear that while adolescent girls are pressured by positive perceptions, adolescent boys are in equal measure pressured by negative stereotypes which may lead to their exclusion from development interventions. Alleged laziness, a supposed lack of sincerity, and a perception of a lack of interest in urgent village issues facing boys and their communities, place boys on the periphery of the development agenda – both in the scholarship and in practice as articulated by policy actors in the research interviews. Inclusive policies and programmes, including those which educate adolescent boys in parallel measures to adolescent girls, may be an avenue of 'bringing men in' to the development space while simultaneously relieving some of the burden adolescent girls carry for being responsible for positive outcomes of development interventions. Engaging in what it means to be a male, breaking down male identities and notions of masculinities in safe spaces for adolescent boys may, indeed, be an initial start to addressing structural oppression of girls and women. Acknowledging that adolescent boys have a vested interest in the community and understanding the cooperation between adolescent girls and boys that must take place for village development is an important step in recognising boys as potential partners for change and agents of development.

Leaving out a significant portion of the population in isolated villages may hold serious implications for both adolescent girls and boys. Some adolescent girls were offered further opportunities for training and leadership post-*Deepshikha* training, while other adolescent girls were left out of these opportunities altogether. Adolescent boys, too, may be sidelined in such interventions. The boys

at the case-study site were not participants in the programme, although many policy actors (UNICEF officials, NGO youth group and other staff, and *Deepshikha* trainers) expressed the need for such an intervention among the village boys. What the consequences of such interventions are needs to be further explored. Indeed, during my research visit, there were UNICEF staff members who strongly advocated for and were hopeful such a programme would be implemented in the near future. Translation of MDG 3, therefore, in the rural Maharashtrian context need not be an empowerment of adolescent girls to the exclusion of adolescent boys. Indeed, engaging with all members of community is of benefit to the village as a whole.

### ***Future areas of research***

This research addressed a specific gap in the literature on policy translation and MDG 3 in the rural Maharashtrian context. In doing so, it focussed attention on how notions of culture and local influences shape policy affecting a life-skills empowerment programme for adolescent girls. This research did not attempt to measure statistical outcomes of development programmes nor did it attempt to make a prognosis of successes or failures of MDG 3 in the Maharashtrian context. Instead, this feminist qualitative case study endeavoured to understand the meanings and values behind empowerment programmes through the examination of extensive interview material and relevant documents. It is in this space that future research can explore opportunities to deploy the adolescent girl and development perspective in other contexts. This would be an avenue through which the perspective could be used as an instrument of analysis to extend the gender and development scholarship in other developing country contexts. It would be not only relevant but imperative to explore how policies within empowerment frameworks influence gender relations, shaping interactions between adolescent boys and adolescent girls and how these interactions play out in the wider community. These are, indeed, actions of young adults who have been socialised within their particular cultural, social and political contexts which reflect how they think about themselves and others. Notions of citizenship, rights, and service to community influence how adolescent girls and adolescent boys are viewed by local NGOs and UN organisations. These, in turn, determine resource

allocation and investment in human capital in order to further a particular development agenda. In the Maharashtrian context, it would, therefore, be important to explore how the *Deepshikha* programme has remained relevant to rural communities, how and if adolescent boys are now ‘part and parcel of the development approach,’ and how the programme has been replicated and translated to ‘fit’ into other contexts in the state.

As I noted in Chapter 8, an interesting, unexpected but welcome outcome of gender-sensitive training was its effect on a male gender trainer in Chandrapur district. Examining the effects of gender-training on both male and female *Deepshikha* trainers and gender and field coordinators may provide the space for staff to reflect on their needs and how the programme may be improved from their perspectives. As valuable and important actors in the *Deepshikha* programme, the trainers and gender and field coordinators provide crucial frontline assistance and support in the field. Through their reflections we may glean meanings of particular components which contribute to the success of the programme. In addition, we may explore possible staff contribution to structural reforms within organisations and through teaching and delivery methods. These may have a wider reach as programmes and interventions are expanded into other areas of the state, region and country.

## ***Conclusion***

In the final section of this thesis, I turn back to the quote which served as the opening comment to this piece of scholarship:

Study after study has taught us that there is no tool for development more effective than the education of girls and the empowerment of women. No other policy is as likely to raise economic productivity, lower infant and maternal mortality, or improve nutrition and promote health, including the prevention of HIV/AIDS. When women are fully involved, the benefits can be seen immediately: families are healthier; they are better fed; their income, savings, and reinvestment go up. And what is true of families is

true of communities and, eventually, whole countries (Secretary-General Kofi Annan, 2004).<sup>125</sup>

It reflects the complexities of adolescent girls' and women's lives, marking them as the best objects of investments, entrusted with the well-being of their families and wider communities. Beyond their regions and states, these young women and girls are indeed embodiments of a hope for entire nations, striving to climb out of poverty and into economic growth rates promising prosperity for all. Policies and programmes which were implemented in support of MDG 3 have not been successful in all contexts as demonstrated in this thesis. Contestations and conflicts in articulation of MDG 3 meant that for some the Goal was too narrowly defined or inadequate for particular contexts. Despite these shortcomings, MDG 3 provided a space for debate and discussion.

How the development community moves beyond the MDGs and learns from pitfalls and deficits in the MDG agenda will determine how effective the new development agenda, that is, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)<sup>126</sup> will be. It will also be determined if and how adolescent girls may continue to be instrumentalised within the neoliberal development agenda. While the *Deepshikha* programme had many positive and, indeed, favourable aspects contributing to the empowerment of adolescent girls, many components of its agenda fell into a narrative of functional discourse and instrumentalisation of already over-burdened adolescent girls. These individual-focussed solutions are hallmarks of neoliberalism and may in fact hinder a discussion of structural and hierarchical causes of oppression. We see then how notions of empowerment go much deeper than merely economic empowerment. The *Deepshikha* life-skills programme for adolescent girls offered opportunities for developing autonomy, agency, and voice which meant realising the possibility for resistance to the neoliberal agenda – or to agendas which did not suit the girls. Indeed, how these multiple dimensions of

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<sup>125</sup> <http://www.un.org/press/en/2004/sgsm9118.doc.htm>

<sup>126</sup> For further information on the Sustainable Development Goals see <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015>

empowerment, seen varyingly as vice or virtue, may be envisioned is ultimately decided by who has power and who has the right to exercise that power in such circumstances. Hence, a re-envisioning of development work which targets transformational change not just at the individual level but at the structural level is urgent. This may come in the form of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals which, unlike the MDGs, were crafted in conjunction with civil society. It is a complex proposition and there is no one single correct path. Collaboration is needed and if government, NGOs and, indeed, social movements recognise this as an opportunity for cooperation, perhaps then may 'development' as a project begin to work for everyone. Only then may we begin the enormous task of encouraging fair, socially-just, and equitable policies which serve to empower adolescent girls, adolescent boys, women and men to build stronger and healthier communities.





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## Appendix 1

### Millennium Development Goals and Targets

*Effective 8 September 2003*

Goals and Targets (from the Millennium Declaration) Indicators for monitoring progress	
Goal 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger	<p>Target 1: Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than one dollar a day</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Proportion of population below \$1 (PPP) per day [World Bank] a</li> <li>2. Poverty gap ratio [incidence x depth of poverty]</li> <li>3. Share of poorest quintile in national consumption</li> </ol> <p>Target 2: Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Prevalence of underweight children under-five years of age</li> <li>5. Proportion of population below minimum level of dietary energy consumption</li> </ol>
Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education	<p>Target 3: Ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. Net enrolment ratio in primary education</li> <li>7. Proportion of pupils starting grade 1 who reach grade 5b</li> <li>8. Literacy rate of 15-24 year-olds</li> </ol>
<b>Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women</b>	<p><b>Target 4: Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education no later than 2015</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>9. Ratios of girls to boys in primary, secondary and tertiary education</b></li> <li><b>10. Ratio of literate women to men, 15-24 years old</b></li> <li><b>11. Share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector</b></li> <li><b>12. Proportion of seats held by women in national parliament</b></li> </ol>
Goal 4: Reduce child mortality	<p>Target 5: Reduce by two-thirds, between 1990 and 2015, the under-five mortality rate</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>13. Under-five mortality rate</li> <li>14. Infant mortality rate</li> <li>15. Proportion of 1 year-old children immunised against measles</li> </ol>
Goal 5: Improve maternal health	<p>Target 6: Reduce by three-quarters, between 1990 and 2015, the maternal mortality ratio</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>16. Maternal mortality ratio</li> <li>17. Proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel</li> </ol>

<p>Goal 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases</p>	<p>Target 7: Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS</p> <p>18. HIV prevalence among pregnant women aged 15-24 years</p> <p>19. Condom use rate of the contraceptive prevalence rate<sub>c</sub></p> <p>19a. Condom use at last high-risk sex</p> <p>19b. Percentage of population aged 15-24 years with comprehensive correct knowledge of HIV/AIDS<sub>d</sub></p> <p>19c. Contraceptive prevalence rate</p> <p>20. Ratio of school attendance of orphans to school attendance of nonorphans aged 10-14 years</p> <p>Target 8: Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the incidence of malaria and other major diseases</p> <p>21. Prevalence and death rates associated with malaria</p> <p>22. Proportion of population in malaria-risk areas using effective malaria prevention and treatment measures <sub>e</sub></p> <p>23. Prevalence and death rates associated with tuberculosis</p> <p>24. Proportion of tuberculosis cases detected and cured under directly observed treatment short course DOTS (Internationally recommended TB control strategy)</p>
<p>Goal 7: Ensure environmental sustainability</p>	<p>Target 9: Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes and reverse the loss of environmental resources</p> <p>25. Proportion of land area covered by forest</p> <p>26. Ratio of area protected to maintain biological diversity to surface area</p> <p>27. Energy use (kg oil equivalent) per \$1 GDP (PPP)</p> <p>28. Carbon dioxide emissions per capita and consumption of ozone depleting CFCs (ODP tons)</p> <p>29. Proportion of population using solid fuels</p> <p>Target 10: Halve, by 2015, the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation</p> <p>30. Proportion of population with sustainable access to an improved water source, urban and rural</p> <p>31. Proportion of population with access to improved sanitation, urban and rural</p> <p>Target 11: By 2020, to have achieved a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers</p> <p>32. Proportion of households with access to secure tenure</p>

<p>Goal 8: Develop a global partnership for development</p>	<p>Target 12: Develop further an open, rule-based, predictable, non-discriminatory trading and financial system Includes a commitment to good governance, development and poverty reduction – both nationally and internationally</p> <p>Target 13: Address the special needs of the least developed countries Includes: tariff and quota free access for the least developed countries' exports; enhanced programme of debt relief for heavily indebted poor countries (HIPC) and cancellation of official bilateral debt; and more generous ODA for countries committed to poverty reduction</p> <p>Target 14: Address the special needs of landlocked developing countries and small island developing States (through the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States and the outcome of the twenty-second special session of the General Assembly)</p> <p>Target 15: Deal comprehensively with the debt problems of developing countries through national and international measures in order to make debt sustainable in the long term</p> <p>Some of the indicators listed below are monitored separately for the least developed countries (LDCs), Africa, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States.</p> <p>Official development assistance (ODA)</p> <p>33. Net ODA, total and to the least developed countries, as percentage of OECD/DAC donors' gross national income</p> <p>34. Proportion of total bilateral, sector-allocable ODA of OECD/DAC donors to basic social services (basic education, primary health care, nutrition, safe water and sanitation)</p> <p>35. Proportion of bilateral official development assistance of OECD/DAC donors that is untied</p> <p>36. ODA received in landlocked developing countries as a proportion of their gross national incomes</p> <p>37. ODA received in small island developing States as a proportion of their gross national incomes</p> <p>Market access</p> <p>38. Proportion of total developed country imports (by value and excluding arms) from developing countries and least developed countries, admitted free of duty</p> <p>39. Average tariffs imposed by developed countries on agricultural products and textiles and clothing from developing countries</p> <p>40. Agricultural support estimate for OECD countries as a percentage of their gross domestic product</p>

	<p>41. Proportion of ODA provided to help build trade capacity</p> <p>Debt sustainability</p> <p>42. Total number of countries that have reached their HIPC decision points and number that have reached their HIPC completion points (cumulative)</p> <p>43. Debt relief committed under HIPC Initiative</p> <p>44. Debt service as a percentage of exports of goods and services</p> <p>Target 16: In cooperation with developing countries, develop and implement strategies for decent and productive work for youth</p> <p>45. Unemployment rate of young people aged 15-24 years, each sex and total <sup>f</sup></p> <p>Target 17: In cooperation with pharmaceutical companies, provide access to affordable essential drugs in developing countries</p> <p>46. Proportion of population with access to affordable essential drugs on a sustainable basis</p> <p>Target 18: In cooperation with the private sector, make available the benefits of new technologies, especially information and communications</p> <p>47. Telephone lines and cellular subscribers per 100 population</p> <p>48. Personal computers in use per 100 population</p> <p>Internet users per 100 population</p>
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The Millennium Development Goals and targets come from the Millennium Declaration, signed by 189 countries, including 147 heads of State and Government, in September 2000 (<http://www.un.org/millennium/declaration/ares552e.htm>). The goals and targets are interrelated and should be seen as a whole. They represent a partnership between the developed countries and the developing countries “to create an environment – at the national and global levels alike – which is conducive to development and the elimination of poverty”.

Note: Goals, targets and indicators effective 8 September 2003.

a For monitoring country poverty trends, indicators based on national poverty lines should be used, where available.

b An alternative indicator under development is “primary completion rate”.

c Amongst contraceptive methods, only condoms are effective in preventing HIV transmission. Since the condom use rate is only measured among women in union, it is supplemented by an indicator on condom use in high-risk situations (indicator 19a) and an indicator on HIV/AIDS knowledge (indicator 19b). Indicator 19c (contraceptive prevalence rate) is also useful in tracking progress in other health, gender and poverty goals.

d This indicator is defined as the percentage of population aged 15-24 who correctly identify the two major ways of preventing the sexual transmission of HIV (using condoms and limiting sex to one faithful, uninfected partner), who reject the two most common local misconceptions about HIV transmission, and who know that a healthy-looking person can transmit HIV. However, since there are currently not a sufficient number of surveys to be able to calculate the indicator as defined above, UNICEF, in collaboration with UNAIDS and WHO, produced two proxy indicators that represent two components of the actual indicator. They are the following: a) percentage of women and men 15-24 who know that a person can protect herself/herself from HIV infection by “consistent use of condom”; b) percentage of women and men 15-24 who know a healthy-looking person can transmit HIV.

e Prevention to be measured by the percentage of children under 5 sleeping under insecticide- treated bednets; treatment to be measured by percentage of children under 5 who are appropriately treated.

f An improved measure of the target for future years is under development by the International Labour Organization.

Source: <http://www.unmillenniumproject.org/goals/gti.htm#goal1>

## **Appendix 2 Participant Information Sheet**

### **Information Sheet**

*The Millennium Development Goals in Translation – An Analysis of Culture, Gender and Policy in India*

This research is being carried out as part of a doctoral studies programme at the University of Waikato, New Zealand. The goal is to examine the way the Millennium Development Goals are translated into local development projects which focus on the empowerment of young women and education. The research aims to:

- explore the implications of the Millennium Development Goals for the field of development – is it a new way of doing development?
- examine the collaboration between global and local actors to achieve the MDGs.
- investigate how policy formulated at the global level translates into local practice with reference to the goals of girls' schooling and gender empowerment.
- study the role of culture, norms and values and their interpretations and implications for policy translation in the local context.

The local project I wish to examine is in Chandrapur district, Maharashtra, India. As part of my fieldwork in India, I will be undertaking interviews with the following groups of people:

- UNICEF India officials (National and State)
- State of Maharashtra policy officials (women, social justice) and education officials
- Chandrapur district officials
- Civil society organisations including grassroots and gender-based movements
- 'Deepshikha' girl group participants

The project aims to inform development initiatives by gaining insights into how development policy formulated at the global level translates into local practice with reference to the girls' schooling and gender empowerment.

Researcher:

Ms Gauri Nandedkar, PhD Candidate, Political Science and Public Policy,  
University of Waikato, ln35@waikato.ac.nz, +64 7 8384466 ext 6180

Supervisors: Dr. Priya Kurian (Chief Supervisor), Political Science and Public Policy, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, University of Waikato, 838-4466 Ext 6109, pkurian@waikato.ac.nz

Dr. Patrick Barrett, Political Science and Public Policy, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

Dr. Rachel Simon-Kumar, Societies and Cultures, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

## Appendix 3 Consent Form

### Consent Form – Participant’s Copy

*The Millennium Development Goals in Translation – An Analysis of Culture, Gender and Policy in India*

I have been given the **Participant Information Sheet** for this study and I understand the purpose of this research. My consent for participation in this research is as follows:

- |   |        |
|---|--------|
| (a) I consent to participate in this research   | YES    |
| NO  |        |
| (b) I understand that I can withdraw within 2 weeks of my interview   | YES    |
| NO  |        |
| (c) It is alright to refer to my agency and title in the final report   | YES NO |
| (d) I wish to remain personally anonymous in the final report   | YES    |
| NO  |        |
| (e) I understand that only the researcher and her supervisors will see named raw data   |        |
| YES NO  |        |
| (f) I understand that the researcher’s and her supervisors’ access to named raw data will not in any way compromise anonymity of my participation in the published thesis |        |
|   | YES    |
|   | NO     |

This research project has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences. Any questions about the ethical conduct of this research may be sent to the Secretary of the Committee, email [fass-ethics@waikato.ac.nz](mailto:fass-ethics@waikato.ac.nz), postal address, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, Te Kura Kete Aronui, University of Waikato, Te Whare Wananga o Waikato, Private Bag 3105, Hamilton 3240.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Researcher:



Ms Gauri Nandedkar, PhD Candidate, Political Science and Public Policy,  
University of Waikato, ln35@waikato.ac.nz, +64 7 838 4466 ext. 6180

Chief Supervisor's Name:

Dr. Priya Kurian, Political Science and Public Policy, Faculty of Arts and Social  
Sciences, University of Waikato, 838-4466 Ext 6109, pkurian@waikato.ac.nz

### Consent Form for Participants (**Researcher Copy**)

#### *The Millennium Development Goals in Translation – An Analysis of Culture, Gender and Policy in India*

I have been given the **Participant Information Sheet** for this study and I understand the purpose of this research. My consent for participation in this research is as follows:

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| NO  |     |
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| NO  |     |
| (c) It is alright to refer to my agency and title in the final report   | YES |
| NO  |     |
| (d) I wish to remain personally anonymous in the final report   | YES |
| NO  |     |
| (e) I understand that only the researcher and her supervisors will see named raw data   |     |
| YES NO  |     |
| (f) I understand that the researcher's and her supervisors' access to named raw data will not in any way compromise anonymity of my participation in the published thesis |     |
|   | YES |
|   | NO  |

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Signed:

Name:

Agency/Organisation:

Date:

Signature of researcher:

Researcher:

Ms Gauri Nandedkar

PhD Candidate, Political Science and Public Policy, University of Waikato,  
ln35@waikato.ac.nz, +64 7 838 4466 ext. 6180

Chief Supervisor's Name:

Dr. Priya Kurian, Political Science and Public Policy, Faculty of Arts and Social  
Sciences, University of Waikato, 838-4466 Ext 6109, pkurian@waikato.ac.nz

## **Appendix 4**

### **Sample Questions**

#### **Research Questions**

The objective of this project is to study the translation of the MDGs, transforming broad policy into a gendered and cultured local context. I focus on the following key questions:

- (1) How is development policy created at the global level, exemplified by the MDGs, translated and reinterpreted within local context?
- (2) How do values, principles and culture contribute to the reshaping of the MDGs with respect to gender empowerment?

#### **Questions for UNDP administrator**

##### Implementing MDGs

1. Given your role as UNDP administrator and your responsibility for overseeing the implementation of policy developed at the global level, what are the organisational challenges the UNDP faces in implementing the Millennium Development Goals into local development programmes?
2. In your view, have the MDGs as a framework promoted a bottom-up approach to development work for the UNDP as an international organisation? Has it promoted bottom-up development within country contexts?
3. From your perspective, what are some of the challenges of implementing MDGs in diverse cultural contexts?

##### Translation of MDG 3: Gender Empowerment

4. MDG 3 is a key goal for women's empowerment. From the UNDP perspective, how successfully has Goal 3 been translated from broad global aspirations into local contexts?  
(What are some of the challenges faced by the UNDP in implementing gender empowerment programmes in different cultural contexts?)

##### Challenges of Working with Local Partners

5. What are some of the issues that UNDP confronts when working with a range of partners to implement MDGs? What makes for good collaborative partnerships? How are conflicting agendas negotiated?

## Monitoring and Evaluation

6. How involved is the UNDP in the monitoring and evaluation of the MDGs at the country level? Is monitoring or evaluation carried out with local partners or independently by UNDP? What sensitivities need to be considered?

## **Questions for Fieldwork Interviews**

Note that follow-up questions as required will be asked in each interview.

The questions have been re-structured to develop a catalogue of questions and responses surrounding three key processes: implementation, evaluation and translation. The questions will be asked to multiple interview participants and catalogued under type of question (implementation, evaluation, translation) and interview partner (government official, NGO, intergovernmental org, civil society org, programme participants, academics).

## **Implementation**

- How dependent on donor agency funding are local policies for girls' education and gender equity programmes? How has this affected the relationship between funding agencies and local policy officials?
- How does UNICEF 'accompany' countries in policy?
- Implementation/Descriptive (I/D): According to the UN website, training in the *Deepshikha* programme for young women is for 20 days. What is the curriculum for this training? Who decides what is appropriate and why?
- I/D: Are the *Deepshikha* instructors male or female or both? Have the instructors been trained in gender-sensitivity? How is the curriculum gender-sensitive?
- I/D: How are life skills education integrated with sexual and reproductive health education? How are the girls empowered? Are they empowered according to the targets and indicators of MDG 3?
- Which local NGOs are actively working with UNICEF on the *Deepshikha* project(s)?
- I/D: How much does the programme cost to run? Teachers' salaries, administrators, fees for participants? How is funding for the *Deepshikha* project determined and secured? How and who will determine if funding for *Deepshikha* extends beyond 2015?

## Evaluation

- Several international non-governmental and intergovernmental agencies have worked towards the eradication of poverty in India over the past six decades. How are the MDGs different from previous poverty alleviation plans and how are they relevant for India's development planning?
- UNICEF has been present in India since 1949. How has the work of the organisation evolved over the past six decades? What has changed? What remains the same?
- How do local values and culture shape this *Deepshikha* project? What is found here which cannot be found elsewhere?
- How does UNICEF see the MDG of gender equity succeeding in Maharashtra?
- Have *Deepshikha* participants either prior to or as a result of their participation in the programme become involved in local political processes?
- How does UNICEF see *Deepshikha* programmes being sustainable past 2015? How has the local community become responsible for the programme or how have they become accountable?
- How does the UNDP support India's 12<sup>th</sup> Five-Year Plan?
- Who does the UNDP work with in India? For how long? What is the nature and level of that engagement/interaction?
- How is the project representative of informal schooling? Is it considered complementary training to formal schooling? Does participation depend on a minimum standard of literacy and numeracy? What is that standard in this context?
- How does the training develop capabilities in girls (who have a low-level of literacy)?
- Where and how does the curriculum build capacity and critical thinking?
- What are the aims, objectives and goals of the *Deepshikha* project? Have they been met? How will it succeed in being sustainable?
- Where are the 'graduates' of the programme today? Have any of them trained to become project teachers or mentors? How do they see their role in the project after 'graduation'?

## Translation

- How or why are the MDGs appropriate in the Indian context?
- As a signatory to the MDGs how does the Indian government view the MDGs? An opportunity, an interference, an on-going struggle in development?
- What elements of broad UN policy have been re-negotiated and/or re-interpreted to fit local settings?
- How is *Deepshikha* in line with achieving MDG3?
- Are the groups supporting *Deepshikha* local women-led NGOs? How do women-only spaces allow for the development of girls to explore their potential?
- Since the creation and implementation of the *Deepshikha* programme how has social change been effected in the local community?
- What role have local values and local culture played in shaping the creation (and success) of the *Deepshikha* project?

## Opinion

- The IMF and World Bank are large donor agencies, often criticised for their focus on economics at the heart of development work. How does UNICEF respond?
- What is the role of the State in development?
- How does the translation of global policy find roots and expand in the local setting?
- How would you define empowerment? There are several categories and definitions – what does it mean to you?
- How difficult or easy is it to attract girls to the *Deepshikha* programme?
- What does education mean to you? What does schooling mean to you?
- What is your motivation for attending the *Deepshikha* programme?
- What skills are you learning as a participant in the *Deepshikha* programme?
- How are the skills you are learning preparing you to lead other girls to continue with their education?
- What do you hope to achieve by attending the programme?

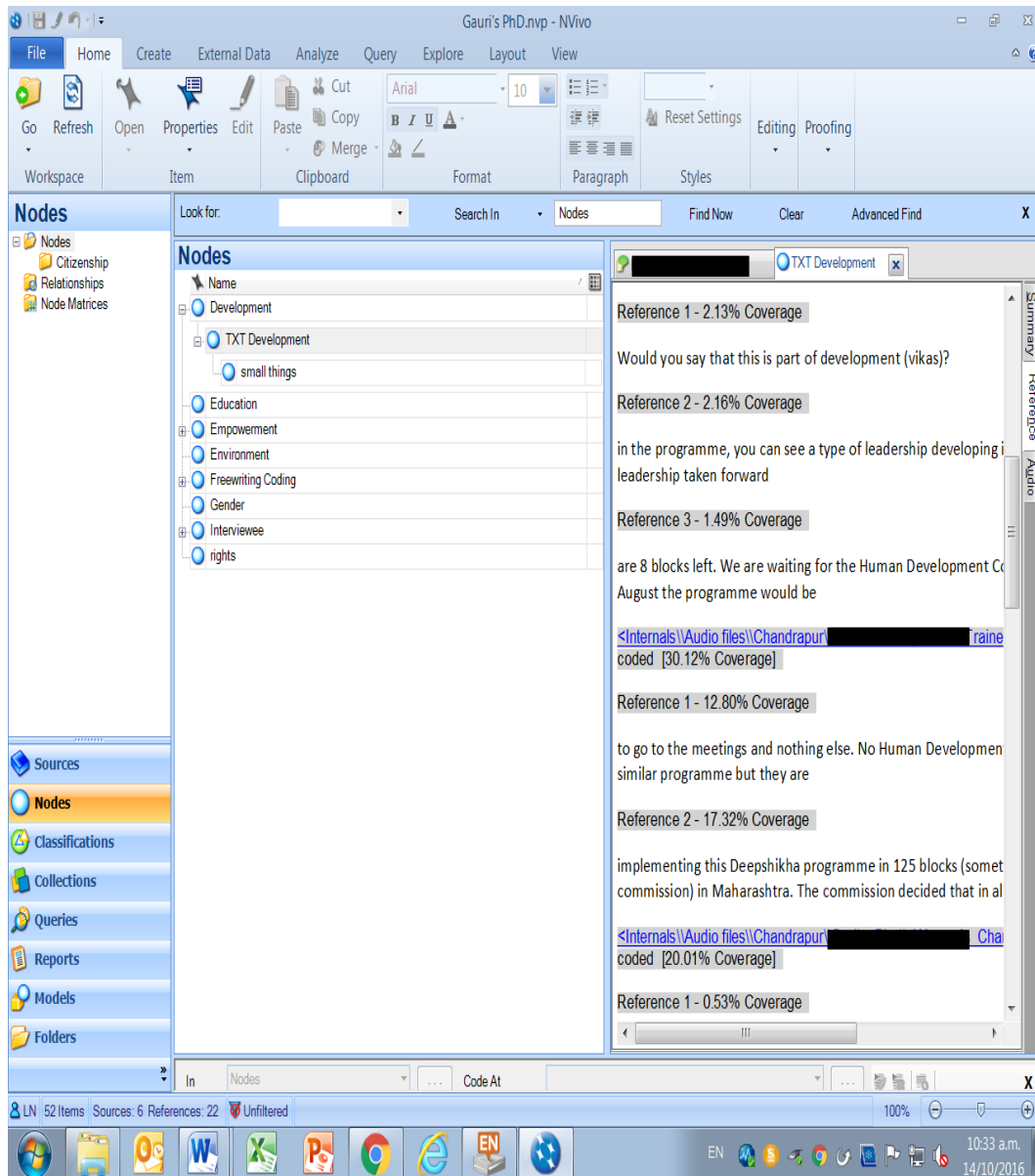
- How do you reflect on the terms ‘gender empowerment’, ‘development’, ‘third world woman’, ‘progress’, ‘policy’, ‘United Nations’ and ‘Millennium Development Goals?’





## Appendix 5

### Sample of Nodes



Note: Personal names redacted to ensure confidentiality and anonymity of interview participants.



## Appendix 6

### Other Documents

The *UN Millennium Declaration* (2001) outlines the overall development goals of the United Nations and its member nations in support of the Millennium Development Goals.

The *Deepshikha* training manuals (Modules 1, 2 and 3, 2009) are handbooks providing information to trainers and facilitators of programme content and methods of delivery.

The *Deepshikha Evaluation Report* (2014) is a document commissioned by UNICEF and written by Sambodhi Research & Communications. It assesses the first phase (2008-2011) of the *Deepshikha* programme in Maharashtra.

The *Maharashtra Citizen Charter* (undated) documents child rights and protection in the state and is embedded in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The *UNDP Vision Statement 2014-2017* outlines the global vision for the UN agency at a macro-level.

*India's First Periodic Report* (2001) provides a definition of the child in India and is embedded in the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child* (1989) is an internationally recognised document outlining the rights and protection of children around the world.

The *Beijing Platform for Action Section L Girl Child* (1995) is a subsection of the Beijing Platform (1995) dedicated to illuminating the rights and protection of the girl child.

The document *Adolescent Girls and their Rights* (1997) was compiled at the first ever meeting dedicated to the condition of adolescent girls. The meeting took place in Ethiopia.

The *Evolving Capacities* (2005) document offers a fresh and timely perspective on children's rights as citizens and their capacities as they evolve from childhood through adolescence into adulthood.

*The role of men and boys in achieving gender equality* (2004) is a UNESCO document detailing the importance of males in the successful implementation of policies and programmes supporting gender equality.

