

Working Paper – 4



Tata Institute of Social Sciences
Patna Centre

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A Case Study of Adolescent Girls at KGBV, Ranipur*

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August 2017



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Education, Patriarchy, Gendering and Resistance: A Case Study of Adolescent Girls at KGBV, Ranipur

MAITREYI JHA¹

Schools have been essentially associated with the pedagogical process of learning and tutoring. Implicit in this common sense view of the school is the belief that learning takes place in a rarefied atmosphere affording equal opportunity to all learners. Cultural capital of the students as also partially of the teachers and prevalent social norms go into shaping the experience and outcome of schooling. Deacon has referred to 'a judicial power within the school', in the sense that there is no more or less simple transfer of knowledge from one person to another as it cannot be disentangled from those authoritative processes which seek to instill discipline into the moral fibers of its inmates and thus differentiate between them, their nature, potentialities, levels and values. This is because schools are multifaceted amalgamations of economic, political, judicial and epistemological relations of power.² It is not without reason that schools have been seen as "sites of struggle" and pedagogy "a form of cultural politics."³

The question of discipline, when fused together with the themes of patriarchy and gendering assume an added significance when dealing with the subject of education of adolescent girls, especially in any discussion regarding India. In this case it becomes imperative, as one scholar has pointed out, that we recognize that 'girls' lives and education in contemporary India continue to be shaped by cultural forces deeply anchored in history.⁴ The subject has become more relevant as in our country a major attempt has been made in recent years, as is discussed below, to bring larger number of girls to school and impart them proper education.

1 Maitreyi Jha worked as Research Fellow with the Patna Centre of TISS from March 2016 to February 2017. The present paper was prepared during the fellowship and presented in a symposium held in February 2017 at Patna. The author is grateful to the discussants – Prof. Muniba Sami and Dr. Panchali Ray – for their comments on the draft of the paper.

2 Pitsoe, Victor, and Moketsi Letseka. "Foucault and School Discipline: Reflections on South Africa." *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, vol. 5, no. 23, 2014, pp. 1525–1532. doi:10.5901/mjss.2014.v5n23p1525..

3 Deacon, Roger. "Michel Foucault on Education: a Preliminary Theoretical Overview." *South African Journal of Education*, vol. 26, no. 2, 2006, pp. 177–187

4 Kumar, Krishna. "Culture, State and Girls: An Educational Perspective." *Economic and Political Weekly*, vol. 45, no. 17, 2010, pp. 75–84.

RESEARCH SETTING

In the present context, the KGBV scheme is a significant part of the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan programme, which is the Indian flagship programme that aims to provide free and basic education to children. KGBV targets and nobly seeks to provide formal education to dropout girls, between the classes 6 to 8, by enabling them via both school, as well as a hostel facility. A detailed background to the scheme will be given later. For this study, the KGBV facility in Ranipur in Darbhanga district of Bihar was chosen, because of its uniqueness. This particular KGBV, as opposed to its counterparts in other states of the country, provides only a hostel facility to the girls, and thus relies on an existing middle school to extend the education facility to its beneficiaries. The lack of this feature leads to mushrooming of other effects, as will be explained later.

The research was exploratory and descriptive in nature. It was important to see how the scheme is seen by the girls at KGBV, how the teachings shape them, and how does power play come to control them. Hence in order to have a detailed understanding it was important to be present in the field for a long duration, for it was their perspective, understanding, experiences that needed to be studied. The best possible way to engage with the research questions was through ethnographic study.

These participants come from myriad backgrounds. The methods undertaken to investigate various facets of the study were non-participant observation in classrooms, participant observation in hostels, open-ended interviews with teachers, and diary entry method. The field work was methodically conducted in two parts – the first in the months of May and June, and the second part, which involved more intensive field work began in the months of August to October. During the first phase, interactions and observations were made only in the hostels – the relationships of the girls with their teachers and among themselves. During the second phase, which incorporated observations in both the school and the hostel – interactions with day scholars were studied too. In this phase, those girls who were in class eight were studied the most as they had gone through the maximum number of years under the program.

The study aims to provide an ethnographic overview of the participant girls so that an understanding is gained about the pedagogic environment to which they now belong. This present ethnographic study of adolescent girls at KGBV, Ranipur makes an attempt to understand these issues. Ethnography of school illustrates the social worlds of the students, teachers, office bearers, rules and regulations of a particular school. It is simultaneously part of general framework of analyzing the school as a pedagogic space of knowledge

production, creating productive individuals and good citizens. This study seeks to capture the play of power and its manifestations – disciplinary mechanisms, patriarchal and gender related norms in the education of girls and also the way they challenge, subvert and negotiate these norms to find a fuller expression of their true person.

KGBV SCHEME

The school chosen for this study was, Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV) Ranipur in Darbhanga district. The school happens to belong to a larger chain of KGBV schools. But before going further the evolution of the scheme is worth a look. In India the governments since colonial times, as indicated above, began trying to promote girls' education and the process only got accelerated since independence. Provision of free and compulsory education till the age of fourteen for all was enshrined in the directive principles of state policy of the Indian constitution. However, it was the experience of past many decades which indicated that the percentage of enrolment in the government schools in primary classes saw a major disparity between boys and girls and also much higher dropout rates in case of girls. In the last few years even though there was definite increase in the enrolment of girls because of certain governmental schemes like mid-day meal and poshak rashi but their regular attendance in schools was found to be lower than the boys and the dropout rate continued to be higher. In addition to these factors, in many backward areas there were simply no schools, where girls could get elementary education. Hence, In 2003 the government launched the National Program for Education of Girls at Elementary Level, seeking to promote girls education especially from disadvantaged communities by developing model upper-primary schools in every cluster and also through offering material incentives such as providing stationeries and arranging towards remedial classes and bridge courses. However, it was realized quickly enough that some more problems needed to be addressed. The number of girls dropping out continued to remain high and the major reason identified was the lack of infrastructure in these schools, especially lack of toilets and the distance of the schools, and the resulting concerns of the girls' families about their safety on the roads. In August 2004, a more focused program the Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV) scheme was launched.

It took a step forward in providing elementary education at upper primary level to girls by setting up residential schools for backward communities, with 75% reservation for SC, ST, OBC and Minorities and 25% for BPL in Educationally Backward Blocks (EBBs), where the female literacy was below

the national average (i.e. below 46.13%: census 2001, in EBBs) and gender gap in literacy was above the national average of 21.59%: census 2001) [3]. The basic idea behind launching KGBV was for mainstreaming girls who could not study up to or beyond 5th std. The facility to stay in a hostel for the upper primary stage of elementary education, namely 6th to 8th was provided. At the primary level the scheme was for slightly older girls who had dropped out of school for some reason but in difficult areas younger girls were also enrolled. The scheme was merged with SSA (Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan) with effect from 1st April, 2007 and its scope was enlarged with effect from 1st April 2008 to cover the blocks that had rural female literacy rate below 30% and urban areas having a minority concentration (94 town/cities in all) with a female literacy rate below the national average (53.67% as per Census 2001). With the RTE ACT 2009, coming into force with effect from 1st April 2010, and SSA framework of implementation being revised to correspond to the RTE Act, the KGBV component of SSA began to be implemented in the overall context of child rights and child entitlements and the scope of the scheme was again enlarged to cover all the educationally backward blocks with rural female literacy of 46.13%.

In the state of Bihar, KGBVs are run under the aegis of Bihar Education Project Council (BEPC). The scheme has run for almost a decade now and two evaluative studies have been done till this date, the first in 2007 by the Department of School Education and Literacy, Ministry of Human Resource Development and the second in June, 2015 by NITI AAYOG, erstwhile Planning Commission. These studies have revealed that not all the expectations behind the launching of this scheme have been met and have also tried to locate the causes behind this partial fulfillment of the objectives of the scheme. These studies have a bearing on our study.

The KGBV curriculum betrays the deeply steeped patriarchal and gender norms. Though the KGBVs have been launched for mainstreaming drop out girls by providing them a platform for finishing their elementary education, but class 8th can hardly become a foundation if the future of the girls is taken into account. The curriculum designed is also the same as in the regular government schools, with only a few bridge courses, but the fact that these are drop out girls who would need a special curriculum to actually emerge at the same level is not taken into consideration.

The fact that girls are only being taught till Std 8th indicates that these girls could become eligible for marriage after getting very basic education, in which vocational studies have a major role. Girls are being trained in the

traditional homely skills, such as “Madhubani painting”, “silai-kadhai” etc. An oft-observed aspect of the KGBVs is the prime role that they play in the lives of post-puberty adolescent girls as they grow up, emphasizing their gender-related roles that can be performed in homes. Strict discipline is an underlined motto of most of the KGBVs and consequently, this inevitably leads to repression of all individualistic desires. For example, on the subject of sex, silence on the part of women then becomes the rule. This, in turn, has the effect of reinforcing prevalent gender norms in society where girls are instructed to maintain their ‘character’. The school does not encourage the girls to play football and cricket as much as boys. Conversely the boys are not encouraged to explore their artistic side and express themselves in cooking, art and domestic science. The students after all have to return to their homes and families at the end of the day and go out and succeed in the society where the schools exist. So a question whether schools and education system are beset with a patriarchal mind-set and value system really becomes a question if the society which the education system serves is itself free from it or not. Schools cannot exist on islands and not form a closed system. A change in educational system requires a simultaneous co-evolution of the social values and expectation. One in absence of the other would not be a success.

The present study made an attempt to look at and understand how the many natural desires of teenage girls to lead as free life as the boys their age is dealt with through education; how the individual conduct of girls is controlled at the very space of school and hostel, to understand what kind of productive bodies does the state wish to produce through these vocational courses being taught at KGBV by trying to look at the link, if any, between these courses and the new labour process, to explore the link between disciplinary approaches (by imparting patriarchal judgments and forcing them to imbibe prevalent social norms) and marriage (a course prepared through vocational studies), to study the challenges faced in regard to their sexual disciplining and in other aspects and modes of everyday resistance by the girls at KGBVs. What is the understanding of both the girls and the teachers regarding disciplining?

ETHNOGRAPHY OF THE SCHOOL

The KGBV, Raipur is a government school and was established in 2007. Ranipur village is about a distance of 4 kms from the outskirts of Darbhanga, a divisional headquarter town in north Bihar. The town houses two universities and also happened to be the capital city of the famous Darbhanga Raj. The east-west corridor passes at about a distance of half a km from the school. There are a number of shops selling all kind of goods nearby as also by now ubiquitous

internet cafes. This proximity to Darbhanga has impacted the cultural practices of the school students.

The KGBV, Ranipur is a Model 3 school, like other KGBV schools in Bihar in that it forms part of a regular co-educational government school though classes for the KGBV students are also held in the hostel. The students of the KGBV, Ranipur are attached and enrolled at the Rajkiya Madhyamik Vidyalaya and attend their classes there. The majorities of the students come from poor families and have dropped out of regular classes. The fact that they are selected through a very perfunctory process, also often through persuasion, ensures that most of them are less equipped to do justice to their studies initially than other students who have been regular students. This impacts their later experience in the school. Most of the students join the school in their teens, mostly falling within the age group of 14-16, often touching 18.(who could not study up to or beyond 5th std.) , and have already been exposed to patriarchy and gender related norms. In other words their minds are not tabula rasa on which something entirely novel can be or is sought to be written. This study takes cognizance of this fact and incorporates these experiences while studying whether these norms impact their school experience, get further embedded or challenged.

The school is housed in a moderately sized campus. As soon as one enters the premises the Madhya Vidyalaya building is located on the left hand side of the campus. There is a lawn, a small playground and a boundary wall that separates the school from the hostel of the KGBV. . The school has a double storied building, having three class rooms on the ground floor and one room on the first floor. The ground floor has a corridor, where morning prayers are held. Interestingly a lone motorcycle (that of the principal) can be seen parked here. Rest of the vehicles (two-wheeler motorcycles, mainly of the teachers) is parked in a corner of the playground. The school building has one office which also functions as the Principal's office cum staff room. Paintings and calendars of goddess Saraswati* can be seen hanging from the walls. There is a picture of girls dressed up in their karate uniforms from KGBV, on being asked the Principal explains that it was a taken during the first year when the girls were enthusiastic about learning and now slowly it had "fizzled" out so they not push the girls much. The attendance sheets are stacked in one corner and a teacher in the corner is frantically working on some papers, he explains that there is regular invigilation and hence finishing the paper was more important than actually taking the classes. There are three big classrooms on the ground floor and one more classroom on the 1st floor, for class 6th to 8th respectively. Across the school's boundary wall there is small gate that leads to the Kasturba hostel. The entrance of the hostel is manned by a guard, who is permanently

stationed there. There is a small passage that leads upon to the courtyard of the hostel. The passage has names and pictures of all the girls living in the hostel, nobody from outside are allowed inside the hostel not even parents. The passage also has a notice board that has the same picture of girls in Karate uniform which was in the office. There is also a notice about the admissions being open for the coming session, and the amenities that are provided at the hostel (including the monthly deposit of Rs. 150 in the girls account. As soon as one enters the courtyard (which is quite big), a tattered old building can be seen. There are a total of five rooms on the ground floor. On the left hand side there is the accountant's office that also happens to be the only male staff at KGBV. Right across his office is the Warden's room. The warden's room can easily be seen from the office, she has a few dupattas hanging from the windows as drapes. Next to that is kitchen which is open, a cook with the help of the students cooks all the food, the teachers are served food before the students and they are generally seen eating in the warden's room. There are three more bathrooms on the ground floor which the students use, there is no source of light in them and are pretty dingy hence the teachers don't use them. There are three more rooms on the ground floor, one is for the blind girls and the other is for students of class 6th. The third room is a classroom which also functions as the recreational room. There is a bathroom in this room and on several occasions the class had to be dismissed because the teacher's wanted to use the washroom or take a bath. The floor upstairs has two more rooms they are built in haphazard manner, both the rooms are in opposite corners and one of them functions as the room which has all their clothes and books, none of the girls stay in that room.

OTHER KEY-FEATURES OF THE SCHOOL AND THE CLASS/ CASTE DYNAMICS

The school and hostel have the same number of holidays. The academic year begins in April and ends in March of the next year. The subjects taught in the school are again taught to the girls at the hostel. Since these are drop-out girls the idea is to teach them the syllabus twice so that they have the needed extra guidance. The subjects offered at the school are, Hindi, English, Maths, Science and Social Science. Apart from this the girls who are willing are taught Karate in the mornings. The schools timings are from 10 am to 3 pm in the afternoon. The students at KGBV have to get up at precisely 4 am, they need to freshen up by 4.30 am. Morning prayers are done, wherein they mostly pray to Hindu gods and goddesses. The school provides the girls with two school-uniforms and scholarship amount of Rs. 150 per month. As is the case all the students are from extremely poor family backgrounds and most of them are

drop-outs although in certain cases some of the girls have joined straight after from 5th standard. The school comprises of ST, SC and OBC students with a small percentage of minority girls. Most of the girls come from very poor economic backgrounds. Many of the parents work as farmers or daily-wage labourers. The girls from the minority community come from relatively better economic background, with their fathers working in Saudi Arabia.

There are a total of 5 female teachers at Kasturba and although all the students belong to the lower castes, these teachers are all from upper-caste. They have a B.Ed. degree and are married. Their families live in Darbhanga and they often try to commute back on the weekends.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE AND POWER PLAY AT THE SCHOOL

The various features of the school discussed earlier provide a background for understanding Kasturba Vidyalaya as an organization. There are a set of rules prescribed by the BEPC for both the teachers and the girls studying at Kasturba. These set rules and regulations are managed at various levels. There are a set of duties and powers given in hierarchical format to look after all the rules and regulations of the school. There is some scope of flexibility in special circumstances and various means of deviance and resistance was observed during my entire course of fieldwork. . Since the KGBV hostel is a part of the middle school, the hierarchical structure of the administration is twofold; one of the principal of the school and the second of the “Pramukh” of the village who works with BEPC. The second layer of hierarchy can be seen within the teachers, wherein the warden has the maximum power according to the prescribed rules but very often she takes suggestion from the accountant of the hostel for making important decisions. The accountant happens to be the only male staff at KGBV.

The school works under the direct supervision of the BEPC, however the power and authority are at times over exercised and misused at certain hierarchical level several instances of which could be seen during my field study. The Jila Pramukh (member of BEPC), would visit the hostel three times a week on random days, so that the teachers were unaware of the exact dates. These visits would be at the odd hours in the night somewhere between 10pm to 12am and on certain occasions even at 5am in the morning, the teachers have to stand in front of the window so that their attendance could be verified. The administration officially is in the hands of the Principal of the Kendriya Vidyalaya. The Principal of the middle school takes all the administrative

decisions regarding the KGBV as well although he doesn't visit the hostel or interact with the students in any form.

The organizational hierarchy can also be observed in the daily activities of the teachers at the hostel. The warden takes all major decision regarding the administrative functioning of the hostel, although the instructions and major decisions are taken by the Principal, on a daily basis the warden has the maximum say in the functioning. She is the one who looks after the maintenance of the hostel, which includes the cleaning of the bathrooms and kitchen as well. It is to be noted that although there is a staff for this, mostly the warden asks the students to do the cleaning. In fact her laundry is done by the students at the hostel too; other teachers however do not practice this. There are three more teachers at the hostel apart from the warden; they take responsibility of extracurricular activities as well as the classes. The warden takes classes on rare occasions and in fact is seen taking only the "moral science" class which happens each day in the morning. The other two teachers are in charge when the warden is on leave. Never in my observation of over three months did I see the teacher who taught the blind kids given in-charge of any activity. The care-taker is responsible for the blind students studying at school, but also takes care of the needs of the teacher. From shopping for groceries to taking care of a sick girl, all these duties are assigned to her.

The unspoken hierarchy can be seen even amongst the students. Even though at Kasturba there is no formal monitor appointed. One girl from each class is given the responsibility to monitor the behavior of their classmates. They are chosen on the basis of their performance at the school and their behavioral conduct in the hostel. The rest of the girls recognize their authority and are seen maintaining safe distance from them, and are on their best behavior in front of them. In fact during one of the interviews girls confessed to me that they are not comfortable around these monitors as they see them at teacher's pet and are afraid everything that they say will be reported back to the warden. They are seen as the warden's pet, but they seem to take pride in their duty and are very sincere in their work. There is no reward given to these monitors in-fact they are not even officially appointed, but the support and appreciation keeps them motivated. And although the other girls at times make fun of them, they do recognize the monitor's authority and respect them. Through appointing leaders and authoritative figures at various hierarchical levels the functioning of the school and the moral conduct of the students is under continuous invigilation.

THE KGBV GIRLS – A SECOND CLASS CITIZEN WITHIN THE CLASSROOM?

The classroom at the Madhya Vidyalaya is the only interaction of the girls at Kasturba with the outside world. Here they come in contact with students from the villages and the one who have been attending school without dropping-out, naturally their experiences differ from the girls of Kasturba who are drop-outs, from distant villages and come from very poor families. I observed the students across the three classes especially focusing on the girls from the hostel and their relationship with other students and their performance in the classroom. The seating arrangement clearly showcase the gender segregation with boys sitting on the left hand corner and the girls seated in the right row, further within the girls side of the classroom, the girls from the hostel always take up the last two rows. The Kasturba girls only interact within themselves and a clear demarcation could be seen. On several occasions I observed that the girls from hostel would sit uncomfortably but would not go and sit with the day scholar girls.

The discipline aspect can be clearly seen within the classroom in the presence of teachers, they are expected to maintaining discipline, be in their uniforms and finish their homework on time, responding to the teacher in a formal manner, failing which they are often beaten up with a wooden stick in front of the entire class. But as soon as the teachers leave the classroom the boys usually run to the corridors to play and the girls are seen talking in groups. Even in the absence of teachers hardly a girl from the hostel is seen interacting to the other girls. During one of my interviews with a day scholar girl, she talks about how these girls “come from small villages and are not good at studies.” Over a period of time a general view within the class developed that the girls of Kasturba were not capable of studying with the rest of the class and in fact two of the teachers held similar opinion. A visible example of this could be seen during the math class where the teacher can only be seen interacting with the boys of the class and at times the girls sitting in the front rows. One of the teachers went on to say “why did you leave your homes to live in a jail (hostel) when you can't even read properly”.

The classroom is also a place where the student and teacher discuss about topics other than those mentioned in the syllabus, the boys generally are more vocal during these classes, especially on topics related to mental math and sports. Although a certain amount of freedom and informality can be seen during these sessions, the teachers do not like being corrected one such instance was when a teacher could not explain the meaning of a certain Urdu

word and when a girl from Kasturba tried to explain the meaning, she was not allowed to do so.

The teachers always carry a wooden- stick in their hands when they enter the class. According to them the students are not interested in academics nor did they have any inclination of maintain discipline and would defy the rules as soon the teachers walked out of the class. The teachers identify most of the students in this category, however most of them held the view that even though the boys were harder to discipline, and they were quicker to learn the subjects being taught in class. During one of the math classes a girl solved the question on the board, the teacher was very surprised by this and looked at the boys and said “ ladki hoke tum logon se pehle sawal bana liya” (even though she is a girl she solved the math sum before all you). This view that girls are not good at math was very deeply embedded in the minds of the teacher and even the students seemed to accept it as a fact.

The girls of Kasturba seem to be distant and withdrawn from the rest of the class as well as the teachers, most of them during the interviews said it was because they always felt humiliated and targeted in the class, one of the girls said that because they come from poorer family background they are treated differently. Their responses and behavior in class was very different from what it was inside the hostel and they felt discriminated against, I in fact saw several such incidences and often the girls go back to the hostel and narrate these to the warden who provides comfort and assurance to them.

RITUALS AND THEIR ROLE IN DISCIPLINING AND MORALITY

Rituals play a very vital role in maintaining the construction of school as a sacred space. The morning assembly is a very vital part of these everyday rituals. Every day the girls get up at 4.30 in the morning and they assemble after getting ready to pray to god, sing hymns and the national anthem, the assembly is held on the same exact time everyday with same set of prayers and songs. The warden then talks about the importance of cleanliness and maintaining a proper hygiene with the students. In the absence of the warden, the English takes up on this responsibility. Missing the morning assembly is prohibited and even punishable in some cases. The assembly at KGBV is religious in nature with majority of the hymns sung for the Hindu goddess Saraswati. The major focus in the morning assembly is on imparting moral values to the girls and disciplining them by teaching the importance of being on time, not talking to the “rowdy” boys in the class, having their hair tied

in two ponytails and their nails properly groomed. The monitor of the class, checks the nails and the uniform of the girls during assembly hours. The girls are not allowed to put nail paint or use colorful ribbon.

Another ritual is the Republic day and Independence Day celebrations. Students have to compulsorily participate in programs. Other festivals such as Saraswati pooja is celebrated in the hostel where all the girls have to participate, no other festival is celebrated with such zeal. The idea is to celebrate the religion's festival to which majority of the students belongs. The question of "morality" is very central to the aim of the school. The idea behind establishing these residential schools apart from mainstreaming the drop out girls was to provide them with an environment where they would be taught about morality and how to conduct themselves. They in fact have a "moral science" lecture every day in the morning, where the warden teaches these girls about the importance of "conducting themselves" in a proper manner, she is often seen explaining to the kids that because they are girls a certain kind of behavior is expected out of them, they are taught to be honest, loyal and more importantly to be disciplined, maintain a safe distance from the boys at school and have zero interaction with them because as the warden and other teachers explain, these are rowdy boys and it's for the girls own safety. The importance of self-disciplining is emphasized a lot; breaking which otherwise would lead to severe consequences. The concept of moral education which emphasizes on discipline as the first principle along with attachment with social groups and autonomy can be seen in the school.

RULES, PUNISHMENTS AND RESISTANCE

Rules both said and unsaid are present at KGBV. Much importance is given to following the rules. With written rules like students being on time, not leaving the hostel premises without a teacher accompanying them, being regular in school and finishing their homework on time, however it is the unsaid rules that are more sternly followed, the girls are not allowed to talk to the boys in the class, they cannot look out of the window. During one of my interviews with a girl at the hostel she said that the warden did not allow them to look out of the window or as much as open the window. The windows have a view of the main road, where boys often stand in groups, hooting and making noises to disturb and sometimes ogle at the girls. Another respondent, Fareeda narrates that many a time the boys would make such noise and still the girls would get a beating from the warden, even if it was the boy's fault.

Another student Ritu spoke about how she was not allowed to wear

anything except for salwar-kameez. She did not understand why the girls were scolded for looking out of the window when in fact it's the boys that made noises and stare at them. She said they had to keep the windows shut at all times because they were afraid to even accidentally look outside just in case some boy is standing downstairs and they would get punished for it. But at the same time she said that the girls needed to be careful and that the teachers were only looking out for them. She believed that if any of her classmates broke these rules they ought to be punished for it. She explained that the cook in the mess (hostel's kitchen) often asked for help and she loved doing it. She enjoyed doing all household chores and her mother insisted that she learnt it because she would get married soon and these things would help her the most even more than studies. Ritu spoke of the teachers with respect. Another student named Sarah told me that Ritu would always go and tell everything to ma'am, so she did not let her on secrets. Some students narrated an incident that happened a few months before the fieldwork began. One of Ritu's classmates had written a letter to a boy in the neighboring village who was a pass-out from their school. Ritu accompanied her friend to the main gate of the school where they handed over the letter to the boy. Ritu, however, was too scared and went on to tell the teacher about the whole incident. Both Ritu and the girl were beaten up and their parents called to the school. However, no action was taken against the boy. I later spoke to the warden about the incident and she said that "boys will be boys" but the girls should not indulge in such activities: talking to boys in the class, or staying in the school after hours and hanging out in the corridors were not permissible behavior for the girls. The warden said that since it was a residential school, the responsibility of "protecting" the girls was on her and this was the best way to ensure their safety from the "rowdy" boys of the school.

The girls at KGBV resist these impositions on a day to day basis and so do the teachers. The warden is often seen getting her son to stay at the hostel, who is 10 years old, but she has to keep him hidden in case there is invigilation. The girls resist these in small forms like, going to bed after the fixed times, putting on nail paint, not finishing their homework on time.

VOCATIONAL COURSE

The vocational courses taught at KGBV are Madhubani painting, Silai Kadhai, and Painting. A new trend has emerged since the past few years where the girls are being taught Karate during the morning assembly. These courses are generally further defining the gendered roles. Karate is taught so that the girls could defend themselves, it is not looked up as a vocation but something

like self-defense, and surprisingly the boys of the school are not taught Karate. As many of the teachers hold the view that the boys don't need self-defense classes. There is no case of the girls actually working in these areas later on in life, and the teachers and students have no say in the vocation being taught to them.

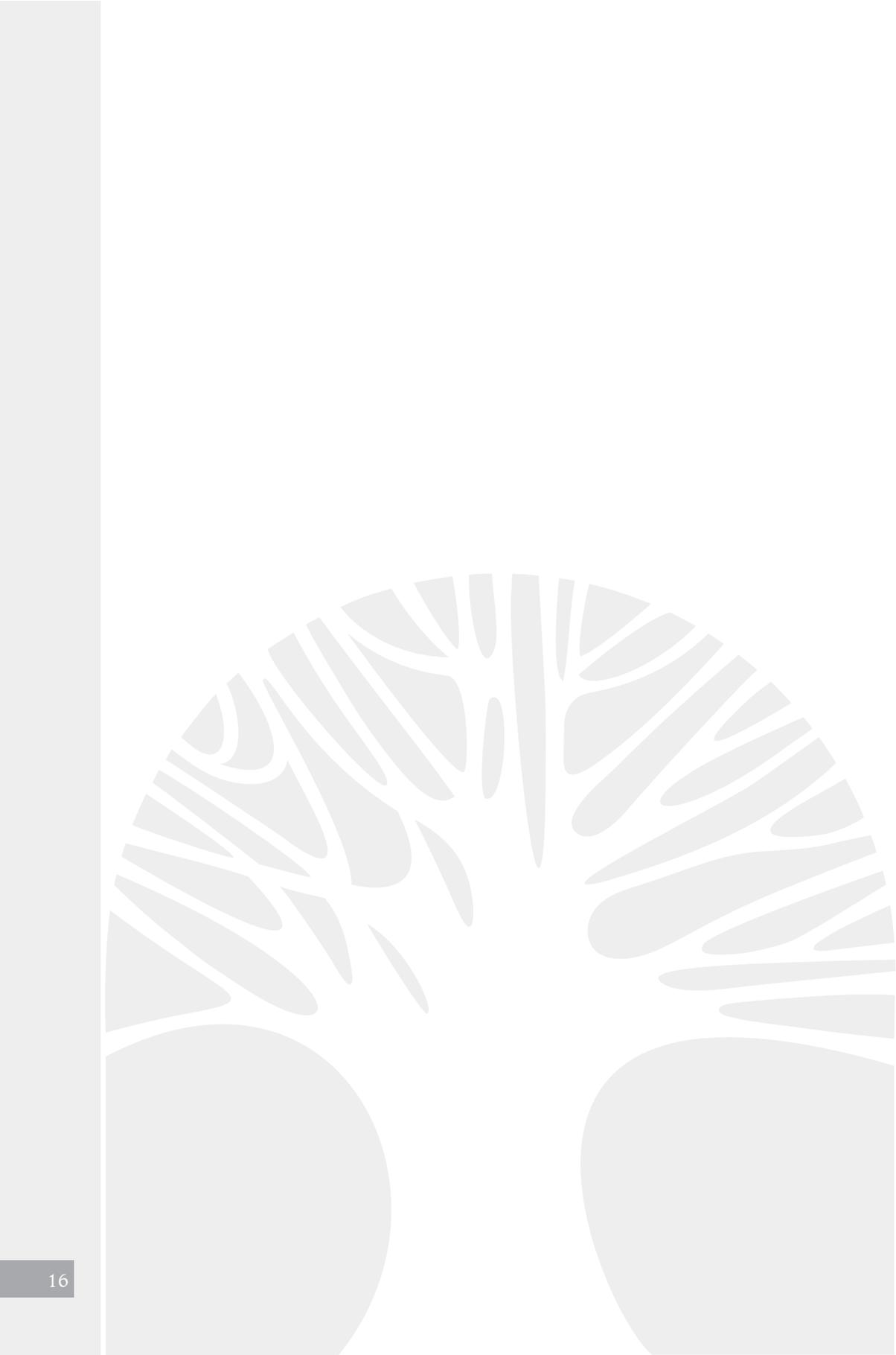
CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

The infrastructure and inclusion of girls was observed. There are a total of 10 girls who are visually impaired, ranging from different age-groups, the youngest being of 8 years of age. Although the official records maintain that they are enrolled in the regular classroom but in reality none of the teachers agreed to let them attend regular classes, on being asked they said that these girls slow down the rest of the class and they would never be able to finish the syllabus at that pace. A teacher trained in Braille has been appointed by the school to teach the girls basic reading. An interesting fact to observe is that although the rest of the teachers have to stay with the girls at night, the teacher who teaches Braille is relieved at 3 in the afternoon, so the visually impaired girls do not have any help after that time. An old lady looks after them for the rest of the day. The books in Braille are very limited and the textbook being used to teach is the same for all the girls, irrespective of the class they are enrolled in. The infrastructure when I observed again keeping in mind their needs is not at all friendly, with steep turns and big steps to climb the stairs leading to the school. An important fact to note is that although the teachers have refused to include them in regular classes, these girls are the one who conduct the morning assembly at school. This is an attempt to make them feel included at school without actually having to engage them in regular classes.

CONCLUSION

The KGBV hostels although began with the aim of mainstreaming drop out girls, the power dynamics and the issues such as patriarchy and gendering can be seen throughout my ethnographic report. The issue of disciplining becomes very important in case of schools, especially in a residential school like KGBV. It is this issue of disciplining that I have tried to observe during my ethnographic study of the hostel.







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