Children's experiences with agency in an indigenous community in Chhattisgarh, India

Ambika Kapoor

Submitted in accordance with the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

University of Leeds
School of Education

Supervisors:

Dr. James Simpson
Dr. Hayley Davies

August 2020

Acknowledgements

Abstract

This research is an exploration of children's everyday lives in an indigenous community (Pahari Korwa) in Chhattisgarh, India. It aims to understand how children engage with hardships and risks in their everyday lives, and negotiate agency. I use ethnography as a methodological approach to capture the various elements of children's daily lives and experiences through observations, conversations, drawings and photographs.

I unpack and explore the relational and interdependent nature of children's agency, and take this discussion further empirically through illustrating how agency is not possessed by individuals but enabled through their embodied interactions with the physical spaces they occupy, the material objects they interact with and the people they encounter.

This thesis illustrates that children's everyday sites of encounter are not rigid but porous. It demonstrates how children explore risks by assessing a situation and relying on their bodily capacities, building a discussion for a relational understanding of the body. Children in the study engaged with everyday mundane objects ingeniously, in ways that enabled their agency, as did everyday interactions with other adults and children, through collaboration, interdependence, resistance and negotiations. The thesis also highlights the intersections of caste and gender in children's everyday experiences, making space to discuss intersectionality within childhood studies.

The contribution to theoretical knowledge lies in the understanding of agency beyond the binaries of the human and non-human, through assemblages, and in the kinds of children's agency ranging from more routine agencies, demonstrated in the presence of adults, to more inventive agencies, that children experienced with their peers and siblings. The overall contribution of the thesis lies in the rich descriptions of children's lives, discussing the intricacies of how agency is produced (or not) in their context.

Table of Contents

List of Figures

List of Tables

Glossary for Hindi and Sargujia words

Adivasi	Tribal group
Ajji	Grandmother
Angan	Front yard
Anganwadi	Centre run for children from 0-6yrs under the Integrated Child Development Scheme
Anusuchit jana jati	Scheduled Tribe, as an officially designated group in the Constitution of India
Arhar	A variety of lentil
Baiga	Religious priest of the Pahari Korwa
Baila	Fruit
Basi ghar	Kitchen or area for storing food
Bhoot	Ghost
Bindi	A red sticker on the forehead for adornment
Chaal goti	Game played with stones, similar to African *mancala*
Charota	A plant by the community
Chullah	Clay structure where a wood fire is used for cooking
Chuna	Limestone
Croqui	Sketch
Dabba-bhanda	Pots and pans
Darri	Jute mat
Degchi	Vessel
Dheki	A simple machine to separate rice from chaff
Dukan	Shop
Dupatta	Scarf
Ghar ghar	A game where children imitate their parents everyday chores
Godana	A practice of tattooing by etching the name of friends using the *baila* fruit oil expressing affection and loyalty
Gulel	Slingshot
Hadiya	Fermented rice beer
Haldi	Turmeric, used during wedding rituals
Hindu rashtra	Hindu nation
Hindutva	Hindu-ness
Janjati	Folk communities
Jati	Community, also used to refer to caste
Jhingas	A type of small fish
Jhoom kheti	Shifting agriculture
Jugaad	Judicious opportunity
Karma	Harvest festivals celebrated by the Pahari Korwas
Khukkadi	Wild mushroom that grows for a short period during the monsoon.
Koilar	A tree whose leaves are used for cooking veg

Korwai	Language with austro-asiatic root
Lakra	A plant whose leaves, flower and stem are used by the community for different purposes
Ludu	Cotton
Mahua	A tree common in the region, its flowers are fermented to produce liquor
Mehmaan	Guests
Mudha	Pond
Navakhani	Harvest festivals celebrated by the Pahari Korwas
Nilgiri	Eucalyptus tree
Pakka	Concrete
Panchayat ghar	Village level government office
Pandri	White
Papad	Poppadum
Para	Hamlet
Phool bandhana	A ritual where two people with the same name exchanged flowers and a piece of cloth to strengthen their relationship
Phulwari	Plant nursery
Pooja	Prayer
Potai	Applying a mixture of cow dung, water and mud for plastering the walls or floor
Puttu and *Khukkadi*	Wild mushroom varieties
Roti	A round flatbread, also called chapatti
Sahadi	Eastern Indo-Aryan language and considered a variety of Hindi
Sal	Shorea Robusta tree
Saree	a traditional Indian dress worn in most parts of the country
Sarpanch	Village head
Shaadi	Wedding
Shuk bazaar	Friday market
Tangi	Axe
Tikli	A red sticker on the forehead for adornment, also called Bindi
Tilak	Mark on the forehead
Vanya Jati	Forest community

Chapter 1: Introduction

This study, *Children's experiences with agency in an indigenous community in Chhattisgarh, India,* is an ethnographic enquiry into children's everyday lives, that aims to understand how children engage with everyday hardships and risks, and how they negotiate their agency through physical spaces, material worlds and social relationships.

This study looks at children growing up in an indigenous village community in Chhattisgarh, India. Indigenous people (hereafter also referred to as Adivasis) are among the most oppressed and marginalised groups in the country, impacted by poverty, migration, land alienation, which has affected their quality of life (Xaxa, 2011). The study is embedded in the larger context of people's lives including their history, governance and state policies. Within this larger ecology, this study specifically aims to understand how children engage with hardships and risks in their everyday.

1.1 Background for the research

This study is influenced by my previous encounters with children. A Masters' degree in Human Development and Childhood Studies from the University of Delhi helped me build a theoretical understanding of the discipline, focussing on childhood in different contexts, engaging with theories and laws relating to childhood and the importance of early childhood care and education. I undertook a dissertation on the 'Role of Voluntary Organisations in the Lives of Street Children'. The eclectic approach of the course helped me evolve my perspectives on issues of social justice related to children. Through my work at a think tank in New Delhi, the Centre for Equity Studies, I was involved with a street children's program and later did a research study assessing the implementation of government policies and schemes for children under six in India. These different work and academic assignments offered me the opportunity to look at the various experiences of childhoods in India. I also gained insight into how programmes and policies are adult-centred and not inclusive of all children. Further, children's perspectives and lived experiences of marginalisation and hardships have not been adequately taken into account.

While working, I developed an interest in understanding the lives of children in India beyond these categories of 'street child', 'labourer', and wanted to understand children's everyday lives from their perspective. Working with street children previously got me interested in exploring the concept of resilience, particularly the everyday lived reality of poverty, migration, rootlessness and urbanisation. Exploring factors that bring about resilience, looking at care practices which promote resilience, and exploring differences across cultures were the initial exploratory questions for the research. Most of my previous experience of fieldwork was in the rural areas of the country, and I selected one of these previously visited sites, where I was also familiar with the state language, to work with a particularly vulnerable Adivasi group.

1.2 Moving from resilience to agency

I initially entered the field with the intention of exploring the concept of resilience with the children in the community. Over the course of time, my focus moved from looking solely at resilience, as I paid attention to children's everyday lives that were in interaction with their everyday environment and other people in the community. Rooted in psychology (Garmezy, 1971), as a concept resilience focussed on individual traits (Block and Block, 1980) and was more of an immediate response or a reaction to a particular event (Bonanno, 2004). Instead, I explored other lenses where I was able to encompass everyday lives and routines. From the beginning, I believed that it was important to include an understanding of the context to understand children's resilience. As otherwise there is a danger that 'resilience' will be seen as a personal or individual attribute alienated from socio-economic conditions (Medrano, 2016). Even though the project changed over the years, where I moved from exploring the concept of resilience to looking at children's agency, what remained constant was the focus on children's everyday lives and lived realities.

During my time in the field, I observed children's everyday lives and interactions. I was particularly intrigued by their close association and relationship with their physical and social environment, including spaces, materials and people (both adults and children). With a concept like resilience, I was constrained in not being able to think relationally, as it focussed on the individual. Therefore, to be able to think of children's lives in relation to their everyday spaces, objects and people, I found agency a more suitable lens.

Before arriving at the concept of agency, I also explored other possibilities, like looking at children's well-being in situations of hardships and risks, but using well-being as a concept felt limiting, as it would mean I assume that children did not have a choice but to cope, and this way I might not be able to explore their vulnerabilities. Agency, as a concept, shelved in the social studies of childhood, seemed better placed to explore the lives of children in a village in the Global South context, as it was dynamic and non-linear. Previously when I began working with the concept, I looked at it as the capacity of children to respond to situations and things. Over the period, as I got acquainted with post-social theories, I developed a more nuanced understanding of thinking relationally (Oswell, 2013, Spyrou, 2018) further discussed in Chapter 3. Here I look at agency as something not possessed by an individual but in relation to other humans and non-humans.

I also felt that hardships and risks were limiting the ways of viewing children's everyday lives and may not encompass other activities and events of children's daily lives and decided to keep hardships and risks as the larger context of the research. Therefore, throughout this thesis, I examine children's agency through children's understanding of hardships and risks in their everyday practices, with relation to their physical space, everyday materials and social relationships. Physical space encompassed the everyday spaces in the village, including the home, neighbourhood, fields, school, jungles and any other place children engaged with. Material objects referred to in the thesis include the everyday mundane objects that were present in the contexts of the children. Social relationships include relationships in the field with family, friends and teachers.

My agenda to look at agency was initially driven more politically (Holloway et al., 2019), with the purpose of 'rebalancing the perceived inequalities of power' (Oswell, 2013, p.38), viewing children as social actors who have rights. For the research, I took a political stance leaning towards social justice with the purpose that it would be able to help challenge current systems. Further, contribute in meaningful ways to engage with inequality, discrimination and marginalisation and amplify the voice of the Adivasi community I worked with. Over the course, along with strengthening the understanding of social justice in research (further detailed in Chapter 8, Section 8.3.2), I developed an understanding of the nuances of the concept of agency, its challenges and new ways of conceptualisation (Holloway et al., 2019).

1.3 Significance of the study

Although a lot of empirical studies are done in the Global South, with a few based in India (Dyson, 2008; Walker, 2016), the concept of agency that is being discussed in the Western discourse on childhood is still a relatively new concept in South Asia, where the central debates are usually around policymaking and human rights (Sen, 2018). In this sense, my research becomes relevant and attempts to fill a gap, building a case to contribute to discourse around children's agency in the non-western contexts (Balagopalan, 2011). Although the study specifically looks at childhood in the context of an Adivasi community in Chhattisgarh, it is one category among the many childhoods across the country. This contributes to the broader understanding of childhood(s) in India. By carrying out this research, I aim to present rich descriptions of children's everyday lives in an Indian context.

1.4 Research aims, objectives and questions

The thesis centres around children's agency in an Adivasi community in India. The overarching research aims that frame this research are:

1. *To understand how children engage with particular hardships and risks in their everyday lives; and*
2. *To explore how children negotiate their agency through physical spaces, everyday materials and social relationships.*

Through engaging with the following objectives, the research attempts to produce knowledge about the lives of children growing up in an Adivasi community in India, experiencing material hardships and ecological risks.

Research objectives:

1. To empirically investigate children's agency in engaging and negotiating with hardships and risks in the everyday settings of home, neighbourhood and school, as they grow up in an Adivasi community.

2. To build a detailed and nuanced picture which explores children's agency in relation

to their physical spaces, material worlds and social relationships.

3. To explore the suitability of ethnographic methods in understanding hardships and risks in the everyday lives of children in Adivasi communities.

4. To make an original theoretical contribution to the literature on childhood, agency and everyday practices.

These objectives will be addressed through the following specific research questions:

- What are Pahari Korwa children's everyday routines and practices? (addressing Objective 1)
- What are children's perceptions of the different hardships and risks in the everyday setting of home, neighborhood and school? (addressing Objectives 1, 2, 3)
- How do children engage and negotiate hardships and risks in the everyday settings of home, neighbourhood and school? (addressing Objectives 1,3)
- How do children negotiate agency in their everyday through relationships, materials and spaces? (addressing Objectives 2, 3, 4)

1.5 About this thesis

This thesis is based on a study where I took an ethnographic approach, to look at children's lives in a village in Sarguja, Chhattisgarh. I do not attempt to make any generalised claims about the children's lives or to represent any singular truth. Through analysis and critical reflections, based on my observations, conversations, interactions and visuals from the field, I attempt to construct a complex picture of their lives.

Photographs

All the photographs in this thesis have been taken over the period of time I spent in the field. In Chapter 2, these photographs are used to illustrate the features of the village that I discuss. Here, the purpose is to aid the readers in visualizing the village and the community I work in. The photographs used in Chapter 5, 6 and 7 form a part of the analysis, along with the text. Here each photograph is discussed in detail, along with its significance and relevance for my

analysis. These photographs were taken by me, but over time the choice of what photographs to take was directed by the children (which I further discuss in Chapter 4, Section 4.6.3 and Chapter 8, Section 8.3.3).

1.6 Structure of the thesis

This thesis is divided into nine chapters, including this Introduction (Chapter 1). In Chapter 2, I discuss the context of the study. I introduce the state and the district where I conducted my research, and the Adivasi community whom I researched, presenting an overview of their physical geography, and socio-economic and cultural landscape.

In Chapter 3, I discuss the relevant literature for the study. I begin by reviewing the different theoretical approaches towards research with childhood, building an argument for the approach I take with the Pahari Korwa community in India. I unpack the theoretical concept of agency, its discussion in childhood studies, and the empirical studies that have made a contribution to the field. I further discuss the relational approach I take towards understanding agency and the relevant literature to understand relationality.

Chapter 4 outlines the questions guiding this study, and the methods employed to answer them. I discuss the approach I take for my research and the practices during my fieldwork. An ethnographic approach was used to conduct fieldwork over a period of seven months. A part of this chapter includes reflections on the process of doing the fieldwork, being a researcher and the ethical considerations and challenges of conducting research in the given context.

Having set out the background, context and literature for the study, in Chapters 5-7 I answer the research questions by exploring children's relational agency through physical spaces, everyday materials and social relationships. In Chapter 5, I focus on children's everyday spaces, their agency in different situations and environments and agency through engagement with risks. I also look at how movement within space, along with their siblings and peers, enabled children's, especially girls' agency in the village. In Chapter 6, I discuss children's agency through the use of selected everyday objects. I discuss children's material agency

within limited resources. In Chapter 7, I explore the relational agency through social relationships in the village, including adults in the family, siblings, friends and teachers. Throughout Chapters 5-7, I repeatedly demonstrate empirically children's agency as relational and not possessed by an individual. In the three chapters, along with the spectrum of agency that children experienced, their agency was also understood through their embodied interactions. Through looking at children's lives with the lens of agency, I link it to larger issues of children's use of space, material entanglements and intersections of gender and caste.

In Chapter 8 of the thesis, I bring together the discussions from the three analytical chapters and the literature to address my research questions. I show how my ethnographic approach explored the relationality in children's everyday lives through their physical spaces, everyday materials and social relationships. I provide rich descriptions of children's lives, discussing the intricacies of how agency is produced (or not) in their context. I further question the dichotomies in childhood studies through discussions around agency and body. In Chapter 9, I conclude, highlighting the empirical and theoretical contributions that the thesis has made along with implications for policy. I also highlight future directions for further research in the area.

Chapter 2. The village context

Introduction

Having introduced the study in Chapter 1, in this chapter, I turn to a description and discussion of the context in which the work takes place. This study aims to explore the everyday lives of children in the social, cultural, political contexts of Chhattisgarh, a region marked by political struggles and resistance from Adivasi (indigenous group, further discussed in Section 2.2) communities attempting to protect their rights to land. In the first section of this chapter, I introduce the general setting where the study was based — the state of Chhattisgarh. I further discuss the history of Adivasis in India and the terminology I use for the study. I provide a background of the Adivasis in the state of Chhattisgarh, with a particular focus on the children. Further in the chapter, I describe the physical location — the village, housing, schools; the people — their livelihood, language, religion, ethnicity, gender. I briefly discuss the welfare schemes provided by the government, in order to understand the different institutions and systems the children were in contact and interact with.

2.1 Chhattisgarh: The locale

Chhattisgarh gained independent statehood within the Indian union in the year 2000. It is located in central India and shares borders with six other Indian states — Uttar Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Orissa, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Jharkhand. The Chhattisgarh Human Development Report (2005) highlights that the northern part of the state has hills, dense forests and water reserves, while the central region is mostly plains, and the south is covered with rich forests. Chhattisgarh is rich in paddy (rice) cultivation and is therefore sometimes referred to as the 'Rice Bowl' of Central India (Chhattisgarh Human Development Report, 2005). It is also rich in natural resources like coal, iron ore and bauxite, and forests that occupy 44 percent of the total area. The forests contain resources such as medicinal plants, fruits, flowers, wood (especially bamboo) which are essential to the livelihood of the Adivasi community who live there.

Even though the state is rich in natural resources, there is a high incidence of poverty among the communities of Chhattisgarh. The Human Development Report (2011) states that as per

the Income Index, the population of Chhattisgarh has one of the lowest standards of living in India. With a majority of the country's indigenous population residing in the region, the proposal for a separate state was made with the intention to cater to this particular group. For a state that was purportedly born to fulfil the needs of indigenous welfare, the development in this region has primarily taken the form of dams, irrigation, industries, power projects but more importantly mineral exploitation, which has led to far-reaching environmental degradation (Bijoy, 2001). With the forest-rich state losing its green cover to mining and other developmental activities, its inhabitants are experiencing displacement, exploitation, increased poverty, lack of employment, migration and law and order problems as the major outcomes of land alienation (George, 2015). These developmental activities mainly serve the interest of the government and industry, taking away land from its inhabitants, which is also their source of livelihood. While in the north (including the district where I worked), the region is battling mining corporations destroying pristine forests, the district of Bastar in south is the epicentre of Maoist[1] (Naxalite) insurgency. It is an armed struggle against the Indian state which has also caused a large number of migrations to neighbouring states (Bhardwaj, n.d.).

The specific locale selected for the study was Sarguja district, located in the northern region of Chhattisgarh. As per the Chhattisgarh Human Development Report (2005) this region is hilly and surrounded by the Hasdeo Arand forests, comprising some of the most pristine and dense tracts of forest, and home to perennial water sources, rare plants and wildlife species.

---

[1] The term *Naxal* derives from the name of the village Naxalbari in West Bengal. The Naxalite movement is a social revolutionary movement started in 1969, backed by the Communist Party of India (CPI M-L). The movement is centred around the struggles of land acquisition and the realisation of constitutional rights. The government views this as a law and order problem and often uses police and military against the marginalised people the movement represents (Pelly and Singh, 2009).

Figure 2.1: Map of Chhattisgarh highlighting Sarguja district (Source: Wikipedia)

2.2 Naming the Adivasi people

In India, Adivasi (translated as 'earliest dwellers') is commonly used as a synonym for the indigenous population. They are also referred to as *vanya jati* (forest community) and *janjati* (folk communities) (UNICEF, 2014). However, in the Indian Constitution, they are referred to by the administrative category of 'Scheduled Tribes' — STs or *anusuchit jana jati*, i.e., indigenous people, who are officially regarded as socially disadvantaged. The Constitution of India recognises 461 ethnic groups as STs, according to the most recent census (Census, 2011). India's Scheduled Tribe population makes up 8.6 percent of the total population of the country, and Chhattisgarh has 30.6 percent Scheduled Tribes (Census, 2011).

Bijoy (2001) writes that a large majority of Adivasis continue to face prejudice and violence, are socially and culturally distanced and at the lowest point in every socio-economic

indicator. Therefore, the government of India has implemented protective measures for the indigenous population, including constitutional and legislative rights, to safeguard their interests and protect them from outsiders (Xaxa, 2011). These rights include providing special administration in tribal areas, referred to as the Fifth and the Sixth Schedules (Articles 244 and 244(a)) under the Indian Constitution, which guarantee protection and autonomy. The constitutional categorisation of Scheduled Tribes, has made these groups eligible for certain affirmative action benefits, such as reserved seats in universities and government jobs (Karlsson, 2000).

2.2.1 Terminology discourse around 'indigenous' and 'Adivasi'

There is a considerable debate now around the usage of the terms tribe, indigenous and Adivasi. In this discussion, I draw from the Indian context and how these terms have been viewed.

Some scholars argue that indigenous communities are groups that have long been separated from the larger Indian society and lived in self-governing communities (Bijoy, 2003). Similarly, another view stresses the uniqueness and distinctiveness of their customs (Singh, 2002; Peffer and Behera, 2005). For some, the distinction was based on Adivasis being outside the Hindu civilisation and not following the Hindu caste system (Xaxa, 2008). Another view claims that the distinction between 'indigenous' and 'non-indigenous' is purely a colonial construction (Karlsson, 2000). It is beyond the scope of this study to discuss in greater depth the historical debate around the origins of these groupings. However, I briefly touch upon the discussions to explain my own use of particular terms.

The term Adivasi has been used in India by scholars for a long time in reference to the differences in physical features, language, customs, religion and social organisation (Xaxa, 2008). The term Adivasi also has political underpinnings (Roy Burman, 2009). At times it has been used to convey the position of exclusion of the Adivasis (Kumar, 2001), at other times it has helped generate focus on their rights (Dietrich, 2000), resistance (Pati, 2001) and movements (Bijoy and Raman, 2003). The term 'tribal', which is also employed, often carries a derogatory connotation, due to its association with the belief that they are backward, especially in urban India, where the term is used to denote people who are primitive, naïve and often residing in remote areas (Skoda, 2005). Despite its negative connotation, Adivasis

now also use the term tribal to identify and define themselves (Xaxa, 2008), assert a collective identity (Karlsson and Subha, 2006) and to convey a sense of 'empowerment'.

How people name (identify) themselves is important to how people define their personal, social and cultural identity. The situation of the indigenous communities in India is extremely heterogeneous and a unified approach may not do justice to all the communities (Roy Burman, 2009). Each region has its own politics related to indigenous terminology. I am aware of the contention around these terms and for the purpose of this study, I paid close attention to how people characterise, identify and refer to themselves and others. Therefore, while writing this thesis, I refer to the community as Adivasi or Pahari Korwa, the terminology that was most often used by community members themselves.

Further, though the group did not identify with the Hindu caste system, in this thesis, I use the term *jati* (caste) and ethnicity interchangeably, as in the village the term *jati* was being used to indicate a *community* who had a shared language, culture and identity. This was similar to Jalais' (2014) observation in her work with the Adivasis in the Sundarbans, where *jati* was being used to 'encompass other collective identities such as religion, regional affiliation and gender' (p.49).

2.3 Adivasis in Chhattisgarh

Chhattisgarh comes under the Fifth Schedule of the Indian Constitution (Xaxa, 2011), a provision for states that have a majority indigenous population. Major tribes in Chhattisgarh are Bhil, Birhor, Damar, Gond, Kharia, Majhi, Munda, Oraon, and Pardhi. Within these tribes, the Government of India has identified some Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs), who inhabit the most 'isolated, remote and difficult areas in small and scattered hamlets' (Government of India, 2015). The Government of India (2015) document also states that most of these vulnerable groups have not attained a significant level of education, economic progress and have low health indices. The PVTGs in Chhattisgarh are Abujh Maria, Baiga, Bharia, Pahari Korwa, Birhor, Kamar and Sahariya.

Peggy Froerer (2015) writes in her account of Chhattisgarh that Adivasi villages in Chhattisgarh are geographically cut off from urban areas by thick jungle and inaccessible

roads, which contribute to the general underdevelopment of the community. People living in these areas are considered among the most socially and economically deprived in the country. Adivasi groups have had a long history of struggle with issues of mining, land alienation, poverty, migration and Naxalite movements (Xaxa, 2011).

My project in Sarguja district was based among a Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group, the Pahari Korwa. The Pahari Korwa's (Hill Korwa) are a small-scale forager-horticulturist society (UN FAO report, 1998). The Pahari Korwas are a subgroup of Korwas residing in the hilly areas of Sarguja (Deogaonkar, 1986). In his book, Deogaonkar writes that they stay in houses that are not in a cluster but spread over the hills, preferring to live in isolation. In the village where my study is located, the village itself is close to the city and not deep inside the hilly forest, it is divided into hamlets, with 30-40 houses in each, mostly belonging to one family. The houses are simple, made of mud and the roof is constructed from baked mud tiles (Rizvi, 1989; Srivastava, 2007). The introduction of forest protection laws by the Government of India in 1952 caused a shift from their traditional nomadic lifestyle reliant on hunting and gathering to settled communities (Rizvi, 1989). They are still heavily dependent on gathered forest products, which are a primary source of food and income, but also practice agriculture on a small scale, usually adjoining forested areas. They mainly grow rice, but maize, millet, pulses, potatoes and some vegetables are also grown. Small numbers of goats, chickens and pigs are reared by families, mostly for personal consumption.

Both men and women wear tattoos, as ornaments and decorations on their arms and legs (Khan, 2018). The Korwas worship their ancestors (Srivastava, 2007) along with worshipping indigenous gods and goddesses, often associated with the forest and hunting. Their festivals are usually centred around the sowing or harvest of certain crops (Rizvi, 1989) where they give offerings to gods and ancestors. Nuclear families are a norm in this community, which are both patriarchal and patrilineal (Deogaonkar, 1986).

2.4 Growing up as an Adivasi in Chhattisgarh

The description above illustrates the socio-political situation in the state. These overarching debates and discourses have often shifted the focus away from the everyday life of Adivasi children, whose lives are nonetheless deeply affected by the larger context. This study

attempted to focus particularly on the lives of children in these communities.

The idea of childhood is not universal, as argued in James et al. (1998), which further opens up the possibility to explore the multiplicity of childhood, considering the social diversity and the influence of context where a child lives. Unlike the Global North, where childhood is seen as a distinct and separate phase from adulthood, in India, the adult's world is not very different from the child's world and the child is not viewed as separate from the larger unit of the family or tribe (Raman, 2000). Therefore, although there is literature available on indigenous societies, there is not much literature documenting the lives and experiences of Adivasi children. The available books, reports and documents about Adivasi children in Chhattisgarh that I found were mostly centred around issues of health and education, and it was difficult to come across a detailed, systematic account of children's lives in particular indigenous communities. There is an urgent need for research among Adivasi children in order to understand the issues that concern them (Xaxa, 2011). I elaborate on this in the following paragraphs.

Adivasi children growing up in Chhattisgarh experience political and industrial intrusion into their daily lives, both directly and indirectly (HAQ, 2010). According to one report (HAQ, 2010), mining in the mineral-rich state is leading to direct impacts such as displacement, increased environmental pollution, degeneration of the quality of life, increase in school dropouts and children entering the workforce. These conditions lead to poverty and the indirect impact of mining is seen with decreased nutrition levels causing malnutrition, increase in diseases due to contamination of water, soil and air, and increased migration due to unstable work opportunities.

Garg (2006) focusses on health as an issue of concern in Chhattisgarh's Adivasi communities. He points out how starvation is widespread in these areas; and there is a high proportion of children who are malnourished, as they do not have access to public healthcare. Malnutrition is so prevalent that it goes unnoticed by members of the community unless it is severe. The National Family Health Survey (NFHS-3, 2005-06) confirms that the infant and child mortality rates remain very high amongst indigenous groups. Adivasi children are also still less likely to receive immunisation.

The Chhattisgarh Human Development Report (2005) states that access to education remains an issue in many districts despite the recent initiatives in literacy and universalisation of primary education. Sarguja has one of the lowest literacy levels in the state, 54.8 percent compared to the state average of 64.7 percent (Census of India, 2001). Sarangapani (2003) reasons that retention in schools is difficult as schooling in these communities is invariably in the language of the dominant community or in English. Adivasi children are unable to sustain interest as they are not familiar with the language being used as a medium of instruction. In remote villages, due to lack of roads and transport facilities, children are unable to receive secondary education. Further, continued exclusion and discrimination within the education system have resulted in dropout rates remaining the highest amongst Scheduled Tribe children compared to other social groups (HAQ, 2010). Despite laws prohibiting discrimination and untouchability of Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Castes, there is discrimination against these communities in access to food, healthcare systems and educational institutions (HAQ, 2010). Mining also increases their vulnerability, making survival and development more precarious as the families are displaced and at times forced to migrate. Displacement also has an impact on children, who need security and stability in their upbringing (HAQ, 2010).

Though development and modernisation are taking place at a growing pace, impacting indigenous culture, identity and way of life, there is little documentation of people's accounts and experiences of the impact of globalisation in India. How children negotiate these changes in their daily lives is even more sparsely documented.

2.5 Physically locating the field

In the following section, I focus on describing the specific locale of the study, the village and the physical space.

2.5.1 The village

The village selected for the study, Aamadara,[2] was located 10 km from Ambikapur city bus station, in the Lundra block of Sarguja district. It is at a distance of 350km from the state

---

[2] The names of villages and people mentioned throughout the thesis are anonymised.

capital, Raipur. It takes an overnight train journey to reach the capital city. The NGO Chaupal, that I contacted and was affiliated with (see Chapter 4, Section 4.4), has been working in the village for many years focussing on the rights of the Adivasi communities, through working on issues related to health, education, employment and forest rights of the Pahari Korwa community. Unlike most of the Pahari Korwa villages that are in dense jungles and inaccessible through roads or public transport, this village had a *pakka* (concrete) road that went through the village. Since the village was close to a city, and the distance from the block headquarters, Lundra, was 20km, there was more influence from the city and urban lifestyles. A tribal rights activist[3] explained, that after India gained independence from the British Empire, forest management was brought under the Government of India. Many Pahari Korwa villages were relocated to the plains as the government felt there was a threat of deforestation from Adivasis, who practiced *jhoom kheti* (shifting agriculture). The then president of the country, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, inaugurated these villages and Aamadara was one such village that was relocated. Initially, only Pahari Korwa families stayed in the village but over a period of time, other communities have been settling there as well.

The village is a 0.5 km walk inside from the main highway. It is spread over a large area in the hilly terrain, distributed in hamlets that are divided mostly based on caste or tribe, with a cluster of houses that form a *para* (hamlet). The families in one *para* of the village are usually related to each other. The houses in a hamlet are clustered together, and one has to walk some distance to reach the next hamlet. The population of the village according to the 2011 census is 967 people, including 476 males and 491 females (including children), and there are 258 households. There were three children on average per household. The village has two Adivasi communities, the Pahari Korwa and the Oraons, there are a few households of the Yadav community (unlike the other two, this is not an Adivasi community) and a couple of Muslim households. There were three hamlets in the village where the Pahari Korwas stay, two where the Oraons stay and one small hamlet each where the Yadav community was settled. There were two Muslim families settled in two of the hamlets in the village.

---

[3] Interview with Gangaram Paikra, an activist and the director of an NGO Chaupal, who works for the rights of the Adivasi community in the Sarguja District of Chhattisgarh. The interview took place in his office, in Ambikapur, on 30th October 2017.

The village has two *anganwadi* centres (for children up to six years old, discussed further in the chapter) two primary schools and one middle school, a fair price shop (under the Public Distribution Scheme, discussed further below) and a local grocery shop. The hamlet I worked in has one of the primary schools, a *panchayat ghar* (village level government office), a middle school and the fair price shop, all next to each other, and all these establishments are not far from the main road. There is also one *anganwadi*, a daily needs shop inside a house, and three functional borewells located in the hamlet. There is a pond about a five minute walk from the hamlet where the children and adults bathe and wash clothes. The children also spend time here catching fish and playing. In summer, when the water in the pond dries and is too dirty for bathing, the villagers go to the well that is not very far from the hamlet. The following are three maps of the hamlet where I was researching.
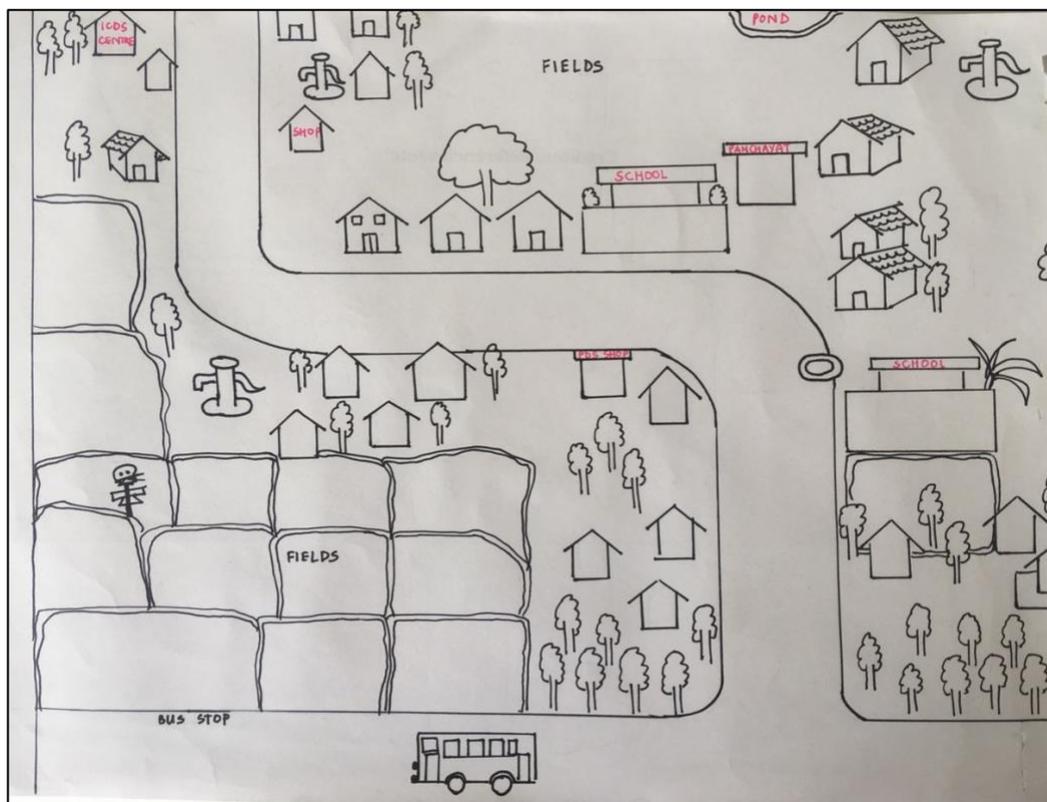
Figure 2.2: Map of the village hamlet [Drawn by Ambika Kapoor]

Figure 2.2 is the first rough sketch of the hamlet I drew initially, which represented the important places in the study. I include the homes of the participants and their neighbours, the schools, the ration shops, the trees, fields and the borewells.

Figure 2.3: Map of the village hamlet [Drawn by Ambika Kapoor]

Figure 2.4: Map of the village hamlet using children's drawings [Drawn by Ambika Kapoor]

The maps in Figure 2.3 and 2.4 were developed during a fellowship[4] in Brazil at the University of Juiz de Fora, as part of a course — Cartography with Children. The exact location of the village was identified using Google Earth Pro and the maps were prepared using Microsoft Word. In the first map, a *croqui* (sketch), I use legends and symbols, to represent houses, trees, roads, fields, schools, shops and borewells in the hamlet. The second is an illustrated map, developed as an attempt towards cartography with children, where I use children's drawings to represent their community, including houses, trees, borewells, ponds. Both maps are not to scale. The aim of the second map was to represent children's spaces through their drawings and visuals. As this were prepared after the fieldwork and it was not possible to return to the field to work with the children to make maps, instead their drawings from other activities were collected and used to reconstruct this map (Figure 2.4).

2.5.2 Housing in the village

The Pahari Korwa houses in the village are made of mud and roofs are made of clay. Some houses have one long room where the family slept and spent time, and a small room on the side they refer to as the *basi ghar* (kitchen or for storing food and clothes). Some houses have one room and a kitchen at the centre and with an *angan* (front yard) outside fenced with wood or shrubs. The adults and children in the family spend most of their time outside the house, in the yard or outside the house under the trees. The third kind of house in the village, mostly among Oraon families, had a courtyard in the centre and three or four rooms surrounding the centre, with one of them being for cattle.

Cooking is done on a *chullah* (clay structure where a wood fire is used for cooking) inside the house, using wood from the jungle. A few Pahari Korwa families have a gas connection in the hamlet under a government scheme (Ujjwala Yojna), but since the price of re-filling the gas cylinder is high, they continue using wood. The houses do not have a water connection, there are three hand pumps in the hamlet from where people got water in buckets and *degchi* (vessels). Most houses do not have a toilet and the ones that do, still preferred open defecation in the jungle as there is shortage of water, or often these toilets are too small or not functional and used as storage.

---

[4] Reverse Sandwich Doctoral Program (PDSR), at the Federal University of Juiz de Fora, (Juiz de Fora, Minas Gerais, Brazil) in collaboration with Professor Jader Janer Moreira Lopes (a Professor in Geographies of Children and Babies) from September to November 2019.

Under a government scheme, the Indira Awaas Yojna (IAY), the government provides affordable concrete housing to the villagers. Each year, a certain number of families are allocated money for the construction of their house. A few families had a concrete structure built, that included a room and a smaller corner inside for a kitchen. All houses were still under construction and the ones that had been completed had no doors or windows. People in the village use these as storage rooms and prefer to live in mud houses as they are cooler in the summer and warm in the winters. Three participants in the study also have a *pakka* (concrete) house being constructed under the scheme, as and when they get the money.

The families have a few hens, goats and oxen as cattle. Most of this livestock helps in ploughing and the hens and eggs are for family consumption, particularly on special occasions including guests visiting, festivals and marriages. One part of the house is for the cattle, and the chickens and goats are in the front yard of the house. The Pahari Korwas consider the bulls sacred and decorate the bulls and goats during festivals with a *tilak* (mark on their forehead) and garlands. These bulls in the village are often given names by the family.

Figure 2.5: Entrance of a house in the village   Figure 2.6: Front yard of a house in the village

2.5.3 The school

The village has two government primary schools and one middle school. The hamlet I researched in has one primary and one middle school, these are close to each other, and to the highway. The primary school I visited functions five days a week from 8 am to 3 pm and it has two classrooms, one for children from classes 1, 2 and 3 (aged between seven, eight and nine) and the other for children of classes 4 and 5 (age group 10 and 11). As the school was

constructed in 2000, the building is in fairly good condition. There is one room at the back where the mid-day meals are prepared, one room where children eat their meals, a borewell, a bathroom, and open space for children to play. There is a boundary wall around the school and a gate they keep closed, preventing people and animals from entering while the school is functioning. At the time of the study, there were 22 children enrolled in the primary school and there were two teachers. Most of the children walked to school and a few who came from the other hamlet cycled to school. One teacher came from the nearby town of Ambikapur and the other was from a village nearby. The medium of education at the school is Hindi. The school follows the state board curriculum and the children are taught Hindi, English, Maths and Environmental Science. For familiarity, some chapters in their Hindi textbook are written in Sargujia, the local language of the region. The teachers attend school regularly, but during the period of my research, one teacher was on a long medical leave due to illness. The teacher from the city came to the school regularly, but the actual time spent teaching was less than the official school hours, and he spent more time with the teachers from the middle school while the children sat in their classes with their books, mostly unsupervised. When the teacher would leave the school premises, the children would start to play. There are regular inspections from the Department of Education to ensure the functioning of the school and teachers also attend regular training. The school celebrates annual festivals and days of national importance, including Independence Day and Republic Day.

There are no private schools in the village and some parents send their children outside the village, to private or missionary schools that they assume are of better quality as they use English as a medium of education. Sriprakash (2016) also observed that 'mushrooming of low fee private English-medium schools in nearby towns meant that rural families who were able to afford highly desirable English instruction often sought out private education' (p.160).

Figure 2.7: Children leaving school

2.6 Lives of people in the community

This section of the chapter discusses the people in the community, both adults and children, their lives, practices and traditions.

2.6.1 The people

As the Pahari Korwa community in Aamadara village is closer to the highway and the city, it is relatively less isolated than other Pahari Korwa villages. The village has electricity, though there are many days when the villagers experienced a shortage of power, sometimes even for a few days. Many families have one mobile phone, a radio and some also have a television. The other families, especially children, watch programmes and movies in the house of the person who has a television. The person to person communication network within the village is strong and news travels fast within the village. People are aware of what was happening in

each other's lives. For instance, when I told one child about my internet device (USB modem) catching fire due to short-circuiting, the entire group of children in the hamlet soon knew about it.

Some families own a bicycle or a motorbike, but all villagers walk or use public transport like buses or shared auto-rickshaws to commute between villages and other cities. Children also walk with their parents and are encouraged to walk, but very young babies are tied on the waist with a cloth. Children in the village walk a lot — from home to school, to fill water, to the shop, sometimes to the jungle with their parents, between fields, from one hamlet to another.

In the community, both men and women drink alcohol. They drink *hadiya*, alcohol made from rice and *mahua,* that is made with *mahua* tree leaves, both prepared at home. They ferment the rice and *mahua*, following a process of distillation to prepare these drinks. The alcohol is a large part of festivals and occasions but is also consumed if the family has money or it is the season for *mahua* flowers. Due to urbanisation and greater access, villagers have also started consuming bottled liquor.

2.6.2 Livelihood

The opportunity for wage employment in the village is limited and people do not have a steady source of income. People's livelihood is based on the forest and its products. The villagers collect wood from the forest to sell and to cook food, *mahua* flowers fetch them money during the months of April and May. Surrounding the village are hills, fields and forests. Over the years, the government cut trees in these forests and during the process of afforestation, these trees have been only replaced by *sal* (Shorea Robusta) and *nilgiri* (Eucalyptus). These trees consume high amounts of water thus impacting the water levels of the region. Further, the medicinal herbs that the villagers use do not grow under these trees, therefore, the community has to go deeper into the jungle for medicinal plants.

The agriculture period is short and is mainly between monsoon and winter (September–December) as the rest of the year there is not enough water. Rice is the major crop cultivated in the village during the monsoon, for a short period in the winter the villagers also grow maize and *arhar* (lentil). During summer, the water levels reduce and there is not enough

water for crops such as rice, sugarcane or maize, therefore, people grow seasonal vegetables. During the summer the prices of some vegetables are high, including tomatoes, and people dry these for consumption in the summer. There are trees in the village — jackfruit, tamarind, mango, mulberry, *mahua* and eucalyptus — that the families and community use for eating and cooking in the summer.

Some families in the hamlet have a small piece of land that they use for cultivation, there are some who work on other people's land. When not working on their fields, the adults in the family work in Indira Awaas Yojna construction sites in the villages or as daily wage labourers in Ambikapur. Three of the participant families own a small piece of farming land, the others rely on construction work in the city. They also have a few *mahua* trees in the jungle, and during *mahua* season sell the flowers and earn money. The women in the community also prepare utensils (plates and cups) with *sal* leaves and sell them in the city.

There is a patch of land at one end of the village, owned by a person from the city, referred to as the *phulwari* (plant nursery) by the villagers. There were a variety of trees in that patch and during my fieldwork, there was construction work taking place there. All the trees were being cut in the *phulwari* and a house was being constructed and a solar panel was being installed. The older boys and men in the village had been employed to cut the trees during that period.

2.6.3 Language

The language of the Pahari Korwa community is Korwai which has Austro-Asiatic language roots.[5] It is part of the Munda languages of India, spoken in central and eastern India, and Bangladesh. Since the village is near the city, this community in the village speaks the language of the dominant group, which in this case included Sahadi (eastern Indo-Aryan language and considered a variety of Hindi) and Chhattisgarhi (an Indo-Aryan language closely related to Awadhi and Bagheli). Korwai borrows many words from Sadri and has lexical similarity.

---

[5] Available from: https://www.ethnologue.com/language/kfp

During my time in the village, initially, I found it challenging to understand what was being said (Chapter 4, Section 4.4). There are some similarities between Hindi (the language I speak) and Sargujia and over the period, I familiarised myself with the frequently used words and was able to understand conversations. At home, my housemate helped me understand recordings that I was unable to follow. Conversations with children were easier, as while communicating with me, they spoke in Hindi.

2.6.4 Religion

The Korwas traditionally worshipped nature and their ancestors. They also believe in *bhoot* (ghosts) and spirits that are warded off by offering chickens and goats. Their religious priest is known as *Baiga* and is respected in the village community. Most of their religious festivals, including *karma* and *navakhani*, are related to agricultural work (Sahu, 1998).

Due to the influence of Hinduism, the community also celebrates Hindu festivals like Holi and Diwali. The trees are an important part of their rituals and they are often included in prayers and auspicious occasions. During weddings, the pandal is made with *sal* trees.

Figure 2.8: A wedding ceremony in the Pahari Korwa community. (L) a group of musicians playing the traditional *ghasiya baja* (drums with horn) and (R) the bride and groom are being carried by their relatives who dance around the *sal* tree

Over a period of time, these communities have been influenced by other organised religions, including Hinduism and Christianity, and started adopting their practices. In the village, many Korwas refer to themselves as Hindus and have started following Shiva, Kali and

Ganesha (Hindu gods and goddesses). The cooks in the school informed me about a few people, possibly a part of a religious organisation, visiting their village and teaching them Hindu prayers and rituals. They are convinced that these are superior to their own traditions and practices, and are influenced by them. All the Oraons in the village and the region have converted to Christianity, largely owing to the presence of missionaries in the area. There is also a church in the village.

2.6.5 Caste and social inequalities

India is a caste conscious society. Religion and caste have an important role to play in the social fabric of the country. The population of the village comprises predominantly of two Adivasi groups — Pahari Korwa (PVTGs) and the Oraons who are socially more advantaged than the Pahari Korwas.

Untouchability is a practice where people, usually of a minority group, are ostracised and segregated from the mainstream by customs and practices. It is a part of the Hindu caste system (Gandhi, 1982). Adivasis are not a part of the traditional Hindu caste system but have their own system of rules and practices of untouchability. Here, people from one community do not drink or eat from the house of another community. The hamlet I was researching in comprised of the Pahari Korwa community, a few Oraon households and one Muslim family. The *sarpanch* (village head) is a Yadav, recognised as OBC (Other Backward Classes) in the Indian constitution, higher up in the hierarchy to the Scheduled Tribes in the village.

The Pahari Korwas, whom I was researching, had a strong sense of identity associated with their community. Even the children in the community understood their identity with respect to the otherness — 'them' and 'us'. They were aware of differences in practices, language and socio-economic status. The children were aware that they could play and eat with children from the Oraon community, but also as soon as a person got married, they were not permitted to eat or drink water from an Oraon household.

There is one Muslim family in the village and their status was very different from others in the village. Even though they are a part of the same village, their position is associated with their religious identity. They are perceived as 'dirty' and 'unclean' by others, and this

understanding of the family also translated to the children who often pointed to their house, referring to it as dirty.

There were instances during my time in the village, conversations with the adults and children that led me to understand the role of politics and state in further reinforcing the dominance of one caste over the other. Through conversations with children on a Sunday afternoon about their routines, one of the participants in my study, Mani, who I introduce later, mentioned that she was tired as they had exercised in the morning. I found out that a group of people come to teach yoga to the villagers every Sunday. Here the purpose of yoga is not purely physical or spiritual. With the present BJP (Bhartiya Janta Party) government and its affiliation with the RSS (*Rashtriya Swayam Sewa Sangh*), a cultural organisation with its ideological and political agenda to spread *Hindutva* (Hindu-ness), aspiring towards a *Hindu Rashtra* (a Hindu nation) as a unified whole (Froerer, 2006), these ideologies were interwoven and propagated through the practices of yoga.

In another instance, the cooks in the school produced a book of prayers given to them by members of a religious community who visited their village to talk about their religion. They asked me if I knew these prayers, adding that they themselves were ignorant and uneducated, as they could not even perform these prayers and rituals. Over a period, people with different religious affiliations visited the Adivasi villages to talk about, propagate and often emphasise their religious superiority. Froerer (2006) during her fieldwork in Chhattisgarh also observed how Hindu nationalism was a visible force in a mixed Hindu/Christian Adivasi village, although there is little data available that documents the precise ways in which Hindu nationalism is introduced in Adivasi communities in India. For my study, these instances were important in piecing together a macro landscape of the different identities within the village and the larger impact of political and religious structures.

2.6.6 Gender

In the village, there are different roles for both men and women. The girls are responsible for household chores including cleaning, cooking, washing clothes, filling water from the borewell, feeding the cattle and other tasks such as cattle grazing and collecting wood. The boys also have chores to perform, including cleaning or fetching water, cattle grazing, accompanying

parents collect wood, but they are not held accountable for these chores in the way that the girls are.

The games and toys children use are different. While the girls collect pieces of utensils, old plastic bottles and caps to play with (often roleplay of cooking in the kitchen), the boys play with cars or trucks made with locally available materials, usually made by their grandparents.

Both boys and girls are sent to school for education but there is more focus on better education for boys. If the parents could afford it, they would first send their boys to a better school outside the village. This is not universally true for all households, there are many who aspire for similar education for their daughters.

The gender expectations are crucial in shaping the activities and practices of children and the work they performed, as also observed by Spittler and Bourdillon (2012) in their edited work on childhoods in Africa. The parents of girls were concerned about their honour and tried to ensure that their daughters would marry within the community. Due to this, they impose restrictions, like not walking in the village alone and not wearing certain clothes that were considered provocative.

There are certain cultural restrictions on girls and women during menstruation. They are confined to one part of the house, do not cook, are restricted from accessing certain water bodies in the village, and have to go far to take a bath. As mentioned by the school cook, from the village, traditionally, these practices are meant to give rest to women during their periods.

2.6.7 Social policies supporting the village

The Government of India provides support through schemes and programs for people from lower socio-economic backgrounds, particularly those living in rural areas. The government schemes functional in Aamadara village, relevant to this study, have been elaborated in this section below. These schemes may or may not be directly discussed in everyday conversations but formed a layer of the context for both children and adults in the village. Information regarding these schemes is also made available to the village through writings on the walls (of homes and institutions) related to different issues being addressed through these

schemes. For instance, there are couplets in Hindi and Sargujia outside the *anganwadi* emphasising the importance of polio drops for children and adequate nutrition for pregnant and lactating mothers. Further, though these provisions and policies from the government exist in the village, they do not always function well and their access to the beneficiary is not always guaranteed.

Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS)

The Integrated Child Development Scheme was introduced in 1975, as a flagship programme of the central government. The aim is to provide comprehensive services addressing the health, nutrition and developmental needs of children under six. The beneficiaries of the scheme are children under six, pregnant and lactating mothers and adolescent girls. The scheme provides nutrition services to children and pregnant and lactating mothers through a supplementary nutrition programme. It assists the health department in immunisation and referral services. It also provides pre-school education for children in the age group of 3 to 6 years (FOCUS Report, 2006). This service is provided through *anganwadi* centres that are run in every village and city across the country. There are two *anganwadis* in the village and one in the hamlet I was researching. There is one Anganwadi worker and one helper who helps the worker in cooking meals. The program functions well in the village and most children in that age group attend the centre.

Figure 2.9: Anganwadi centre in the village

Mid-day meal (MDM) Scheme

The mid-day meal is a school meal program of the government of India that was launched in 1995. The aim of the program is to improve the nutritional status of school-aged children across the country. The program provides a free meal on working days for children in primary and middle government and government-aided local schools. The food menu is based on the local diet of the state. In the primary school children are given rice and lentils along with one dry vegetable and pickle. Initially, in many states including Chhattisgarh, eggs were served as they were considered nutritious and a cheap source of protein. Due to political and religious reasons, some states have stopped serving eggs (Mishra, 2019). The newly elected Indian National Congress government in Chhattisgarh is planning to re-introduce eggs in the MDM Scheme, though this has been met with opposition (Kaiser, E. 2019).

Figure 2.10: Children eating mid-day meal at the primary school in the village

Public Distribution System (PDS)

The Public Distribution System or PDS is an Indian food security system established by the Government of India under the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution. It distributes subsidised food and non-food products to families that are identified to be below

the poverty line. The scheme was launched in its current form in 1947. The food distributed includes food grains such as wheat or rice, lentils, sugar, fuel and oil. This distribution takes place through fair price shops established across the country. The food distributed is as per the local diet of the community. The food distributed in Aamadara village includes 35 kg rice, 2 kg sugar, 1 litre oil, 2 kg black gram per family for a month. The distribution takes place at the local fair price shop. The family member is required to show their ration card to prove that they are below the poverty line to be a beneficiary of this scheme.

Indira Awaas Yojna (IAY)

The IAY is a flagship social welfare programme, created by the Indian government, to provide financial assistance to the weakest sections of the society for construction of houses. With the change in the government at the central level in 2014, the official name is now Pradhan Mantri Gramin Awaas Yojana (PMGAY), but it is still popularly known as Indira Awaas. Under the scheme, the eligible person get financial assistance of Rs.1.2 lakh (1.2 lakh is Rs.1,20,000, approximately £1300) from the government for the construction of a house in rural areas and Rs.12,000 for the construction of toilets. This money is allocated in phases. In the village, most houses being built were half-constructed and families were waiting for the next instalments to continue the work.

Figure 2.11: A house in the village constructed under the Indira Awaas scheme

Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act 2005 (MNREGA)

This is an act that guarantees the 'right to work'. The act aims to enhance livelihood security in rural areas by providing at least 100 days of wage employment in a financial year to every household whose adult members are willing to do unskilled manual work. Road construction in the village was under the MNREGA Act. At the time of the study, a few families were employed under the scheme in construction of wells or roads in different villages.

Pradhan Mantri Ujjawal Yojna

The scheme was launched in 2016 to distribute 50 million Liquid Petroleum Gas (LPG) connections, used as a fuel for cooking food, to women of Below Poverty Line (BPL) families. Though these have been distributed, the use of LPG cylinders still remains low as families are often unaware of how to use it, or the price of refuelling is very high and most are unable to refill it.

2.7 Children's routine and everyday work

The day starts early around 4 or 5 am as most people wake up at the break of dawn, including the children.

In the morning, children help their family members in cleaning the house, washing utensils, fetching water from the borewell and sometimes cooking. Sometimes on a holiday or early morning, the children also accompany them to the jungle to collect wood. After helping with household chores in the morning, the children go to school at 8 am and are there till 3 pm. In school children study, play games with their friends and eat their afternoon meal.

For most children, the school is not far from home, so they walk back. After returning the afternoon usually includes looking after their siblings, walking to a friend's house, watching TV, feeding animals, fetching more water, washing clothes, or helping with cooking. During winter children also go for a bath to the pond as the water is comparatively less cold in the afternoon.

During the cultivation season, the children help in the field and they also help take cattle for grazing in the field or jungle, as the cattle could not be left loose in the fields with the danger

of crops being destroyed by them. Further, during the *mahua* season, children help collect *mahua* flowers. At times, some children have to miss school to perform these activities. Apart from these everyday tasks children sometimes help with plucking or digging vegetables from the field, separating rice from its chaff in a *dheki* (a simple machine), *potai* (applying cow dung and water on the floor or plastering the wall with cow dung and mud). Parents encourage children to contribute to household work and children as young as 6 or 7 years old help with household chores.

There is a difference in the responsibilities based on gender, similar to what Punch (1999) observes in her work in rural Bolivia, that household work in the village is divided according to gender, age and birth order. Girls are more responsible for household chores, while the boys help but are not held responsible for these tasks. Even at school, there are expectations from girls to fill water or apply cow dung on the floor to clean but the boys are not asked to perform these tasks.

During the day, children make time to play, sometimes while working. They have a wide variety of games and use locally available material from the surroundings to make toys and play games. The children make a ball with a plastic bag and string (by heating and sealing it) or stuffing socks with hay and stitching, they use paper and small twigs to make kites, roll tyres or wheels with a stick, make flowers with pencil peels, and play *chaal-goti* with stones. A lot of the play is inspired by what they see at home and the everyday is sometimes enacted through play. Children collect yellow flowers and grind it with stone (crushing and preparing turmeric), they play *ghar-ghar* (house-house) by drawing a house on the ground and performing different chores.

Figure 2.12: Children bathing in the pond and cattle drinking water

Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the locale of the study, both geographical and political, which helps understand the context of children's lives. Further, I have described the specific context of the study, the lives of people and children. I have presented the context of the study as it is important to build an understanding to further enable exploration of agency in relation to children's everyday spaces, material objects and social relationships (Chapters 5, 6 and 7). Therefore, it is important to understand the socio-economic and political climate of a place as it forms a backdrop of the study. I have discussed the impact of urbanisation on the everyday lives of children (Katz, 2004) along with other factors impacting their everyday (Blazek, 2016). Having set out the hardships and risks that children in Chhattisgarh may encounter, the next chapter discusses the literature I use to build an argument for my research, through relationality and interdependencies.

Chapter 3: A theoretical discussion and review of relevant literature towards understanding children's agency

Introduction

This literature review discusses concepts that are relevant to my ethnographic research with children in the Pahari Korwa community. In my study, I explore children's everyday lives, looking at their agency through physical spaces, everyday materials and social relationships. The purpose of the chapter is to explore the importance of agency in the relevant literature on childhood and to add to the ongoing debate that asks critical questions about agency. Following Oswell (2013) I also pose questions such as: is agency individual or collective? Is it human or in relation to non-humans? Do some children have more agency than others?'. Throughout this chapter and the thesis, I think through and respond to these questions.

In section 3.1, I begin with a discussion about the various perspectives on childhood, starting with the developmental view, moving on to the new social studies of childhood. I then explore the relational thinking within childhood studies and finally engage with the post-structural and postcolonial lens to look at the lives of children. Through these engagements, I build an argument for the frameworks I use for my research. The chapter then explores and unpacks the concept of agency as understood within childhood studies, rethinking agency in the light of a post-structural and posthuman turn, exploring children's agency relationally. In the next sections, I bring in the empirical work that uses this concept of agency and makes a contribution towards its understanding. The chapter looks at research that explores the lives of children in different contexts, further understanding the notion of hardships and risks in the context of poverty, gender and caste. In section 3.7, I build a discussion around the role of the everyday to understand the lives of children. Finally, after building an argument for the relationality of children's agency, in section 3.8, the study looks at the role of physical spaces, everyday materials and social relationships to understand and explore children's agency in their everyday lives. These are foundational issues that later inform my analysis and discussions (Chapters 5, 6, 7 and 8) for the thesis.

3.1 Perspectives on childhood: Theoretical frameworks

The first section of this chapter discusses the perspectives on childhood studies. Here I outline and explain the theoretical frameworks I chose for my research with children in the Pahari Korwa community of Chhattisgarh. I discuss these to build a discussion about agency in the next section.

3.1.1 Developmental perspective

Developmental psychology has had a long-standing influence on the understanding of children. Discussions generated in this field during the early 20th century have had a great and even disproportionate influence in shaping our views about children and childhood (Menon and Saraswathi, 2018). Scholars over the years have also located children as products of developmental socialisation. This approach to childhood, grounded in psychology, is based on the idea that rationality is universally a mark of adulthood, and childhood is, therefore, an important stage to study as a biologically determined period, towards the path to adulthood (James and Prout, 2005). An important work in this area was Piaget's (1936) theory of cognitive development, that has majorly influenced the field. The developmental perspective also depicts children as passive products of socialisation and overlooks their active participation and agency in social life (James et a., 1998; James and Prout, 2005; Qvortrup, 1994). I mention this briefly and do not delve into further detail as it forms a basis for understanding other developments and approaches that are relevant for my research.

3.1.2 The new social studies of childhood

Dissatisfied with the approaches where children were seen merely as adults in the making, childhood studies moved towards an interdisciplinary approach (Spyrou, 2018). During the second half of the 20th century, the perspectives on the study of childhood began to change. Aries (1962) was the first to talk about childhood as a socially constructed category. From the mid-1980s, researchers from sociology, anthropology and more recently geography sought to establish a new model based on the view of children as persons with agency and the capacity to influence their social worlds (Matthews, 2007) and the wider world. This theoretical perspective has been referred to as the 'emergent paradigm' (Balagopalan, 2011; James and Prout, 2005) or the 'new' social studies of childhood (James and Prout, 2005; Jenks, 2001;

Qvortrup et al., 1994). It sought to counter the linear, biological models of child development and adult-centred approaches to research with children (James et al., 1998). The new social studies aimed to view children as social actors, and features of this approach are discussed in the following paragraphs. These include viewing children as social actors and social agents, focussing on their present, rather than viewing them as future adults and as individuals interpreting their social world and the world around them.

Children as social actors

The 'new' social studies of childhood stresses the notion of young people as competent social actors to counter the traditional views of seeing them as passive (Holt, 2011). It suggests that children are competent and active participants in social situations. They are social actors capable of perceiving and acting on their situation (James and James, 2004; Mayall, 2002) and like adults, they are also constrained by structures like institutions and practices (James and Prout, 2005). In relation to my research, this approach creates spaces to hear children's voices and consider their constructions and negotiations of hardships and risks, rather than make claims about their socio-economic 'realities' from an adult perspective (Hopkins and Sriprakash, 2016). By viewing children as reflexive social actors (Jenks, 2001), I explore children's lives where they are active, interactive subjects rather than mere products of heredity and environment. This is important for my study as it forms an integral idea in the epistemological and ontological assumptions informing the study, and in shaping the methodology (Chapter 4).

Children as agents

Initially, in the new social studies, the terms social actor and agent were used interchangeably. Mayall (2002, p.21) adds a more nuanced understanding of children's agency by elaborating the distinction between the two. She explains that an 'actor is someone who does something; the agent is someone who does something with other people, and, in so doing, makes things happen, thereby contributing to the wider processes of social and cultural reproduction'. Therefore, to view children as agents gives them a part to play 'in the lives of those around them' and in forming independent 'social relationships and cultures' (James, 2009, p.41 quotes in the original text). Since I explore children's agency in my work, this understanding helps me further build on the role of agency that is produced in interaction with others (Chapter 8).

Been, being and becoming

In the new social studies of childhood, sociologists have argued that children should be understood and researched as social 'beings' (Uprichard, 2008), rather than focussing on children as 'human becomings' (Qvortrup, 1994) or as future outcomes. Uprichard suggests that focussing only on the child as a 'becoming' assumes that children are incompetent and competency will be achieved only when they 'become' adults, and focussing only on the future will discount the present reality and everyday life. Lee (2002) suggests that both children and adults are always in the process of 'being' and 'becoming' with one another and are more or less competent at doing things throughout their lives. Hanson (2017) adds that to contextualise research with children, it is also important to consider the child's history — 'been'. In the context of my study, I explore children's everyday through their perspectives, considering all these three aspects, and viewing children as having a past, as human beings in the present, and future adults in the making.

Interpretive reproduction

Based on his extensive fieldwork with young children in New York and Bologna exploring children's social lives, Corsaro (2005) developed the term interpretive reproduction. Interpretive reproduction sees children as being involved in a reproductive, non-linear, relationship with their cultures. Children do not simply 'imitate' or 'internalise' the world around them; instead, they strive to make sense of it and to participate in it (Corsaro, 2005, p.24). Through my research, I seek to understand the ways in which children interpret and reproduce their social worlds.

The new social studies of childhood as an approach provided me with children's accounts of their lives in the context of hardships and risks. This enabled me to look beyond children only as poor (Hopkins and Sriprakash, 2016) and focus on their agency being produced in the context. However, there are limitations to this approach that I discuss in the next section, further justifying my exploration of a post-structural and materialist framework for the study (Section 3.1.4).

3.1.3 Addressing dichotomy within the new social studies of childhood

The social constructivist focus of the new social studies of childhood has encouraged reflexivity in thinking in scholarly work. Attempts to critique the field and re-theorising have

been limited (Gallacher and Gallagher, 2008; Oswell, 2013; Prout, 2005), and Alanen (2014) argues that there is a need for more engagement in current theoretical debates. As Tisdall and Punch (2012, p.251) claim, the limited theoretical contribution and innovation in childhood studies may partly be due to the field's preoccupation with foundational concepts such as social construction, agency, voice, and participation. James et al. (1998, p.197) have also added that there is a 'need for constant vigilance over the kind of attention we pay to our growing body of knowledge' and this realisation remains as imperative today as it was then.

Further, though the new social studies of childhood forms a useful framework to base my understanding of childhood, as it looks at children having their own voice, as a field it positions itself within modernist sociology and adheres to dichotomies such as adult–child, agency–structure, nature–culture, being–becoming (Prout, 2005). These dualisms have been critiqued for excluding alternate forms of knowledge (Spyrou, 2018). I engage with agency relationally, as viewing children only as social actors puts the onus on individual children, therefore contradicting my claims of agency being produced in relationship (Eßer, 2018). The intention for writing this section is to be able to hold on to some of the strengths of the new social studies of childhood and to rearticulate them in discussions which problematise an individualised understanding of structure and agency (Oswell, 2013). This further encouraged me to look at the relationalities, situating myself within a post-structural and materialist approach (discussed in Section 3.1.4).

3.1.4 A post-structural and materialist turn

To move beyond these dichotomies in my research, I expand my framework to include post-structural theory, which 'questions the universality of knowledge and truth' (Spyrou, 2018, p.22). Post-structuralism reframes knowledge as 'fragmentary, contingent, partial and situated and as an outcome of power relations' (Spyrou, 2018, p.19). Instead of applying singular meaning to the texts, there can be contradictions, inconsistences and ambiguities allowing for multiple realities, recognising the role of the research and researchers in the construction of certain realities. The post-structural critique also questions the authority of ethnographic text, calling for a more critical look and constructing more 'messy texts' that would allow for multiple voices, contradiction and ambiguity (Marcus 1998; Fischer and Abedi, 1990). A post-structural lens aligns well with my approach in the study undertaken to understand children's everyday lives through agency. As it allows the de-centring of the

subject and shift towards a more critical sense of subjectivity (Oswell, 2013), exploring agency as being fractured, constructed and performative, which so far have failed to capture the field's imagination.

As post-structural theorists acknowledge the existence of multiplicity in views, this paves the way to understand the impact of colonialism on childhood in the context of the village. This is another important part of my study, as India is a postcolony and children's everyday lives have been shaped by everyday structures, such as the schools in the village. Here, because of this framework, I am able to look at the socio-cultural aspects of the child's life, which also helps me contextualise and localise the concept of agency (Edmonds, 2019) that I discuss further in this chapter.

I am aware of the critiques around the post-structuralist approach, particularly for not paying attention to the non-humans, as it does not consider the analysis of social relations in terms of objects and materials (Oswell, 2013). Therefore, I take a materialist turn in my approach towards this research. Engaging with actor-network theory (Latour, 2005) allows for a material-semiotic to emerge. This helps comprehend the complex ways in which agency is framed and entangled (Oswell, 2013) through interaction with objects. This materialist turn is discussed in Section 3.8.2.

To understand agency in my study (discussed in Section 3.4 and 3.5), I use both post-structuralist and materialist approaches, to help make my analysis deeper and richer (Chapters 5, 6 and 7).

3.2 Multiple childhoods in India

The notion of 'multiple childhoods' has gained attention in childhood studies as a way to capture the plurality of children's lived experiences, and to emphasise the importance of understanding their contexts (James et al., 1998; Jenks, 1996). As childhood studies scholar Sarada Balagopalan observes:

> The notion of 'multiple childhoods' has produced research that over the
> years denaturalised the assumed universality of concepts like biological

age, adult–child differentiation, notions of childcare and children's work, and the affective investments that adults make in children.

(Balagopalan, 2014, p.12)

For India, there is also another reality, which is the diversity of circumstances in which childhood unfolds in the country (Kumar, 2016). Kumar (2016) further elaborates that this diversity could be a consequence of geography and culture, but could also arise from structural inequality rooted in gender disparity, economic conditions and caste hierarchy. Some children suffer neglect due to the poverty, inequality and marginalisation of their community. Another kind of neglect, the rejection of girls, has been demonstrated in many instances such as female feticide, abandonment by parents, less focus on girls' education, and unequal expectations from boys and girls towards household work (Anandalakshmy, 1994). For instance, like a majority of the countries in the Global South, children's roles in India, especially in the low social income groups, is also that of a contributor to the families' incomes; girls often play a central role in sibling care and domestic labour (Morrow, 2011).

Some scholarship in India has helped to understand the complexity in multiply located childhoods. This includes Kakar's (2009 [1978]) work that reflects upon the cultural variations by analysing the different cultural webs that shape the development of upper-caste Hindu children. Nandy (1987), a political psychologist, in his work drew parallels between characteristics of childhood and of the colonised — both being seen as primitive, immature, naïve and inferior. Additionally, work in the field of cultural anthropology in the Indian context, including the work of Das (2001) and Nieuwenhuys (1994) have focussed on the meanings that children give to the processes that affect them in particular, e.g., around issues of labour. A similar interpretive lens is adopted by Froerer (2011) to describe children's moral reasoning.

Even though in the past two decades there has been a lot of interest from the Global North to understand Indian childhood from a policy perspective, it has not done much to build an understanding around Indian childhoods, which are portrayed as either non-existent or in need of intervention (Nieuwenhuys, 2009). On closer look, it seems clearer that ethnographic work done in the Indian context only serves as an example of difference (Balagopalan, 2018) that supplements or opposes work done with children in the Global North. Therefore, they are seldom used as material for the broader theorisation of childhood.

This discussion helps in situating childhood(s) in India amongst a kaleidoscope of childhoods in the contemporary world. This is an important discussion, as children in the Pahari Korwa community (Chapter 2) are one of many Indian childhoods and not representative of the entire country. In the next section, I discuss employing a postcolonial lens to further help situate childhoods in India.

3.3 Postcolonial lens

India is a postcolony, where colonial structures continue to impact the everyday lives of citizens, including children (Balagopalan, 2011), for instance through formal schools in the Adivasi village. The structural conditions of 'backwardness' in the schools come with a history of social marginalisation for Adivasis, children from minority groups, lower castes and even girls (Bandhopadhyay and Subramaniyam, 2011; Sedwal and Kamat, 2011).

Theorists working on contemporary India have stressed the crucial post-colonial lens, that helps to look at the colonial past to be able to read the present (Balagopalan, 2011). This requires the researcher to look at the countries in the non-West with a framework of multiple modernities, rather than being assumed to lack or as having failed to match the efficiency of the west (further discussed in Chapter 8). Balagopalan (2014) in her ethnographic research with marginalised children in India employed a postcolonial lens to critically rethink a series of questions and discourses around rights and agency. In my ethnographic research with children in the Adivasi community in Chhattisgarh, I employed a postcolonial lens to critically think about the discourse on agency, discussed later in the chapter (Section 3.4). This allowed me to move beyond the binary of universal and normative childhoods to acknowledge the multiplicities in childhood. As a researcher, it helped me make sense of the practices that were local or not; traditional and modern; colonised and colonising within the context and within my understanding (Gupta, 2006).

Categories such as 'indigenous childhoods' (Balagopalan, 2002) and 'rural youth' (Leyshon, 2008) have been recognised as these multiple positions (discussed in the previous section) of being a young person beyond the urban, experienced and educated. These categories, which are being explored through my research, help in highlighting varied experiences and inequalities, the influence of culture and history and how these shape lives (Morarji, 2014).

Through the study, I attempt to recognise the diverse experiences of children in India, going through a transformation led by globalisation and technology (Menon and Saraswathi, 2018), among other things. I go beyond descriptions, focusing on creating an image of 'multiple but equal lives' (Balagopalan, 2018) through exploring the lives of children in a small Indian village. Through the research, I add to the existing knowledge about childhood in India, acknowledging that it requires viewing childhood through diverse disciplinary lenses (Menon and Saraswathi, 2018).

Postcolonial scholar Spivak (1988) in her work 'Can the subaltern speak?' attempts to give voice(s) to the silenced, though she advises caution that it might project the same intent of liberating the 'other' by speaking on their behalf. Through my work with children from socio-economically and politically less privileged communities, I am aware of my positioning, taking care to represent their lives through maintaining reflectivity in my research process (Chapter 4). In support of this argument, Connolly (2008) recognises that critical reflexivity helps to overcome the need to identify 'true' and 'authentic' voices of children and instead recognises the need to take into account the contexts in which these voices are produced.

Having built an argument for the various frameworks I will use, in the next part of the chapter I discuss the concept of agency that I use as a lens to explore children's everyday lives.

3.4 Unpacking agency

This section explores the concept of agency, how it has been understood in the childhood studies literature, the rationale for using this concept, and how I use the concept in my research, as it forms an important part of my research with children in Chhattisgarh.

3.4.1 Rationale for exploring children's agency

Agency has been a key concept in the new social studies of childhood (James and James, 2008). The idea of young people having agency has become a mantra within the social sciences (Katz, 2004). Mizen and Ofusu-Kusi (2013) argue that agency in childhood studies

'is a much used but largely unexamined concept' (p.363). Prout (2005, p.64) also writes that agency has been considered as an 'essential characteristic' of humans that requires little explanation. There have been attempts to define agency. One such definition of agency states it as the 'individual's own capacities, competencies and activities through which they navigate the contexts and positions of their life-worlds fulfilling many economic, social and cultural expectations, while simultaneously charting individual/collective choices and possibilities for their daily and future lives' (Robson et al., 2007, p.135). Through this definition and others 'what is less clear is the degree of agency, the impact of that agency, let alone the nature of that agency' (Bluebond-Langner and Korbin, 2007, p.242).

James and Prout's (2005, p.8) argument that children are 'active in the construction and determination of their own social lives, the lives of those around them and the societies in which they live' formed the founding concept of the new social studies of childhood, and helped establish a new mode of inquiry. But here agency was being attributed rather than being theorised (Oswell, 2013; Vanderbeck, 2008; Ruddick, 2007a, 2007b). Recently a growing number of academics in childhood studies have encouraged to take a critical look at children's agency (Sutterlüty and Tisdall, 2019). This recent flurry of debates has highlighted the lack of a theoretical underpinning for the concept of agency in childhood studies (Oswell, 2016; Esser, 2016; Spyrou, 2018). Further, there are many empirical studies in relation to agency in the realm of the new social studies of childhood, but the term has been used without a very clear definition (Kallio and Häkli, 2013). Oswell's (2013) explanation of this ascription rather than theorisation of agency, indicates that the original interest of agency was less about theorising, but emerged more from politics, where the purpose was to rebalance the power inequalities in research with children (Oswell, 2013), suggesting a need to look at agency through a post-structural lens.

The concept of agency has been developed and used normatively (Tisdall and Punch, 2012). This makes it problematic if children's agency is not aligned with established ideas of childhood, including behaviours and the activities they should perform, or the places and spaces considered appropriate for them (Bordonaro and Payne, 2012). With a theoretical shift towards a relational thinking (discussed in section 3.4.3), it has been argued that children's agency cannot be explored as a child's individual feature. Ideas about children's agency are connected with contexts (Bordonaro 2012). Therefore, there is a need to socio-culturally ground and localise the experience and concept of agency. It is an important concept for the

exploration in my study as there is scope to theorise it through moving beyond the agency versus structure debate (section 3.4.2) and localise the concept of agency, bringing childhood studies at par with the rest of the social sciences. As my research is based in a specific context, it will empirically add to the understanding of agency that is nuanced, dynamic and considers the cultural, structural, environmental and pollical aspects of agency (Sirkko et al., 2019). Through my study, I propose to add illustrations from the field to understand the intricacies of children's agency, contributing to deeper engagement with the concept (Chapters 5, 6 and 7).

3.4.2 Understanding of agency within the new social studies of childhood

Although children's agency has not been thoroughly theorised, its relation to structure has been given importance within the new social studies of childhood (Holloway et al., 2019). According to Qvortrup (2011), the balance between structure and agency is a significant issue in childhood studies. Though the new social studies of childhood paves the way to look at children beyond a developmental perspective, as discussed earlier, there remain problematic ways in which dichotomies have been employed within concepts such as individual and society, being and becoming; agency and structure (Prout, 2005). Traditionally, structure and agency have been looked at as a binary, which does not explain the more nuanced questions concerning agency (Oswell, 2013) such as: what is the depth of agency, what is the type of agency, is agency contextual or relational, is the agency of adults and children same or different, do all children across ages have agency, and do some have more agency than others (Oswell, 2013)? Therefore, as Prout (2005) encourages, instead of looking at it as a dichotomy, it is important to understand the ongoing messy relationship between structure and agency and how sociology contributes to the understanding and relevance of these concepts to children and childhood. An initial attempt to understand agency beyond the dichotomy was made by Giddens (1979) in his account of structuration theory, that suggested that both agency and structure need to be taken in account to explain the social world. As he argued, every act which contributes to the reproduction of a structure is also an act of production and as such may initiate change by altering the structure at the same time as it reproduces it (p. 69). Though his work was not directly related to childhood studies, his ideas were explored within the field. The structure–agency dichotomy raised important questions about children's role in their own socialisation, which has not been acknowledged within the traditional, dominant framework (James, 2009). Giddens tries to move beyond the structure–

agency dichotomy by suggesting that the two concepts are interrelated (Valentine, 2011). Rather than asking whether structures influence people or people influence structures, Giddens articulates how both are constraining and enabling (Leonard, 2015). What emerges out of Giddens' theory of structuration is a human subject who is both knowledgeable of his or her surroundings and reflexive about his or her actions. Much of the empirical research in agency used his work as the basis (Spyrou, 2018)**.** Though in practice studies have largely either favoured structure or agency, rather than exploring the dialectical relations between the two (Holt, 2006). The problem with Giddens' model was that in ways it universalised the structure or individualised and localise agency, therefore, it also reinforced a sense of dualism (Larkins, 2019). A complex, multi-layered understanding of system, that may include materialities, was forgone in favour of agency that was possessed by the isolated individuals (Oswell, 2013).

Another aspect of agency that needs to be examined is its individual nature. Valentine (2011 p.348) argues that childhood studies has relied uncritically on theorising agency that is built on individualistic notions of 'authentic choice or self-directed action'. Oswell (2013) in his book discusses the 'myth of the individual child' which assumes that capacity is attributed to individual traits, where he questions the notion of agency as an individual trait, suggesting that 'agency neither starts nor finishes with any individual agent' (2013 p.269), which forms the basis of my research. He urges childhood studies to explore more relational understandings of agency.

3.4.3 A relational thinking of agency

There is scholarship that does not reject the studying of children as social actors exercising agency but is critical and questions agency being celebrated, uncritically, non-relationally and non-reflectively (Huijsmans, 2011; Ansell, 2009; Hart, 2008; Skelton, 2007; Spyrou, 2011). As some scholars argue, celebrating agency often leads to ignoring the powerful constraints that may limit children's potential (Ansell, 2009; Ridge, 2006).

In another line of thinking about agency, based on the context of post-social theories, it is understood as distributed across the different actors (Oswell, 2016). Relational thinking is not new to social science, and can be traced to Durkheim and to Marx ([1971 p.77] cited in Sherman, 1996) who wrote that 'society does not consist of individuals; it expresses the sum

of connections and relationships in which individuals find themselves'. In childhood studies, a relational thinking aims to challenge the dualisms by exploring relations between different entities, through their interactions. An increase in the number of scholars taking the relational approach signals a critique of the essentialist notion of children's agency and also paves way for a more dynamic and nuanced theorisation of agency as a concept (Spyrou, 2018). Relationality in a post-structuralist approach aims to destabilise and unfix categories, by focussing on the dynamic processes of local and situated practices, that give rise to multiple subject positions that are fluid. In contrast, with materialist thinking, the focus is on extending relationality to the realm of the non-human (Spyrou, 2018). It is to a discussion of this new, emerging thinking about agency that I now turn (Spyrou, 2018, p.128).

Oswell (2013) attempts to account for the material semiotics of children's agency within a post-structuralist frame, allowing for a more nuanced understanding of how agency functions in a variety of contexts. Rethinking children's agency, he suggests it is distributed, partial, networked, assembled, and relative, and does not reside with the individual child. He writes, agency is:

> …not as located within the individual child faced against social structure, but as itself distributed across a network of agents or actors, both human and nonhuman.

(Oswell, 2013, p.69)

Here the networks of agents and actors are not only humans but non-humans, including materials and spaces. From a relational perspective, both children and adults live their lives within a web of interdependent relationships — with other humans, and with spaces and materials (Prout, 2005, 2011; Lehmann and Sanders, 2014). These relationships provide 'opportunities and constraints in which agency is enacted and shaped' (Leonard, 2015). Eßer (2016) also offers an alternative view on agency, where he argues that agency does not pre-exist, and isn't possessed by individuals but can be understood through relationships, as it 'comes about' in the context of various social interactions (Eßer, 2016, p.61). He suggests that relational theories make visible the social by revealing 'the materiality and messiness of agency as well as its intersectionality' (p.8). This focus on relational ontologies makes a shift from the independent, knowledgeable and reflexive individual towards the networks and connections (with both human and non-human) that make up the social world.

Within childhood studies, there have been efforts towards engaging in more nuanced discussions about agency. Leonard (2016) productively attempts to move beyond the structure-agency dualism through the concept of generagency. This concept is a useful tool in examining the relationality and interdependence between two key concepts – generation and agency. He argues, that to understand children's agency we need to recognise its dynamism which in derived from its situatedness within relationships of power and generation. Tisdall and Punch (2012) discuss the complexities and ambiguities of agency arguing that:

> 'children and young people's agency should certainly be a contested and scrutinised concept rather than one which is taken-for-granted, unproblematised or assumed inherently to be positive, and desired by all children and young people'.

> Tisdall and Punch (2012, p.256)

Further, Valentine (2011) offer a critical view of looking at children's agency, by accounting for diverse ways in which children express. She writes:

> 'Given the conventional emphasis of agency on articulation, rationality and strategy, a failure to incorporate a critical, embodied, engendered, material account of agency into childhood studies risks reinscribing a model in which privileged children will be accorded more agency than those who do not display rationality and choice in conventional ways'.

> Valentine (2011, p.355)

This discussion helps to move away from the idea of whether or not children have agency to 'when', 'where' and 'how' children's agency takes place (Oswell, 2013; Prout, 2005, p.64; James, 2010). What does agency mean to different groups of children and can children choose to not assert their agency (Tisdall and Punch, 2012)? This debate also asks a critical question on agency: 'which children are able to exercise their agency and under what circumstances'? (Spyrou, 2018, p.126). In section 3.5, I examine empirical work that explores these debates. This is an important discussion for my research, as I explore agency with children in an Adivasi community in India who are a relatively marginalised group (Chapter 2). Relationality, then, can be seen as the larger, overall framework from where different entities become entangled and come to affect one another, which becomes the principal means through which we attempt to understand and make sense of the worlds which unfold in front of us (Spyrou, 2018).

Relationality also helps move beyond the romanticised dichotomy where the adult represents the conservative structures and the children act rebellious (Oswell, **2018,** Bühler-Niederberger and Schwittek, 2014). Instead agency is related to the social contexts and the childhoods in these contexts (Eßer, 2016, p.125).

Having considered these arguments, for the purpose of this research, I work with these definitions that offer a broader meaning to agency, suggesting that agency is not individual, but relational, situated in a context and is a continuum (Fuchs, 2001). I acknowledge the relationality and inter-dependence of agency (Abebe, 2019), exploring how children's agency is enabled (or not) through their networks and alliances with other actors, including other children, adults, environment, spaces and materials (Christensen and Mikkelsen, 2011).

3.5 Empirical studies: exploring different kinds of children's agency

This section discusses different research, with some of these engaging in recent arguments, that have looked at complex ways in which agency is explored beyond the structure and agency dichotomy, discussing the types of agency, depth of agency and agency as relational. My work does not directly align with this research, but I discuss it here as it has contributed to the understanding of agency in the field of childhood studies, and has helped me look at agency beyond structure.

Bordonaro and Payne (2012, p.366) use the term 'ambiguous agency' to refer to examples of agency that are in contrast to:

> 'established and normative conceptions childhood and moral and social ideals about the kind of behaviour young people should demonstrate, the activities they should be engaged in, and the spaces and places deemed appropriate for them to inhabit'.
>
> Bordonaro and Payne (2012, p.366)

Such agency is experienced in the case of a street child, child soldier or sex worker. A critique for this work elaborates that those who do not reflect normative models of childhood, and rupture notions of innocent childhoods, are labelled as having constrained or ambiguous agency (Holloway et al., 2019). For such childhoods, the limits to their agency are based on

moral judgements. In my work, I discuss constraints in the form of socio-economic and political limitations, but do not foreclose children's opportunities to respond or act (Holloway et al., 2019).

Based on her work with child domestic workers in Tanzania, Klocker (2007), theorises children's agency in presence of the constraints they experience in their daily lives, in this case having to work for long hours for minimum or low wages. Here Klocker discusses the notion of 'thick' and 'thin' agency' (Klocker, 2007). Thin agency refers to 'decisions and everyday actions that are carried out within highly restrictive contexts characterized by few viable alternatives' while thick agency refers to instances when one is confronted with 'a broad range of options' (p.85). For Klocker (2007), factors such as age, poverty, gender, and ethnicity can have an influence on a person's choice and agency, making it thick or thin. In a critique of her work, Eßer et al. (2016) state that agency is still theorised as an attribute held by an individual — even though agency is affected by relationships, it is not seen as being produced relationally.

Payne (2012) proposes the concept of 'everyday agency', drawing on her ethnographic research with 'child-headed households' in Zambia. She illustrates what this everyday agency looks like from the children's viewpoint when we look beyond existing notions of their agency as illustrative of resilience and competency. Though they act as carers, take up roles and responsibilities at home, contribute economically and operate in so-called vulnerable situations, from their own points of view their agency is a part of everyday life rather than something extraordinary. This allows us to view their agency as exercised by children themselves and not from an adult perspective (Payne, 2012).

The concepts discussed above are important for my research as there are structural and environmental constraints in the context being explored in Chhattisgarh. Though the way agency is explored in this literature 'privileges individual capabilities, especially the capacity of individuals to resist inequality and unreasonable cultural expectations' (Durham, 2008, p.152) and romanticises the construction of young children as resistant and rebellious. To move the focus beyond the individual, I further explore studies that emphasise the relationality of agency.

3.5.1 Studies exploring agency relationally

Punch's (2001, 2015) work in rural Bolivia highlights the role of 'negotiated interdependency' in understanding children's positions as social actors. It is the interdependent relationship between children and parents, and children and other children, including siblings, which are negotiated and re-negotiated over a period of time (Punch, 2015). The term emphasises the various structural constraints like poverty, cash limited economy (Punch, 2016) and cultural expectations from the child including household tasks, and also how children assert their agency within such limitations, balancing both household needs and their own (Punch, 2014). Along similar lines to Alanen and Mayall (2001), she further focuses on the relationality of the generational order, considering the relation between children–adults, and between children–children in terms of interdependencies rather than dependency. The children negotiated their position within the generational order, both in child–adult and sibling relations. According to Buhler-Niederberger and Schwittek (2014), these interdependencies are important as they helped to protect individuals against economic and social instability. As in the Global South, there are fewer welfare benefits and a strong sense of family responsibilities (Mills and Blossfeld, 2005). The relationality of children's agency can also be seen in Vanderbeck's (2007) work with 'street children' in Cape Town, South Africa, which challenges the common notion that children on the street are isolated. According to his observations, the children are positioned relationally in between the street, their home communities and their family lives, with some relations being protective, other coercive and problematic.

The stories from the Young Lives study (Crivello et al., 2014) illustrate the complexities of children's agency, focussing on its social nature. It discusses how agency is not an individual trait a child possesses, rather it is cultivated as a social process, closely interlinked with family, friendships and wider social networks. The study revealed that children weigh their decisions based on their relationships, obligations and changing household circumstances. In many instances, they were seen as vital support to families, seeking to protect their parents from poverty (Crivello et al., 2014). Children function within 'constrained circumstances and limited choice, and their agency and decision-making need to be situated within the contexts of their social worlds' (Crivello et al., 2014, p.111).

Jeffrey (2012) argues that departing from the idea of resistance, resourcefulness has been seen as another concept that has emerged as a form of agency and is a common theme in recent studies (Dyson, 2014; Katz, 2004; Abebe, 2007). Jane Dyson (2014) in her research with girls in the Indian Himalayas, discusses how girls challenged the notions of appropriate femininity. They achieve this by playing rough games and talking about sexuality while collecting lichen in the forests, in contrast to the behaviour expected of them in the presence of adults. Unlike other studies of agency, Dyson (2014) provides illustrations of how children used compliance with social norms to strengthen their position in the community which she documents as 'active quiescence'. Tatek Abebe (2007) offers evidence from his study based in Ethiopia, where children have negotiated with shifting rural livelihoods by developing skills in domestic work and trade. In Katz's (2004) study of globalisation, social reproduction and intergenerational relations in Sudan, along with resistance and rupture, resourcefulness was often associated with children's ability to simply survive. Her work draws from feminist thinking and rejects the analyses that favour either structure or agency, instead exploring agency in the context of multiple structures (Katz, 1991, p.505).

These studies also contribute to the contestation of looking at children's agency as fixed and individual. Punch and Tisdall (2012) emphasise its relational nature across different contexts, which I use to explore in the study through spaces, materials and relationships, discussed in the following sections. Concepts and related empirical work such as 'negotiated interdependencies' (Punch 2001, 2002), materiality (Bacon, 2012) generationing (Alanen and Mayall 2001), spatiality (Holloway and Valentine, 2000a) and resourcefulness (Katz, 2004 and Dyson, 2008; Abebe, 2007) provide perspectives for a nuanced understanding of children while recognising them as active participants in their lives. In the analytical Chapters 5, 6 and 7, these concepts are explored and understood in the context of social and economic constraints (Redmond, 2009), among others.

3.6 Poverty, gender, caste and agency in children's everyday settings

The relevance of discussing this section for the literature review was to highlight the specific context of the children in the village, which I further explore in Chapters 5, 6 and 7. As discussed in Chapter 2, the study is based in a village in India among an indigenous community scheduled as one of the most vulnerable, referred to as PVTGs or Particularly

Vulnerable Tribal Groups (Government of India, 2019). These vulnerabilities are an outcome of structural inequalities. The discussion of research in this section explores these inequalities, particularly in the context of children's everyday lives. I employ this socio-economic and political lens later in the study, observing the impact of material resources, caste, local politics and gender. Even as I discuss inequalities, I do not view children's everyday lives as inherently deprived or lacking.

Popular images of children in difficult circumstances include extreme conditions like being in situations of violence, conflict or severe poverty or being orphans or victims of abuse (Crivello and Boyden, 2012). Crivello and Boyden (2012, p.380) note that the situations may be extreme but hardships (or risks) are not simply a feature of 'extraordinary' childhoods and circumstances but also an integral part of children's everyday lives in more 'ordinary' circumstances. For the purpose of the study, hardships here refers to different aspects of a child's life. This includes factors such as poverty, caste and gender in relation to their everyday life experiences (further discussed in Chapter 3) that either singly or in combination have a challenging impact on children (Howard et al., 1999).

Children experience poverty in different ways to adults. Child poverty measures cannot only be equated with general poverty assessments, which often focus solely on income levels but must take into consideration access to basic social services, especially nutrition, water, sanitation, shelter, education and information (UNICEF, 2007, p.1). In children's context, poverty has been more specifically described as 'deprivation of the material, spiritual and emotional resources needed [for children] to survive, develop and thrive, leaving them unable to enjoy their rights, achieve their full potential or participate as full and equal members of society' (UNICEF, 2005, p.18). As Bourdillion and Boyden (2014) highlight, poverty is not only about what people may or may not have but arises from how individuals are treated within structures and systems. Along with having an impact on health and education, poverty also has an impact on a child's social life. Children can be deprived by direct exclusion, exclusion by stigmatisation, or exclusion by the loss of opportunities (Bourdillion and Boyden, 2014, p.7-8). Social structures play an important role in this experience (Boyden and Mann, 2005) as children from indigenous communities face far more social exclusion, compared to other groups (Bhatty et al., 2014). This is an important consideration to explore agency in the context of my study where the resources were constrained.

Another study (Chi, 2010) indicates how Vietnamese children from ethnic minorities can be severely disadvantaged in the school system, sometimes resulting in their leaving early. It reveals that the way in which poverty undermines an individual's social interactions, which can be as important to children as food or other commodities (Boyden and Mann, 2005). Even though poverty is not the focus, this study is based in a socio-economically weaker community where the lack of monetary and material resources is a reality of children's lives. Therefore, I will explore how it contributes to children's everyday situations of hardships, further looking at how agency is being produced and performed in this context (Chapter 6, Section, 6.7). In the studies around agency from the Global South, there are differences that emerge due to these material inequalities and in social expectations of children's intergenerational responsibility (Tisdall and Punch, 2012), that were also observed in my study (Chapter 7).

Agency is a useful lens to explore the impact of hardships, especially in the context of a particularly vulnerable marginalised community in a country where people struggle to get equal access to resources. It is also vital to understand how the community and the children in that community interact with each other and the environment to work their way through these limited resources.

Dyson (2014) in her work in Bemni village, Uttarakhand, highlights young people's rich relationship with the forests. It was a means for resources and developing a sense of competence for young people. It cultivated a sense of their own capacity for work and identity through their tactile use of the environment and its materials, for example, the leaves, branches, trees and streams. Her work reflected an agency where young people are only able to select from a narrow range of resources, which are further shaped by broader structures (Dyson 2008). Thus, it is important to consider and be sensitive to young people's context — the culture, politics and economy that shape their agency.

Discourse in the field of childhood studies encourages us to ask questions such as whether there are different kinds of agency for different social groups, by attributing 'agency' to girls as a distinct social group (Crivello et al., 2012) where they are considered both powerful and extremely vulnerable. Crivello et al.'s (2012) work with young people suggests that gender inequalities intertwine with other sources of disadvantage, such as poverty, and influence children's choices and decisions in their everyday lives. In the Young Lives data from India

and Vietnam, both cultures revered the birth of a son and there was gender bias, favouring boys. In the study, the girls were more likely to leave school early (Pells, 2011) and invested more time doing household chores compared to boys. The gender gap was also experienced through gender processes that shaped their identities, interpersonal relations, and everyday experiences (Crivello et al., 2012). Gender is an important aspect, as gender inequalities have an implication for my study. In various instances, there were differences observed in the roles and responsibilities of girls and boys in the village, as discussed in further chapters. All participants in the study were girls, since there were few boys present in the village. Families who could afford to pay would first send their boys to study in schools outside the village, which they considered better.

This is an important discussion, as these studies view children as social actors, valuing children's active role in their lives, recognise social and material boundaries, constructions and institutions which shape the experiences of children. But how these structures contribute to producing (or not) agency is less explored. In this section, through relevant literature, I discuss the intersections of caste, gender and poverty in children's everyday lives, that I also encounter in my work. The work I discuss in this section has been established within the field, and a discussion of gender, caste and poverty through my research (Chapter 8) will be an important contribution to push the boundaries of knowledge in the area.

3.7 Examining agency in the everyday

The new social studies of childhood has reached a stage where its patterns of inquiry need to be examined (James, 2010; Prout, 2011; Spyrou, 2018), moving beyond concepts that are fixed and static, with dichotomies and which lack awareness of the cultural and contextual variations (Punch and Tisdall, 2012). Similar to the discussion in the previous section (3.1.4 and 3.3) of this chapter, Matthew (2003 p.4) also expresses the need to explore alternative contemporary theories, based on post-structural, post-feminist and post-modern views, through the values of embodiment and identity that provide a less structured lens. Horton and Kraftl's (2006a) discussions take this approach further as they propose to look at children and childhood through the elements of everydayness, material, emotion, affect, embodied interaction and spacings. This is an important way of engaging for my study that explores children's agency in hardships and risks in their everyday lives. In the following paragraphs,

I discuss the elements that I found important for the understanding of the everyday, which included everyday routine practices, bodily practices and language.

3.7.1 Everydayness

According to Chaney, (2002, p. 10) everydayness is 'the forms of life we routinely consider unremarkable and thus take for granted'. A diverse body of work has explored its significance. A lot of what we do in the everyday such as going to work, watching television, buying groceries, having conversations, not having conversations (Marcus, 1989) seems mundane and obvious. Hence it is thought of as insignificant or not worthy of thinking or writing about (Horton and Kraftl, 2006a). Therefore, a lot remains unrecorded and unexamined.

More recently, researchers have engaged with children's everyday (Beazley, 2003; Tucker, 2003; Gallacher, 2005; Christensen, 2004), focussing on the routine mundane activities that children do (or don't). At present, there is more focus on observing specifics, which may divert or narrow the observations. The observations of the everyday take their own time, therefore, there is a need to slow down (Massey, 2002) the process of observing. This has an implication on my work with children in the village, which I explore in Chapter 4. Within this everyday there are materialities, practices, embodied interactions and spacing that form a more nuanced way of exploring children's everyday.

Practices are a fundamental tool in the understanding of the everyday. Attention to practice makes us realise that we are always 'in the midst of doing' (Seigworth, 2000, p. 239); that whatever is going on, 'the body is always in motion, always in action' (Harrison, 2000, p. 503); that 'movements, gestures, practices' never cease (Sheringham, 2000, p. 187). There have been studies to explore children's everyday practices (Woodhead, 1999; Vanderbeck and Johnson, 2000; Gordon et al., 2003) but the precise nature of these doings and the complexities is often underexplored. In the research, embodied practices are important to the account I develop.

Bodily practices (such as eating, sleeping, washing, and presenting ourselves to others) define us and dominate our everyday lives (Valentine, 1999). How a person conducts him/herself, including the habitual bodily practices, in particular 'a way of walking, a tilt of

the head, facial expressions, ways of sitting' (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 87), are examples of bodily practices. Bodies are seen as a site of power, either cultural, social or political. They are always in flux, ongoing, being, and always becoming. Prout (2002, p.2) notes that 'bodies are interwoven with other aspects of the material environment – artefacts, machines and technologies'. Coole and Frost (2010, pp.7-8) further argue that humans, as embodied, material entities (including researchers) do not passively stand apart and make sense, instead, they participate in the dynamic processes of materialisation where both the organic and inorganic nature plays an important and agentic role. For this study, bodies, bodily practices and embodied interactions are a useful tool for understanding children's everyday through the materials, spaces, and relationships. Prout (2002, p.2) supports this argument by adding that 'children understand and perform their bodies in ways often different from adults; entering into their world is thus an essential step in an adequate sociology of childhood bodies'. It was an important aspect of my research and I take up the discussion of the body further in Chapter 8.

Children's **talk and language** is another aspect that needs to be paid attention to. Listening to children, along with observing what they are doing can provide important insight into children's perspectives. Christensen urges the researcher to pay attention to children's cultures of communication. This includes paying attention to their 'language use, their conceptual meanings and their actions to piece together a picture of the social interactions and the connections between people through getting to know about different codes of conduct and communication' (Christensen, 2004, p.170). Rosen (2015) discusses children's screams, not seeing them as mere noise but arguing that children's embodied vocal production has meaning. She views it as 'an important political expression, even in the limited but important sense of mattering and affecting those who produce and sustain the vocal production' (Rosen, 2015, p.49).

Through ethnographic research, I attempt to witness children's everyday through these elements, with a methodological slowness that Massey (2002) emphasizes, taking time to think. I elaborate on this further in Chapter 4.

3.8 Agency through spaces, materials and relationships

The studies explored above discuss how relationships, resources, materials and spaces have an influence on children's everyday agency, whether this agency is explored through cooperation, resourcefulness, resistance or negotiations. There is a focus on the context, different structures and relationships that make children's agency 'thick' or 'thin' (Klocker, 2007, p. 85). Having discussed the empirical research above that explore aspects of children's agencies, here I extend the discussion about the relationality of agency. Thinking relationally in childhood studies will help to move beyond claims to truth, often represented through the notions of 'children's perspective' or 'children's voice' (Samuelsson et al., 2015). Feminist and post-structuralist work emphasises the powerful, relational and performative nature of the subject (Gallacher and Gallagher, 2008), not viewing them as pre-existing and agentic beings. Their agency emerges through social practices within time and space and specific regimes of power, challenging earlier conceptions of agency (Holloway et al., 2019). As Barad (2007, p.170) argues, 'bodies do not simply take their place in the world…rather "environments" and "bodies" are intra-actively constituted'. Thus it suggests that space is not fixed, objects are not passive and bodies are not waiting to be moved (Tylor, 2013). Throughout the thesis, I draw together from the different interdisciplinary threads (Section 3.1), to demonstrate the interaction and relationalities between objects, spaces and bodies. The following sections discuss the various studies that have explored these relationalities.

3.8.1 Physical space

Space is complex and multiple and therefore to talk of 'space' (or 'a space') is, perhaps, to not acknowledge 'the unutterable complexity of the spatial' (Massey, 1998, p. 126), and the 'complexity, contradictoriness and contingency' of particular 'spaces' (Renold, 2001, p. 372). At any given time, there will be more than one thing taking place in 'a space' children occupy. There is a need to acknowledge that, and to detail the material, practical, embodied, affectual complexities of the 'spaces' which they occupy (Horton and Kraftl, 2006a).

Empirical work with children's everyday lives gives an insight into space. In her study with child workers in Uganda, Van Blerk (2006), argues that children's capacity to establish themselves in informal work was linked to their sense of spatial security. Van Der Bergt's (2015) work with both rural and urban youth in Sweden elaborates that children exercised

agency by taking precautions or spatial avoidance in spaces they found risky. In their research with young girls, Christensen and Mikkelsen (2013) argue that the young girls' agency came through movement in everyday spaces. Scholars have observed varying agency in different spaces, Valentine (2004) notes that home is a significant place to perform socio-spatial competence by doing household chores. Punch (2004, 2007) observes that children may have more negotiating power at home, where they were more involved with parents in the household, comparing it with a more constrained relationship with the teachers at school, where their 'negotiating power' is diminished. Mayall also reiterates that home is 'the main site where children's moral agency is expected and enacted' and school is a space where children internalise ideas that 'adults know best' (2002, pp. 110-111).

As I explore children's agency in Chapter 5, I use physical space as the lens for relationality. I do not use space as an object of study but as an interpretive lens (Hackett et al., 2015). Throughout the chapter, I recognise the role of space in enhancing the understandings of children's everyday experiences. In this thesis, I frame the understanding of space as dynamic, socially constructed and political (Lefebvre, 1991; Massey, 2005; Soja, 1996). A spatial lens will help to recognise the non-linearity of children's lives and further understand how children's practices are embedded within the 'more-than-social' contexts (Hackett et al., 2015).

3.8.2 Everyday materials

An important part of the everyday is the material, even the smallest, most 'humdrum' matters profoundly (Horton and Kraftl, 2006a). An initial discussion about materiality comes through the Actor-Network Theory (ANT). Latour (2005) discussed how everything in the social and natural worlds exists in a network of relationships with each other to make meaning. These networks of material (both human and non-human) and semiotics are potentially transient, existing in a constant making and re-making (Latour, 2005). As the analysis progressed, I found a closely related concept — assemblages (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987) useful for my work (discussed in Chapter 8, Section 8.2.1).

A materialistic turn (discussed in Section 3.1.4) helps to move beyond dualism, as it encompasses all kinds of relationalities, beyond the humans (Barad, 2007). It offers an understanding of agency, suggesting that 'agency is not an attribute but the ongoing

reconfiguring of the world. The universe is agential intra-activity in its becoming' (Barad 2007, p.141) (discussed theoretically and empirically in Chapter 7). An attention to material things make us realise the complex and contingent materialities that contextualise individual things, and us, in practice; the ongoing 'active, productive, and continual weaving of bits and pieces [from which] we emerge' (Harrison, 2000, p. 502) and the meanings and emotions attached to these. This approach suggests that all matter (both human and non-human) should be studied not in terms of what it is but what it does, viewing everything as an active participant.

In the exploration of children's interdependence with other individuals, some post-structural theories have extended this interdependence to materiality and to the 'more-than social' relations through which the children exercise agency (Kraftl, 2013; Lee, 2001, 2002; Oswell, 2013; Prout, 2005). Lee suggests that material objects serve as an extension to children's capacities (Lee, 2002, 2001). Oswell (2013) and Lee's (2001) work on the materiality of childhoods provides an insight into the ways in which children access material objects (or lack them).

A discourse around children's agency should encompass material resources as they shape children's everyday experience, especially in low-income or resource-lacking settings (Ridge, 2002). Studies carried out in contexts of poverty show how situations and cultural practices may shape the understanding of children's role expectations in the family. The Young Lives study (Crivello et al., 2014) observed that contributing economically to their household made children exercise their agency through feeling responsible. Another study on children's poverty (Ridge, 2002) demonstrates how children engage with their lives and their situations, devising ways of participating as and when they can, and utilising alternative strategies of living and engaging socially through work and play. In Punch's work (2002) children used materials from their everyday environment (leaves, cans, rubber tyres, for example) to ingeniously make toys and play material (Chapter 6, Section 6.4). Blazek (2016) illustrates how children encounter things in their everyday not in isolation or as something that bear meaning, but emphasises the embodied interaction with everyday things (further discussed in Chapter 6 and 8).

In my discussion on children's relations with the materials in Chapter 6, I am informed by a post-human theorisation of matter (Barad, 2007), where I position human along with the non-

humans and explore their interaction. Similar to the discussion in section 3.8.1 on space, the material objects here are not the focus of my study but being used as an interpretive lens, to understand children's agency.

3.8.3 Social relationships

In research, children's agency has been explored through the lens of social relationships, that have looked at compliance, negotiations and defiance. Dyson's (2014) work focusses on the importance of social relationships, particularly friendships, through which children express their agency in the contemporary Global South. In her research with young girls in the Indian Himalayas, Dyson (2008) argues that young people's agency was not about asserting autonomy but was focussed on building relationships and mutual dependence with each other and their parents, which has also been observed and explored through my research (Chapter 7).

Abebe (2019) critically demonstrates how agency is intersected by 'experience, societal expectations, gender, geography, stage of childhood, and social maturity' (p.1). He illustrates how everyday practices were defined in relation to members of the family and community.

Punch (2002) and Abebe (2019) discuss the role children play in caring for siblings. Studies on relationships have also looked at children as 'active co-participants in care' within their families (Brannen et al., 2000, p. 195). Exploring children's landscapes of care helps to challenge the generational hierarchies and a construction of childhood that is viewed as innocent (Evans, 2012). This is an important discussion for my work as the children in my research actively engaged in sibling care.

Hammersley (2016) cautions that simply modelling agency where the children are seen to 'exercise autonomous will' will not be able to capture the complex contexts and structures that enable (or not) their agency. In Chapter 7, I use a framework of interdependence and relationality and observe children's social and cultural interactions and everyday practices in the field, within the larger ecological context of children's lives, to build an understanding of agency as relational.

Through Chapters 5,6 and 7 I attempt to 'decentre' the child (Spyrou, 2018), to facilitate a relational understanding of childhood across spaces, with different materials, and within different relationships. In doing so, I aim to contribute to the debate of how to move forward in theorising children's agency from a relational perspective (Abebe, 2019).

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have discussed the foundational concepts that I use later to inform my analysis and discussions. This literature review builds an argument for the post-structural, materialistic and relational framework I use for the study, to explore children's agency. I discuss various approaches towards exploring children's agency. In the new social studies of childhood, the concern with agency's relation to structure has been considered important (Holloway et al., 2019). Even though this remains a large part of the field, studies have largely favoured either structure or agency rather than exploring them relationally. The studies discussed in this chapter do not favour either structure or agency, but take the discussion further to exploring children's depth of agency, types of agency and relationality of agency.

Building 'an understanding of agency which rests on the knowledgeable, self-reflexive and autonomous individual child finds its conceptual limits in light of social life's relationality, connectedness and interdependence' (Spyrou, 2018, p.147). I align my study with the more contemporary developments that provide opportunities for childhood studies to re-think children's agency through a relational lens, and offer a nuanced and decentred approach (Spyrou, 2018). As Holloway et al. (2019) urge, instead of moving beyond agency (Kraftl, 2013), there is a need to have a sustained engagement and critical (re)thinking of agency in light of post-structuralist and materialistic critiques.

After building a theoretical understanding and detailing different research within the study of children's agency, I have discussed the importance of everydayness and its importance in research with children. Finally, I built on the relationality of children's agency, focussing on this relationality through their physical spaces, everyday materials and social relationships, which I follow up in Chapters 5, 6, and 7. In the next chapter, I discuss the methodology for the research. This is where I provide details of how I did the research with the children in the

village — accessing the community, the reflexive processes I used as a researcher, the research methods I used and the ethics involved in research.

Chapter 4: Exploring children's everyday lives through ethnography

After setting the context (Chapter 2) and discussing the relevant literature for the research (Chapter 3), this chapter details the design and methodology of the research. It begins with a set of research questions, and I describe the design of the study, with children in families in Chhattisgarh. I elaborate on the process of the research — entering and exiting the field, building a relationship and reflexively discussing my role as a researcher in the field. Following that, I describe the specific methods for fieldwork and the strategy I use for data analysis. The chapter concludes by addressing some of the key critical issues in the ethical practice guiding the research. Examples from the field have been woven throughout the chapter to better illustrate the methods and ethical challenges presented in the field.

4.1 Research aims, objectives and questions

The thesis centres around children's agency in an Adivasi community in India. The overarching research aims that frame this research are:

1. *To understand how children engage with particular hardships and risks in their everyday lives; and*
2. *To explore how children negotiate their agency through physical spaces, everyday materials and social relationships.*

Through engaging with and addressing the following research objectives, the research attempts to produce knowledge about the lives of children growing up in an Adivasi community in India, experiencing material hardships and ecological risks.

Research objectives:

1. To empirically investigate children's agency in engaging and negotiating with hardships and risks in the everyday settings of home, neighbourhood and school, as they grow up in an Adivasi community.

2. To build a detailed and nuanced picture which explores children's agency in relation to their physical spaces, material worlds and social relationships.

3. To explore the suitability of ethnographic methods in understanding hardships and risks in the everyday lives of children in Adivasi communities.

4. To make an original theoretical contribution to the literature on childhood, agency and everyday practices.

These objectives will be addressed through the following specific research questions:

- What are Pahari Korwa children's everyday routines and practices? (addressing Objective 1)
- What are children's perceptions of the different hardships and risks in the everyday setting of home, neighbourhood and school? (addressing Objectives 1, 2, 3)
- How do children engage and negotiate hardships and risks in the everyday settings of home, neighbourhood and school? (addressing Objectives 1, 3)
- How do children negotiate agency in their everyday through relationships, materials and spaces? (addressing Objectives 2, 3, 4)

4.2 Doing ethnography

This study, looking at a small group of children and their everyday life, requires a reflexive approach (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007) and I adopt an interpretive paradigm. The ontological position of interpretivism is relativism. Relativism is the view that reality is subjective and differs from person to person (Guba and Lincoln, 1994, p. 110). Aligning with this approach, I interpret children's interactions from their perspective. I do not assume children to be a general category, paying attention to their individual and collective voices.

I adopt ethnography as an approach for the study. Ethnography allows for a focus on people's routine and everyday lives (Emerson et al., 2011). The emic (from the insiders perspective) and etic (from the outsiders perspective) nature of ethnography helps to understand what people, both adults and children, do in their everyday, interpreting their multiple and subjective realities (Arnould and Wallendorf, 1994).

Many scholars in childhood studies consider ethnography an effective methodology for research with children (James and Prout, 2005; Qvortrup, 2001). According to Christensen (2004, p.166), 'ethnography is a distinct type of research where the knowledge that is produced depends on the researcher taking part in close social interaction with informants over extensive periods of time'. I spent seven months in the field observing and understanding children's everyday lives. An ethnographic stance was appropriate for this study as it helped acquire knowledge about children's experiences and perspectives of their everyday life, embedded in their socio-cultural contexts (Kjörholt, 2012). It permitted viewing children as competent interpreters of their social worlds (James, 2001). It allowed me to research for an extended period of time in the field: observing, listening, asking questions, making fieldnotes and participating in children's everyday chores including filling water in the buckets, carrying clothes from the pond, separating rice from the chaff, etc. It was also influential as an approach as it helped pay attention to the culture and context of children in the village, not just as a background but as constantly influencing and being influenced by the children (Weisner, 1996).

An ethnographic approach allowed me to make 'thick descriptions' (Geertz, 1973) in the field. This mode of interpretation helped 'go beyond the microscopic examination of actions to their contextualisation in a more holistic sense, to capture actions and events as they are understood by the actors themselves' (Corsaro, 2005, p.53). Even though there were times when there were repetitions or a feeling that nothing was happening, as Massey (2002) emphasises, a methodological slowness — taking time to think — was useful for the research. The approach helped gain deeper insight into children's own understanding of their everyday lives. Along with listening to the voices of the key participants, in the study, I included the voices and views of other children and adults significant to the context.

Ethnography helped me amplify the voices of children that have traditionally been marginalised socially and within research (James and Prout, 2005). As my own voice is influenced by my privileged, educated, middle-class background, this approach helped expand my understanding as I was more attentive to diverse views on childhood in the context of an indigenous group in Chhattisgarh.

4.3 Fieldwork Settings

4.3.1 Fieldwork site

I conducted my fieldwork in Aamadara village (introduced in Chapter 2; name anonymised, discussed in Section 4.9.3), located 10 km from the district headquarters in the Sarguja district, Chhattisgarh. This district was selected based on my previous experience and familiarity with the region based on a fieldwork visit in 2014. I identified and selected this specific Adivasi village community (Discussed in Chapter 2, Section 2.2) with help from a local NGO, Chaupal (see Chapter 2, Section 2.5.1). The selected village predominantly consisted of members from the Pahari Korwa Adivasi community, who according to the NGO had been historically, socially and economically marginalised. The community faced issues of poverty, deforestation, water shortage, denial of access to welfare schemes and land alienation. The community and the context have been discussed at length in Chapter 2. I spent time in one hamlet of the village, meeting and spending time with my participants. Initially, I observed children in the school, and later moved to the other settings, including the home, neighbourhood, fields and water bodies.

4.3.2 Key informants

The key participants of the study were five children in the age group of 6–12 years and their families, within the broader context of the community. The participants were selected using convenience sampling. Participants were selected in a manner that tried to capture the heterogeneity of the community. For example, more girls participated in the research as there were a greater number of girls in the village in that age range. The reason that there were more girls in the village was that parents who could afford it sent their boys to study outside the village in private or missionary English medium schools.

The sample size was selected as five, keeping in mind the feasibility, and also to be able to achieve in-depth understanding. With a particular focus on the five children, my observations, knowledge and understanding of the village were built through interactions with other children and other members of the community. The excerpts and discussions are based on observations and discussions with the key participants and others who were around and part of the study. In the following paragraphs, I introduce my participants in brief, constructing this information based on my fieldnotes and discussions with them.

Mani, 10 years old, lived with her parents, grandmother and siblings — Sona, 6, Indrani, 8, Sukhan, 3, and Heera, 16. Their house was at the entrance to the village, near the middle school. The family lived in a mud house, and their cemented house was used to store grains and wooden logs. Mani went to the primary school and was in class two, her sister Indrani was also in the same class. Sona attended the *anganwadi* centre (discussed in Chapter 2). Her mother worked at home and her father at that time was engaged in daily wage labour, cutting trees for the *phulwari*.

Sakhi, 8 years old, lived with her mother and siblings, Vikas, 6, and Shree 3. She had another sibling, Sikas, 10, who studied in a school outside the village and stayed in the hostel and was only present in the last month of my fieldwork. Sakhi was in class two at the primary school. Vikas went to the *anganwadi*. Sakhi took care of her younger siblings when her mother went for construction work to the city. Sakhi's grandparents' house was behind their house and the grandmother also ensured the children were safe, while their mother was away. In the last month of my fieldwork, Sakhi went to stay with an aunt in a different village and was later admitted to another school outside the village. Initially, Sakhi's aunt (father's sister) Paro, 13, also stayed with the family before she moved to her sister's house.

Nisha, 8 years old, lived with her parents and two younger sisters, Milo, 6, and Sakshi, 4. Nisha was in class 1 at the primary school while both her sisters went to the *anganwadi*. They stayed in a small mud house that was fenced with bamboo and the courtyard included a mango tree. On one side of the cement house (IAY house discussed in Chapter 2, Section) were two rooms with walls with openings for windows. Nisha's mother worked in the field and her father did not work as a year earlier he suffered partial paralysis, affecting his arm and face. Nisha helped her mother in household chores and sometimes in collecting wood from the forest. She would sometimes miss school to take care of her sisters when her parents were away.

Reema, 10 years old, lived with her parents and siblings, Shiv, 7, Mayawati, 5, Jaya, 13. Both Shiv and Reema attended the primary school in the village. Reema was in class four and Shiv was in class two. Mayawati went to the *anganwadi* while Jaya had left school after completing class four. Reema's grandparents also stayed in the hut opposite to their hut and shared the kitchen complex. During my time in the field, the family had started work on their IAY house and there were two partially constructed rooms. In the first month of the

fieldwork, her aunt Neeta, 18, was also living with the family but after a few months, she eloped and started living with her husband's family a few houses further. Reema's parents worked in the field during the crop season, while her father also worked as a daily wage labourer in the city during offseason. At the time of the study, he was working at the *phulwari*, cutting trees.

Neelam, 11 years old, had lost her parents at an early age and lived with her cousin, his wife and two children. Her father's older brother also stayed in the same house. Her brother Shankar, 16, worked as a construction worker in a different village. They lived in a mud house which was slightly bigger than most houses in the village. There were two rooms inside, a long hall and a porch outside. The house was fenced with bamboo. Neelam was in class five at the primary school. As she was expected to help with the household chores, she would often miss school.

Maanmati, 20 years old, was the daughter of the NGO representative in the village. She stayed with her parents, husband and 2 year old son. Her father worked with the forest department. She and her parents were a crucial part of the study as they introduced me to the other families in the community. They were the contact point for me in the community and I would spend time with them building an understanding about the village. During my time in the village, I also attended Maanmati's wedding ceremony, witnessing some of the communities rituals and practices.

While writing the excerpts in my analytical chapters, along with the key participants and their siblings, I mention other children who were friends, cousins, neighbours or classmates. I briefly introduce them here, with relation to the key participants.

Name	Age	Relationship with the participants
Suraj	10 years old	They belong to the Oraon community and lived in the neighbouring hamlet. At the time of the fieldwork they were in the same school as the participants of the study.
Seema	10 years old	
Kabir	9 years old	
Anurag	7 years old	
Meera	8 years old	They also lived near the school and were neighbours with Sakhi, Nisha and
Chandni	7 years old	

Chanda	7 years old	Mani. At the time of the fieldwork they were in the same school as the participants of the study.
Sangeeta	7 years old	
Jamni	12 years old	They are siblings and Mani's neighbours.
Jamna	11 years old	
Ramya and Fulmatiya	-	Ramya belongs to the Oraon community and Fulmatiya is Pahari Korwa. They prepared mid-day meals at the primary school.
Mita	13 years old	She is Sakhi's cousin and lived in the house opposite to hers.
Kendli	14 years old	She was Reema's neighbour
Achal	8 years old	She was Neelam's niece and they lived in the same house.
Asmita	12 years old	She lived near Sakhi's house.

Table 4.1: Other children and their relationship to participants in the field

4.4 Field visits

Initially, I spent a month in October 2017 familiarising myself with the village and introducing myself to the participants. The data collection took place over a period of six months from January to July 2018. Each visit to the village was between four to six hours (Appendix 1). The visits included observations and interactions in the school and later at the homes of the participants and other spaces they occupied.

Accessing the field

The first visit to the village was made with an NGO worker, who travelled with me from the city, explaining the bus route and landmarks. On our way, she told me about the different Adivasi communities in the village. She introduced me to the *mukhiya* (the Pahari Korwa village representative appointed by the organisation), as a contact in the village. The fieldworker introduced me to the community, informing them that I would be working with the children and families in the community for six months. For the community to understand my work, she added that I would be playing and dancing with them, and teaching them. I further explained that I was interested in children's lives in families and their everyday routines, and would spend time with them. The *mukhiya*, his wife and daughter introduced

me to others in the village and during the entire period of the study, ensured that I returned safely to the city after each visit.

The fieldworker also introduced me to the village *sarpanch* (village head), health worker and teachers in the school. I sought permission from the *sarpanch* and the teachers to visit the school and observe children and their interactions in the informal settings of the school including playtime, meals and during cleaning. I took formal written permission from the Department of Education, Ambikapur to be present in the school during the period of my fieldwork.

The fieldwork was planned in a manner that I could finish before the monsoon, since during that period the commute is difficult, with less transportation available. For the period of the study, I stayed in the nearest city, Ambikapur. Here I shared an accommodation with an employee from the NGO I was associated with. Since she was from a village in the region and also worked with the Pahari Korwa community, she was able to give me insights about the local customs and practices. I was also able to take her help to understand and translate the audio, as she was familiar with the language.

I would visit the village in the morning and stay until the evening. In the initial three months, I mostly met the children in the school as that is where they spent their day. But I also visited on Sundays to meet them and observe activities outside the school and make myself a more familiar presence with the families. On other occasions, I would accompany children after school to places they visited. These places included inside the home, *aangan* (area outside the house), ponds, near the trees and fields.

At the end of the day, I would return and take fieldnotes for the events. I visited the field three or four times in a week and on the other days continued to work on my fieldnotes and transcripts. Some days it was difficult to visit the field due to extreme heat, thunderstorms, road blocks, visits by politicians or bus strikes.

4.5 Reflections on the process of fieldwork

In this following section, I discuss the process of my fieldwork, and my positionality as a researcher. I further reflect on the issues of power in the field and address the diversity in children's voices. The definition of reflexivity that I found most useful for my work is by Tisdall et al. (2009), who describe reflexivity as

> The thoughtful reflection of a researcher upon the impact of her or his research on the participants, their social world, on the researcher her or himself and on the knowledge produced.

(Tisdall et al., 2009, p.229)

In the following sections, I build my discussion about reflexivity based on this definition. I present my experiences from the field, of how I attentively maintained reflexivity throughout the process. I develop this section through reading and reflecting on my fieldnotes while analysing the data. During the process of the research, I was making notes on the process of the research and methodological reflections that aided in the development of this section.

4.5.1 Building relationships and gaining trust

An important part of my work at the beginning of my research was being accepted by the children and the community. I spent almost three months getting to know and understanding the community, their rhythms and routines. After the initial visit in October 2017, when I returned in January 2018, in the first few meetings with the children in the school, I tried to re-connect with them. In the beginning, I would stand or sit and observe, awaiting invitations from the children to be involved in their activities rather than imposing my presence on them (to avoid taking up a position of powerful adult). Corsaro and Molinari (2008) write about Corsaro's experience of doing ethnography with children and using a similar strategy by entering the play areas, sitting and allowing the children to react to him. Once the children were more comfortable with my presence, I asked them about what they were doing or playing, asking them about their family members and daily routines. I also made paper cut-outs, and played games that made children curious and want to engage with me. Another way I found useful to relate with children was by sharing similar experiences. For instance, when children were dressing up their younger brother in a saree, I said, *main bhi aise apne bhai ko*

saree pehnati thi, aur lipstick lagati thi (I also used to make my brother wear a saree and put lipstick on him) and the children laughed.

Building rapport was an ongoing process which was not easy and presented me with new challenges and learning. I tried to build rapport by being present, observing children in different activities, accompanying them to different places and participating in activities. I also tried to use humour to initiate conversations. For instance, when the children only said *ji* (respectful yes) in response to anything I asked, I joked with them and said, *aap sirf ji bolte ho? Agar koi mujh se poochega maine gaon mein kya seekha, main bhi ji bolungi?* (Do you only say *ji*? If someone asks me what I learnt in the village, I will also say *ji*). They found this amusing, and made an effort to engage with me. Often, they would do something and would look at me, to see if I was also paying attention. Even though initially they were not engaging directly, they were indirectly beginning to involve me.

Over a period, as I became familiar, they got more comfortable with me, and began to hold my hand, lean on me The younger ones would also touch my face and look through my bag. I was patient with their questions and curiosity about my life. After spending three weeks with the children in the school, they were more willing to engage with me, asking me to accompany them, walking me to the bus station and inviting me home. They started inquiring about me on days that I did not come to the village, as they had begun to see me as a part of their everyday lives.

Ethnographic reflexivity was particularly crucial at the point of entry into the field (Davies, 2008a; Corsaro and Molinari, 2008). As a researcher, I paid attention to understand the ways in which I was being perceived and accepted by the children, and by adults as well. Initially, it was difficult to communicate with adults in the village but as I became a familiar face, the women in the families started communicating with me. The fathers were aware of my presence and purpose but did not engage, possibly due to cultural reasons, as in many Indian cultures men do not speak with women outside of the family setting. Over the months, I developed a close bond with some families where I was always welcomed, especially by the grandmothers, possibly because I was new to the village. I tried to base the relationship with the community on the values of trust and genuine interest in people's lives. Like Denzin and Lincoln (1994), I build a rapport by developing mutual trust, confidence and making people feel that I valued what they say. Spending time in the field helped develop this trust further

(Greene and Hogan, 2005). Towards the end of the study, most people in the hamlet knew me and would greet me, sometimes giving me updates about the village.

4.5.2 Role as a researcher

While carrying out research with children, Christensen (2004, p.166) emphasises that the researchers need to pay attention to the question 'what is an adult?'. Fine (1987) argues that the obvious difference in size, hierarchy and power make it difficult for an adult ethnographer to 'pass' as a child, therefore making it difficult to fit in the role Geertz (1973) describes, of a 'native insider' to their social and cultural lives. Different researchers have attempted to position themselves differently to modify their adult status and identity. Some researchers (Corsaro, 2003; Fine and Sandstrom, 1988) adopted the role of a 'friend,' while Mandell (1991) coined the term 'least-adult' and Thorne (1993) adopted this role in her work with children. This work was also critiqued, as Thorne (1993) recognised that negotiating a position for herself as a researcher between children and other adults was not straightforward, and required her to at times to switch to adult roles. Allerton (2019) also suggests that the adult–child relationship should be recognised as fluid and 'prone to slippage' (Barker and Smith, 2001, p.145), as power was fundamentally shifting in nature, preventing the possibility of any fixed (powerful or powerless) positions.

Christensen (2004) encouraged researchers to be recognised as adults and at the same time avoid the preconceived ideas and practices associated with well-defined adult roles. Taking a similar approach, for the research, I did not fix myself into the role of a teacher, a parent or a friend. I presented myself as an unusual type of adult, one who is seriously interested in understanding their social worlds from their perspectives, without attempting to be a child (Mayall, 2000). I introduced myself and expressed interest in how they lived their everyday lives. I expressed genuine interest in their lives and opinions, and achieved this through spending time, observing, listening, paying attention and participating. Similar to Mukherji and Albon (2010, p.76), I refer to my stance towards both adults and children as one of 'not knowing', and inviting the participants of the research to explain what they do and why they do it, seeking to understand their knowledge and experiences.

Gradually, the children started accepting me as a friend. They mostly referred to me by my first name or called me Ambika *didi* (elder sister). They had an awareness that I was an adult

who is different from the other adults in their community — they would involve me in play but did not ask me to take lead, I accompanied them to pluck fruits from the trees but they did not expect me to climb the trees.

Initially, they were not sure of my intentions and sincerity about understanding the context. Spending time with them in their everyday activities and sometimes contributing to their tasks helped build trust among the children, convincing them that I was serious about their lives. For instance, after I helped separate rice from the chaff, Mani looked at the sweat on my face and said, *aaj tune mehnat ki hai* (today you have worked hard).

4.5.3 Positionality as a researcher

As a researcher, I was aware that my socio-historical location may influence my orientation, for instance being a student, from a city, and a woman. In the village, I made sure to dress in a manner that was in accordance with local practices. The children were extremely observant and throughout the process of the fieldwork would discuss and ask questions about life in the city, the colour of my skin and my physical features being different from theirs, commenting that my hands were as soft as cotton because I did not do (physical) work.

As a researcher, I was attentive to the ethnographic practice being (re)shaped by my own life, both personal and professional (Günel et al., 2020) (including environmental, gender, health concerns, financial or political), recognising my role in the field as being embodied. For instance, as a researcher there was the physical strain of engaging with the environment while walking long distances in the field, sitting outside in the sun, or waiting patiently for children to engage.

My association with the NGO also had an impact on how I was perceived in the village to some extent. The villagers trusted me as a person as I had come with the NGO fieldworker whom they trusted. Since the NGO was not actively involved in village life on a day-to-day basis, or running a program, there were no such expectations from me.

To be able to maintain trust with the children, I had to carefully balance my position in relation to the teachers in the school and children from the other communities. Similar to Allerton's (2019) approach in her research in primary schools in North East England, I sat on

the *darri* (carpet) with the children. The teachers found it puzzling that I did not want to sit comfortably on a chair or spend time with them. Since I was building a rapport with the children and presenting myself as an adult different from the teachers, I did not want to jeopardise my relationships. Therefore, on multiple occasions, I had to refuse the teachers. Along with the teachers, I also had to maintain a delicate balance with children from the Oraon community. I had to be careful, the children were perceptive and would often question me if they felt I was favouring children from the other community. At the same time, the children from the Oraon community would not talk to me if they felt I was not engaging with them. Therefore, I had to constantly find a balance and ensure that I did not get involved in their fights or take sides. A reflexive approach (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007) helped me reflect on my position and its relational construct and maintain a flexible identity. I negotiated and re-negotiated my role and status throughout the process of the research.

4.5.4 Addressing power

Along with my role and positionality as a researcher, another important aspect of the fieldwork was power. With debates around power with relation to the researcher and the children, in my research, power was fluid, negotiated, relational and contextual (see Christensen, 2004; Connolly, 2008; Gallacher and Gallagher, 2008). During the process of fieldwork, there were times when children exercised equal or more power in relation to me. At other times, I as an adult from the city, was in a position of more power in relation to the children. In my research, I acknowledge the complexity of power, not viewing it as a commodity possessed by dominant groups (adults), nor by children (Gallaghar, 2008). Instead as discussed in section 4.5.2, I view it as fluid and open to negotiation (Woodyer, 2008).

Since I was from the city and someone from a different socio-economic background, I was aware that I had more in terms of material resources. The children themselves were aware of these differences and would often bring them into conversations. The children would ask me questions about how much money I was carrying, how many clothes I had, whether I used perfume. As a researcher, I had to be continuously innovative in my responses and sensitive to the research setting. I did not dismiss their questions about money and material resources, which were often uncomfortable, and would respond honestly. These instances were worth exploring, since they indicated differences in power. However, I was not always sure if the

children perceived power in a similar sense, necessarily with relation to material resources. Foucault's (1983) ideas of power as an ambivalent web of relations and diverse, rather than a unidirectional force of domination is helpful to think of power in my research, as something that is exercised and not possessed.

The children realised that I did not know much about their lives in the village. Not knowing the language and the culture, and asking questions added to my ignorance, giving children an opportunity to laugh at my mistakes. As Agar (1980) observes, making mistakes can be fruitful in terms of creating opportunities for ethnographers to learn about people's lives. In his ethnographic work with pre-schoolers in Bologna, Italy, Corsaro shares a similar experience, as his limited competencies in the Italian language and his lack of knowledge of the working of the school led the children to see him as an 'incompetent adult' who they could take under their wing, and this helped in being accepted into children's everyday lives (Corsaro and Molinari, 2008, p.240). In the village, I tried to speak the local language and used words familiar to their context. If I made a mistake the children would laugh and correct me. This also helped in shifting of power as they started to see me as a person who had to spend time with them to learn.

4.5.5 Entry to and exit from the field

At the beginning of the fieldwork, I visited the region in two phases. The first phase helped me identify and understand the field site in order to plan the fieldwork, understand the suitability of my methods, and to consider the feasibility of the study. The purpose of the visit to the field was not to conduct research per se, instead, I used it as an opportunity to introduce myself to the community and explore the field.

The first trip was a brief visit to the city of Ambikapur. During this period, I met with two organisations, Sarthak Jan Vikas Sansthan and Chaupal, working with Adivasi communities in Sarguja district in Chhattisgarh. After establishing contact with the local organisations and identifying the village, in the second visit, I introduced myself to the community, both adults and children, and spent time in the village trying to familiarise myself. As an outsider, I could not enter their lives and expect to be accepted immediately. Therefore, in the beginning, I spent most time being present, meeting different people, having informal conversations, talking about my research, exploring the village community with the children, observing and

understanding their daily routines.

As I was nearing the end of my fieldwork, I wanted to bring closure to the fieldwork both for myself and the children and the community. A month before the fieldwork ended, I started to prepare my participants for my departure. I did not want to leave the field abruptly, breaking their trust and leaving the children wondering and disappointed. I also did not make false promises that would be difficult to keep, so I told the children that I would be gone for a while to a place that is very far. I did not give them an exact date of visiting again but promised to visit. As a going-away present, I gave the children copies of the photographs that we had taken during the period and the colours they used for the drawings. The children were excited but at the same time, some were very concerned that I might have spent all my money and would not have enough to travel back home. In the end, they were sad that I was leaving but not surprised and hoped for me to return. This was an important step for ethical reasons, as leaving abruptly, or creating false hopes would mean that I was being insincere to the participants.

4.6 Research methods

Conceiving of children as social actors (Christensen and James. 2008) and viewing them as participants (Alderson, 2008; Woodhead and Faulkner, 2000) aims to look beyond children as objects and subjects of enquiry. In my research, I maintain reflexivity throughout the process, for instance, even the methods were chosen and adapted to ensure children's participation. In a vein similar to Christensen and James (2008) and Fraser et al. (2004), I would like to argue that research with children should not be looked at differently from research with adults, as it would seem to question their competencies. Punch (2002), based on her research in rural Bolivia which explored children's everyday life at home, school and play suggests that research with children is mainly different from research with adults because of adult perceptions of children, their marginalised position in society and not because of any inherent differences.

As a researcher in the field of childhood, I kept in mind two important questions that Christensen argues are essential for research:

> Are the practices employed in the research process in line with and reflective of children's experiences, interests, values and everyday routines; and what are the ways in which children routinely express and represent these in their everyday life?
>
> (Christensen, 2004, p.166)

This discussion has implications for the study and the methods I used to understand children's lifeworlds from their perspectives. To ensure that my methods were in line with children's everyday activities and to capture the various elements of their lives, I spent time in the field observing and understanding their routines and practices. To capture their diverse experiences, I used a multi-method approach. Mixing different methods to explore children's lives helped with the crystallisation of data, which is a post-modern influenced approach to triangulation, that Richardson (2000) argues produces a richer and complex understanding and makes the data more credible. Instead of the two-dimensional, fixed triangle being used as the basis of methodological validity, the crystal with its multi-dimensions provides more rigour (Richardson, 2000). Children had several ways of expressing their knowledge and opinions. I used different methods — observations, conversations, drawings and photographs — in combination with each other. There were a few participants who preferred to express themselves through words and there were some who enjoyed drawing.

Having an ethnographic approach helped me spend time in the village and get a nuanced understanding of children's perspectives, prioritising their voices and experiences. This diversity in methodology helped children communicate their own interpretations of their everyday lives.

As Anandalakshmy et al. (2008) write in their book *Researching Families and Children*, contextualising the research methodology is important for research with children. For instance, in my case, participants were not comfortable with writing and therefore, methods like diaries and journals were not explored.

4.6.1 Participant observation

Participant observation as a method helped me immerse in the research setting (Mason, 2002) and observe people's everyday routines for a long period. This enabled me to understand how people give meaning to their own contexts and social worlds (Atkinson et al., 2001).

As a method, it helped me understand the everyday lives of children and families, as the observations were not only limited to specific events or problems associated with a child's life. Adler and Adler (1987, p.219) suggest that 'naturally occurring interactions are considered to be the foundation for understanding a society' and therefore, observing mundane everyday living was a crucial part of my study. These observations took place within the diverse settings of children's lives, including the family (while watching television, during meals, playing with siblings, feeding the cattle), the neighbourhood (while playing near the house or street, neighbours' houses, street, filling water from the borewell, visiting the pond and well) and the school (inside the classroom, during meals and play).

Along with meeting them in these spaces, I also walked with them to places they were going to, talking to them on the way and observing while they were playing, climbing a tree, watering plants, eating or helping in household tasks. These activities and walks also helped me understand the spaces children occupied. I moved around with the children and realised that it was difficult to fix a setting as children were very mobile. The boundaries of home and neighbourhood and for some even the school were very blurred. For a few children, the school was next to their home, making that space an extension of their neighbourhood. For instance, on a Sunday when the school was closed, the children jumped over the school gate and went inside to play. I also visited the village on weekends when the children were not in school, to observe their morning routine at home and in the neighbourhood.

There was also a difference in the children's routines and practices with the change in season. It was useful to spend a prolonged period of time in the field as I was able to observe a diverse range of activities and children's discussions around them. For instance, there was more discussion about picking *mahua* flowers in the month of April and children discussed stories of snakes when the monsoon was approaching in June.

Leyshon (2002) observes that the advantages of participation and informal dialogues are that it makes children comfortable, easing them into the process of the research. I used the research questions (Section 4.1) as a guide to observing the children in the village. During the observations in the field, I paid attention to daily routines, social actions, behaviour, interactions and conversations with adults and peers, language, body language, relationships,

events, as well as spatial and locational dimensions (Mason, 2002) including the layout of the space and the physical elements.

Participant observation combines two different processes — participation and observation (Dewalk and Dewalt, 2011). Based on the researcher's relationships with the participants (Davis, 2000), there are varying degrees of the researcher's 'participation' while observing. Some researchers adopt the approach of 'not disturbing the field', but more reflexive ethnographic approaches recognise that such a detachment of the researcher is difficult (Mukherji and Albon, 2010, p.70). During the research, I placed myself at various points on the participant–observer continuum, flexibly working and moving between the roles of participation and observation. I decided whether to participate more or observe more or less based on where (context) and what (situation or activity) I was participating in. The participation ranged from observing what was happening, listening, learning, taking part, playing, engaging, collaborating, helping and sharing. At some points, I was more of an observer as I would watch children play a game and at other times I was a participant, as I walked with them from the school.

4.6.2 Conversations and informal dialogues

In addition to participant observation, informal dialogue was used as a technique for the research. I had a guideline for the questions that took the form of informal discussions, dialogues and reflective conversations with children during the process of observation, while they engaged in some activity or were drawing. Unlike structured interviews which are close-ended, these allowed children to express their thoughts more freely, though within the framework of the issues I was interested in. It also gave me an opportunity to incorporate new areas or issues identified by the children themselves. This was a good method to gain information about children's perspectives and subjective experiences (Punch, 2002).

These dialogues were more useful than structured interviews as the communities did not discuss their worries and hardships in isolation. These came up in everyday conversations. For instance, the children discussed fathers physically abusing their wives after drinking when there was an incidence of domestic abuse in the neighbourhood. Both adults and children in the village reflected and made sense of their lives in relation to everyday events. Through being present in their everyday, observing and having conversations, I attempted to

understand the everyday lives of children. Through conversations with people and children, I also realised that risk and hardship is a notion that may have different meanings for the community. I asked questions to understand hardships and risks from their perspective.

4.6.3 Visual techniques including drawing and photographs

Along with observations and dialogues, visual methods including drawings and photographs were used for the research. Using these methods was a creative way to motivate participants to be part of the research process and it helped bring out complexities in experiences. The nature of the research questions and a personal interest in visual methods was the motivation behind using visual techniques (O'Connell, 2013). In the particular context of this study, visual techniques were selected for their power of communication. They provided children with the time to think, build an idea rather than responding immediately (Gauntlett, 2004). As one the participants Reema said, *kal aana, main soch ke rakhugi* (come tomorrow, I will think about it).

I am aware of the critique of visual methods, that they may not necessarily interest children more than any other method (O'Connell, 2013) and in my work did not work with this assumption that they would or would not be interested. In the research, I used them with the awareness that visual methods in research are not unquestionably good, or better than other forms of research.

Visual techniques such as draw and dialogue
After building a rapport with the children, in the second half of the fieldwork, drawings were used as another method for engaging and having dialogues with children. There were a total of 44 drawings. Drawings were used to understand children's everyday routines. As Punch (2002, p.331) observes, 'the advantage of using drawing with children is that it can be creative and provides them with time to think of what aspects they wish to portray'. An image can be changed and added to, giving them more control over what to express, unlike an interview situation where responses tend to be quicker and more immediate (Shaver et al., 1993). In my research, through drawing as a method, children were able to take control of the activity. For instance, Mani said, *kaal le ke aana, aaj mood nahi hai, isliye nahi ban raha* (bring it tomorrow, today I am not in the mood, so I am not being able to draw well). As a method, children were also reflexive about their participation and critiqued their progress.

Children would look at their drawings and comment saying, 'it is not nice', or 'what will your friend say Ambika.'

Adapted from Eldén's (2013) work, I asked children to 'draw your day', an activity focussing directly on daily practices and routines. Children were given an A4 size paper, divided into four parts and were asked to draw four things that they do at home or in the village. In the second activity, children were asked to draw two things they liked and two things they did not like. The children were assured that the information they share would not be shared with others in the community, ensuring it did not impact children's relationships with the others.

In the beginning, the method did not work as I had visualised, as the children were unsure. They would only sit with the paper and colours, while some copied drawings from their school books. But as they became familiar with me, they were able to express themselves through art. For instance, Indrani drew three figures of her sister and explained it by saying, in the first, she is carrying a pot of water, in the second she is carrying *charota* (plant leaves used to make soap) from the jungle and in the third, she is carrying mustard from the fields (Figure 4.1). The drawing helped me understand some of the different activities children performed in their everyday lives.

Figure 4.1: Indrani's drawing of her sister (from L-R) carrying water in a pot, *charota* leaves from the forest and mustard from the fields

There were some children who enjoyed drawing but others who were reluctant to draw. Nisha, for instance, preferred to talk. Therefore, I had to be reflexive in the way I used the method with children. While making these drawings, the children had conversations with me and each other, describing their artwork or having conversations around the drawing. These conversations were rich and along with the drawings helped me understand children's everyday lives. The conversations around them helped bring out complexities in their experiences. For instance, while drawing four activities of their day, all the girls portrayed themselves drawing water from the well, while in Shiv's (a boy) drawing there was a girl drawing water from the well. This led to children discussing different roles of boys and girls (discussed in Chapter 5, Section 5.2.2). In the thesis, I use both the drawings and the accompanying talk as data. In some places in the analysis, I draw more attention to the drawing and at other places to the talk.

Photographs

During fieldwork I took photographs. They were taken to describe the context, including home, school, village, the activities children engaged in, games they played and spaces they occupied. Children would tell me what they wanted me to capture, e.g. during play, while climbing trees, putting flowers in their hair, wearing sarees, or with animals.

Figure 4.2: Children wanting to be photographed with flowers in their hair [Photograph, 23rd January 2018] and with their animals [Photograph, 27th April 2018]

Initially, the intention was to use photographs for description but slowly children started using this is a mode of expression, telling me what to pay attention to and what to capture. This was similar to the Hecht's experience with street children of Northeast Brazil (1998), where the children naturally became collaborators, taking the recorder and doing interviews,

and decolonising to some extent the ways in which children become part of the research process. As a method, it provided me with an insight into the participants' views and 'by focusing on collaboration and the idea of "creating something together", the agency becomes shared between the researcher and informant' (Pink, 2001, p.44).

The photographs as research data from the field were multimodal and layered, providing a deeper and richer understanding of the context of the children. It helped better understand the embodied experience (Chapter 3, Section 3.7) of the participants and the research (Niskač, 2011).

4.7 Fieldnotes

To record the observations and conversations, I took fieldnotes, which formed a central part of the data collection. Initially, during the time I spent in the school, it was easier to write some words or sentences of observation in my notebook, this was also a way to gain children's interest and to remember the sequence of events. In other physical research settings (such as standing outdoors, or while participating in a task) or social settings (in the middle of a conversation), it was not possible to take notes in the field. Depending on the feasibility, when I was alone in the field or walking in-between places, I would write a few words on my phone (notes application). This helped me remember the sequence of events that I elaborated while typing out the fieldnotes later in the day.

I developed a system of field note taking whereby I left a margin approximately two-thirds of the way across the page, and wrote my descriptions on the left and the first stages of thematic analysis on the right (May, 1997; Swain, 2006). At the bottom of the page, I was writing my overall thoughts and reflections. The fieldnotes also include the date, place time and a small description of the context. Figure 4.3 below is a sample from the actual fieldnotes. At the end of each day, I wrote the fieldnotes as a way to preserve as much as possible. On days I was not in the field, I would listen to the audio recordings and transcribe data, adding to the notes and making the conversations richer.

Field notes

1st June 2018 Sikasos house	Initial comments on the notes
After a few days of illness, I reached the village and went to Sikasos house. Her *kaki nani* (cousin grandmother), who is also Pinkis mother was mixing mud with hay to apply on the wall. She was staying there with Pinki for the repairs of the house before the rain. Sikasos mother had gone for work at a construction site in Ambikapur and the children were at home. Sikaso was at the back of the house carrying a heavy pot of water and pouring it in a bucket kept near the house. Vikas, her younger brother was following her with a small bucket of water and Ganeshree the youngest was carry a small pot on her head. I asked Sikaso what they were doing and she said–*paani dho ke la Rahi hoon. Nahane ke liye* (collecting water to take a bath).	Children begin to perform tasks like carry pots and do other household activities from a young age. Socialisation
I looked at Ganeshree, smiled and asked, *Kya kar rahi hai Ganeshree?* (What are you doing Ganeshree?) She replied in a soft voice, *Madam, paani dho rahi hoon.* (Madam, I am carrying water). Ambika–*arre main toh nahi padhati, madam kaise hui?* (Hey, I don't teach, so how am I a madam?) Sikaso said *main bataun? Kyunki tum door se aayi ho.* (Let me tell, because you have come from far.) Ambika– *accha* (okay)	Identity of the researcher in the field
Ambika–*moodha pe nai nahate?* (you don't bathe in the pond?) Sikaso–*aajkal moodha main paani bohot ganda hai. Ghaav ho jata hai.* (These days the water in the pond is very dirty. We get infection) She showed me her hand and said which had white spots due to infection and said *ye dekho badh gaya hai* (look at this, it has increased). Sikaso–*Paani kam ho gaya hai.* (The water has reduced), implying that the water is dirty because of that, *Lekin heeramani log abhi bhi wahan nahate hain. Asha bhi jati hai.* (Still, Heeramani and family bathe there, even Asha goes.)	Due to the water shortage in the village and summer season the bores, wells and ponds had dried up. Also, making the water dirty and unsuitable. Both a risk and hardship for children and community commenting and comparing hygiene with peers
She had filled one big bucket and Ganeshree and Vikas's common bucked was only half filled. She asked him to fill more water, Vikas said I will not get more water. She said–okay I will also not get you more, then told her younger sister to ask him to give back her two pots of water, the ones she had filled and carried. He did not return that water and kept playing with it. Sikaso hit him (not too hard or seriously) on his back, and then bathed Ganeshree with the bucket o water she had filled.	children taking care of younger siblings and looking out for them

She asked me–*Tum Dilli Chali gayi thi?* (Did you go back to Delhi?) I said no, I was not well. She asked me to come and stand in the shade as I was standing in the heat saying *Gham lag jayegi.* (you will get [catch] heat). Pinki joined us outside the house while Sikaso was bathing Ganeshree. She sat on a tyre tube and said–I have not seen you in a few days, I told her about the illness and she said yes, it is very hot. Pinki added, *main abhi nai naha rahi, paani bohot garma hai. Itna garmi lagta hai, kaam karne ka man bhi nai karta* (I am not taking a bath right now as the water will be very hot. Feel so hot that I don't even feel like working).	expressing concern over protection from heat as I might get a heatstroke. Heat is a major concern and causes hardship during the summer season
Ambika–so when do you do all the repair work for the house? Pinki (pointing to a place in the distance) –*wahan se subha ya sham mein mitti late hain. Itna gham nahi hota* (from there we get the mud, in the morning or evenings, when it is not this hot). She looked at the house and said, *isko paani aane se pehle theek kar rahe hain, varna gir jayega* (we are repairing it before the rains, otherwise it might fall.) Pinki (referring to the school terrace)–*abhi jaungi chatt pe baithne. Wahan thodi acha hawa lagta hai. Jamni, filmita log ke saath.* (will now go to sit on the roof. There is some cool breeze there. With Jamni, Filmita and others)	Talking about the weather and work was a way in which children expressed hardships Children and adults in the community work their everyday routine around the harsh weather conditions. Many families repaired their homes in preparation for the monsoon which in this region is usually accompanied with a lot of thunderstorm and lightening Children of the same age formed groups and would mostly be seen together. Children connected with nature on an everyday– the trees the breeze, the fruits–could explore this as something that helps in resilience
Pinki–*aajkal hum mudha pe bhi nai jaate. Gham hai, gunda aate hain. Bacche ko le jaate hain.* (these days we don't even go to the pond, it's hot and thieves come in the village. They pick children and girls.) Ambika–*tumne suna hai kisi ko le jaate?* (have you heard of anyone being taken?) Pinki–*abhi toh nahi. Par ye accha samay hai. Gham mein log ghar mein rehte hain na* (This is good time to come because it's hot and people stay indoor.) *Aajkal iska darr lagta hai* (These days we are scared of this)	Risk in the community-Children would often talk about staying indoors in the heat as they might fall ill or someone would take them
When I reached Heeramanis house, Heeramani, Indermani and Sonamani were leaving with their mother who was carrying a *supa* (rice cleaner made with bamboo) on her head and a bag full of	

Figure 4.3: Screenshot of fieldnotes along with the preliminary comments and colour coding

The fieldnotes were descriptive, detailed, and compiled with as much care and consciousness as possible (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007), trying to paint a vivid picture of the context, the participants and the everyday events in the children's lives. While writing, I paid particular attention to language, body, relationships, spaces and material objects. Along with routine everyday events, I documented any unique events that took place in the children's lives during my time in the field. Through these notes, I tried to grasp the richness of the field. Along with descriptive notes from the field, I was also writing my personal reflections. As an ethnographer, I was aware of the importance of fieldnotes and how my writing choices and stories and instances I chose to focus on (Emerson et al., 2011) would impact the research and influence the readers understanding of the lives of people I worked with.

During my fieldwork from January to July 2018, I wrote a total of 1,40,514 words. These notes include my observations of the context, events of the day, conversations that took place, reflections, observations about ethnography as an approach and my role as a researcher. All the files were stored on a password-protected area of the university's hard drive, as per the commitment made to data security in the ethical review.

Audio recording

In the first two weeks, I did not record audio, but as the participants became familiar with me I used my phone to record conversations in the field. There were a total of 64 audio files with approximately 89 hours of recording in total (Appendix 1). In a few places, I would add my own voice comments, where I felt the observation could not be captured on audio. All the files were stored on a password-protected area of the university's hard drive, as per the commitment made to the ethical review committee.

4.8 Data analysis and writing

The data, obtained through experiences, observations, informal dialogues, in-depth interviews, and visual methods, was produced in the form of fieldnotes, audio recordings, drawings and photographs. It is established in ethnography that data analysis should be an ongoing process that should not be restricted or left for the formal stages before writing (Gallagher, 2009). This was also true in my case, and I began the process of data interpretation during fieldwork and continued thereafter. The fieldwork, like other ethnographies, was physically demanding (Atkinson and Hammersley, 2007), and I spent more time in the field collecting and generating data rather than on analysis during fieldwork. After returning to the UK from fieldwork (which lasted from 16th January to 5th July 2018), I engaged with literature but did not take up the process of analysing the data immediately. Since I was personally invested and very close to the data, I took some time to distance myself before I transited to the process of analysing and writing.

First, I collated and arranged all the notes from the field. I tried to familiarise myself with the material by reading through the notes slowly and carefully (Goodall, 2000), paying attention to the way people talk, and what the participants were saying. I read systematically, going through the pages of the field accounts with care, to 'develop a sense of the whole' to identify threads that could be woven together to tell a story (or a number of stories) about children's social world (Emerson et al., 2011). A close examination of and reflection on fieldnotes helped develop analytical insights (Emerson et al., 2011). Reading notes as a whole also enabled me to recognise patterns and make comparisons, helping interpret the data in a reflexive manner (Mason, 2002).

I then started writing my preliminary observations and comments on these fieldnotes on the side, keeping the research questions in mind, making note of interesting details, and this formed the basis of my preliminary interpretation. This was based on constant engagement with the data, where throughout I focused on questions of who, what, why, when and where (Dey, 1993). The construction of these analytical comments helped in internal dialogue, thinking aloud, and engaging with the material, which is the essence of a reflexive ethnography (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). After writing the preliminary observations on the fieldnotes, and reading of the fieldnotes, I identified the common occurring themes and patterns in the fieldnotes and the preliminary comments. For instance, children's work, sibling care, children's friendships, ingenuity in using everyday material objects, Adivasi identity, hardships in everyday lives were some of the recurring themes throughout the data. With more reading of the data and the emerging themes, I changed my lens from resilience to agency as it helped me provide a richer account of children's everyday lives (as discussed in Chapter 1, Section 1.2). I examined children's agency through their practices in physical spaces, with material objects and in relation to their relationships in the village, using everyday hardships and risks as a backdrop to explore these relationalities. These broad themes — physical space, material objects and social relationships — became the basis for the analytical chapters for the thesis (Chapters 5, 6, and 7). With these three broad themes in mind, I revisited the original data and using colour codes, identified them within these themes. I created a matrix to collate all the data and initial thoughts under each theme, and created sub-themes. The amount of data under each theme varied, and there were more instances in some compared to the others. There was some data overlapping with different themes, in which case they were included in both the themes. Mind maps (Figure 4.4) helped to better understand these themes and linkages, that formed the basis of writing the analytical chapters.
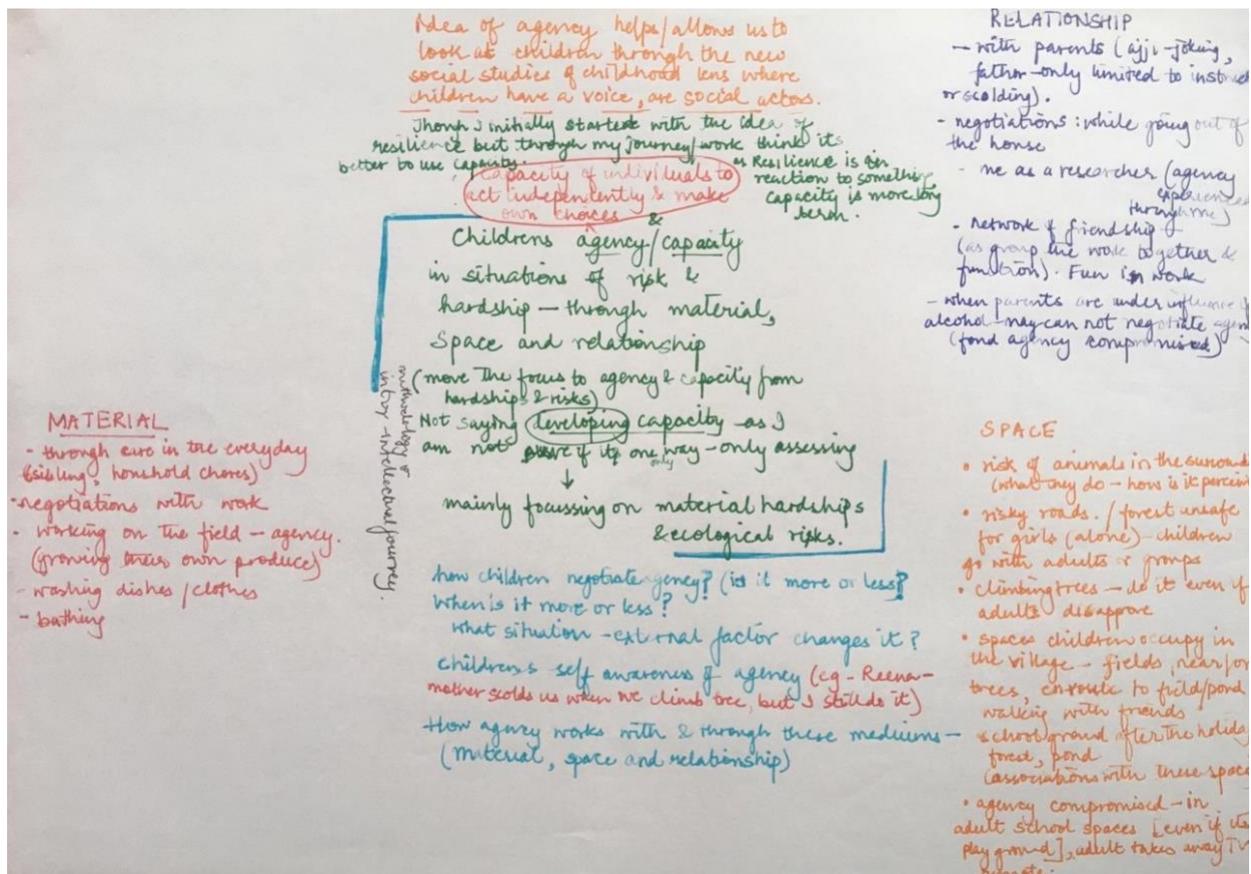
Figure 4.4: Mind map of the analytical themes

As a researcher, I am aware that existing research terminology may be limiting to ethnographic and qualitative research (MacLure, 2013). Terms such as 'codes', 'data' and 'reduce', for lack of better terms, can make the data sound unintelligible, waiting for analysis to make it worthy. I was conscious about not condensing the data, and through a continued reading of the notes, going back and forth, I tried to capture the essence of people's accounts (Miles and Huberman, 1994).

4.8.1 Transcription

I also listened to the audio recordings of the conversations and discussions in the field alongside the analysis of written fieldnotes. I made a short summary of each audio recording, later revisiting and selectively transcribing in detail the sections I used in the final writing (Copland et al., 2015), based on the themes that were colour coded in the fieldnotes. After making a list of themes that were to be discussed in the chapter, I looked through the notes and selected and transcribed excerpts that were either part of children's everyday routine lives or very unique and telling and helped illustrate specific aspects of their lives. Since I

was working towards presenting the data in the form of excerpts, followed by its description and analysis (Mason, 2002), I selected excerpts from the fieldnotes and some detailed verbatim conversations through transcription. The following table provides a convention that I used for translation.

?	Questioning intonation
!	Exclamatory utterance
Words in italics	Sargujia or Hindi (non-English) transcription
(words)	English translation
[words]	Other details, non-verbal observations
…	Non-measured pause
____	Underlining for emphasis

Table 4.2: Convention for transcription (Adapted from Richards, 2003; Copland and Creese, 2015)

4.8.2 Presenting visual data

For the analysis, I also use the photographs from the field. There were a total of 328 photographs. In some places the visuals accompanied the fieldnotes, enriching the excerpt, in other places these were used by themselves to discuss themes of relevance. I organised and analysed these photographs based on the themes they were linked to, in connection to the fieldnotes (Pink, 2012). I analysed selected photographs by using a reflexive approach, describing the context and making meaning in relation to the circumstances in which it was taken. I engaged in an interpretive reading of the photographs asking a range of questions including what the photograph was about, what the context of the photograph was, what phenomena was photographed and what was not, and who/what was or was not included in the photograph (Mason, 2002). Based on these questions, I analysed the visual data. As both Pink (2012, p.97) and Moličnik (2003, cited in Niskač) argue, it is impossible to capture the full processes, relationships and activities in the visual. Therefore, it is important to pay attention to the context in which these images are produced. For the purpose of the analysis, I described these photographs along with the context and also elaborated on the events that preceded and followed the photograph.

Along with photographs I used children's drawings to analyse data. More than the drawings, it was the conversations around and about these drawings that were analysed and included in the writing. The drawings were rich visual illustrations, which exhibit how children see their world (Punch, 2002). I took care to present children's perspective on the meaning they were attempting to convey and did not impose adult interpretations to the analysis. Therefore, I asked children to explain what they made (Punch, 2002) and the analysis was based on the conversation around the drawings.

4.8.3 Writing on

In ethnography, writing is messy as the social world does not present itself in separate analytical themes (Atkinson Hammersley, 2007). For my thesis, the process of analysing and writing was continuous, therefore, I do not refer to it as 'writing up' but 'writing on'. In writing the ethnography, I used fieldnotes as building blocks for constructing and telling the story. I present the data with 'thick descriptions' (Geertz, 1973) attempting to bring out the nuances of the everyday lives of children in an Adivasi village community captured by an ethnographic study. Here, I present the data in the form of analytical themes. For the analytical writing, I selected a portion of the fieldnotes and audio transcripts and discussed it at length, explaining the reasons for selecting the fieldnotes, describing and analysing the text. These notes were reviewed, selected and discussed in accordance with the relevant literature. This also helped me situate the study in the larger social, cultural and economic context.

4.9 Ethical considerations and challenges in research

Christensen and Prout (2002) argue that the new social studies of childhood has changed the way research is done with children. This perspective of 'children as social actors' has created new ethical dilemmas and responsibilities for researchers within the study of childhood (Christensen and James, 2008). The ethical considerations for this research were underpinned by this view of children as social actors. I based this research in ethical symmetry, as proposed by Christensen and Prout (2002), who argue that children have equal rights as adults. Therefore, I take as a *starting* point the view that the ethical relationship between researcher and informant is the same in the case of both children and adults. The primary

areas of ethical concern for the study were centred around issues of access, informed consent, confidentiality, power relations and protection.

4.9.1 Gaining access into children's lives

Gaining trust and access to a community is not a straightforward process (Allerton, 2016). When working with children in the communities in particular, one needs to go through several gatekeepers. This includes parents, the community, schools, and local institutions. To conduct research in the community in Sarguja, I gained access through the assistance of the NGO Chaupal. Access to the community through a local organisation was easier both physically and socially, as the organisation had a presence and purpose in the community, and this helped build trust among people.

I took permission from the State Department of Education in Ambikapur (Appendix 2), since I was meeting children and spending time in the school. I got this letter of permission from the department, once they were satisfied that my work posed no threat or interruption to their department functioning, by making complaints against the school or reporting against the teaching practices. Another issue around access I faced was in relation to the language. Even though the state language was Hindi, a language I was familiar with, the community spoke Korwa Sahadri (Chapter 3, Section 2.6.3), a language different from Hindi or Sargujia (the language largely spoken in the region of Sarguja). In the first two or three months, I found it difficult to understand what the children were saying. I would often ask them to repeat or translate in Hindi. They spoke in Hindi when they were conversing with me but it was difficult to observe and understand their interactions with each other. It was more difficult to converse with their parents many of whom who did not speak any Hindi. At home, I took help, learning new words from my housemate who was also from a nearby village and fluent in Sahadri (discussed in Chapter 2, Section 2.6.3).

4.9.2 Informed consent

Gaining consent is considered central to ethics in research (Alderson and Morrow, 2011). Informed consent requires the imparting of adequate information by researchers to potential participants in order for them to decide whether or not to participate in research (Davies,

2008b). Alderson and Morrow (2011) argue that researchers who seek consent from children are more likely to take their views seriously throughout the research.

For the purpose of this research, I gained informed consent from both children and adults. As Christensen (2000) argues, if we regard children as social actors, it is no longer justifiable to say that children are too young to understand or make a decision about participating in the research. I prepared an information leaflet (Appendix 3) in Hindi, in a clearly formulated language understood by both children in the age group of 6–12 years and adults. This leaflet was prepared in a question and answer format to provide information to the community about the researcher and explain the purpose and the process of the research.

I approached the families in the community, introducing myself as a researcher who was interested in understanding how communities live. I expressed my keenness to take part in their lives, along with inviting them to take part in the research. As it was important for me to understand children's perspectives, I added that I was interested in understanding what the children did and thought (Christensen, 2004). I read the leaflet to the parents and the children in Hindi, encouraging them to ask questions.

A simply worded consent form for the parents/caregivers and children was also prepared. Their consent was taken orally, in Hindi from the children and in Sargujia from the parents, which I recorded on my phone. Oral consent was effective, as many members in the community were not literate, and I did not want to make the participants wary by presenting documents and asking for signatures. I also took their permission to audio-record our discussions and conversations. As most of them were unaware of audio recordings, I showed them how it worked. Along with parents and children, the leaflet and consent form was shared with the NGO workers, the *sarpanch* (head of the village), the teachers and education officers, and written consent was received from the concerned authorities.

As Farrell (2005) argues, researchers should listen to children as competent participants. I was respectful to the child participants and their right to decline involvement or withdraw from research. Most families of children I met were welcoming, and a few mothers urged their children to talk to me. The children were initially shy but curious. There was only one instance where a child I met to explain the purpose of my visit did not respond. I asked her if she would prefer if I come later, and she said yes and I left. This could have been due to her

unfamiliarity with a stranger. Later, when I met this child in school, she was very shy and would not talk to anyone, only smile.

Instead of generic consent for the whole research, I used informed consent as an ongoing process, which allowed participants the freedom to decide whether they wished to participate on a particular day. For instance, if I perceived a child as being uninterested, I tried to seek consent through asking some of these questions:

- Should we keep talking about this or would you be more interested in talking about [options]?
- Do you want to finish talking now or would you like to do this some other day?

(Adapted from Morgan, 2000, p.3)

To cite one such instance, during one of my initial observations, I was sitting in the school playground watching the children play. I was accompanied by Meera who was unable to play because of an infection in her hand. After a while, all the children came to where we were sitting and were looking at each other and smiling. I asked them what the matter was. There was no response, then I asked what time they usually ate. They said 12 pm, and the time was 2 pm. I suggested that I leave, as I also had to eat and maybe they should too. Then finally Meera said, they go home to eat. The children were not comfortable telling me of their own accord that they had to leave. This incident captures the complexity of entering the field. I discovered how I, as a researcher, also had to be aware of signs and cues which required me to stop.

Throughout the research, I paid attention to signs in the field, through people's gestures and expressions, to understand if they were keen to participate in the research. If on a particular day the children were not interested in talking, I would not force them to do so. Towards the last month of the fieldwork, two participants stopped engaging with me When I tried to approach them at home, they would leave. Later one of them told me that she did not participate since it was very hot, she was bored and did not feel like talking. The other girl disengaged with the research as she did not want to answer questions anymore.

4.9.3 Protection and confidentiality

The research ensured the protection of the participants' views and anonymity, keeping their information confidential. In accordance with standard ethical practice, I have anonymised the names of all participants while writing. During the fieldwork, I guaranteed the participants, that their information would not be shared with others in the community without their consent.

There are limits of confidentiality (Williamson et al., 2005), for instance when a situation arises where a child discusses abuse or reveals information about any potential 'harm' to herself/himself or others. In my research, I informed the children of the limitations of their right to confidentiality. If the limits of confidentiality are not discussed with children then the whole issue of informed consent could be questioned (Williamson et al., 2005).

As a researcher, I encountered this situation once. While the children were drawing and discussing their everyday lives, they casually mentioned that some boys and girls play in the semi-constructed buildings adding, *vo ganda khelte hain* (they play dirty) and remove their underwear. Since my research was based in a UK University and the fieldwork was in India, I considered the ethical guidelines regarding child protection in both countries. The ethical committee at the University of Leeds does not provide any fixed protocols for situations where there may be potential harm to the participants and takes a case by case decision (University of Leeds Research Ethics Policy 9.0). In India, there are National Ethical Guidelines for Biomedical Research Involving Children (2017), but they focus on research in the area of health (Morrow, 2013). It was difficult to find adequate guidance in a single set of ethical guidelines, as they do not keep pace with the theoretical shifts in thinking, such as the new ways of conceptualising childhood (Davies, 2008b). In both countries, the obligations of a researcher with regards to child protection were unclear (Williamson et al., 2005).

In the given situation, I also asked the children if they had informed the adults in their families. Some said yes, adding that their parents scold those children. I told them that I would discuss this with their parents too. After discussing it with my supervisors, I talked to the head of the NGO, who advised me to not intervene directly, since the community could be alarmed and might not be receptive. When the NGO fieldworker had her monthly meeting with the villagers to discusses different issues, this was also added to the agenda. The

organisation also had booklets and trained staff to talk about child protection (Figure 4.5). Since the fieldworker was accepted by the community as a trusted person, she had a general discussion with the community, talking about the possibility of children's safety being compromised and how parents should be alert and taking care. Since I was not present at the meeting, I was unable to capture the parents' response, but in the feedback from the fieldworker she informed me that they were interested in discussing it and ensuring their children's safety. During the rest of the time in the field, I did not hear children discuss such incidences again.
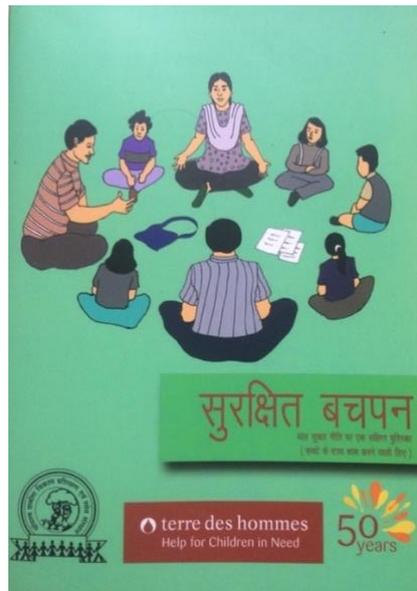
Figure 4.5: Child protection manual for fieldworkers used by the NGO Chaupal (Hindi version)

Figure 4.6: Rights of the child booklet used by the NGO Chaupal

4.9.4 Awareness of the culture and context

A range of literature has emerged regarding research with children in the Global South. There may be different understandings of children in each country, constructed and reflected by

culture, religion and history (Twam-Danso, 2009). While broad shared ethics practices are crucial, there is a need for flexibility that can be applied to a given context or situation. It is important to understand the local contexts in undertaking research with children and families in environments that change rapidly, whether economically, environmentally or politically (Morrow, 2013). In the case of India in general, and Chhattisgarh specifically, ethnicity and caste were highly sensitive and political issues and needed consideration while conducting research. The role of men/boys and women/girls in the families was also more rigidly defined in the community. In the village, the children assumed social and economic responsibilities at a young age, like taking care of younger siblings, assisting in the household, agricultural or income-generating activities to contribute to the family livelihood (O'Kane, 2003; Woodhead, 1998; Hart and Tyrer, 2006). While facilitating children's participation, as a researcher, I needed to consider the appropriateness of different methods and to keep in mind if it was time-consuming for the children and adults who had to work or attend school. Therefore, I tried to do my fieldwork in a manner that caused minimum disruption to their daily activities, doing my observations around their everyday activities and engaging with them while they continued working or when they were resting.

It was also important to be aware of social and cultural norms as an outsider to the community. I did my best to ensure that I did not offend anyone in the field through any of my actions. Even though I was cautious, one such incident took place which briefly impacted my relationship with children. There was a misunderstanding with the mother of one of the participants, who did not approve of my behaviour. As a result, some of the children stopped talking and responding to me. On inquiry, other girls informed me that they had been asked to maintain distance from me. One participant also expressed her disappointment, saying she had not expected it of me. The misunderstanding was resolved with the help of the NGO fieldworker and the *mukhiya's* family. With some convincing, the children also started conversing with me again. During this period, I looked for literature and similar experiences, but I did not come across any such incidents in people's experiences, so it was difficult to find support from others' experience and literature. At that time, the support of the NGO and the fieldworker was crucial in restoring my relationship with the participants.

4.9.5 Safety as a challenge

One of the main challenges of being a female researcher in the field was safety. I discuss this here as it impacted my work and I made different decisions based on it. During the visits, I recognised safety as a concern, especially as I was from a different city. I was advised by the NGO and the community to leave the village around 4 or 4.30 pm each day, around the time of the last bus to the city, as there were a lot of men travelling on the highway on motorbikes and cars who would create trouble, and there was a forest on both sides of the highway making it very deserted. There was always a member of the *mukhiya's* family, his wife or daughter, who would accompany me to the bus stop on the highway and wait till I got a bus, and on some occasions, the children accompanied me to the bus stop. These timings and dependence on people to accompany me made my fieldwork slightly restricted as I would have to take a bus ideally before dark. People in the village also asked me to avoid coming on festivals, when men drink copious amounts of alcohol.

Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the methodology I adopted for research with children, to understand their hardships and risks and how they negotiate these in their everyday living. I adopt ethnography as a suitable approach, to create a sustained engagement with children's lives allowing for multiple perspective. With this approach, as I was able to spend an extensive period of time in the village, and it allowed for methodological slowness (Massey, 2002) that helped me gain deeper insights into children's lives.

I introduce the participants and the research setting and discuss the experiences of doing fieldwork. Throughout this chapter, I emphasise the role of the researcher reflexivity, including in accessing the field, building a rapport and addressing power. Using reflexive ethnography as an approach helped me use different methods, including observations, conversations and visual methods like drawing and photography, based on the suitability of the participant and the context, a discussion that I take up in Chapter 8, section 8.3.3.

I systematically document the presentation of fieldnotes, the process of data analysis and writing, providing illustrations for the reader. Through presenting issues in ethics and complexities in research and practices, I explored different ways of doing research with

children. Since there were no set rules (Christensen and James, 2008), as a researcher, I critically engaged in discourse on ethical practices during fieldwork with children and communities.

Having discussed the approach, methods and ethics I used for the research, in the next three chapters, I present the analytical data from the fieldwork, discussing children's experiences with agency through interactions with their physical space, everyday materials and in relation to their social relationships. The next chapter explores children's everyday spaces and how it enables (or not) children's agency.

Chapter 5: Children's agency in relation to encounters with everyday spaces

Introduction

During my time in the village, I observed children in various spaces of their everyday lives, looking at the impact of these spaces on their lives and how children, in turn, impact these spaces. In the chapter, I explore children's agency with relation to their everyday physical spaces in the village including the home, neighbourhood and the school. Spyrou (2018) argues that situating agency in its spatial and temporal contexts allows the exploration of its varied manifestations. I align my understanding of space with Massey (2005), who views space as relational and as an interconnection between people and things. I also align with Holloway and Valentine (2000b, p.18) who argue that the spaces of everyday life are 'produced through their webs of connections within wider global social processes'. Moving along with the discussion in Chapter 3, Section 3.8.1, I treat space as dynamic, non-linear and interconnected. For this chapter, I rely on the discussion of space that looks at it as interacting, always becoming, transforming and being transformed by the bodies that move through them in a state of 'on-goingness' (Horton and Kraftl, 2006a, p.85; Anderson, 2012).

As Massey (2005) elaborates, spaces are produced through social practices. I explore the complex ways in which children manifest their agency in these everyday spaces through their practices, paying attention to the complexities, intricacies, tensions and ambiguities of children's lives (Tisdall and Punch, 2012). A spatial lens further helps to understand the non-linearity of children's lives (Hackett et al., 2015). In this chapter, I engage with looking at the everydayness of children's lives, their practices and children's embodied interactions (Horton and Kraftl, 2006a). I explore how spaces were brought to being through children's interaction and relationships with the human and non-human (Djohari et al., 2018).

The first section explores the various spaces children occupy and how their agency is enabled through and in interaction with these spaces including home, school and neighbourhood. The chapter further explores how children engage with work in these different spaces, that enabled(or not) their agency. In the next section, I look at children's engagement with their physical environment, which I illustrate using engagement with water as an example. This is followed by a section where I discuss children's relational understanding of rural and urban space. The final section explores children's access and mobility within spaces that are

considered risky by the community. The chapter aims to look at instances from children's lives, exploring children's agency through spaces where they develop strategies for taking, negotiating, handling risks and hardships (Van Der Burgt, 2015).

5.1 Agency in and through spaces

Children's construction of space in the village was comprised largely of places they occupied, this included the fields, school, neighbourhood; places where they could not go, like the Oraon hamlet due to restrictions posed by caste in the society; and where they should not go, like the jungle, highway, playing out in the heat or climbing trees, due to restrictions posed by adults in the community. The children travelled through these spaces on foot and mostly travelled around areas close to their homes. This section illustrates the ways in which children's lives were constructed through these sites of everyday life (Holloway and Valentine, 2000a). Here, I look at the various spaces — including school, home, neighbourhood and fields — that children were a part of and how these places influenced their agencies.

5.1.1 Home and neighbourhood

Children were very much present in most parts of the house, as there was no fixed space for them. The houses in the village were small, with a small room for storage and cooking and an L-shaped room surrounding it, where the family members slept, ate or watched television. Some homes only had one room. There was usually some space outside the house — fenced or unfenced — where families, especially children, spent most of their time. As there was not a lot of indoor space, children mostly spend time outside. At home, Mani spent most of her time sitting under the mango tree, working, playing or sleeping.

Seasons and temperature also had an impact on the everyday activity and movement of both children and adults. During the summer children spent more time indoors watching television. The parents also encouraged them to stay indoors, as Reema's mother said, *jab gham kare hain toh TV dekhe badhiya hai* (when it is hot, they should watch TV, that is good). Even the adults spent the afternoons indoors during summer.

> After cooking in the kitchen, Reema's mother lay on the floor and covered her head with a saree to take a nap while the children were watching television.

<div align="right">[Fieldnotes, 8th May 2018]</div>

Both the children and the adults in the community spent time resting and relaxing, especially during the summer afternoons, either by sleeping or sitting in the shade indoors or under a tree with other members of the village. The families also collected wood for the monsoon during the summer, as it was difficult to go out and collect any wood during the rains. Additionally, if the logs were wet it would also be difficult to light them on fire.

In the village, adult needs of space were prioritised over those of children. When Mani's brother came back from work and wanted to watch television with his friends, Mani and her younger siblings had to leave the place without arguing. But in other instances, the children would continue sitting or hide the remote. This example illustrates Aitken (1994) and Sibley's (1995) argument that the home is an important site for the negotiation of adult–child power relations. Home was a space where children practised negotiations with adults through domestic responsibilities, which may subsequently support their negotiations with parents over their use of spaces outside the home, as also observed by Valentine (2004). These negotiations with adults were practised through resistance and compliance, mainly through doing work or refusing to work. This contributed to their agencies within well understood hierarchies and deference.

Parents beliefs and constrained agency

Children's spatial movements were also restricted by parents in response to their beliefs about the village being a dangerous place for children (Valentine, 1997). Nisha was not allowed to go to the pond to bathe with her other friends as her mother believed that there was a *bhoot* (ghost) in the pond and that might be harmful to her child. Nonetheless, despite her mother's concern, Nisha would sometimes go to the pond with her friends. She would ensure that Mita her cousin, was with her, so she was accompanied by someone her mother trusted. This way she did not completely disregard her mother's wishes and trust, at the same time exercising her agency to go to the pond.

Through observing interactions within families, conversations with children, parents and the villagers, I came to understand the perceived dangers for children in the village. These

included extreme weather like heat, speeding cars making the roads unsafe and the fear of strangers as they might abduct children for human sacrifice, for religious purposes. During my time in the village, conversations with children and parents revealed that as part of a ritual, human lives, especially children, were offered in prayers to the god before the construction of a building. This was done due to the belief that it would help strengthen the foundations of the building. This piece of information was further confirmed with the NGO fieldworkers and by newspaper reports (Choudhury, 2016). These perceived threats to children's safety restricted children's movements, structuring their time and activities in the village, constraining their agency in their physical space. Yet children, especially boys, found ways to negotiate them and go out. Even though parents would disapprove or get angry, most did not punish children in any form and some parents would let them go saying they are boys, they don't listen. The girls also found ways to travel outside the home, though it was mostly in groups. They themselves preferred to go out together, especially at night, as they wanted to avoid the danger of unknown elements. They would try and limit themselves to familiar spaces or spaces close to home. Girls also ventured outside the homes on the pretext of work, like washing clothes and filling water. Similar to Punch's (2000) observations in rural Bolivia, children had boundaries set by adults, that would limit their possibilities, yet within these constraints, they asserted their autonomy and played an active role in their social worlds.

5.1.2 Agency in formal and informal spaces in the school

This section explores the ways in which children experience, interpret and negotiate their agencies in different spaces within the school, with relation to the others. There was one primary school in the hamlet (Chapter 2, Section 2.5.3). The formal spaces in the village school included the classroom and playground. The informal spaces were the kitchen and the backyard in the school, where children played without much adult supervision.

The formal structures of the institution largely made it restrictive for the children to produce and perform agency, though they took charge by being responsible for the act of locking up and opening the school. The responsibility to lock up was given to Reema by the teacher, who ensured that she was the first person to arrive and the last person to leave the school. She took this responsibility seriously, making sure all the materials and equipment were in the

proper place at the beginning of the day, preparing the space for the school to function. At the end of the day, she along with the other children would roll the mats, put the chairs back, close the windows, lock the toilet and ensure no cattle were in the school compound before she locked the gates. She instructed other children to help her, and was aware of her role and recognised that locking the school premises was her responsibility. I bring this discussion again in Chapter 6, section 6.4.1, with relation to keys as everyday material objects.

Similar to Ansell's (1999) observation of the southern African schooling systems, the school was also seen as a site for the reproduction of gender identities. The school in the village was seen as a space where gender roles and identities were being continuously created and recreated by the children and the adults. The school had two teachers, one male, one female and there was usually another female teacher from the middle school who spent most of her time sitting and talking to the other teachers. During the preparations for the celebration of India's Republic Day in January, the children were asked to clean the school. As illustrated in Figure 5.1, only the girls were applying cow dung on the floor on the schoolyard, to smoothen the surface and make it look clean, whereas the boys stood and watched, occasionally passing the bucket of water when asked. Two older girls took the lead, directing the others on what to bring and instructing them where to apply the cow dung next. The teachers also encouraged the girls, by saying they did this at home and knew how to do it well. The girls also took initiative and performed their agency within a more formal setup, by taking leadership, instructing the others, scolding them when the task was not performed well.

Figure 5.1: Children preparing the school for Republic Day Celebration [Photographs, 24th January 2018]

The girls mostly complied with the tasks in school, but at times expressed resistance, and at other times complained about the task that was given. While being summoned, many times the children did not respond immediately, especially if they were engaged in playing. Mani while washing the teacher's utensils when they were not around said, *kitna tel khate hain, mota jayenge* (how much oil do they consume, they will get fat) and then started laughing. She was unable to refuse to the task but in her own way found a means of expression by criticising their lifestyles and choices, that were different from her own. This illustrates how the school as a structure reinforces gender roles, and how girls tried to resist and redefine activities through humour and by expressing their opinion.

Children as social agents have a 'range of strategies and tactics that enable them to resist hegemonic practices established both by adults and by other children' (Skelton, 2009, p.1437). As the children were unable to practice agency in the more formal spaces where there was authority and control by the adult teachers, on days when the teachers were sitting outside they preferred to play in the backyard. Here they could freely play, away from the gaze of the teacher who would provide suggestions about what the children could play, how to play or try to introduce rules in their games. While away from the teachers' gaze, the children could run freely, make noise and their bodies were less restricted. Therefore even

within the spaces of school, including the ground that was meant for children's play, the children found and preferred the backyard that was relatively less supervised and was not frequently visited by the teachers. This observation was similar to the one made by researchers (Ward, 1990; Sibley, 1991) who have argued that there is a difference between the formally designated playgrounds for children and open spaces and landscapes where the children actually prefer to play.

Apart from the influence of the adult authority and their negotiations with them, within the school structure, some children also experienced less agency due to social structures like caste, as the school had children from both the Pahari Korwa and the Oraon communities, illustrated in the following excerpt.

> The children inside the classroom were engaged in different activities including writing or drawing on their slate, looking through their books, and playing and running around the room. There was some noise in the other classroom and we heard some children. Indrani went to check and came back, reporting, *ladai ho rahi hai. Suraj log Reema ko maar rahe hain* (there is a fight taking place. Suraj and others are hitting Reema). Then she added, *main isko bachane ja rahi hoon* (I am going to save her). A while later she returned followed by Reema who was crying. Indrani explained that the argument happened while they were playing snakes and ladders.
>
> Mani said, *hum inke saath nahi khelte kyunki ye maarte hain* (we don't play with them because they hit). The other children comforted her by cursing Suraj, Kabir and Seema behind their back. Mani added *vo Oraon hain. Us para ke bacche hamein tang karte hain* (they are Oraons. The children from the other hamlet trouble us). Later in the day when the fight had settled, when no one was looking, Reema punctured the tyre of Suraj's cycle which was parked in one corner of the schoolyard.
>
> [Audio embedded in fieldnotes, 7th February 2018]

The excerpt above explores the children's relationship with their peers in the classroom when the teacher was not present. In this situation, while the children were playing, a fight took place between Reema, and Suraj and his friends. Indrani reported the fight to the children sitting in the other room. While reporting it to her friends, she used the term '*Suraj log*' (Suraj and others), here indicating the difference in the community, since Suraj and the other children who were beating Reema were Oraons. There were instances of bullying and children experienced hierarchy with peers who were from a different indigenous community, which was economically better. The children were aware of such treatment being associated

with a difference in their socio-economic positioning. Mani also explained that since they were Oraon, Pahari Korwa children did not play with them. During the fight, Indrani also tried to intervene, and all the children tried to stop the fight, but it was evident that the fight became between children from the Pahari Korwa and children from the Oraon community. Though Reema was hit by Suraj and his friends, she did not engage much during the face-to-face fight, when they were hitting her, as she did not feel equipped physically. She did, however, take revenge in her own way later, by puncturing Suraj's cycle tyre. She was well aware that this would inconvenience him, since his house was in the other hamlet, and a few minutes cycling distance. The absence of the teacher from the school premises transformed the space, as power shifted and was divided between children from the Oraon and Pahari Korwa community. The engagement between children of different communities led to disagreements, fights and displays of power. Children appropriated these spaces differently and explored different ways of enabling their agency.

Children's opportunities to exercise agency differed between spaces, according to their varying social positions in these spaces. Reflecting on her work in rural Bolivia, Punch observes that children may have more negotiating power at home, where they are mutually involved alongside parents in the 'survivability' of the home, compared to a lesser sense of interdependence between students and teachers, which reduces children's 'negotiating power' (Punch, 2004). Through these extracts, I discuss the different ways in which children's agency was enabled (or not) in the school, a setting that was structurally more restrictive. As Skelton (2009, p.1438) argues, children 'sometimes challenge and transform hegemonic social patterns and power relations'. This section helps to understand power as fluid, performed and open to negotiations (Woodyer, 2008), making it essential to examine it in the given context (Holt, 2004).

5.1.3 Agency through 'carved' spaces

The term 'carved spaces' has been inspired from anthropological and sociological discussions referring to children carving out spaces of individual assertion, independent of adults (Durham, 2008; Jeffery, 2012). Here I acknowledge the relational and social nature of children's agency. In the following excerpt, Jamni, Paro and Indrani were standing near the corner of a field near a tree and discussing their 'secrets' with each other. I discuss the

following excerpt, as it is a telling example of how children carved out spaces for themselves in the field.

> Jamni and Paro were interested in asking me about my romantic relationships and then told me about the boys they liked and the ones who liked them. Jamni added, when I had gone to graze the cattle one boy proposed[6] that I be his girlfriend, by writing on the back of a bull. As they were talking, they saw a man approaching and walk past the field and quickly became silent and signalled me to keep quiet as well. As soon as the man went past they resumed their conversation.

[Fieldnotes, 26th January 2018]

In the above excerpt, the children selected a particular spot in the field, ensuring there were no adults in the vicinity and then discussed their romantic interests with each other. As soon as an adult approached they all stopped speaking till the person was far enough not to be able to hear anything. Places such as homes, schools, playgrounds provide relatively well-boundaried contexts for children's lives (Cunningham, 1991), and only a limited sense of agency is carved out due to adult presence and supervision. Therefore, children often preferred less readily regulated spaces to 'hang out' in the village where they expressed themselves, away from adult supervision.

In this instance, the children were discussing a secret they did not want to share with other adults in the community, therefore they found a safe place. They exercised their agency in choosing places, deciding when to speak and whom to speak with. Other children also used these spaces to talk about their family situation, for instance, Neelam narrated that her sister-in-law made her do many domestic chores, and she often had to skip school. Neelam would go sit by herself or talk to a friend about how she felt.

Rasmussen (2004, p.166) makes a distinction between 'places for children' and 'children's places'. Places for children are the adult-designed and designated spaces for children, whereas the children's places are the ones that children create for themselves. In my study, these spaces included the half-constructed Indira Awaas Yojna homes (a government housing scheme, these homes were usually close to their mud houses but not in the supervision of adults unless there was construction work taking place); a far-off tree in the village; roofs of

---

[6] In the Indian context the word proposed in a romantic context usually means 'to ask someone out'.

the school buildings; spaces near the pond; a corner of the field where children would meet others, sit for some time, play, talk or discuss their love interests or other secrets. During fieldwork, the children took me to these spaces as they were important places children identified with. With no adults in the vicinity, children freely expressed themselves to each other. The games children played in these spaces, including *ghar ghar* (home-home), *shaadi* (wedding), *pooja* (prayers), *mehmaan* (guests over for a tea party), contributed in rehearsing their roles in society. In these places, children were free to enact scenes that frequently referenced their everyday life at home and school, with a joking take on the state of affairs (Bowen, 2015). The children cherished these places as here they were away from adult gaze and supervision. Such places afford greater agency in the use of children's time and are freer from adult control (Cunningham, 1991). These spaces were not hidden from adults but were not necessarily occupied by them. These spaces were also important as they were seen as time off from their routine life and work. As Paro explained, *ghaam mein kaam kar ke thak jati hoon toh kabhi kabhi wahan ja ke baithti hoon. Hawa bohot accha hai. baith ke sootati hoon* (in the heat, when I am tired working, sometimes I go up [on top of the school roof] there and sit. The breeze is nice [there]. I rest there).

5.2 Children's agency in spaces of work

Here I discuss children's spatial practices at work, that enabled their agency. This discussion of space and work is important, as there is little attention given to children's use of spaces in work. Through this section, I illustrate how children's identities and agencies are made and re(made) through different sites in their everyday (Holloway and Valentine, 2000a). This helps understand how spatiality matters in the construction of childhood.

I choose to discuss agency through work, as a large part of the children's day and movement in the village was structured around work. As illustrated in the following drawing activity where Mani, 10, describes 'two things I like to do in a day and two things I don't'.

Figure 5.2: Mani, 10, 'Things I like and dislike' [Drawing, 1st May 2018]

Mani explained her drawing (Figure 5.2) saying that she enjoys carrying water from the bore well (top left), and carrying mud for the construction of the house (top right). She also likes to make oil from the *mahua* tree (bottom left) and to spread the log for drying to store for the rainy season (bottom right). All the likes she expressed were related to work. She further added that she did not enjoy washing utensils at night, *raat ko bhada manjhna accha nahi lagta. Mera aankh band ho raha hota hai. Fir nahi karti* (I do not like cleaning utensils at night, as my eyes are closing, so then I don't do it). Even though she enjoyed doing different chores, she had a preference for some. She did not like cleaning the utensils at night because she was usually too tired and sleepy. Here she exercises her agency by taking control of her time and refusing to perform the tasks at a particular time that was expected from her.

> In another instance, Mani, Sakhi, and Nisha with their siblings went to a potato field with their sickle and bags, the field had already been harvested and they were looking for leftover potatoes that may have been missed out by the field owner.

[Fieldnotes, 25th January 2018]

The children were navigating the field to look for potatoes for their family's meal. Here the field was seen in relation to what they will be able to extract from the space while digging. Since the field had been harvested, and children were looking for leftover potatoes, they had to look carefully and particular areas of the field with more potatoes attracted more interest than the others. Their understanding of the space, that developed through their familiarity with the space and observing other adults work, enabled their agency. They also exercised their agency by contributing to the family in a productive manner. As Panelli et al. (2007) also observes, children's work in rural areas is important in both productive and reproductive household tasks, contributing to household maintenance in paid and unpaid ways. Further, children's work in the village can be seen as a form of their agency (Lieten, 2008), as through their work, they helped ease the economic poverty of their family.

The following excerpt from the fieldnotes and the photographs are further used as an example to illustrate how children, if not completely avoiding work, found ways in-between to resist and exercise their agency. Indrani and Mani were helping their mother separate the rice from its chaff in a *dheki* (a simple machine made with a wooden log), in preparation for the family dinner.

> The *dheki* comprised of a hole in the ground where the rice was placed, and a wooden log that was operated by foot. Once their mother cleaned the place, the paddy was put in the hole and like a seesaw mechanism Mani and Indrani started pressing the log from one side with their feet, when it would fall on the other side, it would hit the crop, and a continuous movement slowly separated the chaff from the grain. Both Mani and Indrani were doing the work, continuously pressing the log. Indrani would occasionally stop in the middle to catch a breath or rest her leg as it was strenuous work, but Mani continued tirelessly. After the first round, she pointed to her head saying, *itna paseena aa jata hai* (it sweats so much). Then while their mother was removing the rice from the hole, Mani quickly went inside the house to watch TV and take a break while their mother was preparing the rice for the second round of separation. They were called out again to work. Indrani was having fun jumping on the log, so after a while, their mother asked her to get off and Mani still continued.

> [Photographs and fieldnotes, 1st June 2018]

Figure 5.3: (L) Mani and Indrani working on the *dhek*i to separate rice from its cover (R) Their mother putting rice grain in the *dheki*

The work of separating the chaff from the rice was physically strenuous and tiring but both siblings found different methods of engaging with the task and finding their way through it. As observed in the photographs, while their mother put the rice in the hole, both siblings worked in synchronisation with each other to ensure the continuous and rhythmic movement of the log falling on the paddy. Initially, both Mani and Indrani were smiling and enjoying the activity, but slowly their energy wore off. Mani explained that the work was difficult and tiring by pointing to the sweat on her forehead and Indrani started to take breaks. She also leaned on the cycle placed next to the wall to seek support.

Both the sisters performed the same task differently. Initially, Indrani worked diligently but later started to perform the job with less care, laughing and jumping, slowing the pace of their work. Finally, her mother had to ask her to stop working. On the other hand, Mani continued to work with her mother from the beginning to the end but found ways in between to take breaks and run away to watch television. Children's agency at work was created through a web of connections with the wider spatial, material and social world. Even though children had to engage in work — both at home and outside — they found subtle ways of resisting that enabled their agency, which is also observed in the works of Katz (1991), Punch (2001) and Dyson (2008) in South Sudan, Bolivia and India respectively. In all the three contexts,

children used their independent time within work, to play, similar to this excerpt, where Mani would run to play in-between work. Katz (2004, p.61) coined the term 'playful work' and 'workful play'. This reinforces the argument that play and work are not opposites, but meaningful aspects of many children's lives, contributing to their material spatialities (Skelton, 2009).

Children used these tasks to exercise spatial freedom and take control of their time (Katz, 1994). For instance, it was observed that children taking the cattle for grazing would sometimes go further into the fields, away from the parents' and adults' supervision and securing time off, where they would sit and talk to each other. Neelam who stayed with her cousin brother,[7] sister-in-law, their children and uncle said, *jab garu charati hoon, main apni puskat le ke jaati hoon, garu cheri charati hoon aur parhti hoon* (When I take the cattle for grazing, I carry my book with me. I graze the cattle and read). Neelam was aware that the task was unavoidable, therefore, she combined her school work, that she prioritised, along with it. She found ways of doing things she wanted to, away from adult supervision, even when she had to work alongside. This discussion also helps think of space with relation to children's social relationships and materiality in their everyday lives (further discussed in Chapter 6 and 7).

5.3 Exploring agency through children's physical environment

Children in the village spent a large amount of time outdoors engaging with their physical environment, especially while playing games, plucking fruits from the trees, walking to the pond or sitting under the tree. Nightingale (2003) argues that people's environments are not passive backgrounds, but play an active role in their lives. Similarly, Ingold (2000) also stressed the importance of the ecological context in which people live. The following section first discusses children's engagement with their physical environment that contributed to their agency, either by enabling or constraining it. I then discuss their engagements with water to understanding their entanglements with the physical space.

---

[7] Cousin brother is a common terminology used for referring to a cousin in India. Gender is an important feature in kinship terminology in Hindi. Where the repertoire is considered inadequate from a local perspective, it is common to substitute local kin terms in English (Chaudhary, 2007).

5.3.1 Children's knowledge and perspective of their physical environment

In the following transcript from the field, as children were playing in the backyard. Mani was tending to the potatoes they had sowed in the school backyard near the borewell. I discuss this excerpt as it illustrates Mani's investment in the potato crop and her certainty towards predicting weather patterns based on her experience and knowledge gathered from the community, both adults and peers.

> Ambika (looking up at the sky): *Lagta hai aaj baarish hogi* (seems like it will rain today).
> Mani (while digging the ground for her potato): *Nahi* (no).
> Ambika: *Toh baarish kab aayegi* (so, when will it rain)?
> Mani: *Jab arhar katega* (when the lentil crop will be cut).
> Ambika: *Vo toh ho gaya na?* (isn't it done)?
> Mani: *Mere ghar mein abhi ho raha hai* (my family is still doing it).

[Audio transcription, 7th February 2018]

The excerpt demonstrates Mani's firm knowledge of her physical space and environment. All children in the village displayed this knowledge about their surroundings, including names of plants, trees and herbs. They were aware of their medicinal properties and how these were beneficial and used in their everyday. Some knowledge was passed on by the elders in the community and others through conversations with peers. There was a sense of security and pride displayed while talking about the environment and their symbiotic relation to it. They were aware and felt connected and had firm opinions in relation to their environment. Most children expressed concern and displeasure towards the cutting of trees in the village *phulwari* (a place with flowers and trees), a piece of land at the beginning of the village with a dense cover of trees. Children often referred to it in their conversations about the village. The photograph in Figure 5.4 illustrates Reema sitting on the mango tree outside her house. Her body was wrapped around the branch and she placed her head on it and added, *mujhe ped kadte dekhna accha nahi lagta* (I do not like looking at trees being cut) [Fieldnotes, 8th May 2018]. Similarly, Mani also raised concern as she pointed to a guava tree and commented that it was very sweet but she did not know why they were cutting it. She, like the other children in the village, was unable to reason why these trees that provided shade, fruits and cool breeze were being cut. By paying attention to the embodied nature of children's practices, I was able to attend to the intimate and intense nature of children's engagement with their everyday environment (Woodyer, 2008; Jones, 2000).

Figure 5.4: Reema sitting on and embracing the mango tree while expressing her love for trees
[Photograph, 8th May 2018]

When children were asked to draw 'four things I do in a day', some of these drawings expressed children's thoughts and concerns about their immediate environment, especially the need for cleaner spaces. Here I use two drawings by the children that expressed these concerns.

Figure 5.5: Paro, 13, Throwing garbage in the dustbin

Figure 5.6: Reema, 10, Telling her mother to clean

In both drawings, the children expressed a desire for cleaner surroundings. In Figure 5.5 Paro said, *main ghar ke bahar kachra phenkne ja rahi hoon* (I am leaving the house to put garbage outside in the dustbin). Here she emphasises her active role in keeping her house clean by throwing the garbage outside. In Figure 5.6. Reema explains, *main mummy ko bol rahi hoon, yahan inta ganda kyun hai, saaf kyun nahi kiya* (pointing to the garbage, I am asking my mother, why is it so dirty here, and she should clean). Cleanliness and dirt was an important concern for the children in the village. How they viewed and desired their homes to be was also expressed in terms of cleanliness. Children were conscious of the waste generated and its disposal. Unlike De Hoop's (2017) observation in a village in Tamil Nadu, India, plastic consumption and waste had not infiltrated the community completely despite being closer to the city. The families produced cups from leaves, mats with dried grass and carried durable plastic or cloth bags to purchase vegetables.

Children exhibited agency by forming opinions and expressing views on how they want to see their surroundings — both immediate and the larger village. The first example of expressing concern over felling trees is different from the desire for cleaner spaces. With the trees being cut in the *phulwari* and the village, the children realised their constrained agency, where they were unable to intervene or change anything directly. But in their more immediate surroundings at home or in the neighbourhood, they exercised their agency to make spaces clean and green, since most were responsible for cleaning at home. They swept the house regularly and kept the surroundings clean. My observations were similar to the ones made by Phoenix et al. (2018) in their book *Environment in the lives of children and families*, where they reveal that though children's agency was constrained within the generational hierarchies across different spaces, children also did not fit into adults' notions of being irresponsible, innocent or vulnerable. In this case, this is demonstrated by their direct and indirect involvement in their everyday spaces.

5.3.2 Children's entanglements with water

Water and the practices associated with it provided me with rich opportunities to understand children's rhythmic patterns and spatial engagements and experiences in the village (Woodyer, 2008), since a significant part of their everyday lives revolved around activities related to water and water bodies. The following excerpt is from a hot summer day, when the

borewell in the primary school had dried up. Mani, Reema, Indrani along with the school cook Ramya, collected a few buckets and pots from the school kitchen to fill water.

The children, along with Ramya, carried the buckets and pots in their hands and balanced some on their head, walking slowly towards the borewell near Reema's house, that was about a 5 minute walk from the school. At the borewell, Reema switched on the pump and they first washed their hands and feet as it was very hot and dry. They then filled the water with a pipe that was attached from the borewell. Reema's brother Shiv, who had not gone to school that day, was standing close by and watching them fill the pots. Mani looked at him and said, *na gae Shiv, dekh raha hai* (why are you standing there and looking Shiv)?, since he was not helping them. Shiv only smiled and did not say anything. Ramya added, imitating one of the teachers who had asked them to get water, *boli, thanda paani peeyenge. ghar se na lana chahiye. Yahan kitni dikkat hoti hai* (she says, we will drink cold water. They should carry water from home, no? There is so much difficulty here). After filling the pots and buckets, they helped each other place the big ones on their heads and carried the smaller ones in their hands. Mani was carrying and balancing the heaviest one, which was a 20-litre drum. They walked back slowly, ensuring the pots were balanced well. After reaching the school, Ramya offered the water to the teachers in a jug and they asked her if the water was clean or not, adding they would only drink it if it was from a particular borewell.

[Audio embedded in fieldnotes and photographs, 22nd June 2018]

Figure 5.7: (L) Children filling water at the borewell and (R) Mani carrying the pot back

The preceding excerpt and photographs construct a picture of the everyday lives of children, especially girls in the village. Discussions around water formed a large part of village life for both adults and children. This was observed more during the summer months when the water bodies would dry up due to extreme heat. Though Chhattisgarh is a state which gets abundant rainfall, the village had limited sources of water, which became more difficult to access during the summer as the pond, well and most of the borewells dried up. As the village was on a slope it was difficult to drill deeper for a borewell to access groundwater, which also required a lot of money.

In the village the children's time, movement and conversations were often structured around accessing water for the family, school or for themselves. In the above excerpt, the children had been asked by the teacher to bring water for them and as there was no water in the school borewell, the children had to travel further away from the school to access water. This changed the way children accessed space and impacted their movement in the village. They could not refuse the teacher's request owing to social hierarchy. Therefore, through conversations among themselves, they expressed their feelings, sometimes through humour and sometimes through anger, similar to as the school cook Ramya did when she remarked that the teachers should carry their own water, knowing the condition of water here. Expectations of children were also gendered, the boys were not usually asked to fetch water, whereas the girls were expected to. The scarcity of water especially impacted the girls, as all the girls involved in the research were responsible for filling and carrying water for their families twice a day. At school, they were expected to fill water for drinking, cleaning utensils and for the teachers. This illustrates the notion that spatial practices, gender and experiences of childhood are intersectional concerns (further elaborated in Chapter 8, Section 8.2.4).

Most of the children's drawings also illustrate filling water as one of the major tasks that girls performed in their everyday. In Figure 5.8, Reema draws herself filling water and carrying a water pot back home on her head, in Figure 5.9, Indrani draws herself pumping water from the borewell and in Figure 5.10, Sakhi is carrying water from the borewell.
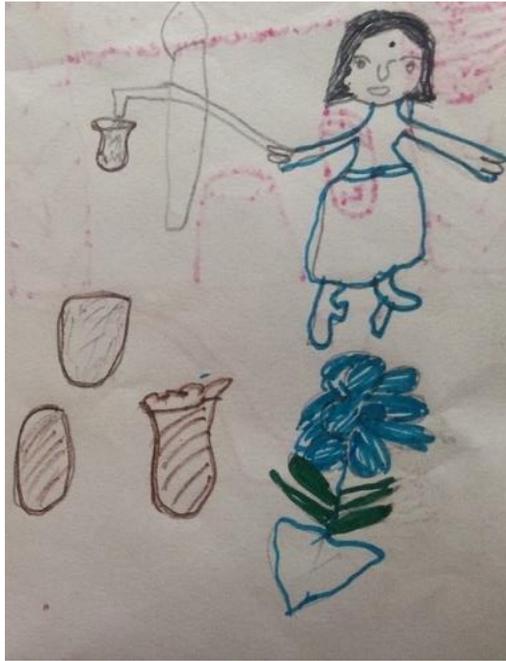
Figure 5.8: Reema, 10 Drawing and carrying water [Drawings, 19th April 2018]
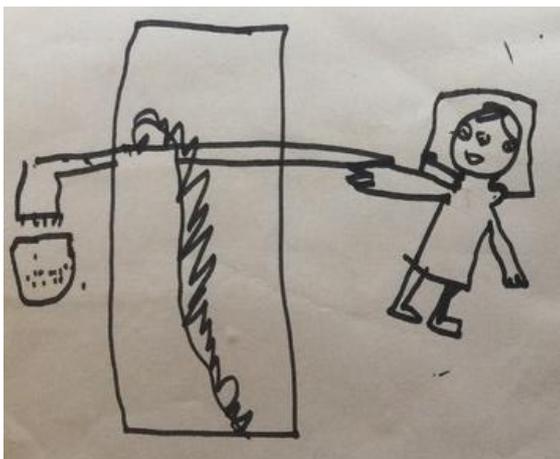
Figure 5.9: Indrani, 8 [Drawing, 20th April 2018] Figure 5.10: Sakhi, 8 [Drawing, 1st May 2018]

Girls usually went to fill water together in groups with their friends or siblings. As Paro explains, *haan dikkat toh hoti hai, par kya karein karna padta hai. Dost ke saath baat karte jaate hain* (yes, it is difficult, but we have to do it. We go with friends, we talk while we walk). As it was habitual, it became an engrained practice. Children recognised that there was not much choice but tried to make the situation enjoyable by going with friends. The responsibility of bringing water also added to children's mobility around in the village, facilitating movement and access to spaces. It provided children with the agency to get away from spaces like the house or the school when they wanted to.

Due to hierarchy and fixed gender roles, girls were unable to refuse the task of filling water, but in spaces with their peers, they were at times able to resist these roles, negotiate and be able to express not wanting to do them. In the school, during meal times the children had to fill buckets of water to wash their hands and utensils, and for drinking. Usually, the girls would fill the water and the boys would not help. The girls, while eating, would tell the boys to not use the water they filled for themselves, instructing them to fill their own water. Those who finished eating their food first would guard the water buckets ensuring that the boys did not use or used very little water they filled for themselves.

The school was a space where there was a possibility for the girls to assert themselves with the boys. Even though there were fixed gender expectations from girls and boys, it was easier to make these negotiations as there were spaces in the school mostly unsupervised by the adult teacher, for instance, the backyard with a kitchen where the children ate and played. These possibilities of resistance arose among girls as they observed the unfairness of hierarchical gender relations. At times, they also heard women in the community speak of these hierarchies. Therefore, to refuse accepting the status quo, the girls resisted.

There were also adult regulations that impacted and changed the way children used space. Sakhi, 8, said, referring to the borewell in the middle school close to her house, *hum wahan nahi naha sakte, mudha pe jana padta hai. Mita ki dai garhiyati hai. Boli hum khatam kar denge, peene ke liye nahi hota* (we are not allowed to bathe in that borewell, we [referring to children in the village] have to go to the pond. Mita's mother gets angry. She says we will finish it, there will not be enough for drinking). There was a hierarchy between the adults and children where adults took the decisions about which water source could be accessed. This scarcity of resource and the adult–child power relations in the situation also contributed to a larger part of children's time being spent in walking or travelling to the pond or well, instead of using the borewell near their houses. However, children were seen renegotiating these adult-imposed boundaries (Punch, 2001) by gaining control over their use of time and space, deciding when they want to perform these tasks, at what pace and how they would do it. They walked in groups to bring water, on their way talking to each other, playfully interacting with each other and objects along the way, meeting and interacting with people on their journey to the water body, calling out to friends. Their agency was produced in their movement as they were choosing how to perform and take control over their time, space and the task.

This section has drawn attention to different ways in which water becomes a part of children's everyday lives through their routines, bodies, conversations; proposing a deeper understanding of the material, embodied and spatial entanglements with water, that extend and complicate the understanding of inequalities with relation to water (Hadfield-Hill and Zara, 2019). I take this up further in Chapter 8, to discuss children's entanglements with water. Along with being an important part of the children's everyday lives in the village, water has emerged as a global concern in relation to climate change and the impact it has on communities around the world, raising issues of access and inequality. The material reality of being impacted by the consequences of these environmental issues (Ingold, 2000; Nightingale, 2003) was more direct for children in the village.

5.4 Understanding space through rural and urban relation

Another important discussion with relation to space was the children's understanding of space through rural and urban relation. In the following excerpt, Paro and Jamni discussed life in the village and asked me about my experiences from the city.

> Paro: *Ek baat batao, Dilli mein lakadi bechne jaate hain* (tell me one thing, do you sell wood in Delhi)?
> Ambika: *Nahi* (no).
> Jamni: *Haan sab log toh ameer honge na* (because everyone is rich there)?
> Ambika: *Nahi, kyunki dilli mein itni lakdi nahi hai na. Jangle nahi hai.* (no, because we do not have so much wood in Delhi. we do not have forests).
> Jamni: *Toh kaise khana banate hain? Gas mein* (so how do you cook? with gas)?
> Ambika: *Haan, gas mein* (yes, with gas). *Aur sab ameer nahi hote, alag alag kaam karte hain toh alag paisa milta hai. Aur kuch gareeb bhi hote hain.* (not everyone is rich, people do different things and earn different amounts of money. Some are poor too).
> …
> Paro: *Aap ke yahan toh bohot saare factory honge. Bohot dhuan dete honge* (there must be a lot of factories in Delhi. There must be a lot of pollution). *Hamare gaon mein aisa kyun nahi rehta jaise dilli mein. Sab kehte hain dikhne mein bada accha dikhta hai (*why are there no factories in our village like there are in Delhi? Everyone says they are big and look very nice).
> Paro: *Par factory bohot khatarnak hota hai. poora dhuan kar deta hai. Yahan factory nai banate hain. Sarpanch log toh mana karte hain* (but a factory is a very dangerous thing, creates pollution all over. Here they don't build factories, the *sarpanch* [village head] refuses).

> [Audio transcription, 28th January 2018]

Above is an excerpt from a conversation with the children while walking in the village from one hamlet to another. Paro and Jamni's description and discussion of their village space detail their embodied and lived experience of their physical space. They initiated this discussion because of their curiosity and interest of urban spaces, as they imagined these to be more promising (Hoop, 2018) based on their understanding from television and others who had returned from the city (Tylor, 2009). Through conversations with me, the children also made sense of their rural space in relation to a different space outside their village (urban). Jamni and Paro were curious about the livelihood of people outside the village. Since they found out that people don't collect wood, they understood people in urban cities to be rich. Through this discussion, children demonstrate an understanding of the inequalities of spaces by comparing their rural landscapes and activities to cities. Although they wished their village would also have factories which look beautiful, at the same time they reasoned this with their concern about pollution caused due to these factories, that were a product of urbanisation.

As Tylor (2009) observes, viewing of the world in binaries of nature–culture, city–country, can take away from the diversity of places. While discussing this section, I take care to not create a rural–urban dichotomy, but to present a continuum between the two and try to comprehend how children understand these spaces in relation to the other, while considering the wide variation between and within these spaces. This discussion can also be viewed as children making sense of the 'local' and the 'global' (discussed in Chapter 8, Section 8.2.7), whose boundaries are blurred through everyday practices (Holloway and Valentine, 2000a) and how ideas of the global (in this case the city) are produced in a local context (Tylor, 2009). As Holloway and Valentine (2000c) argue, places are linked to the process of 'othering'. Through these conversations, Jamni and Paro were trying to build a sense of agency based on the understanding of their space in relation to another. Even though there was a curiosity to understand the city and the comforts of life there, the children had an understanding of how there is a greater affordance of wider and open physical spaces and a cleaner environment in their rural context. This section demonstrates children's complex and relational understanding of spaces based on their personal experience and through sources such as television, visitors and consumer goods (Vanderback and Dunkley, 2003)

5.5 Access and mobility in 'risky' spaces

In the following section, I explore children's everyday engagement in spaces that were otherwise considered risky and dangerous by adults in the village, and how children navigate these, enabling (or not) their agency. These spaces here include the highway and the village roads, where there was fast-moving traffic or the danger of strangers.

The fear of vehicles has been established in childhood research as a great influence on children's free movement in the neighbourhood (e.g. Freeman and Tranter, 2012; Banerjee et al., 2014). Though most of this research is from the Global North or focusses on urban areas, the parents in my research village were often concerned about children's safety on the roads as sometimes there were cars that passed by at a high speed even inside the village. Unlike cities, the village spaces of public and private were more porous and children's movement from one to another was easier. Parents would often ask children to stay away, walk on the sides or instruct older siblings to take care of the younger ones. While walking with her siblings towards the road, Mani shouted at her younger sibling who was running towards the highway, *aye babu, mat ja na gae, gaadi aa jayehi* (hey child, don't go there, the car will come) [Fieldnotes, 8th March 2018]. Similarly, in another situation, Sakhi was keeping an eye on and ensuring that her younger sister Shree did not go too far on the road while playing [Fieldnotes, 18th January 2018]. Though children looked out for their siblings while on the road, or were extra careful, at other times they navigated through these spaces, relying on their knowledge of the space and their bodily capacities and competencies, as illustrated in the excerpt below. As Nayak argues, 'we need to acknowledge the contradictory practises of children and see...their activities as situated responses, continually reworked by landscape, peers and social situations' to move beyond the binaries of risk or at risk and vulnerable or dangerous (Nayak, 2003, p.311).

The following was a typical event during the winter months in Sarguja when the sugarcane crop was being harvested and transported in trucks that passed by on the highway near the village. During my time in the field, this lasted for a period of two months in January and February. I describe an event which is telling of the everyday lives of children in the village during that season. This particular event highlights the risks posed by the highways, passing by trucks and discusses how children engage with it.

Mani, Indrani and Paro were looking for their friend Sakhi. They asked a few other children, but no one knew where she was. Achal who was passing by, said she had seen Sakhi go with Asmita towards the highway, they had gone to pull sugarcane from the trucks. During sugarcane harvest, a lot of trucks passed through the highway and children tried to pull sugarcane from them.

There was a slope at one end of the road near the village, where it was easy to stand and wait for the trucks to pass. As the trucks would go down the slope, the sugarcane loaded at the back could be easily reached and pulled. These trucks were moving at high speed and it was a dangerous activity, especially as the highway had fast-moving traffic. While they were talking, they saw Sakhi and Asmita walk in their direction, smiling. When they came closer, Paro angrily told Sakhi that she would complain to her mother. She then looked at Asmita and threateningly told her not to encourage other children to go with her, even if she decided to do it herself, as it is a dangerous activity. Asmita, on the other hand, was excited to narrate her story, of how in the process of pulling the sugarcane from the truck she would have almost died had she moved any differently, as the truck passed near her, just missing her. She said*, aaj toh mar hi jaati* (today I would have died). I asked her, if this is dangerous then why do you do it? She replied, *mazaa aata hai, accha lagta hai* (it is fun, I like it).

[Fieldnotes, 27th January 2018]

In the above excerpt, Sakhi and Asmita went towards the highway to wait for passing trucks and attempted pulling out the sugarcane from the back of the vehicles. The highway was half a mile away from the village, connected to the hamlet through a road going to the village and a route through the fields. The highway was busy as it was close to the city, connecting the villages in the Sarguja block to Ambikapur city. There was a high frequency of fast-moving traffic including buses and trucks carrying fruits and vegetables, this made it dangerous. Despite being considered a dangerous activity by both children and adults, Asmita and Sakhi went to the main road to pull sugarcane from the passing trucks because they wanted to eat sugarcane. Paro was angry with Asmita and Sakhi for going towards the road, where children were not permitted to go by adults. She threatened Sakhi, by saying she would complain to her mother, trying to limit her agency by imposing rules and restrictions. This account highlights concerns raised by parents, older siblings and relatives of children's movement outside their 'usual' places, such as homes, schools and the neighbourhood (Kullman, 2010).

It also demonstrates how children displayed the ability to take measured risks in everyday spaces, realise the consequences of these and yet continue taking these risks, as they enjoyed them. Here Asmita was aware of where to stand, when to pull the sugarcane, at what time, in order to escape the risk of getting hurt or crushed by the truck. As she talked of her

experience, she seemed quite aware of the consequences as she said, *aaj toh mar hi jaati* (today I would have died). While talking she smiled, almost congratulating herself on this achievement. This incident emphasises children's bodily engagement with spaces (Kallio, 2008), that work towards viewing childhoods as intertwined with active exploration rather than being associated with vulnerability (McDonnell, 2019). Asmita also displayed confidence, as she displayed an understanding of the space and how to navigate her way. In this case, her fearlessness, agility and knowledge of the space helped her navigate the situation, enabling her agency. This is similar to Christensen and Mikkelsen's (2008) reflection with relation to their work with children's schoolyard games in Denmark, where they note that children are not passive victims of risk but deal with everyday risks in an active way, and that this active risk management might involve taking risks. In the village, Asmita made an active decision to engage with the risky task of pulling the sugarcane.

As observed by Kraftl (2013), children in a majority of contexts do not have the power to change the way they use public spaces, but 'they negotiate public spaces with satire, creativity and a sense of 'simply getting on with life' (p.143). In the village, navigating risk in everyday spaces was also ensured by looking out for each other. In the excerpt, Paro asked the other children about Sakhi. The children in the village asked about each other, as a way of keeping a check on each other's whereabouts and movements in the village. It was an attempt to create safety nets for each other in these risky spaces. The children depended and relied on each other and displayed strong networks and interdependencies.

Children ventured and were willing to take more risk in the areas they were familiar with, areas they visited regularly, that were in close proximity to their homes and that were considered safe places by the adults. This was observed in many cases when they would often not go out to unchartered terrains. Reema said, I only go out on my own up to the *dukan* (a daily needs shop inside a house). There was only one in the village, five houses away from her house. On days she did not have school, she did not go towards that side (referring to the area near the school) [Fieldnotes, 8th May 2018]. Mani, Sakhi and their siblings instead used the school ground after school informally as a playground.

Children from this hamlet did not go to the other *para* or hamlet, because of the distance and because there was a difference in the communities that lived there, their social practices and economic conditions. The other *para* or hamlet comprised of the Oraon community, which

was also an indigenous community, but according to the NGO working in the village, they had better education and economic status. This was also evident in more children from the Oraon hamlet going to schools outside the village. Socially there were not much difference in their practices but the Pahari Korwa would not drink or eat from an Oraon household. There were no such restrictions for children and young people, they were permitted to eat or drink water, until they were married. These boundaries were enforced by the adults as part of their everyday conversations. The children were aware of these caste difference and the restrictions, and did not explore a lot beyond their defined boundaries. These social restrictions to some extent added to their spatial limitations, reinforcing Massey's (2005) idea that spaces were not inert but made up of social practices.

5.5.1 Gendered experience of risk in the village

In the above paragraphs, I discuss examples of children's agency being enabled through their explorations and interactions with the risk in everyday physical spaces in the village. In the following paragraphs of this section, I discuss the experiences of girls in engaging with everyday spaces.

> Neelam said, I am scared to go out alone in the dark, she was joined by Paro who added, I do not go out at night. If at all I have to, I go with my friends.

> [Fieldnotes, 14th February 2018]

In the excerpt above, Neelam and Paro expressed their concern about travelling alone outside in the dark, as the girls felt unsafe due to the danger of men from the city. The children, especially girls, also expressed the danger of going alone to the jungle to graze cattle, getting wood or herbs, again because of the perceived danger of men from the city. Similar to Spilsbury's (2005) observation in Cleveland, children devised a range of strategies, that helped them access the physical spaces and remain safe. As Paro explained, we do not go there alone, even during the day, the village is safe but we do not trust people from outside the village. According to the adults, since the village was very close and accessible to the highway on one side, there were higher chances of outsiders entering. Children exercised agency thorough avoidance or through precautionary strategies like avoiding going out alone at night or to certain places. As Tucker and Matthews (2001) observe, children always being accompanied by friends was another precautionary measure many young people took. In

cases where it was necessary to travel, they were aware of alternate routes to these places. In the village, the girls preferred to take shortcuts and travel through the fields rather than the main roads, as the road would take longer, would be more hot in the summer. As explained by Paro, they were well versed with the different spaces (refer to map in Chapter 2, Figure 2.2) in the neighbourhood they had to avoid, identifying 'safe' and 'risky' places (Cahill, 2000). These potential dangers were being transmitted through family and friends and not being shaped by personal experiences (Van Der Burgt, 2015).

Girls in the village also constructed a discourse by building knowledge around and assigning meaning to their gender, for example, by talking about female as weak and at risk (Daniella, 2015). One day in school, while the teacher had not arrived, the children were playing and talking outside in the front yard. Suraj was walking on a thin pole railing in the school, and Seema who was watching him, first gently and then in a panicky tone asked him to get down as he would hurt himself. On being asked if she would do it, she replied, *nahi, ladkiyan nahi kar sakti. Nai hota* (No, girls don't do it, they are unable to do it). [Fieldnotes, 18th January 2018]. Seema felt girls could not walk on the pole since it was difficult and they were not used to it, and also since girls were expected to behave responsibly by the other adults in the village (for instance, by warning Suraj). This was an idea that was ingrained by the village, family, teachers and the media. The girls' socialisation took place keeping in mind their future roles as being responsible for the family. In the village, children were encouraged and discouraged along gendered lines. Children would often refer to these accepted norms in their conversations with each other. Taking or avoiding risk in different spaces by children was often gendered, similar to Christensen and Mikkelsen's (2008) observations. Both boys and girls managed risks differently.

Conclusion

A spatial and a material turn (discussed in Chapter 6), helps to focus attention on the micro-level practices of the bodies, materials and spaces (Massey, 2005) that reveal the contested, gendered and political nature of these spaces and interaction (Tylor, 2013). In this chapter, I have explored the different ways in which children through their everyday actions and small acts of resistance exercised their agency. Along with acknowledging that their agency was constrained and had to be negotiated with adults and social structures.

I explore children's agency as enabled through movement in space, especially with their peers and siblings. Similar to the observation of Christensen et al. (2011), children appreciated journeys and movement outside the house with others including siblings, friends or a family member. This pattern revealed more interdependence than independence in children's choices for movement. The chapter explores children's interaction in formal and informal spaces in the school, and how agency is produced and performed in these spaces. A discussion around children's interaction within 'places for children' and 'children's places' (Kullman, 2005) reveals carved spaces in the village important for the children. Through examples from the field, I illustrate how children's lives in the village were entangled with their surroundings, as they moved within different spaces.

The chapter highlights the embodied nature of children's interaction and relationship with their immediate environment. I also discuss children's engagement with water and its impact on their lives, focussing on the gendered nature of these interactions.

Along with the spectrum of agency that children exercised, their agency was also understood through their embodied interactions with the spaces they occupied. For instance, Christensen and Mikkelsen (2008) noted that in situations of risk, children made assessments of their bodily capacity in order to handle the risk. Bodily capacity is a dimension of agency important for negotiating and perceiving risk and safety. Children were able to take measured risks (Christensen and Mikkelsen, 2008) in their environment and handling some sort of risk was perceived as something exciting (Green et al., 2000).

As in the rest of this thesis, I attempted to move beyond dichotomies, and this chapter contributes to the understanding that these everyday sites that children encountered were not fixed and rigid but porous and connected to each other (Holloway et al., 2019). I explore and engage with these findings again in Chapter 8, keeping in mind the research questions. In the next chapter, I present more excerpts from the field and analytically discuss children's agency in relation to everyday material objects in the village.

Chapter 6: Children's agency in engagement with everyday materials

Introduction

As Woodward (2007 p.vi) writes, 'our lives are characterised by innumerable encounters with objects'. During the process of my fieldwork, I observed children's interactions with the materials in their everyday. This helped me think of agency as extended by and relational to material things, and I decided to bring these everyday non-human materials into the discussions about children's agency.

According to Latour (2005), material objects are the 'missing masses' waiting to be included in social analyses. Recent literature in childhood studies has also emphasised materiality in the shaping of children's everyday lives. In this chapter, I explore children's agency in their everyday, recognising how they engage with the complexities of the material world (Kraftl et al., 2012; Pells, 2012).

I rely on new-materialism (Barad, 2007; Hultman and Taguchi, 2010) that moves away from dualisms, repositioning the human along with the non-human actant. New-materialism challenges human privilege and exceptionalism (Spyrou, 2018), questioning the positioning of humans as central. This offers a theoretical approach to rethinking agency, challenging its understanding as being self-possessed (Spyrou, 2018).

To say that things have agency (Latour, 2005) does not mean that they can act themselves, rather 'things can potentially affect, trigger or even be conditions for some human actions, whether the things act as practical tools, sources of knowledge or foundations of meanings' (Blazek, 2016, p.121). Agency is an 'effect' of alliances involving humans, texts, materials (Prout, 2005; Kraftl, 2013). This understanding is important to this chapter as I explore children's interactions with the everyday materials in the village.

Empirical work on the topic concerning the intra-agency of things in the constitution of human subjectivity is still not wide (Prout, 2011; Kraftl, 2013; Rautio, 2013). The following chapter discusses different objects or sets of objects, networks and interactions of which contributed to children's agency at home, in school, in the field and during play with friends. It explores the kind of extensions to children's agency that emerges through children's

encounters with these mundane objects, and how children's practices are affected by the presence of things. The chapter is based on the idea that human agency and the presence of material things are inseparable (Latour and Venn, 2002), with human agency emerging through interaction between things and people (Latour, 2005).

Materials in this chapter refers to small material objects in children's everyday as opposed to larger entities, for example, the environment, that surrounds them (Blazek, 2016). I carefully selected the objects for discussion. This decision was largely made based on the amount and nature of interaction children had with these objects, and specifics have been discussed within the chapter.

I first discuss children's engagement with everyday objects, moving to the discussion of objects children used for care. In the next sections, I look at children's ingenious use of objects for play, engagement with risky tools, and experiences of material inequality.

6.1. Material agency of everyday objects

Daston (2004) highlights that objects offer a fascinating entry point to understand the everyday world, in a way that is not blurry but sharp and focussed. In the following section, I discuss engagement with everyday objects using pots, classroom objects, stones and keys. While reading the fieldnotes, these objects emerged salient as they formed an important part of children's daily lives and activities, often came up in conversations and children used them in different ways to express themselves. Hence, I select these to describe children's interactions with these objects in different situations, and how they enabled or disabled their agency.

6.1.1 *Dabba-Bhanda*: Pots and utensils in the everyday

Neelam was sitting in her courtyard, near a pile of unwashed utensils. The following excerpt describes Neelam's engagement with the utensils and how she used these household objects to express her agency.

> Pointing to the pile of unwashed utensils, I asked, *ye kaun karta hai* (who cleans these)?

Neelam: *Main karungi* (I will do it).
Ambika: *Apna kaam akele karte ho ya kisi ke saath?* (do you do the work alone or with someone)?
Neelam: *Akele karti hoon* (I do it alone) adding *pehle kaam khatam karti hoon, jaise hi khatam hota hai hum baat karna shuru kar dete hain. Paro aur main toh bohot baatein karte hain, fir kaam karne ka maan nai karta* (first, I finish work and then as soon as it's done we start talking to each other. Otherwise, Paro and I feel like chatting and doing nothing else).

Neelam explained that although she would like to but is unable to attend school outside the village because of domestic work, and her sister-in-law would not agree to let her go.

Ambika: *Tumko kaisa lagta hai* (how do you feel)?
Neelam: *Acha nahi lagta, gussa laga hai* (I don't feel good, I feel angry).
Ambika: *Phir kya karti ho* (then what do you do)?
Neelam (in a nonchalant manner): *Kuch nai, thoda sa ladti hoon, Jab gussa lagta hai, toh bartan bhanda zor zor se bajati hoon, fir doston se milne chali jato hoon, vo hasa dete hain toh theek lagta hai* (nothing, I fight a little, When I feel angry, I bang the pots while working, then go to meet my friends. They make me laugh, then I feel better).

[Fieldnotes and audio transcription, 24th April 2018]

The above excerpt illustrates the presence of pots and utensils in children's everyday environment. Each household in the village had a few pots of varying sizes. These utensils made of clay or metal were an essential part of the community's everyday living, as they were used for cooking, bathing, fetching water and making the local alcohol — fermented rice *(hadiya)* or fermented *mahua* tree flower *(mahua).*

Neelam explained how cleaning utensils at home was her responsibility. She did not always enjoy it, but found a way around it, by ensuring that she finished the work before engaging with her friends. She enjoyed talking to her friends and was aware that it could be a distraction while she worked, and instead used it as an incentive to finish her work. Like Neelam, children in the village used work as incentives to play and talk to their friends (Katz, 2004).

Even though she had household responsibilities, Neelam was passionate about her studies, but at the same time acutely aware of the limits to her opportunities for studying further. She may not be able to make her sister-in-law or brother change their decision about her education, but used these pots to express her anger or disagreement by banging them while

cleaning. This would help her release her anger and express her agency which was otherwise limited in the area of making a decision about her education.

The following (Figure 6.1) is a photograph from Reema's living room, where the family had stacked all their pots and utensils on the floor near the wall. These utensils were an important part of every families' daily routines and this was reinforced by their presence in their everyday spaces. Since the families did not have many rooms in their houses, the presence of large pots and pans in the main room signifies their importance in the daily life of the families.

Figure 6.1: Utensils in Reema's house [Photograph, 20th March 2018]

These pots and pans also provided space to perform gender, as the association of boys and girls with these materials was different. The use of pots and utensils in the village was highly gendered. Like Neelam, all girls her age in the village were responsible for cleaning pots and utensils and carrying water in these pots. The boys, on the other hand, had no such responsibilities. In one instance, when Mita's father was carrying a pot on his head, Sakhi commented, *kaisa ladki jaisa pakada hai* (look how he is carrying it like a girl) and she laughed as she found the visual unusual. Children were used to seeing mostly women or girls carry pots on their head. The only time boys and men would carry water was when they were

performing construction labour (constructing homes, wells) and carried the water on their shoulder, in tin cans tied to two sides of a stick.

To further emphasise the significance of pots in the children's daily life are the following images of girls filling and carrying water, as depicted by Reema and Indrani in their drawing of the activities that comprise their everyday.

Figure 6.2: Reema, 10, Carrying pots to fill water from the borewell [Photograph, 19th April 2018]

Figure 6.3: Indrani, 8, Balancing water pots on her head [Photograph, 20th April 2018]

In Figure 6.2, Reema draws an image of herself pumping water from the borewell and surrounded by three pots. In Figure 6.3, Indrani depicts herself carrying two pots of water on her head. They may not necessarily enjoy filling water or washing utensils but these tasks were acknowledged as a crucial part of their lives, and as Paro commented with reference to filling water, *kya karein, nahi karenge toh kahan jayenge?* (what to do? If we don't do it then where will we go?). They were aware of fetching water as being an essential part of their survival and living.

These pots and utensils and their miniatures were also an important part of children's games, including *dabba-bhanda* (pots and pans) (Figure 6.3). Achal emptied a wooden basket under the Jackfruit tree that had been filled with tin and plastic caps and bottles collected from different places over a period. Nisha explained that they were playing *dabba-bhanda,* pretending to cook food for guests who were visiting their house. She used mud and small pieces of jackfruit to make the curry, mixed water with sand to make tea and small white pebbles as eggs. Twigs were used as spoons and spatulas to stir the food [Fieldnotes, 23rd March 2018]. This was a common game played by most of the girls and at times young boys. Similar to Katz's (2004, p. 257) observations of the 'mimetic faculty' of children's play, the children's games in the village were inspired by their everyday lives and routines. This game further signified the relevance of these materials, including pots and pans as part of children's everyday. It also allowed children, especially girls, to familiarise themselves with the idea of carrying out household chores. Children in the village started helping with cooking at the age of 9 or 10, as they turned 13 or 14, most girls knew how to cook rice, lentils and vegetables that were part of their daily diet.

Figure 6.4: Children playing *dabba-bhanda* [Photograph, 30th March 2018]

This section illustrates how pots and utensils were an integral part of children's daily lives. The material objects and material practices through these objects were important to understand children's agency, especially of girls. As in the first excerpt, these pots and utensils enabled Neelam's agency as she used them to resist the everyday norms (Evans and Holt, 2016), in this case, her family's expectation of washing utensils. Since she was unable to refuse the work, she expressed her anger clearly by banging the pots while working. Through the games the children played with these pots and pans, they practised and strengthened their skills for domestic work.

6.1.2 Everyday classroom objects

In the following excerpt, while the children were in the classroom waiting for the teacher to arrive, they engaged in different activities, with the different materials. Reema and Indrani were playing a game, making paper cut-outs and using it as money.

> Reema showed her paper cut-out collection to Mani and said, *dekho mere paas khajana hai* (look I have treasures). Indrani looked at her paper cut-outs and said, *dekho mere paas bhi itna paisa aa gaya* (look, I also have so much money).
> Ambika: *Kitna paisa* (how much money)?
> Indrani: Rs.600
> Ambika: *Kya karegi iss paise ka* (what will you do with this money)?
> Indrani: *Murgi kharedungi. Khaungi* (I will buy chicken and eat it).

Reema was holding a pencil in her hand and started rolling it like a chapati roller. She said to Inderman, *dekho, mai roti bana rahi hoon* (look, I am making a chapati). I asked Reema if she liked roti, she said I really like it. I asked, do you eat it everyday? She said yes. I said, but I thought you eat rice? Reema added, *haan abhi nahi kha rahe the-paisa nahi hai. Jab baba Ambikapur jayega, toh milega.* (yes, right now we are not eating roti as there is no money. When dad goes [to work] in Ambikapur, then he will get money).

[Audio embedded in fieldnotes, 27th February 2018]

Figure 6.5: Children in the classroom [Photo 12th March 2018]

During the initial observations in the classroom, and as illustrated in the photograph, there were materials present in the classroom, including a map, alphabets painted on the wall, books, blackboard, chair, table and mat. Though there were not many things, but a wealth of agentic material emerged from the classroom. Children used these everyday objects in the school to enact parts of their everyday, giving an insight into their lives. They would often devise games where they made money with paper cut-outs, adding a different monetary value to each cut-out and deciding what they wished to do with it. In this above excerpt, Reema makes these paper cut-outs and claims that she has a lot of treasure. Indrani also shows Reema how much money she has. Reema expresses joy about owning a large sum of money and Indrani is making decisions about how she is going to spend her money, in this case, by buying chicken. In both these cases, the children displayed a diverse range of fantasies, in the first case having a large amount of money given their real-life situation, and in the second case, the fantasy of buying chicken which was more realistic and grounded, given their

relative poverty. The 'practices, doings and actions' (Barad, 2007, p.135) in the classroom that were often taken for granted, were constitutive in producing what mattered to the children (Taylor, 2013). The children in the village often expressed their wish to buy meat, sweets and eat food they liked but these were decisions they did not take. The families were able to buy these things when they had money but that was contingent on the work they got, which was not consistent throughout the year. But here in the school, children had the agency to perform and decide what they wanted and what they could have. The children and pieces of paper were actors (Latour, 2005) and their network and interactions enabled children's agency. Through these everyday games in the school children explored their material and monetary agency.

6.1.3 The multipurpose stones

This section offers insight into how children interacted with the most mundane and everyday objects, such as stones. Stones were present in children's everyday surrounding in the village. They were of different shapes, colours and sizes. The children in the village were often seen using stones for various purposes. In the following incident (also discussed in Chapter 5, Section 5.1.2), after a fight between two groups, Reema used a stone to take revenge upon Suraj.

> After a fight with Suraj, Reema, Shiv and Indrani were inspecting Suraj's bicycle. They wanted to puncture it. When they saw me looking, Reema in a hushed voice said, *mat batana* (don't tell). The children looked for a few stones and finally, Reema picked up a pointed stone and started to puncture the tyre, and to facilitate the process Indrani found a pin on the floor. The children took some air out from one of the wheels.
>
> As Suraj was preparing to leave, he noticed the tyre but did not realise it was a prank. Shiv, who was standing in the vicinity laughed and said, *humne puncture kia tha* (we punctured it). Mani quickly hit him on his head and pulled him back saying, *chup kar* (be quiet).
>
> [Audio embedded in fieldnotes, 7th February 2018]

In this incident, Reema and Indrani were angry with Suraj after he hit Reema. They felt that the fight was unfair, and decided to apply different tactics to express themselves. The need to use a different method to confront Suraj was also because the children realised that they were not as physically strong as him and were scared of him hitting them again. Therefore, to teach

Suraj a lesson, and express their anger, Reema decided to puncture his bicycle tyre with a stone. The stone was sharp and the children were aware of the impact it would have when used to flatten a tyre. The children were also aware of the inconvenience the puncture would cause Suraj. The children were cognizant of the repercussions, therefore, they did not use it to throw or to hurt others but only to scare. As explained through the Actor-Network Theory (Latour, 2005), here the stones and the children were *actors* that in interaction were producing agency.

Urging me not to say anything suggested that they were aware that they were doing something that would get them into trouble, yet they were willing to take the risk. After puncturing the tyre, the children waited close by to observe Suraj's reactions, so they could have a laugh. Shiv almost confessed to the prank, but the others stopped him.

During fieldwork, I observed a few fights between the children. In school, these groups were sometimes divided on the bases of their classes, denoting their seniority over the others but more often these differences and fights were between children from the two different hamlets and communities. In this particular case, Suraj belonged to the Oraon community and Reema and Indrani were Pahari Korwa. Since the Pahari Korwa as a community were structurally suppressed, the stone thus also became symbolic of representing power and was used by the children collectively as an instrument to express agency. As observed by Taylor (2013), educational spaces were continuously being re-constructed, through complex networks of bodies and object that were enacted, through power relations. I have discussed this excerpt in Chapter 5 (Section 5.1.2) to explore children's experience in school spaces, but here I revisited the same incident through the lens of materiality.

Apart from using stones in fights and to demonstrate power, children also used stones in play. Rautio (2013) writes that humans, especially children, carry and engage with stones. Further, it is children who have a prolonged engagement, and interact with stones, in what adults construct as 'playing' with stones (Burke, 2007, p.363; Hart, 1979). As a material, it was easily available in the children's environment and they interacted and played with these stones in different ways. Two of the games have been described below, through an illustration and an excerpt from the field.

Figure 6.6: Indrani and Nisha playing *chaal goti* [Photograph, 8th March 2018]

Indrani and Nisha were sitting on the floor in the schoolyard during the lunch break along with other children and playing *chaal goti*. *Chaal goti* (similar to the African pebble game, *mancala)*, was a game played with pebbles. Here, 12 holes were dug in the ground with four pebbles placed in each, and there were two empty wells on the two side. The player had to pick the stones from one hole and distribute it in the others. The game continued this way, and the person with the maximum number of stones in the well would win. When the weather was not very hot, the children sat outside in the ground to play *chaal goti* or found a place in the shade where the ground was not so hard and could be dug with fingers. Children did not just use any stone but selected the most suitable pebbles for their games. In this case the pebbles preferred were small and softer at the edges and could be easily held in the hand. The weather was an important determinant in the games that children played — they preferred to play games indoors on a hot day.

The second game is illustrated through the following fieldnote. The children were playing a guessing game, hiding the stones in their hands and the others had to guess how many stones and in which hand. I also select this excerpt as it illustrates the varied dynamics between the children in the school.

> Seema asked Reema if she wanted to play the guessing game and Reema said no and started playing *chaal goti* with another child. Seema wanted to play the game I was playing with Reema the previous day, hiding stones and guessing how

many are in each hand. She then showed me some stones, hid them in her hand and asked me, *khelegi* (will you play)? I agreed. We started to play with a couple of other children sitting next to us. Slowly, children watching the game, including Shiv, Kabir, Anurag and Suraj joined the game. Suraj altered the game a bit and dropped some of the stones, so there were more permutations and it was difficult to guess how many were in each hand. As the number of children increased, Seema reiterated, only the four of us — Suraj, Seema, Ambika and Kabir — were playing, eliminating the others. The class 5 students were summoned by the teacher. Suraj, Seema and Kabir went inside and Reema, who had earlier refused to play, quickly came and picked the stones, sat next to me and started playing with me. While playing she competitively said, *kaise jeet-ti hai, abhi batati hun tujhe, le dekh, ab jeet* (I will see how you win. Here, I will show you. Now win) and kept using more permutations than we had initially been using.

[Fieldnotes, 23rd March 2018]

In the above excerpt, even though Reema wanted to play the guessing game, she exercised her agency, first by refusing to play with Seema and waiting till Seema left, because she was angry with her and expressed it by ignoring her. As soon as Seema was called by the teacher, Reema found the opportunity and joined me for the game. Later, when she started playing with me, Reema exercised her agency by changing the permutations of the stones, making the game more difficult and almost impossible to guess, since she would at times drop some stones, which was initially not part of the rules. She found great satisfaction in competing and making me lose. Children would alter the rules of the game for their convenience. As Seema, Suraj, Kabir and I were playing and the other children joined, a little while later, Seema clearly reminded everyone that the game was being played between the four of us. Along with the children participating in the game, others were spectators, observing the game, making remarks and often participating in decisions and negotiations. There is an agency in deciding to take part and at the same time, children's agency can lie in deciding that they do not want to do anything, or just watch.

In playing with stones, children found a meaningful way to engage with a dominant motif of their everyday life. By viewing the effect of particular assemblages (networks) of people, materials and practices, the discussion about children's interaction with stones helps to offer insights to the nature–culture interaction and move beyond the dichotomy, which I aim to do throughout this thesis.

6.1.4 Keys and children's responsibilities

Another everyday object in the village were keys. In the following excerpt, I discuss children's engagement with school keys and the conversation that takes place to decide who will take responsibility for them.

> Meera informed the others that the teacher had asked them to lock up once school is over. Usually, Reema was responsible for locking and carrying the keys home since she was regular and the first one to arrive. But as Reema was absent, the others started discussing who would take responsibility. Mani said, Suraj, *le ja na ge* (Suraj, take it), and Suraj replied, *mera ghar door hai* (my house is far). At 3 pm, the children started to leave from the gate, Sakhi stopped everyone and said, *school kaun band karhe? Tor baba* (who will lock the gates? Your dad)? Indrani and Sakhi went to the classroom, to shut the windows and bring the mirror, jug and chair from outside. Neelam chased the goats out of the campus. It was finally decided that Meera would keep the keys since she stayed closest and could arrive early. As Mani handed the keys, she instructed her, *kisi ko nai dena, dhyan se rakh na ge* (do not give it to anyone, keep it safely).

<div align="right">[Audio embedded in fieldnotes, 8th April 2018]</div>

This excerpt illustrates how children found responsibility and agency through a set of school keys, as they were put in charge by the teacher. Reema would ensure the school was locked and she took the keys home, since she was the first one to arrive in the morning. As she was absent on that particular day, the others were discussing who could take the responsibility of locking up and taking the keys home. Carrying the keys was a responsibility, and there were no debates or fights in favour of taking up the task, they all seemed hesitant and reluctant. They gave each other's names instead. When they had not decided and it was time to leave, Sakhi reminded all of them that they still had to lock up the school, mockingly adding that their fathers would not come to lock up.[8] They all helped in wrapping up, placing all the things inside and locking up the school. Then through conversations and discussions, the children worked their way to the most convenient arrangement. It was decided that Meera would take the keys, as she stayed closest to school. This decision was taken by the older children, and she was also instructed on how to take care of the keys. She did not have much say and the older children exercised their agency to not take the responsibility.

---

[8] In Indian context *'tera baab thodi karega'* (your father won't do it) is used as a slang that means, you have to do the work.

Children in the village, usually older siblings, wore a set of keys around their neck. Sangeeta referring to the keys around her neck explained, *ek bheetar ghar ki hai, ek phulwari ki* (one is for the inside room, one is for *phulwari*) [Fieldnotes, 20th March 2018]. While the adults went out to work and the children were home alone, they were given the house keys. Though they were still supervised by a neighbour or a relative, the responsibility of the house and the siblings was with the older children. In all these situations, from the perspective of ANT (Latour, 2005) the keys (physical material) and the children were *actors*, who work together and their interactions and networks enable agency, in the form of responsibility.

Throughout this section, I explored how children deployed these things to present themselves within a complex network of embodiment (wearing keys around the neck), emotions (such as pride, anger, dissatisfaction) and daily practices (carrying pots of water) (Blazek, 2016). The objects that have been explored in this section were mundane, everyday objects. Children's material agency was not realised through giving a monetary value to the objects (Blazek, 2016), but with how they engaged with them. These objects were not necessarily of high monetary value but were easily available in their everyday surroundings, and accessible. They also served an important role in children's lives. The keys and pots were associated with responsibility, the classroom material helped fulfil desires and the stones were used by the children to express power that enabled children's agency in different ways. The children engaged with these objects, based on their experiences and observations of others.

6.2 Agency and materiality of care

Tronto (1993, p.103) understands care as 'everything that we do to maintain, continue, and repair our 'world' so that we can live in it as well as possible. That world includes our bodies, ourselves, and our environment, all of which we seek to interweave in a complex, life-sustaining web'. In this section, I illustrate this through children's entanglements with everyday objects that facilitated care.

6.2.1 Materiality of body care

The following two excerpts illustrate how children used various materials such as oil, combs, creams for personal care, and to express care towards others.

Nisha was sitting in the front yard of her house oiling her arms and legs with mustard oil. She poured some oil on her hand, rubbed it and then spread it across her legs, arms and face.

Sakhi with her younger sister Shree joined Nisha. The children sat quietly and did not talk much in the beginning. Nisha started washing the utensils with ash (produced from burning wood). She had one bucket filled with water that she was using to wash all the utensils. In the meantime, Sakhi made Shree sit in front of her and began styling her hair. She took pins and a clip out of her hair and put it on Shree's hair. She opened it again and this time tied it with a rubber band and added a flower to her ponytail.

Sakhi looked at Nisha and said, *nai, bhanda manjhe se pehle tel chopdi* (hey, you applied oil on your body before washing the utensils). Nisha looked at her and nodded. Sakhi then looked at me and said, *ganda ho jata hai na* (it gets dirty no).

[Audio embedded in fieldnotes and photograph, 11th March 2018]

Figure 6.7: Sakhi styling Shree's hair

In school, after Reema and Indrani were combing and styling each other's hair, Reema showed Indrani her sole, pointing to the deep cracks between the toes that were hurting and said, *phatates. Dukhat hai* (there are cracks. It hurts). Indrani carefully examined the cracks and touched them to see where all it hurt. She then

took out a small box of Vaseline petroleum jelly and applied it to Reema's cracks. Reema waited patiently as Indrani applied Vaseline, she then instructed her to apply it on her arms and legs and Indrani gently rubbed it in places she was directed.

[Fieldnotes, 25th April 2018]

The above two excerpts from the fieldnotes and audio transcriptions illustrate how Vaseline, oil, combs, pins, rubber bands and flowers acted as everyday materials children used towards caring (self and others) practices. In the first excerpt, Nisha oiled her body before she started washing the utensils. Children were aware of the physical harm caused to the skin while washing utensils or performing any physical tasks, therefore, to take care of their bodies they invested in body care routines. These activities and practices of care were culturally determined (Tronto, 1993). In the village, oil was applied to keep the body hydrated, and as Sakhi explained, it would protect them from getting dirty while they did other work.

This excerpt can also be analysed in relation to cleanliness practices. Similar to the observation in Chapter 5, the children were interested in cleanliness and this was also extended to their bodies. The concept of cleanliness could also be rooted in caste as the politics of caste in India is strongly linked to cleanliness. As Harper (1964) observes that in India, the concept of purity and pollution[9] were related to hierarchy and subordination and practised by members of the higher caste, especially Brahmins. This was translated in everyday practice. Nambissan (2009), based on a study in Rajasthan, writes, children from lower caste experienced discrimination in school and were often made to perform the cleaning chores. This was also observed in the teachers' description of the children (Chapter 7, Section 7.4). Therefore, children in the village paid particular attention towards looking tidy, though were acutely aware that due to their everyday engagements it was difficult to maintain, as Mani explained, *hum nahate hai, phir jaldi ganda ho jata hai* (we bathe but then again it quickly gets dirty).

Similar to the adults in the community, children would also spend time with rituals of care and aesthetics. They were often seen spending time applying and rubbing oil on their bodies, combing and styling their hair. They styled their hair occasionally after oiling to make it look

---

[9] Purity (ritual and religious purity) and pollution (ritual pollution) are critical features of the Hindu caste system. Purity and pollution are intricately linked to untouchability (Dumont, 1970) and play a crucial role in maintaining a distance between different castes.

neat and fashionable. Young girls were also influenced by the way women dressed on television and would try to incorporate this in their fashion. The care was also extended to others including their siblings and friends. Considering care from an ethical perspective helps to focus on the interdependence and relationality of caring, re-positioning the individual with the social and material determinants (Wihstitz, 2019). As in the first excerpt, a concerned Sakhi advised Nisha to apply oil before she started washing the utensils, in the second excerpt, Indrani applied Vaseline to her friend Reema who had cracks on her feet that were hurting. Children paid attention to each other, and here, Indrani carefully examined Reema's cuts and applied the petroleum jelly. Through their attentiveness and responsibility towards the others (Wihstitz, 2019), and use of objects that helped express care, extended children's agency, especially girls', to care for themselves and the others they cared for.

The children and the community used locally produced material such as oil from the *mahua* tree that the community believed had medicinal properties. The children were aware of local knowledge that was constructed through adults and peers in the community and applied these in their daily care practices. Though they mostly used these local products, due to the influence of television, children were also aware of the different commercially available products, such as shampoo and skin whitening creams. As Beazley and Chakraborty (2008) argue, children assimilate styles of popular culture into their social worlds. On days the children had money, they bought soaps and shampoo sachets from the nearby shop in the village.

6.2.2 Gendered materiality of objects

Some objects of care from the everyday and the practices around these were more gendered than others. In section 6.1, I discuss gendered practices with girls carrying pots of water. Along with the everyday objects of care, girls sometimes carried lipsticks and nail-paints in their bags to the school. These either belonged to their mothers or aunts and sometimes the parents had purchased these from the market for the children when they had money. Similar to Thorne's (2003) observations in her work, these objects also acquired symbolic significance among friends. When there was no teacher in the class or when they had free time after their meals, girls would flock around the child carrying the lipstick or the nail paint on that particular day and apply it for each other. It was in interaction with peers that children's gender identities were explored, crafted and expressed (Sharma, 2014). During this

period, if the teacher came back the children would cover their hands over their mouths, seal their lips or quickly rub it off their lips. Children knew that these were not permitted, yet they would bring them to the school, defying rules. They would often also encourage me to wear bangles and *tikli* (a red sticker on the forehead), and sometimes apply a *tikli* on my forehead. Children encouraged me to dress and wear makeup, similar to the girls and women they watched on television.

Children also showed interest in *sarees* (a traditional Indian dress worn in most parts of the country, essentially a 6-yard long cloth, wrapped around the body). In the following photograph taken at Sakhi's house, Sakhi and Nisha wanted to be photographed in a saree. Sakhi pulled two of her mother's sarees hanging on a rope and they started wrapping these around themselves, making pleats at the centre. Sakhi tied the saree on her own while Nisha took help from me to make the pleats. Sakhi asked, *tu saree pehena janti hai* (do you know how to wear a saree)? I said yes. After wearing the saree, Sakhi took out a broken piece of mirror from a polythene bag and looked at herself. She opened another polythene bag and took out a necklace to wear on her forehead and wore plastic dark glasses [Fieldnotes, 27th April 2018].

Figure 6.8: Sakhi and Nisha dressed in sarees [Photograph, 27th April 2018]

Sarees were garments worn by the adults in the community. Children would often tie their long scarfs around themselves as a saree while playing games, pretending to be adults. Corsaro (2005) refers to this pretend play as interpretive reproduction (Chapter 3, Section 3.1.2). As observed by Corsaro (2005) and Katz (2004), this play often elaborates or parodies adult behaviour and their social milieus. In the village, wearing a saree was seen synonymous with being an adult, with responsibility and decision-making power. Often children would ask me to dress up or wear a saree. Their fascination for the garment led some of the children to make drawings of girls dressed in sarees and jewellery at the back of their school notebooks. Children also dressed up to look beautiful, as Sangeeta said while applying a red lipstick to Reema, *accha lag raha hai* (it is looking nice) [Fieldnotes, 7th February 2018]. Children would get these objects from their older siblings, relatives, neighbours, or sometimes parents who would buy them on some occasion. These objects provided children with the power and agency of experiencing being transformed into an adult, to look and feel different and in some cases defy adult rules by bringing them to the school.

This engagement and play with these objects helped reinvent the existing power dynamics (Corsaro, 2012). In schools where children had less power, or among friends, these were markers of hierarchy and further used as tokens of friendship. I discuss children's friendships in Chapter 7 and engage in a discussion about gender in Chapter 8 (Section 8.2.4).

6.3 Children's ingenious play

Children often transform everyday, unnoticeable things into tools for play, including stones, sand, sticks, leaves, plastic bags, flower petals, bottles and bottle tops, shadows, pathways, painted lines and trees (Skelton, 2009). On one occasion, it was a holiday in school, and children in the village, together with their siblings, were sitting under the mango tree near Mani's house. The older children were making pinwheels using twigs and mango leaves.

> Mani, Sakhi and Indrani were looking for soft sticks (*lakra* wood) and mango tree leaves to make *chakri* (pinwheel) for their younger siblings Sukhan, Vikas, Sona and Shree. Mani pointed to a few mango leaves and asked Sukhan to pick them for her. First, she smoothened the outer surface of the long stick and inserted a small needle-length sharp stick on the top. She then took the leaf, tore it to the middle from opposite sides, folding it to make a fan. She fixed it on the top of the

stick with the help of the small stick and as the wind would blow, it would rotate. Mani asked Sukhan and Vikas to run with it so the fan moved faster.

[Fieldnotes, 10th March 2018]

The older children were engaging their younger siblings in play, as they made pinwheels for them and asked them to run with it in the direction of the wind. The children were enjoying their game with the pinwheel that was assembled using leaves and twigs. During my time in the field, I found significant diversity in children's play and how they ingeniously used materials from the everyday to create play. Children in the village did not possess any expensive toys or games. This is similar to Punch's (2003) observation from her research, where children's access to manufactured toys was restricted due to the families' limited finances. In the village, the children used materials from their everyday surroundings to devise play or play objects. For instance, they used plastic cans, rubber slippers and bamboo sticks to make a toy car (Figure 6.9 and 6.10); they would use the leaves of various trees to make garlands, flowers, locks, and pinwheels. Children rolled tyre tubes as a game, made a ball using plastic and socks and used magnets, stones and bottle lids to play. Punch (2002) made similar observations in her work with children in rural Bolivia where they used unusual objects to devise other objects. Being able to produce materials out of other objects enabled children's agency to imagine and create what they desired, some in collaboration with their peers, others on their own. By using used and old unused objects and their imaginations, they did not have to rely on purchasing toys and games that would cost money.

Figure 6.9: Sukhan's toy truck [Photograph, 13th June 2018] Figure 6.10: Vikas' cart [Photograph, 10th May 2018]

The above two photographs illustrate toy cars that belonged to Sukhan and Vikas respectively, Sukhan's grandfather had helped him assemble the truck with an old plastic can,

wires and rubber slippers. Vikas had made his own car, which was less elaborate, and used a bamboo stick to drag the car. In continuation of the discussion about gendered play in section 6.2.2, mostly it was boys that had toy cars. The girls did not have many toys or designed objects. They devised play using old caps and bottles, as discussed in section 6.2.1. Most times the children would make these toys on their own, but sometimes were assisted by older siblings or adults in the family.

Play can also be seen as a medium to understand young people's agentive relations and creative contributions to their social and spatial worlds (Sutton-Smith, 1997). Some children used their toys and materials to achieve various positions of influence and status among their siblings and peers. As Mani was good at assembling objects, e.g., making the pinwheel quickly, she managed to reorganise and control the activities of the group. Jamna who had constructed a neat and sturdy truck with plastic, rubber tyres and wire, would walk around the neighbourhood, and other children would often ask him if they could take it for a round. Thus, the truck influenced his position among his peers.

Even though children ingeniously constructed play and games from everyday objects, there was a desire to engage with purchased games. Paro, Jamni and Mani would often ask me to bring snakes and ladders, as after school they were bored and had no games to play. This made me realise how objects and things aided social interactions, binding the children together. Children's need to access games that were not built or constructed from their everyday indicated their desire to change their social positioning through materials, realising the role of the non-human in children's agency.

6.3.1 Ingenious use of objects

Similar to Dyson's (2014) observation in her work with girls in an Indian village in the Himalayas, in my research, improvisation was a theme that emerged in young people's use of objects. Children used their resources through *jugaad* (judicious opportunity). The term refers to improvisation that made the best use of the resources and materials at hand. The following excerpt describes how the children's group orchestrated their trip to the pond to go fishing, where they used an old mosquito net to catch the fish.

In the afternoon, after school, as we were sitting under the mango tree near Mani's house, Reema Indrani and Shiv came by and said let's go to the *mudha* (pond). Mani and Indrani went inside the house and started looking for a mosquito net so they could use it to catch fish. They first found a new mosquito net, then asked their grandmother where the old one was kept. They finally found a net that was not too old and torn. The children then picked up a bucket, put clothes, soap and the net in it. The children walked towards the pond, through the empty fields. As they crossed Sakhi's house, Reema and Mani called out to her asking her to join in. She was sitting outside and quickly called her sister Shree picked up a bucket with clothes and joined. The children walked towards the pond in the heat. Near the pond, the children began removing their clothes.

Mani, Reema, Sakhi and Indrani each held a corner of the net and went inside the pond. They went to the middle and then on a count of three, went inside the pond inserting the net. They then emerged and dragged the net out of the water and started looking for and taking out *jhinga* (a kind of fish) from the slush and the net and putting it in the bucket. While looking for the fish, Indrani was angry at Shiv saying he had gone inside first and alerted the fish away. There was not much, as most of it was mud and moss. After one round of looking for the fish, they went inside again.

[Fieldnotes and photographs, 19th April 2018]

Figure 6.11: Children collecting fish from the pond

In the above excerpt, as the children were sitting together on a hot day, they decided to fish. The children first looked for appropriate materials, which included a bucket and an old mosquito net which Mani and Indrani found in their house. They all walked towards the

pond, asking other children along the way to join the group. Children visited the pond regularly to bathe and wash clothes but on some occasions, especially after the rain, they also enjoyed fishing. At the pond, the children collaborated, deciding who would stay on the shore, while the older and the more experienced ones went inside to catch the fish. They coordinated their moves, one person would count till three before inserting the net in the water. Indrani got angry with Shiv when he was not coordinating with the group since that was affecting their catch. In the photographs above, the children are sifting the mud from the net and trying to find the small fish that have come along with the mud or got stuck in the net, collecting them in the bucket. The mosquito net that the children converted to a fishing net is a good example here of how children ingeniously used objects in the village. Utilising things they found and reusing, reconstructing, and reshaping them gave children the agency to mould things (Blazek, 2016). Everyday objects were important here, for children had fewer resources and they ingeniously and creatively made use of these in their everyday. They did not let the lack of an object, in this case, a net, get in the way of their adventure. In some cases, the children also used the same net as a loofah to clean and scrub their bodies. Their *jugaad* and creative interactions with these objects enabled their agency.

The pond did not have many big fish but there were the small *jhingas* that the families cooked. As the activity was performed with a few friends and siblings, the collected fish was distributed equally. Additionally, the children were making a contribution toward the food being consumed by the family, since the fish that was collected was to be a part of a meal. Therefore, children had agency in deciding what the family ate, adding to their sense of responsibility (discussed further in Section 6.5).

6.4 Risky materiality

The term 'risky materiality' has been taken from Kraftl et al. (2013), who discuss young children's experience and interaction with building and construction material. In the following section, I discuss children's encounters with materials that are conventionally considered dangerous from an adult perspective. There were objects in the children's everyday that enabled their agency but could be categorised as risky.

6.4.1 *Tangi* (axe)

The forest, wood and forest produce were an essential part of the community and children's everyday lives. A *tangi* was a common object present in all homes in the village, used to cut wood, it was made of iron and the handle was made with wood. Children at the age of 4 and 5 would get a customised *tangi* (axe) which was smaller and easier for children to hold, and were encouraged by adults in the family to practice.

Figure 6.12: Indrani using a *tangi* to cut *lakra* [Photograph, 19th January 2018]

In the photograph above (Figure 6.12), Indrani is in the yard outside her house, in the afternoon after returning from school, while still wearing her school uniform. She is holding a *tangi*, to cut the *lakra* plant, which had soft wood and was used for feeding the goats. The *tangi* is small compared to the ones used by the adults in the village.

Similar to the photograph above, young children were seen cutting wood at home. They were not taken to the forest to cut wood or expected to do so on their own but at home children practised on smaller and often softer pieces of wood lying around in the yard. When Mani's youngest sibling, Sukhan, 3 years old, was playing with an axe, trying to cut a log, he looked at the others and said, *lakadi katuhn* (I am cutting wood), their *ajji* (grandmother) grinned and encouragingly said, *haan kaat kaat* (yes, cut cut) [Fieldnotes, 23rd January 2018]. The adults

were encouraging but would also look out for the children. There was a lot of trust invested in children for keeping each other safe and being responsible with these objects. *Tangi* is a sharp object, Mani once mentioned how it fell on her toe while she was cutting the wood and was badly injured. Yet, children were encouraged to practice with it. The children also used the object with care, aware of the dangers of getting hurt. Often older siblings would make sure to be around the younger children while they were playing with the *tangi*.

6.4.2 Buildings and construction material

Often in the village, there were building materials lying around in the yard or near a house where construction work was taking place. In ways similar to those observed by Kraftl et al. (2013) in their work, children interacted with these materials in different ways. This included playing with builders' sand, climbing piles of wooden planks, devising games in the half-constructed buildings, touching and feeling the remnant materials.

The children in the village also helped their parents build or renovate homes. Mani walked back to her house, carrying a basket full of mud for the house on her head. As she placed it on the ground she explained that her *ajji* (grandmother) would mix it with hay and make the boundary of the wooden wall [Fieldnotes, 11th February 2018]. Similarly, Paro went to Chendra, the nearby village, to collect *chui mitti* (a kind of black soil) to renovate Sakhi's house, adding, *isko gham mein karte hain, paani girne se pehle* (it has to be done in the summer, before the rains) [Fieldnotes, 21st March 2018]. Similar to Punch's (2001) observation, children were expected to contribute to the maintenance of the house from a young age. Children were familiar with how and when to use these material objects in their everyday lives. They also described construction work as a part of their routine, as in the drawing made by Mani (Figure 6.13), where she draws herself carrying a basket of mud on her head and putting it outside the house, where it was being collected for the construction of the house. She drew it as a part of a drawing activity (Chapter 4, Section 4.6.3), 'things I like' and 'things I dislike' and explained that she liked doing this work. During the period of my fieldwork, her family was doing renovations in the house, preparing for the monsoon and she would often help her mother in carrying mud from the nearby village.

Figure 6.13: Mani, 10, Carrying mud for the renovation of her house [Drawing, 1st May 2018]

Many children between the age group of 8–11 years helped in small activities to build or renovate their homes with their parents or other family members. This mostly included carrying cans of water, getting soil from the nearby village, applying cow dung to the floor or helping in painting the walls with white *chuna* (limestone). As observed by Pankhurst et al. (2015) and Bourdillion et al. (2011), children enjoyed work outside the home as it gave them an opportunity to connect with peers and play.

As they became older they also helped with the construction of the cemented houses (Indira Awaas Yojna housing scheme, Chapter 2 Section 2.6.7) in the village. Kendli laughed as she recalled her first experience at the construction site, saying, *mere ko pata nai tha, toh tasla bhi machine mein daal diya* (I did not know, so along with the mud, I also put the metal basket with it into the [mixing] machine). Further explaining that it was dangerous, and they had to stop the machine and take it out. At most times, the children were accompanied or supervised by their parents, and they recognised that some of these tasks were perilous and there was fear of getting hurt, for example stepping over a nail, with the sharp edges of the

tools or carrying a heavy basket of mud on the head. But by engaging with these materialities, through these activities, the children were contributing significantly to the construction and renovation of their homes and expressing their agency as productive members of their family.

Kraftl et al. (2013) observed that buildings sites could, paradoxically, constitute both safe play and significant risk. This section, through the discussion of children's engagement with a *tangi* (Section 6.4.1) and construction materials attempts to move beyond the duality of risk and safety.

6.5 Materiality of children's work

In the following excerpt, Mani and Sakhi with their siblings, Indrani and Sona, Vikas and Shree respectively, went to their neighbour's field in the afternoon after school. The field had been recently harvested and they were going to look for leftover potatoes. I have previously discussed this excerpt in Chapter 5, Section 5.2 from a different lens, here I focus on the materiality of children's work.

> The children carried a bag and an axe to dig and fetch leftover potatoes from the field that had been recently harvested. On the other side of the field, they were joined by Reema and her brother Shiv. The children were collecting potatoes for their family's dinner. Mani would select an area and start to dig. As soon as she found some potatoes she would give it to Indrani, who was carrying the bag. Indrani put some potatoes in the bag and looked inside and said, *bhar raha hai* (it is filling).
>
> The children knew how to distinguish the edible potatoes from the rotten ones. Indrani said, *ye acchi hai. naya aloo hai. Laal dikhta hai* (yes, this looks new. It looks pink). Sakhi explained, *aur kaala dikhta hai toh junha rehta hai* (if it is black then it is old), further adding, *jis se aloo ko jagaye the na, vo juna aloo hota hai* (*junha* is the potato they plant as a seed for the next crop to grow).
>
> The younger children were not using the axe but digging and searching with their hands and stones and as soon as they found anything they would bring it to the bag. Sona would bring a potato to her sister Mani and ask if it was good or not.
>
> [Audio embedded in fieldnotes and photograph, 25th January 2018]

Figure 6.14: Sakhi and Nisha digging the field for potatoes

This above excerpt and photograph describe children digging the field to look for more potatoes that may have been leftover by the farmer during the harvest. Here, as the children decide to dig and plough the field, their work was enabled by the use of materials such as axes, stones, *dupatta* (scarf) and bags. The children were digging the field to search for potatoes that would be used for preparing dinner. In the beginning, they all worked together in one area, and one person would dig the ground further to find potatoes, the others helping locate potential ground where they could continue their search, while some helped to collect the potatoes in the bag. Reema examined the bag with satisfaction as she saw it filling. The younger children were not using the axe but using their hands and stones to dig. As soon as they found potatoes, the siblings would bring them to Mani to confirm with her whether they were good or the ones used initially as a seed to grow the new crop. Mani was skilled and experienced in differentiating a new potato from the old. This was an important piece of knowledge for collecting potatoes and she was able to identify them based on their colour and texture. Her knowledge and understanding of the crop enabled her agency, as by being able to identify a good potato she was able to collect good ones for the family's meal.

Materialist approaches to agency have also been rooted in political economy, which emphasises the role of children in productive and reproductive spheres (Panelli et al., 2007). For example, Katz (2004) emphasises young people's role in tending to animals, preparing meals, and taking care of younger siblings. Dyson (2008) observes that around the age of 7 or

8, children became 'crucial to the material and social reproduction of the household' (p.44). Children in the village contributed to their household through accompanying adults for work and sometimes doing the work themselves. Acting as family labour by collecting potatoes from the field or getting fish from the pond helped reduce the parents' burden.

In this case, the children were also aware that they were looking for potatoes in a field that had already been harvested. Since vegetables and crops were expensive, and the families' resources were limited, the children thought of making the best of everything and not wasting what was left by the adults or machines.

6.6 Material agency within limited resources

As the analysis progressed, I observe how both material conditions and narratives of rurality are woven into young people's lives in the village (Punch, 2016). The kind of material and resources available for children in their everyday physical and social environment also have an impact on children's agency. While for the materially privileged their everyday may be dominated by education and play, young people in less resources intensive environments were constrained by structural limitations (Mayall, 2002) such as poverty, health care and education. Young people's agency is considered in relation to their material realities, social rules and regulations that decide how and where their lives are enacted (Robson et al., 2007).

6.6.1 Water as a resource

In Chapter 5, Section 5.3.2, I discuss children's entanglements with water. Here, I give the discussion around water a material dimension. Water was a scarce resource in the village, especially during summer. There were three borewells in the hamlet, one well and a pond a little further away (Chapter 2, Section 2.5.1). During summer, the water levels in the borewell and the well were too low, and water in the pond dried up. Though the scarcity of water came up frequently in conversations among children and adults, the children would not restrict their use of water during games, exercising their agency to use resources. For instance, while playing *shaadi–shaadi* (wedding–wedding), Mani and Jamni along with their siblings fetched four buckets of water to play *haldi*, a wedding ritual where the relatives and friends dance around the *sal* tree and others throw water coloured with turmeric on them [Fieldnotes, 19th

May 2018]. Other studies illustrate how children's lives and routines are shaped by water interactions. Robson (2010) writes about children's labour work of collecting water and Punch (2005) discusses how children's work, mobility and play and is often centred around water-based activities.

Adults in the village would often express their anger, trying to stop the children but they continued, defying adult rules. As Sukhan took a glass full of water from the pot and threw it in the air, his mother shouted *mat kar na ge, paani nahi aat hai* (hey, don't do it, there is no water) [Fieldnotes, 26th March 2018]. His mother was trying to tell him to not waste water because there was not much for consumption and daily use. The children contributed in fetching water from the well and borewell and often mentioned the difficulties in accessing water, yet in games, they did not refrain from using water for play. Through using water for games the children were exercising their agency of being able to use even those resources that were scarce within the community. I extend this discussion of water in Chapter 8, Section 8.2.3 where I discuss the entanglements of children's lives with water and its implications on their everyday.

6.6.2 *Shuk bazaar*, the Friday market

Children in the village did not have a lot of monetary agency, they also did not have much money to spend. If they were given small amounts of money by their parents, siblings or relatives, they would spend it on sweets or buying something from the village shop. As I crossed the shop one day, I met Sakhi and Shree at the shop waiting for it to be opened. They were dressed in formal clothes and Sakhi said they had returned from a relative's place. She had Rs.5 and was going to buy her sister some sweets [Fieldnotes, 22nd May 2018]. Sakhi had received money from her relatives which she decided to spend on buying sweets for herself and her younger sister. Children used their money to meet their immediate needs or desires rather than waiting for something, for example eating ice cream when they had Rs.2.

Children were aware of the situations where they did not have agency, and would at times try to avoid these, as illustrated in the following excerpt.

> Shiv came to Reema and said, ask the teacher to let me go. Reema said, *kya bolun* (what should I say)? Shiv said he wanted to go to the Friday market, adding, *bol*

mummy ne bulaya hai (tell her our mother is calling him). Reema replied, *hatt main nai poochti. Main bazaar nai jaungi.* She added, *waise bhi mujhe toh kuch milega nai* (forget it, I am not going to ask. I will not go. Anyway I will not get anything from the market). I asked, *kyun* (why)? she said, *aise hi. Aur paise bhi nai hain na* (just like that, plus there is no money). I asked, will Shiv get anything? She said yes, he might get a notebook or some stationary.

[Audio embedded in fieldnotes, 23rd March 2018]

In the excerpt above, Reema was not willing to ask for permission for her brother as she knew that even if she does and accompanies her parents to the market, she will not be able to get anything for herself. There was not enough money and she was certain that her brother would get something from the market, and she would not. Therefore, Reema refused to help him, exercising her agency in a situation where she knew she was not going to benefit.

Since the village only had a small daily needs store, the villagers used to buy their weekly rations and any additional supply of clothing, stationery, and so on from the *shuk bazaar* (Friday market) in the neighbouring village. Children in the village looked forward to *shuk bazaar*. A day before the market, the children would talk about it in the school anticipating what they would get from the market, if they were accompanying parents or if any of their siblings were going. It was seen as a privilege by the children to be able to go to the market. Most times the children did not accompany parents, but each week would hope they could. Some Fridays they accompanied their parents, at other times they would only talk about what the parents purchased, especially if it included sweets or savoury treats for them. Children with limited material resources connected with things differently from their more affluent counterparts, and instead of buying, they relied more on sharing or finding, reworking and readjusting (Blazek, 2016), thus materialising their agency through everyday objects.

6.7 Material inequalities and children's agency

Material inequalities are an important factor in the formation of children's agency (Blazek, 2016). Along with how children ingenuously used objects from their everyday to enable agency, this section discusses children's views on material poverty. The community that these children were embedded in may be regarded as poor in the larger socio-economic and political framework. Though children's own assessment of their life situation was not of

abject poverty (Suneja and Sharma, 2017), they did have an awareness of the various state provisions that were available to them, since their economic conditions were relatively poor.

6.7.1 Children's awareness of state provisions and entitlements

The children were aware of the state provisions they had for families below the poverty line. These included meals for children through the mid-day meal (MDM) scheme and *anganwadis* (ICDS), and the Public Distribution System (PDS) (discussed in Chapter 2, Section 2.6.7). There was also a provision of distributing household items every year by the current state government, which so far included mosquito nets, knives and a torch.

The PDS, a service by the government, only provided the families with 35 kg ration (rice) @Rs.2 per Antyodya (AAY) ration card[10]. As Mani explained while helping her mother remove the chaff from the rice, this was not sufficient for a big family, so they had to buy more from the market. Her mother added that this was sometimes difficult when there was not enough money.

Sakhi, Mani and Nisha were having a discussion where Sakhi said, *hamein toh ration nahi mil raha* (we are not getting rations these days). She looked at Nisha and said, *phone number maange hain. meri maa ke paas phone nai hai, usko khareedna padega* (they have asked for a phone number. My mother does not have a phone, she will have to buy it).
Mani responded, *pata nai kya kya mangate hain…kabhi Aadhar, kabhi phone* (I don't know what all they keep asking for, sometimes Aadhar/UID [unique identification number][11], sometimes phone numbers) [Fieldnotes, 24th March 2018]. Conversations such as these help us understand that children were aware of these unrealistic demands by administrative systems, which they as a household were not in a position to fulfil. They were aware of their rights but also aware of the hurdles which did not allow them to access these resources. These

---

[10] Under the National Food Security Act (NFSA), 2013 the Antyodya ration cards are issued to 'poorest of the poor' households. Each AAY household is entitled to 35 kilograms of food grain per month.

[11] AADHAR, is a 12 digit unique identification number, that can be made using demographic and biometric details. See:
Sharma, S. 2018. Looking for Modi: When Aadhaar makes your hard-earned money disappear down a rabbit hole. *Scroll.* [Online]. 24 September. [Accessed 6 March 2019]. Available from: https://scroll.in/article/895462/looking-for-modi-when-aadhaar-makes-your-hard-earned-money-disappear-down-a-rabbit-hole

government support systems were useful to an extent but were not always sufficient and sometimes had pre-requirements for access that the community found difficult to fulfil.

Children also had a sense of being beneficiaries of charity, for instance during the inauguration of an old age home in the village by people from the city, clothes were being distributed to the villagers. Paro accompanied a few other women from her hamlet to the function, remarking, *ab kambal denge aur* <u>*purana kapda*</u> *batega. Sheher se log aayenge batne* (now they will distribute blankets and <u>old clothes</u>. People from the city will come to distribute). She emphasised the word old clothes, indicating that they valued objects but many were not keen on charity and did not find it very dignified.

6.7.2 Materiality as relational

Ridge (2009) in her review of empirical studies about children's experiences of poverty found that these were linked to economic, educational, material and social deprivation. Money as a material resource came up in children's everyday conversations in the village, often concerning the lack of something. Different children shared different views and understandings of poverty, the observations and discussion with children suggest that poverty meant a lack of something, e.g., food or money.

Children's understanding of material poverty was relative. It was similar to Townsend's (1979) concept of 'relative deprivation' that defined households as poor when they were lacking certain commodities that are common in society. In one conversation, when Sakhi talked about her house she added:

> Sakhi (pointing to the ceiling): *Mera ghar bohot accha rahe. Abhi nahi hai. gandagi dekh na* (my house should be very nice. It's not nice now. look at the dirt).
> Ambika: *Toh kya hona chahiye?* (so, what should it be like)?
> Sakhi: *Mahal rehta. Bohot bada* (should have been a palace. Very big).
> Sakhi: *Achal ka ghar acch hai. bada hai, saaf rehta hai. gandagi nahi hota. hamara dekho phata chat hai* (Achal's house is nice. It's bigger and it is clean. There is no dirt. Look at ours, the ceiling is broken).

[Audio transcription, 27th April 2018]

The above excerpt captures how Sakhi describes her house as dirty and small and expresses a desire to have a house that looks like a palace. While comparing it with other houses in her village, she wishfully adds that it should be as beautiful as Achal's house, which is big, clean and well maintained. Achal, Sakhi's friend and neighbour had a bigger and newer house, with freshly painted walls, it looked cleaner. Children often made comparisons with other children, especially with children from the Oraon community, who were better placed in terms of wealth and education. As Paro exclaimed, referring to an Oraon household in the hamlet, *inka ghar bada hai aur saaf hai* (their house is bigger and clean) [Fieldnotes, 29th January 2018]. Here cleanliness was equated with prosperity. Children in the village valued larger and cleaner houses. They themselves made an effort to keep the houses clean and swept regularly, similar to Chapter 5 (Section 5.2.1), where children expressed a desire for a cleaner and greener village. Though children compared their material resources with others, their being able to visualise, dream and imagine something in itself was an exercise in agency.

Conclusion

There is substantial literature that discusses children's agency and materiality with toys, or in playgrounds. Through this chapter, I also extend these to children's everyday objects in the rural setting of the children's lives in Chhattisgarh, which have an impact on their agency.

These excerpts from the field are not all extraordinary and capture mundane things. These have been deliberately chosen to highlight the impact of seemingly regular events in children's everyday lives. Through these ordinary and extraordinary details of children's everyday lives, I explore children's agency, seamlessly woven in their everyday (Suneja and Sharma, 2017). Through this chapter, I extend beyond the binaries of human and non-human and explore the agency that is produced and performed with their encounters and interactions.

The chapter illustrates a varied range of experiences and encounters with different materials. Children would explore and interact with the objects they encountered through looking, touching, smelling, feeling and throwing (Blazek, 2016). Some materials enable children's responsibility, extended care and made them resourceful. In some cases, with limited resources, children found innovative ways to be resourceful and exercise agency.

While most of the everyday objects children engaged with could qualify as waste material, children found even 'the most mundane throwaway bits and pieces' (Kraftl and Horton, 2007, p.1016) to incorporate into their activities and play. At times, it would include playing with magnets, bottle caps, glass, wires, and blades that were presumed as dangerous objects. Children reused and reshaped things in their everyday e.g., making a toy car using a plastic can, rubber slippers, old wires and bamboo sticks (Section 6.3).

Things acted in diverse ways as an extension of children's agency, from using things for expressions of anger by throwing pots or for creating something when making a pinwheel. The examples of 'buying, searching for, adjusting, producing, asking for, maintaining and giving things' introduced a diverse and complex network of local practices that children experienced, extending it to their agency' (Blazek, 2016, p.131).

In the next chapter, I discuss the children's agency as being produced and performed by their everyday interactions and social relationships within the community. I discuss this explicitly by focussing on friendships, sibling relationships, relationships with parents, grandparents and teachers. I discuss the different spaces, situations and forms of interactions and how they enable (or not) children's agency.

Chapter 7: Exploring agency through relationships in the village

Introduction

The previous chapter was an analytical discussion about children's agency being produced in associated with their everyday materials. Following a similar pattern, in this chapter, I discuss children's agency in relation to social relationships in the village. As Abebe writes, 'children live their everyday life in the context of social structures, relationships, and institutions. This requires agency to be understood against the backdrop of wider fields of generational power' (Abebe, 2019, p.6). Therefore, to understand agency, it is important to acknowledge and understand the relationships, societal structures and institutions within which the children's everyday life is situated and by which they are impacted. Thinking about agency through generational power (Alenan and Mayall, 2001) is one way in which these children's lives can be understood. During fieldwork, I observed a multitude of intergenerational, caste, gender and other hierarchies at play, that have been discussed in this chapter.

Within the Childhood Studies literature, there has been a focus on exploring the notion of children's dependence and independence. This often does not capture the complex nature of their relationships within the families and the community (Abebe, 2019). In this chapter, I explore these complexities. I argue that children's relationships with adults and other children in the community are interdependent and relational, and are negotiated and re-negotiated over time and space (Abebe, 2019; Punch, 2015; Morrow, 1994). Here it is useful to align with Kjørholt (2005), who encourages us to look at children as interdependent, arguing that viewing them as independent will separate agency from the wider cultural and social milieu within which it is embedded. The idea of agency as interdependent is not only a critique of neoliberal notions of self and personhood but an alternative conceptual framework that theorises agency from a life course perspective (Abebe, 2019). The life course perspective is an interdisciplinary approach that looks at multiple factors within people's cultural and historical contexts, that shape their lives (Elder et al., 2003). This aligns well with my approach that was ecological and looked at the community at large — their social, economic, political and historical context, that was influencing the lives of the adults and children in the village.

Aligning with what Wyness (2013) says, children's agency should be explored relationally, recognising the roles and positioning of children and adults and how they have an impact on agency. Though adult–child relationships are mostly based on unequal power relations, instead of viewing them as dependent or independent, it is useful to consider and explore the reciprocity between these relations (Morrow, 1994). By looking for evidence of reciprocity, it becomes possible to develop new knowledge in the area of children's agency and relationships.

The primary relationships that children had in the community were with their family, including parents, siblings, relatives; their friends in the school and community and the school teachers. In the village, households rely on an extended network of care within families and the community. This chapter explores children's relationships with others in the village. This includes the nature of these relationships, their interactions, interdependence, collaborations and networks with family, friends and the community, and how they negotiate their agency through these interactions. Instead of focussing on the actor, I explore the actions and interactions of children within their social contexts (Abebe, 2019).

I explore these relationships and networks through various events, observations and interactions during fieldwork. Similar to the previous two chapters, I approach this one by selecting excerpts, photographs and drawings from the field that highlighted aspects of their everyday and at other times instances that were more unique or telling. At times these relationships were easy to observe through people's practices in the village. I paid attention to routines and practices of children and adults to inform myself about relationalities and interdependences that further assisted children's agency. The first section of the chapter explores the nature of children's relationships with the members of the family and their negotiations in various roles. The second section looks at the role of children as sibling caregivers. The next section looks at children's friendships, and finally, the last section discusses children's agency with relation to their teachers. Throughout the chapter, I also weave in the discussion of the impact of various structures including caste, religion and gender on people's lives and decision-making capacities.

7.1 Children's agency within family

Though children in the community spent a lot of time on their own, they were always surrounded by adults who were aware of the children's whereabouts. This included parents, grandparents, older siblings, neighbours or relatives. Typically, in most households, children stayed with their parents, siblings, grandparents and in some cases an unmarried uncle or aunt. Children's spaces and movement in the physical space of the house and the community have been discussed in Chapter 5.

In the village, along with intra-generational interactions, there was also interaction and overlap between the different generations. Their interaction with their mothers was mostly about ensuring that the children had eaten, bathed, were safe, not by themselves, and also asking them to help or giving them tasks to perform. Children's interaction with their fathers was more limited, and included giving instructions for particular tasks or scolding them when they made noise. Most children in the village shared a joking relationship with their grandmothers which they could get away with, even if they teased them. Even if grandmothers would scold children, they showered them with physical affection. This was similar to Trawicks' (1990) account of Tamil families in India, who describes these interactions as 'loving threats of violence' (p.220).

Figure 7.1: Sukhan with his grandmother under the mango tree [Photograph, 24th June 2018]

This discussion about families is relevant as Wyness (2013) urges us to bring adults back to the discourse for a more relational approach, and recognise the different roles and positions of adults and children. Having set the context for intergenerational relationships in the field, in the sections below I discuss the context of children's and adults' unequal social power and children's complex endeavours of negotiating agency.

7.1.1 Forms of children's agency with adults in the family

This section discusses instances from the field where children explored, asserted, and negotiated their agency with members of the household. The children shared distinct relationships with different members of the family and community. These differences were based on the hierarchies within the community, patriarchal systems, the role of the adults in the community and in the children's lives. I explore how the adult-child interactions, negotiations and levels of agency in the village varied with relation to different family members.

>   *i.   Asserting agency through defiance*

One way children enacted their agency was by defying adult wishes and instructions. In the following excerpt, Mani wanted to go to the neighbouring village with her mother and siblings, while her mother wanted her to stay at home since it would be expensive to take all her children.

> Mani's mother was walking through the fields with Sukhan and Indrani who was ill and had to get an injection in the neighbouring town, and Mani followed them. Walking a little further, her mother turned around and asked her to go back. She shouted again, *aye ghar ja na ge* (hey, go home). She said it a few times and Mani stood still with a sad face staring at her mother. When her mother would start walking, she would continue to walk behind her. In desperation, her mother picked up a stick to threaten her, but Mani continued standing quietly. Her mother pushed her shoulder and then finally hit her legs a few times with the stick. She even asked an acquaintance working nearby, to persuade her not to come. Sangeeta's *ajji* tried to dissuade Mani, *aye layika ghare ja* (hey kid, go home) but Mani continued standing. Her mother finally gave up and continued walking, and Mani followed.

> [Fieldnotes, 15th June 2018]

Mani wanted to go out for a trip to the neighbouring village. She was determined to not give up and continued following her mother and her siblings to the bus stop. She was persistent and did not let the beating or the push deter her, defying any instructions that were being given to her. Throughout, Mani kept walking silently and did not say anything, and even while being hit by the stick she did not react, move or run away. She stood there stoically. Her agency was in choosing not to react to her mother's threats and punishment. She was testing her mother's patience. She was aware that her mother did not have much time and no other option but to go to the neighbouring village as her child was unwell. Her mother also did not give up immediately and tried her best, taking assistance from other adults to shame Mani, but she was unsuccessful. Children liked to accompany their parents outside the village, sometimes for the journey and other times with the hope that the parents would buy them something from the market (Chapter 6, Section 6.6). Here, Mani's mother was unsuccessful in dissuading her through threats and punishments, and she walked persistently behind them. Due to her persistence, Mani managed to achieve her goal, further strengthening the argument that adults did not have absolute power over children, and it was subject to resistance (Reynolds, 1991; Waksler 1996).

In other situations, children also silently defied adult rules when they wished to avoid work. Mayall (2001) argues that children seek greater autonomy through resisting adult boundaries. In one instance, when Mani's *ajji* (grandmother) let the goat loose to be taken for grazing, she called out to Mani, who did not look up or respond and continued to eat mangoes. That made *ajji* respond angrily and say, *din bhar khaat hain* (you eat the whole day), but she also left home to do the work herself [Fieldnotes, 13th June 2018]. Here again, by choosing not to respond to *ajji's* instructions, Mani tried to avoid the task. She did not respond verbally but in an embodied manner. By not moving, she conveyed to her grandmother that she was not going to work. Adults attempted to persuade the children to an extent and then had to give up, submitting to children's unwillingness. At times parents did the work themselves, at other times would ask other siblings to help. The children were aware of this pattern, and would use it to their benefit. The refusal to perform a task was also dependent on a child's relationship with the adult. As most of the children in the village shared a close bond and a joking relation with their *ajjis*, they could take liberties with them which they could not with their parents, fathers in particular.

The children were also aware of parents' concern for them, and the different forms in which it was expressed. In the following excerpt, children explain different forms that they considered an expression of concern from their parents.

> When asked how they knew whether their parents loved them, Mani thought for a bit and said, *paisa dete hain* (they give money), Reema said, *haan hum cheez kharedne ke liye mangte hain toh paisa dete hain.* (yes, they give us money to buy things). Mani added, *gham mein ghoomte hain toh bolte hain mat jao. Gham lag jayegi* (when we go out in the heat they say don't go out. You will get a heat stroke). Reema said, *dai gariyati hai, par main chali jaati hoon. Kaam khatam kar ke jati hoon* (mother gets angry, but I still go out. But I finish the work and go).

> [Audio embedded in fieldnotes, 20th April 2018]

Children explained that their parents expressed love by giving them money to buy things. They also added that parents showed their concern when they worried about the children going out in the sun, where there was a risk of falling ill. They were aware that when parents refused them something, it was from a place of care and concern. Reema acknowledged her parents' response as care and was aware that the mother would be unhappy if she went out in the sun, yet decided to go anyway, expressing her agency by defying them. Though she made a choice to go out, as a negotiation tactic added that she finished her domestic chores, so her mother could not complain.

ii.   *Agency through delaying a task*

Depending on the context, situation and the relationship with adults, the children could not always dismiss or ignore instructions or their everyday responsibilities. In the following excerpt, Neelam was seen sitting quietly by herself during the day, near a tree close to her neighbours house and looking at the fields. Neelam's sister-in-law expected her to do a lot of domestic work, due to which Neelam would often have to miss school. Her situation was different from the other children as her parents were deceased and she stayed with her cousin and his family.

> On being asked why she was sitting by herself under the tree, Neelam said, *bhabhi gussati hai...isan saab kaam karne ko bolti hai. Madad bhi nahi karti, mere ko bolti hai. Kabhi kabhi bolti hoon, par khud hi roti hoon* (my sister-in-law scolds me, asks me to do all the work. She doesn't help, asks me to do it. I sometimes answer back, but then I start to cry). She then added, *aaj mujhe accha nai lag raha tha. Mood kharab tha toh bahar tehelne aa gayi. Kuch nahi kiya*

(today I was not feeling good. I was upset and came out to take a walk. I did no work).

Neelam was unhappy with her sister-in-law's scolding and pressurising her to work, so she decided to not do any work and go out for a walk instead and get some fresh air. Neelam felt it would be helpful if her sister-in-law would also contribute to the tasks, instead of expecting her to do all the work. She elaborated on the ways in which she dealt with her feelings of anger and sadness. Neelam said that she usually went out of the house for some time to distract herself, sit quietly or answer back to her sister-in-law, which made her feel sadder. Neelam was exploring different ways of taking charge of the ways in which she spent her time. She found it difficult to express and assert herself because she was dependent on her cousin's family.

Children are aware of the roles different adults play in their lives, and the varying degrees of freedom and limitation they experience with relatives. Even though Neelam had chores to do, and felt she was in a position that she could not refuse, she took the decision of delaying the task and not doing it immediately. As Punch argues (2001, p.3), 'children renegotiate adult-imposed boundaries and assert their autonomy, which can include decision-making, gaining control over one's use of time and space, taking the initiative to do something and taking action to shape one's own life'. In this situation, knowing she could not avoid the task altogether, Neelam delayed her work responsibility and decided to go out to take a walk and feel better, exercising her agency within these limiting circumstances. Even though Neelam's family arrangement was different from others, similar to her response, other children in the village also devised different ways to deal with the tasks. They often took more time to complete them, and found ways to escape, even if it was for a short period.

iii.   Agency: partial, relative and relational

Children's autonomy was partial and relative (Punch, 2001), there were times and situations where the children were unable to refuse to the tasks and had to comply, as discussed in the following excerpt.

> While the children were watching TV, Mani's *ajji* came to the room and scolded them, saying, *saala baithe rahein, dinbhar TV dekhat hain* (idiots, you keep sitting, the whole day you watch TV) and she pulled Indrani's blanket. Sona

quickly shut the television and the children dispersed. Mani went to clean the utensils, Indrani went outside to cut some softwood for the goats to eat.

<div align="right">[Fieldnotes, 28th January 2018]</div>

As discussed earlier, though the children had a friendly relationship with their grandmothers. in this case, since *ajji* seemed very angry, the children had to stop watching television and get to the tasks assigned to them by the other family members. *Ajji* only asked them to get to work, she did not give any specific instructions, but all the children knew what to do. Though the children were allowed to watch television and were encouraged to do so in the heat to keep them indoors, when the household chores were left undone the adults would get angry. Here, children figured that *ajii,* who was usually easy to persuade, was angry, and there was no scope for negotiation. Therefore, they quickly dispersed without attempting any resistance.

Gender and age were also important factors in children's negotiations with parents and other adults. While very young children were more dependent on parents or siblings, older children were able to negotiate their boundaries with adults, sometimes through arguments and defying adult rules. Further, age was associated as an important factor by parents for performing certain tasks and even children were aware of this and were often heard repeating it.

7.1.2 Children's work and agency

Work and household chores formed a large part of children's everyday activities. The following two excerpts from the village are conversations with the children. Here they describe the different work they did at home or with family members and how they felt about performing these tasks.

> Ambika: *Kya karna accha lagta hai* (what do you like to do)?
> Jaya: *Safai karna, barnta dhona, khana banana. Ghar ka kaam accha lagta hai* (cleaning, washing utensils, cooking. I like household work).
> Ambika: *Aur kya accha nahi lagta* (what do you not like to do)?
> Jaya: *Jungle se lakdi katna. Kabhi kabhi accha nai lagta hai* (getting wood from the forest. Sometimes I don't like it).
> Ambika: *Fir kya karti ho* (then what do you do)?
> Jaya: *Kuch nahi. Mummy ke saath jati hoon* (nothing. I just go with mother).

<div align="right">[Audio transcription, 11th June 2018]</div>

Mani: *Paani dhote hai, jhadoo lagate hain, kachada phenkte hain, aur diwal uthate hain* (we carry water, clean the floor, throw garbage, and raise a wall [referring to building a house]).
Ambika: *Diwal mummy papa uthate hain, ya tum* (do your parents raise a wall or do you)?
Mani: *Haan uthate hain, sab uthate hain* (yes, we raise it, everyone raises)?
Ambika: *Ye kaam mushkil lagta hai ya aasaan* (do you find this work easy or difficult)?
Mani: *Mushkil lagta hai* (I find it difficult).
Ambika: *Agar mushkil lagta hai toh kya karte ho* (if you find it difficult then what do you do)?
Indrani (Mani's sister): *Karte hain toh kaam* (we do it, the work).

[Audio transcription, 20th April 2018]

Here Jaya, Mani, Indrani, and Reema discuss the household chores and building work they have to perform. Along with other everyday tasks, children occasionally also engaged in physical work (like collecting wood, helping in construction) with the family. Each year the families prepared for the monsoon by fixing the house wall and making repairs. They often did not refer to household chores as work but discussed the difficulty or dislike for outdoor work as it was tedious and hard. In both these accounts it was evident that even though they did not like certain tasks, children were aware that they had to do them. In Jaya's case it was accompanying her parents to the jungle to cut wood, which she did not enjoy but on being asked what she did about it, she said she went in any case. For Mani helping her parents build the mud wall by plastering or carrying mud and water was a difficult task but like Jaya, she said she did it. The children responded to these questions saying there were no alternatives, and unpleasant tasks had to be done.

Children's work was also dependent on their age and gender; the following photograph illustrates this further.

Figure 7.2: Bhulu, 9, carrying wood from the jungle with his aunt and uncle [Photograph, 5th June 2018]

In this photograph, Bhulu is walking with his uncle and aunt through the fields (which are barren at that time of the year) on a path carved by people walking. He is carrying a small log of wood on his shoulder, while his aunt carries the heaviest bundle of logs, balancing them on a cloth base on her head. They are walking back to the village from the jungle. Though it is the month of May, the sun is not very strong and it is mildly cloudy, making it easier to walk without shade. His uncle walks in front, while Bhulu is walking in the middle so they can keep an eye on him while his aunt walks behind, also as she is carrying the heaviest load. Even though children helped with the household and other chores, they would perform tasks that were manageable. In this case, he is bearing weight that was manageable and not too heavy for him. With age, the physical workload would increase for children and the nature of work also varied with gender. Though the work was equally demanding physically, it was observed that the girls were expected to do more tasks within the village while the boys more often went outside the village. The girls would also go out to collect wood, but they were always accompanied by adults or others from the village.

A common thread was that these chores were performed with others in the family. Therefore, the workload was shared between children, siblings and other adults in the household. Children were aware of their responsibilities, they knew they could not avoid these and did not have autonomy in deciding the nature of the work. Therefore, they complied and found other ways of engaging with work to make it easy and bearable, for instance going to work with friends. Children would often work in groups with their friends (discussed in Section 7.3). Another example of making work less hectic and tedious was through taking breaks in between by either resting, watch television or engaging in play (Section 5.2). In the illustration below (Figure 7.3), children were asked to draw how their days looked. Mani drew a *mahua* tree and flowers on the floor. On the right side, she drew herself carrying *mahua* flowers in a basket on her head during the flowering season (April–May) and on the left side drew herself lying on the ground, resting. Mani describes that she rests or sleeps under the *mahua* tree while waiting for the *mahua* flowers to fall before she can collect them. They have to wait for a long period for the flowers to fall and cannot leave them unguarded on the ground for too long, lest the animals eat them. They rest while waiting.

Figure 7.3: Mani, 10, Carrying *mahua* and resting while the *mahua* falls [Drawing, 20th April 2018]

On occasion, the children would try and avoid work by asking their siblings to do it (Punch, 2001). Usually, the older children convinced their younger siblings to do their share of work,

often in exchange for another task. Sometimes the siblings would remind them of pending favours and make them work. Power was associated with, and relative to, the age of the children and the difference was not necessarily between adults and children, but among children, thus challenging the adult–child dichotomy in relation to power. At other times, children did the work half-heartedly or did not do it properly on purpose, which forced their parents to ask another sibling to take charge and finish their responsibilities. 'Family responsibilities thus become a matter for negotiation between individuals and not just a matter of following normative rules' (Finch and Mason, 1993, p.12). Though there were tasks assigned to children, they were not always followed or completed without resistances and negotiations, a symbol of children's agency.

7.1.3 Ways of dealing with difficult situations

In their everyday, the children had to face some difficult and disappointing situations. They found different ways of expressing anger and disappointment. The following excerpt discusses how Mani distracts herself with other things while dealing with her disappointment of not being able to accompany her mother to another village.

> Mani's mother was preparing to leave with Indrani to the doctor and wanted Mani to stay back and take care of Sukhan. Her mother looked at Mani from a distance and signalled to her to distract Sukhan. Mani said, *thagne ko bol rahi hai Sukhan ko* (she is asking me to fool Sukhan) so that he did not notice her leaving and follow her. Then she said, *main toh nahi janti hoon, nani thagat hai* (I don't know how to do it, grandmother knows). When her mother started to walk away, Mani smiled and said to Sukhan, *dekh babu mummy ja rahi hai* (look baby, mother is going away). Until then, Sukhan had not paid any attention but when she said that, he turned and started following his mother, who had to come back and scolded Mani. When I asked her why she did that, Mani replied, *mujhe bhi jana tha* (I also wanted to go). Suddenly her mother spotted an auto-rickshaw crossing in front of her house and stopped it. She pulled Indrani and quickly went and sat in it. Mani and Sukhan tried coming after her, she turned around and shouted at Mani to stay at home and take care of the children. As the auto-rickshaw left, Mani stood quietly near the house for a while, crying softly, and Sukhna was crying loudly on the road. The neighbours tried to pacify him. Mani let him cry for a bit and then called to him, *aa ja re* (come here). She then looked at me, asking, *toot khane jayegi?* (will you come and eat mulberries?) I said yes. Then she went and tried to calm Sukhan, *koi baat nai babu* (it's okay, child) and picked him and we walked towards the mulberry tree.

[Audio embedded in fieldnotes, 30th March 2018]

In this case, Mani wanted to go with her mother outside the village but was told to stay at home and distract her brother and take care of him. This incident is telling and describes how children made their best efforts to get their way with their parents. This situation is similar to the one described earlier in this chapter, where Mani was successful in going out with her mother. I provide two similar examples with contrasting outcomes to further emphasise how context, time and space were crucial in exercising agency. Mani exercised her agency in this situation and instead of distracting her brother as instructed by her mother, told him that she was leaving, to make it difficult for her to leave. To her, this seemed to be the only way to go with her mother. Despite her best efforts, as events turned out, her mother found a way to leave quickly. Mani was left behind, having to take care of her crying brother and dealing with her own disappointment. She took some time to cry and let her brother cry as well, and then distracted herself by deciding to do another activity she found enjoyable, eating mulberries, to deal with her disappointment. Mani spent some time feeling disappointed but soon engaged herself and her brother in the next best option that was available to her. This incident describes how children dealt with disappointment.

Children also expressed other ways of dealing with disappointment caused by adult structures, rules or not having enough resources to purchase things. Indrani said, *gussa lagta hai toh akele rehti hoon. Khana pakati hoon.* (If I feel angry, I stay alone. Or I cook). Paro also added, *haan aur jaise sundar cheez ko dekhti hoon. Titli phool ped* (I look at pretty things like butterflies, flowers and trees) [Fieldnotes, 30th January 2018]. Spending some quiet time alone, distracting oneself with other activities or spend time with the nature, looking at beautiful things, were ways children used as distraction to deal with disappointment and anger.

Children's agency and alcohol consumption in the village
Social drinking was a custom in the village among both men and women. The local drinks were *hadiya* (rice beer) and *mahua* (alcohol made of *mahua* flower). When there were festivals, marriages and relatives visiting or when people received their pay, these were celebrated through drinking, and all adults regardless of gender would drink. Episodes of drinking would often lead to violence and domestic abuse by husbands. The children were vocal about their unhappiness towards adults drinking. The following extract from the notes illustrates one such event where the adults were drinking and captures children's reactions.

Mani's mother, father and two elderly ladies from the village were sitting and drinking. The elderly women were lying unconscious.

> Mother (to me): *Nasha khaye hain sab* (we are intoxicated).
> Father: *Tumhare yahai gur mithai paani, hamare sarguja zila mein ye peet hain* (your side they celebrate with sweets, but in our Sarguja district we have alcohol).
>
> In the meantime, the children were standing around at a distance and a few minutes later Mani said, *chalo gainda khelenge* (come, let's go play).
>
> Ambika: *Abhi koi tyohar hai* (is there any local festival)?
> Mani: *Nahi aise hi piye hain* (no, they are drinking just like that).
> Sakhi: *Mujhe gussa lagta hai. Pata nahi kyun peta hai* (I feel angry. I don't know why they drink).

[Audio transcription, 25th January 2018]

I draw attention to this particular incident as it was a frequent event in the families. Families would brew the alcohol when they had collected rice or *mahua*. Others who had money would sometimes purchase a bottle from the families who prepared alcohol (at Rs.60) and drink with them. Sometimes, when people in the village did not have enough money, they would give away household objects like sacks of rice, utensils, radios and in extreme cases a piece of their land, to purchase alcohol. In this particular incident, Mani's parents were drinking with two women in the community who were so drunk that they lay unconscious on the ground. The children observed the situation from a distance and did not come very close. From their previous experiences they knew these incidents could turn violent, and so they maintained a safe distance and were silent spectators. While the family members were drinking they would ensure that they dispersed or engaged themselves in different tasks elsewhere. In this case, Mani called the others to play. Children would find ways to escape the house during these drinking sessions by either going to their friend's houses to watch TV, to fill water from the borewell or to play. Children avoided spaces that were usually safe but temporarily made constricted and unsafe by adults. Another reason to stay away and keep their younger siblings away was that they, like adults, believed that children pick up habits from adults. Mita commented on children's tobacco eating habits, *bade ko dekh ke seekh jaate hain* (they [children] learn by observing the adults) [Fieldnotes, 1st July 2018]. Though they did not have the agency to actively change anything, children tried to take control of the situation. They would exhibit their anger by verbally disapproving of their parents' drinking habits, and would often express themselves by saying that as adults they would never drink.

Children also ignored and dismissed instructions from adults who were drunk. Sakhi once angrily mumbled and refused to go when her drunk grandfather was calling her, saying, *saala kutta piya hoga, isliye bula raha hai* (that dog, must be drunk, that is why he is calling me) and ignored him [Fieldnotes, 11th March 2018].

The home as a space also posed a risk for children when the adults were drinking, and often men would become verbally or physically abusive towards their wives. Children were concerned and scared of these fights that occurred after their parents or relatives got drunk. One day Achal got scared when she saw her uncle picking up an axe to beat his wife, and began to cry and ran away [Fieldnotes, 1st May 2018]. During my time in the field, I did not witness but twice heard about incidents of domestic abuse with Achal's aunt and uncle. On one occasion, her aunt threatened to go to the police and also invited her sister from another village to stay with them, so she felt safe. Even after these extreme incidents of violence, she would justify not going to the police by saying, after all, he is my husband. At times, when I asked about the bruises, she would also lie to me, saying she had a fall. There was ostensibly a sense of shame associated with telling an outsider, and wariness about causing alarm. Within the community, the women would discuss abuse and often neighbours would come to each other's rescue when men were physically violent with their wives.

Studies related to parents' alcohol abuse and its impact on children are limited (Backett-Miller et al., 2008; Bancroft et al., 2005; Barnard and Barlow, 2003), especially in India, and are mostly within the domain of psychology or medicine (Sidhu et al., 2016; Rose et al., 2015). My work takes a different perspective, as I capture children's perception of parents consumption of alcohol or fathers physically abusing mothers after drinking. The following section discusses the impact of domestic violence on children in the village.

> One day, from the school premises, we heard a drunk couple fighting in the house next to the school. The teacher had not yet arrived, and children went to the yard, peeping from the school gate to hear what was happening and some climbed the tree to be able to see. The woman was unconscious, and the man was pulling her hair. Mani said, *daru pete hain toh ladte hain. Mujhe toh bohot darr lagta* hai (they drink and act like this. I feel scared). Sakhi added, *jab mera papa marta tha tab main mummy ko churane jati thi toh mujhe bhi marta the. Ek din mummy ko bal se ghaseet ke le ke gaya* (when my father used to hit my mother after drinking, I used to stop him. He would then hit me too. One day he dragged my mother with her hair onto the road).

> [Fieldnotes, 15th February 2018]

These discussions did not take place regularly among children during the period of my fieldwork. When such an episode would take place in the village, the children would talk about it amongst themselves, each giving their version of the incident and explaining what they saw or heard. They also talked about their feelings, mostly expressing their fears of someone getting hurt and feeling scared. They were aware of these episodes and would often witness them. Children used sharing experiences and feelings with their peers as a method to deal with and make sense of these disturbing events. The younger children would mostly get scared and start crying, the older ones stood at a distance and watched their parents fight or would run away to do other things. In cases where the children sensed danger, they would call their neighbours. This section is important for the discussion of agency as these situations regularly posed a risk to children in the village and limited the space to express themselves and take control. Therefore, in the discussion of agency, it is also important to acknowledge external factors that limit the extent of agency.

7.2 Expressions of agency in sibling care

In this section, I discuss children's experiences and agency as sibling caregivers. During the fieldwork, in the village, the children were mostly accompanied by each other, and not always with adults or under adult supervision.

An important aspect of sibling interaction and relationships that I observed in the field was sibling caregiving, as children were 'active co-participants in care' in the village along with their families (Brannen et al., 2000, p.195). Sibling caregiving was a deeply integrated part of children's everyday lives in the village. Children discussed it with terms such as, *dhyan rakhti hoon* (look after), *khilati hoon* (I play), *babu ko paati hoon* (I carry my baby brother). Even though sibling care was a largely unspoken process, it was ongoing and experienced and expressed in different forms. The children in the village were often responsible for taking care of their younger siblings for tasks including bathing, ensuring they eat, playing with them, making sure they do not go out alone on the road. Robson and Ansell (2000) argue that in the Global South, sibling caregiving has not been researched critically, as it is considered a part of children's socialisation, expected from children. Therefore, I consider it important to include it as a focus for the study, to understand the impact caregiving has on children's everyday lives. Through conversations and observations, I unpack and explore children's

agency in sibling relations with relation to care practices, and how children make sense of caring in their everyday lives.

7.2.1 Forms of sibling caregiving

In the village, the older children, from the age of 8 and above, were responsible for taking care of their younger siblings, which in my study included children of age range 3 to 6 years. While caring for their younger siblings, there were techniques that the children had learnt through their previous knowledge, experience and by observing others, which they used while managing their siblings. The following section discusses the different ways children cared for their siblings.

i. *Care through giving time*

In the following excerpt, Paro, leaves Shree to cry for a while before she pacifies and distracts her.

> While Paro and Mita, were sitting and chatting, Shree was crying. I looked towards her, concerned. Paro noticed and said, *rone do, bohot royegi, apne se shaant ho jayegi* (let her cry, she will cry a lot and then calm down on her own). Shree had tripped over a piece of log, though she was not evidently hurt, she was wailing because of the fall.
> Paro said, *yahan bacche ko rone do. Apne aap chup ho jayenge aur tumhare paas aa jayenge* (here, we let children cry. They become quiet on their own, and will come to you). She added, *chup bhi karao toh gussa hote hain* (if you try to soothe them, they get angry).
> Paro said to Shree, *aa ja. Ama khane jayenge* (come, we will go eat mangoes). She shook her head in refusal and when Paro gently persuaded her again, Shree walked closer to her and Paro picked her up.

[Audio embedded in fieldnotes, 15th June 2018]

In this excerpt, Paro, who was taking care of Shree and Vikas while their mother was away, let Shree cry, knowing well that if she would try to comfort her, Shree would not respond. The child crying did not hassle her. She was not avoiding Shree but gave her time to cry and compose herself. Here, similar to Davies' (2015) observation, Paro demonstrates an intimate understanding and knowledge of younger children's verbal and non-verbal communication. Paro relied on her previous knowledge and her observations from the others in the community to decide how to respond when her younger sibling was crying. She assessed the

seriousness of the situation and knew that Shree was not physically hurt and did not require any immediate aid. As Corsaro (2005) observes, children do not imitate adults but reproduce the knowledge through 'interpretive reproduction'. This knowledge was pieced together through children observing other adults and children performing their everyday tasks. Further, by accompanying others to perform different chores and during families' everyday discussions, where children got an opportunity to listen and observe. Similarly, in this situation, Paro, through her past learnings and assessment of the current situation, devised her own ways. Through their experiences with siblings, children also understood individual children and how they responded differently. When Shree had cried for a while and calmed down a bit, Paro told her that they would go and eat mangoes. She used mangoes as a means of distraction. It required some persuasion on her part, but Shree finally agreed to go with her. Paro, through her experience, dealt with the situation in a calm and composed way. Paro also explained her actions to me as a researcher, partly because I looked concerned and partly because she knew that from the outside it may seem like she was ignoring the child, but her decisions were conscious. Through previous knowledge, assessment of the present situation and understanding of other children, children took care of younger siblings.

As sibling responsibilities would take up a large part of children's day, children combined it with play and spending time with friends, as they could not opt out of care duties (Akkan, 2019). Here, Paro was looking after Shree and Vikas while talking to her friend Mita. In the village, though I observed two boys taking care of their younger nephews at one point, it was more often the girls who were observed taking care of younger siblings. It was a gendered practice, and girls were expected to take more responsibility, as also observed by Suneja (2017), in her work with siblings caregivers in both rural and urban India.

Other ways in which the children took care of their siblings was by engaging them in play or involving them in activities and tasks they were performing. In the photograph below, Sukhan is standing below the tree, picking *koilar* leaves and collecting them in a plastic bag as instructed by his sister Mani who was on the tree, throwing the leaves on the ground.

Figure 7.4: Sukhan collecting *koilar* leaves from the ground in a plastic bag [Photograph, 19th May 2018]

Mani was indicating him to the places where the leaves were falling and Sukhan was following her instructions. Mani did not want the goats to eat the leaves and asked Sukhan to pick them. He occasionally ran after the goats to chase them as they tried to eat the leaves. This way Mani involved Sukhan while collecting *koilar* leaves for dinner. Evans (2012) observed that in Tanzania and Uganda that older children played a crucial role in the informal training and socialisation of children within the family and community. Similar to Evans' observations, here Mani was a teacher for her younger brother, teaching him chores through instructions and example. At times, by involving siblings in tasks and activities, children were able to perform other tasks along with looking after them.

ii. *Caregiving through distraction*

Children used different techniques ranging from using words and gestures to pauses, silences and bodies to engage with their siblings and other relationships in the village. Along with giving the siblings time to calm down, as illustrated in the previous section, children also used distraction as another method to soothe their siblings. In the following photo and extract, Mani is sitting on a plastic mat and writing while Sukhan is sitting on Mani's lap.

Sukhan was crying for their mother, and Mani was unable to find her. She picked him up, soothed him, tidied his hair and sat down to do her work. In the meantime, she cut a raw mango for him and said, *le babu, kha* (here baby, eat).

[Fieldnotes and Photograph, 19th April 2018]

Figure 7.5: Mani distracting her brother

Mani was making a drawing for the research activity 'four things I do in a day', but when Sukhan began to cry for his mother after waking up, she began searching for her in the house. As she was unable to find her mother to calm Sukhan down, she picked him up, swayed a little to soothe him, tidied his hair and finally sat with him and worked. This is captured through the photograph (Figure 7.5). Mani is seen sitting cross-legged on a mat with one leg slightly raised to balance Sukhan on her left hip, as she continued to draw. She held Sukhan with one hand and wrote with the other. To distract his attention she cut a piece of raw mango for him. Sukhan still looked unhappy but he stopped crying as he started to play and eat the mango. Since her mother was not in the vicinity, Mani decided to take care of her brother. She was not told to do so but took it up on her own. Mani and other children often took up the role of sibling caregiving, sometimes when asked to and at other times on their own.

Care was not something that children only responded to as a responsibility but as a human response to others' emotional distress. In line with Morgan's (2011) work, I also move beyond the dichotomy of separating labour and emotion, highlighting the more complex and reciprocal relationship in which care is performed. These thoughts further resonate with Mason's (1996) work about care, as she makes a distinction between 'caring for' and 'caring about'. Here the former involved feeling and emotions that were of a non-active nature and the latter involved the labour of care that was conceptualised more actively; and how these two were often overlapping. Elden (2016, p.175) also makes a similar observation in her work where she discusses the 'ordinary complexities of care'.

Many times, in the village, children used pacifiers and distractions with their siblings to soothe them. This often worked with younger siblings and eased children's work. In this excerpt, Mani also physically holds her brother to soothe him. Similar care through bodily actions was also expressed in the photographs below.

Figure 7.6: (L) Sakhi carrying her sister Shree [Photograph, 11th March 2018] (R) Shilpa tied around Mita's waist [Photograph, 16th June 2018]

These photographs capture children taking care of younger children in the village. In the first photograph, Sakhi is carrying her sister Shree. Sakhi is walking towards her home on a hot afternoon, carrying her sister Shree on her waist. While Sakhi is supporting Shree with her

arm, Shree also has her arms wrapped around Sakhi. In a lot of cases, the younger child would also attach themselves to the hip of the older child, with a strong grip so the one carrying would not need to hold very tightly. Shree could walk, but children carried their siblings if the distances were longer, it was hot or the younger siblings were tired. In the second photograph, Mita is posing for a photograph under a tree with Vikas, Shree and Shilpa. Mita wanted to be photographed as she was holding the baby in a way which I had expressed as being different from my context. She had tied 4 months old Shilpa on her waist with a thick cotton cloth, while Shilpa's mother was washing utensils. While she was supporting the baby with her hands, the cotton cloth was tied firmly and close to the body. This allowed the hands to be free and the person carrying, mostly girls or women, could perform other tasks like cleaning utensils, cooking or carrying wood on their head. Care was expressed through these bodily interactions of holding or carrying a child. Care was embodied (Evans, 2012). In these photographs, the children held their siblings close to their bodies, in a manner that there was eye contact and the person carrying could also engage with the child.

iii.   Caring through anger

If the siblings were unwilling to listen through simple instructions, children used anger and threats to express themselves and make them comply. Children in the village often scolded their siblings angrily or threatened them, something that had been modelled to them by the adults in the community. The following two excerpts from the field are examples of children's expression of varying degree of anger and threats towards their younger siblings.

> Milo was not removing her clothes for a bath. Nisha after trying to convince her a few times angrily raised her hand and said, *aye gai, khol chaddi, marbe ge, choodha* (hey, open your pants. I will hit you. Fucker. I don't have too much time).

> [Fieldnotes, 10th February 2018]

> Shiv and Mayawati were playfully pushing and fighting while watching TV and disturbing the others, Reema warned the two and then got a stick and hit them lightly on their back.

> [Fieldnotes, 8th May 2018]

185

These examples from the fieldnotes illustrate techniques used by the children to manage their siblings. These threats and beatings were not intended to hurt but to keep them from doing further mischief. In the first excerpt, Nisha verbally abused her sister, telling her to comply as she had other tasks to perform and did not have much time to indulge her sister. She raised her voice in annoyance expecting her sister to do as she was being told. In the second example, Reema hit her siblings. Since her intention was not to hurt them, she did not use a sharp or a heavy object and assessed the force being applied with it. She lightly hit the children so they would stop making noise. In situations where the children were aware of their limiting influence with their siblings, they used extreme measures like verbal abuse, threats or beatings to assert themselves. When there were situations where the children were not sure if these threats would be effective, they also involved their parents or other adults who the children feared. Similar to Punch's (2003) experience, children, as a last resort, would complain to the adults when a sibling would not listen, or threaten the child to complain to the person they feared the most.

Children's embodied interactions and use of their previous knowledge and experience reveal the diverse ways in which they managed various situations with their younger siblings in the given context, which extended their agency in their relationships with the siblings.

7.2.2 Protecting siblings in difficult situations

Children ensured that their siblings felt safe and cared for, especially in situations involving external factors, be it involving dangerous roads or a disagreement with another family member. The following excerpt describes how **Mani** and Sona cheered up their sister Indrani after she was refused by their mother to get her ears pierced.

> **Mani** and her siblings were sitting under the mango tree, and a man selling artificial jewellery walked towards them carrying a box of jewellery and tools for piercing. Indrani said, *mai bhi chidwahun* (I will also get my ears pierced) and went inside to ask her mother. She came out looking disappointed and walked away. **Mani** explained that their mother refused to let her pierce her ears because of a lack of money.
>
> Indrani walked away feeling sad and angry, and after some time, Mani asked her other sister Sona to go and find Indrani, *ja noni bula na gae, bol didi bula rahi hai, abhi bula rahi hai, didi jaat hai* (go kid, call her, tell her didi [referring to me] is calling, calling right now. She is leaving). Sona went to look for Indrani

186

and called her back. When Indrani walked back and found me sitting there, she exclaimed looking at Mani, *thagat raaes* (were lying) and they all laughed…and Indrani smiled a little.

<div align="right">[Fieldnotes, 5th May 2018]</div>

When their mother refused to let Indrani get her ears pierced, Indrani felt sad and walked away to be by herself. Since the houses inside did not have much space for children to be by themselves, they found other places such as the fields, empty constructed homes, trees to spend time alone. Indrani walked away and sat under a tree. Both Sona and Mani, who were watching, did not say anything. Mani was sensitive towards her sister's disappointment and decided to give her some time by herself. Though ensured that she was not left alone for too long and found ways to cheer her up. Children looked out for their siblings when they were upset, finding ways to make them feel better through jokes, distractions or coaxing. In this situation, Mani understood that there was a shortage of money and she could not resolve the issue. She involved her other younger sister Sona, taking her help to tell Indrani to come back on the pretext that I was going away. She made up a reason which ensured that Indrani would definitely return. After Indrani came back and saw me sitting on the mat with the others, she realised they had fooled her and I was not going anywhere. They laughed and Indrani also smiled. Mani ensured she did her best in the given limited circumstances to make her sister feel better. Children were mostly aware of their household's limited access to material wealth but they still occasionally made demands that the parents or other adults could not fulfil, leaving them disappointed. In these cases, the children were sometimes consoled by older siblings or cousins. Children in the village would have their differences and fights with siblings but when their siblings faced difficulties caused by external factors — in this case, a structural problem caused by the of lack of monetary resources — they supported each other. Children's lives in the village were interdependent and they relied on siblings for emotional support.

The children also looked after their siblings in situations they considered risky and difficult. In the following excerpt, Sakhi tried to ensure that her younger sister would not accompany her to the highway as roads with fast-moving traffic were dangerous (Chapter 5, Section 5.5).

> As I was preparing to leave, Paro said, *layika ke saath chali ja Ambika* (go with these children Ambika) [referring to Indrani and Sakhi]. Indrani and Sakhi prepared to come with me, while Sakhi looked at her younger sister Shree and

said, *noni mat aa* (baby, don't come) explaining, *layika road pe jahi* (children run away to the road). Shree started crying at this refusal, and Paro asked Sakhi to take her.

I carried Shree towards the bus station, and she stopped crying. As we approached the highway, Sakhi instructed me to leave her near the *kadam* tree and walk. As we walked further she turned around to Shree and shouted, *aa toh noni* (come, sweetheart) with her hands asking Shree to come towards her. As Shree approached, Sakhi hugged her, kissed her and picked her up and twirled a few times. She then asked her to stand close to another tree and wave goodbye to me.

[Fieldnotes, 14th February 2018]

Children were aware of the highway being dangerous, especially for their younger siblings, as there was fast-moving traffic. Though they were mostly eager to accompany me to the bus station when I left the village, they were not keen to bring their younger siblings. In this particular event, since Sakhi would have to take responsibility for Shree, she initially refused to take her. As Shree began to cry, Paro asked to let her be taken along. I carried Shree, since she was upset with Sakhi. Even though Sakhi took her to the bus stop, she negotiated and ensured that Shree would not walk up to the end of the road, and instead stand at a safe distance near a tree. Since she had been stern with Shree initially, she then expressed her love and affection through gestures and bodily actions, in this case by hugging, kissing and twirling her. Shree was pacified and stood near the tree as instructed by her sister. Through her own experiences of vehicles passing by, and also being warned by other adults around her, Sakhi understood the risk involved in children being close to highways. Therefore, to protect her sister she refused to take her along.

As illustrated in the observation above, often children would try not to bring their younger siblings to the highway as it was dangerous, and additional responsibility. Even if they did, they tried to negotiate with them and make them stand away from the road. Children learnt these negotiations through their experiences and therefore found a middle ground, where they could ensure the siblings' safety along with being close to the road. When the siblings did not comply, the children used various ways to express their concern. Sometimes they resorted to threats and verbal abuse while demonstrating their agency and its limits, in relation with their siblings. As with Punch's (2003) experience, children stepped into adult roles with their siblings, and the position of responsibility gave them authority over the younger siblings.

Similar to Davies' (2008) work with children's experience of parents' divorce, in the village, children also responded to relationships in an embodied manner, by picking up their siblings, kissing them, pulling their cheeks, hugging them or wiping their tears, and occasionally even shouting at them when they felt the siblings, cousins, or other younger children in the community were in danger. The following photograph (Figure 7.7) illustrates this further as Mani pacifies Sukhan when he was scolded by *ajji*.

Figure 7.7: **Mani** soothing Sukhan [Photograph, 19th May 2018]

Sukhan was playing with cooking utensils and had thrown them on the floor. *Ajji* angrily scolded him. The photograph illustrates Mani pacifying Sukhan. Mani is leaning on the tree trunk, her arms wrapped around Sukhan to console him, occasionally stroking his hair. He also leaned in on his sister as he sobbed. The bucket, utensils and toys are lying on the floor and *ajji* in the distance is collecting them as she scolds Sukhan. Mani could sense her brother's pain. As an older sibling who also cared for her brother, she felt the need to take care of him, protecting him from the adults in the family. She would occasionally say, *mat ro*

babu (don't cry baby) but continued holding him, wiping his tears till he calmed down. Mani expressed her agency in the situation by supporting and caring for her sibling who had been scolded by an adult. Along with words, Mani used her body to express care and concern for her younger sibling. This is also supported by Christensen and James (2000), who writes that children use their bodies to communicate (Chapter 3 and Chapter 8). Exploring and examining children's embodied interactions and response was a crucial aspect in understanding their relationships with others, their capacities and their agency in the situation.

7.2.3 Responsibility or care? Children's perception of sibling care

In the village, the children were given the responsibility of their younger siblings while the adults were busy working. It was also a way of preparing children towards collective responsibility (Nsamenang, 1992). I observed that it was not always the case that the adults were busy, as children also took responsibility for their siblings even when adults were around. While the adults were around, children were sometimes asked to take care of their siblings and at other times they took up the role of the carer on their own. As seen in the previous sections, children expressed care for their siblings, but were not always willing to take responsibility for them. In the following two excerpts, Jaya and Sakhi share similar views and experiences of caring for their younger siblings:

Ambika: *Toh tum Reema ko sambhalti thi?* (so, did you take care of Reema)?
Jaya: *Haan* (yes).
Ambika: *Kab se* (since when)?
Jaya: *Chote se hi, jab paida hui* (since she was born).
Ambika: *Reema ko sambhalna accha lagta tha* (you liked taking care of Reema)?
Jaya: *Accha nai lagta thha. Roti rehti thi. Par rakh leti thi* (I didn't like it, she would keep crying. But I would do it).

[Audio transcription, 11th June 2018]

Ambika: *Tum layika ka dhyan rakhti ho* (do you take care of the children)?
Sakhi: *Haan sadak pe jaane se rokti hoon. Dhyan rakhti hoon* (yes, I stop them from going to the road. I take care of them).
Ambika: *Hamesha karti ho ya kabhi kabhi* (do you always do it or sometimes)?
Sakhi: *Haan, kuch din karti hoon, fir mummy ko kehti hoon, tum le jao. Bolti hai paisa degi, Par deti nai hai. Chutte nai hote na* (yes, I do it on some days and then

tell my mother to take them. She tells me she will give me money but doesn't. She doesn't have loose change).

As observed by Suneja (2017), care was viewed on a spectrum, ranging from responsibility, response to needs, the desire to care, or the lack of it. In both these extracts, the children expressed that they did not always enjoy taking care of their siblings, but were aware that it was an important responsibility. In the first vignette, Jaya did not like taking care of Reema because she cried a lot, but she would still take care of her. In the second one, Sakhi said that she would take care of her siblings on some days but on other occasions asked her mother to look after. Children relied on adults and other children in the village to share these responsibilities of care. Sakhi explained that her mother encouraged her to take up this role by promising her to give money as an incentive. With the awareness that she would not get the incentive she was promised, Sakhi made the decision to take up the responsibility. This could be out of love and care for her sibling, or also because she understood her mother's intentions but was aware of her financial situation. She expressed her agency by making this decision, fully aware that she would not get what had been promised.

Sharing sibling care responsibility for the children could be empowering, but also makes them vulnerable (Akkan, 2019). Taking care of siblings was articulated as an inescapable process. There were times they tried to share responsibility with others, both adults and children, but were aware that they had to do it. Paro said, *arre Ambika, karna padta hai* (oh Ambika, we have to do it). Paro demonstrates that she is aware of her role in the family as a caregiver. Like Paro, children in the village were aware that this was the way and there was no alternative. Further, it was an intimate form of work the children were willing to do most days but not on other days. As Sakhi said, *kabhi kabhi accha lagta hai, kabhi nahi lagta* (sometimes I like it, sometimes I don't). As I walked with Shree towards Sakhi, who was playing with her friends, she looked at her younger sister and said, *arre kyun layi isko* (why did you bring her). I asked her why and she smiled and said, *ab noni ka dhyan rakhna padega* (now I will have to take care of her) [Fieldnotes, 10th March 2018]. She was playing with her friends and did not want to take care of or engage her sister in play. Her disappointment was indicative of her desire to have some time away from her siblings (Morgan, 2011, p. 74) and have time for 'peace and quiet' (Christensen, 2002, pp. 85-86). But when her sister was there, she was also aware that now she could not ignore her and therefore took charge. By

expressing her dissatisfaction openly, Sakhi explored ways of dealing and coping with an unavoidable task, which was also observed by Punch (2001) in her experience in rural Bolivia.

Sibling caregiving was an integral part of children's everyday lives and through their knowledge and experiences children explored their agency within their relationship with the siblings and their role as a caregiver. This was achieved through a range of mechanisms including avoiding responsibility, expressing dissatisfaction, taking help from adults and other children, using anger and threats and showing affection. Children also expressed and experienced sibling care through embodied interactions. Embodied care, embodied play and physical fights were all seen as forms of physical interaction that were a part of the negotiations within sibling relationships (Davies, 2015). The agency children demonstrated could be understood through their negotiation of time and space against the demands of sibling care work that is embedded in the interdependencies with others in the community (Akkan, 2019).

7.3 Children's agency through friendships

As discussed earlier, children in the village were rarely seen alone. They often spent time together with friends and siblings doing their everyday activities, playing or seen in groups walking from one place to another. These groups varied in age range, usually, children would form groups with children of the hamlet and in particular their neighbourhood. Their peers and friends in school who belonged to the same hamlet were usually their friends at home. Though in school they played with children from the other hamlet and community, they were not seen sharing time with them outside of school, as the other hamlet was not very close. Therefore, physical proximity was a factor for children's friendships in the village.

Unless it was a very young sibling that the children were taking care of, the girls were often seen together and the boys moved in separate groups. The girls would play together, perform their everyday activities like bathing in the pond, filling buckets of water or grazing the cattle together and the boys mostly engaged in playing together or going to the jungle to hunt birds with a *gulel* (slingshot). The older boys would also accompany their parents to carry wood from the jungle. I was only able to do limited observations of boys, as most were studying in

a hostel outside the village. In this section, I explore children's friendships and how children explored their agency through these relationships. In my work, I often discuss peers and siblings together, a rationale for which is that often the friends were children's cousins and these relations and dynamics were very fluid.

7.3.1 Children's expressions of friendship

Friendships formed a central component of children's lives (O'Connor et al., 2004). Friendships were socially valued in the village by both children and adults and children spent considerable time with their friends while either working with them, playing or relaxing. In the community, there were social customs that placed value on friendship as a significant relationship. One such ritual was referred to as *phool bandhana* (tying a flower) where two people with the same name exchanged flowers and a piece of cloth, signifying their lifelong commitment to each other. Mani's *ajji* (grandmother) wanted to perform this for me as I shared my name with her niece, though it did not take place. The ritual made friendships more culturally and socially accepted forms of relationships.

Another ritual observed was *godana* (Agarwal, 2019) where children expressed their affection and loyalty towards each other more explicitly by etching the name of their friend on their hand using the *baila* fruit oil which would leave a burnt mark for a long period. Children often talked about their friends as someone they could relate to and spend time with. In the following conversation, Mani discussed the nature of her friendship with Sakhi and Sarita:

> Ambika: *Accha to Sakhi chali gayi* (has Sakhi left)?
> Mani: *Haan mehmaan gayi hai, wahin se school bhi jaati hai* (yes, she has gone as a guest [to her aunt's place]. She has started going to school from there).
> Ambika: *Tum usko yaad karti ho* (do you think of her)?
> Mani: *Haan karti toh hoon, hamare saath khelti thi* (yes, that I do, she used to play with us). *Par aur bhi saheli hain. Par usko bhi yaad karti hoon.* (I have other friends. But I do remember her). *Tum nai karti ho* (you don't [miss her])?
> Ambika: *Aur tumhari dost sarita? Vo yahin hai? Uske saath khelte ho* (what about your friend Sarita? Is she still here? Do you play with her)?
> Mani: *Nai vo badal gayi hai. Alag se baat karti hai. Hamare jaisa nai bolti hai* (no, she has changed. She talks differently. She does not talk like us).

> [Audio transcription, 28th June 2018]

Mani valued her friendship with Sakhi, as she used to spend time and play with her. She explained that though she has other friends to play with, she still thinks of her and misses her. On further enquiring about her friend Sarita who had returned after two years from the city, Mani said that things were different with her now. Mani and the other children in the village were not able to associate with Sarita anymore since she talked differently from the others. Sarita had been away from the village for two years, working in another city as domestic help and her accent had changed. She used more Hindi words with a Marathi accent (from the region of Maharashtra) which the children found difficult to associate with. Children's association with their friends in the village was based on the physicality and proximity of their relationship. Here the friendship was shaped by everyday embodied practices and everyday interactions like playing rather than having cognitive attachment (Blazek, 2016). The following photograph below (Figure 7.8) elaborates this argument further by illustrating children's interactions in the field.

Figure 7.8: Shree, Chand, Vikas and Sakhi playfully fighting [Photograph, 1st May 2018]

In the photograph, the children are lying on a mat placed on the mud floor inside Sakhi house. The room is small and there is not a lot of empty space, with utensils and clothes lying in the corner of the room. Sakhi, Vikas and Shree are wearing plain clothes they wore at home while Chand is wearing his school shirt. The children are lying on top of each other, tickling, laughing and physically engaged, with their clothes and bodies entangled. Only on closer observation does one realises that there are four children playing. It soon became more intense and the playful interaction turned into a fight. In the village the children's interactions with their friends were embodied and both boys and girls interacted with their friends in a similar manner. Children used the body as a tool to construct relationships, meaning and experiences (Taylor, 2013). In the village, the children's interaction with each other ranged from physical interactions, including oiling and combing each other's hair, playfully hitting, laughing, screaming, throwing water at each other, to more intense engagements like sometimes tearing each other's clothes.

This image with children playfully laying one on top of the other could be from any part of the world, where children play and fight, helping to think about their childhood as global. As Punch (2003) argues, children in the Global South are mostly perceived in relation to their work, while the overlapping areas of life such as play and school tend to be ignored. This picture therefore contributes to a holistic understanding of children's lives in a village in the Global South.

There were other forms of expressions of children's friendships. In the following excerpt, Meena is expressing her anger when she finds out her washed clothes fell in the mud.

> Meena had washed her clothes and left them at the edge of the borewell and had gone to play with her friend Sonam. The pot suddenly fell in the muddy water. Chanda called Meena, who was watching TV inside, and when she came out to see her clothes, she got angry. She asked, *kaun kiya* (who did it)?
> Reema: *Apne aap hooes* (it happened on its own).
> Meena looked at Nisha and said, *kyun dhakele* (why did you push it)?
> Nisha: *Main nahi kari hoon. Puchwa dehun* (I haven't done it, ask any one).
> Indrani said, *apne aap hooes Meena* (it happened on its own Meena).
>
> Chanda's mother, sitting at a distance, also added, *apne aap hooes* (it happened on its own). Meena angrily said to Nisha couldn't you have seen it? Nisha also angrily replied, *ja dai ko bata dehe* (go, tell your mother).

<div align="right">[Audio embedded in fieldnotes, 10th February 2018]</div>

Meena was angry and was accusing and cursing the other children for being irresponsible with her clothes. Even though they tried to explain themselves, she seemed fixed in her idea that it was one of them that was responsible for the clothes falling in the mud. She was angry as she had spent time washing them and would have to do it again. When Meena was accusing Nisha, Nisha tried to seek affirmation and support from others by saying, "you can ask anyone", taking support from her other friends who were witnessing the incident. The friends supported Nisha. Meena was not ready to believe her, so finally when there was no other way to explain, Nisha angrily added, go tell your mother. Encouraging her to complain was her last resort to prove her innocence. If there was a fight between two children the other children took sides and to pledge allegiance, they would stop talking to the children supporting the opposite side. The decision of what side to choose was based on their own assessment of the situation and opinion. These groups and sides were not always fixed and would change based on the situations.

Although they made fun of each other, at other times they also expressed concern for each other. When friends in school were not feeling well, children would ask about their wellbeing. They express their concern towards them by suggesting that they rest.

> Reema and Chandni were playing, making paper dolls in school, Sakhi was lying on the carpet. Reema looked at her and said, *bohot beemar hai. Vo udas hai kyunki vo beemar hai* (she is extremely unwell. She is sad because she is unwell).
> Ambika: *Jab dost udas hote hain toh kya karte ho* (what do you do when your friends were sad)?
> Reema: *Unko chutti lene bolte hain, ghar ja ke aarama karne ko bolte hain (*we ask them to take a day off and go back home and rest). *Ek baar meri bua baila charane aayi thi. Badhiya nai laga tha, toh maine bola ghar ja, main kar dungi* (once my aunt had gone to graze the cattle and she was not feeling well. I said go home, I will do it).

> [Audio embedded in fieldnotes, 21st March 2018]

Children would make fun or fight with each other, but they were concerned about their friends. When their friends were unwell, they did everything possible to make them feel better. While talking about how they help their friends, Reema talked of an incident where she asked her young aunt to go back home when she was feeling unwell and offered to do her work. There was care and concern for their friends and they could depend on each other for support (Chapter 3, Section 3.8.3).

These excerpts illustrate that children's interaction with these peers varied widely. Their friendships were also impacted by space and everyday routines. In the school, children formed friendships with children from the other hamlet, but outside the school they played, interacted and spent more time with children from their hamlet, with whom they played and performed their everyday tasks.

7.3.2 Work, leisure and friendship

Friendships were further affirmed through shared practices (Dyson, 2010) and work performed outside the house like filling buckets of water and washing clothes or cattle grazing. These were everyday tasks children did collectively with friends. Children often referred to the task being easier when done with friends. As Paro said, *dosti ke saath accha lagta hai* (it feels nice with friends). They were aware that they could possibly be distracted by friends. As Neelam said, *pehle kaam karte hain fir baat, varna baat hi karte rahenge* (first we work and then talk or else we will keep talking). Having company made the job less boring and helped in completing the task quickly (Punch, 2001). Based on her ethnographic fieldwork in Sudan, Katz (2004) argues that children transformed the nature of their practices by combining household work with play. In the following photographs, the children are seen performing their everyday chores along with their friends.

Figure 7.9: Children engaging in everyday activities with friends [Photograph (L) 10th March 2018 (R) 19th June 2018]

In the first photograph, Sakhi and Mani are sitting together at the edge of the pond and scrubbing their clothes with soap on a stone slab. They both walked to the pond with their siblings and friends. While the others were taking a bath the two washed their clothes, also looking out for their siblings and other friends. In the second photograph, the children are talking and walking towards the pond, carrying clothes in pots on their head to be washed and soap to bathe. On their way they talk, joke and stop to look at things. Children working collectively were helped by each other, this interdependence on their peers contributed to children's collective agency.

Research has illustrated how friendships created networks for collective actions (Dyson, 2010). Niewenhuys (1994) describes children's collective work in coastal India and Swanson (2009) writes about the crucial role of friendship networks in children's organisation of begging in Ecuador. Many times, in the village the children engaged in tasks with friends that they were not allowed to perform otherwise. They defied adult rules and explore their agency collectively. Friendships added mobility into children's lives, increasing their agency, as parents were willing to send their children out when they knew they were not alone.

Friendships also helped children escape adult rules and expectations. As Neelam explained, she felt she was able to rely on her friends on a day she was feeling sad, *hum baat karte hain, mere dost mujhe hasa dete hain, fir accha lagta hai* (we talk, my friends make me laugh. It feels good) [Fieldnotes, 24th April 2018]. Like Neelam, children found solace in each other's company.

The main topics of discussions among friends were usually work, making plans to do activities together including going to pluck fruits, bathe in the pond and play. Among girls, marriages and boys were common topics of discussion. They would discuss weddings in the village, especially if one was taking place at the time. If they saw some poster or a movie with wedding scenes, they would compare that to their context. Older children also engaged in recreational activities like applying henna, sitting together, relaxing or taking a break. The following two excerpts explore how children spent time with each other.

> Clouds were forming and there was a pleasant breeze. Paro smilingly plucked a few flowers and commented, *itna accha mausam hai. Maan kar raha hai baith ke baatein karein* (the weather is so nice today. I feel like sitting and chatting). Mita and Paro sat outside their homes on a raised platform and talked about the

monsoon that had almost arrived and *puttu* and *khukkadi* (wild mushroom varieties) that would grow in the jungle after the rain. *Abhi baarish mein puttu, khukkadi khayenge* (now in the rain, we will eat wild mushrooms in the jungle). I asked, how do you identify the poisonous ones and the non-poisonous ones? *Bas kar lete hain. Jante hain* (we can do it, we just know).

[Fieldnotes, 11th June 2018]

Sukhni and Jaya were sitting on a mat under the *mahua* tree outside Reema's house. They were also joined by a guest from the neighbourhood who was sitting with them with their baby. Sukhni and Jaya were playing with the baby and talking to each other. While playing with the baby Sukhni said*, Ambika* [their friend in the village] *apne bete ko pane nahi deti hai, hum uske dost hain phir bhi (*Ambika doesn't allow us to pick her son up, even though we are her friends, still she doesn't). After the baby left, Jaya placed her head on Sukhni's lap. She asked her to check her hair, and said *gana suna de* (sing a song for me) and Sukhni untangled Jaya's hair while she rested her head on Sukhani's lap.

[Fieldnotes, 13th June 2018]

Between work, children found time for leisure and to have conversations with their peers. As Dunn (2004) observes, children's friendship practices included sharing intimate information and secrets. Similar to his observations, in the excerpt, Paro and Mita's conversation explores their care and concern for nature, which helped them bond with each other. While Jaya and Sukhni shared an intimate bond over care for each other and discussions about common friends.

In the village, when children were questioned about their knowledge of different things, in this case non-poisonous mushrooms, many would respond saying *we just know it.* Similar to Dyson's (2014) observation with girls in the Indian Himalayas, there was little reflection on the construction of knowledge. Children learnt at an early age, from observations, trial and errors. This is not the analytical focus of my work but emerged in the data, and can have implications for future research (Chapter 9).

Friendships were a source of knowledge and information for children in the village. Through this relationship, they were informed about the world — both their immediate and distant environment. This is similar to Bartos (2013), who observed that friendships were particularly crucial in developing and influencing children's environmental subjectivities

(Chapter 5, Section 5.3). Friendships both in school and outside were seen as a source of information sharing, knowledge construction and meaning-making by the children. The children collectively made sense of their physical, material and social worlds through these interactions.

7.4 Relationships with teachers

Another significant relationship children had was with the teachers in the school. The teachers in the primary school were from the nearby city, Ambikapur. Since they were from a city, with better access to resources, the children were aware of the power difference and how they were different from the other adults in the community. In school, the children sat on a *darri* (jute mat), they were asked to clean teachers' utensils and were also hit by the headmistress if they were unable to read or write correctly. Children's experience in the village school resonated with the experiences of children in Peru, as observed in the Young Lives research, where punishment was a part of the disciplinary system (Arangoitia, 2011).

The teachers referred to the children in the school by their community's name, *Korwa bacche* (Pahari Korwa children). A lot of the children's conditions, choices and behaviour were attributed to them belonging to the Korwa community. This was explicitly stated by the teacher in conversations with the children, and even with me. Similar to Sriprakash's (2016) observations, teachers sympathised with the economic hardships of the community, including their reliance on daily wage labour, but this was accompanied by another discourse where the community was considered 'uneducated' and 'backward'. This was also seen as a reason for parents' lack of interest in the child's education. For instance, if the children's dresses were torn the teacher would say *inke ma baap dhyan nai dete* (their parents don't pay attention) or if Neelam or any other child would miss school the teacher said, *ye korwa log padhai pe dhyan nai dete* (these Pahari Korwa people don't value education).

Children from the Pahari Korwa community also felt that the teachers were partial towards the children from the Oraon community. Indrani said, when we miss class, sir marks us absent but Suraj and Seema [children from the Oraon community] always get attendance [Fieldnotes, 11th June 2018]. She felt the impact of her Pahari Korwa identity while being differentially treated by the teacher in the school. Sriprakash (2016, p.161) observes that the

'class and caste discourses were enmeshed in the view that villagers were ignorant, superstitious and lazy, or that they lacked hygiene, culture, civility, technology, education and discipline'. Similarly, the teacher would often comment on their clothes being dirty and asked them to wash.

As a group, the children feared the teachers, particularly because teachers would beat them. When the teacher was around they would sit quietly, without making any noise. As soon as the teacher left the school, the children would start running and playing. In the photograph below (Figure 7.10), the children were seen sitting in a relaxed posture, with their legs extended and playing a game with paper chits. In the second photograph, Mani is pouring water over Reema inside the classroom while other children are running around. In both these photographs, the children seemed carefree and not worried about adult presence. As they would see the teacher approaching, one child would inform the others and they would go back to their respective rooms, sit and start reading or writing. Within their relationship with the teacher where they had less power, children explored their agency by making use of the time the teacher was away, pushing their boundaries. They also did this by collectively helping each other by passing on information about when the teacher was approaching the school premises.

Figure 7.10: Children playing while the teacher was away [Photograph (L) 20th March (R) 18th January 2018]

The children sat on the *darri* (carpet) and the chair was associated with power, it was seen as a place where only the teachers sat. When the teachers were away, the children would often sit on the chair and pretend to be the teacher — teaching, instructing and scolding the others. Tylor (2013, p.693) argues that 'as an object with thing-power, it took its place as a material-discursive agency within a classroom space'. In the following photograph (Figure 7.11), Reema and Indrani were sitting on a chair that was placed near the kitchen area at the backyard of the school. They were sitting one on top of the other, Reema spread across the chair with ease and authority while eating a *papad* (poppadum) and talking to Indrani. The chair as a place signified power, and children experienced it in the absence of the teacher. Linking it to the discussion about material objects in Chapter 6, Jones (2013) argues, thinking about the chair helps to reconceptualise 'things, bodies and pedagogic space as an assemblage of intra-active, ongoing and productive happenings entailing multiple agencies'.

Figure 7.11: Reema and Indrani sitting on the chair in the absence of the teacher [Photograph, 21st April 2019]

The teachers also expected children, especially girls, to perform tasks for them like bringing water or washing their lunch boxes after they finished eating. The children were not able to refuse, but the girls would sometimes not pay heed immediately and take longer to respond to the instructions. In one instance, Chanda came to inform Seema that the teachers wanted her

to wash their dishes, Seema looked up and heard Chanda, but continued to play. Only on being summoned again by the teacher did she finally respond [Fieldnotes, 18th January 2018]. In a relationship where her agency was limited and she was not able to refuse or disobey, Seema used her agency by delaying the task that was given to her by the teacher.

During the research, it was observed that in the school space the children's responses varied with the presence and absence of the teacher. The children were quieter when the teacher was around and in his/her absence roamed around freely engaging in play. The response also depended on the teacher's reputation among the children. The children would still find some space to talk in the presence of the male teacher but as the senior female teacher was infamous for being more strict and for beating, they did not speak at all.

Conclusion

This chapter discussed instances from the field that explored relationships between children, adults and other children. It viewed these relationships in terms of interdependencies that were negotiated and renegotiated (Punch, 2015). I explored agency through everyday interactions within these different relationships, through collaboration, interdependence, resistance and negotiation. Children, as competent social actors, chose to respond to the requests and demands of others through obedience, compliance, defiance and resistance (Punch, 2001). Children's agency in the village was not assessed by their ability to have an independent life, instead, by their capacity to support dependents (Abebe, 2019).

Though children had a strong sense of responsibility and were expected to be active contributors to the household from a young age, the ways in which these tasks were fulfilled were negotiated (Punch, 2001). Refusing to do a task, delaying a task, avoiding a task, asking siblings to do it, or working with friends were different strategies children used with adults in the village. Within the household, not all children necessarily experienced childhood in the same way — differences such as age, gender, birth order and personal attributes had a role to play. These factors defined the opportunities and constraints of children's experiences (Punch, 2001).

Kuik (1999) argues that children established social identities through negotiations and contesting hierarchal relationships through their bodies. Sibling caregiving was an important aspect of children's relationships in the field and was experienced and expressed through embodied interactions. Further, friendships gave children relative autonomy, in the sense that they were able to escape the adult world. These relationships helped them form their own rules, which added to their agency (Blazek, 2016). Similarly, with other adults, including teachers, who had relatively more power than other adults in the village due to their social positioning, the children found different ways to explore and negotiate their agency.

After analysing the spaces-objects-bodies inter-activity and relationality to develop an understanding of children's agency in Chapters 5, 6 and 7, in the next chapter I build a discussion based on the literature and analysis from the field, and respond to the research objectives. Drawing from the findings of the field, I deliberate on emerging themes from the thesis and discuss methodological insights from the research. This helps me take the work forward, making explicit the contribution of my research in the field of childhood studies.

Chapter 8: A discussion of children's relational agency and everyday life

Introduction

This thesis has attempted to look at children's everyday lives in the context of an indigenous community in Chhattisgarh, India. Through excerpts from the field, it provides an account of children's lives in a small community in the Global South, recognising the multiplicity of childhoods from a postcolonial perspective. This helped look at children's lives in the village as situated in the larger cultural, historical and political context, and not assumed as lacking in relation to childhoods in the west (I discuss the post-colonial lens in Section 8.2.8). In this thesis, I chose agency as a concept to write about children's lives in the village. As a concept, it provided me with a lens to illustrate aspects of children's everyday lives that I might have overlooked or which would have remained unseen. I also decided to explore agency as a lens as in childhood studies, 'agency is a much used but largely unexamined concept' (Mizen and Ofusu-Kusi, 2013, p.363). It is often 'naturalised rather than analysed' (Buhler-Niederberger and Van Kreiken, 2008, p.149). With the increasing interest of different disciplines in childhood studies, the concepts of children as agents and social actors are being problematised (Eßer et al., 2016) with an effort to provide a nuanced understanding of relationships within childhood studies (Tisdall and Punch, 2012). Through my work, I further contribute to the understanding of agency as relational.

In the previous three chapters, developing the argument that agency is relational, I have explored how children's agency is interdependent and relational with respect to physical spaces, everyday materials and social relationships. In this chapter, I discuss and bring together reflections from the previous chapters. I explore how this relational thinking allowed me to observe particularities of these childhoods in the context of the village.

This forms the overall argument of the thesis, as throughout my work, the children were observed to belong to a 'complex web of interdependencies' (Prout, 2005, p.67). By looking at agency from a framework of interdependence (Abebe, 2019), I move away from assessing individuals with the capacity to lead an independent life and focus on their interdependence with others within the community. The thesis supports the argument for moving away from the dichotomies of agency–structure (Prout, 2005) and explores agency as a concept in relation to physical spaces, materials and social relationships.

Contributing to thinking about children's agency

There is growing literature that creates fissures and challenges the taken-for-granted assumption of children's agency to push for a more relational thinking (Spyrou, 2018). A relational approach is able to help us see agency as assembled and networked (Oswell, 2016; Spyrou, 2018). I support this theoretical shift that looks at children's agency relationally, through the situatedness of my work in a particular context. I base my research in an Adivasi community in India, building an understanding of agency through the context of the village in the Global South. In Chapters 5, 6 and 7 of my thesis (discussed and summarised in Section 8.1), I respond to the research questions and detail *how* this agency is enacted. The strength of the work lies in the depth of detail. Through analysing excerpts, photographs and drawings, I highlight the intricacies of agency. This is also a justification for an ethnographic approach (discussed in detail in Section 8.3), as it enabled me to engage in-depth with the children and the context of research. Through my work, I contribute to what Oswell (2013) describes as 'making more visible a rich analytical and descriptive language for thinking through the complexity of children's agency as a sociological topic' (p.8).

In most research, children's agency has been explored specifically through children's work and how children are able to make choices in these situations. Throughout my thesis, I engage with diverse situations and settings in the children's everyday to understand their agency. How the thick descriptions unfolded in the field helped me write about and document different kinds of agencies (I discuss this in Section 8.2.2, on inventive agency).

Another contribution of my work is being able to discuss the intricacies of agency in a particular context — an Adivasi community, with socio-economic and historically marginalised conditions, where children are assumed to have limited agency. Throughout the thesis, I highlight instances where and how, in the context, children's agency was enabled (or not). This will help us theoretically to contextualise the concept of agency, which as Edmonds (2019) highlights, is still used as a normative concept, where the norms are developed in the Global North, and anything that does not fit the norm is labelled as ambiguous. Socio-culturally grounding the concept of agency helps to see how privileging of certain cultural expectations of agency obscure the realisation and practice of agency in different contexts (Rudnick et al., 2019). Localising the concept also does not mean that I simply adapt it to the local needs, but it also helps assess if the concept itself is suitable to learn about the socio-cultural phenomena of the place (Rudnick et al., 2019).

The discussions throughout this chapter respond to the following research objectives as outlined at the beginning of the thesis:

1. To empirically investigate children's agency in engaging and negotiating with hardships and risks in the everyday settings of home, neighbourhood and school, as they grow up in an Adivasi community.

2. To build a detailed and nuanced picture which explores children's agency in relation to their physical spaces, material worlds and social relationships.

3. To explore the suitability of ethnographic methods in understanding hardships and risks in the everyday lives of children in Adivasi communities.

4. To make an original theoretical contribution to the literature on childhood, agency and everyday practices.

In this chapter, I intend to discuss how the thesis has addressed these objectives, illuminating the contribution the thesis makes to childhood studies. Here, I address four aspects of the work that I have engaged with. First, how is children's agency interdependent and relational to the physical space, everyday materials and social relationships? Second, what are the contributions of my work to the field of childhood studies — theoretical and methodological? Third, critically reflecting on my analysis, I discuss the political contributions of my work. Fourth, what are the future directions of this work? These four aspects bring together the theoretical, methodological and analytical issues from this study. The themes discussed in this chapter emerged during fieldwork, through developing a relationship with the children and the community. Further, through spending time doing observations, sharing conversations with children, taking part in some of their activities, playing with children and through photographs and drawings.

In the previous three chapters, I presented the analysis from the research. This chapter draws this analysis together, to explore the links between them and the theoretical framework that supports the arguments that this thesis makes of agency being relational and interdependent.

8.1 Pahari Korwa children's relational and interdependent agencies

Many empirical studies write about the agency of children as social actors or explore 'agency in the context of structure's constraining influence, which shapes children's collective position as a minority group in society' (James and James, 2008, p.11). Such studies often tend to focus on situations where children are enacting their individual agency in the context of external limitations (Murray and Cortes-Morales, 2019). Increasingly, the understanding of agency that is based on an individual being knowledgeable, independent and self-reflexive is being replaced by an understanding of agency as relational and interdependent with others and contingent on things (Spyrou, 2018). Relying on this argument that children's agency is relational and interdependent, and using it as a lens for the study, I researched children's lives in the Pahari Korwa community in a village in Sarguja district, Chhattisgarh and explored different aspects of their everyday lives. Through this study, I question the established and more hierarchical relations, including structure and agency, through a more complex and interconnected understanding of agency in the context of children's lives in the village. I move beyond the dualistic binaries of the discipline, like structure–agency, being–becoming (Lee, 2001; Prout, 2005; Uprichard, 2008) to emphasise interdependencies. Within childhood studies, the notion of agency has been problematised in relation to the focus on children being independent social actors (Gallacher and Gallagher, 2008). In the attempt to view them as social actors with independent agency, there is a risk of oversimplifying the impact of spaces, social structures and material objects in children's everyday lives. In my study, I explore their agency in relation to these.

Through my work, I try to challenge the individualised understanding of agency, keeping in mind the inequalities and the wider social structures (Murray and Cortés-Morales, 2019). As observed in the study, the nature of these interdependencies can be impacted by the kind of relations children had with others in the field, the material resources and the physical spaces that were available in the village. As illustrated in Chapter 7, children and adults in the family were dependent on each other for performing household chores, especially childcare, and within these chores children negotiated their agency.

Throughout the empirical Chapters 5, 6 and 7, I am making an argument that agency is produced, undermined, challenged and limited in relation to others, and I found it useful to align with post-social theories. Though the areas and themes explored in the chapters are

broad, for the research, I selected different aspects and situations I observed during the fieldwork. These were based on their relevance to the research questions and the frequency of their occurrence, with some being unique incidents and others more common occurrences. I discussed these at length in Chapters 5, 6 and 7, exploring a range of complexities within. I deliberately set out these chapters separately to discuss children's encounters with physical spaces, everyday materials and social relationships, and at various stages, realising and revealing the messiness of documentation, due to their overlaps and interconnections. This messiness provides different ways of looking at children's encounters of their everyday. As a process of writing, it was difficult to tease them into different chapters. This helped me make a case of interdependence and relationality as I brought them together in the discussions, arguing that children's agency is produced through constant interaction with and between physical spaces, everyday materials and social relations. Children collectively made sense of their physical, material and social worlds through these interactions (Murray and Cortés-Morales, 2019).

In the study, I have presented the context of the village as socio-economically and politically marginalised through a macro-lens. While from a micro-lens, I look at children as active subjects having engagements with spaces, materials and social relations (Blazek, 2016). The following three sub-sections illustrate how these relationalities and interdependencies played out in the field. Further, how children's agency was a collected outcome of their interactions with the spaces children were in, the materials they engaged with, and their social relationships.

8.1.1 Everyday space and agency

In Chapter 5, I discussed at length children's engagement with their everyday physical spaces and environment and the agency being produced with relation to space. My analysis offers insights into children's everyday interactions with their physical spaces, including spaces children occupied for play, work or leisure. In different spaces, children develop strategies for taking, avoiding, negotiating and handling risks (Burgt, 2015). The children were seen creatively using their spaces for the purpose of play (Kraftl et al., 2012; Punch, 2000) as they used the half-constructed brick houses in the village to play *ghar ghar* (home-home), a game where they would perform roleplay, managing a house.

Within the village, though the children moved and travelled between spaces, there were routine and fixed spaces for children's movements. As described in Chapter 5 (Section 5.1.2), they took a particular route, a fixed path within the field to go to the pond. Though the children were making decisions of where to go, their use of different spaces was mediated through encouragement or discouragement by adults, gender, previous events, customs and practices (Walker, 2016). Similar to Dyson's (2014) observation, the seasonal cycle also structured children's routines and use of physical space. For instance, in the winters they missed school and spend more time in the field grazing cattle, or during April when *mahua* trees were flowering and the children accompanied their family members to collect the flowers. The analysis illustrates children's networks and interdependence on each other, as children in the community and neighbourhood were aware of other children's movements and activities. They would often ask about and look out for each other (Chapter 5, Section 5.1.1).

Chapter 5 elaborates how the environment was an important part of their everyday narratives and conversations. For instance, children used trees as a point of reference and to indicate a location in the neighbourhood. Children in the village observed and gained knowledge of their space and the everyday environment through bodily and sensory engagement. This was in addition with reproducing what they observed from the adults and their peers. They were expressive of their concern for the environment. They conveyed sadness at the felling of trees in the village, reduced water levels and failed crops, demonstrating their commitment to the environment and adding to their political awareness and agency.

Through the analysis, I observed children's practices in particular spaces, that build on the argument Wilson (2013) makes about focussing on micro-spaces to highlight the possibility of these sites acting as the main context for social transformation (Ansell, 2009). At the school, a space more structured compared to the home or the community, the girls, through their practice of filling water and strategically refusing to share it with the boys, were transforming these spaces to redefine gendered practices. This discussion helps build an alternative discourse in an institution traditionally regarded as a formal structure. Further, elaborating how spaces enabled children's agency, as children used spaces to sometimes rupture and at other times reinforce norms and practices.

The research was conducted in children's everyday spaces including home, neighbourhood and school. Through working in different spaces, I moved away from viewing space as 'bounded'. Thus I push away from the dualistic thinking where the children were either seen being in a particular space or not. Further, by illustrating their fluid movement within these spaces, demonstrate that these spaces were not rigid. I align my work with Holloway and Valentine (2000a, p.779), who argue that everyday sites should be seen 'not as bounded spaces, but as porous ones produced through their webs of connections with wider societies which inform socio-spatial practices within those spaces'. Within the village, these boundaries between school, home and neighbourhood were blurred, as children played inside the school premises after school or used the school borewell to get water.

8.1.2 Material objects and agency

In the thesis, I discussed children's engagement with the materials in their everyday environment (Chapter 6). This offered insights into how children's lives in the village were entangled with the materials in their everyday spaces, for example, pots, stones, keys and axes. The objects used to discuss and explain this relationship were selected with care, which included mundane everyday objects most used by the children. These objects ranged from small to large things and were not necessarily things that were bought or expensive. The deliberate selection of mundane objects helps to add to understanding the significance of the otherwise everyday events that were part of the children's lives.

The analysis in Chapter 6 illustrates how the agency of children emerged through connections with a host of non-human others (Holloway et al., 2019), from culture artefacts (Horton, 2010), stones (Rautio, 2013) and nature matter (Änggård, 2016). This research is also an empirical contribution to understanding Adivasi children's engagement with things. Much of the literature discusses material agency with toys (Blazek, 2016; Woodyer, 2008), or in the playgrounds (Holt, 2007) but there is still not enough literature about rural children's engagement with everyday objects. It provides insights into what resources were available and how the children engaged with materials. It gives a detailed picture of communities' entanglement with resources and the impact of scarcity. Observing children's engagement with everyday objects helps in the construction of children's lives in a village in the Global South. It helps understand children's experiences of rurality — how it is similar and different

from others, contributing to the understanding of the local and global (discussed in Section 8.2.6).

In the village, the children used material objects to defy adult rules, as described in Chapter 6. Children would bring nail paints and lipstick to school and during lunch-breaks would apply them on each other. The children also used everyday things in creative and ingenious ways — using a mosquito net as a scrub and a fishing net, for instance, demonstrating creative and pragmatic ways of functioning. These practices added to children's agency, as the way they used objects was not limited to their traditional use and could be adapted as per their needs.

I align this chapter with scholarship on new materialism (Barad, 2007) and decentring the child, building on the argument that children's agency is not possessed but is produced in relation with other things. I illustrate this throughout Chapter 6, where children's agency has been shown as being influenced by everyday material objects. Drawing upon Oswell's argument, that agency is not a property, but is relational, in-between and dispersed (Oswell, 2013, pp.264-270). Through my analysis, I make a case for assemblages (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987) as important to understand children's agency (discussed in Section 8.2.1). The understanding of these assemblages was made possible through children's relations with their everyday objects.

Through exploring agencies with these assemblages, I focus on the positivity and hopefulness of children's lives and experiences (Marshall, 2013), along with the vulnerabilities and fragilities associated with them. Through this, I aim to make a contribution to theoretical understanding of childhood in the Global South and keep alive the interest in political and economic issues, including poverty, that impact children's everyday lives in the Global South (Holloway et al., 2019). In Chapter 6, Section 6.8, for instance, I discuss the impact of resource scarcity in children's lives and families and its impact on their everyday lives and routines.

8.1.3 Relationships and agency

Through my analysis in Chapter 7, I discussed children's agency being exercised in relation to their social relationships in the village, including families, siblings and friends. I explored

agency through children's actions and interactions (Abebe, 2019), and how they make negotiations (Punch, 2015) within these relations.

In the village, the children's lives were intricately interwoven with each other and other members of the community. Chapter 7 discusses children's contributions to their family in domestic chores (Section 7.1) and particularly childcare (Blazek, 2016), discussed in Section 7.2. This finding builds on the argument that agency is enacted through relationships of interdependence, collaboration, and negotiations within families, where children and adults mutually engage in household activities (Crivello and Boyden, 2012; Katz, 2004; Punch, 2001; Dyson, 2014). In the context of my study, children used strategies including refusing to do a task, avoiding it, delaying it, or performing the task (Punch, 2001) differently with different adults in the family and community. The children were aware of their positioning in the social hierarchy and were familiar with adult responses. Since fathers were usually the head of the family, the children rarely refused their fathers anything but made negotiations with their mothers, grandmothers and other children. There were exceptions and variations to this pattern, as when adults, especially fathers, got drunk. This made children angry and unhappy, and they chose to express their anger by ignoring, not responding to, or avoiding tasks.

In the study (Section 7.2), sibling caregiving emerged as an important aspect of children's contribution to their families, as children were seen as 'active co-participants in care' within their families (Brannen et al., 2000, p.195). Though mainly girls were expected and seen to perform these roles of care towards younger siblings, in households where there were no girls, boys performed these roles. Through my study, I discuss children's role as caregivers, highlighting both the vulnerabilities and strengths.

Within the households, not all children necessarily experienced childhood in the same way, differences such as age, gender, birth order and personal attributes had a role to play. For instance, Reema's mother was concerned about children's health and would encourage her children to not go out to the pond in the heat. Despite his mother's concerns, Shiv would go out and his mother would unwillingly accept this, justifying it by saying, 'he is a boy' or 'he is like that'. These factors defined the opportunities and constraints of children's experiences (Punch, 2001).

In relationships within the same generation — with peers at home, school and siblings — children had more freedom of expression and they expressed themselves in a physical and embodied manner, with more non-verbal interaction. Their agency manifested through networks and groups (Section 7.3). Christensen et al. (2011), who research children's mobility patterns in the rural and urban areas of Denmark, also observed that children preferred and appreciated the companionship of others, including peers, family and pets, especially in journeys and walking around the neighbourhood. In the village, the children were often seen in groups and performing tasks together. To catch fish from the pond, children collected the equipment and walked to the pond together. They divided the tasks and helped others, complementing each other to complete the work. In these groups, children took up different roles. Including that of the informer (e.g. which part of the pond is better), the initiator (how to carry the net inside), and the executor (how to quietly walk inside the pond together). Through the study, I identified these various roles children played within the group, adding a layer of complexity to the understanding of children's peer relationships.

8.2 Emerging themes and contribution to childhood studies

In the previous section, I summarise the findings from Chapters 5, 6, 7, highlighting the interdependencies and relationality between children's agency and physical spaces, material objects and social relationships. In the following section, I discuss a range of themes that were cross-cutting throughout the three analytical chapters. Though these were not necessarily interrelated, and which helped me take forward the discussion on agency. I first discuss agency as assemblages and move on to discussing relationality using the example of children's entanglements with water. I develop it further with relation to the current discussions on climate change. I build on the intersections of ethnicity[12] and gender for children's agency. I move to broader concepts in childhood studies, understanding the body relationally. Finally, I address childhood in the Global South and contribute to the local and global childhoods debate.

---

[12] In the village, ethnicity was fluidly and interchangeably being discussed as *jati*, which translates to caste (Chapter 2, Section 2.2). For this discussion I use these terms interchangeably.

In this section, I aim to move beyond the immediate and make explicit how my work takes the discussion about agency forward. Through these discussions, I respond to my research questions, and open up a path towards thinking about childhood studies relationally.

8.2.1 Agency as assemblages

Relationality is a productive ontology in childhood studies (Spyrou, 2018), as to think relationally de-centres the child, who is the subject of inquiry. This means expanding the conceptual and empirical space to research beyond humans to encompass all relationalities (Spyrou, 2018). Through the study, I build further on this argument that agency is not possessed by an individual but is produced through a network of assemblages (Latour, 2005; Deleuze and Guattari, 1987). Assemblages is a layout or arrangement of heterogeneous elements (Nail, 2017). It is an 'effect' of the network involving humans, materials and spaces (Prout, 2005; Kraftl, 2013; Hopkins and Pain, 2007). As a concept, it helps me look beyond and explain the complex interactions between things. As relationality was not limited to children and material, or children and space, but was an interaction between all these elements. This is in line with Oswell (2013), who writes that, unlike networks, that may seem static and flat, an assemblage is a composition of 'dynamic, generative and agentic parts that have temporality, movement and capacity only by virtue of their being composed or arranged' (p.73). Throughout the thesis, I draw together from interdisciplinary threads, to show how objects–bodies–spaces work as assemblages (Taylor, 2013). In this research, I explored this network with siblings, friends, adults in the family and community, spaces children occupied and everyday objects in their surroundings that were used by children. The agency of children is produced through an assemblage of multiple parts, connected to make a whole. For instance, in the playground, the children's experience of agency was dependent on the games in the school, the play area, the teachers' presence and attitude, the policy for play in the school, peers, age, gender and ethnicity. In this chapter (Section 8.2.3), I elaborate on these assemblages through children's engagement with water. I chose water as it was a cross-cutting theme, formed a central part of children's everyday lives and has implications beyond the immediate. Through illustrating these assemblages, I make an empirical contribution, strengthening Bennett's (2010) argument that:

> '… an actant never really acts alone. Its efficacy or agency always
> depends on the collaboration, cooperation, or interactive interference of

many bodies and forces. A lot happens to the concept of agency once nonhuman things are figured less as social constructions and more as actors, and once humans themselves are assessed not as autonomous but as vital materialities'.

(Bennett's, 2010, p. 21)

Through this discussion of heterogeneous assemblages (Tylor, 2013), I am able to move beyond the dualistic thinking of looking at human versus non-human or making one superior over the other. Instead, I emphasise assemblages and argue that it is their interaction which produces agency (Gallagher, 2019). While I emphasise that through this thinking, I do not discount the possibility that children might be important mediators of agency (Gallagher, 2019). My thesis makes empirical contributions by providing examples of these assemblages in children's everyday interactions with spaces, materials and relations.

8.2.2 Children's routine and inventive agencies

Scholars have critiqued competency-based models of children's agency for expanding the neoliberal ideology of independent agency (Kjørholt, 2005; Cockburn, 2013; Oswell, 2018). Durham (2011) discusses the importance of moving beyond the recognition that children have agency. Instead urging us to ask what kind of agency children have, the impact of the context in shaping their agency and how their agency relates to others.

As Woodyer (2008) argues, to understand the extent of agency, it is important to look at the myriad ways in which it is exercised. Throughout the Chapters, 5, 6 and 7, I discuss situations of children's agency being produced in interaction with other adults, children and the activities and work children perform as a part of the community's culture and routine. For instance, children's agency in finding ways to resist work or agency in caring for other children. These agencies exist and were made possible because these situations of work were created by the adults. This can be considered the 'routine agency' children perform that arise from situations created by adults.

At the same time, there were other instances and situations in the field where the children's agency was not in response to the adults. These were situations where the children were creating their own unique and creative agency. For instance, the agency that was created while they pulled sugarcane from the moving trucks (Chapter 5, Section 5.1.1). Here, there

were no adults and the children were aware of the risks involved. This situation illustrates how with support from other friends, relying on their knowledge from previous experiences of this activity and with an awareness of their bodies, they made the decisions, thus enabling their agency. The ingenious use of mosquito nets to prepare a fishing net (Chapter 6, Section 6.4) serves as an example of children's inventive agency that is not necessarily a response to adult hierarchy or power. In these situations, the children used their bodies, their silences, spaces and emotions to further enable their agency. Evan and Holt's (2016) work is relevant here, who explain that there is much agency in the seemingly everyday chores of lives, including walking to school or riding a cycle. Through this thesis, I have examined how children creatively alter their temporal experience (Evans and Holt, 2016). For instance, by immersing in play activities on their way to the pond, walking in a particular manner, or talking to each other and others on their way, altering and adding to their seemingly uneventful moments of everyday routine and experiences that add to their agency.

This is a contribution of my work to the understanding of children's agency, that is largely studied with relation or in response to adults or adult created situations. As Gallagher argues, (2019, p.189), 'it may be helpful to recognise a spectrum of children's agencies, ranging from the more routine to the more inventive'. I add to the discussion of the kinds of children's agency by looking at the more routine agency explored with regard to adults and exploring instances from the field where children's agency was more inventive and creative.

8.2.3 Understanding relationality through engagements with water

I use relationality as a concept to understand children's agency, which helped me think of relational aspects through children's engagement with water, discussions of which were present in all three previous chapters. I use water first as an example of relationality, to explain this emerging theme. Second, even though a discussion about water was not an analytical focus or part of the foundational concepts, it emerged as a crucial aspect of the community's life in the village. I bring it in here to highlight the unequal access to resources.

In the context of the village, both the children and the community's lives and routines revolved to a large extent around water as a resource, as also observed by Dyson (2014), Punch (2005) and Robson (2010) in their respective research contexts. These everyday activities in the village comprised of filling water from the borewell, bathing, washing

clothes, play activities that required water and as a result, children spent a lot of time near the borewell, well and the pond. In the summer, as the groundwater level reduced. With water scarcity, these routines were altered and children spent more time walking to a faraway well to access water or accompanying their parents to water bodies in the jungle. It shaped their everyday discussions as they expressed difficulty in accessing water, or waited for the monsoon, which, if in excess, could be harmful to the crops or cause difficulty in movement. The community, including the children, had a deep embodied relationship with water (Hadfield-Hill and Zara, 2019). This was illustrated through how children would be able to indicate the arrival of rain when they saw ants return to their colonies, feel a sense of joy and respite when there were unexpected summer showers lowering the temperature, or a ritual of families sharing the first meal made with *khukkadi* (wild mushroom, that can only be collected after the rain). This discussion aims to understand the impact of water on children's everyday routines. It also helped me to think of both the human and material as essential for creating agency. In this case, instead of viewing water as inert, I understood it as having the capacity to affect the lives of children and adults in the community.

Drawing from new materialism (Barad, 2007) allows me to break the dualistic boundaries between nature and culture (Krause and Strang, 2016). Through this study, I discussed water relationally in order to understand children's everyday lives and build a nuanced understanding of inequalities (Hadfield-Hill and Zara, 2019). Children in the village wished for rain, though they were aware of the impact of heavy rain and thunderstorms on crops, housing, and their mobility. As a researcher, I could afford to select convenient days for fieldwork, where I avoided the severity of the monsoon. For the children and the community, this was not an affordance and had an impact on their everyday lives. There were days with heavy monsoon, where they were unable to go to the forest to collect wood and rains increased the risk of snakes in the village. Similarly, the scarcity of water impacted their routines, as they had to travel far to fill water.

Discussions about water are important in the debate about new materialism, as water is essential for life. This discussion corroborates the ideas of Kraftl (2018) and Adey (2014), who suggest that it is important to broaden our views about how these matters (air, water and soil) affect the earth and help shape our lives. This discussion will help to think about children's entanglements with the weathered world (Hadfield-Hill and Zara, 2019). This will make it possible to ask wider questions about the social, political and ecological conditions of

water (Kraftl, 2018), which are more important in the current times with a global focus on climate change. This discussion is even more important in a country like India where the extreme conditions of drought and floods have become more severe over the years, and the impact and implications are being experienced by the most marginalised communities, with the least access to resources (Mishra and Eapen, 2020).

In India, there are policy reports and academics engaging in debates related to gender and water (Joshi, 2001; Paul, 2017) and the impact of water and sanitation on children's health (Dutta, 2016). There are fewer studies that discuss the impact of water on children's everyday lives (Hadfield-Hill and Zara, 2019). There needs to be a more sustained engagement in relation to the impact of the water crisis on children's lives, especially in rural areas where the impact is more immediate. The discussion needs to take place beyond dealing with an emergency or crisis, to more long-term sustainable strategies.

It can be argued that the issues around water may not affect childhoods all over the globe uniformly (Kraftl, 2018). The children in the village here are sharing in this experience and in many ways, have more in common with the adults in this setting than with some children elsewhere in the world. Not having water is a particular experience which requires compromise on how it is used and preserved, and the assessment of risk (to look out for flooding or drought), while many children in the world will relate to water as something that comes from the tap, to be taken for granted. This study helps recognise and relate to some of these 'local' experiences, which other children may not experience, but are exacerbated by the global climate crisis. It helps recognise 'the global in the local' and 'the local in the global' which will open up spaces to understand how these impact children's lives (Abebe, 2018, p.273, also discussed in Section 8.2.6).

8.2.4 Interplay of ethnicity, gender and children's agency

While exploring children's agency, the themes of ethnicity and gender emerged and were an important aspect in building an understanding around children's agency. As these were social structures that impacted children's use of physical space, material resources and their relationships with others in the community and outside. Exploring the intricacies of children's experience through a single lens — such as gender or ethnicity — would not do justice to their lives. Instead, I use 'intersectionality', the term coined by Kimberley

Crenshaw (1989). Many feminist theorists have argued that the focus on gender should not be narrow, and how people are simultaneously subjected to ethnicity, gender, class and social differences must be seen together (Crenshaw, 1989; Butler, 1997; Mohanty et al., 1991; Valentine, 2007).

In this section, I explore these intersections while analysing children's agency (Konstantoni and Emejulu, 2017). I examine the place of gender and ethnicity in the everyday lives of children (Morrow and Connolly, 2006). I do not examine these concepts with the view that these were necessarily limiting or constraining for children's agency but in the multiple ways that these impacted their everyday lives. The intersections of gender and other identities help to understand fluid and multiple identities, which help to understand the lives of the children in the village.

Ethnicity and children's everyday experience

A large part of people's lives in the village was governed by their caste and had an impact on their social interaction, education and their position in society (Deshpande, 2010; Rao, 2010). Both the adults and the children in the community had a strong association with their Adivasi identity. Even though the Pahari Korwas in the village had converted to Hinduism or practised Hindu rituals, their Adivasi identity was strong. A lot of the children's conversations about practices, rituals and even future aspirations were connected to their identity of being Adivasi, particularly Pahari Korwa. With relation to cultural practices, there was a clear distinction between 'them' and 'us', where the distinction was being made based on their particular ethnicity, in this case, 'Pahari Korwa' and 'Oraon' (Chapter 6, Section 6.1.3). When there were comparisons being made with respect to economic development these categories of distinction broadened and changed to 'rural' versus 'urban' or 'Adivasi' versus 'non-Adivasis.'

As discussed earlier in Chapter 2, Adivasi communities do not fall under the Hindu caste system. But they followed their own set of practices and hierarchies, separating and categorising different Adivasi communities within a region. These identities were complex and layered. Children's ethnicity influenced their position and relations with teachers and other children in the school (Chapter 7, Section 7.5). The children from the Pahari Korwa community experienced instances of bullying by the Oraon children and attributed it to their ethnicity and positioning. The teachers in the school discussed the children's conditions of

poverty, and explicitly attributed the children's or their family's disinterest in education to their Pahari Korwa identity. The children were constantly made aware of the impact of their Adivasi identity.

Children's movement in spaces were also influenced and determined by their ethnicity. The primary and middle school were both located in the Pahari Korwa hamlet and children from other hamlets would attend the school. At school, the children of both Pahari Korwa and Oraon community played together. But outside of school hours, they went back to their hamlets and preferred to limit their movements around their hamlets. Nightingale (2011) argues that the production of social difference and identity takes place through everyday spatial and ongoing practices. Children were aware of the practices related to food — for instance, they had the freedom to eat at an Oraon household until they got married. There were spaces in the village, including the church, where children and adults from the Pahari Korwa community were not allowed, as it was a religious place for the Christian Oraons. The Pahari Korwa children's subordinate social positionings with other communities influenced their power in relation to the others. Ethnicity played a role both at macro and micro levels, in influencing children's lives and agency. This discussion is important, as the impact of caste and ethnicity on children's movement in space has not been widely researched and documented in India.

Apart from the ethnicity contributing to experiences of social and structural inequalities, a strong ethnic identity gave the children a sense of belonging and a deeper association with their environment and culture. The children in the village were concerned about the forests disappearing, trees being felled and scarcity of water. These were concerns that children developed by listening to the adults in the community, conversations with peers and through their personal experiences. During our walks in the village, the children shared with me their knowledge of the different plants and trees, how they were used and their medicinal properties. Indigenous knowledge seemed to be a source of empowerment for the children in the village (Carrin, 2015). Children were constructing their own identity in relation to their Adivasi traditions and were further influenced by mass media, politics, religion and other global events. This discussion is important as it helps to think of formal school systems and its content with relation to children's indigenous knowledge. Dyer (2014), in her work with the Rabaris, a nomadic community in Gujarat, encourages forms of education that make provisions for mobile learning and adopting the curriculum to the learners' needs. Katz's

(2004) research in rural Sudan also examines the different kinds of knowledge and the fluid relationship between knowledge and practice in children's daily lives. Similar to these studies, my research provides empirical data that helps to bring into focus children's indigenous knowledge. This can help foster their interest, aligning education with their everyday lives and values, making their experience of schooling less disconnected. This has not been a direct objective of my research, but can be viewed as a contribution (discussed in Chapter 9) that can help engage with the idea of formal schooling for children in Adivasi communities.

Gender, resistance, care and children's agency

Along with caste, gender emerged as a major cross-cutting theme throughout the empirical data. Aligning with Spittler and Bourdillion (2012), in the village, the gender expectations were crucial in shaping the activities and practices of children and influencing the work children performed. Though both boys and girls performed many chores at home and outside the house, these roles were fairly gendered. The girls in the village mostly helped with household tasks like cooking, washing clothes, cleaning, fetching water from the borewell and according to the season, collecting wood from the forest, grazing the cattle, collecting *mahua* from the trees. The boys were seen doing chores that required accompanying parents to the jungle or helping with the cattle grazing or in the fields. Gender expectations in the village provided boys with comparatively more freedom and less responsibility.

These gender roles in the community were enacted with a sense of normalcy but were sometimes challenged, especially in the company of their peers or siblings. These were ways in which the children explored their agency through resistance. Chapters 5 to 7 give insights into the various forms and acts of resistance by children, which were mainly towards work or rules and regulations set by others in a position of power. Gender practices around filling water are an illustration of children's practices of resistance.

During summer, as the water level decreased, it was more difficult to draw water from the borewell. In school, during mealtimes, mostly girls drew water from the borewell, and even at home, they were expected to fill buckets. Though girls were aware of the expected roles and responsibilities in society for both boys and girls, in the school space, with comparatively less adult supervision, and with only the cook helping with meals, the girls resisted these practices. The girls would guard their buckets of water and ensure the boys used very little or

fill their own bucket to wash their hands and plates. Resistance by girls, in this case, can be seen in the light of Corsaro's (2005) interpretive reproduction, where children did not simply 'imitate' or 'produce' learnt behaviour or practice but reproduced it. This resistance was demonstrated by the women in the community, who sometimes pushed back against gender stereotypes. Young girls learnt and reproduced this behaviour in their everyday practices, in this case filling water. Other forms of resistance included children, especially girls, complaining and expressing anger about tasks and delaying them, which was observed both at home and school.

Care was another aspect associated with gender, in my case care for younger siblings. Sibling caregiving was a gendered practice as this was more of an expectation from girls. The boys helped with caregiving but were not always responsible for it. The girls took care of their younger siblings — carrying them, looking after them when the adults were not at home, feeding, bathing and playing with them. As illustrated through the analysis (Chapter 7, Section 7.2.1), caring was not always confining for children, as they took care of their younger siblings not always as a responsibility but also out of love and affection for them. Care ranged on a spectrum (Suneja, 2017). It is important to move beyond the simplistic understanding of care and explore the complexities of caregiving (Eldén, 2016), that involve both the labour and emotions of care (Mason, 1996).

It is simplistic to say that gender and ethnicity or caste worked in a way that affected the children's agency either positively or made them vulnerable. Both ethnicity and gender acted as social structures, which were embodied and material, and that created a difference in accessing material resources, occupying spaces and created power difference in relationships, at times facilitating and other times limiting children's agency, that was relational and dependent. This section adds to the argument that works towards breaking the dichotomy between structure and agency. It is observed that children were not simply absorbing these identities and roles from their parents. They were also building their own knowledge and understanding informed by their peers, school, media and politics (Carrin, 2015).

In my study, an understanding of ethnicity and gender help in presenting children's complex and complicated agencies (Banaji, 2015) and avoid presenting childhood, and specifically childhoods in India as homogeneous. This discussion on intersections of caste and gender is important for the field, as within childhood studies, there is yet to be a wider critical and

analytical debate about the theories, methods and practices of intersectionality (Alanen, 2016). I bring discussions of gender and ethnicity in other sections of this chapter, making the case that these are entangled with other aspects of children's lives, making it difficult to view them separately from each other.

8.2.5 A relational understanding of the body

Throughout Chapters 5, 6 and 7, the excerpts presented from the field highlight how children expressed themselves through their bodies. By viewing childhood as a social construct, the discussion about bodies has been diminished in childhood studies (Eßer, 2018). However, over the years, there has been a growing interest in children's bodies in the geographies of childhood (Horton et al., 2008; Horton and Kraftl, 2006b) and within sociology and anthropology (Prout, 2000). Geographers suggest that a closer look at the bodily details of children's lives — and as a wider conceptualisation of embodiment — might give a richer insight into children's geographies (Horton and Kraftl, 2006b). Bodies and things that go on with the body are being given more form and importance (Horton and Kraftl, 2006b) as we experience the world through bodies.

A discussion about children's bodies is important in the context of my research, as the community in question were engaged in physical work, and their relationship with their bodies and understanding through the bodies is an important aspect of understanding their lives. In the context of my study, the body became an important tool for understanding children's interactions and everyday lives (Valentine, 1999, p. 329). Children's expressions, such as ways of walking and facial expressions, added texture to the analysis. For the purpose of participating and responding to my questions and curiosity, the children drew on their embodied experiences to express feelings about hardships and risks. As described in Chapter 5, while working to separate rice from the chaff, Mani pointed to the sweat on my forehead and exclaimed, 'you are sweating, you have worked hard today'. For Mani, sweating was symbolic of having worked hard, she made sense of the work through bodily experiences, by observing my body. Most children interpreted their experiences through the body, whether their own or someone else's.

Bodies played an important role in the community as a medium of greeting and expression, such as gestures with the head and hand movements. Bodies formed a large part of what

Christensen (2004) calls 'children's cultures of communication', which she describes as including the language, meaning, actions, interactions and different codes of conduct. Children experienced their everyday lives through their bodies. For instance, the children's experiences of weather and illness were physical. On a day with good weather, Paro slowly moved her head from one side to the other feeling the breeze on her face. In another instance, as Indrani was lying on the floor in the classroom, Sakhi touched Indrani's forehead to check if her body was warm and she had a fever. In the village, children's understanding and experience with their outside world were extended through their bodies. In their interaction with things, children explored these everyday objects through looking, touching, smelling and feeling (Blazek, 2016).

In the village children often reflected on their bodily state (Blazek, 2016), referring to themselves as tired, ill, rested, hurting or cut. The understanding of what it means to be an adult was also related to body size, as Shiv indicated through measurement when he would become an adult, by raising his arm higher. Children displayed knowledge about their bodies and their capacities, as described in Chapter 5 (Section 5.1.2). Asmita and Sakhi were both aware of their movement and the importance of agility while pulling sugarcane from moving trucks. They relied on their bodily capacities to navigate different spaces. Among themselves, children viewed age and size as a factor for certain competencies. For Sakhi the road was dangerous for her younger sister as she was small, for Mani, her younger sister was too small to climb a tree. They made sense of the work and what they did in the village through their bodies.

Children understood the capacity of others through their bodies. Though I was an adult they viewed my capacity differently from the other adults in the community, as they were aware that my experiences and context were different. According to them, they could walk a long distance without getting tired because they were used to it, but since I was from the city and not used to their way of life, walking would be physically difficult and tiring for me.

Children paid attention to the physical features of bodies. Sometimes this was used to make associations, for example, a comparatively fair-skinned child was referred to as *pandri* (white). Girls in the school paid attention to physical appearance as they combed each other's hair, applied lipstick, *bindi* and nail paint. The children were aware of the physical nature of their lives and work and how it impacted their bodies, as they touched my hand and called it

ludu (cotton) comparing it with theirs that were hard, adding an explanation, *paani late hain na* (we carry water).

As Prout (2005) argues, children's bodies emerge as hybrid entities. They were in constant interaction with their environment. They were produced and performed in connection with other material objects, spaces and social relationship. This informs my understanding of children's agency less as an attribute of the children themselves but being produced with connections and relations, including bodies. Throughout my thesis, with the understanding of agency as a result of the links and interactions between embodied beings, materialities and practices, I add to the discussion of disrupting and moving beyond the Cartesian duality of mind and body (Eßer, 2018), and not dividing matter from reason. This adds to the theorising of body debate, that helps overcome the problem within development studies of a sole focus on biology, or within the social studies of childhood where childhood is a social construct.

8.2.6 Local, global and globalised childhood

During the research, while introducing myself to the children, I told them I was from Delhi, locating it for them on the map of India painted on the school wall. I then told them that I was studying in the UK, which was a different country and very far from India. Throughout the period the fieldwork, the children were only curious about Delhi (and not the UK). They would ask questions about life there, and my journey, the mode of travel, distance and the time it would take to reach Delhi. As none of them had made a journey outside the district of Sarguja, in their imaginations, Delhi was extremely far and they were curious to know more. Perhaps for the same reason showed no interest in asking about the UK. Throughout the fieldwork, the children made sense of their everyday rural spaces in relation to my urban context, through conversations about my life in Delhi, as discussed in Chapter 5, Section 5.4.

This relates to debates about global and local childhood, and a need to focus on the in-betweens and being able to view childhoods on a continuum. Throughout this thesis, I have worked towards moving beyond dualities. Here too, aligning with scholars like Abebe (2018), Twum-Damso Imoh et al. (2018) and Balagopalan (2019), I think of global and local not as binaries, but as relational and useful for exploring intersections. Abebe argues that both "'global' and 'local' are unstable and blurred in everyday life, and either alone cannot capture interconnections in cultures, histories, economies and political structures within

which children's lives unfold" (Abebe, 2018, p.274). While writing about children's everyday lives in the Adivasi community, it was difficult not to bring in the macro issues and structures of material inequality and historical marginalisation, as they played an important role in shaping their lives.

Poverty, poor health, social inequality and violence are challenges for children everywhere in the world, and not just in poor countries (Montgomery, 2003). Since children's lives are directly or indirectly affected by global events, including migration, capitalism colonialism, war, natural calamity (Balagopalan in Hanson et al., 2018), for my research I would like to think about the lives of children from the perspective of globalised childhoods. I employ the term not in the way it is currently used — as Abebe (in Hanson et al., 2018) elaborates, the term 'globalized childhood' is understood as a global model of childhood based on Euro-American understandings of children. Similarly, Twum-Danso Imoh (2012) argues that it can mean Southern childhoods and childrearing practices that are considered deficient. Instead, I tried to meaningfully engage with the impact of global events, including their history and politics, on the present lives of children. Through my ethnographic work, where I focus on the particular, I demonstrate how the local and global are not distinct, but intersect fluidly.

8.2.7 Childhood in the Global South

Framing childhood as 'multiple' (James and Prout, 1997) has enabled us to revisit and re-assemble the earlier notions of universal childhood. Viewing childhood as multiple has also led to an interest in doing ethnographic work in the Global South. A closer examination, through a post-colonial lens, reveals that these rich accounts of children from the Global South are not being used for the purpose of theorisation within the discipline. They only serve as differences to the conceptual categories and concepts that are built on the lives of children in the Euro-American context (Balagopalan, 2019). Therefore, my empirical work finds relevance as it contributes to the understanding of children's agency from the Global South presenting the kinds of agency (Section 8.2.2), that can be used towards developing theories within childhood studies.

Through this thesis, I present the everyday lives of indigenous, non-western childhoods that have otherwise mostly been explored as alternate. It is an attempt to bring it to the mainstream, as a 'different' way of looking which is not as an alternate or exceptional way of

thinking about childhoods in the world. While presenting the research, I made a conscious effort to not make comparisons with the Global North and use concepts (such as agency) developed there with scrutiny and relevance to the context. A part of the disciplinary contribution of my work is to see the extent to which these theoretical constructs are helpful in explaining the experiences of children in this particular context. Similar to Danso's (2018) views, my aim is not to create dissonance with the local construction of childhood in India and the global ideal. It is to form connections and commonalities that exist while considering a broader range of childhoods.

I approached the study through a post-colonial lens to explore the lives of children and their agency in the Pahari Korwa community in Chhattisgarh. I did not look at children as marginalised due to their lack of skills, but throughout emphasise their systemic exclusion by structures in society like caste, religion, poverty and education that have an effect on their power positionality (Eßer et al., 2016). Throughout the study, I focus on the lives of the people within these structural disadvantages. I explore how within these structures children enact their agency, facilitated by their physical environment, materials and social relationships. In the past these relationalities have been relatively less explored together to understand agency. Therefore, I bring together the interest in how children negotiate agency as interdependent actors (Balagopalan, 2011; Punch and Tisdall, 2012; Robson et al., 2007) and the relationship between the human and non-human (Prout, 2005; Oswell, 2013; Eßer et al., 2016). These areas of spaces, materials and relationships help present children's complex and complicated agencies (Banaji, 2016), and do not only present childhoods in the context as homogeneous.

The ratification of the United Nations Conventions for the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) brought the lives of marginal children in India under the scrutiny (Balagopalan, 2018) of politicians, activists and academics. The context of the study — the Pahari Korwa community, which is officially regarded as a Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group in India — is crucial to developing a meaningful alternative to narratives around Indian childhood that describe them in monolithic ways (Saraswathi and Menon, 2018). It is important to question how far this label reflects how people in the community see themselves. To understand issues related to childhood in India, there is a need to understand the contrasting experiences of children in a nation undergoing rapid transformation. The study goes beyond the mere descriptions of differences in their lives. It builds an understanding of children's lives in the

community as heterogenous, and as deserving of recognition as other childhoods around the world, a phenomenon that Balagopalan (2018, p.23) terms 'multiple but equal' childhoods.

8.3 Ethnography as an approach: methodological insights from the study

I explored children's agency in relation to their physical spaces, material world and social relationships. To highlight children's experiences, and situate these in their socio-cultural context, I used ethnography as an approach. As an orientation and stance towards research, ethnography was appropriate for my study, as it put the participants at the centre of the work, aiming to generate emic understandings. This approach enabled an in-depth understanding of indigenous children's lives in a village in Chhattisgarh (Chapter 2). I was careful to bring forward their knowledge and perspectives, which has been on the margins (Fine and Torre, 2004). This is especially important as Smith (2012) in her book *Decolonizing Methodologies*, argues that research can undermine and exploit people, their time, culture and resources.

In my work, I researched children's lives through observations, conversations, drawings and photographs that helped to have conversations around the issues and concerns relevant to them, keeping in mind the broader objectives of the study (Chapter 4, Section 4.6). These observations and conversations took place at children's homes, neighbourhoods, schools, fields, ponds, during walks, where boundaries between the home and the neighbourhood and sometimes even the school were blurred. Undertaking seven months of fieldwork, spending a long period of time in the field and meeting and engaging with children in different spaces helped me pay close attention to and document children's everyday lives and routines. Spending time with children across different spaces along with others in the community gave an insight into children's different social positioning from adults and other children in the village. These were dependent on different spaces, context, time, gender and age. As an approach, ethnography helped me build a complex understanding of their lives.

I discuss the methodology used for the study at length in Chapter 4. Here I discuss specific tenets of ethnography as an approach in relation to my work, that bring a nuanced understanding to the discussion of methodology when working with children. I discuss reflexivity in research in relation to my role as a researcher, research practices in the field and the use of particular methods during the fieldwork. I then discuss the role of ethnography in

social justice. I further describe the experience of using photographs in my research and talking about the ethics of children's voices and silence in research.

8.3.1 Reflexivity in research

As an important part of ethnographic research, I adopted a reflexive approach to my study, which I discuss in Chapter 4, Section 4.5. I maintained reflexivity in all the different aspects of my research, including my role as a researcher (Davies, 2008a), the relationship with participants (Alderson and Morrow, 2004), methods (Punch, 2002; Christensen, 2004) and during data analysis.

To maintain reflexivity, along with writing fieldnotes every day, I also kept notes about my thoughts, feelings, and ideas about the research, my presence in the community as a researcher and the challenges I faced (Konstantoni and Kustatscher, 2016). Having days away from the field (Konstantoni, 2011) and after the fieldwork distancing myself from the data for a period of time helped me understand my role and contribution to the research and its process.

Whilst existing discussions on reflexivity address the researcher's positionality, they spend less time considering and discussing processes through which methods and methodologies materialise (Pink, 2012), and the analysis of the data (Woodhead and Faulkner, 2000). Therefore, throughout my research, I paid attention to reflexivity and explored the suitability of methods to elicit views and observe practices in relation to hardships and risks in the everyday lives of children. As a researcher, I continuously aimed to understand how different children responded diversely to different research methods (Davis, 1998).

Initially, I planned to conduct interviews with children. But during the course of my interaction, I observed that children relied on bodily experiences and instances from the field to respond to my questions. They were able to communicate well when it was a response to an immediate action or event. I decided to shift my approach to working with the children and to find a way that better corresponded with the children's own practices and strategies (Christensen, 2004). Though I had initially planned to interview children, I changed my strategy and elicited discussions around children's immediate lives and experiences, having a dialogue following any event I witnessed or while children were performing their everyday

tasks (Chapter 4, Section 4.6.2). Throughout these conversations, I worked with an underlying notion of being a facilitator, allowing children independence by letting them have control over the conversations (Christensen, 2004). I also used visual techniques to get children's views and perspective, which I discuss in the later paragraphs of this chapter (Section 8.3.3).

While analysing the fieldnotes, I paid close attention to children's experiences, what they were saying instead of focussing only on the research questions. As Woodhead and Faulkner (2000) note, transcribing and analysing data can take the focus away from children's lived experiences and instead concentrate attention on the research aim. I was careful and avoided doing this. These reflexive practices helped me develop my writing to be more self-critical (Finlay, 2003), providing multiple voices which may be complimentary or contrary to each other (Konstantoni, 2011). Through a reflexive approach in ethnography, I was able to accept that as a researcher, I was entering the field with my theoretical and methodological tools, and my personal ethics and politics (Heckman, 2010) that were oriented towards social justice (Section 8.3.2). Reflexivity did not help neutralise or change the position within the research but helped to bring out and incorporate greater ethical and emotional complexities while writing the research (Blaisdell, 2015).

8.3.2 Orientation towards social justice

Social justice can be viewed as a belief or value that supports the protection of human rights, equitable access to resources and redistribution of power (Vera and Speight, 2003; Torres-Harding et al., 2012). A long period of time in the field, spending time with the community to understand their lives and routines at their pace, indicates my commitment to people's lives and their perspectives. Ethnography, along with a post-structuralist and post-colonial framework, helped me focus towards bringing the marginalised voices of the Adivasi communities into the research. Through my research, I engaged with issues of power and disadvantage in the wider social, educational and political context. An ethnographic approach helped me, as a researcher, to critically attend to not only issues of positionality and ethics but also to issues of social class, gender, ethnicity, culture and place, among others (May and Fitzpatrick, 2019).

An ethnographic approach provided me with an opportunity to write about the lives of children in a community that has been socio-politically and economically marginalised in the context of India. This helped me in expanding my understanding of the construction of childhood(s), which have for a long time relied on an Euro-American understanding. In the research, I was able to bring attention to the power imbalances between the different communities, and between the community and the government. This helped to understand the community's social positioning and its manifestation in the lives of the children.

Throughout the process of my research, I was sensitive and critical towards thinking whose voices were being listened to or whether some groups or individual children were being represented more than the others (Schnoor, 2012). I address voice and silence in research in the next section (8.4.4), but here I pay particular attention to the voices of children from the particular Adivasi community.

With a research approach that focussed on ideas of social justice, I was able to capture children's perspectives and responses towards issues of social justice. Since I spent an extensive period of time in the field and did not have a fixed interview schedule, I was able to engage with children, understanding their perspectives. Children would often draw attention to injustices in their everyday lives by raising questions or commenting about poverty and inequality, exclusion based on caste, gender roles and responsibilities, environment and its impact on their lives and the community. For instance, in Chapter 6, Section 6.8.1, while attending a function in the village organised by people from the city, Paro made an observation about receiving clothes as a form of charity.

Through my critical and reflexive approach, I was able to discuss and explain notions of access and equality in the village context in a more complex manner. Through in-depth engagement with children's everyday lives, their entanglements with water in particular, I was able to add to the discussion empirically, where scholars are offering new ways of thinking about water relations and inequality (Hadfield-Hill and Zara, 2019), attending to social, spatial and material complexities. An orientation towards social justice can help inform and impact programmes and policies for children in India, especially taking into consideration the lives of children in rural areas (discussed in Chapter 9, Section 9.4).

8.3.3 Photographs as a method for generating and analysing data

In the field, I explored different methods, assessing their suitability with my participants. The fieldnotes and data generated through these methods were rich and more layered. One such method, that I discuss in this section, is photography, which along with drawings as a visual method (discussed in the previous section and in Chapter 4, Section 4.6.3) added to the diversity of data. Photographs acted as powerful tools to help understand the context of the study. The visual imagery was also able to represent resource inequalities, that can be linked to issues of social justice (Section 8.3.2).

In my research, photographs evolved from a tool to describe a place to becoming a part of the analysis. At the initial stages of research, I used my phone camera and took photographs of the village. This included the physical environment, landscape, trees, houses, daily objects children used, institutions or anything that I found of interest, as a resource for my thesis. Initially, I was hesitant to use photography as a method as I was aware of the debates around photography being imbued with issues of power (Barndt, 1997, p.9). In my case this could include power differences being produced by technology — my phone camera. But as I built a rapport with the children and the community, I started taking photographs of children's everyday engagements with each other and their surroundings and capturing everyday activities performed at home, school or spaces in the village.

Initially, I would make the decision of what to photograph, asking permission from children, but as the fieldwork progressed there were instances and events when the children wanted me to take photographs of things they considered important. For instance, after killing a chameleon to feed a baby owl, the children pointed me to the dead animal and asked me to take a photograph. For the children, this was an important event and something worth capturing. They pointed me to things they thought were unique to their culture and practices that they would like to have photographed. An orientation towards social justice allowed me to listen to the children and photograph their suggested subjects. This allowed them 'to construct accounts of their lives in their own terms' (Holloway and Valentine, 2000b, p.7). Therefore, children were involved in the process of what they wanted me to see and were involved in meaning-making during the process of research. Through reflexivity and an orientation towards social justice, the photographs organically evolved as a method of research during the process of my fieldwork.

Initially, these photographs were meant for illustration, but eventually became a part of the research analysis. These photographs help build a picture of the landscape and the humanscape of the village, assisting in the analysis. Along with painting a picture about physical spaces and materials that have a visual presence (Jenks, 1995), these photographs produced in the field embodied themes around gender, children's emotions, interactions and relationships in the field. Using photographs as tools for analysis is an important contribution from this thesis, since recently in the social sciences, photographs are being acknowledged and used as data, and not just illustrations. For a long period, the social sciences have been dominated by words, in which there is no room for pictures, except as supporting characters (Bank, 2001). But with the increasing use of technology, the visual dimension to my work becomes an important contribution as in this world of digital communication, technology and portable devices, this is an important medium of communication. It requires reflexive appreciation to understand how the various elements — gender, caste, class, socio-economic position, technology — combine to produce visual meaning and ethnographic knowledge (Pink, 2001).

8.3.4 Addressing voices and silences in research

An aspect I would like to address through this research is of the ethics of listening carefully to children's voices (Sinha, 2017). Listening carefully to children's voice is important for my research as the community being represented is socially and economically considered marginalised, with a greater risk of their voices being lost in research. Though there has been much writing about focussing on the authenticity of children's voices, here I align with James (2007, p.267) who encourages us to reflect critically on the role of the process of research in representing children's voices, which can be political. Similarly, Mazzei and Jackson encourage us to consider power relations in data collection, to think of more productive ways of representation (Mazzei and Jackson, 2009) of children's lives. Through an ethnographic approach, I carefully used methods that were socio-culturally appropriate to listen to the Pahari Korwa children. I was also attentive to the spaces and situations in the village where the children expressed themselves differently. For instance, children talked more about their lives when they were in the company of peers, but in spaces such as home and school, their conversations and activities were different. I align this approach with Spyrou (2011, p.152), who argues that a critical, reflexive approach to understanding children's voices needs to

consider the 'research contexts in which children's voices are produced and the power imbalances that shape them'.

To overcome this dilemma of authentic voice, in the context of my research, I also included visual methods including photographs and drawings (discussed in Chapter 4, Section 4.6.3 and above), as other methods of representing voice. Through using drawings with children to understand their everyday routines, I was able to get their unique perspective and an insider's view. For instance, while drawing about everyday tasks, Shiv drew a girl drawing water from the well, even though he was drawing his own everyday routine. One reason could be that since he was sitting with other girls, he might have simply copied them, since he said that he did not do these tasks. Through this activity, I got an insider view on the gender roles children performed within the community. Leitch (2008, p.37) explains that a sensitive use of drawings can help children express unrecognised or unsayable stories. I was careful to not rely only on images, and use them along with other methods, since like other methods it cannot bring out a holistic perspective on its own (Spyrou, 2011). I recognise children's voice as multi-layered so that I am not misguided and assume their individual voice to be the only thing of value (Spyrou, 2011). Spending extensive time in the field helped to explore children's perspectives and responses on different issues more than once. A diverse range of responses helped me develop a complex understanding. In my work, I was mindful to not focus too much on their particular voice, and go beyond children's immediate social worlds to focus on how their lives are shaped and re-shaped through globalisation, politics and economic conditions (Katz, 2004; Boyden, 1997).

Since my work deals with children's agency, I felt it necessary to not just limit my understanding of agency to children's voices and the words they say, but also in what remained unsaid. There were many instances where the children used different forms of language and expression, with their bodies (discussed in Section 8.3.2), movements and their silences. In the following paragraphs, I discuss their silences as an expression. This discussion, through my empirical research, is a methodological contribution to understanding children's language through their silences.

Much of the work by scholars within Childhood Studies have focused on highlighting children's voices through research. This is based on the assumption that we can seek truth

through one's voice (Spyrou, 2016), although the more complex and difficult features of silence have not yet been critically examined.

Davies and Christensen, (2016, p.5) indicate that concerns about 'children's rights to silence, intimacy and privacy', that gave them 'a choice about voice', seemed side-lined in research. In my work, there were many instances where the children chose silence. For example, Mani's silence when being shouted at and hit by her mother to return home (Chapter 7, Section 7.1.1). Here her silence can be interpreted as enabling her agency. It was her choice to be silent. Often while responding to my questions, children would say *ji, haan* (yes, ok) or respond with complete silence, ending the scope of any further discussion. These were also signs when they wanted to change the subject of discussion. For instance, Filmita's silence when asked about her mother's bruises, when she had been hit by her husband. She was probably embarrassed to discuss the physical violence inflicted by her father or wanted to protect her family. This silence could be read as a cultural taboo, or something inappropriate for discussion (Spyrou, 2016). There were some silences that emerged from the power difference, others were silences which reflect particular cultural understandings, the 'taken-for-granted' and the common sense (Mazzei, 2003; Poland and Pederson, 1998, p.294). Clarke and Moss urge researchers to:

> '.... acknowledge their [children's] rights to express their point of view or to remain silent. We are keen that a participatory approach to listening is respectful of children's views and also of their silences'.
>
> (Clarke and Moss 2011, p.9)

In my research, I listened carefully and paid close attention. Smiles, giggling or laughter, pauses, sighs and breaths which might be ignored as non-consequential (Mazzei, 2003; Spyrou, 2016) were other forms of silences that I carefully attended to in my work.

Sometimes I had to acknowledge and be humble as a researcher and admit that not all silences were interpreted, and I did not understand all their meanings. For instance, children's silence when their teacher interrupted their conversation. Here their silence could be interpreted as being scared of the teacher but it could also be a choice and self-imposed, as they may not want to share their discussions with the teacher. These silences cannot be translated in isolation and need to be considered in their entirety, with the context and the

voices. A rigorous engagement with the data is required for 'a more nuanced, complicated, and productive story' (Mazzei and Jackson, 2012, pp.746-750) to be told. Silence is an opportunity to learn more by 'attending to children's voices in all their complexity and fullness' (Spyrou, 2016, p.18).

Conclusion

In this chapter, I began with summarising the discussion from the previous three chapters, referring to children's agency with relation to physical spaces, materials and social relationships. In the second section, I described the contribution of my research to the conceptualisation of agency and childhood studies. The contribution to theoretical knowledge lies in its understanding of the agency beyond the binaries of human and non-human and through assemblages. Further, I contribute to the kinds of children's agency, ranging from more routine agencies, demonstrated in the presence of adults, to more inventive agencies, that children experienced with their peers and siblings. I engage with children's entanglements with water and the weathered world. Further, opening up avenues to ask wider questions about the social, political and ecological condition of water (Kraftl, 2018) and the impact of the environment on everyday lives. The thesis opens up a discussion about the body, trying to move beyond the duality of mind and body, it also discusses the intersections of caste and gender in building an understanding of children's agency. Viewing the 'global' and 'local' as unstable and blurred (Abebe, 2018, p.274), the research, based in a particular local context, contributes to the discussion on the local and global childhoods. I argue that these can be viewed not as a dichotomy but on a spectrum, collectively contributing to the understanding and interconnectedness of histories, economies and political structures. I finally discuss methodological insights from the field where I use ethnography as an approach.

In the next and final chapter, I bring together the empirical, theoretical and methodological contributions I make through this thesis, discussing the policy implications of my work and directions for future work.

Chapter 9: Conclusions and reflections

Introduction

Drawing on the concept of agency and focussing on the experiences of the children, through this thesis, I have attempted to respond to the following four research objectives that guided the study. I address these in detail in Chapter 8, with reference to the analysis Chapters 5, 6 and 7.

1. *To empirically investigate children's agency in engaging and negotiating with hardships and risks in the everyday settings of home, neighbourhood and school, as they grow up in an Adivasi community.*
2. *To build a detailed and nuanced picture which explores children's agency in relation to their physical spaces, material worlds and social relationships.*
3. *To explore the suitability of ethnographic methods in understanding hardships and risks in the everyday lives of children in Adivasi communities.*
4. *To make an original theoretical contribution to the literature on childhood, agency and everyday practices.*

Moving away from the modernistic thinking of viewing the subject as fixed, I conceptualised agency in my work along post-structuralist lines as 'necessarily contingent, unstable, relational and momentary' (Hopkins and Sriprakash, 2016, p.14). This agency is not autonomous but is present within the possibilities available to the person (Davies, 2004). This helped push back ideas of neoliberal individualisation, where the responsibility of dealing with difficult circumstances lies with individuals (Hopkins and Sriprakash, 2016).

I began this thesis by setting the context of the study, reviewing literature and making a case for why is it useful for my research. I described the methodology for the study, and in the three analytical chapters, illustrated instances of children's agencies in action. In Chapter 8, I weaved the strands from the literature and took forward the discussions from the empirical understandings in Chapters 5, 6 and 7. Through this thesis, I have been able to draw on empirical data to analyse and unpack children's agency in an Adivasi community in India. In the following sections, I briefly sum up the main contributions of my work and its

implications for policy, along with possible future directions. The methodological contributions have been embedded within the chapter.

9.1 Empirical contributions

I spent an extensive period in a village observing the lives of children in an Adivasi community, the Pahari Korwa. Focussing on one site helped me acquire an in-depth understanding of the children and the community's everyday lives. Research within Adivasi communities in India, including the Pahari Korwa, has mostly been anthropological (see Deogaonkar, 1994; Elwin, 2007). It has often been undertaken from the perspective of understanding the community's lifestyle and patterns of living. These works do not include any detailed distinct discussion about the children in the community, as they are seen and studied as part of the larger family unit. Other research in indigenous communities is within the fields of medicine and public health, assessing the levels of nutrition and researching malnutrition (UNICEF, 2014; Das et al., 2010). My research looks at the lives of Pahari Korwa children as a particular context among many childhoods in India. I focus on the children, with the family and community as a larger context. The study contributes to the understanding of children's lives and routines and is able to observe the particularities of childhood in the given context. As Spyrou (2018) suggests, acknowledging and examining the varied childhoods that emerge in different contexts is essential, as these are variedly constrained by structures and the children experience them differently depending on their social and biological circumstances. Writing about the lives of children in a particular context in India also helped in portraying heterogeneous childhoods.

Through this thesis, I highlight the necessity of empirically exploring how agency is produced and experienced by children in the village, rather than taking it for granted. I do this by illustrating the intricacies of agency as they were experienced by children in the field. It helped me discuss the diverse ways in which agency was being constructed and produced in their everyday lives (Abebe, 2019).

Banerjee (2016) argues that colonialism has sought to map Indian society in binaries of tribe and caste. Throughout this thesis, I attempt to disrupt binaries within the field of childhood studies. With a discussion around the lives of the children in an Adivasi community, through

a post-colonial framework, I move beyond the duality of modern and indigenous. As I am able to view children's lives alongside the larger landscape. Throughout the study, I carefully listen to children and pay attention to their perspectives. As Santos (2016) explains, different knowledge does not mean being superior or inferior. Through my work, I represent Adivasi children's knowledge not as an alternate, but explore their lives as a legitimate way of living and thinking.

The illustration of children's everyday experiences through the empirical data brings out their encounter with gender, ethnicity and caste and how it shapes their physical, material and social encounters and landscape. Through children's experience of gender, caste and ethnicity with everyday practices, I was able to see intersections of caste with children's agency. Through my study, I make an empirical contribution to the concept of intersectionality within childhood studies. It is currently an oversight and theoretically lagging within the discipline.

In the study, a description of the children's specific context highlights their socio-economic and structural inequalities. Instead of working towards a notion of 'saving the poor child', I worked with an approach that 'pays attention to the politics of agency and disempowerment that are embedded in current international development discourses' (Hopkins and Sriprakash, 2016, p.200). Further, focussing on the practices and consequences of inequality in children's lives. One of these particular inequalities is understood in relation to the access to natural resources, in this instance, water. The study details children's entanglements with water and nature and specifically the impact of water scarcity on children's immediate lives in the village. As discussed in Chapter 8 (Section 8.2.3), this contributes to our understanding of global phenomena and issues related to climate and their impact on local communities. This is an important contribution as these will have implications for policy development, particularly focussing on rural and indigenous childhoods.

9.2 Theoretical contributions

Throughout the study, I challenge binaries and discuss relationality through the concept of children's agency. This relationality is explored through children's physical space, everyday material objects and social relationships. Through the analytical discussion, I show *how* these are being produced while in constant interaction with each other and through assemblages.

Through this thesis, I am able to explore the intricacies of agency within the field of childhood studies, which is often discussed but not elaborated as much. The detailed exploration of how agency is produced is a theoretical contribution of my work, as it adds empirical examples and illustrations of children's agency in interaction and relationally. This helps to take the debate around agency further, which, as Prout (2005) argues, is assumed to be a human characteristic, not requiring any explanation. I take up the task of providing an analysis to 'explain agency in the context of contingent empirical realities' (Oswell, 2013, p.50). My contribution lies in the rich descriptions of children's lives, discussing intricacies of how agency is produced (or not) in a context where it may be assumed that the children have limited agency due to their socio-economic conditions.

A part of the issue with agency in childhood studies is that it attributes significant action to children, often discounting the many internal and external bodies and forces which are at work (Gallagher, 2019). Gallagher (2019) further argues, children's agency is an important concept to be explored, as:

> 'compared to many actants in the assemblages of which they are a part of, children have limited access to structural resources such as money, status and language, limited physical power, a relatively smaller repertoire of learned skills and so on' .
> (Gallagher, 2019, p.192)

I develop my work using a framework of relationality and illustrate this through the empirical data. This research has implications for childhood studies, for how we view children, as important enough to be studied as independent of a family unit and through their perspective But at the same time not putting the onus on them of being agentic. Their agency is being seen in relation to others — both humans and non-humans. Through providing illustrations of children's agency, that describe it as a network of assemblages, my work opens a path for other researchers to explore children's agency that is dynamic, in constant interaction and shifting.

Theoretically, I move the discussion on agency further by adding to the kinds of children's agencies. In my research context, I describe children's agency as both routine and inventive. This agency is performed by the same group of children at different times and in different spaces. Routine agencies are the more common practices children performed in their

everyday that are mostly in response to adults or structures in their environment. Children's inventive agencies emerge within their routines, as creative practices that added to their seemingly uneventful routines.

Through including a close analysis and discussion around children's bodies, I move beyond the social constructionist analysis of childhood by including critical analyses of the body (Prout, 2005). Building an understanding of agency being produced in relation to the body added to the argument that agency is produced relationally. Within the field of childhood studies, body can be explored as an important tool to understand children's everyday lives and routines.

9.3 Policy implications

With the rapid worldwide ratification with the United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), the focus on children's rights has become a priority for the political agenda within India and the international context. The UNCRC views children as human beings with rights to participation and autonomy, and the right to be heard (Abebe, 2019). Though these are universal conventions, there has not been much written about how these rights translate in the context of different cultures and nations (Balagopalan, 2012; Hanson and Nieuwenhuys, 2012). This convention does not mention responsibility, which is a large part of children's lives. I contribute to this discussion of rights and responsibility in policymaking by building on the central goal of this thesis, to move beyond dichotomy. In this case I move beyond the 'right-based' or 'responsibility-based' (Balagopalan, 2019) approach to policymaking, and therefore recommend contextualising the debate, keeping in mind the historical and colonial past.

Secondly, as discussed in the previous chapter, a major contribution of my work is being able to discuss the intricacies of agency in a particular context, an Adivasi community. Here, due to their socio-economic conditions, children may be assumed to have limited agency. Along with adding to theoretical contributions, where I look beyond using agency as a normative concept, a socio-cultural grounding of the concept will further address the '… persistent gap/tension between the discourse of childhood studies and arenas of practice and policy' (Punch, 2016, p.352).

The understanding of children's lives rooted in their context helped me identify local traditional knowledge as children's strength, informing their everyday life decisions and choices. This work adds to the small but slowly emerging literature on education in India which takes an interpretive approach (Dyer, 2006). Sarangapani (2003) in her ethnographic work in an Indian village, makes pertinent observations. She explains why children, who are able to make judgements and decisions in and about their everyday lives, are not able to draw inferences in school where they may have to challenge authority. She argues that knowledge in the school curriculum is framed in a way that students accept it as being logical and relevant within the school space, rather than having any connection or relevance with spaces outside the school. In line with this, my work contributes to the larger literature on education within indigenous communities and education policy frameworks. It states that knowledge needs to be integrated within the school curriculum to make school education more connected with children's lives, orienting school systems to the present lived realities of children, rather than the future (Sarangapani, 2003).

9.4 Conclusion and future directions

The overall contribution of my research lies in the rich descriptions of children's lives, detailing intricacies of how agency is produced (or not) in a context where it may be assumed that children have limited agency due to their socio-economic conditions.

From a theoretical perspective, this work helps to further think about agency as a concept, whether it is a concept arising from a particular context or arising from neoliberal capitalism and mode of governance (Asad, 2000). Since agency is built on individualistic notions of 'authentic choice or self-directed action' (Valentine, 2011, p.348) this research helps posit questions about agency as a concept adequate (or not) to understand the lives of children in the community. Based on the research experience, is there a need to re-think agency as a concept? Do the children view themselves as agents, or is there a way to study relationality and interdependencies differently? With illustrations of children's everyday engagement in caregiving and household work, is there is a possibility to explore the concepts of responsibility alongside agency? Further, I briefly discuss children's engagement with the environment and perspectives on policies. This research provides an opportunity to move in

the direction of discussing children's environmental and political agency, especially in the context of a global climate movement led by children.

In my thesis, I layer my analysis and discussions with the intersections of caste and gender, describing their influence on children's agency in their everyday lives. It is not the central focus of my work but emerged as an important finding from the field. Alanen (2016) argues that there is yet to be a more critical and analytical engagement with theories and practices of intersectionality within the field of childhood studies. Through an initial discussion, I contribute to the understanding, opening the field to a wider scope of having a more nuanced engagement with the concept. Further, understanding how socio-economic and gender inequalities impact children's agency.

Empirically, my research works as an example for others interested in researching children's everyday lives. I hope to invoke interest in research with children in Adivasi communities in India. This can be taken forward through similar research with different indigenous communities in other regions to understand children's practices and relationships with their everyday spaces, material social relationships, and other lenses. Though my research was set in the different spaces of children's everyday lives, there is scope to look at children's engagement within formal settings of the classroom in the village school and how agency is performed and produced.

This thesis makes a contribution to the methodology of working with children, as it gives an insight into looking at the lives of children through a post-colonial and post-structural lens and has relevance beyond academia. In this study, I depart from the child as a centre and re-position the role of the researcher as an important feature in the process of the research. This widens the scope of discussion, especially to study the relationship of the researcher in the field and exploring the embodied role of a researcher in the research process.

I briefly bring in the discussion of children's construction of knowledge (Chapter 7) and indigenous knowledge, but do not examine it as it is not the analytical focus of my work. The focus on knowledge may help impact policy and promote social justice in education through asking – what knowledge is being selected and whose knowledge we are prioritising (Wood, 2007; Konstantoni, 2010).

Finally, young children are increasingly engaging in debates around major developments like climate change, voicing their concerns and attracting political attention. In my study, I highlight many instances where children expressed their views and opinions about the kind of space they envisioned for themselves and their concern for the environment. As Phoenix et al. (2018) discuss, there is not enough research on children and environmental practices. My work adds to the literature and builds the scope to explore children's agency in the matter of policy and issues related to the environment. Summarising the findings of the study by preparing a policy briefing document will help engage with policymakers. This may also help think about how children are placed while developing policies.

References

Abebe, T. 2007. Changing livelihoods, changing childhoods: patterns of children's work in rural southern Ethiopia. *Children's Geographies.* **5**(1-2), pp.77-94.

Abebe, T. 2018. 'Global/local' research on children and childhood in a 'global society' *Childhood*. **25**(3), pp.272-296.

Abebe, T. 2019. Reconceptualising children's agency as continuum and interdependence. *Social Sciences*. **8**(81).

Adey, P. 2014. *Air.* London: Reaktion.

Adler, P.A. and Adler. P. 1987. *Membership roles in field research.* Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Agar, M. 1980. Getting better quality stuff methodological competition in an interdisciplinary niche. *Urban Life.* **9**, pp.34-50.

Agarwal, V. 2019. In Chhattisgarh villages, friendship is deep-rooted tradition. *101reporter.* [Online]. 4 August. [Accessed 25 June 2020]. Available from: https://news.101reporters.com/featured/in-chhattisgarh-villages-friendship-is-deep-rooted-tradition/

Aitken, S.C. 1994. *Putting children in their place.* Washington, DC: Association of American Geographers.

Akkan, B. 2019. Contested agency of young carers within generational order: Older daughters and sibling care in Istanbul. *Child Indicators Research*, *Springer: The International Society of Child Indicators* (ISCI). **12**(4), pp.1435-1447.

Alanen, L. 2014. Editorial: Theorizing childhood. *Childhood.* **21**(1), pp.3-6.

Alanen, L. 2016. 'Intersectionality' and other challenges to theorizing childhood. *Childhood.* **23**(2), pp.157-161.

Alanen, L. and Mayall, B. eds. 2001. *Conceptualizing child-adult relations*. London: Routledge.

Alderson, P. 2008. Children as researchers: Participation, rights and research methods. In: Christensen, P. and James, A. eds. *Research with children: Perspectives and practices.* London: Falmer Press, pp.241-257.

Alderson, P. and Morrow, V. 2011. *The ethics of social research with children and young people: A practical handbook*. London: Sage.

Alderson, P. and Morrow. V. 2004. *Ethics, social research and consulting with children and young people.* Barkingside: Barnardo's.

Allerton, C. 2016. *Children ethnographic encounters.* New York: Routledge.

Anandalakshmy, S. 1994. *The girl child and the family: An action research study.* Department of Women and Child Development. New Delhi: HRD Ministry.

Anandalakshmy, S., Chaudhary, N. and Sharma, N. eds. 2008. *Researching children and family*: *Culturally appropriate methods.* Los Angeles: Sage Pub.

Anderson, J. 2012. Relational places: The surfed wave as assemblage and convergence. *Environment and Planning D. Society and Space.* **30**(4), pp.570-587.

Änggård, E. How matter comes to matter in children's nature play: Post-humanist approaches and children's geographies. *Children's Geographies.* **14**(1), pp.77-90.

Ansell, N. 1999. *Southern African secondary schools: Places of empowerment for rural girls?* PhD thesis, Keele University, UK.

Ansell, N. 2009. Childhood and the politics of scale: Descaling children's geographies?. *Progress in Human Geography.* **33**(2), pp.190-209.

Arangoitia, V.A. 2011. *'I'd rather be hit with a stick... Grades are sacred': Students' perceptions of discipline and authority in a public high school in Peru.* Oxford: Young Lives Study.

Aries, P. 1962. C*enturies of childhood: A social history of family life.* New York: NY Viking.

Arnould, E.J. and Wallendorf, M. 1994. Market-oriented ethnography: Interpretation building and marketing strategy formulation. *Journal of Marketing Research.* **31**(4), pp.484-504.

Asad, T. 2000. Agency and pain: An exploration. *Culture and Religion*, **1,** pp.29-60.

Atkinson, P., Coffey, A. and Delamont, S. 2001. A debate about our canon. *Qualitative Research.* **1**(1), pp.5-21.

Backett-Milburn, K., Wilson, S., Bancroft, A. and Cunningham-Burley, S. 2008. Young people's accounts of 'getting by' in families with substance use problems. *Childhoods.* **5**(4), pp.461-479.

Bacon, K. 2012. 'Being in their own right'? Exploring children and young people's sibling or relationships in the minority world. *Children's Geographies*. **10**(3), pp.307-319.

Balagopalan, S. 2002. Constructing indigenous childhoods: Colonialism, vocational education and the working child. *Childhood.* **9**(1), pp.19-34.

Balagopalan, S. 2011. Introduction: Children's lives and the Indian context. *Childhood.* **18**(3),

pp.291-297.

Balagopalan, S. 2012. The politics of failure. In: Hanson, K. and Nieuwenhuys, O. eds. *Reconceptualizing Children's Rights in International Development: Living Rights, Social Justice, Translations*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp.131-151.

Balagopalan, S. 2014. *Inhabiting 'Childhood': Children, labour and schooling*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Balagopalan, S. 2018. Colonial modernity and the child figure. In: Saraswathi, T.S., Menon, S. and Madan, A. eds. *Childhoods in India: Traditions, trends and transformations*. New Delhi: Routledge.

Balagopalan, S. 2019. Teaching 'global childhoods': From a cultural mapping of 'them' to a diagnostic reading of "Us/US". In: Twum-Danso Imoh, A. Bourdillion, M. and Meichsner, S. eds. *Global childhoods beyond the north-south divide*. Springer International: London.

Banaji, S. 2015. Behind the high-tech fetish: Children, work and media use across classes in India. *International Communication Gazette*. **77**(6), pp.519-532.

Banaji, S. 2017. *Children and media in India: narratives on representation, learning and social change*. Abingdon, Oxen: Routledge.

Bancroft, A., Wilson, S., Cunningham-Burley, S., Masters, H. and Backett-Milburn, K. 2005. Children managing parental drug and alcohol misuse: Challenging parent–child boundaries. In: McKie, L. and Cunningham-Burley, S. eds. *Families and society: Boundaries and relationships.* Bristol: The Policy Press, pp.111-25.

Bandhopadhyay, M. and Subramaniyam, R. 2011. Gender equity in education: A review of trends and factors. In: Govinda, R. ed. *Who goes to school? Exploring exclusion in Indian education.* New Delhi, India: Oxford University Press, pp. 123-165.

Banerjee, P. 2016.Writing the Adivasi: Some historiographical notes. *The Indian Economic and Social History Review*. **53**(1), pp.131-153.

Banerjee, T., Uhm, J.A. and Bahl, D. 2014.Walking to school: The experience of children in inner city Los Angeles and implications for policy. *Journal of Planning Education and Planning.* **34**(2), pp.123-140.

Bank, M. 2001. *Visual Methods in Social Research*. Sage: London.

Barad, K. 2007. *Meeting the universe halfway: Quantum physics and the entanglement of matter and meaning.* London: Duke University Press.

Barker, J. and Smith, F. 2001. Power, positionality and practicality: Carrying out fieldwork with children. *Ethics, Place and Environment*. **4**(2), pp.142-147.

Barnard, M. and Barlow, J. 2003. Discovering parental drug dependence: Silence and disclosure. *Children and Society.* **17**(1), pp.45-56.

Barndt, D. 1997. Zooming out/zooming in: Visualising globalisation. *Visual Sociology.* **12**(2), pp.5-32.

Bartos, A.E. 2013. Friendship and environmental politics in childhood. *Space and Polity.* **17**(1), pp.17-32.

Beazley, H. 2003. Voices from the margins: street children's subcultures in Indonesia. *Children's Geographies.* **1**, pp.181-200.

Beazley, H. and Chakraborty, K. 2008. Cool consumption: Rasta punk and bollywood on the streets of Yogyakarta, Indonesia and Kolkata, India. In: Rodrigues, U.M. and Smaill, B. eds. *Youth, media and culture in the Asia Pacific region.* Newcastle: Cambridge Scholar publishing.

Bennett, J. 2010. *Vibrant matter: A political ecology of things.* Durham: Duke University Press.

Bhardwaj, S. n.d. Adivasi struggles in Chhattisgarh: Self-rule, resource conflicts and militarization. [Publication and place of publication not mentioned].

Bhatty, K., Namala, A., Bhasin, A., Shah, A., Mittra, A., Dwivedi, A., Farooqi, F., Sharma, G., Madhumita, B., Khair, N., Alkazi, R., Hassan,S., Tirkey, S. and Singh, S. 2014. School education and exclusion. In *India Exclusion Report.* New Delhi: Books for Change, pp.77-108.

Bijoy, C. 2001. The Adivasis of India: a history of discrimination, conflict and resistance. *Indigenous Affairs.* pp.54-61.

Bijoy, C.R. 2003. *The adivasis of India: A history of discrimination, conflict, and resistance.* People's Union for Civil Liberties.

Bijoy, C.R. and Raman, K.R. 2003. The real story: Adivasi movements to recover land. *Economic and Political Weekly.* **38**(20).

Blaisdell, C. 2015. Putting reflexivity into practice: Experiences from ethnographic fieldwork. *Ethics and Social Welfare.* **9**(1), pp.83-91.

Blazek, M. 2016. *Rematerialising children's agency: everyday practices in a post-socialist estate.* Bristol: Policy Press.

Block, J.H. and Block, J. 1980. The role of ego-control and ego-resiliency in the organization of behavior. In: Collins, W.A. ed. *Development of cognition, affect and social relations: The Minnesota symposia on child psychology.* **13**. Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum, pp.39-101.

Bluebond-Langner, M. and Korbin, J. 2007. Challenges and opportunities in the anthropology of childhoods: An introduction to children, childhoods, and childhood Studies. *American Anthropologist.* **109**(2), pp.241-246.

Bonanno, G.A. 2004. Loss, trauma, and human resilience: Have we underestimated the human capacity to thrive after extremely aversive events? *Am. Psychol.* **59,** pp.20-28.

Bordonaro, L. and Payne, R. 2012. Ambiguous agency: Critical perspectives on social interventions with children and youth in Africa. *Children's Geographies.* **10**(4), pp.365-372.

Bourdieu, P. 1977. *Outline of a theory of practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bourdillion, M.F.C. and Boyden, J. 2014. *Growing up in poverty: Findings from Young Lives*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Bourdillon, M., Levison, D., Myers, W. and White, B. 2011. *Rights and wrongs of children's work.* New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.

Bowen, Z. 2015. Play on the mother-ground: children's games in rural Odisha. *South Asian History and Culture.* **6**(3), pp.330-347.

Boyden, J. 1997. Childhood and the policy makers: A comparative perspective on the Globalization of Childhood. In: James, A. and Prout, A. *Constructing and reconstructing childhood: Contemporary issues in the sociological study of Childhood*. London: Falmer Press.

Boyden, J. and Mann, G. 2005. Children's risk, resilience, and coping in extreme situations. In: Ungar, M. ed. *Handbook for working with children and youth*. Thousand Oaks: Sage, pp.3-26.

Brannen, J., Heptinstall, E. and Bhopal, K. 2000. *Connecting children: Care and family life in later childhood.* London: Routledge.

Bühler-Niederberger, D. and Schwittek, J. 2014. Young children in Kyrgyzstan: Agency in tight hierarchical structures. *Childhood.* **21**(4), pp.502-516.

Bühler-Niederberger, D. and Van Kreiken, R. 2008. Persisting inequalities: Childhood between global influences and local traditions. *Childhood.* **15**(2), pp.147-155.

Burgt, D. 2015. Spatial avoidance or spatial confidence? Young people's agency in the active negotiation of risk and safety in public space. *Children's Geographies*. **13**(2), pp.181-195.

Burke, C. 2007. The view of the child: Releasing "visual voices" in the design of learning environments. *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education.* **28**(3), pp.359-372.

Butler, J. 1997. *The Psychic Life of Power.* Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Cahill, C. 2000. Street literacy: Urban teenagers' strategies for negotiating their neighbourhood. *Journal of Youth Studies.* **3**(3), pp.251-277.

Carrin, M. 2015. Adivasi children and the making of indigeneity in Jharkhand. *South Asian History and Culture.* **6**(3), pp.348-364.

Census of India. 2011. Ministry of Home Affairs, *Government of India.* [Online]. [Accessed 20 June 2017]. Available from: http://censusindia.gov.in/

Chaney, D. 2002. *Cultural change and everyday life.* Basingstoke: Palgrave.

Chaudhary, N. 2007. Mothers, fathers and parents. In: Gertz, S. K., Valsiner, J. and Breaux, J. eds. *Semiotic rotations: Modes of meanings in cultural worlds.* Charlotte, NC: IAP-Information Age Publ.

Chi, T.H. 2010. Understanding vulnerability and resilience in the context of poverty and ethnicity in Vietnam. *Children and Society.* **24**(4), pp.315-325.

Choudhury, 2016. Two held for human sacrifice in Chhattisgarh. [Online]. *The Asian Age.* 21 May. [Accessed 2 March 2020]. Available from: http://www.asianage.com/india/two-held-human-sacrifice-chhattisgarh-304

Christensen, P. 2002. Why more "quality time" is not on the top of children's lists: The "qualities of time" for children. *Children and Society.* **16**(2), pp.77-88.

Christensen, P. 2004. Children's participation in ethnographic research: issues of power and representation. *Children and Society.* **18**, pp.165-176.

Christensen, P. and James A. 2008. eds. *Research with children: Perspectives and practice.* London and New York: Falmer Press.

Christensen, P. and Mikkelsen, M.R. 2008. Jumping off and being careful: Children's strategies of risk management in everyday life. *Sociology of Health and Illness.* **30**(1), pp.112-130.

Christensen, P. and Mikkelsen, M.R. 2013. 'There is Nothing Here for Us..!' How girls create meaningful places of their own through movement. *Children and Society.* **27**, pp.197-207.

Christensen, P. and Prout, A. 2002. Working with ethical symmetry in social research with children. *Childhood.* **9**, pp.477-498.

Christensen, P., Mikkelsen, M.R., Nielsen, T.A.S. and Harder, H. 2011. Children, mobility, and space: Using GPS and mobile phone technologies in ethnographic research. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research.* **5**(3), pp.227-246.

Citizens' initiative for the rights of children under six. 2006. *Focus on children under six: abridged report December 2006*. New Delhi: Citizens' Initiative for the Rights of Children Under Six.

Clark, A. and Moss, P. 2011. *Listening to young children: The mosaic approach*. London: National Children's Bureau.

Cockburn, T. 2013. *Rethinking children's citizenship*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Connolly, P. 2008. Race, gender and critical reflexivity in research with young children. In: Christensen, P. and James, A. eds. *Research with children: Perspectives and practices*. London: Routledge, pp.173-188.

Coole, D. and Frost, S. 2010. *New materialisms: Ontology, agency, politics*. Durham and London: Duke University Press.

Copland, F. and Creese, A. 2015. *Linguistic ethnography*. London: Sage.

Copland, F., Creese, A., Rock, F. and Shaw, S. 2015. *Linguistic ethnography: Collecting, analysing and presenting data*.

Corsaro, W. 2012. Interpretive reproduction in children's play. *American Journal of Play*. **4**(4), pp.488-504.

Corsaro, W. and Moliniri, L. 2008. Entering and Observing in Children's Worlds: A reflection on a longitudinal ethnography of early education in Italy. In Christensen, P. and James, A. eds. *Research with children: Perspectives and practices*. London: Routledge, pp.239-259.

Corsaro, W.A. 2003. *"We are friends. Right?": Inside kids' culture*. Washington, DC: Joseph Henry Press.

Corsaro, W.A. 2005. *The sociology of childhood*. Thousand Oaks, California: Pine Forge Press.

Crenshaw, K. 1989. Demarginalizing the intersection of race and sex: A black feminist critique of antidiscrimination doctrine, feminist theory and antiracist politics. *University of Chicago Legal Forum*. **1989**(1), Article 8. Available from: https://chicagounbound.uchicago.edu/uclf/vol1989/iss1/8

Crivello, G. and Boyden, J. 2012. On childhood and risk: An exploration of children's everyday experiences in rural Peru. *Children and Society*. pp.1-12.

Crivello, G., Huong, V.T.H. and Vennam, U. 2014. Gender, agency and poverty: Children's everyday eperiences in Andhra Pradesh and Vietnam. In: Bourdillion, M.F.C. and Boyden, J. eds. *Growing up in poverty: findings from Young Lives*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Cunningham, H. 1991. *The children of the poor: Representations of childhood since the seventeenth century.* Oxford: Blackwell.

Das, M., Kapoor, S. and Nikitin, D. 2010. *A Closer Look at Child Mortality among Adivasis in India.* Policy Research working paper no. WPS 5231.Washington, D.C. : World Bank Group.

Das, V., Kleinman, A., Lock, M.M., Ramphele, M. and Reynolds, P. 2001. *Remaking a world: Violence, social suffering and recovery*. California: University of California Press.

Daston, L. 2004. *Things that talk: Object lessons from art and science*. New York: Zone Books.

Davies, C. 2008a. *Reflexive ethnography*. London: Routledge.

Davies, D. 2004. 'Introduction: Poststructuralist Lines of Flight in Australia.' *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education.* **17**(1), pp.3-9.

Davies, H. 2008b. Reflexivity in research practice: Informed consent with children at school and at home. *Sociological Research Online.* **13**(4), p.5.

Davies, H. 2015. *Understanding children's personal lives and experiences.* Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.

Davies, H. and Christensen, P. 2016. Sharing spaces: children and young people negotiating intimate relationships and privacy in the family home. In: Punch, S. and Vanderbeck, R. eds. *Families, intergenerationality, and peer group relations*. Singapore: Springer.

Davis, J. 1998. Understanding the meanings of children: A reflexive process. *Children and Society.* **12**(5), pp.336-348.

Davis, J., Watson, N. and Cunningham-Burley, S. 2000. Learning the lives of disabled children, In: Christensen, P. and James, A. eds. *Research with Children: Perspectives and practices*. London, RoutledgeFalmer, pp.220-238.

De Hoop, E. 2017. Multiple environments: South Indian children's environmental subjectivities in formation. *Children's Geographies*. **15**(5), pp.570-582.

Deleuze, G., Guattari, F. and Massumi, B. 1987. *A thousand plateaus: Capitalism and schizophrenia*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Denzin, N. K. and Lincoln, Y. S. 1994. *Strategies of qualitative inquiry*. Handbook of qualitative research. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Deogaonkar, S.G. 1986. *The Hill-Korwa*. New Delhi: Concept Pub. Co.

Deshpande, M.S. 2010. *History of the Indian caste system and its impact on India today.* PhD Thesis, College of Liberal Arts, California Polythechnic State University.

DeWalt, K. M. and DeWalt, B. R. 2011. *Participant observation: A guide for fieldworkers.* Lanham, Md: Altamira Pres, Md.

Dey, I. 1993. *Qualitative data analysis: A user friendly guide for social science.* London: Routledge.

Dhaatri Resource Centre for Women and Children–SAMATA, HAQ: Centre for Child Rights and Mines, Minerals and People. 2010. *India's childhood in the 'pits': A report on the impacts of mining on children in India.* New Delhi: HAQ Centre for Child Rights.

Dietrich, G. 2000. Dams and people: Adivasi land rights. *Economic and Political Weekly.* **35**(38).

Djohari, N., Brown, A. and Stolk, P. 2018b. The comfort of the river: Understanding the affective geographies of angling waterscapes in young people's coping practices. *Children's Geographies.* **16**(4), pp.356-367.

Dumont, L. 1970. *Homo hierarchicus. The caste system and its implications.* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Dunn, J. 2004. *Children's friendships: The beginnings of intimacy.* Oxford: Wiley Blackwell.

Durham, D. 2008. Apathy and agency: The romance of agency and youth in Botswana. In: Cole, J. and Durham, D. eds. *Figuring the future: Globalization and the temporalities of children and youth.* Santa Fe: SAR Press, pp.151-178.

Durham, D. 2011. Apathy and agency: The romance of agency and youth in Botswana. In: Durham, D.L. and Cole, J. eds. *Figuring the future: Globalization and the temporalities of children and youth.* Santa Fe: School for Advanced Research Press, pp.151-58.

Dutta, A., Hajra, G. and Ramani, S.V. 2016. On incidence of diarrhoea among children in India. *Economic and Political Weekly.* **51**(22).

Dyer, C. 2014. *Livelihoods and learning: Education for all and the marginalisation of mobile pastoralists.* Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.

Dyson, J. 2008. Harvesting identities: Youth, work and gender in the Indian Himalayas. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers.* **98**(1), pp.160-179.

Dyson, J. 2010. Friendship in practice: Girls' work in the Indian Himalayas. *American Ethnologist.* **37**, pp.482-498.

Dyson, J. 2014. *Working childhoods: Youth, agency and the environment in India.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Edmonds, R. 2019. Making children's 'agency' visible: Towards the localisation of a concept in theory and practice. *Global Studies of Childhood*. **9**(3), pp.200-211.

Eldén, S. 2013. Inviting the messy: drawing methods and 'children's voices'. *Childhood*. **20**(1), pp.66-81.

Eldén, S. 2016. An ordinary complexity of care: Moving beyond 'the family' in research with children. *Families, Relationships and Societies*. **5**(2), pp.175-92

Elder, G. H., Jr., Johnson, M.K. and Crosnoe. R. 2003. The emergence and development of life course theory. *In:* Mortimer, J.T. and Shanahan, M.J. eds. *Handbook of the life course*. New York: Springer.

Elwin, V. 2007. *The Baiga*. New Delhi: Gyan Pub. House.

Emerson, R.M., Fretz, R.I. and Shaw, L.L. 2011. *Writing ethnographic fieldnotes*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Eßar, F., Baader, M.S., Betz, T. and Hungerland, B. eds. 2016. *Reconceptualising agency and childhood: New perspectives in childhood studies*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.

Eßer, F. 2016. Neither 'Thick' nor 'Thin': Reconceptualising agency and childhood relationally. In: Eßer, F., Baader, M.S., Betz, T. and Hungerland, B. eds. *Reconceptualising agency and childhood: New perspectives in childhood studies*. Abingdon: Routledge, pp.58-70.

Eßer, F. 2018. Theorising children's bodies. A critical review of relational understandings in childhood studies. In: Baraldi, C. and Cockburn, T. eds. *Theorising childhood: Citizenship, rights and participation*. [Place of publication not identified]: Palgrave Macmillan.

Evans, R. 2012. Sibling Caringscapes: Time-Space practices of caring within youth-headed households in Tanzania and Uganda. *Geoforum*. **43,** pp.824-835.

Evans, R. and Holt, L. 2014. *Diverse spaces of childhood and youth: Gender and socio-cultural differences*. New York: Routledge.

Evans, R. and Holt, S. 2016. *Diverse spaces of childhood and youth: Gender and socio-cultural differences*. London: Routledge.

Farrell, A. 2005. New possibilities for ethical research with children. In: Farrell, A. ed. *Ethical research with children*. New York: Maidenhead.

Finch, J. and Mason, J. 1993. *Negotiating Family Responsibilities*. London: Routledge.

Fine, G. A. 1987. *With the Boys*. Chicago University Press: Chicago.

Fine, G. A. and Sandstrom, K. 1988. *Knowing children: participant observation among minors*. California: Sage.

Fine, M. and Torre, M.E. 2004. Re-membering exclusions: Participatory action research in public institutions. *Qualitative Research in Psychology.* **1**, pp.15-37.

Finlay, L. 2003. The reflexive journey: mapping multiple routes. In: Finlay, L. and Gough, B. eds. *Reflexivity: A practical guide for researchers in health and social sciences*. Oxford: Blackwell, pp.3-20.

Fischer, M. and Abedi, M. 1990. *Debating Muslims: Cultural dialogues in postmodernity and tradition*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.

Foucault, M. 1983. The subject and power. In: Dreyfus, H.L. and Rabinow, P. eds. *Michel Foucault: Beyond structuralism and hermeneutics.* Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Fraser, S., Lewis, V., Ding, S., Kellet M. and Robinson, C. 2004. *Doing research with children and young people*. London: The Open University, pp.97-112.

Freeman, C. and Tranter, P. 2012. *Children and their urban environment: Changing worlds.* Hoboken: Taylor and Francis.

Froerer, P. 2006. Emphasizing 'others': The emergence of Hindu nationalism in a central Indian tribal community. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute.* **12**(1), pp.39-59.

Froerer, P. 2011. Children's moral reasoning about illness in Chhattisgarh, central India. *Childhood.* **18**(3), pp.367-383.

Froerer, P. 2015. Adivasi young people and the risk of education in rural Chhattisgarh. *South Asian History and Culture.* **6**, pp.365-379.

Fuchs, S. 2001. Beyond agency. *Sociological Theory*. **19**, pp.24-40.

Gallacher, L. 2005. 'The terrible twos': gaining control in the nursery? *Children's Geographies*. **3**, pp.243-264.

Gallacher, L.A. and Gallagher, M. 2008. Methodological immaturity in childhood research? Thinking through 'participatory methods'. *Childhood.* **15**(4), pp.499-516.

Gallagher, M. 2008. 'Power is not an evil': Rethinking power in participatory methods. *Children's Geographies.* **6**(2), pp.137-150.

Gallagher, M. 2009. Data collection and analysis. In: Kay, E., Tisdall, M., Davis, J.M. and Gallagher, M. *Researching with children and young people: research designs methods and analysis*. London: Sage.

Gallagher, M. 2019. Rethinking children's agency: Power, assemblages, freedom and materiality. *Global Studies of Childhood.* **9**(3), pp.188-199.

Gandhi, R.S. 1982. The practice of untouchability: Persistence and change. Humboldt Journal of Social Relations. **10**(1), pp.254-275.

Garg, S. 2006. Chhattisgarh: Grassroot mobilisation for children's nutrition Rights. *Economic and Political Weekly.* **41**, pp.3694-3700.

Garmezy, N. 1971. Vulnerability research and the issue of primary prevention. *Am. J. Orthopsychiatry.* **41**, pp.101-116.

Gauntlett, D. 2004. Popular media and self-identity: New approaches, inaugural lecture, Bournemouth University. [Accessed 14 September 2019]. Available from: http://artlab.org.uk/inaugural.htm

Geertz, C. 1973. *The interpretation of cultures*. New York: Basic.

George, G. 2015. Are we heading to Adivasi genocide? *Journal of People's Studies*. **1**(1).

Giddens, A. 1979. *The central problems of social theory*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Gordon, D., Pantazis, C., Townsend, P., Nandy, S. and Pemberton, S. 2003. *Child poverty in the developing world.* London: Policy Press.

Government of India, 2019. *Scheme of Development of Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups.* [Online]. Tribal Affairs Ministry. [Accessed 12 February 2020]. Available from: https://tribal.nic.in/DivisionsFiles/GuidelinesofPVTGs17092019.pdf

Government of India. 2015. *Scheme of Development of Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs).* [Online]. Shastri Bhawan, New Delhi: Ministry of Tribal Affairs. [Accessed 26 August 2017]. Available from: http://tribal.nic.in/WriteReadData/userfiles/file/201503201015086292852PTGGuidelines-final.pdf

Green, E., MitchellI, W. and Bunton, R. 2000. Contextualizing risk and danger: An analysis of young people's perceptions of risk. *Journal of Youth Studies.* **3**, pp.109-126.

Green, S. and Hogan, D. 2005. *Researching children's experience: Methods and approaches*. Sage: London.

Guba, E.G. and Lincoln, Y.S. 1994. Competing paradigms in qualitative research. In: Denzin, N.K. and Lincoln, Y.S. eds. *Handbook of qualitative research.* London: Sage, pp.105-117.

Guidelines on Ethical Practice. [Online]. University of Leeds. [Accessed 20 October 2018] Available from: <Downloads/Research_Ethics_Policy.pdf>.

Günel, G., Varma, S. and Watanabe, C. 2020. A manifesto for Patchwork Ethnography. [Online]. Members Voice. *Fieldsights.* [Accessed 12 June 2020]. Available from: https://culanth.org/fieldsights/a-manifesto-for-patchwork-ethnography.

Gupta, A. 2006. *Early childhood education, postcolonial theory, and teaching practices and policies in India: Balancing Vygotsky and the Veda.* New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Hackett, A., Procter, L. and Seymour, J. 2015. *Children's spatialities: Embodiment, emotions and agency.* London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Hadfield-Hill, S. and Zara, C. 2019. Children and young people living through the monsoon: Watery entanglements and fluid inequalities. *Children's Geographies.* **17**(6), pp.732-747.

Hammersley, M. 2016. Childhood studies: A sustainable paradigm? *Childhood.* **24**, pp.113-27.

Hammersley, M. and Atkinson, P. 2007. *Ethnography: Principles in practice.* London: Routledge.

Hanson, K and Nieuwenhuys, O. 2012. *Reconceptualizing Children's Rights in International Development: Living Rights, Social Justice, Translations.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hanson, K. 2017. Embracing the past: Been, being and becoming children. *Childhood.* **24**(3), pp.281-285

Hanson, K., Abebe, T., Aitken, S.C., Balagopalan, S. and Punch, S. 2018. 'Global/local' research on children and childhood in a 'global society'. *Childhood.* **25**, pp.272-296.

Harker. C. 2005. Playing and affective time-spaces. *Children's Geographies.* **3**, pp.47-62.

Harper, E.B. 1964. Ritual pollution as an integrator of caste and religion. *The Journal of Asian Studies.* **23**(1), pp.151-197.

Harrison, P. 2000. Making sense: Embodiment and the sensibilities of the everyday. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space.* **18**, pp.497-517.

Hart, J. 2008. Children's participation and development: Attending to the political. *International Journal of Children's Rights.* **16**(3), pp.407-18.

Hart, J. and Tyrer, B. 2006. *Research with children living in situations of armed conflict: Concept, ethics and methods.* Working Paper Series 30. Oxford: Refugee Studies Centre, University of Oxford.

Hart, R. A. 1979. Children's Experience of Place. New York, NY: Irvington.

Hecht, T. 1998. *At home in the street: Street children of Northeast Brazil*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Hekman, S. 2010. *The material of knowledge: Feminist disclosures.* Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.

Holloway, S. and Valentine, G. 2000b. *Children's geographies: Playing, living, learning*. London: Routledge.

Holloway, S. and Valentine, G. 2000a. Spatiality and the new social studies of childhood. *Sociology*. **34**(4), pp.763-783.

Holloway, S. and Valentine, G. 2000c. Corked hats and Coronation Street: British and New Zealand children's imaginative geographies of the other. *Childhood*. **7**(3), pp.335-357.

Holloway, S., Holt, L. and Mills, S. 2019. Questions of agency: Capacity, subjectivity, spatiality and temporality. *Progress in Human Geography*. **43**(3), pp.458-477.

Holt, L. 2004. Children with mind-body differences: performing disability in primary school classrooms. *Children's Geographies*. **2**(2), pp.219-236.

Holt, L. 2007. Children's sociospatial (re)production of disability within primary school playgrounds. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*. **25**(5), pp.783-802.

Holt, L. 2011. Introduction: Geographies of children, youth and families, disentangling the socio-spatial contexts of young people across the globalising world. In: Holt, L. ed. *Geographies of children, youth and families: An international perspective*. London: Routledge, pp.1-8.

Hopkins, L. and Sriprakash, A. 2016. Revisioning 'development' Towards a relational understanding of the 'poor child'. In: Hopkins, L and Sriprakash eds. *The poor child: The cultural politics of education, development and childhood*. Oxon: Routledge.

Hopkins, L. and Sriprakash, A. eds. 2016. *The 'poor child'.* Oxon: Routledge.

Hopkins, P. and Pain, R. 2007. Geographies of age: thinking relationally. *Area*. **39**(3), pp.287-294.

Horton, J. 2010. 'The best thing ever': How children's popular culture matters. *Social and Cultural Geography*. **11**, pp.377-398.

Horton, J. and Kraftl, P. 2006a. What else? some more ways of thinking and doing 'children's geographies'. *Children's Geographies*. **4**(1), pp. 69-95.

Horton, J. and Kraftl, P. 2006b. Not just growing up but going on: Materials, spacings, bodies, situations. *Children's Geographies*. **4**, pp.259-276.

Horton, J., Kraftl, P. and Tucker, F. 2008. The challenges of 'children's geographies': A reaffirmation. *Children's Geographies*. **6**(4), pp.335-348.

Howard, S., Dryden, J. and Johnson, B. 1999. Childhood resilience: review and critique of literature. *Oxford Review of Education*. **25**(3), p.307-323.

Huijsmans, R. 2011. Child migration and questions of agency. *Oxford: International Institute of Social Studies*. **5**, pp.1307-1321.

Hultman, K. and Lenz Taguchi, H. 2010. Challenging anthropocentric analysis of visual data: A relational materialist methodological approach to educational research. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*. **23**(5), pp.525–542.

IAMR and Planning Commission. 2011. India Human Development Report. [Online]. [Accessed 2 September 2019]. Available from: https://www.in.undp.org/content/dam/india/docs/chhattisgarh_factsheet.pdf

India. 2005. *Census of India 2001*. New Delhi, India: Office of the Registrar General.

Ingold, T. 2000. *The perception of the environment: Essays in livelihood, dwelling and skill.* London: Routledge.

International Institute for Population Sciences. 2007. *National family health survey (NFHS-3), India, 2005-06*. Mumbai, India: International Institute for Population Sciences.

Jalais, A. 2014. *Forest of tigers people, politics and environment in the Sundarbans*. New Delhi: Tylor and Francis.

James, A. 2001. Ethnography in the study of children and childhood. In: Atkinson, P., Coffey, A., Delamont, S., Lofland, J. and Lofland, L. eds. *Handbook of ethnography*. Sage: London.

James, A. 2007. Giving voice to children's voices: Practices and problems, pitfalls and potentials. *American Anthropologist.* **109**(2), pp.261-272.

James, A. 2009. Agency. In: Qvortrup, J. ed. *The Palgrave handbook in childhood studies.* Houndsmill: Basingstoke. Palgrave Macmillan.

James, A. 2010. Competition or integration? The next step in childhood studies? *Childhood*. **17**(4) pp.485-499.

James, A. and James, A. eds. 2004. *Constructing childhood theory, policy and social practice*. Basington: Palgrave Macmillan.

James, A. and James, A.L. 2008. *Key concepts in childhood studies*. Los Angeles: Sage.

James, A. and Prout, A. eds. 2005 [1997]. *Constructing and reconstructing childhood:*

contemporary issues in sociological study of childhood. London: Falmer pp.184-215.

James, A., Jenks, C. and Prout, A. 1998. *Theorising childhood.* Cambridge: Polity Press.

Jeffery, C. 2012. Geographies of children and youth II: Global youth agency. *Progress in Human Geography.* **36**(2), pp.245-253.

Jenks, C. 1995. *Visual cultures.* Routledge: London.

Jenks, C. 1996. *Childhood.* Oxon: Routledge.

Jenks, C. 2001 [1989]. *The sociology of childhood: essential readings*. Aldershot, Hants, England: Ashgate.

Jones, L. 2013. Children's encounters with things: Schooling the body. *Qualitative Inquiry.* **19**(8), pp.604-610.

Jones, O. 2000. Melting geography: Purity, disorder, childhood and space. In: Holloway, S.L. and Valentine, G. eds. *Children's Geographies: Playing, living, learning.* London: Routledge.

Joshi, D. 2011. Caste, gender and the rhetoric of reforms in India's drinking water sector. *Economic and Political Weekly*. **46**(18).

Kaiser, E. 2019. Tussle over proposed programme of including egg in Chhattisgarh mid-day meal scheme. *The Indian Express.* [Online]. 14 July. [Accessed 20 September 2019]. Available from: http://www.newindianexpress.com/nation/2019/jul/14/tussle-over-proposed-programme-of-including-egg-in-chhattisgarh-mid-day-meal-scheme-2003723.html

Kakar, S. 2009 [1978]. *The inner world: a psychoanalytic study of childhood and society in India*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

Kallio, K.P. 2007. Performative bodies, Tactical agents and political selves: Rethinking the political geographies of childhood. *Space and Polity.* **11**(2), pp.121-136.

Karlsson, B.G. 2000. *Contested belonging: An indigenous people's struggle for forest and identity in sub-Himalayan Bengal*. Richmond, Surrey, United Kingdom: Curzon Press.

Karlsson, B.G. and Subha, T.B. 2006. *Indigeneity in India.* London: Kegan Paul.

Katz, C. 1991. Sow what you know: The struggle for social reproduction in rural Sudan. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers.* **81***,* pp.488-514.

Katz, C. 2004. *Growing up global: Economic restructuring and children's everyday lives.* Minneapolis: Minnesota Press.

Khan, I. 2018. Ethnographic profile of the Hill Korwa: A particularly vulnerable tribal group (PVTGs) of Chhattisgarh. *RESEARCH REVIEW International Journal of Multidisciplinary.* **3**(10), pp.415-422.

Kjørholt, A. T. 2005. *Childhood as a social and symbolic space: Discourses on children as social participants in society.* Ph.D. thesis, Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU), Trontheim, Norway.

Kjörholt, A.T. 2012. 'Childhood studies' and the ethics of an encounter: Reflections on research with children in different cultural contexts. In: Fossheim, H. ed. *Cross-cultural child research: ethical challenges.* Oslo: The Norwegian National Committee for Research Ethics in the Social Sciences and Humanities (NESH).

Klocker, N. 2007. An example of thin agency: Child domestic workers in Tanzania. In: Panelli, R., Punch, S. and Robson, E. eds. *Global perspectives on rural childhood and youth: Young rural lives.* London: Routledge, pp.81-148.

Konstantoni, K. 2010. *Young children's perceptions and constructions of social identities and social implications: Promoting social justice in early childhood*. PhD Thesis, The University of Edinburg.

Konstantoni, K. 2011. *Young children's perceptions and constructions of social identities and social implications: Promoting social justice in early childhood*. PhD thesis, University of Edinburgh.

Konstantoni, K. and Emejulu, A. 2017. When intersectionality met childhood studies: The dilemmas of a travelling concept. *Children's Geographies*. **15**(1), pp.6-22.

Konstantoni, K. and Kustatscher, M. 2016. Conducting ethnographic research in early childhood research: Questions of participation. In: Farrell, A., Kagan, S.L. and Tisdall, E.K.M. eds. *The SAGE handbook of early childhood research.* London: Sage.

Kraftl, P. 2013. Beyond 'voice', beyond 'agency', beyond 'politics'? Hybrid childhoods and some critical reflections on children's emotional geographies. *Emotion, Space and Society*. **9**, pp.13-23.

Kraftl, P. 2018. A double-bind? Taking new materialisms elsewhere in studies of education and childhood. *Research in Education.* **101**(1), pp.30-38.

Kraftl, P. and Horton, J. 2007. 'The health event': Everyday, affective politics of participation. *Geoforum.* **38**, pp.1012-1027.

Kraftl, P., Christensen P., Horton J. and Hadfield-Hill, S. 2013. Living on a building site: Young people's experiences of emerging 'sustainable communities' in England. *Geoforum.* **50**, p.191-199.

Kraftl, P., Horton, J. and Tucker, F. 2012. *Critical geographies of childhood and youth.*

Policy Press: Bristol.

Krause, F. and Strang, V. 2016. Thinking Relationships through Water. *Society and Natural Resources.* **29**(6), pp.633-638.

Kuik, S. 1999. The magical power of words: about children, their conflicts and their bodies. *Etnofoor*. **12**(1), pp.53-72.

Kullman K. 2010. Transitional geographies: Making mobile children. *Social and Cultural Geography.* **11**, pp.829-846.

Kumar, K. 2016. Studying childhood in India. *Economic and Political Weekly*. **23**, pp.2016-2018.

Kumar, S. 2001. Adivasis of south Orissa: Enduring poverty. *Economic and Political Weekly*. **36**(43), pp.4052-4054.

Latour, B. 2005. *Reassembling the social an introduction to actor-network-theory*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Latour, B. and Venn, C. 2002. Morality and technology. *Theory, Culture and Society.* **19**, pp.247-260.

Lee, N. 2001. The extensions of childhood: Technologies, children and independence. In: Hutchby, I. and Moran-Ellis, J. eds. *Children, technology and culture: The impacts of technologies in children's everyday lives*. London: RoutledgeFalmer, pp.153-169.

Lee, N. 2002. *Childhood and society: growing up in an age of uncertainty*. Buckingham: Open University Press.

Lefebvre, H. and Nicholson-Smith, D. 1991. *The production of space.* Malden: Blackwell Publishing.

Lehmann, J. and Sanders, R. 2014. Independence to interdependence: A much harder lesson to learn? *Children Australia.* **39**(3), pp.131-133.

Leonard, M. 2015. *The sociology of children, childhood and generation.* London: Sage.

Leyshon, M. 2002. On being 'in the field': Practice, progress and problems in research with young people in rural areas. *Journal of Rural Studies*. **18,** pp.179-191.

Leyshon, M. 2008. The betweenness of being a rural youth: Inclusive and exclusive lifestyles. *Social and Cultural Geography.* **9**(1), pp.1-26.

Lieten, G. K. 2008. *Children, structure and agency.* New York: Routledge.

MacLure, M. 2013. Researching without representation? Language and materiality in post-qualitative methodology. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*.

26(6), pp.658-667.

Mandell, N. 1991. The lease adult role in studying children. In: Waksler, F. ed. *Studying the Social Worlds of Children.* Falmer Press: London.

Map of Sarguja, Chhattisgarh. 2016. [Online]. [Accessed 8 May 2017]. Available from: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Surguja_district#/media/File:India_-_Chhattisgarh_-_Surguja.svg

Marcus, G. 1989. *Lipstick traces: A secret history of the twentieth century.* London: Secker and Warburg.

Marshall, D.J. 2013. 'All the beautiful things': Trauma, aesthetics and the politics of Palestinian childhood. *Space and Polity.* **17**, pp.53-73.

Mason, J. 1996. Gender, care and sensibility in family and kin relationships. In: Holland, J. and Adkins, L. eds. *Sex, sensibility and the gendered body.* London: Palgrave Macmillan, pp.15-36.

Mason, J. 2002. *Qualitative researching.* Sage: London.

Massey, D. 1998. The spatial construction of youth culture. In: Skelton, T. and Valentine, G. eds. *Cool places: Geographies of youth cultures.* London: Routledge, pp.121-129.

Massey, D. 2002. Editorial: time to think, transactions. *Institute of British Geographers.* **27**, pp.259-261.

Massey, D. 2005. *For space.* London: Sage.

Matthews, H. 2003. Children and regeneration: Setting an agenda for community participation and integration. *Children and Society.* **17**(4), pp.264-276.

Matthews, S.H. 2007. A window on the 'new' sociology of childhood. *Sociology Compass.* **1**(1), pp.322-334.

May, S. and Fitzpatrick, K. 2019. *Critical ethnography.* In: Atkinson, P., Delamont, S., Cernat, A., Sakshaug, J.W. and Williams, R.A. eds. *SAGE Research Methods Foundations.* London: Sage.

May, T. 1997. *Social research: Issues, methods and process.* Buckingham: Open University Press.

Mayall, B. 2000. Conversations with children: Working with generational issues. In: Christensen, P. and James, A. eds. *Research with children: Perspectives and Practice.* London: Routledge, pp.120-135.

Mayall, B. 2001. Understanding childhoods: A London study. In: Alenan, L. and Mayall, B. eds. *Conceptualising Child adult Relationship.* London: Routledge.

Mayall, B. 2002. *Towards a sociology for childhood: Thinking from children's lives.* Maidenhead: Open University Press.

Mazzei, L. and Jackson, A.Y. 2009. Introduction: The limit of voice. In: Jackson, A. and Mazzei, L eds. *Voice in qualitative inquiry: Challenging conventional, interpretive, and critical conceptions in qualitative research.* London and New York: Routledge, pp.1-13.

Mazzei, L.A. 2003. Inhabited silences: In pursuit of a muffled subtext. *Qualitative Inquiry.* **9**(3), pp.355-368.

Mazzei, L.A. and Jackson A.Y. 2012. Complicating voice in a refusal to 'let participants speak for themselves'. *Qualitative Inquiry.* **18**(9), pp.745-751.

McDonnell, S. 2019. Nonsense and possibility: ambiguity, rupture and reproduction in children's playful narratives. *Children's Geographies.***17**(3), pp.251-265.

Medrano, L. 2016. The construction of resilience: Voices of poor children in Mexico. In: Sriprakash, A. and Hopkins, L. eds. *The 'poor child': The cultural politics of education, development and childhood*. New York: Routledge, pp.102-123.

Menon, S. and Saraswati, T.S. 2018. Introduction. In: Saraswati, T.S., Menon, S. and Madan, A. eds. *Childhoods in India: traditions, transitions, and transformations*. New Delhi: Routledge.

Miles, M.B. and Huberman, A.M. 1994. *Qualitative Data Analysis.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Miller, D. 2010. *Stuff*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Mills, M. and Blossfeld, H. 2005. Globalization, uncertainty and the early life course. A theoretical framework. In: Blossfeld, H., Klijzing, E., Mills, M. and Kurz, K. eds. *Globalization, uncertainty and youth in society.* London: Routledge, pp.1-24.

Mishra, N. 2019. In Chhattisgarh, a mid-day meal battle between eggs and soya. *The Wire.* [Online]. 16 July. [Accessed 20 September 2019]. Available from: https://thewire.in/food/chhattisgarh-midday-meal-eggs-bhupesh-baghel

Mishra, A. and Eapen, N. 2020. How Inequality Is Aggravating the Impact of Climate Change for Millions in India. *The Wire.* [Online]. 16 June. [Accessed 20 July 2020]. Available from: https://science.thewire.in/environment/discrimination-inequality-climate-change-labour-rights/

Mizen, P. and Ofusu-Kusi, Y. 2013. Agency as vulnerability: Accounting for children's movement to the streets of Accra. *The Sociological Review*. **61**, p.363-382.

Mohanty, C.T. 1991. Under western eyes: Feminist scholarship and colonial discourses. In:

Mohanty, C.T., Russo, A. and Torres, L. eds. *Third world women and the politics of feminism.* Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, pp.51-80.

Moličnik, V. 2003. Antropologija in vizualno – simbolni prostor kulture. *Glasnik slovenskega etnološkega društva.* **43**(3-4), pp.6-11.

Montgomery, H. 2013. *Local childhoods, global issues*. Childhood. Bristol: Policy Press.

Morarji, K. 2014. *Negotiating tensions of development: A critical ethnography of education and social reproduction in contemporary rural India*. PhD thesis, Cornell University.

Morgan, A. 2000. *What is narrative therapy?* Adelaide: Dulwich Centre Publications.

Morgan, D. 2011. *Rethinking family practices.* Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Morrow, V. 1994. Responsible Children? Aspects of Children's Work and Employment Outside School in Contemporary UK. In: Mayall, B. ed. *Children's childhoods: Observed and experienced.* London: Falmer Press.

Morrow, V. 2011. *Understanding children and childhood*. Lismore: Centre for Children and Young People, Southern Cross University.

Morrow, V. 2013. Practical ethics in social research with children and families in Young Lives: A longitudinal study of childhood poverty in Ethiopia, Andhra Pradesh (India), Peru and Vietnam. *Methodological Innovations Online.* **8,** pp.21-35.

Morrow, V. and Connolly, P. eds. 2006. Special issue: Gender and ethnicity in children's everyday lives. *Children and Society.* **20**(2), pp.87-91.

Mukherji, P. and Albon, P. 2010. *Research methods in early childhood: An introductory guide.* London: Sage.

Murray, L. and Cortés-Morales, S. 2019. *Children's* Mobilities: *Interdependent, Imagined, Relational.* London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Nail, T. 2017. What is an Assemblage? *SubStance.* **46**(1), [Issue 142] pp.21-37.

Nambisssan, G. 2009. *Exclusion and Discrimination in Schools: Experiences of Dalit Children.* Working Paper Series **1**(1). New Delhi, India: Indian Institute of Dalit Studies and UNICEF.

Nandy, A. 1987. *Traditions, tyranny and utopias: Essays in the politics of awareness.* New Delhi, India: Oxford University Press.

National Ethical Guidelines for Research Involving Children. 2017. [Online]. Indian Council of Medical Research. [Accessed 20 October 2017]. Available from: <http://icmr.nic.in/guidelines/National_Ethical_Guidelines_for_BioMedical_Research_Involving_Children.pdf>

Nayak, A. 2003. Through children's eyes: Childhood, place and the fear of crime. *Geoforum.* **34**(3), pp.303-315.

Nieuwenhuys, O. 1994. *Children's lifeworlds: Gender, welfare and labour in the developing world*. London: Routledge.

Nieuwenhuys, O. 2009. Is there an Indian childhood? *Childhood.* **16**(2), pp.147-153.

Nightingale, A. 2003. Nature-Society and development: Social, cultural and ecological change in Nepal. *Geoforum.* **34**, pp.525-540.

Nightingale, A.J. 2011. Bounding difference: Intersectionality and the material production of gender, caste, class and environment in Nepal. *Geoforum.* **42**, pp.153-162.

Niskač, B.T 2011. Some thoughts on ethnographic fieldwork and photographs. *Stud. ethnol. Croat.* **23**, pp.125-148.

Nsamenang, A.B. 1992. *Human development in cultural context: A third world perspective.* Newbury Park: Sage.

O'Connor, P., Haynes, A. and Kane. C. 2004. Relational discourses: Social ties with family and friends. *Childhood.* **11**(3), pp.361-382.

O'Connell, R. 2013. The use of visual methods with children in a mixed methods study of family food practices. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology.* **16**(1), pp.31-46.

O'Kane, C. 2003. Street and Working Children's Participation in Programming for their Rights: Conflicts Arising from Diverse Perspectives and Directions for Convergence. *Children, Youth and Environments.* **13**(1). Available from: http://cye.colorado.ed.

Oswell, D. 2013. *The agency of children: from family to global human rights*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Panelli, R., Punch, S. and Robson, E. 2007. From difference to dialogue: Conceptualizing global perspectives on rural childhood and youth. In: Panelli, R., Punch, S. and Robson, E. eds. *Global perspectives on rural childhood and youth: Young rural lives.* London: Routledge.

Panelli, R., Punch, S. and Robson, E. 2007. *Global perspectives on rural childhood and youth: Young rural lives*. New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.

Pankhurst, A., Crivello, G. and Tiumelissan, A. 2015.Work in Children Lives in Ethiopia: Examples from Young Lives Communities. In: Pankhurst, A., Bourdillion, M.F.C. and Crivello, G. eds. *Children's work and labour in East Africa.* Addis Ababa, Ethiopia: Organisation for Social Science Research in Eastern and Southern Africa.

Pati, B. 2001. Identity, hegemony, resistance: Conversions in Orissa. *Economic and Political Weekly*. **36**(44).

Paul, T. 2017. Viewing national water policies through a gendered lens. *Economic and Political Weekly.* **52**(48).

Payne, R. 2012. Extraordinary survivors' or 'ordinary lives'? Embracing 'everyday agency' in social interventions with child-headed households in Zambia. *Children's Geographies*. **10**(4), pp.399-412.

Peffer, G. and Behera, D.K. 2005. Tribal situation in India: An introduction. In: Peffer, G. and Behera, D.K. eds. *Contemporary society: Tribal studies*, 6. New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company, pp.9-17.

Pells, K. 2011. Poverty and gender inequalities: Evidence from Young Lives. [Online]. Policy Paper 3. [Accessed 20 January 2019]. Available from: https://www.younglives.org.uk/sites/www.younglives.org.uk/files/YL_PP3_Poverty-and-Gender-Inequalities.pdf

Pells, K. 2012. 'Rights are everything we don't have': Clashing conceptions of vulnerability and agency in the daily lives of Rwandan children and youth. *Children's Geographies.* **10**, pp.427-440.

Pelly, G. and Singh, J. 2009. *State terrorism: Torture, extra-judicial killings and forced disappearances in India.* Report of the Independent People's Tribunal, 9-10 February 2008. New Delhi, India: Human Rights Law Network.

Phoenix, A., Boddy, J., Walker, C. and Vennam, U. 2018. *Environment in the lives of children and families: Perspectives from India and the UK*. Bristol: Policy Press.

Phonix, A., Boddy, J., Walker, C. and Vennam, U. 2018. *Environment in the lives of children and families: perspectives from India and the UK*. Bristol: Policy Press.

Piaget, J., Gruber, H.E. and Voneche, J.J. 1977. *The essential Piaget*. New York, Basic Books

Pink, S. 2001. *Doing visual ethnography. Images, media and representation in research*. London: Sage.

Pink, S. 2012. *Situating everyday life: Practices and places.* London: Sage.

Poland, B. and Pederson, A. 1998. Reading between the lines: Interpreting silences in qualitative research. *Qualitative Inquiry*. **4**(2), pp.293-312.

Prout, A. 2002. Childhood bodies: Construction, agency and hybridity. In: Prout, A. ed. *The body, childhood and society*. Basingstoke, Macmillan, pp.1-18.

Prout, A. 2005. *The future of childhood*. London: Routledge Falmer.

Prout, A. 2011. Taking a step away from modernity: Reconsidering the new sociology of childhood. *Global Studies of Childhood*. **1**(1), pp.4-14.

Punch, S. 2000. Children's strategies for creating playspaces: Negotiating independence in rural Bolivia. In: Holloway, S.L. and Valentine, G. eds. *Children's Geographies: Playing, living, learning*. London: Routledge, pp.41-54.

Punch, S. 2001. Negotiating autonomy: Childhoods in rural Bolivia. In: Alanen, L. and Mayall, B. eds. *Conceptualising child-adult relations*. London: RoutledgeFalmer, pp.23-36.

Punch, S. 2002. Research with children: The same or different from research with adults? *Childhood*. **9**(3), pp.321-341.

Punch, S. 2003. Childhoods in the Majority World: Miniature Adults or Tribal Children? *Sociology*. **37**(2), pp.277-295.

Punch, S. 2004. The impact of primary education on school-to work transitions for young people in rural Bolivia. *Youth and Society*. **36**, pp.163-182.

Punch, S. 2005. Children's strategies for creating play spaces: Negotiating independence in rural Bolivia. In: Holloway, S.L. and Valentine, G. eds. *Children's geographies: Playing, living, learning*. London: Routledge, pp.41-54.

Punch, S. 2007. Generational power relations in rural Bolivia. In Panelli, R., Punch, S., and Robson, E. eds. *Global perspectives on rural childhood and youth*. Abingdon: Routledge, pp.151-164.

Punch, S. 2014. Young migrant trajectories from Bolivia to Argentina: Changes and continuities in an era of globalisation. In: Veale, A. and Dona, G. eds. *Children, migration and globalisation*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, pp.21-43.

Punch, S. 2015. Youth transitions and migration: Negotiated and constrained interdependencies within and across generations. *Journal of Youth Studies*. **18**(2), pp.262-276.

Punch, S. 2016. Exploring Children's Agency across Majority and Minority World Contexts. In: Esser, F., Baader M., Betz, T. and Hungerland, B. eds. *Reconceptualising Agency and Childhood: New Perspectives in Childhood Studies*. London: Routledge, pp.183-

196.

Punch, S. and Tisdall, K. 2012. Exploring children and young people's relationships across majority and minority worlds. *Children's Geographies.* **10**(3), pp. 241-248.

Qvortrup, J. 1994. Childhood matters: An introduction. In: Qvortrup, J., Bardy, M. and Sgritta, G. eds. *Childhood matters: social theory, practice and politics*. Aldershot: Avebury Press, pp.1-23.

Qvortrup, J. 2001. *The relationship between protection and participation: risk or opportunity for young people or adult society?* Trondheim: Norwegian Centre for Child Research.

Qvortrup, J. 2011. Childhood as a structural form. In: Qvortrup, J., Corsaro, W. A. and Honig, M. eds. *The Palgrave handbook of childhood studies.* London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Raman, V. 2000. Politics of childhood: Perspectives from the south. *Economic and Political Weekly.* 35, pp.4055-4064.

Rao, J. 2010. The caste system: Effects on poverty in India, Nepal and Srilanka. *Global Majority E-Journal*. **1**(2), pp.97-106.

Rasmussen, K. 2004. Places for children – children's places. *Childhood*. **11**(2), pp.155-173.

Rautio, P. 2013. Children who carry stones in their pockets: on autotelic material practices in everyday life. *Children's Geographies.* **11**, pp.394-408.

Redmond, G. 2009. Children as actors: How does the child perspectives literature treat agency in the context of poverty? *Social Policy and Society*. **8**(4), pp.541–550.

Renold, E. 2001. Learning the 'hard' way: Boys, hegemonic masculinity and the negotiation of learner identities in the primary school. *British Journal of Sociology of Education.* **22**, pp.369-385.

Reynolds, P. 1991. *Dance civet cat: Child labour in the Zambezi Valley*. Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press.

Richards, K. 2003. *Qualitative Inquiry in TESOL.* Basingstoke: Palgrave: Macmillan.

Richardson, L. 2000. Writing: A method of inquiry. In Denzin, N.K. and. Lincoln, Y.S eds. *Handbook of qualitative research.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, pp.923-943.

Ridge, T. 2002. *Childhood poverty and social exclusion: From a child's perspective*. Bristol: Policy Press.

Ridge, T. 2006. Helping out at home: Children's contributions to sustaining work and care in lone-mother families. In: Glendinning, C. and Kemp, P. eds. *Cash and care: Policy*

challenges in the welfare state. Bristol: Policy Press, pp.203-216.

Ridge, T. 2009. *Living with poverty: A Review of the literature on children's and families' experiences of poverty.* London: Department for Work and Pensions.

Rizvi, B.R. 1989. *Hill Korwas of Chhattisgarh.* New Delhi: Gian Publishing House.

Robson, E. 2010. Children's bodies: Working and caring in sub-Saharan Africa. In: Colls, R. and Hörschelmann, K. eds. *Contested bodies of Childhood and Youth.* New York: Palgrave Macmillan, pp.148-162.

Robson, E. and Ansell, N. 2000. Young carers in Southern Africa? Exploring stories from Zimbabwean secondary school students, In: Holloway, S.L. and Valentine, G. eds. *Children's geographies: Living, playing, learning and transforming everyday worlds.* London: Routledge.

Robson, E., Bell, S. and Klocker, N. 2007. Conceptualizing agency in the lives and actions of rural young people. In: Panelli, R., Punch, S. and Robson, E. eds. *Global perspectives on rural childhood and youth: Young rural lives.* London: Routledge, pp.135-148.

Rose, A., Arun, R., Minz, S., Manohari, G.P., Vinodh, A. and Thavamani George, K. 2015. Community perspectives on alcohol use among a tribal population in rural southern India. *The national medical journal of India.* **28**(3), pp.117-121.

Rosen, R. 2015. The scream: Meaning and excesses in early childhood settings. *Childhood.* **22**(1), pp.39-52.

Roy Burman, J.J. 2009. Adivasi: A Contentious Term to denote Tribes as Indigenous Peoples of India. *Mainstream*, **57**(32).

Ruddick, S. 2007a. At the horizons of the subject: Neoliberalism, neo-conservatism and the rights of the child, Part One: From 'knowing' fetus to 'confused' child. *Gender, Place and Culture.* **14**, pp.513-527.

Ruddick, S. 2007b. At the horizons of the subject: Neoliberalism, neo-conservatism and the rights of the child, Part Two: Parent, caregiver, state. *Gender, Place and Culture.* **14**, pp.627-640.

Rudnick, R., Witteborn, S. and Edmonds, R. 2019. Engaging change: Exploring the adaptive and generative potential of cultural discourse analysis findings for policies and social programs. In: Scollo, M. and Milburn, T. eds. *Engaging and transforming global communication through cultural discourse analysis: A tribute to Donal Carbaugh.* Vancouver, Canada: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, pp. 253-272.

Sahu, C. 1998. *Primitive tribes of India: An ethnographic profile*. New Delhi: Sarup & Sons.

Samuelsson, T., Sparrman, A., Cardell, D. and Lindgren, A. 2015. The active, competent

child, capable of autonomous action: An inherent quality or the outcome of a research process? *AnthropoChildren*, **5**, pp.1-19.

Santos, B.D.S. 2016. *Epistemologies of the South: Justice against epistemicide*. London: Routledge.

Sarangapani, P.M. 2003. *Constructing School Knowledge: An Ethnography of Learning in an Indian Village.* New Delhi: Sage Publications.

Sarangapani, P.M. 2003. Indigenising curriculum: Questions posed by Baiga *vidya. Comparative Education.* **39,** pp.199-209.

Saraswathi T.S. and Menon, S. 2018. Introduction. In: Saraswathi, T.S, Menon, S. and Madan, A. eds. *Childhoods in India: Traditions, trends and transformations.* New Delhi: Routledge.

Schnoor, O. 2013. Early childhood studies as vocal studies: Examining the social practices of 'giving voice to children's voices' in a crèche. *Childhood.* **20**(4), pp. 458-471

Sedwal, M. and Kamat, S. 2011. Education and social equity in elementary education. In Govinda, R. ed. *Who goes to school? Exploring exclusion in Indian education.* New Delhi, India: Oxford University Press, pp.87-122.

Seigworth, G.J. 2000. Banality for cultural studies, *Cultural Studies.* **14**, pp.227-268.

Sen, H. 2016. Do the "mollycoddled" Act? Children, agency and disciplinary entanglements in India. In: Essar, F., Baader, M.S., Betz, T. and Hungerland, B. eds. *Reconceptualising agency and childhood: New perspectives in childhood studies*. New York: Routledge.

Sharma, A. 2014. Negotiating school and gender: Peer performatives. In: Thapan, M. eds. *Ethnographies of schooling in contemporary India.* New Delhi: Sage Publications.

Shaver, T., Francis, V. and Barnett, L. 1993. *Drawing as dialogue: A qualitative approach to needs assessment for health education planning*. ERG Technical Notes series 2. Liverpool: Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine.

Sheringham, M. 2000. Attending to the everyday: Blanchot, Lefebvre, Certeau, Perec. *French Studies*. **54** pp.187-199.

Sherman, H.J. 1996. *Reinventing marxism*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Sibley, D. 1991. Children's geographies: Some problems of representation. *Area.* **3**, pp.269-70.

Sibley, D. 1995. *Geographies of exclusion. Societies and difference in the West.* London: Routledge.

Sidhu, J., Dutta, E., Naphade, N.M. and Shetty, J.V. 2016. The impact of parental alcohol dependence on the development and behaviour outcome of children in a tertiary care hospital. *Medical Journal of Dr. D.Y. Patil Vidyapeeth.* **9**(1), pp.17-22.

Singh, K.S. 2002. *People of India: Introduction*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

Sinha, P. 2017. Listening ethically to indigenous children: experiences from India. *International Journal of Inclusive Education.* **21**(3), pp.272-285.

Sirkko, R., Kyrönlampi, T., and Puroila, A.M. 2019. Children's Agency: Opportunities and Constraints. *International journal of early Childhood*. **51**, pp.283-300.

Skelton, T. 2007. Children, young people, UNICEF and participation. *Children's Geographies.* **5**(1), pp.165-181.

Skelton, T. 2009. Children's geographies/geographies of children: Play, work, mobilities and migration. *Geography Compass.* **3**(4). pp.1430-1448.

Skoda, U. 2005. *The Aghria: A peasant caste on a tribal frontier.* New Delhi: Manohar.

Smith, L. 2012. *Decolonizing methodologies: Research and indigenous peoples*. London: Zed Books.

Soja, E. W. 1996. *Thirdspace. Journeys to Los Angeles and other real-and- imagined places.* Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishers.

Spilsbury, J.C. 2005. 'We don't really get to go out in the front yard' – children's home range and neighbourhood violence. *Children's Geographies.* **3**(1), pp.79-99.

Spittler, G. and Bourdillon. M.F.C. 2012. *African children at work: Working and learning in growing up for life*. Münster: Lit.

Spivak, G. 1988. Can the subaltan speak? In: Nelson, C. and Grossberg, L. eds. *Marxism and the interpretation of culture.* Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press.

Spyrou, S. 2011. The limits of children's voices: From authenticity to critical, reflexive representation. *Childhood.* **18**(2), pp.151-65.

Spyrou, S. 2016. Researching children's silences: Exploring the fullness of voice in childhood research. *Childhood.* **21**(1), pp.7-21.

Spyrou, S. 2018. What kind of agency for children? In: Spyrou, S. ed. *Disclosing childhoods: Research and knowledge production for a critical childhood studies.* London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Sriprakash, A. 2016. Modernity and multiple childhoods: Interrogating the education of the rural poor in India. In: Hopkins, L. and Sriprakash, A. eds. *The poor child: The*

cultural politics of education, development and childhood. Abingdon, Oxen: Routledge.

Srivastava, V. K. 2007. *The Pahari Korwas: Socio-economic condition and their development.* New Delhi: Sonali Publications.

Suneja, S. 2017. *Ecology of care of children by siblings.* PhD Thesis, Department of Home Science. University of Delhi.

Suneja, S. and Sharma, B. 2017. Children finding their ways through life spaces: Glimpses from the Indian ecology. In: Chaudhary, N., Hviid, P., Marsico, G. and Villadsen, J. eds. *Resistance in everyday life: Constructing cultural experiences*. Singapore: Springer.

Sutterlüty, F. and Tisdall, E.K.M. 2019. Agency, autonomy and self determination: Questioning key concepts of childhood studies. Global Studies of Childhood. **9**(13), pp.183-187.

Sutton-Smith, B. 1997. *The ambiguity of play.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Swain, J. 2006. An ethnographic approach to researching children in junior school. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*. **9**(3), pp.199-213.

Swanson, K. 2009. *Begging as a path to progress: Indigenous women and children and the struggle for Ecuador's urban spaces.* Athens: University of Georgia Press.

Taylor, C.A. 2013. Objects, bodies and space: gender and embodied practices of mattering in the classroom. *Gender and Education*, **25**(6), pp.688-703.

Taylor, T. 2009. Children constructing Japan: material practices and relational learning, *Children's Geographies*. **7**(2), pp.173-189.

Thorne, B. 1993. *Gender play: Girls and boys in school*. New Jersey: Rutgers.

Tisdall, E.K.M. and Punch, S. 2012. "Not so 'new'? Looking critically at childhood studies." *Children's Geographies*. **10**(3), pp.249-264.

Tisdall, E.K.M., Davis, J.M. and Gallagher, M. 2009. *Researching with children and young people: Research design, methods and analysis*. London: Sage.

Torres-Harding, S.R., Siers, B. and Olson, B. 2012. Development and evaluations of the social justice scale (SJS). *American Journal of Community Psychology*, **50** pp.77-88.

Townsend, P. 1979. *Poverty in the United Kingdom*. London: Allen Lane and Penguin Books.

Trawicks, M. 1990. *Notes on love in a Tamil family.* Berkeley: University of California Press.

Tronto, J. 1993. *Moral boundaries: A political argument for an ethic of care.* New York, London: Routledge.

Tucker, F. 2003. Sameness or difference? Exploring girls' use of recreational spaces. *Children's Geographies*. **1**, pp.111-124.

Tucker, F. and Matthews, H. 2001. 'They don't like girls hanging around there': Conflicts over recreational space in rural Northamptonshire. *Area.* **33**(2), pp.161–168.

Twum-Danso Imoh, A. and Ame, R. eds. 2012. *Childhoods at the intersection of the local and the global.* Basingstoke: Palgrave.

Twum-Danso Imoh, A., Bourdillion, M. and Meichsner, S. eds. 2018. *Global childhoods beyond the north-south divide.* London: Springer International.

Twum-Danso, A. 2009. Situating participatory methodologies in context: The impact of culture on adult-child interactions in research and other projects. *Children's Geographies*. **7**(4), pp.379-389.

UN FAO. 1998. [Online]. [Accessed 12 July 2017]. Available from: http://www.fao.org/docrep/007/ae393e/ae393e00.htm.

UNDP. 2005. Chhattisgarh Human Development Report. Raipur, Chhattisgarh: Government of Chhattisgarh.

UNICEF. 2005. *State of the world's children 2005: Childhood under threat.* New York: UNICEF.

UNICEF. 2007. U.N. General assembly adopts powerful definition of child poverty. [Online]. New York, UNICEF. [Accessed 18 January 2019]. Available from: www.unicef.org/media/media_38003.html.

UNICEF. 2014. *Nutrition and Adivasis: A Report on the nutrition status of India's tribal children.* New Delhi: UNICEF.

Uprichard, E. 2008. Children as 'being and becomings': Children, childhood and temporality. *Children and Society*. **22**(4), pp.303-313.

Valentine, G. 1997. A safe place to grow up? Parenting, perceptions of children's safety and the rural idyll. *Journal of Rural Studies.* **13**, pp.137-148.

Valentine, G. 1999. A corporeal geography of consumption. *Environment and Planning D.* **17**, pp.329-351.

Valentine, G. 2004. *Public space and the culture of childhood*. Abingdon, Oxen: Taylor Francis Group.

Valentine, G. 2007. Theorizing and researching intersectionality: a challenge for feminist geography. *The Professional Geographer*. **59**(1), pp.10-21.

Valentine, K. 2011. Accounting for agency, *Children and Society*. **25,** pp.347-58.

Van Blerk, L. 2006. Diversity and difference in the everyday lives of Ugandan street children. *Social Dynamics*. **32**(1), pp.47-74.

Van der Burgt, D. 2015. Spatial avoidance or spatial confidence? Young people's agency in the active negotiation of risk and safety in public space, *Children's Geographies*. **13**(2), pp.181-195.

Van Der Burgt, D. 2015. Spatial avoidance or spatial confidence? Young people's agency in the active negotiation of risk and safety in public space. *Children's Geographies*. **13**(2), pp.181-195.

Vanderbeck, R. and Johnson, J. 2000. That's the only place where you can hang out: Urban young people and the space of the mall. *Urban Geography*. **21** pp.5-25.

Vanderbeck, R.M. 2008. Reaching critical mass? Theory, politics, and the culture of debate in children's geographies. *Area* **40**, pp.393-400.

Vanderbeck, R.M. 2007. Intergenerational geographies: Age relations, segregation and re-engagements. *Geography Compass*. **1**(2), pp.200-221.

Vanderbeck, R.M. and Dunkley, C.M. 2003. Young people's narratives of rural-urban difference. *Children's Geographies*. **1**(2), pp.241-259.

Vera, E.M. and Speight, S.L. 2003. Multicultural competencies, social justice, and counseling psychology: Expanding our roles. *The Counseling Psychologist*. **31,** pp.253-272.

Waksler, F.C. 1996. *The little trials of childhood and children's strategies for dealing with them*. London: Falmer Press.

Walker, C. 2016. *Environment and children's everyday lives in India and England: Experiences, understandings and practices.* PhD thesis, University College London.

Ward, C. 1990. *The Child in the Country.* London: Bedford Square Press.

Weisner, T.S. 1996. Why ethnography should be the most important method in the study of human development. In: Jessor, R., Colby, A. and Shweder, R. eds. *Ethnography and human development. context and meaning in social inquiry*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, pp.305-324.

Wihstitz, A. 2019. Children's agency contributions from feminist and ethics of care theories to sociology of childhood. In: Essar, F., Baader, M.S., Betz, T. and Hungerland, B.

eds. *Reconceptualising agency and childhood: New perspectives in childhood studies.* Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.

Williamson, E., Goodenough, T., Kent, J. and Ashcroft, R. 2005. Conducting research with children: The limits of confidentiality and child protection protocols. *Children and Society.* **19**, pp.397-409.

Wilson, H.F. 2013. Collective life: Parents, playground encounters and the multicultural city. *Social and Cultural Geography.* **14**, pp.625-648.

Wood, E. 2007. Reconceptualising Child-Centred Education: Contemporary Directions in Policy, Theory and Practice in Early Childhood. *Forum.* **49**(1), pp.119-134.

Woodhead, M. 1998. *Children's perspectives on their working lives: A participatory study in Bangldesh, Ethiopia, The Philippines, Guatemala, El Salvador and Nicaragua.* Stockholm, Sweden: Radda Barnen Project, Swedish Save the Children.

Woodhead, M. 1999. Combating child labour: Listen to what the children say. *Childhood.* **6**, pp.27-49.

Woodhead, M. and Faulkner, D. 2000 Subjects, objects or participants? Dilemmas of psychological research with children. In: Christensen, P. and James, A. eds. *Research with children: Perspectives and practice.* London: Routlege Falmer.

Woodward, I. 2007. *Understanding material culture.* Los Angeles: Sage Publications.

Woodyer, T. 2008. The body as research tool: embodied practice and children's geographies, *Children's Geographies.* **6**(4), pp.349-362.

Wyness, M. 2013. Children's participation and intergenerational dialogue: Bringing adults back into the analysis. *Childhood.* **20**(4), pp.429-442.

Xaxa, V. 2008. *State, society, and tribes: Issues in post-colonial India.* Delhi, India: Pearson Longman.

Xaxa, V. 2011. The *Status of tribal children in India: A historical perspective.* IHD - UNICEF Working Paper Series Children of India: Rights and Opportunities Working Paper No. 7. New Delhi: UNICEF.

Appendix 1: Summary of data generated during the fieldwork

The data collection took place over a period of six months from January to July 2018. There were a total of 90 visits between 4–6 hours.		
Data	**Number**	**Number of hours**
Fieldnotes	302 pages [1,40,514 words]	
Children's drawings	44	
Audio files	64 audio files	89
Photographs	382 pictures	

Appendix 2: Permission letter from the Department of Education, Sarguja, Chhattisgarh

कार्यालय जिला शिक्षा अधिकारी, अम्बिकापुर, सरगुजा (छ0ग0)

क्रमांक / 10069 / स्टेनो / 2017   अम्बिकापुर, दिनांक 15 / 11 / 2017

प्रति,

अम्बिका कपूर,
यूनिवर्सिटी ऑफ लीड्स, इंग्लैण्ड

विषय–   अनुमति प्रदाय करने बाबत्।

सदर्भ–   आपके द्वारा प्रस्तुत आवेदन दिनांक 15 नवंबर 2017.

—00—

उपरोक्त विषयांतर्गत लेख है कि आप यूनिवर्सिटी ऑफ लीड्स, इंग्लैण्ड के चाइल्डहुड और यूथ स्टडीज प्रोग्राम में पी.एच.डी. की छात्रा हैं। आपका शोध का विषय–"आदिवासी समूहों में बच्चों की रोजमर्रा का जीवन और उनके कठिनाईयों के अनुभव" है। इस हेतु आपके द्वारा विकासखण्ड लुण्ड्रा के शासकीय प्राथमिक शाला / पूर्व माध्यमिक शाला लालमाटी में 06 माह तक बच्चे एवं उनके परिवारों के साथ काम करने हेतु इस कार्यालय से अनुमति चाही गई है ताकि आवश्यक शोध कर आप अपना प्रोजेक्ट तैयार कर सकें। उक्त कार्य हेतु आपको अनुमति प्रदान की जाती है तथा निर्देशित किया जाता है कि शोध के उपरांत बनाये गये प्रोजेक्ट की 01 प्रति कार्यालय में अवश्य प्रस्तुत करें।
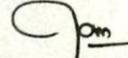
जिला शिक्षा अधिकारी,
अम्बिकापुर, सरगुजा

पृ0क्रमांक / 10070 / स्टेनो / 2017   अम्बिकापुर, दिनांक 15 / 11 / 2017

प्रतिलिपि–

1 /   विकासखण्ड शिक्षा अधिकारी / सहायक विकासखण्ड शिक्षा अधिकारी / बी0आर0 सी0सी0 / लुण्ड्रा जिला–सरगुजा को सूचनार्थ।

2 /   प्रधान पाठक, शासकीय पूर्व माध्यमिक शाला / प्राथमिक शाला लालमाटी विकासखण्ड लुण्ड्रा, जिला–सरगुजा को सूचनार्थ एवं आवश्यक कार्यवाही हेतु।

जिला शिक्षा अधिकारी,
अम्बिकापुर, सरगुजा

Appendix 3: Information leaflet for children and families and consent form
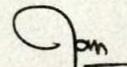
सूचना पत्र
अभिभावकों और बच्चों के लिए

बच्चों के रोजमर्रा के जीवन और _____ गांव में जोखिम के अनुभव

मैं 8-12 वर्ष के बच्चों और उनके परिवारों से बात करने में दिलचस्पी रखती हूँ जो _____ गांव, छत्तीसगढ़ में रहते हैं।

यह सूचना पत्र आपको शोध के बारे में जानकारी देने के लिए है और यह बताने के लिए कि मैं आपके विचार क्यों सुनना चाहती हूँ। कृपया कुछ समय लगा कर इस सूचना पत्र को ध्यान से पढ़ें। और यदि आप अधिक जानकारी चाहते हैं तो मुझे आपके साथ इस विषय पर चर्चा करने में बहुत खुशी होगी। यदि आप इस शोध में योगदान देना चाहते हैं, तो कृपया मुझे बताएं।

अधिक जानकारी के लिए संपर्क करें:
अंबिका कपूर
A.Kapoor16@leeds.ac.uk
+91-9911180349

280

मैं कौन हूँ

मेरा नाम अंबिका कपूर है। मैं इंग्लैंड में लीड्स विश्वविद्यालय की छात्रा हूं। मैं भारत में जन्मी हूं और यहाँ के गांवों में रहने वाले बच्चों की रोजमर्रा की जिंदगी के बारे में शोध करना चाहता हूं।

इसके लिए मुझे क्या करना होगा?

मैं गांव में शोध का आयोजन करूँगी, जिसका मतलब है कि गांव के समुदाय के लोगों की रोजमर्रा की जिंदगी के बारे में जानना और उसका पता लगाना। मैं 8-12 वर्ष की आयु के बच्चों और उनके परिवारों पर ध्यान केंद्रित करना चाहती हूँ और जानना चाहती हूँ कि आप अपने रोजमर्रा की जिंदगी में मुश्किल और चुनौतीपूर्ण परिस्थितियों का कैसे सामना करते हैं। मैं उन बच्चों के माता-पिता और परिवारों से भी इस बारे में बातचीत करने में दिलचस्पी रखती हूँ।

मैं ये कैसे करूँगी?

- समुदाय में उनके आस-पास रहकर और
- समुदाय में घर, विद्यालय, खेल के मैदान, या किसी भी अन्य क्षेत्र सहित विभिन्न व्यवस्थाओं में जहां बच्चे और परिवार नियमित रूप से समय व्यतीत करते हैं, उनका नियमित अवलोकन द्वारा
- माता-पिता और बच्चों से प्रश्न पूछकर तथा साक्षात्कार के माध्यम से
- बच्चों को विभिन्न विषयों पर चित्र बनवाकर और समुदाय का नक्शा बनवाकर

आपकी अनुमति के साथ, मैं हमारे बीच हुई बातचीत का ऑडियो रिकॉर्ड करूँगी (इसका उद्देश्य केवल शोध लेखन होगा) जिसे गोपनीय रखा जायेगा। इसके साथ-साथ में शोध की रिपोर्ट और प्रस्तुतियों के उद्देश्य से फील्ड नोट्स का उपयोग करूँगी और फोटोग्राफिक सामग्री इन्ट्ठा करना चाहूंगी।

यह महत्वपूर्ण क्यों है?

मुझे भारत में मौजूद बचपन को समझने में दिलचस्पी रही है और विशेष रूप से विभिन्न संदर्भों और परिस्थितियों को देखते हुए जिसमें बच्चे बड़े होते हैं। इस

अध्ययन का हो सकता है कि समुदाय पर सीधा असर न हो, लेकिन यह बच्चों और परिवारों के विचारों और आवाजों को सुनने में मदद करेगा। लंबे समय में विभिन्न संदर्भों में बचपन को देखने की यह समझ गैर-सरकारी संगठनों, राज्य के कार्यक्रमों और नीतियों को प्रभावित करने में मदद कर सकती है।

कब तक मैं यहाँ रहूंगी?

मैं नवंबर 2017 से जून 2018 तक 8 महीनों की अवधि के लिए गांव में रहूंगी। मैं नवम्बर में आपके गांव में अपना और अपने शोध का परिचय देने के लिए आउंगी। नवंबर से दिसंबर की अवधि के दौरान आप यह तय कर सकते हैं कि आप शोध में भाग लेना चाहते हैं या नहीं। गांव में इन 8 महीनों के दौरान मैं आपके और आपके परिवार के सदस्यों से दो सप्ताह में एक बार मिलूंगी।

शोध में भाग लेना

शोध में हिस्सा लेना गोपनीय होगा, इसका मतलब यह है कि जब मैं इस गांव से प्राप्त अपने निष्कर्षों के बारे में बात करूंगी और लिखूंगी तो उसमें किसी व्यक्तिगत के नाम का उल्लेख नहीं किया जाएगा और गांव का भी नाम गोपनीय रखा जायेगा। आपके द्वारा दी गई कोई भी जानकारी गोपनीय होगी। इसका मतलब यह है कि जो भी आप मेरे साथ साझा करेंगे उसकी चर्चा घर, स्कूल या समुदाय में नहीं की जाएगी। यदि कोई प्रश्न या विषय ऐसा है जिसका जवाब देने में आप असहज महसूस करते हैं तो आप साक्षात्कार समाप्त कर सकते है या प्रश्न को छोड़ सकते हैं।

यदि आप या आपका कोई भी मित्र इस अध्ययन में भाग लेने में रुचि रखते हैं, तो कृपया नीचे दिए गए संपर्क विवरणों का उपयोग करें या जब आप गांव में मुझे देखें तो मुझसे बात करें।

मैं आपको, आपके परिवार और गांव को जानने के लिए उत्सुक हूं।

सहमति पत्र
माता-पिता और बच्चों के लिए

जोखिम और लचीलापन के बच्चों के अनुभव: जनजातीय भारत की कथाएं

शोधकर्ता का नाम: अंबिका कपूर

में पुष्टि करती/करता हूं कि मैंने सूचना पत्र पढ़ लिया है और समझ लिया है। इसकी विषयवस्तु और शोध परियोजना मुझे समझा दी गई है और मुझे परियोजना के बारे में सवाल पूछने के अवसर भी मिले।

मैं समझता/समझती हूं कि:

- शोध के दौरान में जो भी कहती हूं या करती हूं वह गोपनीय है। में समझता/समझती हूं कि मेरा नाम शोध सामग्री से नहीं जोड़ा जाएगा और शोध की रिपोर्ट / परिणामों में मेरी पहचान गोपनीय रखी जाएगी।
- आकड़े संग्रह की अवधि के दौरान में किसी भी समय परियोजना से अपना नाम वापस लेने के लिए स्वतंत्र हूं। इसके अलावा, में किसी विशेष प्रश्न या प्रश्न का उत्तर नहीं देना चाहता/ चाहती तो में अस्वीकृति के लिए स्वतंत्र हूं।
- शोधकर्ता द्वारा एकत्र की जाने वाली जानकारी का प्रयोग डॉक्टराल प्रोजेक्ट, रिपोर्ट, लेख और प्रस्तुतियों को लिखने के लिए किया जाएगा।
- लिप्यंतरण के उद्देश्य के लिए मेरी अनुमति के साथ साक्षात्कार ऑडियो रिकॉर्ड किया जाएगा
- टिप्पणियां लिप्यंतरण के उद्देश्य के लिए फ़ील्ड नोट्स में दर्ज की जाएंगी और उन्हें गोपनीय रखा जाएगा।
- डॉक्टरेट की रिपोर्ट और प्रस्तुतियों के उद्देश्य के लिए मेरी सहमति के साथ फोटोग्राफिक सामग्री ली जाएगी।

मैं उपरोक्त अध्ययन में भाग लेने के लिए सहमत हूं
transcription

नाम	दिनांक	हस्ताक्षर

*सभी पार्टियों द्वारा फुल पर हस्ताक्षर किए जाने के बाद, प्रतिभागियों को हस्ताक्षरित और दिनांकित प्रतिभागी सहमति फॉर्म, पत्र / पूर्व लिखित स्क्रिप्ट / सूचना पत्र और प्रतिभागियों को प्रदान की गई अन्य लिखित जानकारी की एक प्रति प्राप्त होनी चाहिए। हस्ताक्षरित और दिनांकित सहमति फॉर्म की एक प्रति परियोजना के मुख्य दस्तावेजों के साथ रखा जाना चाहिए, जिन्हें सुरक्षित स्थान पर रखा जाना चाहिए।