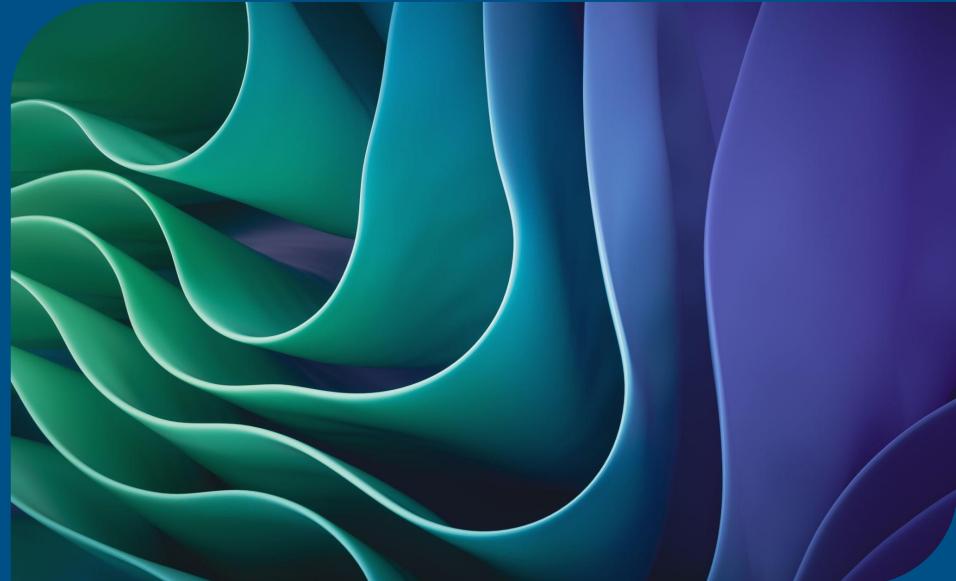


# A Differential Approach to Pluralism and Integrative Education in India:

*How does a society transform difference into cohesion?*

Deepa Srikanthiah, Ph.D.  
Faculty, School of Education  
American University  
Washington, D.C.

Joint Mathematics Meetings,  
Washington, D.C.  
2026

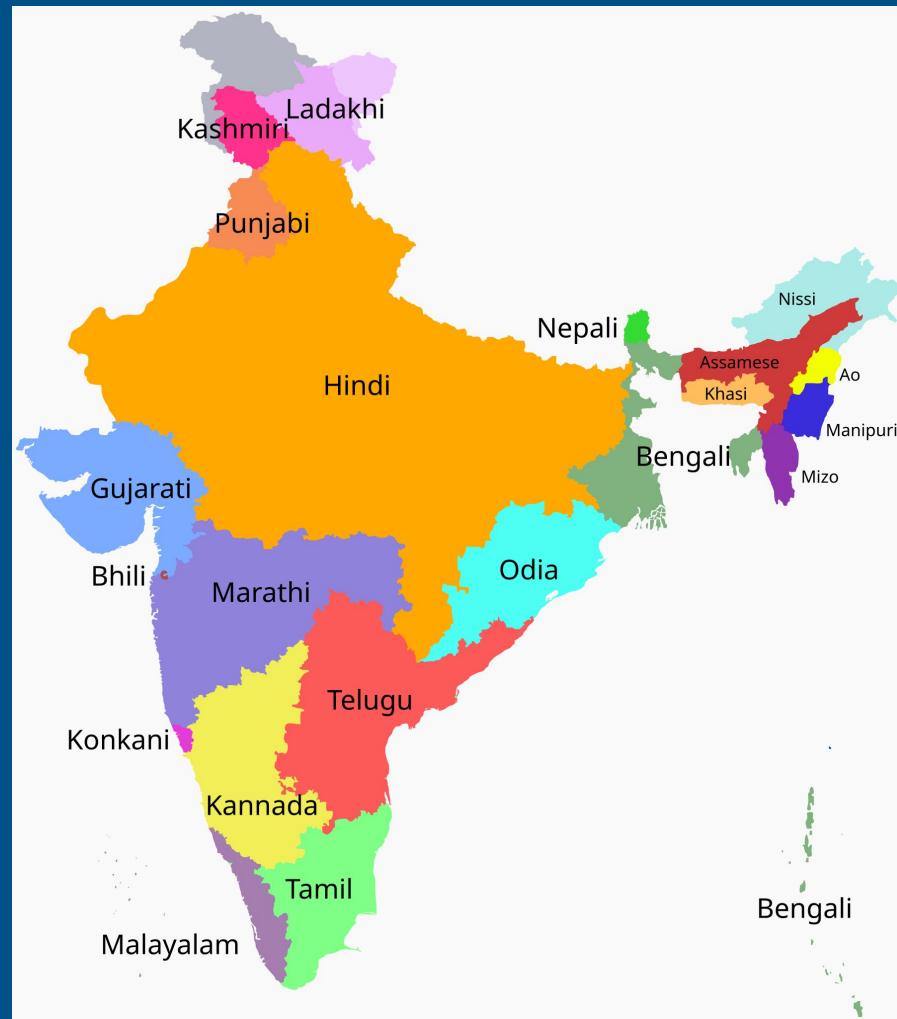




## India is:

- Home to multiple religions, cultures, and philosophies
- Linguistically vast (22 official languages; hundreds of mother tongues)
- Historically marked by coexistence *and* conflict

★ **How do such differences form a functioning social whole?**



# Why Calculus?

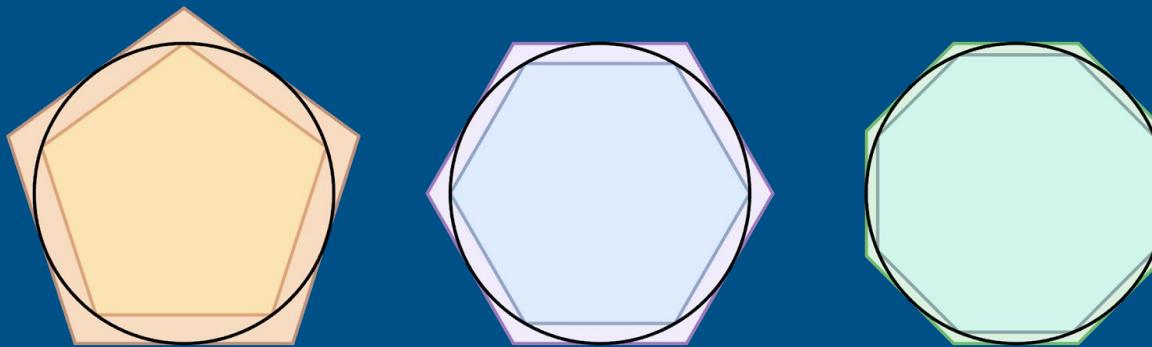
## Calculus helps us understand:

- How wholes emerge from many small parts
- How continuity is formed through integration
- How change, friction, and approximation matter

★ *Unity does not erase difference, it integrates it.*



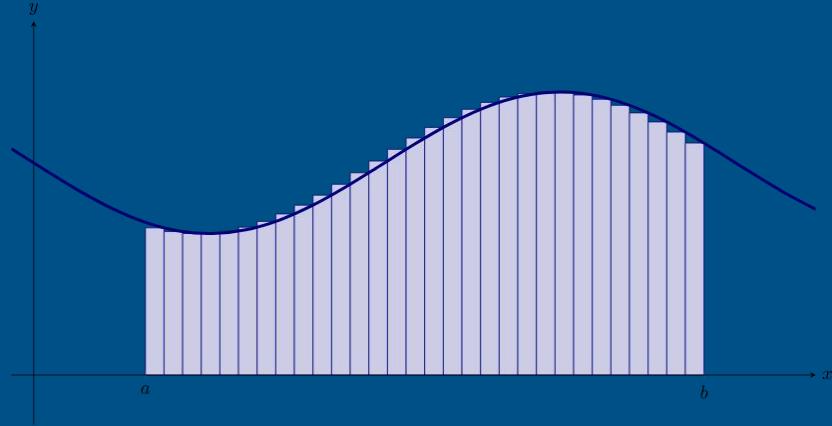
# The Infinity Principle



- Crude approximations distort reality
- Finer granularity produces truer understanding
- ★ **Social parallel:** Pluralism requires attention to *local, infinitesimal* realities such as languages, histories, lived experience.

# Riemann Sums & Social Life

- Each “rectangle” = a community, voice, or practice
- The whole emerges only when *all* are accounted for



## Limit → Integral:

True understanding is approached through continuous inclusion, never a single snapshot.

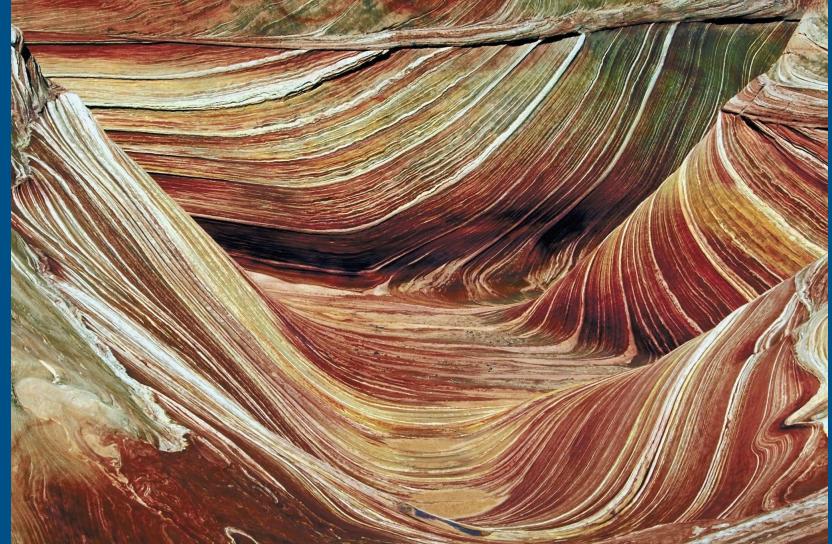
# Discontinuities

**In calculus:** Discontinuities = breaks in smooth behavior

**In India:**

- Caste hierarchies
- Communal violence
- Structural exclusion

★ **Discontinuities reveal *where integration fails* and where repair is needed.**



# Education as Integration:

*Education functions as:*

Disaggregation → listening, dialogue, critique

Reintegration → shared understanding,  
reconciliation

**Like iterative approximation, each educational encounter refines the social whole.**

# Constitutional & Pedagogical Practice

India institutionalizes pluralism through:

- Linguistic recognition
- Minority protections
- Inclusive educational spaces

Education becomes the site where historical inequities are confronted rather than ignored.



# Conclusion: The Calculus of Coexistence

**Pluralism is not a finished sum.**

Like calculus, harmony is a limit, continually approached through ethical commitment, dialogue, and education.



**Difference is not the problem.**  
**Failure to integrate difference is.**

# Srikantaiah, D. (in press). The calculus of difference: A differential approach to pluralism and integrative education in India. *Journal of Contemplative and Holistic Education*.



The screenshot shows the homepage of the *Journal of Contemplative and Holistic Education*. The header features a colorful, hand-drawn illustration of various flowers and leaves. A central flower has a pink circle in its center with the text "Journal of Contemplative and Holistic Education". To the left of this flower is a blue flower with a yellow center labeled "Artist: Irene Wang". To the right is a pink flower with a blue center. The top right corner of the header has a blue box with the journal's name. The top navigation bar includes "Home", "About", "FAQ", and "My Account". The left sidebar contains links to "Journal Home", "About This Journal", "Aims & Scope", "Editorial Board", "Policies", "Publication Ethics Statement", "Call for General Submissions and Guidelines for Authors and Reviewers", "Call for Submissions: Special Issue (Contemplative K-12 Classroom for Wisdom and Peace)", "Call for Proposals: Special Issue (The Complementary Convergence of Science and Spirituality)", "FAQs and Contact", "Submit Article", "Most Popular Papers", and "Receive Email Notices or RSS". The main content area features a "Current Issue: Volume 3, Issue 3 (2025)" section with the title "Contemplative Classrooms (K-12) for Wisdom and Peace: Theories, Curricula, Pedagogies, and Practices". Below this are sections for "Articles" and two PDF links: "Seeking Kairos: Creating Oases of Rest through Contemplative Practice in the Elementary Classroom" by Kaisu Aldom and "Stoic Wisdom for the Contemplative Teacher: Prosochē and Praemeditatio Malorum as Alternative Approaches to Mindfulness" by Anna Rumjahn. A "Follow" button is located in the top right of the main content area. The bottom right corner of the page features a circular logo for the journal, also featuring a colorful floral design and the journal's name.