Human Formation and the Development of Self-Esteem:

A Grounded Theory Research in Indian Seminaries

FR. JO PAUL KIRIYANTHAN JOHN

17 JUNE 2026, ISC, PUG, ROME

BASIC INFORMATION

- **Moderator: Prof. Dr. Hans Zollner SJ**
- **Data Collected in November, 2016**
- **Research published in March, 2022**
- **Doctoral Thesis in Five Chapters**

RESEARCH AREAS

1. **Human Formation in Indian Seminaries**
2. **The Development of Seminarians' Self-Esteem**
3. **The Interrelation between Human Formation and the Development of Seminarians' Self-Esteem**

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. How do seminarians and staff members perceive and implement HF in the seminaries in India? What more can be done in the area of HF?
2. What are the relevant elements that influence the development of seminarians' SE? Specifically, what are the cultural (India) and contextual (seminary) elements that influence their SE development?
3. How do seminarians' SE and HF in their seminary influence each other? What more can the seminary human formation programme (HFP) do in this area with the help of the newer findings in psychology?

METHODOLOGY

- **Qualitative Study**
- **Grounded Theory Method (GTM)**
- **Constructivist Grounded Theory**
- **Social Constructivism (Charmaz, Creswell)**

PARTICIPANTS

- **Twenty Participants**
- **Ten Seminarians & Ten Formators from Two Indian Major Seminaries (Comprehensive nature)**
- **Seminarians:**

  Third Year Theology Students (Experience)

  Students for Diocesan priesthood (homogenous group)
- **Formators: Internal & External Forums (Variation)**

INSTRUMENTS USED

- **Two Semi-structured Interviews (For Seminarians & Formators) with Open-ended Questions**
- **Two Sets of Socio-demographic Questions**
- **Informed Consent Form**

METHOD OF ANALYSIS

- **Verbatim of the interviews**
- **Coding in four levels: initial coding, focus coding, axial coding and theoretical coding**
- **Writing memos**
- **Theoretical sorting of memos**

RESULTS & DISCUSSIONS

14 themes and related to the research areas.

1. **Human Formation in Indian Seminaries-**

   Five Themes

2. **The Development of Seminarians' Self-Esteem-**

   Five Themes

3. **The Interrelation between Human Formation and the Development of Seminarians' Self-Esteem**

   Four Themes

RESULTS & DISCUSSIONS

INTERNATIONAL SAFEGUARDING CONFERENCE

1. Human Formation in Indian Seminaries

1. Perception of human formation
2. Human formation programme
3. Formation environment
4. Methodology of human formation
5. Human formation topics

RESULTS & DISCUSSIONS

INTERNATIONAL SAFEGUARDING CONFERENCE

2. The Development of Seminarians' Self-Esteem

1. Self-acceptance
2. Self-worth
3. Social acceptance
4. Self-confidence
5. Self-efficacy

RESULTS & DISCUSSIONS

INTERNATIONAL SAFEGUARDING CONFERENCE

3. The Interrelation between Human Formation and the Development of Seminarians' Self-Esteem

1. Negative characteristics in the formation environment can harm seminarians' self-esteem
2. Seminarians' unhealthy self-esteem could hinder effective human formation
3. Identifying seminarians' unhealthy self-esteem
4. Possible ways of addressing seminarians' unhealthy self-esteem in human formation programmes

SAFEGUARDING IN INDIAN SEMINARIES

- The terminology ‘Safeguarding’ was vague for participants
- 95% of participants said information received on safeguarding is inadequate
- 20% of Seminarians among participants experienced CSA. They couldn’t process on it since they feared that it could affect admission to Holy Orders
- A staff-member among the participants knew about six seminarians with CSA experience. Though he referred them to an expert, they could not make any process.

RECOMMENDATIONS

INTERNATIONAL SAFEGUARDING CONFERENCE

1. Seminary requires human formators in the internal forum.
2. A psychologist as a coordinator of human formation
3. Better training for human formators
4. Mixing of staff's roles needs to be checked
5. Seminary has to highlight seminarians' responsibility for their human formation
6. Creative use of the advantages of a group in human formation
7. Better integration of psychological insights into human formation
8. Execution of psychological evaluation
9. Promotion of more empirical research in human formation