

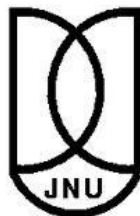
**NEW INDIAN MIDDLE CLASS:
A CASE STUDY OF TWO NEIGHBOURHOODS
IN DELHI**

Thesis submitted to the Jawaharlal Nehru University

for the award of the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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This thesis titled "New Indian Middle Class: A Case Study of Two Neighbourhoods in Delhi", submitted for the award of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy is my original work and has not been previously submitted for any other degree or diploma of any university or institution.

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Chapter One

Introduction

1.1 Introduction

When I watched documentaries about India twenty years or so ago, most were stories of lower caste and lower class people such as *dhobi wallahs*¹ or those who handled corpses in the Ganges river who regarded their destitute lives as *karma* according to the principles of Hinduism. However, just a few years later, the prospect of India becoming one of the leading countries on the world stage via its membership of the BRICS group suddenly began to emerge. This image of an emerging India with its fast economic growth, along with its long-time Orientalist image associated with the Hindu religion, yoga, caste and poverty has excited interest in the exponential increase in the size of India's middle class even in Korea which is far from India.

Since coming to study in India, I have come to realise that the fashionable young people who are often seen in the big malls of South Delhi are exactly this emerging new Indian middle class. Their English speaking capacity and Westernised attire present an astonishing contrast to the typical image of Indianness and traditional Indian clothing of their parents who accompany them, as well as to the ordinary Indians who can be often seen outside the malls. These seemingly modern, Western images of the young urban middle class stimulated my curiosity as to whether their inner world is also Westernised or whether they still retain their traditional Indian identity.

The term 'New Indian Middle Class' began to emerge with economic liberalization – a series of reforms initiated in India in 1991. The transition from Nehruvian socialism

1 *Dhobi wallahs* refers to members of a caste group that is engaged in washing clothes, i.e. washermen.

to market-led liberal capitalism led to a paradigm shift in the discourse on the Indian middle class (Jodhka&Prakash, 2011:47). Both public discourse such as in the media and academic discourse started to cast light on the shifting role of the middle class, its expanding size, and its changing attitudes, lifestyles and consumption practices (Fernandes, 2006, xvii).

When these discourses refer to the “new” Indian middle class, this generally means urban, educated, English-speaking people who are employed in or seeking white collar jobs (Derne, 2008; Lobo&Shah, 2015), as well as those who have a consumption-oriented attitude endorsing the new global market capitalist economy with unprecedented economic growth (Fernandes, 2006). Since the new middle class is regarded as the main beneficiary of economic liberalization (Lakha, 1999; Fernandes, 2006), both public and academic discourses in India have paid attention mainly to two issues – estimates of its size, and its earning potential and consumption patterns (Baviskar&Ray, 2011; Béteille, 2001; Favero, 2005; Fernandes, 2006; Gupta, 2000; Platz, 2014; Varma, 1998).

Many optimistic predictions regarding the increasing size of the middle class have given hope that India would jump up to become one of leading economies in the world. The country’s sudden economic progress is represented in the transnational image of the new middle class. TV serials, advertisements and films have come to highlight the affluent elite middle class sophisticated lifestyle of automobiles, fashion, air-conditioning and travel abroad, while hiding the life of ordinary Indian citizens (Derne, 2008: 93). This new middle class lifestyle has become definitive of ‘middle class-ness’².

Even though this rosy view constitutes the mainstream in various economic institutes, estimates of the size of the middle class differ depending on what criteria and data are used. Also, the difficulty of gaining accurate and reliable data creates a problem in grasping the real size of the middle class.

² Mankekar 1999, Chapter 2. quoted in Upadhyaya 2008, 59.

Who is the Indian middle class? The debate on theorizing the role and composition of the middle class has been controversial in both the academic and political spheres for the last 100 years (Jodhka&Prakash, 2011). Due to the blurred boundaries between the small upper layers of the working class and the lower layers of the middle class, as well as its ongoing formation, defining these very large and varied groups of individuals is difficult (Beteille, 2013: 92).

The tools we use to define the middle class generally start from an economic definition based on levels of income and consumption expenditure. However, such data alone cannot be a reliable index to define the middle class (Deshpande, 2003; Lobo&Shah, 2015; Mazzarella, 2005). Not only is there no exact list of levels of income (Deshpande, 2003: 132), but also income or salary need not be all of a family's or an individual's assets and properties (Lobo&Shah, 2015: xvi). Some people might lie about their income to avoid taxes. Also, a rich farmer's son living in Karnataka and a journalist staying in a metropolitan city cannot be included in the same middle class group, even if they receive the same level of income (Baviskar& Ray, 2011: 5). This is why some scholars argue that occupation and education, as well as aspirations, lifestyle and attitudes, should be considered for an adequate understanding of the middle class, apart from the economic standard of definition (see Beteille, 2013; Lobo&Shah, 2015). In addition, its differentiation by language, region, religion and caste contributes to comprehend more precisely who belongs to the middle class in India (Beteille, 2013: 92). In other words, the Indian middle class should reflect its diversity of socio-economic and cultural situations (Platz, 2014: 11). Taking into account all of these points, Beteille insists that the Indian middle class has the most polymorphous character in the world (Beteille, 2013: 92).

All things considered, we should understand the middle class as infinite gradations of internally distinguished and stratified groups (Bavisak&Ray, 2011; Beteille, 2013; Fernandes, 2006; Platz, 2014). Depending on which standards are used to estimate this group, its size varies from 50 to 250 million people, or between five and thirty percent of the total population (Donner, 2008: 56). If we refer to the 250 million people of the Indian middle class, this means "people who constitute a possible

market for things like radios, rather than expensive consumer durables”³ (Shurmer-Smith, 2000: 29). These groups can be considered poor if we compare with developed countries’ standards of income. Otherwise, if we suppose the top five percent constitutes the middle class, this actually represents the elite and upper section of the middle class, which cannot be equated to the general majority of the Indian middle class. It excludes the majority of subordinated groups (Deshpande, 2003; Fernandes, 2006). The so-called “new middle class” that emerged with economic liberalization can embrace people who already belong to the elite segment of the middle class and those who aspire to belong to this section.

This affluent-elite class is usually described as dining at malls at least once a week and preferring to buy clothes from global brands like Nike, Benetton or Zara rather than locally-produced goods. They are sensitive to fashion and beauty, influenced by the new media associated with western cultures and globalization (see Brosius, 2010; Derne, 2008). Their aspiration for education is articulated through sending their children to private English-medium schools like they attended. They usually employ at least one servant in their households, but live in gated colonies to segregate themselves from these lower class laborers. They think of themselves as having more in common with the western middle class than the mass segment of the Indian middle class, and situate themselves between this mass segment and the extremely rich in India. However, the majority of the middle class who are below them think of themselves as positioned between poor Indians who live from hand to mouth and the Indian elite who are consumers of western lifestyles or are world travelers (Derne, 2008: 18).

The impact of globalization on the lives of the elite middle class and the ordinary middle class is presented differently (Derne, 2008; Deshpande, 2003). While the former espouse a cosmopolitan identity and western values, the latter stick to non-cosmopolitan, Indian identities, especially in terms of gender and family arrangements (Derne, 2008: 205). The main role of the elite segment of the middle class is to

produce and disseminate legitimizing ideologies, and the ruling class and the rest of the majority middle class accept and consume such ideologies (Deshpande, 2003: 141).

Who is the new Indian middle class? What are their distinguishing features that set them apart from the old middle class?

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the modern form of the middle class made an appearance based on British colonial educational policy. Access to English education and modern forms of professional employment were the typical characteristics of the middle class during the colonial period (Misra, B.B, 1961; Fernandes, 2006: 2). They were mostly concentrated in Presidency towns such as Calcutta, Madras and Bombay, where colonial educational institutions were centered. Besides exclusivity of language, education and occupation, social identities of religion and caste contributed to the formation of the colonial middle class (Fernandes, 2006: 8-10). Membership in the upper segments of this class was generally restricted to upper caste Hindus during this period, with Muslims being excluded because they were perceived as being slower than Hindu elites in English education (Ibid.: 9)⁴

The 'old' middle class was associated with characteristics such as saving, moderation and austerity, influenced by Nehruvian socialism and Gandhian ideals of austerity during the colonial and post-colonial period. Material acquisitions or the flaunting of property was not pursued as an ideal example of good citizens (Varma, 1998).

Contrary to this old generation of the middle class, the new middle class is characterized by growing desire in consumption practices and aspiration for a westernized lifestyle (Fernandes, 2006: 32). The inflow of new foreign products to the market and transnational media images that include sensational modern and western fashion styles, images and lifestyles trigger more and more people to consume and

⁴ This does not mean that Muslims were nonexistent in the colonial middle class (e.g. high-born Muslim in northern India). The relationship between class and religion manifested differently according to regional variations (Fernandes, 2006: 9).

show off to others. Growing consumption and spending habits with the opening up of the economy have made them deserve the modifier of the 'consuming class' (Deshpande, 2003: 134-9).

Besides differences in consumption practices, increasing individualism among the new middle class is a feature that distinguishes them from the old generation. Earlier, the middle class participated in the integration of all social groups for the nation-state development ideology, whereas now it raises its voice for self-interest among the various internal middle class groups (Deshpande, 2003: 148). While subaltern groups among the middle class have begun to clamor for the elimination of discrimination according to caste identity, urban elites are trying to maintain their upper caste privilege in the context of the debate on reservation for Other Backward Classes (OBC) (Deshpande, 2003; Baviskar&Ray, 2011:19-20). The protest by upper caste students against the implementation of the recommendations of the Mandal Commission in 1990 is a representative example of the latter. Even though the upper castes constitute only a quarter of the population, almost half of the middle class belongs to the upper castes (Sridharan, 2011: 53). However, they repudiate their upper caste dominant position and the connection between class and caste in the name of 'merit' in access to employment and education (Deshpande, 2003; Baviskar&Ray, 2011: 19-20). This phenomenon of caste privilege among the new middle class shows that they are more prone to seeking self-interest than the ideology of development of the nation-state (Deshpande, 2003:148). They tend to be inclined towards individualism rather than the collectivism that the old middle class embraced.

Furthermore, various internal social hierarchies like language, region and religion that have been produced historically since the colonial period have intensified inequalities among the middle class (Baviskar&Ray, 2011: 8-9). This means that the split between the elite middle class and the lower and middle middle class has become larger than before.

Taking all of these issues into consideration, this dissertation intends to analyze and find out some conspicuous characteristics of the new middle class in contemporary Delhi using case materials collected through ethnographic fieldwork in two middle

class neighborhoods.

Above all, the gradually increasing mentality of segregation from the lower class and castes is one remarkable characteristic of the new middle class in urban India. They tend to reveal this mentality especially through three channels – retention of cultural capital, consumption practices, and spatial segregation.

Retention of cultural capital is symbolic of middle class-ness. Important in holding middle class membership is not only economic and social capital such as income, assets and social networks but also cultural capital (Fernandes, 2006: 34). This cultural capital consists of education, credentials, skills and linguistic and aesthetic knowledge, as well as certain desires and discipline (Baviskar&Ray, 2011: 13). The education system is a particularly important medium for the transmission of cultural capital, so it becomes a field for the reproduction of the middle class (Ibid).

The middle class has historically always expressed its cultural capital in contradictory ways (Baviskar&Ray, 2011: 7). According to Sanjay Joshi, in the politics catalyzed by the middle class, it has insisted on both the preservation of tradition and radical change, and on both equality and hierarchy (Ibid.:6). Although it is enlightened to be modern and claim to advocate democracy as representatives of ‘all Indians’, they differentiate themselves from lower order groups through a superiority complex, since they perceive the lower segment of people as completely different from them. In this way, the dominance of the cultural capital of the middle class reproduces inequalities (Deshpande, 2003; Fernandes, 2006; Baviskar & Ray, 2011: 9), and is also a crucial means of distinguishing themselves from the lower class.

Consumption practice is also a representative symbol of the new middle class in liberalizing India, distinct from the older generation middle class. Sophisticated taste and style derived from aspiration for a westernized modern lifestyle as advertised in the global media have become their identity – evidently different from the lower class. They are an aspirational object for other lower sections with this westernized fashion and lifestyle. In other words, practices of consumption are the definitive marker to distinguish themselves from the past middle class and from the present lower class

(e.g. Baviskar & Ray, 2011; Fernandes, 2006; Nisbett, 2007).

The desire of the new middle class for segregation from the lower class is visually proven in their control of obvious spatial boundaries with the poor. It has made an effort to beautify middle class neighborhoods as clean and ordered spaces by erecting gated residential communities, thereby making themselves secluded from street vendors, squatters and slum residents through the implementation of a new city model in accordance with changed government policies (Chatterjee, 2004:143-6). In addition, the changed attitudes among the new middle class towards the poor are reflected in changes in their servant-management techniques (Baviskar&Ray, 2011:17). The relationship between middle class employers and domestic workers has been transformed to a contractual relationship from the patron-client relationship of the past based on patronage-loyalty between master and servant. They control and manage servants by supervising their behavior and permitting them only limited space in the domestic arena to avoid being threatened by them. In this way, the middle class seeks spatial differentiation through a demarcation between the self and the other in the bounded spaces they use such as exclusive shopping malls, gated residential colonies and the home.

Aside from the increasing attitude of the new middle class of segregation from the poor, one of their prominent characteristics is their mindset seeking to break from old traditions such as strong social stratification and collectivism which was rooted until their parents' generation. Traditional India was the most hierarchical society in the world, based on caste structure (Gupta, 2000: 13), and put value on “holism” (Dumont, 1986), ‘socio-centrism’ or ‘collectivism’ (Platz, 2014:6). However, the new generation of the middle class is challenging traditional social arrangements and practices. This phenomena seems clear with the growth in love marriages and nuclear families, while arranged marriages and joint family lives are declining among the elite young middle class (Derne, 2008: 112).

The young generation is endeavoring to have autonomy and independence from the control of their parents as well as parents’ conservative values such as social hierarchies – including gender, family and caste hierarchies (Platz, 2014). In particular,

the biggest change in the new middle class is the increasing social mobility of women. When women were hardly working outside, their social mobility was restricted, but now more and more new middle class women are participating in higher education and working outside, so they gain “psychological freedom”⁵ – and social mobility.

Although their values are transformed or modernized in terms of gender, religion, marriage, family and caste arrangements, the new middle class manifests contradictions in these arrangements. Their practice of exclusion and distinction in various class fractions seems to be one way of creating an unconscious unity of the class (Bourdieu, 1984: 77).

Based on the above discussions, first, this study will attempt to examine how values and attitudes are diversely represented in the differentiated middle class by comparing and contrasting two middle class neighborhoods in Delhi. Contrary to the existing work about the middle class in Delhi, which has mostly focused on one particular section of the middle class (e.g. Brosius, 2010 ; Favero, 2005), this study is distinctive in that it compares and contrasts the values and customs in diverse middle class differentiations. It can offer the current trend in values and attitudes of the middle class by analyzing the commonalities among them, and by figuring out their differences we can note how the values and perception of the new Indian middle class are vividly different from those of the mass segment of the middle class.

Secondly, I propose that not only economic and social capital but also cultural capital are determining factors in the designation of middle class and in differentiations within the middle class. Indicative of a modernized and westernized mindset, the presence of liberal attitudes in social institutions is one of the most decisive factors in differentiating the new Indian middle class from the old and lower middle class. This is meaningful because it has not been the subject of much study, although cultural capital (such as education, manner, etiquette, credentials and skills) as a way to access

1. Kakar insists that women are experiencing the most positive changes due to the effect of modernization and the social change that comes with it. He says that he cannot call it ‘liberation’, but modernization has surely helped them a lot (Sharma, 2003: 153).

membership in the new middle class has been given considerable attention by many scholars (e.g. Baviskar&Ray, 2011; Fernandes, 2006). In addition, by comparing and contrasting two middle class neighbourhoods, we can clearly see that the cultural capital of values and perceptions is reproduced through generations like other capital. At the same time, in the case of the more socioeconomically marginalized middle class, potential for upward social mobility is likely to occur by disciplining and reforming values and customs. In this sense, this study has significance because it broadens the standard definition of the new Indian middle class.

Thirdly, we will see what characteristics of the new middle class distinguish it from the mass section of the present middle class and the past middle class. Although the new Indian middle class is generally defined as those people who are educated, professional, white collar, high-salaried private sector workers who benefit from economic liberalization, this study used interviews with residents of the two neighbourhoods, as well as with college students nearby the field work areas, were used as the groundwork for determining features of the new Indian middle class. This was done as a result of the commonalities in values and attitudes, which is derived from high-level education and exposure between the white collar professionals and educated young college students, even though they have different backgrounds of occupation, income, property and native origin. Based on this outcome from the fieldwork, this study attempts to reveal the social and cultural capital, including social networks, values and attitudes, as well as the historical backdrop of those who were born or grown up in the period of liberalizing economy. These individuals, known collectively as ‘liberalization’s children’, are a crucial attribute in defining characteristics of the new Indian middle class.

Lastly, this study will explore how these values have been transformed in social institutions such as marriage, gender, family, religion and caste from parents’ generations, as well as how contradictory emotions and conflicts are compatible between the transformed modernized/westernized mindset and indigenous values in these institutions. This psychological approach is valuable for exploring the identity of the new Indian middle class in contemporary urban India.

1.2 Aims and Objectives of the Study

The dissertation has three main objectives.

- a. This study attempts to understand the relation between spatial differences and differentiations in middle classes, or, in other words, differentiations within middle class and differences in spatial organization according to these differentiations. We examine this by comparing and contrasting the environments and cultures of two different middle class neighbourhoods in Delhi, which have different compositions of residents and histories of settlement. Through this exploration, it is possible to understand the spatial strategies of the new Indian middle class for maintaining an appropriate distance from the lower class.
- b. This study examines the characteristics of values in the new Indian middle class, which has emerged along with high-income professionals in the private sector and an increase in consumption practices and aspirations as a result of economic liberalization. By studying how customs and values of this class, which has experienced life differently from previous generations as a result of globalization and westernization due to economic liberalization, we can see that the factors that create differences in values between them are not only a result of economic capital, but also of social and cultural capital.
- c. This study seeks to understand heterogeneous values in the middle classes according to spatial and generational differences, especially in terms of values in marriage, the status of women, caste, religion, family and consumption practices. Through exploring this process, it is possible to understand which aspects of the new Indian middle class have distinct values from the old middle class and lower middle class, and, at the same time, to understand which aspects have still been reproduced from old middle class values.

1.3 Research Questions

- a. How do we define 'middle class' in contemporary urban India, and what is the newness of the so-called 'New Middle Class'? Should we define it in terms of economic criteria such as income, occupation, expenditure, property, etc. or should we include other [intangible] criteria such as customs, values, etiquette, etc.?
- b. In what way is the middle class distinct from upper and lower classes? What are the strategies employed by the middle class to differentiate itself from other classes and, at the same time, to claim its superiority vis-a-vis the lower class?
- c. Have there been any noticeable changes in customs and values of urban middle class since the economic liberalization in 1991 (generally considered a definite turning point in its lifestyle)? If so, what are their nature and extent?
- d. How are the changes in customs and values reflected in the lifestyle of the New Middle Class? Are there any noticeable generational differences between the old and the new middle classes in this respect and, and, if so, how are these differences and possible conflicts negotiated?

1.4 Methodology

This section explains the methodology used in order to investigate the research questions of this study. It informs the course of the fieldwork, which is based on urban ethnography, and includes both the process of choosing two sample neighbourhoods and the process of data collection and sampling.

Since the main purpose of this study is to analyse the differences and similarities in residential environments, resident composition and values in two middle class neighbourhoods, ethnographic work was used for this study.

Ethnography is the study of people and cultures by researchers participating and engaging in natural settings or fields in order to determine social meanings in ordinary lives and activities (Brewer, 2000: 10). The purpose of ethnographic field research is to vividly describe real-life situations. Therefore, ethnographic research generally

involves observing people where they live and participating in their day-to-day lives and activities (Ibid.:18). The methods which used in ethnography is usually unstructured, flexible and open-ended (Ibid.).

Robert Park, a key developer of the Chicago School of sociology, provides proper guidelines for ethnography. For urban ethnography, he emphasizes that the most important quality is for researchers to insert themselves in urban environments and to participate, observe and interact with people:

*Go and sit in the lounges of the luxury hotels and on the doorsteps of the flophouses; sit on the Gold Coast settees and on the slum shakedown; sit in the Orchestra Hall and in the Star and Garter Burlesque. In short, gentlemen, go gets the seats of your pants dirty in real research.*⁶

1.4.1 Deciding the field Area

Since the purpose of this paper is to compare and contrast two middle class neighbourhoods in North Delhi and South Delhi, the first problem was choosing the fieldwork sites. Even though typical characteristics exist among North Delhi and South Delhi, it was challenging to find neighbourhoods that match perfectly within the categories. First, I decided to do research in the neighbourhoods around my university. For the posh, affluent middle class neighbourhood typical of South Delhi, the areas of Vasant Kunj and Vasant Vihar, which were the closest to the university, were observed. Vasant Kunj was ultimately chosen over Vasant Vihar for further research because Vasant Vihar presented as more upper class than middle class, with a much more exclusive and independent atmosphere that would provide fewer chances to observe or make contact with residents.

It was not easy to pick a middle class neighbourhood in North Delhi to compare with Vasant Kunj, which is a new city model built by the DDA. The comparison

⁶ McKinney, 1966, 21; quoted in Ocejó, 2013:5

neighbourhood needed to be a post-colony neighbourhood as opposed to a recently constructed and planned residential community. It should also not have a majority population of white collar workers. Vijay Nagar, which started as a Pakistani refugee camp right next to Kamla Nagar, was ultimately selected.

1.4.2 Immersion in the Field

Immersion corresponds to Robert Park's suggestion to 'get the seat of our pants dirty', as well as to the suggestion that ethnographers 'get up close and personal' (Jones&watt, 2010: 109). In other words, immersion requires that researchers enter into a relationship with participants. Ethnographers strive to build trust and rapport with participants in this step.

Vasant Kunj was studied first. The first step in this site's fieldwork was to learn the geography of the location by visiting every day. Vasant Kunj is an extensive neighbourhood divided into four sectors (A, B, C, D) and with a population over 30,000, so it took considerable time to adjust to the location and become comfortable in the neighbourhood. All four sectors of Vasant Kunj are similar in environment and resident composition.

Next, understanding the colony environment (such as learning the geography and the number, locations, and types of parks, playgrounds, schools, pre-schools, hospitals, and vehicles) was necessary to begin building rapport with residents. While observing the environment of the colony made up of residents and labourers, I tried to start a conversation with the servants to understand their work environments. There were attempts to make conversation with the residents while observing the colony, but only older adults seemed to be available, and most people walking around seemed to be either too busy or uninterested in participating. I lost my way in the colony at one point, but a female resident kindly helped me, invited me to her home and introduced me to her daughter. She mentioned that it is very rare for someone to help others in Vasant Kunj.

Because random interviews with residents in the colony seemed unlikely, I tried to make contact with people who were exercising or resting at the parks in each sector. Interviews with residents from multiple age groups were conducted with an interview guide, consisting mainly of respondents telling stories about their middle class experiences. Each lasted from about 20 minutes to about an hour. The people with whom I developed the best rapport during these interviews were single and in their 20s, like myself.

More meetings with other interviewees created rapport, and the number of interviewees increased as a result of introductions from initial respondents. Thus these interviewees became key informants. In this way, the fieldwork in Vasant Kunj started from the interactions between the people whom I've met at the park, and gradually immersed in the site with investigating the neighbourhood and its surroundings.

Fieldwork in Vijay Nagar also began with an attempt to understand its geography. Vijay Nagar is divided into two areas, single story and double story, and these two areas had noticeably different living environments and residents. Immersion in field work was relatively easier in Vijay Nagar than in Vasant Kunj. The area of Vijay Nagar was much smaller in size, the local shops were mostly run by residents, and most of all, the residents of the neighbourhood were of more heterogeneous classes than Vasant Kunj, thus making it easier to interact with them.

Generally, ethnographic fieldwork is appropriate for the study of confined, small-scale societies or communities. Today, however, only a few studies in sociology or social anthropology are based on small communities and bounded areas, because every social unit is increasingly interconnected with other larger regions, and even across borders (Upadhyaya, 2008:65). In this sense, Vijay Nagar was more suited for a traditional ethnographic study than Vasant Kunj because of its smaller size and population comprising primarily people who were born and raised there.

As with most city ethnographies, it was not feasible to conduct continual interviews with the same interviewees. Most interviews were one-time queries with individual residents. Interactions with married people were almost exclusively one-time

interactions while interactions with unmarried people in their 20s were more likely to result in additional meetings and continual interviews. Interviews with unmarried people in their 20s and 30s and with adults over 60 years old were the easiest to obtain.

Benney et al. (1956) proved that these different experiences in building rapport with respondents occurred according to respondent ages during my fieldwork. The study found that maximal rapport occurred if the interviewer and interviewees were in the same age group.⁷

In addition, the sex of the interviewer can influence interviewee's reactions. According to Bailey (1978), women had more favorable attitudes when interviewed by other women, and exhibited less favorable responses when interviewed by men (Bailey, 1978:166). For example, during my fieldwork in Vijay Nagar, asking for an interview while accompanied by my male assistant often ended in rejection. A woman who described herself as lower middle class declined to be interviewed because it could be dangerous to talk with strangers and because other residents or her mother-in-law would disapprove if they saw her with a male stranger. While people often declined to be interviewed because they were busy or were not interested, I assumed that interviewees were relatively open to me since I am a foreigner and a woman. Wariness of approaching strangers in a metropolitan area could come from a heightened awareness of crime or the proliferation of on-the-street sales promotions, but beyond that, Indian women cannot afford to lower their guard against sexual assault. The fact that approaching people and interviewing them in Indian cities is becoming difficult demonstrates that mistrust towards strangers is increasing.

Furthermore, requests to conduct interviews with the aid of a recording device led to many refusals, as well as much consternation over interviews leaking to the press. Members of the younger generations gave their opinions very easily during recorded interviews, while elders were too aware of the recording device and gave stereotypical,

⁷ Benney et al. 1956: 184, quoted in Bailey. K.D. 1978.

bland or only politically correct responses.

1.4.3 Sampling of the Study

Positivist social research requires proper standards to guarantee ‘representativeness’ when the field and sample are determined and selected (Upadhyya, 2008: 66). However, qualitative research generally follows linkages and relationships that researchers have made in the field itself, rather than selecting exact representative samples (Ibid.). In this sense, researchers cannot assume how and in which way connections will proceed before they start fieldwork (Ibid.). Once researchers start fieldwork, they follow where it drives them (Ibid.). Therefore, the sample was not intentionally chosen as representative of the population during my fieldwork by the nature of ethnographic study.

In addition, my field research, especially in sample selection, could be bound to reflect the middle class urban context. Generally, field research in middle class/ urban areas is difficult and requires different research strategies than those used for small, face-to-face communities and with subaltern groups (Upadhyya, 2008: 66). For example, in Upadhyya’s study about information technology employees, research was usually conducted by appointment because it was performed within formal organizations as well as with educated urban groups. Upadhyya also expressed the challenge of developing sustained relationships with interviewees (Ibid.).

In my case, the sample selection methods for the two neighbourhoods were not identical as a result of the differences in the occupations, lifestyles, values and environments present in the two neighbourhoods. For Vasant Kunj, a mixed design of accidental sampling, convenience sampling and snowballing was used to select interviewees. Interviews were obtained via introductions to locals by acquaintances, after building rapport with residents who were present at the parks, and through introductions from the RWA office president via snowballing. In Vijay Nagar, convenience and accidental sampling were used, but snowballing was not, since most of the businesses in the neighbourhood were run by residents. This made it possible to

go to shops directly for interviews, or to try to interview people at the parks, outside their homes or on the streets.

Samples were more difficult to obtain in Vasant Kunj, and research would have been practically impossible without snowballing. By contrast, in Vijay Nagar, without using the snowball technique, there were many chances to do interviews outside, such as in parks and streets. There is a difference in sample size between the two neighbourhoods because there were more opportunities to go through with interviews in Vijay Nagar. Interviews were conducted across generations, ranging from teenagers to elders over sixty, and we tried to balance the male/female ratio as evenly as possible in order to investigate intergenerational differences in values.

Apart from the semi-structured interviews with residents in the two neighbourhoods, vendors, workers, servants, residents and students around the neighbourhoods with interview guides were held one-on-one or in groups. About 90 people were interviewed in sessions that lasted 20 minutes to an hour.

1.4.4 Data Collection

For data collection in urban ethnography, Robert Park and Burgess suggest multi-methods, which include not only interviews, but also up-close observation, personal documents, autobiographical life histories and maps (Ocejo, 2013: 6). Accordingly, data for this study was gathered through interviews, observations, documents and pictures.

1.4.4.1 Interviews

Before the semi-structured interviews, a pilot study was implemented at the parks in Vasant Kunj. This allowed for the supplementation or deletion of subjects in the interview schedule as needed by questioning themes related to the middle class such as self-identification of class, servant culture and consumption patterns. This made it possible to outline the Vasant Kunj middle class.

The structure of the interview schedule is as follows. The first section asks for background and identification data such as name, sex, religion, age, marital status, education level, occupation, family information, household, family income, consumption patterns, vehicle ownership and time lived in the neighbourhood. The main question is divided into three parts. The first part concerns self-identification of class, and comprises discussions of the following: self-identification of class status and the reasoning behind the identification, perceived characteristics of the contemporary Indian middle class, perceived differences between the older middle class and their generation of the middle class, perceptions of the middle class as compared to the upper class and the lower class and definition of the middle class value are included in the question. The first theme is differences between the generations of the middle class as well as self-awareness of the middle class values that differ from the present lower and upper classes. The second theme includes questions about how present middle class values are changing compared to old middle class values regarding social institutions (marriage, feminism, caste system, religion, relations with neighbours, family, consumption patterns). Finally, the third part explores opinions about the globalization and westernization of India, the concept of Indianness and the globalized parts of oneself and how respondents define the modernization and traditions of India.

With this interview schedule, interviews were conducted with 22 residents from Vasant Kunj and 37 residents from Vijay Nagar, as well as about 90 other people, including residents, college students and passers-by in the two neighbourhoods. Interviews were conducted about a variety of topics, such as local history, social progress, education and differences between private and government education systems. These interviews were held individually and in groups.

1.4.4.2. Observations

a. Residential Colony Environment

Observations were held at the same time during the interview. The observations were

essential to analyze the environmental and spatial differences between the two areas. Gates, streets, parks, playgrounds, residents, passers-by, servants, labourers, RWA offices and vehicles were observed within the colonies. Street view, the distances between the neighbourhoods and lower class or lower middle class neighbourhoods were observed outside the colony, as were the quantity and quality differences in infrastructure (e.g. schools, hospitals, restaurants, shops and shopping malls) within the colony. To compare differences over time, observations were conducted during both day and night and during both regular and festival times. I sometimes made observations during interviews as a participant observer and at the same time made observations of neighbourhood environments and residents as a complete observer. For example, while in parks, playgrounds, and bus stops, I made observations of landscape changes depending on time. I also observed the middle class lifestyle by going to businesses, such as restaurants and hair salons, in the neighbourhoods.

b. Middle Class Home

One suggested strategy for up-close observation in urban ethnographic research is living in the same neighbourhoods as participants (Ocejo, 2013: 9). Living among participants enables researchers to observe and experience daily life in the neighbourhood directly rather than just imagining or guessing (Ibid.).

To directly observe the middle class lifestyle at home, both within and outside the colony, I spent 2 months at a house in Vasant Kunj with a widow in her 60s. This is an effective and popular method of observation for collecting data in urban ethnography. Because most middle class families do not want to live with a stranger, I ended up living with a widow, but the experience was valuable and led to a comparison of the older middle class life of the widow with her daughter's life. A combination of interviews and hands-on observation of the lives of the aunt and her daughters were possible at the same time. Progress in values and lifestyle from past parent generations of women to young female middle class residents was obvious. This was also a good opportunity to observe the relationship between the aunt and her servant, something that cannot be obtained through interviews alone.

Life in Vasant Kunj was an indirect experience of the South Delhi upper middle class lifestyle, which cannot be fully understood by interviews alone. I observed upper middle class weddings in the colony and heard the worries of moms at the playgrounds about their children's education, increasing traffic around schools and other issues. In addition, interviews were often held at interviewees' homes, providing a good opportunity to compare housing interiors between Vasant Kunj and Vijay Nagar.

c. Documents and Pictures

During fieldwork in Vasant Kunj, documents such as neighbourhood maps and resident directories from RWAs could be used as references. However, in Vijay Nagar, there were no RWA offices, and therefore documents could not be procured. Therefore, in Vijay Nagar, direct observations and interviews with residents were used to obtain information without supplemental documents.

A field diary was kept for all observations and included thoughts on observations of all data during fieldwork. The cumulative field diary was a significant resource while preparing this thesis. The diary recorded not only observations of the scenery and verbal exchanges but also emotions and ideas that resulted from these observations.

1.4.5 Reflexivity of the Research

Ethnography is greatly reflective (Jones & Watt, 2010: 8-9). Ethnographers also should be sensitive to reflexivity (Ibid.). Reflexivity involves reflection by ethnographers on various issues such as gender, race, sexuality, class, ethics, topic, locations, power relation in the field and so on, which ultimately affects interpretation of data and the result of writing (Brewer, 2000:127; Jones & Watt, 2010). That is, in ethnography, "the positioning of the ethnographer within the field is a central dimension of method itself, for he/she is interacting with others whose 'discourses

overlap with his or her own'.⁸

Because I was a foreigner, I could only do fieldwork and interpret the data as an outsider. It was inevitable that I would compare Korea and India because Korea has a much more homogenous identity structure in populations.

In Korea, caste hierarchy does not exist, and the social, economic and cultural gap between regions is less severe compared to India. Major religions are Protestantism, Buddhism and Catholicism, and the proportion for each does not differ considerably. However, while there is no visible social discrimination against minority religions, social perceptions show distorted views about them. Perceptions about equality between males and females have been increasing in the domestic unit and in society among both young men and women, but a wage gap in favour of men still persists.

Therefore, the standard of defining class depends mostly on economic conditions or income structure. At first it was hard to accept the fact that to define and understand the Indian middle class one must consider various social arrangements like gender, religion, caste and language apart from economic conditions. This was one phenomenon I encountered personally while going through my fieldwork. In the process of interviews and observations during fieldwork, many portions were compared and interpreted with their Korean counterparts, thus it tends to reflect during the fieldwork itself.

1.5 Chapter Outline

The dissertation is organized into a total of six chapters.

Chapter two introduces the theoretical framework to be used in the study. It maps out the various approaches to defining class and the middle class, from the classical forms

⁸ Marcus, George E. 1995. 'Ethnography in/of the World System: The Emergence of Multi-sited Ethnography', *Annual Review of Anthropology*, Vol 24, pp 95-117, quoted in Upadhyaya, 2008: 68.

of Marx and Weber to Bourdieu who led a new way of analysing class with the introduction of the concept of cultural capital in class distinction. The chapter also looks at the size and history of the Indian middle class, and the characteristics and diverse meanings given in the existing literature to the word 'new' in the phrase 'new Indian middle class', as well as covering some discussions associated with the new Indian middle class such as on issues of caste, religion and their urban strategies. In addition, spatial segregation and the middle class are explored in the context of Delhi – the fieldwork area for this study.

The following three main chapters explore the results of the fieldwork, which focused on comparing and contrasting two neighbourhoods of Delhi – Vasant Kunj and Vijay Nagar – in terms of the residents, their perceptions, and the physical space. This analysis is facilitated by dissimilarities between the two areas, although both are middle class neighbourhoods of the same city.

Chapter three describes the differences/shared features of the two middle class neighbourhoods, focusing on their residents, the histories of the area and the residential environment including gated community, street scenes, parks, schools, and cars, servant culture, relationship with neighbours, and pattern of celebrating Hindu festivals based on ethnographic work.

Chapter four examines the common/different trends in the perceptions of the interviewees based on a combination of the ten case studies of chapter VI with statements of other residents of the two neighbourhoods regarding marriage, the status of women, caste, family, religion and consumption practices. The detailed topics discussed in this chapter are the age of marriage, women's dress and time restriction, the practice of women going out to work, whether untouchability and caste practices persist, parents' interference in their children's career and marriage, the increase in nuclear families, changes in religious practices, frequency of visiting malls and preference for brands.

Chapter five clarifies intergenerational changes in customs and values, varied values in different segments of the middle class, and the characteristics of the new Indian

middle class that distinguish it from the old middle class and present lower class by presenting ten case studies of subjects in the age cohort of twenties to forties. The common themes of the case studies include self-perception of class status, stereotypes of upper class and lower class, and generation gap between their parents' generation and theirs in values relating to marriage, the status of women, caste, family, religion and consumption practices. These case studies suggest how the values of the urban middle class are differently constructed according to income, occupation, education, gender, age, family background and residence. In addition, it attempts to determine the characteristics of the new Indian middle class in terms of values, attitudes and customs. Therefore, this chapter intends to examine the variance in the values of residents in the two areas, as well as to suggest another direction in defining the 'new Indian middle class'.

Chapter six briefly presents the answers to the research questions with reference to the findings we have discussed in each chapter, and points out the strengths and weaknesses of this study. It concludes with a discussion of the emergent characteristics of the new Indian middle class that we want to suggest through this study.

Chapter Two

Theoretical Framework

2.1 Class

Marx, who developed the classical form of class, defined class as being determined based on factors such as ownership of the means of production, control over the products of labor, engagement in productive or unproductive work and status of employment (Friedman, 1974: 333). In his conception, class and ‘class struggle’ are inseparable. Classes can only be defined in terms of their relations with other classes (Wright, 1985: 34). One class has an antagonistic feeling towards another class, and a struggle between them begins, and this antagonism between classes arises because their interests are incompatible (Ibid.: 36). For Marx, class was polarizing, and the “two great hostile camps” were the bourgeois class and the working class (Urry, 1973: 176).

Max Weber's definition of class was much broader than that of Marx. Weber believed that a person's class position is determined by their skills and education rather than by the means of production. He differentiated between class status and “social status”, although these concepts are interrelated because social status is based on class status and also affects class status (Chirbbar, 1968: 10). Weber suggested three elements in the determination of class – wealth, status and power – indicating that political, cultural and psychological factors such as education, authority, status and attitudes may also need to be considered (Pandey, 2009: 2).

These traditional class theories of Marx and Weber have been reinterpreted and revised by their various followers into the late twentieth century. Crompton's (1998) study examines changes in the concept of class in contemporary modern industrial

societies, departing from the work of Marx and Weber. Crompton suggests that the term ‘class’ has diverse meanings based on its characteristics of modern stratification systems (Crompton, 1998: 4-5). Its meaning in the academic sphere is not the same as its everyday usage – class is generally understood as a notion of social distinction or prestige (Ibid: 10). Crompton identifies three different meanings. First, the notion of class includes structures of material inequality that determine ability to access economic and power resources – for example, ownership of capital or productive resources, skills and qualifications, networks of contacts, etc. (Ibid: 11). The second conception of class is related to prestige, status, culture and lifestyles. Many sociologists have pointed out the correlation between class, occupation and lifestyle (or patterns of consumption). They claim that ‘taste maps’ have been accorded with ‘occupational maps’ (Bourdieu, 1984). Also, when occupations are ranked by social prestige or social standing, they tend to be recognized as status (Crompton, 1998: 14). Lastly, the term class has also been defined by revolutionary or conservative social powers or social actors to change society (Crompton, 1998: 11-12).

It is in particular Bourdieu’s notion of social class that has brought a new dimension to class theory, moving beyond the approaches of Marx and Weber (Crompton, 1998: 148). His emphasis on ‘cultural capital’ both as a component of the division of classes and explaining the relationship between classes and lifestyles or cultural tastes deserves further attention⁹.

2.2 Middle Class

The definition of the term ‘middle class’ has provoked considerable controversy and has been continuously changing for more than two hundred years. Many scholars have put a lot of effort into theorizing on the subject, but their explanations of the characteristics of the middle class and its class position in relation to other classes differ. The implications and dimensions of the term are therefore still difficult to grasp.

⁹ Bourdieu (1986) proposes four different ‘forms of capital’ – economic, cultural, social and symbolic – as the determinants of class position.

Indeed, it has been said that with the emergence of advanced capitalist societies the biggest problem for the class structure was the ‘embarrassment of the middle classes’ (Wright, 1985: 13).

Marx did not clearly theorize the characteristics of the middle class. His prediction that the importance of the *petit bourgeoisie* would decline proved to be true, but he was criticized for his failure to forecast the rise of the group of salaried or new middle class such as clerks, technicians, managers and professional workers (accountants, lawyers, teachers, technicians, etc.), although he did mention it in his later writings (Urry, 1973: 176; Burris, 1986: 320).

In the Marxist tradition, the middle class lies between the exploiting capitalist and the exploited working classes in an economic sense. Developing Marx’s class theory, C. Wright Mills (1972)¹⁰ suggests three occupational sub-categories of the middle class: (i) owners of small businesses; (ii) most professional men; and (iii) various levels of salaried employees.

Several scholars including Wright Mills have tried to theorize on the class position of the new middle class. Urry’s (1973) study sums up four different possibilities. The first situates the new middle class as an extension of the existing capitalist ruling class since most of the middle class has been structurally differentiated from previous occupations of the ruling class, and they are structurally reliant on the authority of the ruling class. The second position is that the new middle class is much closer to the working class because neither possesses the means of production, plus the class interests of the new middle class are in accordance with those of the working class. The third position is that there is no such new middle class, but rather two different groups with opposing class interests – bureaucrats with the authority of the ruling class, and white-collar workers who are part of the proletariat. Finally, the new middle class is in a structurally ambivalent situation, with for example blackcoated worker¹¹

¹⁰ Wright Mills, C. 1972, quoted in Pandey, 2009.

¹¹ The term ‘blackcoated workers’ were first employed sociologically by Lockwood (1958). In his study, the term ‘blackcoated worker’ was used interchangeably with clerical worker. In more

being in a proletarian market situation but a bourgeoisie work situation .

According to Beteille (2013, 88), the new middle class was created as a result of the emergence of a new occupational system. Since the period between the beginning of the 20th century and the end of World War II, the number of salaried middle class has been increasing in the developed industrial countries of the West. With deindustrialization, technological change and the growth of the service economy, existing occupational segments – administrative, professional and managerial – have grown and new occupations such as IT experts, call-centre workers and psychotherapists have emerged (Crompton, 2008:103). In this way, there is much fragmentation between the different groups that constitute the ‘middle classes’. (Crompton, 1998:104).

Generally, the old middle class and the new middle class are referred to respectively as the ‘petty bourgeoisie’ – which typically includes small independent business owners – and salaried ‘white-collar’ employees (Beteille, 2007b: 289).

However, according to Lewis and Maude ¹², the typical image of the middle class of white-collar salaried men with a high level of education living in a good neighbourhood and house has disappeared because new occupational clusters have continuously been emerging from the existing group of white-collar employees – clerical, technical, administrative and professional. All of these occupations are variously differentiated and intricately ranked, but according to Erikson and Goldthorpe¹³, these differentiations and rankings are incessantly changing and highly fluid.

For this reason, Beteille (2013: 92) emphasizes that middle class should be defined in

common usage, this category of workers refers to ‘white-collar’ worker (Lockwood, 1958: 13).

¹² Lewis&Maude. 1949. *The English Middle Classes*, Phoenix House London, quoted in Singh, 1985:1.

¹³ Erikson& Goldthorpe. 1992. *The Constant Flux*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, quoted in Beteille, 2007a: 949.

terms of occupation, income, education and employment status all together rather than just one of these criteria.

Meanwhile, Deshpande (2003:132) warns that we always have to be conscious about a gap between theory and the real world because what we analyze cannot include every empirical situation.

The placement of the middle class has generally been determined by employment, production and/or market relationships in both Marxist and Weberian approaches (Crompton, 1998:151). However, in the present era, ‘postmodern’ theorists have insisted that cultural rather than economic factors are gradually affecting societal structuring. As a result, we need to pay attention to the arguments made by Waters (1996)¹⁴: there has been a “general liberation of stratification from social-structural milieu so that it becomes precisely cultural rather than social, focusing on life style rather than life chances, on consumption rather than production, and on values rather than interests. The emerging pattern of stratification will be fluid and shifting as commitments, tastes, and fashion change”.

2.3 History of the Indian Middle Class

To understand the historical roots of the new Indian middle class, we need to examine its growth in broadly three periods – under British rule, in the post-Independence years and since economic liberalization in the 1990s (Fernandes, 2006: 2).

The emergence of the Indian middle class was closely related to the development of British colonial educational policy and English education. For example, in Bombay, the increase in educational institutions produced a sizeable intelligentsia who were employed in professional occupations such as law and government service. These English educated elites, who came to be the ruling group in the Presidency towns of

14 Waters, M. 1996: Succession in the stratification system. In Lee and Turner, quoted in Crompton, 1998: 80.

Calcutta, Bombay and Madras, had become distinguished from the traditional elites and vernacular, lower middle classes (Fernandes, 2006: 5). English education was not only the way to enhance their cultural status but also a means of integrating the socioeconomic position of the upper caste middle class within the political economy of colonial rule (Ibid: 7).

Apart from English education, caste and religious identity were also characteristics of colonial middle class identity (Ibid: 9). The upper segment of this class generally excluded Muslims and was formed of upper caste Hindus because only a small number of Muslims were educated in English and employed in the Indian Civil Service (ICS) (Ibid: 9).

Fernandes (2006) sums up three characteristics of the rise of the middle class in the British colonial period. First, this social group was dominant in access to English education and employed in modern forms of professional occupations. Secondly, the middle class became public representatives in the political realm. Lastly, the demand for representation became a politics of distinction both from the colonial state and from lower strata social groups. Internal differentiation among the middle class made a sense of uncertainty and contradiction within the group more noticeable.

2.4 Indian Middle Class

Although scholars have put forward a range of different opinions, no one can precisely articulate who the Indian middle class is with specific criteria. Moreover, the problem of the identity of the middle class in India is somewhat different from in countries like the US or Britain, not only because of the difference in the occupational structure but also due to the presence of other variables like caste, region, language and religion that should be considered in addition (Beteille, 2013: 82).

Many scholars recommend considering 'the middle class' as a combination of various layers or groups rather than as a single entity (Deshpande, 2003:135; Fernandes, 2006,

Beteille, 2013)¹⁵. For example, Deshpande (2003:135) suggests that it is more appropriate to subdivide the middle class into the upper, middle and lower middle class.

Deshpande (2003:143) emphasizes that the main function of the middle class is building hegemony, and he explains that the mechanism that operates to do this produces disparities within the middle class. In his analysis, the middle class has three characteristics: 1) it is the class that has and maintains the hegemony of the ruling bloc; 2) it is the class that holds ownership of and has the power to control cultural capital and reproduces this capital within the class; and 3) it works on the production and dissemination of ideologies (Deshpande, 2003: 139-142). He says that we need to distinguish between the elite and mass fractions of the class – the intelligentsia versus lower and middle middle class segments (Rudra, 1989) – because the former usually creates and transmits ideologies, while the latter generally consume them (Deshpande, 2003: 147). The extent to which each section owns cultural capital is important because this can result in unequal distribution, such as the occupational distribution between technical-professional groups, generalist administrators, the so-called ‘liberal professions’, and various categories of white-collar workers (Deshpande, 2003: 148). Language – the extent of proficiency in English and Indian languages – is also a crucial means of differentiation within the middle class (Ibid.).

Baviskar&Ray’s (eds.) (2011) *Elite and Everyman* also shows how middle class hegemony is produced and reproduces inequality within the group. Inequality on the basis of caste dominance is reproduced in key areas such as the economy, occupational distribution, educational institutions and the home, an example being the opposition of urban elites to political mobilization for reservation by the OBC, with these urban elites disguising their upper caste dominant position as ‘merit’ (Baviskar&Ray, 2011: 14). Caste-based inequality can also be seen to reproduce itself in domestic spaces in the relationship between a middle class master and lower class-caste servants (Qayum&Ray, 2011: 247-8).

15 Although the term ‘middle classes’ in the plural is sometimes used, I use the singular ‘middle class’ because it is already premised on its internal differentiation, not to deny its diversity.

The book emphasizes that it is not only material resources, economic status, occupation, education and social networks that could be the means of entering the middle class – psychological attitudes of desire and self-discipline are also required to belong to the middle class in India. In the study by Jeffery et al, it is argued that for rural Jats being middle class is closely related to the idea of being modern and urban (Baviskar & Ray, 2011: 13).

Fernandes (2006) takes a similar stand to Baviskar&Ray (eds.) (2011) and Deshpande (2003). She states that the important thing in discussions about the middle class is to understand the various internal differentiations shaped by caste, religion, region and language, as well as reproducing inequality within this class. Also, the middle class who emerged with economic liberalization should be distinguished from a generalized sociological description of the middle class, because those who have received tangible benefits since the 1990s are actually the ‘new rich’ (Fernandes, 2006: xviii). In other words, there is a large gap between the urban elite middle class and the middle class in general – a broader group including the rural middle class and the urban middle class in small towns (Fernandes, 2006: xvii).

In this way, even if the term ‘middle class’ is used by many scholars, the content of the study would be totally different depending on which section of the middle class group is focused on. For example, Fernandes (2006), Upadhya (2008), Fuller& Narasimhan (2007) and Brosius (2010) focus on the upper segment of the middle class who are proponents of economic liberalization, often called the ‘new middle class’. In the case of Saavala (2010), Wessel (2001) and Derne (2008), their ethnography and interviews deal with the middle class who are neither extremely poor nor elites, whose social position is characterized by in-between-ness (Saavala, 2010: 11). However, this ‘in-between’ middle class – the so-called middle mass – is also fragmented by caste, religion, region, gender and language, so innumerable internal cleavages exist in this class as well. In fact, all classes in India are shaped by the reproduction of inequalities of caste, language, religion and gender (Fernandes, 2006).

That being said, according to Saavala (2010: 12), the lower sections of the middle

class and the upper middle class have something in common in valuing education and the English language.

2.5 Size and Criteria for Defining the Indian Middle Class

The middle class is still developing in size and form in India (Beteille, 2013: 88). Its boundaries with other classes have become more ambiguous and changeable since Independence. Therefore, how we define the Indian middle class will always be debatable because estimates will differ according to the criteria chosen.

The most common way to characterize the middle class is based on income and consumption expenditure. However, if we define the middle class income-wise, its size would be very different according to the lower threshold chosen, meaning that there is no fixed definition of middle class status in terms of income – the middle class is very large if the threshold is set very low, and much smaller if it is increased (R.U.P.E., 2014). For example, if we choose the World Bank international poverty line – \$2 per capita per day (PPP) – as the lower threshold, 25% of India’s population belongs to the middle class, whereas if like Meyer&Birdsall (2012), Ernst&Young (Undated), and Kharas (2010) we use \$10 – even though this is still quite low by international standards – India’s middle class would be less than the top 10% of the population or about 70 million people in 2009-10 (Meyer&Birdsall, 2012). In this way, Gupta’s argument that “the term ‘middle class’ does not sit well in our country; it barely has any standing space” sounds quite logical (Gupta, 2008).

If we use consumption expenditure to define the middle class, we have to consider possible errors since this data tends to underestimate the income of the rich and exaggerate that of the poor – the rich accumulate wealth faster than they spend, but the opposite is the case for the poor (Satish, 2003: 132).

We therefore need to consider another way of defining middle class apart from criteria like consumer expenditure and income.

The first important element is attitudinal change towards life and consumption. Chakrabvati (1995) states that rising aspirations for material possession have spread through a cross-section of the different income population. The image of the middle class in India has now changed into “an idealized national standard of living that other social groups can aspire to and potentially achieve through practices of consumption” (Fernandes, 2006: 32). To explain this, an Australian government report based on a mix of income, lifestyle and occupation is worthy of note, suggesting that the Indian middle class is the group with “disposable income to rent or own their residence, hold bank or credit card accounts, engage in holiday travel, own their own means of transportation, afford restaurant meals, and work in white-collar, increasingly service-oriented jobs” (Lakha, 1999: 265). Similarly, Mackinsey Global Institute (2007) divides the middle class in India into seekers and strivers based on occupation, use of consumer goods, consumption patterns and lifestyle. According to them, “seekers range from young college graduates to mid-level government officials, traders and business people. They enjoy a lifestyle that most of the world would recognize as middle class and typically own a television, a refrigerator, a mobile phone and a scooter and car. They save for their children’s education and their own retirement. Strivers, the upper end of the middle class, tend to be senior government officials, managers of large businesses, professionals and rich farmers. Successful and upwardly mobile, they are highly brand-conscious, buying the latest foreign-made cars and electronic gadgets. They have air conditioning, and can indulge in an annual vacation, usually somewhere in India” (Farrell&Beinhocker, 2007)¹⁶.

16 Mackinsey Global Institute (2007) divides groups in India into five based on earnings per year and analyzes the characteristics of each of the groups. The deprived earn less than 90,000 rupees per year (about a dollar per person per day), and include subsistence farmers and unskilled laborers who often struggle to find work. They can be found across India, from its isolated villages to its sprawling urban slums. Many depend on government-subsidized food to get enough calories each day. The next group is called aspirers, who are households earning between 90,000 and 200,000 rupees (\$1,969-\$4,376) per year. Aspirers are typically small shopkeepers, farmers with their own modest landholdings or semi-skilled industrial and service workers. Their lives are not easy, but aspirers generally have enough food and might own items such as a small television, a propane stove and an electric rod for heating water. They spend about half of their income on basic necessities, and many of their other purchases are bought secondhand. The next two groups are included in the middle class – seekers, earning between 200,000 and 500,000 rupees (\$4,376-\$10,941), and strivers, with incomes of between 500,000 and 1 million rupees (\$10,941-\$21,882). Lastly there are global Indians, who earn more than 1 million rupees (\$21,882). These are senior corporate executives, large business owners, high-end professionals, politicians and big

In other words, contemporary Indian middle class image and identity is characterized not only by having money, but also by the consumption of global brands and by being equipped with cultural sophistication and tastes based on modernized lifestyle practices and English education (Lakha, 1999: 265).

In this sense, if we define middle class in an extremely broad way, it makes up about 25-30% of the total population, while the so-called 'new middle class' is equivalent to just 5% (Jeong, 2014: 82).

2.6 New Indian Middle Class

It is difficult to clearly distinguish who belongs to the old middle class and who to the new middle class. When we refer to the 'new Indian middle class', several different opinions exist about the meaning of the word "new". Fernandes (2006) claims "new" to be changed political and social identity as a producer and disseminator of ideology, while in Saavala's (2010) work "new" means people from lower caste backgrounds who are now joining the middle class. However, for most scholars, the "new middle class" is an urban, white-collar, educated, young, high income group who are inclined towards consumerism and materialism, who benefited from the effects of economic liberalization in the 1990s (Fernandes, 2006; Baviskar&Ray, 2011). According to Beteille (2007 b, 2013), this new middle class tends to give more significance to occupation, education, and salaried income than to property ownership.

Since the liberalization of the economy, interest in the middle class has spread beyond the academic field to the media due to its increasing size and spectrum, and drastically increasing incomes (especially in white-collar positions), so that the growth of this group is now treated as being the same as national development.

agricultural-land owners. But a new breed of ferociously upwardly mobile Indians is emerging – young graduates of India's top colleges who can command large salaries from Indian and foreign multinationals. Their tastes are indistinguishable from those of prosperous young Westerners – many own high-end luxury cars and wear designer clothes, employ maids and full-time cooks, and regularly vacation abroad (Farrell&Beinhocker, 2007).

Objectives of recent studies of the new middle class include the following: 1) to focus on the new consumer culture of the new middle class that has emerged with globalization and westernization since the 1990s (Brosius, 2010; Mathur, 2014: 2) to grasp particular characteristics of the emerging new rich and elite class (Fuller& Narasimhan, 2007; Upadhya, 2008:3) to study the new middle class mixed global and local identity (Fernandes, 2000; Wessel, 2001:4) to review criticism of the new middle class (Varma, 1998; Gupta, 2000: 5) to analyse the new culture and changes in values among the young middle class (Favero, 2005; Platz, 2014; Wessel, 2001: 6) to study the new middle class as producers of ideology and hegemonic position (Fernandes, 2006).

Based on recent studies of the middle class, Jeong (2014) summarizes the different layers that have emerged within the middle class due to economic structural changes since the 1990s. First, opportunities for the elite middle class have expanded considerably since they are engaged in new white-collar professional jobs such as IT professionals. Secondly, those not belonging to this elite have been marginalized because jobs and government subsidies have reduced due to the restructuring of the financial and public sectors. Finally, this so called middle mass is in the position of trying to maintain middle class status by obtaining new technologies and skills to be qualified in the neo-liberal market.

The New Industrial Policy initiated by the Indian National Congress (INC) in 1991 has brought about remarkable changes in middle class consumption patterns in the process of the globalization and privatization of the Indian economy. The new economic environment has created many new occupations with the opening of the Indian economy to different global companies and a reduction in state regulation of the economy. In particular, the boom in the IT industry and outsourcing and other investment by foreign companies has played an important role in increasing and extending urban white-collar professional jobs. This has supported increased growth of the national economy as well as of the new middle class. In other words, the new middle class is considered to be newly emerging urban white-collar employees with high incomes who speak English – a group that can be clearly distinguished from the

old middle class in terms of socioeconomic characteristics.

In general, changes in consumption practices and lifestyles distinguish the new middle class from the old middle class that was characterized by moderation supported by Nehruvian state socialism and Gandhian ideals of austerity (Fernandes, 2006; Mathur, 2010). In other words, consumerism is a crucial marker of new Indian middle class identity. Many scholars insist that these changed middle class consumption practices are one of the factors that distinguish the new middle class from the traditional old middle class and the contemporary lower class as well as being a means of equalizing with the upper class (Baviskar&Ray, 2011a; Donner, 2008; Fernandes, 2006; Nisbett, 2009; Platz, 2014: 39).

While necessities-based, simple and moderate consumption by state regulation was respected as a positive virtue before economic liberalization in 1991, with increasing wealth and individualism middle class aspirations are now conspicuous consumption and high standards of living (Mathur, 2010: 217). The new middle class has become habituated to visiting shopping malls, buying global brands of consumer goods, dining out in fancy restaurants, travelling abroad, possessing the latest fashion items, mobile phones and cars, whereas these things were rare for the older generation middle class.

As a result of its consumerism due to increased disposable income, the new middle class is regarded as money-conscious, materialistic and individualistic, and as losing Mahatma Gandhi's ideals of self-sacrifice, service and austerity (Lakha, 1999: 260). In other words, a substantial increase in conspicuous consumer culture and aspirations for urban lifestyles have created a new middle class social and class identity that was unseen before.¹⁷

Another distinction we can make is that the old bourgeoisie was more inclined to value the icons of Indian culture, a sense of nationalism and vernacular language,

17 Conroy. 1998. Discount Dreams: Factory Outlets, Malls, Consumption, and the Performance of Middle Class Identity', *Social Text*, 54(1): 63–83, quoted in Mathur, 2010: 212.

while the new middle class is less interested in learning traditional cultures including literature and local languages (Lakha, 1999: 2). As regards the linguistic dimension, English fluency in particular is a significant symbol of new middle class identity as it is differentiated from the vernacular elites and the lower section of social groups. This means that entering middle class society requires not only economic status but also linguistic skills, particular aesthetic tastes and so on (Fernandes, 2006: 34).

Inequalities of caste and religion also shape the current new middle class identity. According to Sridharan (2011: 53), fifty percent of the middle class belong to the upper castes, even though these only make up a quarter of the population. In 1990, an upper caste students' agitation against the enactment of the recommendations of the Mandal Commission proved middle class desire to maintain their upper caste privileges.¹⁸ In addition, the middle class now tries not to be deprived of their dominant position in employment in multinational companies, especially IT companies (Upadhyaya, 2011) and education institutions. In protesting the reservation policy for OBC, the urban elite class disguises their privilege of upper caste status as 'merit'. These examples all indicate how caste operates in the promotion of inequalities in the new middle class identity.

The rise of Hindu nationalism during the 1980s and 1990s with the support of the BJP is also intricately linked to the current identity formation of the new middle class in terms of sharpening the intersection of class and religion (Fernandes, 2006: 43). Beginning with the demolition of the mosque in Ayodhya in December 1992, the rise of the BJP during the 1980s and 1990s was largely supported by upper caste, middle class Hindus in north India. One of their reasons for supporting the BJP is linked to the party's criticism of westernization through globalization and their emphasis on their slogans 'Shining India' and 'unite the Hindus'. Their fear of an invasion by the 'other' – globalization – strengthens religious nationalism and cultural chauvinism among the upper caste, middle class (Ibid.).

18 Mankekar.1999. *Screening Culture, Viewing Politics: an Ethnography of Television, Womanhood, and Nation in Postcolonial India*. Durham, N.C.Duke University Press, quoted in Platz, 2014. 16-7.

The importance of the new middle class is therefore as the potential Hindu elite group which produces and disseminates ideology such as ‘unity of Hindus’ and ‘meritocracy’ against the ideology of ‘social justice’ of the lower castes (Jeong, 2014: 94). In this sense, the new middle class plays a key role at the intersection of caste and class, which becomes their new identity in contemporary India (Ibid.: 97).

Issues:

2.6.1 Caste and the Middle Class

Many scholars argue that caste has significantly lost its privileges in terms of a system of hierarchy due to processes of urbanization, modernization and democratization in contemporary India. Since the enactment of the constitution, caste has not been able to act as the age-old institution of social stratification (Beteille, 1991: 21). The appearance of a new educational and occupational system has freed people from caste (Beteille, 1991: 23). Sheth (1999) asserts that the phenomenon of ‘de-ritualisation of caste’ occurred after Independence, meaning caste is no longer linked to various forms of rituality associated with immovable status, particular occupations and particular rules of commensality and endogamy. Beteille (1991: 25) also claims that caste is no longer an institution for the reproduction of inequality, at least among the urban intelligentsia. Those who agree with the opinion that caste does not play an effective role as a system of hierarchy insist that caste matters strongly only in the domain of politics in the form of votes and quotas (e.g. Sheth, 1999; Beteille, 1991: 25).

However, other scholars believe that caste still has leverage. For them, the caste system continues to reproduce inequality in the social and economic sphere, and eventually creates a difference in status, job opportunities, and social and cultural values (Jodhka, 2016: 229).

Recent statistical data showing the caste composition of promising careers and members of corporate boards proves that caste inequality continues to be reproduced in Indian society to date. The tendency is for the upper caste to dominate and lower

castes such as the Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) account for only a small proportion of professionals in engineering, medicine, banking, academia and the upper segment of corporations (Deshpande, 2003: 120; Jodhka, 2016; Srinivas, 2016).

Although it is recognized that the ratio of upper castes in the middle class has reduced from earlier times (Sridharan, 2011: 53), this group still occupies a large share of white-collar employment while lower castes and Muslims are rare in this section of the workforce (Fernandes, 2011: 72). This situation can be the result of the social phenomenon of Indian employers highly valuing family background as well as individual merit in assessing their potential employees – merit is lopsided by caste and region and knowing a person's family background is another way of understanding caste (Jodhka&Newman,2007:4132). Given that regular salary workers belong to the middle class category, there is therefore unavoidable discrimination by caste and region when private corporations hire employees. Accordingly, SC and ST and those from rural areas have relatively little chance of being employed in private corporations. Realistically, higher education and merit are benefits concentrated in the upper castes, although employers claim that caste is no longer a significant criterion in assessing employees under the premise of meritocracy. Therefore, in the recruitment stage of a private company, the vicious cycle in which only those from middle class family backgrounds are hired has not yet been broken (Jodhka&Newman, 2007: 4127-8).

Moreover, prejudice and stereotypes derived from differences have strengthened as social interaction becomes more frequent as a result of the increasing participation of Dalit and OBC communities in the social, economic and political sphere¹⁹ (Jodhka, 2016: 238-40). Social prejudice that lower castes are inferior is attributed not only to economic but also to social and cultural capital associated with caste-based

¹⁹ According to an article in *The Hindu* written by Sirkar and Reed (2015), a survey of social bias through questioning of which groups they reluctant as thy neighbours, the results showed upper caste Hindu did not want to live near OBCs than SC or ST groups. Through this survey, it is surmised that social bias of upper caste Hindu middle class against OBCs has resulted from threats to power and increasing social economic competition (Sirkar & Reed, 2015).

inequalities in the past. Monopolies of economic, social and cultural capital by means of unequal distribution of resources reproduce caste inequalities, hence creates prejudice and discrimination (Ibid: 235).

In this way, caste and class seem to be correlated in diverse ways in everyday urban interactions (Deshpande, 2003; Dickey, 2012).

2.6.2 Religion and the Middle Class

Since India is a highly religious country, it is imperative to examine how the perception and practice of religion has been changing. However, answering the question of whether the importance of religion for middle class people has been growing or waning is problematic.

According to Sheth (1999: 2504), changes in caste since Independence have eventually resulted in the de-ritualisation of caste, meaning the gradual removal of rituality or the 'rootedness of caste behaviour and organization in the religious ideology and practices', including bonded status, occupations following caste hierarchies and the idea of pollution. He insists that the new middle class is constituted according to elements such as new consumption practices, material assets and the self-perception of belonging to the middle class, but not in relation to rituality (Ibid.:2509). For him, rituality has become delinked from this class since decolonisation (Ibid.).

On the contrary, Saavala (2001: 301) emphasizes the increasing importance of religion and rituality for the middle class. She contradicts Sheth's claim, suggesting that he connects religion and caste too tightly (Ibid.). In her opinion, the important thing that Sheth overlooks is that the meaning of religion and rituality is not fixed (Ibid.).

Varma (1998: 145) also finds that religious identity has intensified, even though religious ritual has lessened due to economic development and social mobility, and

the breakdown of the extended family. Owing to the unpredictability resulting from the rapid transformation of society, people yearn for a sense of belonging to some transcendental existence (Ibid.).

On the other hand, some scholars take the position that religiosity among the middle class has been presented in a new way as a consequence of urbanization and modernization. Srinivas' study (2002) demonstrates that religious spaces such as puja rooms have become smaller as the residence form has been transformed, with an increasing number of apartment buildings which are desirable for middle class families as secular homes. However, at the same time, the external expression of religion in temples and public spaces of worship as well as the god-men and gurus culture have been booming. According to Srinivas (2012: 382), the practice of Hinduism has become more privatized, but simultaneously more public. Religion is waning in the domestic religious space, while it appears to be increasing in public spaces such as temples, sacred shrines and even cars.

Srinivas (1992 [1966])²⁰ noted that Hinduism was becoming more involved in the state, political parties and religious institutions such as monasteries, temples, saints, and pilgrimages, whereas it is slowly delinking from its traditional social structure of caste, kinship and village community.

As dimensions of the Hindu religion are becoming a thriving business, it is significant to pay attention to the relationship between religious practice in the new middle class and their consumption tendencies. New middle class consumption for ritual practices such as the invention of new rituals, the gentrification of gods and the growing guru culture (Nanda, 2009) is often associated with the enhancement of respectability, economic condition, success in education, jobs, and checking inauspiciousness (Saavala, 2001: 303). Besides, the new consumer culture related to religious sects in urban areas has created 'new middle classness' in the name of 'moral consumption' (Srivastava, 2009).

20 Srinivas, M.N. 1992 [1966]. *Social change in modern India*. Hyderabad: Orient Longman, quoted in Saavala, 2001: 301.

However, ritualistic Hindu practice does not necessarily correspond either to the political extremism of Hindu nationalism or to a casteist interpretation of Hinduism (Saavala, 2001: 294).

2.6.3 Spatial Strategies of the Urban Middle Class

One of the distinguishing characteristics of the urban elite middle class is their assertion of their middle class identity through ‘spatial strategies’. These ‘spatial strategies’ are articulated both in the public sphere as well as in the cultural and social realms to lay claim to the urban aesthetic and clean public space based on ‘citizenship’ and the ‘public interest’ (Baviskar, 2011: 392) with the advent of new civil and community organisations (Fernandes, 2004: 2416). Furthermore, the rapid diffusion of the leisure and entertainment industries among the new middle class has also contributed to the restructuring of the urban public space.

‘Spatial strategies’ are above all prominently featured in middle class desire and concern for ‘spatial purification’²¹, which relates to middle class demands for public spatial order and cleanliness and a movement to eject the poor and working class such as squatters and street vendors.

The study by Baviskar (2011) also revolves around the discourse on middle class claims for ‘cleaning up’ streets through instances of three mobile elements on Delhi’s streets – cows, cycle-rickshaws and cars. The author explains that marginal and poor sections are excluded by the middle class requirements of order, hygiene, safety and ecological preservation in public spaces (Baviskar, 2011:392). The working class and the poor have been deprived of their jobs and homes by processes of social and spatial restructuring in Delhi since economic liberalization (Ibid.). According to one source, 53 different jhuggi-jhopri (JJ) (slum) colonies were destroyed in Delhi between 2000 and 2006, so about 79,000 families (between 400,000 and 500,000 people) were

21 Sibley. 1995. *Geographies of Exclusion: Society and Difference in the West*. New York: Routledge., quoted in Fernandes, 2004: 2416.

forced to move to the outskirts of Delhi ²². Evicting JJ colonies for the establishment of the Akshardham temple in Delhi is also an instance of creating a clean and aesthetic space through the demolition of unclean spaces (Srivastava, 2009: 341). This exclusion of the poor was an outcome of the closure of manufacturing firms and orders for the dismantlement of squatter settlements, and state policy driven by middle class claims of ‘public interest’ to purify the city’s atmosphere (Baviskar, 2011: 392).

However, according to Fernandes (2004), this socio-spatial segregation based on class has not appeared suddenly since economic liberalization in the 1990s. For example, the forced eviction of squatter settlements led by Sanjay Gandhi in the Emergency period in the mid 1970s, the deportation of immigrants from Bangladesh to “clean” the Indian nation, and West Bengal’s Left Front government’s forced removal of hawkers’ stalls in Kolkata have all been associated with strategies of spatial purification (Fernandes, 2004: 2420).

Unlike in developed countries, major urban cities in India historically did not show any strict segregation of space based on class (Fernandes, 2004: 2420). Squatters, pavement-dwellers, street entrepreneurs such as tailors, shoe repairmen and hawkers have made it difficult to distinguish clearly between upper, middle and lower class neighbourhoods (Ibid.). Moreover, working class people often go in and out of middle class neighbourhoods since middle class families depend on their labour, so a thorough class-based separation of urban space has not been possible (Fernandes, 2004: 2420).

Spatial segregation associated with issues of the beautification of a neighbourhood and the removal of hawkers and illegal settlements have been ignited by urban neighbourhood association activism in cooperation with the state and local administrations. Along with the administration, municipality and NGOs, urban neighbourhood associations have generated collective action of the middle class

22 Hazards Centre.2006. “List of Forced Evictions” Delhi: Hazards Centre, quoted in Srivastava, 2009: 341.

(Kamath&Vijayabaskar, 2009; Zerah, 2007). Resident Welfare Associations (RWAs), an example of these neighbourhood associations, have played the role of representing the expression of citizens and claims over 'public service' as 'civil society' organisations (Kamath & Vijayabaskar, 2009:368). For example, its main function is handling common issues such as security (through private guard at gates), maintenance of local infrastructure (e.g. parks and gardens), settlement of local disputes, and organization of social and cultural event for their residents (Srivastava, 2015: 89).

Zerah's study (2007) briefly explains how neighbourhood associations have acted to guarantee the quality of middle class life with local management units through research of Advanced Locality Managements (ALM) in Mumbai. ALMs are intended to enhance urban services by acting as the voice of the residents, such as engaging in garbage collection and the beautification of their neighbourhood, central to urban governance and local democracy. According to this study, members of neighbourhood associations have asserted their rights as taxpayers and law-abiding citizens with privileged access to the administration and bureaucracy. Some of those interviewed said that removing squatters is a lawful and justifiable act in protecting their own rights (Zerah, 2007: 63).

Therefore, "ostensibly based on the notion of collective action, RWAs, in effect, became the key vehicle for articulating an exclusionary urban politics of space" (Srivastava, 2015: 114).

'Spatial strategies' consist of one of the most crucial ways in which social processes are revealed and experienced.

2. 7 Spatial segregation in Delhi

"As considerable scholarship for both Western and non-Western contexts demonstrates, 'spatial strategies' constitutes one of the most significant ways in

which social processes are both expressed and experienced; modern Delhi is a good example of this” (Srivastava, 2015: xxi).

The spatial organization of Delhi appears to be strikingly different in different sectors. This construction pattern has been created by various factors including not only geography, physical barriers and post-Independence urban planning initiatives but also history – from the period of Mughal rule, British rule, Partition and Independence (Dupont,2004:158). All of these elements have shaped the present spatial arrangement of Delhi, as well as impacting spatial distribution and settlement types by socioeconomic composition of resident in various localities of the city (Ibid.).

The most noticeable feature of the spatial organization of Delhi is the evident contrast between North/Old and South/New Delhi. This North/South contrast includes separation by class “with the most prestigious lots south of the great monumental axis and the low- and middle-income groups mostly housed on the north, or wrong side of Rajpath... After Independence, the south continued as a magnet for middle- and upper-class residence, as well as providing sites for prestigious governmental and educational institutions. District commercial centres containing offices, shops, theatres, and luxury hotels also came to characterize the southern edge of the city”.²³

The contrast between the two areas in terms of landscape and socio-spatial construction persists since British planners designed New Delhi during the colonial period. First, in 1991, population density was much higher in Old Delhi than in New Delhi (Dupont, 2004: 160). Secondly, the distribution of residents by occupation also appears to be unequal in the North and South parts of the city. Social and personal service workers tend to reside in New Delhi and the Southern area of the city, while many traders and businessmen are concentrated in the Northern part. One thing to note is that on many occasions, those who are engaged in commerce in North Delhi tend to inhabit the localities of rehabilitation camps for migrants from Pakistan (Dupont, 2004: 163).

23 Evenson, N. 1989. *The Indian Metropolis, A View Toward the West.* Yale University Press, New Haven and London., quoted in Dupont, 2004: 189.

According to 1991 census data and Dupont and Mitra (1995)²⁴, the urban elite still prefer New Delhi and the Southern part of the city as their residential area. Higher literacy rates in this sector prove this continuous preference pattern. Moreover, social segregation inside neighbourhoods by caste and religion has also shaped residential clustering and segregation in Delhi, as well as occupational type and level of income (Dupont, 2004).

24 Dupont, V.& Mitra,A. 1995. Population distribution, growth and socio-economic spatial patterns in Delhi. Findings from the 1991 census data. Demography India, quoted in Dupont, 2004: 162.

Chapter Three

Comparison and Contrast between the Two Neighbourhoods

1: Space and Middle Class Differentiation

One of the main objectives of my thesis is to compare and contrast two middle class neighborhoods in Delhi. I have chosen Vijay Nagar and Vasant Kunj for my fieldwork. The former, which is located in North Delhi close to Delhi University, was established post-Independence. The latter, located in the more affluent area of South Delhi near Jawaharlal Nehru University, could be considered “post-industry”.

There are several important reasons to study the neighborhood. First, neighborhoods are of great importance to their residents (Donner&De Neve, 2007: 10). Second, it is the place where knowledge and experience of the world is expressed, and thus it is a major place for the study of culture (Ibid.: 11). Third, the neighbourhood provides background for the magnification of social and cultural capital, acting within the development of social identities²⁵.

As we have already mentioned, the middle class is highly internally differentiated, and I found a variety of both differences and similarities between the two middle class settlements during my fieldwork. They vary considerably in terms of population composition, history of settlement, environment, house interiors, profession of their residents, and their individual and family values, as well as in several other respects.

This chapter will attempt to look into these differences and similarities in order to compare and contrast these two middle class neighborhoods, Vasant Kunj and Vijay

²⁵ Forrest and Kearns, 2001, quoted in Benson, 2014: 3099.

Nagar. First, I will present an overview and describe the peculiarities of the two localities including their size, history and facilities. How the areas were selected, certain fieldwork experiences, and the different ways in which I selected samples in each neighborhood will also be dealt with in the same section. The next section will discuss the composition of residents in the two localities, focusing on their occupation, community and family background. I will also identify and analyze the characteristics of my interviewees in the two neighborhoods. Then I will examine how issues such as environment, gated community, servant culture, relationship with neighbors and pattern of celebrating Hindu festivals appear different or similar in the two neighborhoods, referring to ethnographic work including observation and interviews with residents and passers-by in those areas.

3.1 Site I: Vasant Kunj

Vasant Kunj is a large residential area with more than 30,000 residents over 18 years of age²⁶ located in South Delhi. It is divided into five major sectors – A, B, C, D and E – and each of these is divided into pockets – 1, 2, 3, 4...10. When the locality was established, the Delhi Development Authority (DDA) acquired land from Jats in Masoodpur urban village to build houses for middle class people of Delhi, but today Vasant Kunj has expanded beyond Masoodpur village to include the nearby Kishangarh village as well. It appears a posh and affluent colony, including one of the biggest mall complexes in Delhi – Ambience mall, DLF Promenade and DLF Emporio, which is the most expensive mall in India.

Vasant Kunj is also well known for the high quality of its education and health facilities. Several popular private educational institutions like Delhi Public School (DPS), Vasant Valley, Ryan International, G.D. Goenka, The Heritage, Bloom Public School and Bhatnagar International School, as well as the Fortis Hospital, which is famous for its top quality treatment technologies, are situated in Vasant Kunj. There

26 Since there are no sources that give population statistics for Delhi neighborhoods, the number of residents quoted here is based on the those registered on the Delhi Electoral Roll, 2015 standard. This means that the actual number of residents must be far more than 30,000.

are also various other schools, kindergartens and private hospitals in each sector.

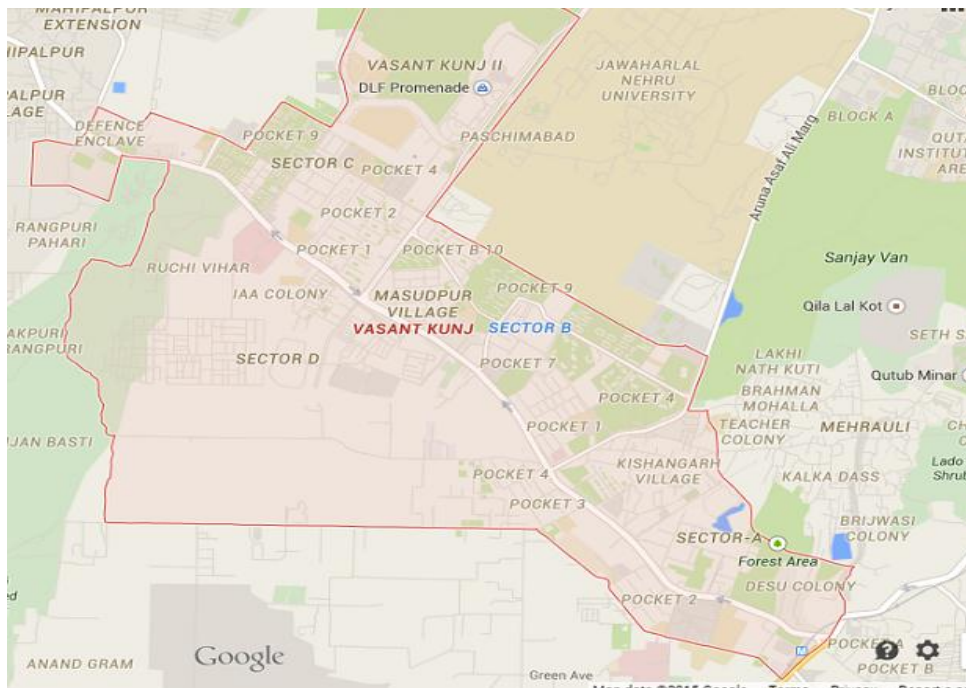


Figure 3.1.1 Map of Vasant Kunj

Source: Google

The residents of Vasant Kunj largely fall into two groups. One is old residents who came to Vasant Kunj and bought flats in the 1980s and 1990s when it was first established, and the other is newcomers who have started to live there recently and rent their flats. Since the locality was initially planned by the DDA for all middle class people living in Delhi, the residents differ in terms of their birthplace, caste and community background – unlike in Vijay Nagar.

When I first started to enter Vasant Kunj for my fieldwork, it was not easy. All the residents looked as though they were very busy, walking with the expression “Don’t bother me” on their faces. It was mostly only elderly people who were resting in the parks and playgrounds during the day, and it looked like they would be the only people who would accept my request for an interview. The opportunity to meet more residents occurred around 5 to 6pm. The scene was usually as follows: elderly women gather and talk in the park or sitting on benches around the colony, housewives play with their children in the playground, and some young people, housewives, and

elderly people exercise and jog in the big park. Except at this time and in this space – in the park or playground – it seemed as though they would not give me time or space for an interview. It was actually more difficult and more of a mental strain for me to talk to people compared to my experience in Vijay Nagar. For this reason, the method of selecting samples was a little different in Vasant Kunj.

Before starting the interviews, I observed the inside of the colony and pre-interviewed for a short time with around 20 people who were exercising and resting in the parks. Pre-interview questions included self-identification of class, consumption patterns and the presence or absence of a servant in their household, with the objective of forming a general impression of affluent middle class life in Vasant Kunj. In this process of pre-interviewing, all the interviewees said that they belong to the middle class and their biggest struggle is with money. Through this pre-interview process, some people developed a rapport with me.

Interacting with more than 40 interviewees (20 pre-interviewees and 22 interviewees with semi-structured interview) highlighted the considerable differentiation among the middle class families of the locality, even though it is clearly a posh and affluent neighborhood. The following quote is from a housewife who was born in Delhi and has lived in Vasant Kunj for 18 years:

There is no defining category for middle class. We are just maintaining our standard of living because we need to meet every demand – kids demand all gadgets like iphone, playstation, cars, everything. They [Vasant Kunj residents] just manage to live... They just want to appear upper middle class even though they don't have enough money. These flats [Vasant Kunj] – the middle income group would have been able to afford them earlier. They cost around 5 lakh rupees 30 years ago. But these flats are more than 2 crore now. How do you expect the middle class group who earn 50,000 to 1 lakh rupees per month to buy a flat for 2 crore rupees? It is not possible to buy these flats unless you have old property nowadays.

(F, 42 years old, housewife, Vasant Kunj)

According to this interviewee, contrary to what others may think, many residents of

Vasant Kunj are struggling to maintain their upper middle class lifestyles since they are living in South Delhi where rents and the overall cost of living are relatively high. However, the eyes of outsiders present a different view. When I explained to three women who work in Vasant Kunj that I had chosen Vasant Kunj for my study since it is a middle class locality, they responded all together, “Vasant Kunj is not a middle class area. If you want to meet middle class people, you should go to Masoodpur or Kishangarh.”

Even when I was doing fieldwork in Vijay Nagar, residents who were born in Vijay Nagar expressed the same point about Vasant Kunj:

Vasant Kunj is a hi-fi area. You cannot compare it to Vijay Nagar, because it's like the difference between sky and land. This small size room, we can get here for 2 lakh rupees, but in Vasant Kunj it will cost around 20 lakh rupees. Vasant Kunj has a good name in Delhi. That area is a super high class area.

(M, 42 years old, iron worker, Vijay Nagar)

In other words, outsiders regard Vasant Kunj as a higher than middle class locality, and these outsiders think they rather than Vasant Kunj residents are the Indian middle class. Let's continue with his comments:

They [Vasant Kunj residents] are upper class people. They don't give you time. They don't entertain you. Even if the person has free time, he will not give you time. It's money that matters. They will think talking with you is useless. This kind of talking and interaction [with me] is not possible with upper class people.

He also expressed his prejudice about upper class people that they would not spend time with me for an interview. Would it be like that? The responses of one of my interviewees in Vasant Kunj seemed to agree with these outsiders. Rashmi, who has lived in Vasant Kunj for 15 years, explained that her neighbors are very individualistic:

People are very individualistic in Vasant Kunj. Nobody bothers anybody... Individualism is very high because education has brought individualism. It's a bad side of education. Here, it's more of a show-off life... And people don't interrupt each other

much. They are not actually very busy, but they show that they are very busy. They are sitting at home, but they want to show that they are busy.

(F, 42 years old, doctor, Vasant Kunj)

As has been mentioned above, initiating conversation with residents in Vasant Kunj and finding interviewees was far more difficult than in Vijay Nagar. One reason could be related to these comments. As a result, one of the sampling methods that I employed in Vasant Kunj was random sampling and the snowball technique. I have established a rapport with some people who I pre-interviewed in parks in sectors A, B, C and D and followed up with in-depth interviews with them, and I have also been introduced to acquaintances through them. In addition, I relied on the RWA. Each pocket has an RWA, so I went to the RWA office and met the RWA president and asked them to introduce me to residents. I also approached residents via introductions from my friends.

In order to observe Vasant Kunj middle class life, I decided to rent a room in Vasant Kunj for two months in a house owned by a 65 year old woman, which was helpful. During that period, I discovered a considerable generation gap between aunt and her children, and also better understood the relationship between aunt and her servant. The experience of staying in aunt's house gave me the opportunity to witness through my own eyes rather than simply listening to what interviewees said.

Aunt is a widow with four daughters. She is from Punjab and came to Delhi when she was 18 years old for an arranged marriage with her husband who was a businessman. When she first migrated to Delhi, she and her husband stayed in Karol Bagh, but after giving birth to her four daughters, she moved to Vasant Kunj in the 1990s. She bought this flat for around 2 to 3 lakh rupees and has stayed in it for more than 20 years, so she can be called an old resident of Vasant Kunj.

Her first daughter works in an insurance company and had an arranged marriage with an army officer. The second daughter lives in the UK. The third is a white-collar worker and lives in Gurgaon. The last is a banker and stays in another sector of Vasant Kunj after a love marriage to another banker. All of her daughters are highly educated

with at least undergraduate degrees and they have all worked in white-collar jobs. Unlike her daughters, aunt passed only her 10th standard exams, but this was an average level of education for women of her generation. This can therefore be a good example of how middle class parents put so much effort into their children's education because the level of education has improved tremendously in the next generation, especially for women. Aunt also confessed that she devoted herself to educating her daughters. One of her daily tasks when she was young was to take her daughters to and from school, check their homework and wait and watch her daughters until they had finished their study.

I found certain differences between aunt and her daughters, who meet the standards of the new middle class in terms of consumerism, religious practice and above all life as a woman. When I asked aunt what makes you feel happy, she responded, "I was living for my husband and children my whole life and their happiness is my happiness." Since she got married at just 18 years of age and even today, her life has been filled only with taking care of her husband and daughters. As regards religion, aunt reads Sikh scriptures every morning and goes to the *gurdwara* every weekend, whereas her daughters and grandchildren do not follow such practices. Aunt does not force them to be religious like her because she understands that they are busy with their work, so they lack time for such things.

There are also differences in consumption patterns. Aunt is in the habit of saving water and electricity at home. When her grandson forgot to switch off the light after coming out of a room, she shouted at him. Checking water leaks and unnecessary power usage at home is ordinary everyday work for her. She is very sensitive about money matters and never spends excessively on herself. Buying cheap *kurta* or jewelry in Karol Bagh or contributing to a kitty party are her only consumption activities. By contrast, for her daughters and grandson, buying the latest gadgets like a Samsung smartphone or playstation are not at all excessive spending. Sometimes her grandson boasts about his 8,000 rupees Puma and Adidas bag and sneakers. Spending more than 5,000 rupees at a time to buy branded goods seems to be common for them. Living with aunt for two months was also a good experience for me to see how the new young generation middle class has been changed and improved from their

parents' generation of the middle class.

As we have already mentioned, one sampling method was to go to the RWA and ask the RWA president to introduce me to residents. However, sometimes the RWA president refused on the grounds that residents don't have time or their privacy might be infringed upon. Each pocket of Vasant Kunj has at least one RWA office, and more than one man sits in and manages the office from 9am to 6pm. The RWA's main purpose is to solve the residents' problems, gather their suggestions to develop the complex, decide the agenda to be discussed by the RWA president and selected members, and inform residents of the results of these discussions.

Almost every RWA in Vasant Kunj produces a directory of the residents' addresses, contact numbers and occupations and distributes this to residents. In this way, I can assume the distribution of occupations by looking at the directories of three pockets in Vasant Kunj. The service sector accounted for the largest share (around 30% or more), followed by business (10-20%), and finally the retired, while housewives accounted for some portion and professionals including doctors, professors and lawyers accounted for less than 5%²⁷. Table 3.1.1-3.1.4 explains the background information of twenty two interviewees from Vasant Kunj including their age, gender, occupation, household income and level of education.

27 This distribution of occupations has been compiled from the residents' directories of three colonies – Vasant Kunj Sector B1 (2010), B10 (2014) and C9 (2012) – by categorizing occupations to take account of the irregular style in which entries have been made. Thus I assume that this figure is approximate. For example, a corporate office worker has written 'Service', while a person working in a bank has written 'Banker'. In this regard, the service sector here refers to an extended meaning of white-collar jobs in both private companies like banks, airlines etc. as well as government service.

Table 3.1.1-3.1.4 Background Information of Interviewees in Vasant Kunj

Table 3.1.1 Total Number of Interviewees according to Gender and Age

| Age | Gender | | Total Number of Interviewees |
|-------|--------|--------|------------------------------|
| | Male | Female | |
| 20-29 | 2 | 3 | 5 |
| 30-39 | 3 | 7 | 10 |
| 40-49 | 3 | 2 | 5 |
| 50-59 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 60-69 | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Total | 9 | 13 | 22 |

Table 3.1.2 Occupational Distribution of Interviewees

| Occupation | Percentage (Number of Interviewees) |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| White Collar or Professional | 71.43% (15) |
| Self-Employed | 14.29% (3) |
| Retired | 4.76% (1) |
| Housewife | 4.76% (1) |
| Student | 4.76% (1) |
| Total | 100 % (21) |

Table 3.1.3 Monthly Household Income Distribution of Interviewees

| Monthly Household Income | Percentage (Number of Interviewees) |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Rs.20,000- 50,000 | 5.3% (1) |
| Rs.50,001- 75,000 | 5.3% (1) |
| Rs.75,001- 1 lak | 26.3% (5) |
| Above Rs. 1 lak- 2 lak | 15.8% (3) |
| Above Rs. 2 lak – 3lak | 15.8% (3) |
| Above Rs. 3lak | 31.6% (6) |
| Total | 100% (19) |

Table 3.1.4 Educational Level Distribution of Interviewees

| Educational Level | Percentage (Number of Interviewees) |
|-------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Primary | 0% (0) |
| Secondary | 4.8% (1) |
| Graduate | 28.6% (6) |
| Post Graduate | 66.7% (14) |
| Total | 100% (21) |

Source: Prepared by the author

The Vasant Kunj interviewees were mostly highly educated and had white-collar jobs, while their parents were also educated and had typical old middle class occupations, so they can properly be labeled as ‘new middle class’. Since they were all highly educated, there was no problem in interviewing them because they all spoke fluent English. However, old generation women often do not speak English because the education of women was not emphasized at that time.

3.2 Site II: Vijay Nagar

Vijay Nagar is situated in North Delhi and is a much smaller area than Vasant Kunj with only approximately 7,500 inhabitants over 18 years of age²⁸. The locality has been divided into a single storey area and a double storey area since it was established in 1949. The single storey area has eight blocks and one market. The market area including shops, restaurants, banks etc. is at the front, with the residential area behind. Of the eight blocks, B is the biggest with 65 houses and H the smallest with only 18 houses. The double storey area is smaller than the single storey area, and it is also divided into few blocks. The market area and the residential area are not clearly separated, with a variety of small shops like a wood mill, street food stalls and clothes dyeing shops being situated among the houses. Vijay Nagar is near the Kingsway Camp and GTB Nagar, while the single storey area adjoins Hudson Lane and the double storey area adjoins the Old and New Gupta Colonies. The double storey area is also attached to the lower class locality of Rajpura.

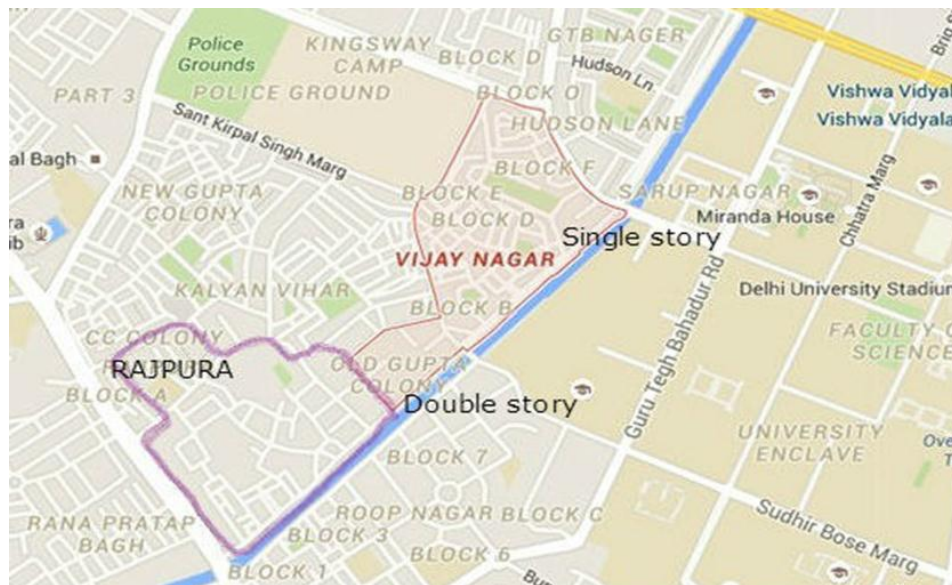


Figure 3.2.1 Map of Vijay Nagar (Source: Google)

²⁸ The number of residents in Vijay Nagar has been measured in the same way as in Vasant Kunj – based on the Delhi Electoral Roll, 2015 standard. The actual population of the neighborhood would be far more than 7,500.

Vijay Nagar is a popular paying guest (PG) area owing to its proximity to Delhi University, and Delhi University students can be found more easily than original residents.

Vijay Nagar has a unique history. It was developed as a refugee camp after Independence in 1947 – as a result of Partition, about 47.5 lakh (4.75 million) Punjabi refugees flooded to Delhi and these refugees accounted for 28.4 percent of the total population of Delhi in 1951 (Datta, 1986: 442-43).

Due to this sudden inflow of refugees, on 6 September 1947 the Government of India established the Ministry of Rehabilitation, which set up three refugee camps. These were the Kingsway Camp (the largest, with 30,000 inhabitants), the Tibia College area in Karol Bagh, and Shadhra (Datta, 1986: 444-45). Punjabi refugees have had a considerable impact on the development and transformation of Delhi since 1947 (ibid: 442).

The Vijay Nagar area belonged to the Kingsway Camp²⁹ at that time. The Ministry of Rehabilitation built colonies and houses in this area to rehabilitate people who had migrated from Pakistan. During the British Raj, this place had been called the Band Stand Area (BSA) because when in December 1911 there was big procession for King George V when he decided to shift the capital from Calcutta to Delhi, it was when he passed through this area that many bands began to play. In 1949, the BSA was renamed Vijay Nagar to honor Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit – a sister of Jawaharlal Nehru – on her appointment as the Indian representative to the UN Human Rights Commission.

29 Kingsway Camp, officially known as Guru Teg Bahadur Nagar (GTB Nagar) since 1970, is a historic area located in North Delhi. It is most known for Coronation Park, where the foundation of the new capital of British India, New Delhi, north of Old Delhi, was laid in December 1911 by King George V. Originally named after Kingsway, an avenue which was built as a precursor to the construction of residence of the Viceroy of India after the Delhi Durbar of 1911, though its location was finally shifted to its present location of Raisina Hill, as was the road called Kingsway, which is now known as Rajpath. The area stretched over twenty-five square miles from banks of the Yamuna River in the east to Shalimar Bagh in the west. After Independence in 1947, it became the venue of the largest refugee camp in Delhi, housing 300,000 refugees. Today, it is a posh residential locality, with a large number of students residing in the area owing to its proximity to Delhi University

For this historical reason, refugees who migrated from Pakistan still constitute the majority of the residents of Vijay Nagar, and they call themselves the Punjabi Hindu community. In addition to this group, students and other migrants who have arrived in Delhi from various regions of India in recent decades have made the Vijay Nagar area more diverse than ever before.

When houses were built in Vijay Nagar, the area was divided into a single storey and a double storey area. Houses in the single storey area had only one or two rooms and a bathroom, while those in the double storey area could accommodate more people in same number of square yards. The allotment of the refugees between the two areas depended on three criteria. The first was the number of family members – if the family consisted of four persons, they got 100 yards, and if there were more than four members in the family, they got 200 yards. The second criterion was a lottery system. Finally, allotment depended on the financial capacity of the family – those who could afford to pay more got houses in the single storey area, while others got the double storey area since their houses were shared by more families.

With the growing population and growing prosperity since the 1980s as a result of economic liberalization, both the single and the double storey areas have become multiple storey, and those refugees who have become prosperous have moved away from Vijay Nagar and are now renting their houses to newcomers. The single and double storey areas look the same today, but in other ways they are further apart than ever. According to residents, the single storey area is now an upper middle and upper class residential area, while the double storey area is for middle class people.

The majority of refugees from Pakistan had an urban background, so they decided to settle in Delhi where they expected to find good business opportunities (Datta, 1986: 444). However, when they migrated, many of them had to abandon their properties and some people brought things worth no more than 100 rupees, so to survive many worked as hawkers, shop assistants or small shopkeepers, vegetable vendors, porters at railway stations or skilled labourers. Some educated refugees entered government service and the professions as well (Ibid.: 451-53).

Interviewees made the following remarks:

We migrated from Pakistan. My parents, after Partition, they were allotted land over here, and my father ran a hotel in Chandni Chowk. Whoever migrated from Pakistan, they just came with their own body and one pair of clothes, nothing else. It is not only the case of my father, it was the case of everyone. They could be called the lowest of the lower class. After migrating from Pakistan, initially, my father used to sell cups of tea in the railway station.

(M, 44 years old, iron work business, Vijay Nagar single storey)

My parents used to have a business in Pakistan and business was quite good. They were upper class over there. Then we had to leave all the properties, business activities. Whatever we had, we had to leave there and come. After my parents migrated here, they fell into the lower class. Then in my time, we have become middle class. They ran a business like a general store like here in India. The same type of business like me.

(M, 47years old, shopkeeper, Vijay Nagar double storey)

Since they had left all their assets behind in their hometowns, most interviewees in Vijay Nagar were lower class in their parents' generation and became middle class in their generation – unlike interviewees in Vasant Kunj. Below is the identification of the interviewees from Vijay Nagar including their age, gender, occupation, household income and level of education.

Table 3.2.1-3.2.4 Background Information of Interviewees in Vijay Nagar

Table 3.2.1 Total Number of Interviewees according to Gender and Age

| Age | Gender | | Total Number of Interviewees |
|-------|--------|--------|------------------------------|
| | Male | Female | |
| 10-19 | 2 | 4 | 6 |
| 20-29 | 10 | 4 | 14 |
| 30-39 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 40-49 | 4 | 3 | 7 |
| 50-59 | 1 | 3 | 4 |
| 60-69 | 3 | 0 | 3 |
| Total | 21 | 16 | 37 |

Table 3.2.2 Occupational Distribution of Interviewees

| Occupation | Percentage (Number of Interviewees) |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| White Collar or Professional | 17.1 % (6) |
| Self-employed | 37.1% (13) |
| Retired | 2.9% (1) |
| Housewife | 5.7% (2) |
| Student | 34.3% (12) |
| Etc. (Assistant in Parlor) | 2.9% (1) |
| Total | 100% (35) |

Table 3.2.3 Monthly Household Income Distribution of Interviewees

| Monthly Household Income (Rs.) | Percentage (Number of Interviewees) |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Rs.20,000- 50,000 | 33.3% (9) |
| Rs.50,001- 75,000 | 18.5% (5) |
| Rs.75,001- 1 lak | 18.5% (5) |
| Above Rs. 1 lak- 2 lak | 14.8% (4) |
| Above Rs. 2 lak – 3lak | 11.1% (3) |
| Above Rs. 3lak | 3.7% (1) |
| Total | 100% (27) |

Table 3.2.4 Educational Level Distribution of Interviewees

| Educational Level | Percentage (Number of Interviewees) |
|-------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Primary | 3.7% (1) |
| Secondary | 14.8% (4) |
| Graduate | 66.7% (18) |
| Post Graduate | 14.8% (4) |
| Total | 100% (27) |

Source: Prepared by the author

The method of selecting interviewees in Vijay Nagar was different to the one used in Vasant Kunj. In Vijay Nagar, interviewing in English was usually difficult with interviewees in their thirties and sometimes even with those in their twenties. Many small shops in Vijay Nagar are run by the residents, so I could find interviewees by visiting shops in the colony. Also, I asked for interviews when residents were in the

park or outside their houses, or just walking on the street.

When I was in the first stage of the fieldwork immersing myself in Vijay Nagar, I had planned to go to the RWA office to be introduced to residents as I had done in Vasant Kunj, but RWA offices don't exist in this neighborhood, so I visited the president of the RWA in his house and checked the residents' directory to figure out the occupation distribution, but it had not been included. This is why it is difficult to know the exact composition of residents' occupations, but we can assume it roughly from what the residents said. According to the interviewees, most residents are involved in small business activities or have government jobs, and the young generation especially women mostly work in the service sector in multinational companies, call centers and so on. For this reason, the snowball technique was not needed, and accidental and convenient random sampling techniques were used in Vijay Nagar. Finding interviewees in Vijay Nagar was less of a challenge than in Vasant Kunj. Naturally, residents sometimes refused interview requests, but there were fewer barriers to meeting and talking to residents and getting samples than in Vasant Kunj. When I asked an interviewee in Vijay Nagar whether they thought other residents of the area would speak to me, their response was as follows:

Yes. These middle class people will talk. They will interact with you. You can go behind this next colony – if you try out of 10 people, a minimum of 8 people will interact with you. I am interacting with you because of my mentality and thinking. We have very different kind of religious ideas. Every month I visit the Golden Temple. Temples give me a different kind of spiritual pleasure. It renews my mindset, religiosity and helping others.

(M, 44 years old, iron work, Vijay Nagar single storey)

Vijay Nagar residents also think the neighborhood is middle class and they think of themselves as belonging to the middle class – as in Vasant Kunj. However, outsiders' views are different. Three women who work in Vijay Nagar responded that it is an upper or upper middle class area, whereas the neighborhoods they live in are middle class. The reason they gave for saying that Vijay Nagar is a higher class locality than theirs was that residents wear whatever they like, usually more westernized clothing.

They also see differences in mindset. For them, appearance and mindset can be decisive factors in differentiating between the middle and upper middle class.

The area where we live is a middle class area. This is an upper middle class area. This area is more like the city area because men, women, young generation over here are completely comfortable to wear any kind of clothes they like – they wear jeans, tshirts – but in the area where we live, women mostly wear Indian traditional dress – suits, sari – and cover with a dupatta. By looking at appearance, we can identify that this area looks like high society. Our locality looks a little bit lower... Within the area where we live, there is also internal differentiation – some have higher living standards, some lower. Even the higher class over there and the higher class here in terms of material conditions might be similar – money and wealth they have – but thinking patterns might be somewhat different.

(Three working women in their twenties, Vijay Nagar)

In this section, we have examined the overall background of the two neighborhoods, Vasant Kunj and Vijay Nagar, in terms of the history of their establishment, the composition of residents, the different viewpoints of residents and non-residents regarding the neighborhoods, and the identity information of interviewees. The differences in backgrounds resulted in the use of different sampling methods and fieldwork experiences in the two neighborhoods. Based on this general outline of the two neighborhoods, the next section will look into similarities and differences in the residential environment through observation of gated communities, street scenes, parks, night time scenes etc.

3.3 Residential Environment

Vasant Kunj is a large residential area divided into sectors A, B, C, D and E, with a large number of households. Vijay Nagar is a much smaller locality divided into a single storey area and a double storey area, with relatively few residents compared to Vasant Kunj. Vasant Kunj doesn't vary much from sector to sector, whereas the single and double storey areas in Vijay Nagar differ a lot in terms of the lifestyle of the residents and the environment of the locality. We will now look at how the residential

environments appear different in these three distinct areas – Vasant Kunj and the Vijay Nagar single and double story areas – comparing and contrasting them in terms of street appearance, night time activity, parks, schools and cars.

Streets

First, the streets inside the colonies look different in each area. Since Vasant Kunj is a planned residential area started by the DDA in the 1980s, it is more spacious and clean than Vijay Nagar. The Vijay Nagar single storey area is also kept clean inside and a distinction between inside and outside is visible, but it is a relatively small colony so the inside is much closer to outside the colony gates than in Vasant Kunj. This means that the Vijay Nagar single storey area is much closer to the outside environment, which is crowded and noisy, filled with cycle rickshaws, vegetable vendors, students, cows, dogs etc., whereas the congested outside world is relatively far away from the colony gate in Vasant Kunj. Even though the outside streets of the colony in Vasant Kunj experience some noise from cars, a few fruit vendors and small chai shops, it is a much more spacious and peaceful atmosphere compared to the outside streets of Vijay Nagar. In the case of the Vijay Nagar double storey area, several waiting cycle rickshaws, rickshaws and street vendors in the unorganized narrow streets, plus many small shops of different varieties, make the scenery look more congested, confusing, dirty and hectic. Since there is no particular colony gate in the double storey area, what is inside and outside the residential area is not clearly distinguished, so residents and lower class labourers can often be seen mingling together.



Figure 3.3.1 Street on Vasant Kunj Enclave

Source: Author



Figure 3.3.2 Street on Double Storey of Vijay Nagar

Source: Author

Lower class labourers are often seen inside the colony in Vasant Kunj as well. However, the Vijay Nagar double storey area adjoins the lower class locality called Rajpura, whereas the residential colonies of Vasant Kunj are relatively isolated from lower class localities, even though some slums also exist in Vasant Kunj.

Poor labourers are seen as much as residents in all three locations. Middle class life is maintained and supported by lower class labourers³⁰. Poor labourers who work for middle class people usually live in slums or lower class localities near the middle class colony because of the convenience of commuting to work. Class differences between residents and labourers appear most distinct in Vasant Kunj, and they are manifested in clothes, accessories, features and the transportation they use. Generally, lower class workers wear traditional Indian clothes or cheap, battered and dirty clothes, and ride a bicycle or walk to commute, whereas the middle class residents wear both Indian traditional and Western clothes and are relatively stylish and neat, while they use cars or rickshaws for transportation.

Cars

Many cars are parked inside Vasant Kunj and the Vijay Nagar single storey area. Most common in both are hatchbacks from Maruti Suzuki and Tata, while sedans of foreign brands like Honda, Toyota, Hyundai, Ford and Volkswagen are also often observed. However, the number of luxury cars is different in the two localities. In Vasant Kunj, cars like Audi, Benz and BMW account for about one in ten, whereas except for a few SUVs they are hardly seen in the Vijay Nagar single storey area. In the Vijay Nagar double storey area, two-wheeled vehicles are as common as cars, and almost every car is a hatchback.

Night Time Scenery

The evening and night-time scenes are also different. By around 9pm in Vasant Kunj C-2, there are just a few people walking around the colony and very few in the parks.

³⁰ Employing at least one servant is typical middle class culture in India. The following section will deal with this servant culture in detail.

It seems as though this is the time dinner starts at home and the streets in the colony are very quiet and calm except for residents coming back from work in their cars after work and a vendor selling desserts like ice cream and snacks from a handcart. At this time, gate security is thorough. The inside colony gate in Vasant Kunj is definitely more separate from the outside world than in Vijay Nagar. This boundary between inside and outside the gate becomes more strict at night since thieves invade the colony and threaten residents, so security guards at the gate check cars and the identity of the people who are trying to enter the colony and ask their destination, as well as inspecting people who don't look like residents.

The night-time scenery in Vijay Nagar is different to Vasant Kunj. All the colonies in the Vijay Nagar single storey area have a gate, but only two of eight blocks have security guards. However, even these security guards do not check and inspect outsiders who want to come inside the colony. This relatively loose gate control by the security guards means that the inside and outside worlds don't look absolutely segregated.

Outside the gate is as raucous at night as it is during the day. In the Vijay Nagar single storey area, it is filled with cycle rickshaws, cars, fruit vendors and Delhi University students. In the double storey area, the situation is even more severe. Loud music and singing, and the sound of the people of Rajpura (the lower class locality) fighting worsens the night-time scene, and some interviewees in the Vijay Nagar double storey area complained that this is irritating. In addition, since it is popular PG area, late night parties and the noise of youngsters' drinking culture aggravate the situation. By contrast, it is rare to hear noise at night in Vasant Kunj, except on special occasions like marriage ceremonies.

Schools

In addition, there are several other differences between Vasant Kunj and Vijay Nagar. The extent of Vijay Nagar (the single and double storey areas combined) and its number of residents are both smaller than one sector of Vasant Kunj. As we have already mentioned, since Vasant Kunj is famous for its excellent education institutions

– it has Delhi Public School (DPS), a famous private school, various international schools, and at least one play school and nursery in each colony. Some interviewees revealed that they moved to Vasant Kunj from another locality or even another state because it is renowned for children’s education. Due to the concentration of noted private schools in Vasant Kunj, with class finishing around 1 pm, on weekdays the streets in front of the schools are overcrowded with parents and their cars picking up the children. According to one interviewee in Vasant Kunj, all children in Vasant Kunj go to private schools even though there is also a government school in Vasant Kunj.

The chance of children who live in Vasant Kunj going to a government school is zero. One hundred percent would go to private schools.

(M, 42 years old, NGO worker, Vasant Kunj)

In answer to the question, “Then who attends the government school in Vasant Kunj?”, he added the following:

Nobody goes to that government school. Only children from other areas like Kishangarh or lower class locality children go to that school.

(M, 42 years old, NGO worker, Vasant Kunj)

Vijay Nagar also has several schools, but not many. According to the residents, half the children go to private schools and half to government schools. Children who go to private schools usually go to another area since Vijay Nagar doesn’t have famous private schools, and they mostly commute by school bus rather than in their parents’ cars.

Parks

Vasant Kunj has at least one big park in each sector, as well as many small parks and playgrounds – at least one almost every 100 metres. Many residents responded that one of reasons they like Vasant Kunj is because of its good number of parks and the green environment. In the Vijay Nagar single storey area, there are also several parks, but the double storey doesn’t have any due to its small size – parks can be found in

another (the New Gupta) colony only³¹.

3.4 Gated community

One of the important issues in deciding on the major differences in colony environment between Vasant Kunj and Vijay Nagar is how obvious the contrast appears between inside and outside the colony, as discussed above. This depends on the existence of a gate and the presence of security guards. In addition, the way of securing and controlling entry to the colony also has an impact, as we can see by comparing Vasant Kunj and the Vijay Nagar single storey area.

Most upper middle class residential areas in South Delhi are gated communities. Gated communities are becoming a necessity as a cultural symbol and global commodity for the urban elite all over the world (Genis, 2007:771). The literature on gated communities stresses that this kind of residential enclave leads to urban social segregationist tendencies (Roitman, 2005:308). The detachment and separation that are the very nature of gated communities are rested generally on the income levels and desires of residents (Ibid.: 307). Similarly, Paolo Calderia (2000) explains well the fundamental character of 'fortified enclaves':

*They are private property for collective use, and they emphasize the value of what is private and restricted at the same time that they devalue what is public and open in the city. They are physically demarcated and isolated by walls, fences, empty spaces, and design devices. They are turned inwards, away from the street, whose public life they explicitly reject. They are controlled by armed guards and security systemen, which enforce rules of exclusion and inclusion.*³²

The reasons for living in a gated community are not only related to the fear of rising crime but also the desire to attain a better lifestyle in which people can pursue social

31 The difference in scenery of parks between Vasant Kunj and Vijay Nagar will be explained in more detail in the next section.

32 Calderia, 2000, 258. Quoted in Srivastava, 2009, 114-115.

homogeneity and status in similar social groups without interference from the poor (Roitman, 2005: 305).

Accordingly, gated communities are criticized for exacerbating segregation and polarization between insiders and outsiders by producing exclusionary spaces, therefore creating fear of an unknown mass of ‘other’ who are different from themselves (Lemanski, 2006:397-8). Thus, tolerance for and interaction with different groups might rarely occur (Ibid.).

In the case of Indian cities, spatial segregation is often associated with the context of colonial times, when it was based on race. But new gated communities with security guards in middle class neighbourhoods have arisen with economic liberalization, indicating that class and money are the most relevant differences (Brosius, 2000: 103). The increasing ‘gating’ of Delhi’s residential communities since the 1980s was implemented under the support of RWAs in the city (Srivastava, 2015:113). And this ‘gating’ or ‘fortification’ has now spread throughout the city (Waldrop, 2004: 94).

The increasing number of gated colonies in South Delhi from the 1990s reflects the new aspirations of the Indian middle class for cleanliness and ordered urban environment in a new city model – a model of a post-industrial globalized metropolis (Chatterjee, 2004:144). This desire for a new city model among the middle class suggests a changed mindset of the urban middle class as regards the lower class – from inclusion of the poor in the post-Independence period to exclusion of the poor after economic liberalization (Waldrop, 2004: 97).

Until the 1990s, South Delhi had been dominated by old villages, squatters, beggars, cows, shops and ruins. Government policy began to act forcefully to “clean up” the city, including evicting squatters, beggars and cows, and demolishing slums (Waldrop, 2004: 97). This effort of making a new model global city is linked to the increasing number of gated colonies in the middle class residential areas of South Delhi. In other words, by erecting gates, combined with the new city model that includes eliminating slums, the government and middle class intended not only to “clean up” New Delhi but also to create order and segregate themselves from the poor (Ibid.).

The term ‘fortification’, meaning gated communities, grows out of a demand for segregation and seclusion of the upper middle class from the poor in the United States. They put up gates with security guards around their houses to make their own fortresses. In these fortresses, the main purpose of the gates or walls is to separate the inside from those who don't have permission to access it, as well as to create a resident community within the walls or gates by equipping them with parks, playgrounds and a meeting hall (Waldrop, 2004: 98).



Figure 3.4.1 Gated Community in Vasant Kunj

Source: Author

According to Waldrop (2004: 99), the fortification of New Delhi appears different to what has been done in America and São Paulo in terms of vigilance and control of the gate. In New Delhi, access to gated colonies is fairly easy for outsiders. Gates are open during the day, and guards do not check everybody who enters carefully. Waldrop (2004: 99) discusses the gate at Golf Links in New Delhi, where the gate does not clearly draw a distinction between the rich and the poor – unlike in other countries – because servants live in servant-quarters within the gates. Golf Links,

which is exemplified in Waldrop's work as an elite neighborhood in New Delhi, is very similar to Vasant Kunj in terms of colony environment, upper middle class culture and gated community.

Spatial and Psychological Distance between the Middle and the Lower Class

The situation of the gates and their control in Vasant Kunj looks similar to Golf Links in Waldrop's study (2004). However, if we compare Vasant Kunj with Vijay Nagar rather than with other countries, the boundaries between residents and the poor appear sharper in Vasant Kunj than in Vijay Nagar. First, not every of the gates in the Vijay Nagar single storey area have guards. Only a few residents in particular colonies in the Vijay Nagar single storey area have requested security guards at the gates. Also, since various sections of middle classes of resident reside in the Vijay Nagar single storey area, including some original residents who migrated from Pakistan and some residents who are newly rich, there can be a big gap in their economic condition, and differences in appearance between lower class labourers and the residents are more obvious in Vasant Kunj than in Vijay Nagar. The economic status of the residents in Vasant Kunj is more homogenous than in Vijay Nagar. Lastly, only Vasant Kunj has RWA offices to manage and supervise servants. In Vasant Kunj, the RWA office makes a directory of all servants including their addresses and pictures, and they check attendance daily. Only permitted servants are entitled to enter the gated colonies of Vasant Kunj. This reflects, of course, the concern of middle class residents that crimes will be committed by the lower class. Unlike in Vasant Kunj, RWA offices don't exist in Vijay Nagar, so any system of controlling the servants may be weaker than in Vasant Kunj.

2011 2012

DETAILS OF PASSES ISSUED BY RWA, B-1, VASANT KUNJ, NEW DELHI

| S. No | Name and Address | R. No | Amount Paid | Date | Validity Period | Signature (Authority) | Sign/Thumb of Pass Holder |
|-------|------------------|-------|------------------------|----------|------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| 261 | [Redacted] | 1381 | 1557, 1602, 1625, 1536 | 11/06/11 | Apr 11 to Sep 11 | [Signature] | [Signature] |
| | [Redacted] | 2519 | 1603, 1625, 1636 | 18/10/11 | Oct 11 to Mar 12 | [Signature] | [Signature] |
| | [Redacted] | 4558 | 1536 | 21-4-12 | Apr 12 to Sep 12 | [Signature] | [Signature] |
| 262 | [Redacted] | 2537 | 1636 | 21/4/13 | Apr 13 to Sep 13 | [Signature] | [Signature] |
| | [Redacted] | 1377 | 1746 | 12-6-11 | Apr 11 to Sep 11 | [Signature] | Substantivity |
| 63 | [Redacted] | 3339 | 1208, 1257A | 22/8/10 | Apr 11 to Sep 11 | [Signature] | [Signature] |
| 106 | [Redacted] | 1372 | 1208, 1257-A | 22/08/11 | Apr 11 to Sep 11 | [Signature] | [Signature] |
| 102 | [Redacted] | 2449 | | 08/10/10 | Oct 10 - Mar 11 | [Signature] | [Signature] |
| | [Redacted] | 4652 | 1208, 1257A | 10/9/12 | Apr 12 to Sep 12 | [Signature] | [Signature] |
| | [Redacted] | 1533 | 1208 | 16/10/12 | Apr 11 to Sep 11 | [Signature] | Oct-12 to Mar 13 |
| BC | [Redacted] | 1371 | 1468, 1730, 1786 | 07/06/11 | Apr 11 to Sep 11 | [Signature] | [Signature] |
| 1252 | [Redacted] | 2519 | | 11/06/11 | Apr 11 to Sep 11 | [Signature] | [Signature] |
| | [Redacted] | 4569 | 1786 | 11/06/12 | Apr 12 to Sep 12 | [Signature] | [Signature] |
| | [Redacted] | 1252 | | 9/10/12 | Oct 12 to Mar 13 | [Signature] | [Signature] |
| | [Redacted] | 2519 | | 01/10/12 | Apr 12 to Sep 12 | [Signature] | [Signature] |

Figure 3.4.2 Details of Servants Passes Issued by RWA in Vasant Kunj
Source: RWA in Vasant Kunj

In case of the Vijay Nagar double storey area, there are generally no gated colonies or RWA offices. Since it also adjoins the lower class locality of Rajpura, the distance between residents and the lower class is relatively small, and interaction between them is also more frequent than in Vasant Kunj and the Vijay Nagar single storey area. Vasant Kunj residents are the most distant from the lower class, spatially and physically, considering both the effect of control of the gates by guards and their geographical distance from the lower class.

Psychological factors should also be considered in discourse about the distance between residents and their servants/labourers. In other words, it is important to look at to what extent middle class residents feel psychologically close to the lower class. Middle class attitude changes from Nehru's post-Independence vision of inclusion of the poor to their exclusion after economic liberalization proves their distant mindset towards the poor. The change in society from post-Independence to post-industry has also effected the relationship between the middle class and their servants. Earlier, the employer-servant relationship was based on interdependence, loyalty and trust. One

was more like a second family for the other. However, the relationship has now become more formal so that servants can be fired whenever the middle class employer wants. The disappearance of close affection between them has been the result of changes in the living arrangements of servants – from living together in the employer’s house to the servant commuting to work. This has made middle class people feel more distant both physically and psychologically from the poor than in previous times.

Keeping servants continues to be a necessary element in maintaining a middle class lifestyle, and the presence of gates with guards cannot exclude them completely in any middle class residential area. However, differences in the extent of control and management of servants in gated colonies mean that Vasant Kunj exhibits the biggest spatial and psychological distance between the residents and the poor.

Distinction between Inside and Outside the Gates

The contrast between the front streets and back alleys in gated colonies also appears different in Vasant Kunj and Vijay Nagar. According to Waldrop (2004:101), the front streets and back alleys before gating in Golf Links were as different as ghar (home) and bahir (outside world) domains. For an Indian, the home generally connotes ordered, hygiene, pure and safe, while the outside world means dirt, disorder, contaminated and dangerous (Dickey, 2000: 470). Besides, the concepts of inside and outside are associated with a lot of parallel contrasts, including ‘family/not family, like/different, close/distant, affection/distance, safe/unsafe, protected/unprotected, clean/dirty, and private/public’ (Ibid.). According to Charkrabarty, the concept of ‘the outside’ always conveys the substances which imperil one’s wellbeing (Charkrabarty, 1991:20). This contrast between inside and outside forms urban residents’ concept of self and other, and it influences their movements through their space (Dickey, 2000: 470).

The front streets are generally wide, clean, bright, organized and peaceful, suitable for an elite neighborhood. By contrast, the back alleys before gating were narrow, dirty, dark, unorganized and bumpy, because this was part of the servant quarters area

(Waldrop, 2004: 100).

The situation inside the gates of Golf Links and Vasant Kunj looks quite similar. During the day, few residents walk if they go outside, dhobis (servants who wash clothes) work in a secluded place, vegetable vendors with their carts are situated on the front streets, some servants walk on the front streets, take care of their employer's children in the parks or have a rest in the parks.

The scenery of the Vijay Nagar single storey area during the day is almost the same as in Vasant Kunj, although inside the gate is sometimes less clear and organized. Some of the front streets are clean, but some are not. Even though there are gates, the distinction between the front streets before gating and the main streets outside the gates is somewhat vague. Also, the structure in terms of the position of the houses and the shape of the front streets is more unsystematic than in Vasant Kunj. All of these elements mean that outsiders feel less of a sense of incompatibility when entering inside the gated colony than in Vasant Kunj.

In the Vijay Nagar double storey area, the landscape of the residential area and the main streets outside during the day are not significantly dissimilar. When I conducted interviews in shops or outside houses in the Vijay Nagar double storey streets, it was difficult to hear the voices of interviewees due to the loud noise of people, cars, cycle rickshaws and motorcycles. On the meandering streets of the Vijay Nagar double storey area, everyone is jumbled together with noises, smells and exhaust from original residents, students, shopkeepers, labourers, vendors and various vehicles, creating a rather chaotic environment.

In the case of Vasant Kunj, all kinds of grocery stores and shops are present in the gated colonies, so the interviews were not affected by loud noise. Inside the colonies is clean and serene. It is an ordered and arranged space, absolutely different to the outer world. Unlike Vasant Kunj, the Vijay Nagar single storey area makes a relatively ambiguous distinction between inside and outside the gates, and the Vijay Nagar double storey area shows the least distinction between the inside colonies and the outside world.

If we apply an Indian's apparent contrast between the conception of inside and outside, residents' notion of inside space might differ according to whether their colonies have gates or not. The perception of inside space can be extended to inside gated colonies, including homes, the front streets and parks for Vasant Kunj residents, whereas the conception of inside space is limited to the inside of the home for Vijay Nagar double storey inhabitants. In other words, the gate is an essential means of extending the conception of inner space for residents.

In this way, gates also make residents feel that the inside of their colony is a safe and protected space because they play a role in controlling entrants more strictly at night. As residents pass through the gates, they feel relaxed arriving in a zone of safety, whereas they would not feel relieved of the threat of crime until they reached the front door of their house if the gates were not there.

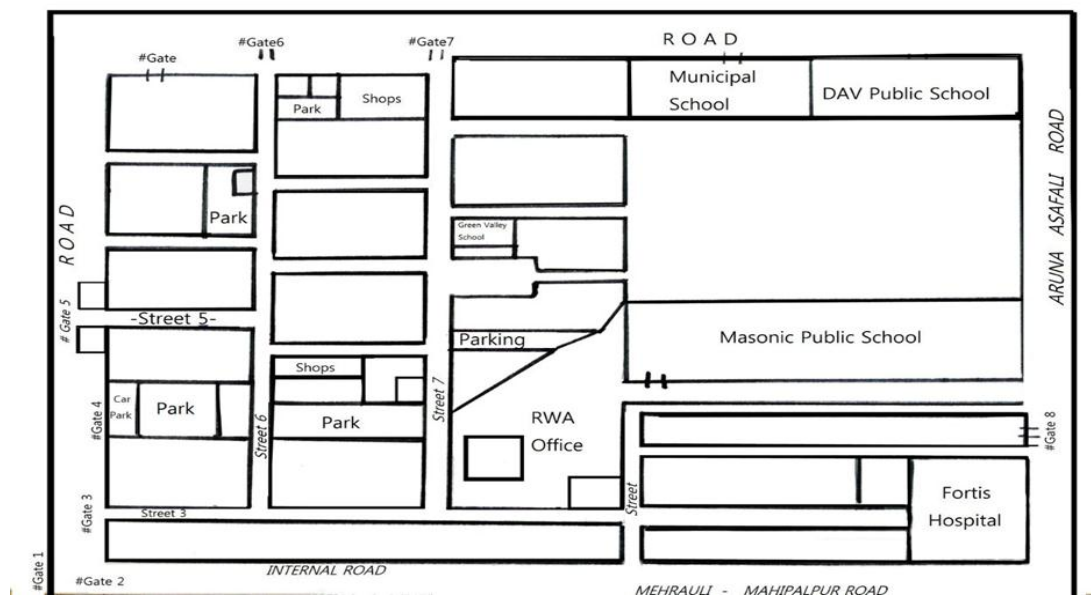


Figure 3.4.3 Map of Inside Gated Community in Vasant Kunj

Source: RWA in Vasant Kunj

The appearance of parks in the two neighborhoods also has both similarities and differences. In both Vasant Kunj and Vijay Nagar, servants and labourers who work in the gated colonies are commonly seen having a rest or sleeping on benches in the parks or playgrounds during the day. However, the number is greater in the Vijay Nagar parks than in Vasant Kunj because of their proximity to the lower class locality of Rajpura. Occasionally, lower class children can be seen playing marbles or cricket,

and in the Vijay Nagar single storey parks, a common scene is of old male residents playing cards for money. In Vasant Kunj, servants or labourers are usually to be seen having a rest with their children, while residents jog or exercise, and their children take exercise tuition classes in the parks during the day. Before dinner time, a typical scene is of housewives watching or playing with their children in the playgrounds, and groups of older females or housewives gathering together for a chat. At night, servants and labourers are hardly seen on the streets, in the parks or playgrounds, or anywhere in the gated colonies. Although they do chores for the middle class residents in the morning and during the day, only a few vendors remain after 6pm because guards tighten gate access at the entrance in the evening.

Guards start to distinguish between people who look like residents and those who do not using their intuition, looking at each entrant's appearance and clothes at the gate entrance in the evening. The intention is to prevent crime, via a rough gate inspection of non-residents, as well as to create a zone of safety by segregating the residents from the lower class.

In the Vijay Nagar single storey area, checks by the guards are relatively less thorough than in Vasant Kunj, both during the day and in the evening – being a PG area, students frequently enter. However, in the case of girls' PGs, control over non-resident men entering is quite strict to prevent the possibility of crime.³³

In the Vijay Nagar double storey area, lower class entry into the colonies is rather free and open regardless of time because there are no gates or guards. Interviewees talked with dissatisfaction about the colony environment, saying that there is a lot of noise from singing, music and fighting, even at night. They also mentioned their wish to leave the area because they were suffering from frequent contact with lower class people who are spatially close to them. In this sense, gates play a crucial role in deciding the spatial distance between the middle and the lower class. An example of

³³ In Srivastava's (2015) study, female residents in the consominium gated communities showed equal participation with males, without fear of disruption, in activities such as a variety of rituals, bodily acts (walking, running) and other social interactions due to the existence of the gate (Srivastava, 2015: 175).

their comments follows:

This man (one of the three men) has already moved to another house, and now it's our turn...we also want to move out....people have ego problems, attitude problems, they don't have sense to talk, how to talk. People from Rajpura are very dirty. They don't have sensitivity, they use abusive language, they pee everywhere. They don't regard us as senior. They don't have a talking manner. They often come here because they want to fight. They are always ready for a fight, but we don't. This place is noisy 24 hours a day. When there is a birthday party, they play at full volume. Residents don't complain about it, because there is no change, they don't react. But it disturbs everyone. This noise is habitual for us. Yesterday I heard Kirtan (religious singing) the whole night. I want to live in a good place, a good area like Gurgaon or Noida. These are the best areas. There are good people, they don't use abusive language. They talk to each other very sensitively, that is why. But here there is no common sense.

(Three men, in their twenties, students, Vijay Nagar double storey area)

This conversation with three men living in the Vijay Nagar double storey area shows their wish to distinguish themselves from lower class people. Their aspiration is to live in a fortified place where only good people (rich people with manners) live, not bad people (poor people without manners).

Since the Vijay Nagar double storey area is not a gated colony and is adjacent to the lower class area of Rajpura, residents have no choice but to interact often with the lower class all day long. Enduring trouble derived from incessant interaction as a result of spatial closeness with the lower class is unavoidable for Vijay Nagar residents in their daily lives. Therefore, middle class desire is to segregate from the poor as far as possible, even though middle class life is sustained by the cheap labour of the lower class. The three men are also expressing their dissatisfaction with not being treated as 'senior' by the lower class and lower caste people, implying that they subconsciously feel that lower class and caste people are inferior to them. If lower class and caste people claim equal citizenship, they might consider it a threat to their status.

Middle class superiority over the lower class has proved constant in their efforts to

maintain their hegemonic position over them, earlier based on caste and in the post-industrial era based on class. In post-Independent India, the middle class embraced the poor, wanting them to participate in supporting the nation-building of Nehru's socialist policy, while the lower caste were subordinated to them. The phenomenon of the middle class dominating by class rather than caste seems to have become stronger under the Mandal policy and with economic liberalization since the 1980s. There are several factors influencing this phenomenon. First, economic liberalization has affected class relations, especially in the metropolis, New Delhi (Waldrop, 2004:108). With an increasing number of middle class in the city who earn high incomes, the gap between the rich and the poor has become larger. In addition, a less hierarchical mindset based on caste has become rooted in the newly emerging middle class. Secondly, the middle class is worried about being deprived of their hegemonic position by the increased mobilization of lower caste people in rural India.³⁴

In this way, the phenomenon of erecting a gate implies a middle class desire for the establishment of an explicit ordered and hierarchical relationship between the rich and the poor since they feel threatened by the blurring of the boundaries between them. In other words, the increasing number of gated communities is an indication of changing class relations in urban India (Waldrop, 2004).

3.5 Servant Culture

Domestic servitude has gone through many changes over the last century. But according to Qayum and Ray (2003:521), the current social form of the institution is not a break from the feudal and colonial eras but rather the re-articulation of ideologies and practices stemming from that era.

Status Marker for the Middle Class

The culture of hiring a servant is common to both Vasant Kunj and Vijay Nagar. Although a few residents of Vijay Nagar do not employ servants, most middle class

³⁴ Omvedt, 1994; Jaffrelot, 2003, quoted in Waldrop, 2004:108.

households in Vasant Kunj and Vijay Nagar take employing between one and three or more domestic servants for granted, whether they work full or part-time. One of my interviewees in Vijay Nagar said that she cannot afford to hire a servant because she belongs to the lower middle class. This suggests that employing at least one servant can signify to visitors, passers-by, neighbors and other communities that a home is of a certain quality – that it is a middle class family (Dickey, 2000: 477).

The fact that most Indian middle class households can afford to benefit from domestic service can be unique to India, if we consider middle class standards of living in developed countries (Jeong, 2014: 86). One of my interviewees in Vasant Kunj emphasized that this advantage of most middle class families of hiring servants only exists in India:

I want to settle abroad, but I cannot live without servants. If I live outside India, I will really miss having a servant. We are used to having a servant all the time. They cook for me, clean for me. There is nowhere in the world you can benefit from this. Isn't it?

(F, 42years old, doctor, Vasant Kunj)

Domestic service takes the form of poor women leaving their homes and working in wealthier women's houses in manual and labor-intensive household jobs (Dickey, 2000: 468). Servants take responsibility of all household work, such as dusting, cleaning utensils, cooking, washing cars and so on. However, employers prefer to hire single-task servants over multi-task servants these days (Froystad, 2005; Qayum& Ray, 2003). According to Froystad (2005), one reason for hiring servants separately is the expectation of skills, but more important is the associated problem of servants' castes. There is a proven and strong relationship between the tasks of cleaning and cooking and a servant's caste background (Froystad, 2005: 74).

For example, only servants who are from general castes can enter the kitchen, so they mostly cook, while servants in charge of cleaning are mostly from backward castes or they are Muslim. In this way, the conception of 'purity and pollution' in caste practice is associated with the various categories of household work. Cleaning toilets, dusting and washing clothes, which are related to the notion of 'pollution' in Hinduism, are

allotted to lower caste or non-Hindu servants, while cooking is only allowed by upper or general caste Hindus. One interviewee explained as follows:

In a locality like Vasant Kunj, you find very few Muslim women cooking because they don't like Muslims to cook for them. They go to Muslim restaurants in North Delhi, but they don't want Muslim women to cook in their kitchens. One maid comes to clean the house and they might be Muslim, and it might not be a problem. Another maid comes for the kitchen work – cooking, washing the utensils – but she can't be a Muslim. Ideally, she shouldn't be a Muslim.

(F, 30 years old, married, officer in publication company, Vasant Kunj)

Hence, some middle class employers do not keep servants to do the cooking because they prefer not to eat food cooked by others or they mind eating food prepared by lower castes or Muslim³⁵. This is usually the case in the old generation who still maintain rigid caste practice mindsets, while the young generation middle class in both Vasant Kunj and Vijay Nagar tend to hire servants to cook.

We would never have a problem with whatever religion or caste if her cooking is very good. We are more concerned about how their cooking is, whatever religion or caste the person follows. This also comes from dependency. If a husband and wife both work, they don't have time to every day clean the house, sweep the house, wash the dishes and cook. After coming back from work, I don't want to do housework. So you depend on somebody from outside and we don't really care what her background is as long as the person works well. We are more practical. It doesn't matter.

(F, 30 years old, officer in publication company, Vasant Kunj)

This tendency of the new middle class to hire servants to do the cooking is a result of their having a less caste-prejudiced mindset compared to the previous generation, as well as their busy lifestyle and the increasing number of working women. These young professional women now prefer impersonal, professional and contractual relationships with servants (Qayum& Ray, 2003, 2011). They do not want to have an

35 Food is closely linked to the notion of purity and pollution in Hinduism. Traditionally, Indians believe that what kinds of food or who makes food are important in maintaining a pure spirit and body.

unfair hierarchy with servants, but at the same time, they want to avoid responsibility of the well-being for servants, something which is based on rhetoric of love (Qayum & Ray, 2003, 2011).

Most middle class interviewees during my fieldwork in Vasant Kunj and Vijay Nagar hire at least one servant for cleaning, regardless of whether they are old or young, or whether they are housewives or working women.

The comments made by one of my female interviewees in Vijay Nagar that “keeping a servant means showing others our ‘middle class status’ indicate that employing servants is a crucial marker of status for the middle class, as well as serving the purpose of taking advantage of their labor. Being able to afford servants is a symbol of belonging to the middle or upper class because poor people do not have surplus money to spend on servants (Dickey, 2000: 466). In this way, “domestic service itself provides one of the clearest markers of class distinction” (Ibid.).

The relationship between employers and domestic workers involves at least three types of inequalities, according to Waldrop (2004: 103). The relationship is similar to the master-slave relationship based on interdependence analyzed by Hegel. It is also based on inequalities of class through unequal access to money. Also, it is a form of hierarchical caste-based relationship, because employers generally belong to the upper or general castes and are Hindu, while most servants are from backward castes like SC or come from a non-Hindu background (Waldrop, 2004: 103).

The tendency for Brahman employers to not allow non-Brahman servants to enter the kitchen or to re-wash dishes when it has been done by lower caste servants (Dickey, 2000: 479), and to distinguish household work according to the servant's caste or religion, demonstrates the caste-based inequalities between them. In other words, the hierarchical structures of class and caste together act on the relationship between employers and servants. Many middle class interviewees recognized that class is fluid, and that achieved status is different from caste which is a permanent and ascribed status. However, at the same time, they tended to perceive class and caste as the same – lower caste is same as lower class, etc. They equated certain aspects of caste and

class when they referred to their workers, saying that they are from the lower class and lower castes, and they live in slums, are dirty, uneducated and polluted (Dickey, 2000: 462). This is because wealthier people and higher-caste people recognize poorer people and lower castes as qualities of the 'outside,' which connotes many of the same negative features (Dickey, 2000: 481).

New Relationships between Middle class Employers and Servants

As mentioned above, the relationship between middle class employers and poor servants has changed over the past few decades. Earlier, it was more of a patron-loyalty relationship as servants stayed at their employer's house throughout their life. However, this old pattern of living in the homes of their employers is now changing into part-time work, meaning that servants work in multiple houses in a day, with single task cooking servants only cooking for two hours in each house but in two or three homes per day (Dickey, 2000: 469). This remarkable change has brought about a new employer-servant relationship which is more of a contractual relationship than a strong interdependent relationship based on affection for each other. Employers can warn their servants as they are exchangeable at anytime (Waldrop, 2004:107). Servants can be hired and fired whenever their employers want. Mutual dependence and threat are constant in the new relationship between employers and servants (Ibid.).

In this changing relationship, servants can demand and adjust their working time more efficiently, they are free from unreasonably long or irregular working hours, they are better able to negotiate their wages and work, and they have more power to manage their family lives than before (Dickey, 2000: 469). At the same time, middle class employers also free themselves of the responsibility of assisting servants financially for the education of their children, medicines or special life events like weddings and funerals (Ibid.).

When I stayed at aunt's house in Vasant Kunj, I could observe how this new relationship between middle class employers and servants has changed. Aunt has hired one young female servant to dust and clean utensils. The servant lived in Kishangarh, a lower middle class locality close to Vasant Kunj, and came every day at

9am (sometimes she changed her commuting time at her own discretion) and worked for one and a half hours. Like other servants in Vasant Kunj, she worked in three other houses in the locality. In her case, she was in charge of working in all our flats from 9am to 6pm.

The relationship between aunt and her servant is no more or less than a formal contractual relationship between an employer and a worker. She had been receiving 1000 rupees per month to clean the utensils, but after I started to stay there she demanded an increase in her wages to 1500 rupees to take account of the additional utensils that I used. In this way, sometimes the servant tried to request higher pay according to the time spent or the amount of work, and aunt did not accept her demands easily. Aunt often got angry about the servant's unreasonable demands, delays in her arrival for work or poor quality of work, but aunt couldn't fire her because she had not stolen anything from aunt's house even once. For aunt, honesty is a more important trait than quality of work when it comes to a servant. Aunt was always bothered about whether anything had been stolen or not when the servant entered aunt's house because aunt recognized her as an outsider or demarcated others as different from the residents of Vasant Kunj.

Negotiating Ambivalence between Closeness and Distance

This distinction can clearly be seen in the fears of an employer about their servant's invasion of their privacy in the inside space of the employer's home (Dickey, 2000: 471). The Indian notion of inside and outside³⁶, as mentioned in the previous section, is not only applied to the outside world and the home, but also to each category of inside space in the home. The main principle that decides the spatial organization of households is a desire for purity and privacy, which is strongly related to the concept of inside and outside (Dickey, 2000:471).

According to the extent of purity and privacy, some spaces in the house are regarded

36 The concepts of inside and outside are associated with a number of parallel contrasts, including family/not family, like/different, close/distant, affection/distance, safe/unsafe, protected/unprotected, clean/dirty and private/public (Dickey, 2000: 470).

as more inside than others (Dickey, 2000:471). The kitchen, puja room and bedrooms should be kept more private and pure. For this reason, once servants enter the household, employers feel the need to control and restrict their movements to diminish any encroachment on their privacy, as well as some other dangers (Ibid.). Generally, concerns raised by employers about the dangers that could be imported from outside into their homes by servants include dirtiness, disorder and disease, and the contamination of children with lower class habits, language and manners (Ibid.: 473). Dangers that may be transported from inside the home to outside that employers worry about are the theft of expensive belongings or the spread of rumors (Ibid.).

However, employers cannot be completely distant from servants. Instead, they seek to contain and control them simultaneously (Dickey, 2000: 478). This control includes a tension between distance and closeness, similarity and difference (Ibid.). Closeness and distance make it difficult to distinguish the concepts of inside and outside (Ibid.).

In other words, keeping servants is a crucial marker of middle class standing, but it also implies introducing a threat to the household. That is why employers consider qualities of cleanliness and honesty as their first priorities when they hire servants. The quality of work is not of great importance. Employers recognize that servants are an indicator of status, while at the same time they threaten it (Dickey, 2000: 477).

In this regard, distance is a primary factor in control over servants (Dickey, 2000, 478). Many different rules of hierarchy and respect are used to maintain the appropriate distance between them (Ibid.). Employers maintain distance from their servants in order to control them and defend themselves from this threat (Dickey, 2000: 478-80).

An employer's vigilance towards their servants has increased inside households since the disappearance of the master-servant relationship based on patron-loyalty. This means that trust of their workers is decreasing among employers. What makes them feel more threatened by their workers? It might be increasing exposure to crime by the backward class in the media as a result of the development of the media, or a growing feeling of need to protect increased wealth, property and privacy as the gap between

the rich and the poor has widened since economic liberalization. Alternatively, they might feel that their class status is threatened as a result of lower caste people's claims to equal citizenship since the 1980s.

Whatever the reason, the fact we cannot ignore is the growing distrust and prejudice among upper and middle class employers towards lower class workers, as they regard their workers as objects that can never be equated with themselves even though they are all citizens of India.

3.6 Relationships with Neighbors

Recent Trend of Diminishing Connections with Neighbors

Relationships with neighbors appeared different in Vasant Kunj and Vijay Nagar due to differences in the historical establishment of the locality as well as in the composition of residents. The community background of the residents in Vasant Kunj differs for each household, and they may not even know the background of the inhabitants of the next-door apartment. By contrast, since more than half of the residents of Vijay Nagar are from the Punjabi Hindu community who migrated from Pakistan and have stayed there since they were born, they know each other's background in detail and intimate friendships with neighbors are natural.³⁷ Although there are different kinship patterns in the two neighborhoods, diminishing connections with neighbors seems to be a recent trend and is now appearing in both Vasant Kunj and Vijay Nagar.³⁸

³⁷ We can link some scholars' theories to situations in which differences appeared between two neighbours in terms of relationships. Low, who studies gated communities in the US, claims that residents have a sense of community and security, but they are not interested in making friends within the community (Low, 1997: 67, quoted in Genis, 2007: 786). Tönnies' theory also insists that friendship and neighbours are important to the lower class, while upper classes tend to keep themselves distant from their neighbours and peers, depending instead on family and non-local contacts and 'interest groups' (Tönnies, 1887: 193, quoted in Lemanski, 2006: 410).

³⁸ Brosius' opinion is different from mine. She studied gated communities in Gurgaon and claims that in the case of urban India, social structures and networks are adapting to new work conditions and lifestyle aspirations, rather than breaking down (Brosius, 2010: 97). Residents feel like extended family through 'clubbing', which is the new form of socializing in residential housing townships

In Vasant Kunj, close relationships with neighbors are maintained mostly by residents of the old generation who have lived there since its establishment in the 1980s and 1990s, through their informal regular meetings in the parks or on the benches of the colony. As regards the young generation, housewives tend to build friendships through kitty parties, or they may maintain friendships only with their immediate neighbors and then also not the number or depth of relationships they want. It appears that they are closer to their friends than to neighbors.

In Vijay Nagar, the original residents who were born in Vijay Nagar and share a common migration history from Pakistan are close and know each other well, including where they live, what they do and who their families are, and they care about each other's family events and share their sadness and joy as well. Moreover, arranged marriages with neighbors sometimes happen since they come from the same community background and are long-standing acquaintances as a result of the strong bonds in the neighborhood. However, they don't know the newcomers including the students and families renting apartments well, even though this group now constitutes about half of the residents of Vijay Nagar. The pattern of relationships with neighbors in Vijay Nagar is likely to become similar to Vasant Kunj due to the conversion of the single storey flats into multiple storey flats to accommodate the influx of newcomers, as well as the replacement of the generations.

The following two interviews, one with an 84 year old man who has lived in Vijay Nagar since the establishment of the locality and the other with a 21 year old man who was born there, explain how relationships with neighbors in Vijay Nagar have changed from the 1950s to date.

When we migrated and settled down here, we were very bonded because we were from Pakistan. Everyone was a sufferer. Everyone was a victim. When we were victims, there was some affection for each other. We wanted to help each other. That's why we

regardless of kinship, caste and region (Ibid.). New forms of networks and socializing have been adopted under the new environment of globalization and urbanization (Ibid.).

were very bonded. There was great cooperation. When someone cried, everyone went to that place to relieve him. We had very strong bonding with each other compared to any other neighborhood. Here was a more peaceful place than any other place because here is not so mixed culture. It has the old culture of migrants, more than 50-60% people have migrated. Still they have old memories and affection. Many are related to one another. That's why it remains quiet and peaceful still to some extent. Before, it was a very compact society and now it is an individualistic society. Now people have complexes due to property and western culture influencing us. Because of western influence, the bond of neighborhood has been torn in many places. The new generation is getting a new type of knowledge and techniques. That's why our bonding is breaking.

(M, 84 years old, Vijay Nagar single storey)

When I asked when this close bonding started to change, he replied:

I can't say exactly when it changed, but I can say twenty years ago, it was not like this. Since the 1980s this bond of neighborhood has been torn. People who become rich don't want to interact with the poor. People get separated. Self-interest is a great motivation. As we become more interested in ourselves, we are becoming an individualistic society. Among the old generation also individualism is increasing. Everyone has their own interest, not the social interest.

(M, 84 years old, Vijay Nagar single storey)

The following quote from a 21-year-old man's dialogue explains that the current process of bonding with neighbours in Vijay Nagar has changed from the old generations:

In our parents' time, through parents, they knew who are their children. But nowadays through children, they know who are their parents. Because children are more mobile, they have contact through using gadgets, internet network like Facebook, Whatsapp. Parents have definitely less contact than children now.

(M, 21years old, student, Vijay Nagar double storey)

According to him, children used to be introduced by their parents, because parents knew and were close to each other in the neighborhood through frequent interaction,

but now parents get to know each other through their children's interaction. Parents in their thirties and forties now do not promote active friendships among neighbors compared to their parents' generation. Relationships with neighbors among young middle class parents who were born in the 1970s or 1980s and experienced economic liberalization at a young age are built through the introduction of parents of their children's friends who get to know each other by attending the same private school or coaching institute.

Relationships among young parents in the neighborhood are built with the parents of children's friends rather than making acquaintances themselves in Vasant Kunj as well. For example, when I asked a 42 year old mother in Vasant Kunj to introduce another neighbor for interview, she introduced as her closest neighbor the parents of her son's friend who goes to the same private school as her son. This happens because children in the neighborhood tend to go to the same school or coaching center.

Nevertheless, communication with neighbors has been restricted to mere formalities among the urban middle class in recent times (Saavala, 2010: 287). Especially in Vasant Kunj, there is no sign of the traditional active social life with neighbors, and people maintain some degree of social distance from each other. By contrast, this level of easy interaction still exists in Vijay Nagar because strong bonds have been built since the establishment of the neighborhood due to their shared suffering for historical reasons. However, the atmosphere in middle class neighborhoods, as I experienced in Vijay Nagar, is undergoing changes especially but not only among the new generation.

I assume that there are several reasons for these changes in relationships in middle class neighborhoods. First, growing social mobility results in neighbors having various community backgrounds. In the past, middle class neighborhoods were more homogenous in terms of community background because the middle classes were mostly upper caste Hindus (Saavala, 2010: 187). In recent times, building a sense of closeness among neighbors is difficult due to the lack of common denominators such as belonging to the same community, caste and background. In Vijay Nagar, the level of familiarity is higher compared to the same generation in Vasant Kunj because of

their sense of connectedness generated from sharing the same caste background as Punjabi Hindus.

Secondly, housing structures have changed with the conversion of single storeys into multiple storeys following an inflow of newcomers. In the past, identifying neighbors was common and easy because people of the same community background, usually general caste Hindus, were neighbors and lived nearby in single storey flats. However, recent multiple storey flats accommodating the different backgrounds of newcomers have created “a new kind of cautious environment”³⁹ and difficulties in knowing who lives where due to a more complicated neighborhood structure than before.

The third reason is lack of time among the new middle class. They generally work until late in the evening on weekdays, so they are used to making friends in their offices. At the weekend, they want to go to clubs and enjoy parties with colleagues and friends rather than creating relationships with neighbors.

Fourthly, the development of the media and the internet has resulted in an absence of face-to-face communication among neighbors. These days people prefer to spend their spare time watching television, movies and communicating over the internet by smartphone than having offline face-to-face meetings like gathering together and having a friendly chat with neighbors in the park or at home. This trend does not only apply to the young generation but to the old generation as well. Widespread consumption of media and the internet has resulted in the old generation not going outside as much as before. They feel more comfortable watching television inside their homes than bothering others.

Lastly, the young middle class mostly live in rented accommodation rather than buying flats because young people in the middle class category cannot expect to

39 Saavala (2010:187) states that there are two reasons for this recent cautious environment. First, having middle class neighbors no longer means that they would be from upper castes and privileged backgrounds. Secondly, as urban middle class neighborhoods and apartment buildings have come to be characterized by a growing “privatization”, neighbors don’t need to communicate with each other.

afford to buy flats in middle class neighborhoods in Delhi. When their rental contract runs out, they need to move elsewhere, so they don't feel the need to build friendships with their neighbors. Also, in many cases, they may feel that the neighbors are a threat to them because they don't know who lives next door. Sometimes, they might worry that neighbors could be obstinate or gossip. Increasing individualism and concerns about encroachment of their privacy encourage them to keep their distance from neighbors.

3.7 Pattern of Celebrating Hindu Festivals

One of the most interesting aspects of observing the two neighborhoods was the stark contrast in the pattern of celebration of Hindu festivals. In Vasant Kunj, people tend to celebrate only the main Hindu festivals like Diwali and Holi,⁴⁰ while in Vijay Nagar residents also enjoy minor ones like Ganesh Chaturthi⁴¹ and Karva Chauth⁴², and they often hold ritual ceremonies as well.

At Diwali or Holi, children in Vijay Nagar started to celebrate by setting off firecrackers and throwing colored water-filled balloons or carrying water guns a few days in advance. The streets of Vijay Nagar had already become dirty with colored powder, water and the residue of firecrackers and created a festival mood with uproarious and noisy sounds a few days before the festival dates.

When I had just begun my fieldwork in Vijay Nagar, I observed several times clay images of Ganesh or other idols in a truck and groups of people following and enjoying worship and celebrations with loud music in the double storey area. One of

⁴⁰ Brosius (2010) and Srivastava (2009) claim that residents of gated communities in Gurgaon are building communities of people who are similar in terms of education and culture, not birthplace, caste or religion (Brosius, 2010: 105). This sense of community forms via public celebrations, including not only Holi and Diwali, but also Karva Chauth and Janmashtami (Srivastava, 2009: 179).

⁴¹ Ganesh Chaturthi is the Hindu festival celebrated in honor of the elephant-headed god, Ganesha.

⁴² Karva Chauth is a one-day festival celebrated by Hindu women in North India in which married women fast from sunrise to moonrise for the safety and longevity of their husbands.

those days was Ganesh Chaturthi, and such scenes were common in North Delhi, unlike in South Delhi. On Karva Chauth also I could see many women buying jewelry and preparing for the festival and fasting while I was walking around Vijay Nagar. Vasant Kunj also, some married women were taking part in the ritual to follow the tradition.⁴³

Differences in Celebrating Dussehra Festival

On Dussehra, one of the biggest Hindu festivals, I couldn't feel any festival atmosphere in Vasant Kunj. The evening was calm and peaceful just like a normal day, and residents were jogging, walking around or just stayed at home as if they didn't even know it was Dussehra.

Meanwhile, the people in Vijay Nagar Double storey began preparation for Dussehra early. The Festival of Dussehra generally starts ten days before the holiday, and residents said that some people even fast during this period. Two days before Dussehra, they sing and dance during the night in celebration of a deity and puja called Jagran. On the day of Dussehra, they brought at least four idols to the parks or the available space on each block and gather to participate in religious performances. They started to establish idols made from outside together with other block residents at lunch time, children burst firecrackers on the streets and the atmosphere of the festival truly began. The neighborhood started to become very noisy and smoky due to the children's firecrackers. Around 7 in the evening, the same block residents began to gather and prepare for the performance accompanying the burning of the effigies on bonfires for the climax of Dussehra. From 8 o'clock, all block residents began to assemble and started to ignite the idols and finally burn them. The residents in Vijay Nagar Double storey created a real Dussehra atmosphere, and the highlight of Dussehra finally came to an end after long preparation process for the festival.

⁴³ According to Srivastava (2011), women working as IT professionals, corporate executives and call-centre managers, and living in the gated communities of Gurgaon, are keen to participate in the public activities of the Karva Chauth festival. This seems to be contradictory, although they have relatively equal status in conjugal relationships in the post-liberalization period.



Figure. 3.7.1 Scene of Preparation for Celebrating Dussehra Festival in Vijay Nagar

Source: Author

Contrary to the scenery in Double storey, the Single storey residents did not prepare for the festival. Instead, they congregated together on the big ground, which has a very big idol on the stage close to the locality, and listened to the story of ‘Ramlila’ from the host, seemingly enjoying the mood of the Dussehra festivities.

Unlike these people in Vijay Nagar, we were able to see different patterns of enjoying Dussehra among college students around Vijay Nagar. People in their 20s were seen in the fancy restaurants around Vijay Nagar or meeting their friends, rather than burning idols in the square to celebrate Dussehra. For them, Hindu festivals, except Holi and Diwali, seem to become the concept of a holiday that can rest a day rather than enjoying the festival sincerely.

Discourse on Choice and Compulsion according to Class

A couple in their twenties who I met in Vijay Nagar made a somewhat interesting

point that the meaning and way of celebrating Hindu festivals is different according to class.

They called themselves upper middle class and explained the difference between upper or upper middle class and lower or lower middle class in the celebration of Hindu festivals. They said the upper, upper middle class and young middle class like them prepare and enjoy only the biggest Hindu festivals like Diwali and Holi due to lack of time. They said that they cannot follow all of the old traditions that the previous generation followed. By contrast, the lower middle or lower class want to enjoy all of the festivities and ritual ceremonies, but reality does not allow them to do so because of tension as a result of their financial condition. In this way, participating in festivals is a choice for the upper, upper middle and new middle class, but there is no choice for the lower class because of their reality that does not allow them to enjoy all.

Monetary condition restricts the lower class. Labourers may want to follow, but it is compulsory for them to work over here to earn money. But we can negotiate because it's not our compulsion. It's our choice. We would like to be here. I'll go only on the day of Diwali. For the upper class and upper middle class, it's a choice. But for the lower or lower middle class, it's a compulsion. They want to follow, but because of the compulsion of monetary constraints, they are here despite the fact that they would like to be at home and enjoy and celebrate festivals. It is because of money only. We are not actually following our culture because of scarcity of time and money also. People who lack money, they don't have any choice and have tension.

(Couple in their twenties, job-seekers, migrated to Delhi from Uttar Pradesh)

Keeping Traditional Customs and Values according to the Extent of Westernization

Besides financial reasons or a lack of spare time, I want to suggest that a westernized way of thinking and lifestyle also seems to bring about differences according to class in the way of enjoying festivals. In the case of the urban upper middle class, they are more accustomed to celebrating Valentine's Day to send gifts and date to confirm their affection rather than the wife fasting to check the love between husband and wife

on Karva Chauth. Also, they want to find enjoyment through westernized leisure activities like clubbing, partying and drinking culture rather than participating in Hindu festivals. However, this western leisure lifestyle is not familiar to lower, lower middle class and the old middle class. For that reason, they want to hold almost all Hindu festivals on the calendar for their entertainment. Therefore, the different patterns of enjoying Hindu festivals between Vasant Kunj and Vijay Nagar are related to class and the extent of westernization.

Conclusion

This chapter has dealt with how residential environment appear differently according to residential space and differences and shared features of the middle class lifestyle through ethnographic study of two different middle class neighbourhoods in Delhi: Vasant Kunj and Vijay Nagar. Vasant Kunj was established by the Delhi Development Authority (DDA) in the 1980s. It was a planned area for the settlement of middle class people at that time. Contrary to Vasant Kunj, Vijay Nagar was developed for refugee camps since independence in 1947. For that reason, many residents who migrated from Pakistan are still living there, and they call themselves a Punjabi Hindu community.

Due to different histories of establishment, these two neighbourhoods have different compositions of residents. Also, middle class residents who reside even in metropolitan cities such as Delhi have different propensities and community cultures according to residential space. In this way, the characteristics of a neighbourhood can be regarded as a form of cultural capital since they play a role of 'distinction'. (Benson, 2014: 3100).

Since Vasant Kunj is a more affluent neighbourhood than Vijay Nagar, the residents are more accustomed to the practices of western individualism, and the process of selecting interviewees during the fieldwork was more difficult in Vasant Kunj. Time-pressed white collar professionals with a propensity for individualism, who have become situated in the busy life of a city, tend to center privacy in their lives and feel

bothered by interactions with strangers. On the other hand, interviewing was easier in Vijay Nagar as most residents are self-employed and able to spend time at their discretion while retaining the value of traditional social relations, so-called 'collectivism' rather than western individualism.

As shown in the first part of chapter, residents and passersby in two neighbourhoods categorized themselves as middle class and defined it based on their standard of living. The tendency of people to label themselves as middle class is clearly evident in the fact that almost all of the 150 interviewees I interacted with during the fieldwork, self-identified as middle class.

Given differences in income, occupation, family background, educational level, consumption expenditure and other factors, why does everyone think they belong to middle class? Deshpande (2003:130) explains that the middle class is a desirable social position. The notion of 'middleness' when it comes to social location is associated with the 'neither-nor' concept of avoiding extremes (Ibid.). The middle class is regarded as a 'moderate' position, neither rich nor poor, neither conservative nor progressive (Ibid.). This class is deemed average, representing the whole of society (Ibid.). Thus, the social groups that are not actually part of this class are still eager to belong (Baviskar&Ray, 2011: 8).

When interviewees judged others' class standing, they cited clothing, appearance, mindsets, ways of speaking and manners as factors in their assessment, and some associated richness with goodness and poorness with badness. For them, good people are those who have good manners, hygiene, sophistication, education, and intelligence, while bad people lack these qualities.

It is common for both neighbourhoods' residents to have a desire to be segregated from the lower class. This middle class aspiration for spatial differences through seclusion from the poor has been demonstrated by the increasing establishment of gated communities and new city models within government since the 1980s, with the purpose of creating beautiful, clean, ordered and bounded space through the eviction

of street vendors and squatters.

Despite their common aspirations, the two neighbourhoods have different spatial environments, particularly presence or absence of a gate and a RWA, which both aid in the exclusion of the lower class and the under-privileged. Since Vijay Nagar Double storey is not a gated community and doesn't have RWAs, noise at night and collisions between the residents and the lower classes are frequent, making the distinction between inside and outside more ambiguous. Psychological and spatial distance between the residents and the lower class is the biggest in Vasant Kunj because the 'gaze of surveillance' (Brosius, 2010: 98) of the gate and the RWA, which is designed to spot outsiders and operates all the time. The presence of the gate can further extend the concept of inside as the meaning of the inside is beyond the home for residents, which is particularly effective in alleviating women's fear of crimes.

A common feature in the residents of both neighbourhoods is the employment of paid domestic workers within the household. They all recognize that hiring a servant is essential for maintaining middle class status. Multi-task servants undertake different household task according to their caste and religious background, especially in the case of cooking and cleaning. In the past, middle class employers lived together with the servants and took responsibility as caregivers based on the rhetoric of love and obligation (Qayum&Ray, 2003:540). Now, however, they are in a position to constantly negotiate distance and closeness with servants by controlling and containing them (Dickey, 2000:478-9). When servants claim workers' rights, employers feel threatened because individuals with rights in one's home can endanger class distinctions (Qayum&Ray, 2011:270). Therefore, domestic service within middle class households includes the process of reproducing social dynamics of power based on class, caste, race/ethnicity and gender within the domestic unit (Ibid.: 249).

Residents of Vijay Nagar have stronger bonds with their neighbors than those of Vasant Kunj as a result of the differences in the histories of their establishments, but Vijay Nagar has also shown a decline in mutual exchanges in the younger generations. This change has several causes, such as increasing social mobility and lack of time. Another factor is the absence of common denominators among people (such as

community and caste backgrounds) resulting from changes in housing structure and inflow of newcomers and the absence of face-to-face communication due to the development of media and the internet. In other words, the values of traditional Indian interpersonal relationships are assumed to be significantly decreasing among young people in urban areas.

In examining patterns of celebrating Hindu festivals, we have seen the differences in participation in the Dussehra festival as a result of westernization, surplus of time, and bonding with neighbours between the two neighbourhoods. Vijay Nagar Double storey residents gathered together to prepare for the festival, and they experienced connectedness through the process, enjoying the festival sincerely. Single storey residents attended the local unit of the festival held in the square to celebrate and feel the mood of Dussehra, although they did not perform the preparations themselves. For the younger residents of Vasant Kunj, the tendency to see Hindu festivals, except Holi and Diwali, as rest days is becoming more common.

In summary, strategies of the new middle class to maintain the solidity of class distance through spatial control are becoming more pronounced. As Fernandes noted (2004: 2420), the new middle class lifestyle reflects middle class aspirations for management of urban space based on strict class-based segregation.

Values of traditional Indian relationships (such as unconditional caring and nurturing relationships as shown by sharing food, time and space) has decreased in the middle class as it proceeds toward western individualisation (Platz, 2014: 150).

Based on these spatial differences in these two neighbourhoods, the following chapter will discuss about common/different trends in the perception and values of interviewees according to the neighbourhoods.

Chapter Four

Comparison and Contrast between the Two Neighbourhoods

2: Customs and Values in Middle Class Differentiations

This chapter will explore common/different trends in perception regarding marriage, the status of women, caste, religion, family and consumption patterns based on a total of sixty residents in two neighbourhoods, including the other interviewees whose ages ranged from teenagers to those in their sixties. Interviewees in the two neighbourhoods have shown different degrees of openness and modernity in their perception according to gender, age, occupation, income, education and residential environment. Although openness and modernity in one's perception and values are derived from one's personality and individual choices, we could figure out some common/different trends according to neighbourhood and age. The central aim of this chapter is to analyse how general trends in perception have differently or commonly appeared as well as what peculiar aspects there have been among the sixty interviewees in two distinct middle class neighbourhoods.

4.1 Marriage

Topics in the interview schedule regarding perception of marriage include the age of marriage, preference for arranged or love marriage, and preference for a spouse from the same community, caste and religion or otherwise. Accordingly, this section will look into the different trends in age of marriage, preference for arranged or love marriage, and inter-caste or inter-religion marriage, as well as any similar features, by comparing and contrasting the two areas.

Differences 1: Proportion of Love and Arranged Marriages

One marked contrast between the two neighbourhoods was the proportion of love and arranged marriages. The proportion of love marriages among married interviewees was higher in Vasant Kunj than in Vijay Nagar. At the same time, arranged endogamous marriages were overwhelmingly to be found among interviewees in Vijay Nagar, especially those who were in their forties or older. Since Vijay Nagar was built to rehabilitate refugees from Pakistan after Partition, most of the residents of the colony were Punjabi Hindus, and they had strong solidarity and attachment to each other because they shared sorrows and joys as a result of the similar historical background to their lives. In this way, it is possible that unfamiliarity with other communities has been reflected in a relatively high rate of arranged endogamous marriages in Vijay Nagar since they have established close bonds as they have been surrounded by the same community for fifty years. This residential environment, which has mostly been comprised of Punjabi Hindus, could lead to a greater number of arranged marriages in Vijay Nagar than in Vasant Kunj.

However, it seems that the tendency for arranged marriage is naturally decreasing among the young generation in Vijay Nagar. Having premarital relationships and love marriages regardless of caste and religion are no longer unfamiliar phenomena for unmarried groups in Vijay Nagar, while endogamous arranged marriage was the norm in their parents' generation. Interviewees in their twenties certainly favoured opening their minds in choosing their own marriage partner based on romantic love and emotions. This growing preference for love marriage among those in their twenties in Vijay Nagar is attributable to increasing opportunities to meet prospective partners as a result of exposure in many places and diverse ways such as college, clubs, parties and online. In addition, the diminishing bonds with neighbours of the same community due to an influx of outsiders from different communities and castes has also brought about a proliferation of love marriages among the young generation in Vijay Nagar.

Nevertheless, this does not mean that preference for arranged endogamous marriages was not observed among young people in both areas. A few unmarried interviewees in

their twenties in both neighbourhoods disclosed their preference for an arranged endogamous marriage. For example, one Punjabi Hindu male in his twenties working in a private company was in favour of an arranged endogamous marriage because he wanted to follow his parents' wishes. Also, some interviewees stated that they did not mind either an arranged or a love marriage because there was no particular reason to avoid an arranged marriage. This seems to be because the mode of arrangement has changed towards a focus on personal happiness in a congenial relationship as in a love marriage, particularly among the urban middle class (Fuller & Narasimhan, 2008: 751). In recent years, middle class marriage has become a form of companionship marriage – 'a bond between two intimate selves'⁴⁴ – as young people are actively participating in the selection of suitable partners, even in arranged marriages (Fuller & Narasimhan, 2008:750-1).

Differences 2: Age of Marriage

With regards to the age of marriage, although some women in their thirties in Vasant Kunj also had arranged marriages and their age at marriage had been around their mid-twenties, the age of marriage for women was higher in Vasant Kunj than in Vijay Nagar. Quite a few of the married women in Vijay Nagar, not only in their forties and older but also in their thirties and late twenties got married in their early twenties. Their children were much older than the children of women of the same age in Vasant Kunj. For example, ladies who were thirty years old with children of age eight were common in Vijay Nagar, while it was not difficult to find single women in their thirties in Vasant Kunj, as we have seen in the case study of Puneet. The peculiar point is that these young women in Vijay Nagar now in their late twenties or early thirties, who got married in their early twenties, were actually highly educated.

44 Parry, 2001: 816, quoted in Fuller & Narasimhan, 2008: 751.

Similarities: Liberal Attitudes towards Inter-Caste, Inter-Religion, Love Marriage, and Preference for Caste Endogamy

A common feature in the perceptions of marriage between the two neighbourhoods could be seen among interviewees in their twenties in both areas. They had generous and positive attitudes towards inter-caste, inter-religion and love marriages due to the rise of individual freedom of choice for a suitable partner. Especially on the Hindu side, getting married to a Muslim was considered acceptable without any deep-rooted hostility and prejudice, while their parents' generation was reluctant to allow their children to marry a Muslim. However, for this reason, the young generation predicted difficulty in marrying a Muslim due to their parents' opposition. Even though they dream of a love marriage based on romantic love which can overcome the endogamy of the traditional dominant norm, they do not want to confront their parents' objections.

By contradiction, a minority of interviewees from the young generation in their twenties and thirties have disclosed their unwillingness to marry a Muslim or person from a lower caste or to accept them as their children's future spouse, even though this was not a dominant opinion. This could be demonstrated by the fact that we could find only general caste/general caste couples, even if they had a love marriage, while no general caste with lower caste/Muslim couples were detected among all the interviewees.

They adduced different cultural capital such as lifestyle, culture, history and mindset as the reason for their hesitation to embrace lower castes and Muslims as their or their children's possible marriage partner.

(Sang) Does caste matters in marriage now?

(Interviewee): Sometimes it's very necessary... In marriage, caste matters. We need to see which caste a person belongs to, because lower caste lifestyles, way of talking, everything is different from ours.

(Sang): Do you prefer to get marry within same caste?

(Interviewee): I will try to look within my own caste for my marriage... But even if I

bring a woman from a lower caste who has a good material condition and good family background, my parents will not allow... My parents will object, so I would not prefer that...

(M, Self-employed, 24 years old, Punjabi Hindu, Vijay Nagar)

A thirty-eight year old married Brahman woman in Vasant Kunj gave a frank confession in answer to the question about what will happen if her children bring Muslim or lower caste people as their prospective spouse.

For example, if a Brahman has to marry a Bhaniya or Kshatriya, things will be slightly more flexible with them... But when it comes to Dalits or SC, OBC, I feel they would never match because of their mindset... This is a very frank opinion... I'm not saying because it is their fault... They were born in this society... Our society is a very different society... Before, whosoever was doing a particular task was given a name... Anybody who is doing puja was a Brahman, Dalits are those who were doing cleaning which was like a dirty job... In our society, we always say what you eat and what you do makes the kind of person you are... If you eat healthy, you think healthy, if you stay in the dirt, you will be dirty... We have these prejudices which are not letting us come out of it... We are not able to keep them into our part when it comes to marriage, frankly speaking... We have those prejudices... I have seen my friends who belong to the same section, like who earn the same income above Rs. 3 lakh like us, they are very open towards drinking and all kinds of things, but when it comes to the marriage of their daughters or sons, they rather say "not a Dalit, not a Muslim"... They would not be happy for doing it... They will say to their children, "not a Dalit"... It's not only applied to the Brahmans... Other castes are also the same... Bhaniya always want to marry Bhaniya, Kshatriya want their children to marry Kshatriya only... In our society, we believe that it is the 'dreams'... We talk about our dreams... We will be altered in case we get somebody from another community. They used to say we are Aryan blood. They have not got mixed with other races. They are pure Aryan blood... We don't want to get out of a particular our sect because we feel this would provide us the best progeny... Kshatriya marry Kshatriya... If a warrior marries a warrior, the warrior blood would give definitely a better warrior... That is what it is.

(F, Housewife and self-employed, 38 years old, Vasant Kunj)

Her narrative demonstrates that preference for caste endogamy still persists among the

urban middle class, in contrast to the earlier finding of a general favourable trend towards inter-caste, inter-religion and love marriages among the young generation.

Also, her dialogue suggests a number of considerable points about the psychology of the upper middle class who are upper caste. First, her reluctance to consider lower castes for marriage arises from her biased assumption that the fundamental mindset of lower castes does not coincide with that of the upper castes because of their inferiority complex and lack of pride due to their long history of suppression. Secondly, her actual expectation for her children's marriage was caste endogamy, namely a Brahman/Brahman couple. She said that caste endogamy is in fact a 'dream' for every parent as regards their children's marriage. This suggests that the mentality of maintaining 'pure upper caste blood' from generation to generation through caste endogamy persists among the young urban middle class.

In this way, marriage is an institution of the reproduction of social inequality in as much as it promotes the merging of class and social status. In addition, caste plays a role in the idea of the Indian marriage as an expression of the principle of separation (Dumont, 1980: 109) Caste separates from other groups by forbidding marriage outside segments of caste groups (Ibid.). It stipulates endogamy and induces the reproduction of itself from generation to generation (Ibid.: 112). Here, the psychology of maintaining the lineage and blood purity seems to result in a preference for endogamous marriage among the current young middle class. At the same time, a desire to minimise dissension and maximise stability in married life could be another factor in the persistence of endogamous boundaries.

The current young middle class, therefore, appears to follow more complex and diversified ways in terms of marriage system although generally being more receptive, while a fixed trend of arranged endogamous marriage was pervasive among the old generation.

4.2 Status of women

To understand the status of women in the urban middle class, three main questions were utilised. The first asked about the practice of women going out to work after marriage. We asked men whether they preferred to have as their spouse a working woman or a housewife, and we asked women about their willingness to work outside the home after marriage. The second question investigated views on the relationship between women's dress, restriction on time and sexual violence. The last enquired about the division of housework between husband and wife. The questions were adjusted according to gender and marital status.

This is the theme which showed the sharpest contrast between interviewees of the two neighbourhoods. Also, the actual status of urban middle class women could be seen in the dialogues of the female interviewees rather than those of the males since it is women that are directly involved in and undergo their current state in the world. For this reason, we need to pay attention to the way in which conservative/liberal views appeared differently in the perspectives of the women and how the status of women is distinguished in two distinct middle class neighbourhoods. At the same time, the de facto state and struggle middle class women are undergoing which emerges from the narratives of the females are worth noticing, although most of the interviewees agreed that the status of women has been improving in comparison with their parents' generation.

Differences 1: Preference for Working Women

Regarding the distinction between the two neighbourhoods, men showed different preferences for working women for different reasons. Single men in Vasant Kunj were highly in favour of a working woman as their prospective partner, or did not care whether she was a working woman or a housewife. All the wives of married men in their thirties or forties were working outside the home. Sanjay, the subject of Case Study in chapter VI in Vasant Kunj, stated that wives in transitional middle class households like his which aspire to upward mobility into the upper middle class are

generally employed outside the home, as verified by the fact that most of his friends' wives were working outside in recent times.

The typical Indian middle class income for a man would probably be Rs. 25-30,000. Probably 7/10 of the women are full-time housewives, which segregates them from the middle class aspiring to be upper middle class. In an aspiring upper middle class family, generally both (husband and wife) are working. Women in stereotypical middle class family are always looking after their children, the man's parents and their partner, even though they might possibly want to work.

On the other hand, he added that some of his friends, despite being highly educated, do not approve of their wives working outside the home. According to Sanjay, this is due to the backgrounds in which they grew up, which have given them a patriarchal mentality, so that they do not want to create an environment in which women can challenge their dominant authority in the household as a result of their financial independence.

Most of my friends who are like engineers, they want their wife to stay at home... These things are ingrained... Maybe because they have been brought up and have seen their father not allow their mother to work outside... So that sensibility is somewhere deep-rooted in them... They would not want their wife to work in spite of the fact that they might have the best education, might have an MBA degree, or have lots of money... These are nothing to do with this sensibility... It's very orthodox...

It's not related to money. It's because of upbringing... It's because in a way, if a woman is working and has some sort of financial independence, then come tomorrow, she might question him... They don't want that because women have to depend on men even for Rs. 10 also... They don't want any questions (from his wives).

This narrative from Sanjay can be associated with the result that men in Vijay Nagar were more partial to a fulltime housewife than men in Vasant Kunj. Even quite a few single young men in Vijay Nagar desired a dedicated homemaker as their future wife, stating that women should be responsible for homemaking, with taking care of their in-laws, husband and children being their primary duty, and women should not run

after money by working in the public arena like men.

Differences 2: Reasons for Preference for Working Women

Another disparity between the two neighbourhoods was the grounds for a favourable attitude towards women going out to work.

In the case of Vasant Kunj, young male respondents were working in white-collar jobs having completed at least graduate level degrees. They wanted women with educational qualifications who are engaged in professional employment as wives. Their reasons were first that they considered women should also be given opportunities for self-fulfillment since they are highly educated, and secondly that it makes it easier to build common sense and perspectives and share distress in conjugal relations due to women's increasing social activities in the public arena. Thirdly, they preferred women who have the power to make decisions and life choices, that is 'independent' women, rather than those who are traditionally considered as good, those who are devoted to and dependent on their families.

On the contrary, the main reason for male interviewees in Vijay Nagar who were in favour of having a working woman as their wife was to lessen their own burden in meeting the household budget as living expenses were increasing, rather than any support for the self-realisation of their wife.

Differences 3: The Relation between Woman's Dress, Time Restrictions and Sexual Violence

The second question regarding perception of the relationship between a woman's dress, time restriction and sexual assault has also presented a significant contrast between interviewees in the two localities. Regardless of gender, most of the young interlocutors in Vasant Kunj emphasised that women should enjoy the same rights as men in terms of space and time of mobility, and choice of dress. Although they agreed that women need to be cautious of wandering around alone at night, rape cases were considered to be entirely the result of a problem in the mentality of the assailant, not

women's skimpy attire or failure to adhere to time restriction.

On the contrary, as we have seen in the case studies of Rajesh, Mina and Ruchi in Vijay Nagar, interlocutors in Vijay Nagar indicated overwhelmingly conservative views towards women's fashion for skimpy dress, roaming around at midnight, clubbing, drinking and smoking. They associated these 'unconventional' behaviours on the part of women with sexual attack. Even some of the interviewees in their twenties agreed with this opinion. According to them, women are required to be more controlled and not get drunk, follow time restriction and be more cautious of what they wear than men. Even female interviewees did not have the will to try revealing modern fashion, or the club and drinking culture themselves, and did not regard those things as positive.

Differences 4: Actual Lives of Women after Marriage

Above all, I perceived dissimilarity in the lives of women after marriage in the two localities according to their family background, income, occupation, and environment of their husband's family. In Vasant Kunj, married women have relatively equal status, rights, and decision-making power with men within the domestic arena, compared to women in Vijay Nagar. Some young married women in Vijay Nagar confessed their dependent and inferior status in conjugal relations, and adverse circumstances within the household of their in-laws.

The following narratives of a young married woman in Vijay Nagar who categorised herself as lower middle class, which suggests linkages between the status of women and modern values, and the backgrounds of their in-laws like income or occupation are worthy of notice.

I don't think the status of middle class women has improved... I'm a dependent woman... I totally depend on my husband for my expenses... It totally depends on whether a woman is working or not, and it depends on what kind of family you are married to, and what kind of family you are living in... I'm from a very orthodox (in-laws) family, and I don't have any right to take my decisions... So I'm totally dependent

on my mother-in-law and husband... I have capability but I'm not authorised... I can take decisions and I can buy my things but I have to ask for money... They are orthodox, so I have to follow the customs even if I'm not willing to... So if you are asking whether the status of women is changing in middle class families, I'd say it totally depends on your family how qualified they are.

My mother-in-law is not too educated, so it's hard to make her understand things... My situation was better in my mother's home. But now it is downgraded. Now I'm very dependent and hesitate when I'm asking some things... I feel reluctant in saying something because I have to adjust (to my husband's family).

Let's suppose if I marry a good and educated family, the situation would be different. Like my friend's mother-in-law was working as a principal in a school, she worked outside and she has seen society... How boys and girls talk to each other and meet each other... But in my case, it is going to be totally different. If I talk to any guy, they (parents-in-law) would object saying something like 'why are you talking to strangers'... This is the difference... If you are a broad-minded person, then you can give liberty to the other person. This is the difference between the lower middle and upper middle class... If you have good finances then you can go to the mall, market and shop, you can talk with others... Let's suppose if I'm talking to a guy, people around me might think 'She must be wrong and she must be going on a date'. This is their thinking... But if you are in a broad-minded and educated family and if they are also working, then they understand what the situation is... So this is the difference between the lower middle and upper middle class.

(F, Housewife, 28 years old, Vijay Nagar Single Storey)

She was the only respondent who said that the status of contemporary middle class women has not been improving. The reason seems to be derived from her own experiences in her husband's lower middle class family who have a narrow-minded background. She could not be independent in decision-making and had no economic power due to her old-fashioned and orthodox husband's family circumstances. Also, talking with any guy is unacceptable behaviour for her in-laws. But she thought that this would be not intolerable in an upper class and educated family, and said that these values actually differentiate the upper middle class from the lower middle class. Regardless of her high-level of education, and her modernised and open mindset, her

position and quality of life was decided by the narrow mindset of her husband's family.

Similarities: Struggles to Manage Compatible Values in Women's Married Lives

Even though there are disparities between the two neighbourhoods in terms of the status of women within the domestic arena, women in both neighbourhoods are similar in terms of their struggle to handle dual duties, that is their family and their career.

First, most single women had a strong volition to go out to work after marriage, even after childbirth. They recognised as necessary their role and duty as full-time carers of their children for some years after delivery, but hoped to pursue their professional identity through their career again later.

The second resemblance was that an obsession to be a 'perfect woman' was inherent in the women themselves. A twenty year old female interviewee in Vijay Nagar told me that the Indianness inside her means there is an ingrained mindset of being a 'perfect woman' which has been taught as a role model for Indian women. This means that managing and balancing both a career and domestic tasks, ideally without neglecting any of the duties or roles of mother, wife, daughter-in-law and homemaker, is indispensable for Indian married women.

The following narratives of a 42 year old female doctor living in Vasant Kunj are examples of the conflict between Indianness and the professional identity of upper middle class, professional working women. For her, the Indianness inside her is about feeling strong affection for her family as well as believing in her husband as a god. Sustaining the traditional patriarchal relationship between husband and wife is her indelible mentality.

I still believe in the relationship between husband and wife... If my husband scolds me, and even if I don't have any fault, I accept it because of my Indianness... Even I want to

give it up, but I can't give it up.

I am deeply rooted in my husband as my god... Whenever we travel, I still make tea for him in the morning because of my Indianness... Although I don't agree it is important, I still cannot let it go in spite of he does not respect me sometimes... In India, a husband is a boss... And I accept it because I cannot let it go... I can't get rid of it.

(F, Doctor, 42 years old, Vasant Kunj)

At the same time, she was struggling to manage both housework and her professional job. Despite her excellent qualifications as a doctor, she should always step behind in terms of pursuing her career compared with her husband who is also a doctor. She added that Indian men are characteristically egoistic and arbitrary, while Indian women maintain a constant temperament due to the different child rearing methods employed by mothers for their sons and their daughters.

If I hadn't got married, I would have been 10 years ahead of what I am now... Since I'm married, I have to leave my husband more space for his career, and I have to take a back seat... I don't know how it is in other countries, but in India it happens... All my friends are facing the same problem... Even if I am more qualified than my husband, I have to take a back seat because my husband cannot be a mother... I have to take care of my son getting up, going to school, doing his homework, getting dressed... My husband can also do it, but maybe only for one day... In India, girls' habits are very consistent... In a family in India, the husband fluctuates a lot... Sometimes he loves me, but sometimes I don't know what to do because they are brought up like that... Boy children are entitled to do anything they like, if he wants to eat in bed, let me give him food in bed... Even most educated boys in India behave this way... My husband is wonderful, but he is like that... I told him, 'Can you drop him (son) to school today?' and he replied, 'No, today I don't want to. It is your duty'... At 7am we fought... I'm consistent... Even if I'm not well, I'll make a point and I'll do it... But boys are brought up like that because their mothers accept it... So he expects me to accept the way his mother did.

The final similarity is in women's oppression and struggle in living with their in-laws. Even though the quality of life of married women was somewhat different in the two

middle class localities according to their family background, income and the environment of their in-laws, there was a certain mental pressure on the married women due to the residence rule of Indian families which is 'patri-virilocal', meaning that the son's bride should live with her husband's family, at least during their newly-married stage (Uberoi, 2006: 30). When the new bride enters her new family, her situation is totally different between her natal home and her conjugal home in terms of personality, status, responsibilities and even name (Ibid.).

For example, according to a 35 year old married woman who had completed her postgraduate education and was working in a professional job, she cannot challenge her in-laws unreasonable behaviour derived from their confined traditional perception based on gender based-norms, despite her feminist character. The principle of 'patri-virilocal' residence acts as an obstruction for women to achieve their dream of complete individual independence away from their families. By contradiction, family bonding which is considered her Indianness creates a feeling of interdependence between the family members, but at the same time causes a struggle due to not being independent from the family.

A 30 year old woman in Vijay Nagar who had an arranged marriage with a Punjabi Hindu man and is now living with his parents and grandparents explained that she belonged to the middle class and recently started working as a tutor again since her daughter was now 8 years old.

In our family, the in-laws, they want everything to be the same the way it was, even if I'm working outside... What they want is "If you want to work outside and earn extra, there is no problem, but there should be no change in the family setup"... But in an upper class family, it would not be like that... They can freely go and work and handle their business... And household work can be distributed and handled by somebody else... The expectation (from the in-laws' side) is always there on the part of the daughter-in-law, whether you are in a middle class or upper middle class family... But there will be no expectation in the elite class... I think in the elite class, the daughter-in-law has to make her family look well-maintained and their job is only doing social work... These are the kinds of expectation from elite class people for their daughter-in-laws... But in our situation, the only expectation on the part of the in-laws is "If you

want to work, we don't have any issues, but there should be no changes in household responsibilities"... This is the major difference between the classes.

(F, Housewife and tutor, 30 years old, Vijay Nagar Single Storey)

According to her, the situation in the households of women who work outside after marriage would depend on which class their husband's family belongs to, whether they are upper class or middle class. For middle class married women, it is important to fulfil their in-laws' expectations, regardless of their engagement in work.

Consequently, the struggles of middle class married women ironically come from the family bonding or obedience to the family which is inherent in their mind as a core Indian value. Contemporary middle class women desire to have equal decision-making power and status within the domestic sphere through economic independence as a result of their earning ability along with seeking autonomous identity, but at the same time, their role model Sita which has been taught from their childhood and imposed duties and sacrifices on women to become an ideal Indian woman (Lau, 2010: 284) would catch up with women to achieve self-independent identity. In other words, the responsibility towards their family makes women suffer from a compulsion to be a 'perfect woman' who should satisfy her family's expectations as well as fulfilling her professional identity through her career.

4.3 Caste

The topic of caste was involved in three main inquiries designed to explore the importance of caste to respondents via the practice of commensality in urban middle class lives by asking whether respondents felt hesitancy in consuming food prepared by Muslim people or members of lower castes and examining the changes in caste practices between new and old generations.

Compared to viewpoints on women, the topic of caste practice has not presented much contrast between the two middle class locations. However, the patterns of reply shown in the two neighbourhoods were different. Responses from Vasant Kunj were almost invariable, regardless of age, while the pattern in Vijay Nagar was more

dynamic and varied. For example, almost everyone between their twenties and forties in Vasant Kunj was unconcerned about food associated with lower castes, whereas some of youth in Vijay Nagar had taboos about consuming food prepared by lower caste and Muslim individuals.

As mentioned previously, caste still operates as an important factor in marriage practices among the middle class. No interviewees in the two neighbourhoods expressed that untouchability presides in their everyday lives. They argued that lower caste discrimination according to the notions of pure and impure is more pervasive in villages, and only among lower income groups or older generations. They recognized that the caste system is virtually nonexistent in a metropolis like Delhi.

Differences: Caste-based Perception according to Cooking Servant Employment

The distinctions between the two areas are exhibited in the phenomenon of servant employment, which is related to caste-based stereotypes. In Vasant Kunj, most of the interviewees between their twenties and forties employed cooking servants without first inquiring about their castes and religions.

Nevertheless, prejudices associated with caste-based fear of servants was not completely absent among respondents. The case study of Diviya in Vasant Kunj said that the issue of touchability and untouchability in lower castes has now become an issue of hygienic and non-hygienic. She claimed that she felt anxiety over dirt and disease transmission from domestic servants as a result of her experience with a servant's concealment of viral pneumonia for several years, not caste-based prejudice.

In addition, interviewees in Vasant Kunj that belong to the general caste are mostly opposed to policies of caste-based reservations that promote opportunities for SCs and OBCs to enter institutions of education and employment in the administrative system and private sector. A young female teacher in Vasant Kunj noted firm objection to reservation policies, saying, 'We (young generation) don't follow caste system at all; we are not categorizing people by caste...but government themselves only categorize people by reservation...That is the one thing, actually: We feel there is no equality.

We really feel bad'. Furthermore, one school parent in their forties was displeased by the fact that the son of her domestic worker was admitted earlier than her own son into a prestigious public school as a result of reservation, and that they were in the same classroom. Interviewees in Vasant Kunj, regardless of marital status and gender, commonly displayed animosity toward the policy of reservation.

A distinct feature of Vijay Nagar is reluctance in young generations to consume food cooked by lower castes and Muslims in an attempt to comply with the principles of purity, pollution and commensality. The following narrative of a single young male in his twenties began with his confession of the need for his prospective wife to have cooking skills, leaving another homemaking proficiency aside.

(Interviewee): Now young generation male, they want a woman who knows only cooking because other things can be managed by servants.

(Sang): If your wife doesn't cook, then?

(Interviewee): I will not eat food prepared by a servant, so my wife should know how to cook... I'll make sure my wife knows how to cook.

(Sang): Why do not want to eat food prepared by cooking servant?

(Interviewee): Because I have health consciousness...I don't trust them, because since I was born, I have been eating only my mother's food...Since my childhood, I have eaten food prepared by only my mother, so I don't want to rely on cooking servant for food...What kinds of cooking oil they use, I am skeptical about that...Whether they wash their hands for preparing food or not...

(Sang): Why do you think they are dirty?

(Interviewee): Because they don't have sufficient amount of money to buy hygienic food products, so they will use low quality of material.

(Sang): If you give money and let them buy foods according to your order, then, do you think it will be acceptable to eat food prepared by them?

(Interviewee): In that scenario, it can be adjusted to temporarily for one or two days when other people (his family member who can cook for him) are not around with me. I'm helpless, so I should eat food prepared by servant then, I might accept. But not regularly...because most of time she spends time in her house.

(Sang): But upper caste people also could not wash their hands and prepare food, right?

(Interviewee): It is related to thinking...We don't know they (upper caste cook) are washing or not, but I may feel like eating.

(M, Self-employed shop owner, 24, General caste, Vijay Nagar Double storey)

His avoidance of food cooked by a maid is quite interesting because it demonstrates that not only is cleanliness a concern, but also that psychological discrimination associated with food and contact in caste practices remains in the urban young middle class. In addition, his stereotypes show that the lower caste is seen to parallel lower class and that lower castes and classes still represent dirt and polluted images associated with the system of caste hierarchy.

In this same vein, it was difficult to find interviewees in Vijay Nagar who employed cooking servants in their households although, young people in the area in their twenties through forties insisted that they were not engaged in the practice of untouchability or commensality related to caste prejudice. They stated that fear of dirt and lack of cleanliness in servants is the primary reason for avoiding servant cooks, and elaborated that they have been brought up in an environment that has accustomed them to eating only their mothers' food only.

An opinion of a servant whom I met in Vijay Nagar falls in line with this. According to her, to employ servants for cooking is an uncommon occurrence among original residents in the area, whereas most of the college students who were staying in PG allowed servants to cook. A fifty-four-year-old woman who was a government sector banker also agreed with this assessment of the situation in Vijay Nagar. In her case, she started to retain a cooking maid to help ease the challenges of managing both work and homemaking, though she prefers to cook by herself. When servants enter her household, she orders them to follow her directions, such as washing hands and drying with a specific towel before cooking, in order to prevent the transmission of germs and disease. Despite concerns about the lack of cleanliness of domestic servants, hiring a cooking servant was unavoidable for working couples and families with limited time.

So what marks the distinction between the two neighbourhoods in terms of

employment of cooking servants? Why do young middle class residents in Vasant Kunj hire servants to cook while families in Vijay Nagar do not depend on servants for cooking, even though it is generally acknowledged that commensality and untouchability engaged in caste practices are diminishing in urban everyday life?

First, females and male interviewees' wives in Vasant Kunj were all employed. Practicality is more important to these working women than traditional concerns related to food practices due to a lack of time for handling both household affairs and outside employment. On the other hand, even youth in Vijay Nagar were not likely to have opportunities to become accustomed to eating servants' cooking because they have been eating only their mothers' cooking due to lack of experience of shift to another places or independence from family.

Second, food practice concerns based on the caste system were more common in Vijay Nagar. The contrast between the two neighbourhoods shows a correlation between level of education/exposure to new circumstances and a caste-based outlook.

Lastly, there is a disparity in financial status between the two areas. Residents of Vasant Kunj are likely to use their enhanced economic position to pursue comfort and practicality, while the logic of interviewees in Vijay Nagar might come from a psychology of self-defense since they have no choice but to perform labor themselves and live with inconveniences to save money.

Consequently, it seems reasonable to assume that economic capital and cultural capital, including education and exposure to society, determine to a certain extent people's perceptions of caste and flexibility in caste practices.

4.4 Family

To explore changes in the contemporary Indian middle class family system, interview forms took note of the following opinions for each interviewee: preference for a joint or nuclear family, intergenerational changes in family hierarchy, obligations, decision-

making power of different family members, child-rearing methods, and influence of parents on career and marriage choices. The theme of family system was not very different between the two middle class locations; instead, differences between old and new generations were more prominent. Gender differences regarding family values are also worth paying attention to in this section.

Similarities: Maintaining Rule of Patri-Virilocal, Recent Trend of keeping Nuclear and One-child Family, and Importance of Family Values as Indianness

Obvious similarities between the two neighbourhoods are that many interviewees consider their close-knit family bonds and attachment to family values as their Indianness, which never disappears, and that a generation gap in attitudes toward family values is present between young interviewees (in their twenties through forties in Vasant Kunj and in their twenties in Vijay Nagar) and their parents' generation (including interviewees who were in their fifties or older) due to the emergence of globalization, westernization, urbanization and the media.

First of all, most married interviewees in both areas were still living with the husband's parents unless they had passed away or resided in other states. Households generally constituted the parental couple or a single parent living together with the married son and his family. According to Uberoi (2006:24), this type of family has been recognized as the present form of joint household, which is regarded as the restricted form of the 'stem family'. It seems that the residence rule of 'patri-virilocal' (Uberoi, 2006: 30) continues in the form of the urban middle class family.

Another mutual feature is that most interviewees above their thirties have spent some time in a joint family structure. Many interviewees, regardless of their ages, concurred with family bonds, children's obedience and duty towards parents, and that the level of hierarchy in family is decreasing in recent household structures. They pointed out that this phenomenon has resulted from changes in family types from traditional joint/extended family structures into nuclear family⁴⁵ structures due to urbanization

⁴⁵ Tripathi's study (2014) suggests four main types of Indian family structures. First is the traditional

and migration for the sake of employment or children's education. In addition, early adaptation of information through internet, media and higher education among young people lessens obedience to parents as compared to the parents' generation. In previous generations, children were under the control of their parents in terms of important life decisions like marriage and career, and were obliged to obey even trifling rules from their parents, whereas the contemporary generation of youth is seeking autonomy and independence.

Even though these young people have recognized that family bonds, frequent interaction and hierarchy within families have been declining, they regard their Indianness as a strong attachment to the family and a family-centric disposition in themselves. A close-knit family network is how they distinguish themselves from a Western person. According to the interviewees, Indian parents have a duty to provide financial support until children complete the process of education and marriage, which is different from parents in western societies who set their children on their feet as soon as they are grown up. Married interviewees with children from both areas commonly were enthusiastic to invest in their children's education, and considered supporting their children through at least a bachelor's degree to be the minimum responsibility of a parent.

Due to this growing emphasis on children's education, one-child or maximum two-children families mostly consisted of families of married interviewees who are younger than their sixties in both areas. They prefer to concentrate their interest on one or two children, investing money for a good education, particularly for enrollment in private school and tutoring, regardless of occupation, income or level of education. Basu and Desai (2012: 8) argue that the causes for this have much to do with recent changes in economic policy. They state that the latest tendency of low fertility in the middle class has resulted from rising consumption behavior, investment in the

joint family, which consists of the male head of the house, his extended family and his married brothers and their extended families. Second is the patriarchal extended family, comprising a male head of the house, his wife and his married sons and their wives and children. Third is the intermediate joint family, which includes a male head of the house, his wife, his unmarried children and one of his married sons' nuclear families. Fourth is the nuclear family, made up of a male head of the house, his wife and his unmarried children (Tripathi, A.K, 2014: 21).

education of children for upward mobility and competition for limited employment.⁴⁶

Differences: Women's Empowerment in Marital Lives

Disparities in family institutions between Vasant Kunj and Vijay Nagar are likely to be associated with differences in women's empowerment and family backgrounds. First, female interviewees and wives of married male respondents in Vasant Kunj were highly educated and white collar workers, while married female and wives of married males in Vijay Nagar were housewives or engaged in self-employment regardless of education level. Despite the commonality that both groups grew up in households where their mothers were all housewives and the only breadwinners were the males in the household, the style of parenting for daughters in previous generations differed as a result of different family backgrounds between respondents from the two areas. Influenced by these different setups, unequal levels of empowerment of females between the two locations is reflected in conjugal relations within the family structure; therefore, marital relations in Vasant Kunj appear more equal than those in Vijay Nagar.

In both areas, most married women were living together with in-laws according to patrilocal residence; nonetheless, the status of daughter-in law in the husband's households is different between Vasant Kunj and Vijay Nagar. According to Kakar (1981), a daughter-in-law is living under the control and surveillance of her husband's mother in a joint household, preventing the establishment of close ties between husband and wife and following the stereotype that it might break the harmony of the joint family structure.⁴⁷ Given her lonely situation, a wife may devote herself to her children to release her emotional energy (Ibid.), and it may result in overprotection and control of the children. Strong patriarchal arrangements in the extended family

⁴⁶ The new Indian middle class has not had a chance to grow with considerable employment opportunities, different from the Western middle class which emerged with a growth of the salariat (Butler and Savage, 1995, quoted in Basu&Desai, 2012:8). Due to limited job opportunities, the rate of employment and the number of highly educated youth have not balanced. Accordingly, competition for scarce employment opportunities has been dramatically increasing (Basu & Desai, 2012: 8).

⁴⁷ Kakar, 1981. *The Inner World*, Delhi: Oxford University Press, quoted in Derne, 2003: 92.

and the resulting inferior status of the wife might bring about a less independent, less autonomous and less individualistic relationship between mother-child.

A married woman in Vasant Kunj confessed that she cannot give as much love to her children as her parents gave her because her parents' love toward her is unconditional, boundless dedication, selfless, a purpose for living, while caring for her children is, for her, as important as seeking self-identity in her life. Since not only her but also her children want more privacy in terms of space and time, she finds that young generation starts to become more individualistic than her parents' generations:

I think that kind of unconditional love my parents did not exist in me. I'm more individualistic... I need to find myself.... Sometimes I need my own time... That kind of changes has come... The same thing is going to my son... He also need his own space... I feel mutual individualism has increased. But my mother is self-less... We are the life for her. Everything surround her is only me.... But I'm not like that... I have my own life also... For them, everything is child first and then think about themselves... For us, we are middle of it... We are think about us and we think about child also.

(F, 35years old, Housewife and ex-lecturer, Vasant Kunj)

There was also a little disparity in family circumstances, such as conservative vs. liberal mindsets of the parents of interviewees. While interviewees in Vasant Kunj indicated that their parents have more liberal notions, in Vijay Nagar, they were brought up in an atmosphere requiring absolute filial obedience toward parents and superiors. Married interviewees in Vasant Kunj showed more openness to inter-caste, inter-religion and inter-racial marriages for their children, and were more encouraging of their children's employment in art, music and physical fields than were interviewees in Vijay Nagar.

Different Perspectives on the Joint Family according to Gender

Besides differences and similarities between the two middle class locations, we need pay attention to gender differences in value preferences in nuclear or extended families regardless of neighbourhoods. Married male interviewees were living in the

present form of the joint family (his parents, himself and his wife and his children), and single males also stated a preference for living with their parents after marriage unless their jobs were distant from their parents' homes. However, married female interviewees were living with husbands' families, but few single women take it for granted. Otherwise, quite a number of young single females prefer to maintain a nuclear household after marriage. Recent ethnographies and women's oral tradition have shown that women have a propensity to avoid maintaining joint family living, preferring to keep close relationships in the nuclear family structure (Derne, 2003: 103).

It seems that contemporary educated young women have been undergoing inner discord between taking responsibility for the care of their husbands' parents, a result of following the traditional Indian family value of patrilocal residence, and desire independence and freedom from their parents-in-laws. The rule of patri-virilocal residence and the joint family norm is still maintained because Indians are obliged to sustain close family ties and care for their parents, but at the same time, women feel confined when they are not completely independent from their in-laws. This incompatible emotion is an inner struggle of women suffering in middle class families, and the following narrative of a female interviewee in Vasant Kunj describes the current situation of married women:

For me, Indian tradition is loving your parents, taking care of your family, supporting each other...These are what I like (in Indian tradition).What I don't like is when they are in same institution of family, you are not able to separate from each other... Always there is independence and interdependence. That is the conflict of middle class....We can stay alone, but (in reality) we can't afford to stay alone...There is independence because I have my isolated floor, even if we are living together....But, we will not let my mother-in-law alone. She is a widow. We can't her leave alone. So, it's together yet... Traditional values keep together, yet we want to be independent....But, we won't be able to free from the kind of Indian setup...We need each other. We are somewhere in between.....We should be independent in our decision making, in our thinking, in our life choices, but interdependent in terms of sharing and caring.

(F, 35 years old, Psychologist, Vasant Kunj)

The interviewees between the two neighbourhoods agreed with as to the phenomenon of declining family bonds, interdependence, and hierarchy within the middle class family compared to old generations. At the same time, family values in the residents has shown dynamics irrespective of age, gender, income, occupation, family background and neighbourhood. For example, there is a coexistence of contrary opinions in the same age groups, genders and neighbourhoods about, for example, concern over the waning submissive attitude towards elders in the family and a favorable attitude about parent-child relationships becoming more comfortable and intimate. At the very least, it is truly appear that the obvious trend regarding family values appears in the youth that they are becoming more individualistic, autonomous and independent.

4.5 Religion

To explore the differences and similarities in the two neighbourhoods regarding the significance of religion and religiosity in middle class lives, the questions about religion are designed to examine meanings of the term 'religious', methods of religious practice, and changes in the importance of religious practice from older generations to the contemporary young middle class.

First, the responses to the somewhat abstract question of "Are you a religious person?" have shown that the meaning of 'religious' is perceived diversely from person to person, and includes factors such as religious rituality (e.g. going to temple and doing *puja*), believing in god, spirituality, maintenance of mental peace, and even performing kind acts and being nice to others.

Differences: Levels of Religiosity

The contrast between the two middle class locations is shown in levels of religiosity. Vasant Kunj interviewees between their twenties and forties rarely engaged in regular and formal religious participation such as temple activities or doing *puja*. They visit temple on particular days, like festivals or birthdays, and ritual performances for

devotion to god are rarely practiced in their daily lives. They said that they believe in god and have spirituality in their minds, and pray to god whenever they are suffering, but they don't feel the significance of engaging in religious practices every day. They believe that prayer activities can take place in any religious temples regardless of what religion they belong to, and the activities of praying for closeness to god can happen regardless of location because of the belief that god is within oneself. Some of the interviewees were atheist, seeing the concept of being Hindu as just being born in Hindu. According to one female interviewee in Vasant Kunj, she is not religious if the meaning of 'religious' applies to participating in regular and formal religious performances. She put more stress on peaceful relationships with others and loving all people than on immersing herself in religious practices.

The evidence for several scholars' arguments, such as the emergence of new ways of practicing Hindu rituals among the middle class (Saavala, 2001) or the new phenomenon of everyday Hindu practices becoming private while public displays are becoming more visible (Srinivas, 2002),⁴⁸ has not been observed in the fieldwork. One reason is that there is no specific puja room in the household structure in Vasant Kunj,⁴⁹ even if there might be the possibility of doing puja in a space that is left over or hidden, I could not find it.

On the contrary, not only old generation but also some young people in Vijay Nagar were actively involved in the practice of religious rituals. Except for white collar employees and most people in their twenties, many of interviewees were going to temples, engaging in pujas and worshipping at home.

⁴⁸ Srinivas (2002) asserts that a religious phenomenon among the new elite in the aspect of social space is the privatization of puja rooms and a simultaneous increase of public places of worship such as cars, temples, pilgrimage centres and ashrams, according to his findings in Bangalore.

⁴⁹ In case of fieldwork in Vasant Kunj, most interviews were conducted inside interviewees' houses since fieldwork was carried out via introductions from others, as well in the very hot summer season. Contrarily, it was difficult to observe the inside structure of the household in Vijay Nagar since interviews were generally held on the streets or outside the home.

Similarities: Trend of Waning Religious Practices

A common point between the two neighbourhoods is that the importance of religion, religiosity and religious practice has been diminishing in the young middle class compared to older generations.

The contrast between the two localities was discovered in parks by observation. In Vijay Nagar, it is common to see five or six members of middle- or old-aged females gathering together to read religious texts in the daytime while same scene was not noticed in Vasant Kunj parks. Also, the existence of regular weekly gathering of female residents for temple visits was commonly expressed in the neighbourhood. One female interviewee in her fifties who was born in Vijay Nagar confirmed this, stating that women in this area congregate for the purpose of practicing religion instead of kitty parties⁵⁰. Her dialogue implies that middle class identity is more associated with religiosity than is upper class identity.

Kitty party culture is business class family culture...They (generally female) meet for lunch and play cards, gamble.... But instead of that, the purpose of gathering for middle class people is because they want to visit temples and listen Ram katha⁵¹, Bhagavad Gita⁵²...Middle class people want to go for religious activities instead of kitty party.

(F, Housewife and Government bank clerk, 54 years old, Vijay Nagar Single Storey)

Rohan⁵³ also insisted on this linkage of religion with class. According to him, people

⁵⁰ A kitty party is a social gathering among upper middle class women, held once a month, at which a sum of money is collected from each person and given to one member of the group. The culture of kitty parties among middle class women has grown since Indian independence. Kitty parties provide an arena for upper caste and urban middle class women to save money and help these women construct social networks outside their families. Waldrop's interviewees in Delhi emphasized that forming friendships is the main reason for regular participation. Besides that, kitty parties are about the 'three S's': shadi (marriage), sona (gold) and saris for the participants; therefore, it is also connected to gossip, showing off and conspicuous consumption (Waldrop, 2011(b): 162-168).

⁵¹ *Katha* means story.

⁵² Bhagavad Gita refers to a special part of the Hindu ancient epic 'Mahabharata'.

⁵³ He is one of the objects of case study in chapter VI.

who are sitting and singing in temples are mostly typically middle class groups rather than upper middle or upper class. Srivastava (2009: 341) also discovered some common characteristics of visitors to Akshardham Temple based on his observations for several months there. Mainly non-English speaking, people who doesn't look like they are in the upper middle classes, extended families and larger groups and women or all-women groups comprise visitors to the temple.

Although the general trend of middle class youth is to be less religious, a few young middle class individuals expressed their devout religiosity by everyday performance of puja within the domestic unit. One intriguing experience during the fieldwork was with visiting *Gurdwara* with one thirty-year-old, self-employed Sikh female in Vasant Kunj. She visited *Gurdwara* every day in order to invoke the favor of god for reconciliation with her ex-boyfriend. Her faithful practice of this ritual actually engaged in making her private wish, as Saavala (2001: 307) emphasizes that devotionalism such as serving god in new middle class lives is associated with pursuing earthly desires such as success, material well-being, employment and gaining high scores on examinations.

4.6 Consumption Practices

The prominent feature of the new Indian middle class that distinguishes it from the old middle class and from upper and lower classes is increasing consumption practices and aspirations for consumption (Baviskar&Ray, 2011; Fernandes, 2006; Nisbett, 2009; Platz, 2014). The results of interviews about consumption practices also shows that young generations in both neighbourhoods commonly felt a marked difference from their parents in consumption patterns and spending behavior. Accordingly, the fieldwork results of the practice of consumption display the most striking contrast between old and new generations compared to other values about marriage, women, caste, family and religion. Besides intergenerational changes, the differences in two middle class areas and gender are also presented in the interviews.

To explore contemporary middle class consumption culture, I asked about brand

preferences, frequency of visits to shopping malls, shopping places, desires for luxury brands or conspicuous consumption, value of money and changes in consumption patterns from parents' generations to the new generations of interviewees. This section will discuss differences and similarities between the locations, generations and genders in regards to these questions.

Gender Differences

It was found that female interviewees were more interested in shopping for fashion items such as apparel, shoes and accessories and visited shopping malls more frequently than males. Nevertheless, young males in Vasant Kunj (twenties to forties) and Vijay Nagar (twenties) are beginning to adorn themselves as the culture of being conscious of others is emerging.

Intergenerational Differences

There were certain differences between youth and their parents in terms of brand consciousness, frequency of going to malls, value of money, saving and spending habits and where money is spent. Among other things, young interviewees mostly pointed out that the most noticeable generational gap in the practice of consumption is changes in the ideas of saving and spending. While parents' generations valued only saving their limited amount of money and were under the strain with it, the new generations are more likely to spend, and desires for consumption are escalating now. According to the youth, their parents only value saving, and feel guilty of spending because they do not glean pleasure from obtaining material possessions, whereas the young generations tend to spend money first and work for surplus income later. Since global markets have produced a wide variety of consumer goods since economic liberalization, the post-liberalization middle class harbors desires for consuming and owning these goods. People those who purchase these consumer goods show off their wealth and compete with others' possessions, and people who do not own these consumer goods are tempted to acquire them.

Besides commodities, young generations' entertainment culture, consisting of things

like nights out, partying, smoking and drinking, was not prevalent in their parents' time. Instead, their parents mainly spent their leisure time with family, friends and neighbours within the household.

There is a generational gap in the culture of food, travel, movies and music as well. Since parents' generations were not living in a time of acceptance of global and western influence, transnational and new cultures that are different from Indian food, movies music are alien and unacceptable for them. They are stingy with spending money since they are imbued with Gandhian ideals of frugality, saving and constraint. Their consumption pattern is characterized as simple, saving and thrifty, and afraid of high-risk-taking. On the other hand, young generations are experimental and desire newly available and diverse products in the global market. Parents have not changed from traditional Indian consumption patterns which idealize saving for the future, while youth are more attached to the motto of 'enjoy the present', following western styles of spending.

Spatial Differences

Exploring the different points in consumption practices between the two neighbourhoods, brand awareness, ownership of luxury branded items, frequency of visits to shopping malls and restaurants, shopping places and taste of food, has shown a difference in trends between them.

In the case of young people in Vasant Kunj, males are more inclined to prefer branded clothes and shoes. They tend to shop for branded fashion items but avoid luxuries and overly expensive items. Since males do not shop as often as females, and they also feel it necessary to maintain class status within their social circles, their habits do not express the pursuit of aesthetic for their own pleasure. Their favorite shopping place is the mall, and they visit malls at least once to a maximum of four times in a month for eating and watching movies in addition to shopping. According to a thirty-six-year-old white collar male, malls are preferred for their easy accessibility (based on geographic proximity since Vasant Kunj has one of the biggest malls in Delhi), their lack of bargaining practices and for shopping comfort. When he needs to buy shoes,

he prefers to purchase mid-priced shoes, around 2000 rupees, in shopping malls instead of going to a chaotic local market to bargain with vendors there.

None of them own expensive luxury brand cars, but they disclosed some degree of desire for owning them in the future. Using of credit cards or taking loans for the regular upgrade of house or car is pervasive and non-problematic for their generation of middle class.

Males in their twenties in Vijay Nagar have shown the tendency to prefer brand names even in small accessories like body sprays, perfumes and belts, and also in engagement with consumer culture via partying, clubbing, drinking and travelling.

On the other hand, since average age of marriage is earlier in Vijay Nagar than in Vasant Kunj, male heads of household in their thirties and forties have already observed the widening gulf between their children and themselves regarding consumer culture. They were displeased with their children's materialistic tendencies, such as being never satisfied with what they had even though necessities were available, insistent demanding and craving for new products like clothes, food, mobile phones and gadgets, preference for brand items and indulgence in pleasure-oriented entertainment. The older generations did not have brand consciousness, were not interested in fashion and leisure, and rarely visit shopping malls. They seem to be remote from consumerism-based contemporary society.

Between groups in their twenties and those in their forties, there were tangible disparities in terms of real purchasing power of branded commodities and accessibility and frequency of mall visits, as well as activities pursued in shopping malls, between two neighbourhoods.

With regard to branded commodities, real purchasing power seems to be stronger among youth in Vasant Kunj than in Vijay Nagar, even though both of them placed equal value on commercial brand names and luxury fashion brands. Some young males in Vijay Nagar attempted to satisfy their desires for luxury brands by purchasing imitations in traditional local markets.

The purpose of activities in shopping malls between young age groups in the two areas were quite different. For Vasant Kunj residents, spending time in malls leads to spending money on dining out, drinking coffee in Starbucks, watching movies or doing grocery shopping, even if they only like to purchase expensive items on sale. However, visiting malls for some young respondents in Vijay Nagar was not linked to consuming something specific, but rather soaking up a sophisticated atmosphere, taking pictures and roaming around. According to Mathur (2010), the people who visit the malls generally fall into two different categories. The first category is ‘serious buyers’, which comprises over-35-year-old professionals and makes up about 20% of regular mall visitors. They consume based on brands and styles that show their status in society. They prefer to purchase products from a mall rather than a local market to avoid overcrowded, unsafe and chaotic atmospheres and price bargaining (Mathur, 2010: 221). The second category is ‘casual buyers’, which makes up 80% of regular mall visitors, comprises mostly young people following social impulses and wanting to follow new trends in fashion and food without interference from family members, as well as people who do not yet belong to the new middle class in terms of income levels. They rarely engage in large purchases, and mostly spend money on food and entertainment (Ibid.).

These two categories, which are divided based on different patterns of expenditure and choice, reflect this heterogeneity of the new middle class according to Mathur (Mathur, 2010: 222). Therefore, the new middle class is not a homogeneous consumer group comprising only modernized Indians who construct their identities through self-representation and reproduction. (Ibid.).

In Srivastava’ study (2014), activities and intentions in visiting malls in India are different according to class and gender. According to Srivastava (2014: 68), the mall is the space where distinction, urban culture, and the aspirations of urban citizen converge, as well as a reflective place of social and cultural changes associated with the growth in number of middle class female consumers.

Brand consciousness, preference for brand, ownership and availability of luxury international brands are predominantly higher in females in their thirties and forties in

Vasant Kunj than in Vijay Nagar. Their choice of brand is even linked to determination of their children's public school and food product purchases. However, there was also a tendency of ignorance of brand name in terms of fashion items. Since women were more tied into the latest trends in fashion than men, they enjoyed shopping in both local markets and shopping malls, especially in sale seasons. They frequently visited shopping malls, a maximum of 7-8 times in a month, and visiting this social 'fortresses' that excludes people those who cannot be part of the new middle class consumers (Voyce, 2007: 2055) seems to be an ordinary life activity for these Vasant Kunj interviewees. In the same vein, a 38-year-old female interviewee, stated, 'We visit shopping malls on every weekend these days instead of visiting family or relatives' reflecting that frequent engagement with shopping malls has become a trend in this area.

Her narrative also expressed a longing for luxury commodities, and she mentioned kitty party culture among Vasant Kunj housewives. According to her, almost all housewives in Vasant Kunj are members of at least one kitty party, and the kitty parties of wives of rich husbands are organized with the aim of buying luxury commodities.

In Vasant Kunj, people have kitties. It means culture of having party....This is lunch party for ladies....It's another feature of upper middle class....upper middle class believe in lot of kitty parties, specially with housewives. People those who have good money, upper middle class, specially the housewife of business men...they have big kitty parties....Paying for Rs.10,000, 50,000 per person in one time with 10 member...It could be Rs.1lak....They go to jewelry shop and buy ring, bangle, dress with that money.

(F, housewife and tutor, 38 years old, Vasant Kunj)

Compared to Vasant Kunj, females above their thirties in Vijay Nagar have shown lower levels of brand preference and awareness, fewer visits shopping malls, and less dining out and enjoyment of leisure culture. Their main preferred spaces for shopping are the traditional local markets like Karol Bagh, Chandni Chowk and Kamla Nagar, and they favor South Indian food over international food when they eat out. In grocery shopping also, they tend to buy from street vendors instead of big retail shops

or in accordance brand names.

Spatial Similarities

The similarities between the two neighbourhoods are apparent in new consumer culture among youth in both areas. The young people who enjoy following the latest trends are showing off through ownership of commodities and are inclined to hold materialistic values. They are aware that a substantial part of their culture is accepting western ideas, and their eagerness for spending money is due to this.

Conclusion

From the above discussion, we have ascertained similar and different trends in two middle class neighbourhoods as well as a generational gap irrespective of neighbourhood with regards to views of marriage, women, caste, family, religion and consumption practice. In addition, the coexistence of contradictory views with general trends of each neighbourhood and generations are also grasped as the characteristic of urban middle class.

Firstly, in the regards to marriage, there were differences in age of marriage and the ratio of love and arranged marriages between two neighbourhoods. Vasant Kunj, an elite middle class neighbourhood, had a relatively high age of marriage and percentage of love marriage compared to Vijay Nagar.

There were also different reasons expressed between the two neighbourhoods for preference of caste endogamy. Married interviewees in Vasant Kunj desire caste endogamy for their children to perpetuate their status through generations by reproduction of elite middle class membership through upper caste endogamy. On the other hand, in Vijay Nagar, the desire for caste endogamy in children's prospective spouses is related to a wish for sharing the same culture, customs and language within families.

A common trend in marriage systems in both neighbourhoods is young people's high preference for love marriages. However, some of them exhibited hesitation in getting married to lowest castes and Muslim people, even though they endorse love and inter-caste marriage. This seems to come from not only cultural differences but also their inclination to obey their parents' will and prejudice against Muslims. The youth, like their parents, still hold prejudices that Muslims and lower caste individuals are lower class, even though Muslims and lower caste people have seeking upward social mobility in education and the economy through reservation policy.

With regards to views on women, of particular importance is that interviewees in Vijay Nagar had more conservative attitudes towards gender perception than those in Vasant Kunj. The sharpest contrast between the two neighbourhoods appeared in opinions about women, among six other topics of perception. Even though Vijay Nagar respondents acknowledged that the status of contemporary women is higher compared to previous generations, their stance on women with regard to dress, restrictions on time, drinking, smoking and partying evinced unequal expectations for men and women.⁵⁴ This conservative value of women ultimately leads to reproduction of patriarchy in family institution in Vijay Nagar.

With regards to caste practice, intergenerational differences were the source of the contrast. Despite this, Vijay Nagar showed more concern over 'the vulnerability of food'⁵⁵ by untouchability related to caste practice than did Vasant Kunj. Even though both areas have intergenerational differences in terms of caste practice, the narratives of the young generations in Vijay Nagar, which expressed caste-based discrimination associated with food and marriage and implies that even urban young people still linger on the psychology of caste-based hierarchies. Proceeding from these results,

⁵⁴ Related to this conservative view on women in Vijay Nagar is Fernandes' study (2000) which indicates the relationship between the meaning of prevention of women's sexuality and Indian culture. The media and the BJP have made an effort to protect the Indian culture from threats of globalization and westernization by preservation of the purity of women's sexuality (Fernandes, 2000: 623-5).

⁵⁵ In Dumont's study (1980), vulnerability of food is related to pollution through the intermediary of contact or place. Therefore, the kitchen is the most vulnerable and spiritual space in the house since it is attached to the vulnerability of food (Dumont, 1980: 133).

not only differences in occupation, education and income but also experience of independence from parents and migration can generate different perceptions toward the caste system.

Compared to women in Vijay Nagar, women in Vasant Kunj tended to have more equal relationships with their husbands, more equal decision-making power with all family members, and were starting to break down the patriarchy and hierarchy in parent-child relations. However, there are changes from the older generations, like horizontally structured relations within the family and respect for individual independence, were commonly discovered among young people in both neighborhoods.

With regards to religion and religiosity, the level of religious participation was been much lower among the interviewees in Vasant Kunj than in Vijay Nagar. The importance of religiosity in urban white collar middle class daily lives is weakening due to lack of time, changes in lifestyle, and western influences. Besides, intergenerational differences in valuing religion and religious practice also stand out from the results of interview analysis. The trend of declining religious participation among the young extends to the consumption of food disconnected to religion, particularly the eating of cow, which is no longer taboo for the young middle class.

Consumption practice is the area that has shown the most distinct contrast across generations, The liberalization generations⁵⁶ who were born around economic liberalization in India or grew up during that period have consumption-friendly attitudes that contrast with the old middle class who pursue simplicity and austerity as the ideal. However, even if young interviewees in both neighbourhoods are included in the same age cohort of the liberalization generation, the spaces and methods of consumption are differently displayed according to education, occupation, income and living environment between the two areas. In any event, aspirations for upper class

⁵⁶ The study of Bijapurkar (2007: 146) discusses consumption ideology and consumption behavior according to age cohort, which is divided by the period of pre-independence, post-independence and post-liberalization. The following chapter will deal with the characteristic of each age cohort in consumption in detail.

and western lifestyles, and an experimental mind for new and diverse world through spending is a characteristic of young interviewees in both areas.

As a result, the perceptions of young interviewees in both neighbourhoods have similar values even though there are some differences. What are the reasons for the age cohort gap between the interviewees of both neighbourhoods in terms of modern values and openness?

In the case of Vasant Kunj, interviewees have been brought up in a settled middle class family background and characterized as highly educated and white collar workers. Accordingly, even middle-aged interviewees have already embraced global and western ideas. Therefore, they have shown relatively more openness and modernized ideas about marriage, women, caste, family relations, education of children and consumption.

On the other hand, the trend of consumption of modern and western values are newly emerged among young people in Vijay Nagar since parents of interviewees were pioneers, settling down in the area as first-generation migrants from Pakistan after Partition in 1947. For that reason, older generations started from zero in economic condition, not from middle class status. Therefore, in Vijay Nagar case, the age cohort of thirties to forties, the second generation after migration, has started to enter into the middle class stage for the first time.

Disparities between upper segment of the middle class and the rest of the middle class seem to be determined by the level of openness to westernization and modernization in older generations. In addition, upward social mobility seems to be feasible after one generation. Therefore, the perceptions and ideas of parents, which are shaped differently according to education, occupation, income and other environmental factors like exposure to the outside world, actually make a difference in age cohorts that start to embrace modern and western values between the two neighbourhoods. Consequently, we can ascertain through analysis of the differences between the two neighbourhoods in terms of perception of six topics-marriage, gender, caste, religion, family, and consumption practice-, how the reproduction of inequality within families

generates differentiation in the middle class in terms of economic, social and cultural capital.

In addition, young people in Vasant Kunj and Vijay Nagar are inclined to modernized, westernized, individualized and materialistic value orientations, even though there are some differences between them, signifying that the young have been certainly changed from their parents.

Chapter Five

Emergent Characteristics of New Indian Middle Class

This chapter will introduce intergenerational changes in customs and values, varied values in different segments of the middle class, and the characteristics of the new Indian middle class that distinguishes itself from the old middle class and present lower class based on case studies from the two neighbourhoods.⁵⁷ The responses to the same questions in case studies of ten interviewees varied according to age, gender, education, occupation, income, family background, hometown and place of residence. For the case studies, ten of the sixty in-depth interviewees were selected, age cohort of their twenties to their forties. They were chosen for their peculiarities rather than because they were representative of their neighbourhood, but some contrast in the values and perceptions expressed according to neighbourhood was noticeable.⁵⁸

There are three broad themes in the case study narratives that follow. The first is generational change in values as regards social institutions like marriage, the status of women, caste, religion, family, and consumption between the interviewees' parents, themselves and their children. The second is self-perception of class status, including the reasons given by the interviewees for considering themselves middle class, their opinions on the characteristics of the contemporary Indian middle class, and stereotypes they expressed about the upper and lower classes. The third is the meaning of Indianness and modern as related to themselves, and how this dichotomy

⁵⁷ Although this chapter is primarily based on the narratives of ten interviewees, in order to understand the characteristics of the new middle class, interviews including about 60 residents and passers-by (and 90 interviewees including mainly college students) interviewed in the two neighbourhoods also form the basis of this chapter.

⁵⁸ The interviewees of the ten case studies are Diviya, Kiara, Sanjay, Rohan, and Puneet in Vasant Kunj (2 males and 3 females), and Alisha, Manuraj, Mina, Ruchi, and Rajesh in Vijay Nagar (2 males and 3 females). Their identification of information will be indicated when their narratives are introduced for the first time (All names of interviewees are pseudonyms).

is moulded in new middle class identity.

By looking into the following dynamic narratives of the interviewees according to their diverse social identities and family backgrounds, we attempt to capture different forms of middle class values in the social institutions of marriage, gender, caste, religion and family systems, and differences in customs and values between the youth's and their parents' generations' middle class. Above all, central to this chapter is an attempt to clarify not only economic capital such as income and property but also social and cultural capital including social networks, education, practices and customs of everyday life and especially the mindset and values that constitute the membership of the new Indian middle class as differentiated from the old and contemporary lower classes.

The analysis of these case studies will be the groundwork in inferring the nature of the new Indian middle class in this dissertation.

5.1 Intergenerational Changes in Values

The age cohort of the case study interviews in this chapter, which encompasses those who were between their twenties and forties in 2015, can be called 'liberalization's children'. This term refers to those who were born between around 1970 and 1990 and who have been naturally influenced by economic liberalization (Bijapurkar, 2007:144). This newly globalized middle class is informally called 'Zippies', which signifies those who are young, cool, confident and creative, residing in urban or suburban areas, and who retain attitude, ambition and aspiration.⁵⁹

They are enjoying challenges and risks without the social, political, economic, cultural or ideological baggage of previous generations (Lukose, 2009:5). These youth are shifting from their parents' generation in terms of sensibilities, attitudes and values (Ibid.). They are evolutionary generations breaking from their more backward

⁵⁹ Outlook, 2004, January, 12, quoted in Lukose, 2009: 4-5.

ancestors (Ibid.).

The parents of liberalization's children, referred as 'midnight's children' by Salman Rushdie to portray the first post-Independence generation. Sufferance is life value for this generation since the historical experiences of wars and famine have influenced their identity (Bijapurkar,2007:145). Compared to liberalization's children, midnight's children seem locked in an ideology of Nehruvian nationalist development, with its emphasis on the rural poor and work for the nation. They are seen as lacking ambition, avoding risks and being uncool and fearful (Lukose, 2009: 5).

According to Bijapurkar (2007:145), 'the pre-Independence generation are unhappy consumers, midnight's children are guilty consumers'. On the other hand, the young generations's world views are moulded by the currency of capitalist markets and media so that new environments of westernization and globalization shape their consumption ideology and behavior in a different way from their predecessors. Their practices of consumption are one of the peculiar ideologies that distinguishes them from past generations.⁶⁰

Apart from consumption patterns, liberalization's children display differences in values and attitudes relating to social institutions like marriage, gender, caste, religion and family as compared to their parents' generations.

Therefore, this chapter aims to figure out how the young generation of the middle class is evolving and developing from their parents' generations in terms of customs, attitudes and values through narratives of case study interviewees.

5.1.1 Marriage

The trend of the ideal of marriage in the contemporary young middle class shows that

⁶⁰ New consumption practice is one of the most important characteristics which distinguish the new middle class from old middle class and lower class, so we will explore this theme in the next section in detail.

the rhetoric of romantic love is normative, and could exist both in a love marriage or an arranged companionate marriage, while older generations are confined to the practices of traditional arranged marriage (Fuller&Narasimhan, 2008; Platz, 2014: 224).

Love marriage is generally exogamous, without restrictions of caste and community-bounded. It commonly follows the process of finding one's own partner, dating for a certain period of time and engaging in premarital sex, and finally asking for parents' approval (Platz, 2014: 223).

According to Fuller and Narasimhan (2008: 750), arranged endogamous marriage is also preferred and practiced among the majority of the young middle class with the development of the companionate form. It signifies that individual personality, self-expression, and free will are more reflected in the practices of the Indian middle class marriage than in the past (Fuller&Narasimhan, 2008:751). This emergence of individualism among the youth is in turn associated with enhanced education (especially for females), increased marriage age and decreased gender inequality (Ibid.). They believe in changing marriage practices based on education and progress, an ideology that distinguish them from their parents, who generally consider only endogamous, arranged marriages (Platz, 2014: 232).

The result of field work also indicates that unmarried youth in their twenties and thirties often prefer love marriages, but at the same time, some of them considered arranged marriage as well. It implies that unlike the parents' generation, arranged marriage practices have become the modern ideal by transforming into companionate marriage through arrangements (Fuller&Narasimhan, 2008: 752).

Young generations commonly responded that their parents would disapprove of inter-caste and inter-religion marriages (especially to SC, ST and Muslims), while they themselves do not pay attention to qualities of caste and religion in potential spouses.

The following three narratives from the young and unmarried middle class will describe differences in perspectives of the ideal marriage between them and their

parents.

a. Rohan in Vasant Kunj

Unmarried male, 28 years old

Place of Birth: Jodhpur

Occupation: HR manager in private company

Education: Studied in Private school/ MBA

Household composition: 4 members (self, mother, father, married 1brother)

Number of persons working in the household: 2 (except his brother because his brother got marry)

Total household income: Rs.1 lak- 2 lak

Religion and Community: Hindu/ General Caste

I prefer Love marriage and inter-caste, inter- religious marriage is ok for me. But my parents might opposite to get marry Muslim, or SC...They will agree to get marry only general caste. But, Im ok with anyone....If a girl is educated, and she has good value system, then Im ok. She should be intelligent, educated, independent...She should take her own decision about her life. I don't want her sit only in the household and take care of family, but at the same time I don't want a girl who is too advanced, too modern, and enjoyinh party every weekend with lot of friends...I don't want that... I want a simple, good heart and brave woman....For me, the ideal relationship between husband and wife is related to honesty, good communication, and respect...They should respect each other's differences.

Rohan said he thinks arrange marriage, getting married with someone you do not know but who your parents picked, has high risks. He prefers, therefore, love marriage like most people in his age does. He also said his parents wouldn't mind whoever he marries to but I could still see some prejudice on lower caste and Muslims. When I asked what he thinks about getting married with lower caste or Muslim, he said he does not care as long as the woman is well educated and has a decent value. However, his parents will oppose which means that his parents prefer general caste, Hindu lady for his wife.

b. Manuraj in Vijay Nagar

Unmarried male, 22 years old

Place of Birth: Delhi

Occupation: Property Dealer

Education: Studied in Government school/ 12th pass

Household composition: 4 members (Father, Mother, Elder brother, Self)

Number of persons working in the household: 3

Total household income: Less than Rs.50,000

Religion and Community: Hindu/ General caste

On the first day of field work in Vijay Nagar, we had our first interview with Manuraj's father. Sometime after, we had the chance to interview his son, Manuraj, as well.

Manuraj was planning to marry his 19-year old girlfriend at the young age of 23. He is planning to marry partners from a different caste, but even so, both of them belong to general caste. We asked Manuraj 'would your parents have allowed it if you had chosen a Muslim, lower caste, or a woman with a different religion,' and to that he replied that he was also planning to have an inter caste marriage to which his parents had no opposition at all. He added that because his parents held no biases about inter caste marriage; he believed that they would happily accept such a marriage. However, in reality, the thoughts of his father were different. Though he had no feelings of aversion towards an inter caste marriage, he replied that the story would be different if one of his children brought a marital partner from the SC or Muslim.

The third subject, Alisha, who is twenty-three years old, elaborated on the differences in marriage values between her and her parents, especially in terms of age of marriage, ideal types of spouse and the matter of caste in choice of marriage partner.

c. Alisha in Vijay Nagar

Unmarried female, 23 years old

Place of Birth: Delhi

Occupation: Trainee in her father's business

Education: Studied in Private school/ Post Graduate

Household composition: 4 members (self, mother, father, 1 brother)

Number of persons working in the household: 2

Total household income: Rs.75,000-1 lak

Religion and Community: Hindu/ General caste

Currently a post-graduate student, 23-year old Alisha accompanies her father in running his business. Born and raised in Vijay Nagar, the young adult has a family of four, with a mother, father, and brother. Both her father, who is the household's single breadwinner, as well as her mother, a housewife, hold graduate-level degrees. Like a majority of the residents of Vijay Nagar, Alisha is a Punjabi Hindu.

The disparities in values between Alisha and her parents were illustrated in various aspects. It seemed as if Alisha felt conflicted because of the clash between her parents' conservative and narrow-minded mindset, and her westernized and broader-minded personality.

Regarding the issue of marriage, Alisha wished to get married at around the age of 30. Her parents, on the other hand, wanted an earlier marriage at the age of 25 or 26, at the very latest. Alisha's reason for wanting to pursue marriage after the age of 30 well-represents the independent nature of an educated, urban Indian woman. The young woman seemed to know well the highly disadvantageous and restrictive character of the Indian marriage system, especially for women.

Differences between Alisha and her parents were also evident within the subject of ideal types of partners. While Alisha prioritized an educated-driven way of thinking as a fundamental quality, to her parents, whether the man had financial ability and a good family background was most important. Her parents desired a husband who already possessed economic prosperity, but Alisha did not pay much attention to current financial status, because she valued potential for growth more.

For my partner, first of all, the way of thinking is important... It should not be the way of our parents thinking like strict.... And way of thinking is influenced by education, so

education has big role...It is important for our parents that our spouse to be very well earning, but for us, if we find potential that they can earn later or they are now into their struggling period, we are ok with it...But our parents might not ok with it.....My parents prefer arrange marriage for me....What I think that guy's parents prefer a girl who sit at home and know how to cook food and how to look after his parents...But for me, my parents look for a guy who is earning very well, and has a good family background.

To add, the caste that the husband belonged to mattered greatly to Alisha's parents, but not at all to Alisha herself. From this we assume that when considering a man as Alisha's partner, her parents would firstly inquire which caste he was associated with. Following, if any problems occurred between the couple, Alisha's mother and father would attribute the conflict to difference of belonging caste between the two. Unfortunately, the young woman claimed to oppose all of the judgements and preconceptions that her guardians held regarding the caste. And although her parents rejected the idea of an intercaste marriage, Alisha stated that she had absolutely no problem with the matter.

My parents believe that if people are getting marry with different caste, they actually hit their mind like "why isn't he or she is same caste?" Suppose, they will think that if the couple don't work out well, the first point they will bring would be caste difference between the couple...They will speak like "The person isn't belong to your caste, that's why he is behaving that way".

Upon asking whether it would matter if she had only a single daughter after marriage, the woman replied that although she would have no problem, her parents would certainly have some. This is attributed to the fact that, in the perspective of the parents, after marriage, their daughter becomes a part of another household in which she must take care of her parents-in-law. Alisha's father and mother affirm that this sort of mindset is commonly shared in their generation, and as long as this trend persists, Alisha will not have only one female offspring.

Her last statement involved her wish to no longer persist in the situations of her parents' generation, in which daughters are treated as only short-term guests in their

natal homes until they move to their conjugal homes in accordance patri-virilocal residence. (Uberoi, 2006:30)

The progressive marriage values of Alisha that are different from that of her parents hint at a more advanced future for young Indian females who have a desire to live for themselves, not just their husbands and children.

The following section will address the contemporary transformed image of women through the narratives of educated and liberal-minded young middle class females like Alisha.

5.1.2 Status of Women

One of the most prominent changes in the new middle class compared to its predecessors is increasing self-confidence and independence among females as a result of growing opportunities for employment outside the home and higher levels of education.

Though identity is shaped by both the private and public spheres (Maslak & Singhal, 2008:490), Indian women of previous generations have been limited in the construction of identities through multiple experiences since they had restrictions on social mobility and activities in public arenas. They were largely limited to the responsibilities of wives, mothers and daughters-in-law. On the contrary, young middle class women have started to take an active role for shaping their identities by participating in various activities in social settings. As a result, they can enjoy much more dynamic lives by taking on multiple roles in not only domestic arenas but also in public ones.

The formation of identity around traditional gender roles in old middle class women is associated with British colonial history, which combined high caste values such as purity and sexual chastity with the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries values of national pride, education and Victorian prudery (Poggendorf-Kakar, 2001:127). In

the process of forming high-caste (middle class) values and reestablishing a Hindu identity, women came to be symbols of security and tradition, as well as icons of purity (Ibid.).

In this regard, a woman's sexuality is ideally bound to one man, her husband, in order to maintain order, moral strength and spiritual power (Poggendorf-Kakar, 2001:128-9). Women in this view can never be independent since they are subordinated first to their fathers, then to their husbands and later to their sons (Ibid.).

However, these values are not in line with the desires of contemporary young women for independence and self-determination. Today, young, urban middle class women consider the legendary Sita, the image of an obedient and sacrificing wife, to be an old-fashioned role model (Poggendorf-Kakar, 2001:135). They no longer perceive boundless tolerance and obedience as strengths of women, unlike the generations of their mothers (Ibid.: 136).

Waldrop's study (2011a) recounts different views on women working outside, gender roles and housework, interest in pursuing careers and decision-making regarding marriage partners, which have been shaped by three generational experiences of middle class women: pre-independence, midnight's children, and liberalization's children. An interviewed middle class woman in the generation of midnight's children was supposed to receive an education, but working outside the home was not encouraged. She says young women were compelled to do what their parents and middle class society expected from them at that time (Waldrop, 2011a: 626).

On the other hand, her daughter, who belongs to liberalization's children, is aware of the importance of financial independence in conjugal relationships, and is open to the possibility that a marriage may break up if her husband does not meet her ideals and demands (Waldrop, 2011a:632). The activities of going out late without male protectors or going to a bar or drink alcohol, which was unimaginable for her mother and grandmother, are natural behaviours to her even after marriage (Ibid.: 633). This propensity for being outgoing and enjoying social interactions in a setting outside the home is in contrast to being homely, a term that is the characteristic of older

generations (Ibid.:634). Hence, Waldrop estimates that young, educated, urban, high caste, upper middle class women have more self-decision making power over their lives with increasing individualism than their mothers and grandmothers (ibid.: 635).

The following shows the narrative of independent, individualistic and autonomous values in a new middle class woman, Puneet, who works in an IT company and migrated from Haryana to Delhi seven years ago.

a. Puneet in Vasant Kunj

Unmarried female, 37 years old

Place of Birth: Haryana

Occupation: HR department in IT company

Education: Studied in Private school/MBA

Household composition: 4 members (self, mother, father, 1 married brother)

Number of persons working in the household: 3

Total household income: Rs. 50-75,000

Religion and Community: Sikh

Puneet, whom I met through a friend's introduction, is a 37-year old single woman working in the HR department of an IT company.

She, as a new middle class woman representative, told me that she did not wish to be known as anybody's daughter or anybody's wife, but instead wished to be evaluated based on her own identity and achievements. She also emphasized that even after marriage, the work between her and her husband must not be divided for the sole reason of being a man and a woman according to gender classification.

People should know me as what Puneet is....what actually Puneet is.....good or bad whatever....People shouldn't know me as Puneet is somebody's daughter. I should stand out for myself...not because of name for my family. I mean I should not be known by the name of what somebody else's done. I should be known because of the work I have done...not like somebody's wife...That is important.

In the relationship between husband and wife, they should be friends first. Should have

space to each other....I don't want like you are a man, so you are supposed to do this, you are female, so you should do this...I don't want this. Should be very supportive each other and what person wants to do irrespective of what society tells us.

The second narrative, Kiara, shows the phenomenon of contemporary middle class women who have awareness of gender equality based on increasing individualism and autonomy, and who endeavor to break from traditional ideologies associated with female chastity and sexuality. At the same time, she recognizes that her ideal spouse is endowed with a feminist mind, something unlikely to be found among Indian males. Therefore, she does not expect changes compared to the generation of her mother in terms of responsibilities for household work after marriage. In this regard, she assumes there will be discrepancy between her ideal and reality in terms of the responsibility of women to the family.

b. Kiara in Vasant Kunj

Unmarried female, 21 years old

Place of Birth: Delhi

Occupation: Teacher

Education: Studied in Private school/ Graduate

Household composition: 5 members (self, mother, father, 1 brother, 1sister)

Number of persons working in the household: 4

Total household income: Rs.75,000-1 lak

Religion and Community: Hindu/ General Caste

Born and raised in Vasant Kunj, 21-year old Kiara is a bright and high-spirited contemporary woman. Currently a university graduate already working as a teacher, the woman has a father working in the service sector, a housewife mother, and a brother and sister who have both completed their MAs.

Even during the few times that we met with Kiara after, the woman, though she was wearing very comfortable-looking, Western-style clothing - shorts or skirt with a t-shirt - her upper wear consisted of clothing that revealed part of her chest. Along with this, she also wore various types of accessories. Taking in her style, she seemed to me like a very free-spirited, young contemporary woman.

Asserting that she wanted to continue working even after marriage, Kiara said that her future partner had to be able to support her decision. She also went on to mention that she had to have freedom in all areas, including what she wanted to wear. In addition, Kiara claimed that between the parents-in-law and the wife, her husband should not unconditionally take sides with the parents. In other words, above anything, the husband that Kiara wanted was one that was different from the existing patriarchal husband. Instead of someone who was superior to the wife and considered her merely as a person who worked for him and his parents, it was important to Kiara to maintain an equal, friendship-like companionate relationship.

My future husband should be friendly one. He should not be bossy. He should support me. In Indian culture, what is happened that e relationship between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law don't work out well, so he should support right thing... I'm not saying even if I am wrong, he should take my side, even that is wrong....If mother in-law is right, he should take her side....But if I'm right, he should take my side... He should support in that sense.... And he should let me work after marriage and freedom of clothing... Everything should be there.

Adding to that, Kiara wanted a man who would perform his share of the housework, however, she seemed to acknowledge that that was almost an impossible feat considering the characteristics of the average Indian man. The mindset that house chores were the responsibility of the woman is still deeply engrained within the values of Indian men. Knowing that it wouldn't be easy to change such values, or to meet a man who possessed a feministic mindset, Kiara appeared to hold low expectations in this part.

He should help me, not everything but something... Mostly I have to do only by myself. That's the mentality of Indian men that women are supposed to take care of household chores. I think that if women and men both of them are working, then household chores should be distributed because if both of us are working, work pressure he and me are same as well... This is what my ideal ideas... But in reality, I have to do it...No matter how much I idealize it... But there are few men who distribute their household chores...I hope I get that kind of guy for my husband.

Kiara was highly open-minded regarding dating or having premarital sex relations as well. It seemed like both the woman and her friend had mostly male friends. Interactions with the opposite gender, such as having a boyfriend, engaging in sexual relations, or having close relationships with the opposite gender were, to their generation, a very natural and inevitable process. Even her male friends did not seem to particularly favor the idea of virginity. Although they would naturally discuss the topic of sex with both same-gender and opposite-gender friends, they could not discuss such things with their parents. This was because in India, the matter of sex was still regarded as a taboo.

Young middle class individuals in Pune in the study of Platz (2014) also showed their liberal attitudes toward dating and sexual relationships before marriage. According to Platz (2014: 255), the trend toward accepting premarital sex and sexuality among young females is an indication of their increasing individual autonomy. To control one's own body and sexuality is to control one's own life (Ibid.). Sex is one important source of self-determination and self-fulfilment (Ibid.: 257). In addition, pride in deviating from traditional society norms of chastity distinguishes these youth from rural, backward and conservative groups in Indian society (Ibid.).

As expected of a progressive and modernized woman, Kiara firmly stated that behavior such as wearing clothing that revealed, or walking around late at night, could not serve as a cause of sexual assault. She attributed the cause instead to the problems with the mentality of Indian men, as well as to the Indian society that regards sex as a taboo, and does not offer proper sex education to citizens at early ages.

Kiara asserted that she was a person who liked to help others. Nevertheless, within the aspect of making decisions on one's own, the woman referred to herself as an individualistic person. Furthering this notion, she claimed to desire living as part of a nuclear family, instead of taking care of her parents-in-law after marriage. In this aspect, it was evident that the individualism of the young generation had become stronger.

5.1.3 Caste

The caste-based hierarchy system is regarded as an outdated traditional custom to the urban young middle class. Awareness about the caste-based discrimination is gradually changing the behavior of their parents' generations as well. Not only does urbanization make it difficult to practice the rules of purity and pollution, but fear of condemnation from others after legal prohibition also contributes to a decline in caste-based discrimination. Thus, maintenance of caste purity by practicing untouchability or commensality seems sure to decline in urban areas, especially in middle class in metropolitan cities like Delhi. In interviews with approximately 150 subjects about the significance of caste in their lives, hardly any respondents answered that it is important in their daily lives. It seems that the caste system is meaningless in shaping the identity of the young, educated urban middle class, who regard it as an aspect of outmoded convention and ideology. So, it appears that the caste system does not operate in the everyday lives of the young middle class, but is it so?

These days, urban middle class youth generally do not recognize someone's caste by surname, and eat food regardless of the caste background of the cook. However, in the unconscious mind of middle class individuals who belong to the upper caste, a sense of superiority and prejudice about the lower castes seem to coexist. Actually, internalization of caste prejudice is found in everyday life in the urban middle class. Influences of caste appear in master-servant relations within everyday domestic life (See Froystad, 2003). Although the caste system seems to have almost disappeared in the urban arena, it still reproduces inequality in some spheres such as choice of marriage partner and treatment of domestic servants in middle class households.

However, except in marriage matters and relationships with domestic servants in the middle class household, the young generation displays different perspectives in the lifestyle associated with caste, especially in terms of caste rituals of hierarchy-commensality and untouchability and social interaction, as compared to their parents' generations.

In this regard, Nisbett (2007) and Osella and Osella (1998) discuss the phenomenon of rejection of hierarchy among young men in India by sharing of food, cigarettes and drinks, as well as physical contact, with groups of friends from different castes and communities. These activities foster solidarity, social closeness and equality among friends (Platz, 2014:185-6). So, we can infer that caste is not entirely unconnected to the lives of the young generation, but it is not major principle for them (Nisbett, 2007: 939).

In connection with the above framework, the first interviewee, Sanjay, explains the differences between his parents and himself in terms of commensality, and differences between old generations in Vasant Kunj and himself in terms of employment of cooking servants.

a. Sanjay in Vasant Kunj

Married male, 30 years old

Place of Birth: Jharkand

Occupation: Internet marketing company

Education: Studied in Private school/ Post Graduate

Household composition: 2 members (self, wife)

Number of persons working in the household: 2

Total household income: Rs.75,000-1 lak

Religion and Community: Hindu/ General Caste

We totally depend on food prepared by our lower caste or Muslim maid. For example, we will have no problem if a Muslim cooks, but for my parents, if a Muslim cooks, they might have a problem.

In a locality like Vasant Kunj, women who come to clean and cook belong mostly to Hindu lower castes or they are Muslims. You find very few Muslim Bengali women cooking in Vasant Kunj households because they don't like Muslims to cook for them. They go to Muslim restaurants in North Delhi, but they don't want Muslim women to cook in their kitchen. But most of the people who clean in Vasant Kunj, they are not Dalits. They are mostly Muslims and from West Bengal.

When I asked whether the tasks of cooking and cleaning are divided between different maids, he replied as follows:

Sometimes they are. One maid comes to clean the house and they might be Muslim and it might not be a problem. Another maid comes who does kitchen work. She washes the utensils. But she can't be a Muslim. Ideally, she shouldn't be a Muslim.

We would never have a problem with whatever religion or caste if they cook very good food... We are more concerned about how their cooking is... whatever religion or caste the person follows... It also comes from dependency. If husband and wife both work, they don't have time to clean the house, sweep the house, wash the dishes and cook every day. After coming back from work, we don't want to do housework. So we depend on somebody from outside and don't really care what her background is as long as that person works well. We are more practical... It doesn't matter about caste.

For Sanjay, it is not important who has prepared food, so long as they are a good cook. Unlike his parents' generation, his generation eats food regardless of whether lower caste or Muslims have prepared it, according to him. This is a phenomenon that can be seen among the young middle class and students in both Vasant Kunj and Vijay Nagar. However, his parents do not eat any food that has been prepared by Muslims. The young generation middle class hires a maid to do the cooking, but his parents have never done that. They usually do their own cooking. He showed much more practical values than his parents' generation. In the young generation, it is common for both spouses to be working, and because their daily lives are busy with little spare time, it seems that there is a phenomenon of being practical.

We can see that differences in opinion between father and son were evident in regards to commensality as related to caste practice through Manuraj's case as well.

b. Manuraj in Vijay Nagar

Manuraj, along with those of his age, claimed that he felt no hesitation in eating food made by Muslim or the lower caste, and that not only him, but his parents were also not discriminate of such things. Nevertheless, what his father had confessed to me

was different. He explained that though at times he ate the food that Manuraj's Muslim or lower caste friends would send over to the house, there were times when he did not wish to eat such foods and even admitted that he felt hesitant to eat together with Muslims. This was because he had the conception that Muslims were dirty. Furthermore, the man said that if his neighbors or relatives found out that he ate dishes made by the lower caste or Muslims, then they would humiliate him for such. He confessed that this was also a part of why he felt uncomfortable eating such food. Thus, Manuraj's thoughts that his father is open in terms of marriage or caste practice when it comes to inter caste or inter religion were, in truth, only limited to the general caste or religions such as Christianity or Sikh, while his father was still trapped in the traditional norms regarding caste or religion when it came to marriage with a lower caste and Muslim, or commensality.

5.1.4 Religion

With regard to the relationship between the contemporary middle class and religion in India, many scholars argue that religious revivalism in the new middle class, with its support of Hindu nationalism, has emerged with the resilience of traditional institutions such as monasteries, temples, and pilgrimages.⁶¹ (e.g. Nanda, 2011; Srinivas, 2002).

The study of Saavala (2001) also describes the phenomenon of using the practice of Hindu rituals among the lower caste middle class in order to give salience to their new, middle class identity. Here, religion functions as a crucial way to boost self-esteem for (Saavala, 2001: 316-7).

Despite the opinion that the religious practices of the middle class are entering on a new phase, the fieldwork results of this study reveal opposition to this. In fact, the majority of interviewees from the young middle class (including students) displayed a indifference to religion and religiosity, and they stated that this propensity is quite

⁶¹ Srinivas, 1992 [1966]: 145-46, quoted in Saavala, 2001:301.

different from their parents.

Titus (2015) also claims that religiosity in the youth has disappeared compared to their parents' generations. The survey regarding religion and religiosity among youth conducted by the 2012 Hindustan Times demonstrated this. Only 32% of youth considered themselves faithfully religious, while 59% responded that they only occasionally participated in religious activities. Further, 70% expressed that their parents were more religious than they were (Titus, 2015: 46). Most of them believed in secular ideologies and celebrating the diversity of religion (Ibid.).

In this sense, the young generation in India tends to be spiritual rather than religious (Titus, 2015: 47). A transition from religiosity to spirituality means that younger generations rarely use religious affiliations to forge their identities (Ibid.:50). According to the above mentioned survey, 70% of the respondents denied religion as the basis of their cultural and social identities (Ibid.).

Therefore, Indian youth want to practice religion in a way that is different from the traditional style and in a manner that is not confined by rules (Titus, 2015: 50). They want religion to be flexible, tolerant and a way of life that embraces other different ideologies and religions (Ibid.).

The results of the Titus study are similar to those of the fieldwork in this study on the religiosity of the young middle class. The following narrative from Alisha precisely shows different internalizations of the meanings of religion and religiosity between the young middle class and their parents.

a. Alisha in Vijay Nagar

There is religion and there is superstition....So, we believe in religion, we believe in God, but we don't believe in superstitions....But my parents believe in superstitions as much as religion and they excuse of believing in superstition because it is religion for them.....They want us to accept something which are under the name of superstition. For example, my parents, they have habit to go to temple .If they don't go to temple each day and every day, they won't feel comfortable within themselves. They feel something is

missing in that day... But, I feel alright if I have busy day.....All I believe is you can have inside of yourself. You can have belief in yourself... It is not necessary to go to same temple and worship to same idol. That does not mean disrespect.

Discrepancies between parent and daughter were visible regarding not only the perspective of marriage, but also the issue of religion as well in her case. Alisha told us that while she believed in the existence of a God, her parents were firm believers of superstition. In contrast to her parents, who became anxious after a single day of not visiting the temple, Alisha valued faith, and thus believed that going to the temple was simply a perfunctory act. However her parents believed that behavior such as neglecting to give worship to an idol, or not going to the temple, was an act of disrespect and unfaith.

5.1.5 Family

The major change in the recent Indian family system is that the traditional joint family is rapidly disintegrating (Uberoi, 2006: 23) into nuclear families due to urbanization, industrialization and migration.⁶²

Such changes in the family system and in socialization processes have considerable influences on the self, especially in the urban upper caste middle and upper classes that have been affected by modernization (Roland, 1988: 92). New relationships have begun to emerge accordingly: romantic love, new dynamics in marital relations, separation of the liberal youth from the old, and extra relationships based on equality and contract rather than hierarchy.⁶³

The traditional patrilineal joint family system gives precedence to the relationship of parents and sons over the conjugal relationship of husband and wife, and is based on the ideals of selflessness, altruism, duty and sacrifice rather than the ideals of individual self-interest and autonomy (Uberoi, 2006:30,33). However, with increasing

⁶² Chekki, 1996; Sinha, 1984, quoted in Tripathy, 2014: 21.

⁶³ Ross 1961, quoted in Roland, 1988: 92.

individualization, personal identities of family members have become more verbalized than in the past, not only within the nuclear family but also within the changed forms of the extended family.⁶⁴ In these recent urban unitary family structures, the relationship between husband and wife has become more intimate and companionate, and the bond between father and children is closer than in past joint households (Roland, 1988:99). Furthermore, more freedom and autonomy is bestowed to children (Ibid.), and constant affection and regular attention is accorded.

As for socialization processes in the family, Roland suggests that strong emotional bonding and interdependencies in family hierarchical relations still predominates within the Indian familial self, but individualization and individuation grow within it, different from Western-style autonomy and individualism (Roland, 1988: 100-1). With greater independent decision-making and autonomy in the new middle class identity, important decisions that were generally put to extended family elders have become the responsibility of husband and wife. Parents are giving children more autonomy and freedom, but at the same time expecting deference and obedience from them (Roland, 1988: 103). In other words, a considerably different developmental model of psyche in the Indian familial self has occurred, where greater individuation can emerge but still within strong familism (Ibid.: 101).

The following narrative is from Sanjay, who experienced changes from the traditional joint family in his childhood to a nuclear family after his marriage. He also expects there will be differences in conjugal relations, obedience and hierarchical relations within the family compared to himself and his parents.

a. Sanjay in Vasant Kunj

Sanjay expects hierarchy and obedience within the family, and the relationship between spouses is very different from his parents. In the middle class of his parents' generation, the roles of the husband and wife within the household are clearly divided. Household chores were mostly done by the mother, while the father was the

⁶⁴ Ramanujam 1977, quoted in Roland, 1988: 98.

breadwinner, and the final decision-making rights lay with the eldest male. However, Sanjay's relationship with his wife is much more equal, closer to partnership. They try to divide household chores 50:50.

The style of bringing up children is also expected to be different from his parents' generation, but he says that even now he must obey his father because questioning his father's orders means that he is disrespecting his father.

Considering now I'm 30... Even now there is a possibility that if my father calls me or texts me to do something, I'll do it... Just because there is our sensibility that has been there. I won't stand up to him even if what he said is wrong because to show respect I won't question him....Yeah... that sensibility of questioning and wanting to know the reason for their decision is not there with me. It's a mark of disrespect in the household. For example, my parents expected me to study science while I was strong about English... But I never rebelled. That kind of non-Western attitude all they want from me.

His dialogue proves that people in their thirties have much more admiration for their parents compared to the younger generation. In the case of his parents, they wanted him to study science regardless of the fact that he was not good at science, but he never opposed that, and actually believed that objecting and raising questions about his parents' opinion are Westernized ways. For him, Westernized means a more equal relationship between parents and children and Indianness implies a more hierarchical relationship so that children should show strong respect towards their parents and old people. He said that nowadays it seems like admiration for parents is slowly disappearing among the new generation.

However, he explained that this kind of phenomenon cannot be described as good or bad, because such a relationship between parents and their children can lead to more of a friendship, provide children with an independent mind and give them freedom, so this depends on the individual.

Conclusion of the Section 5.1

It is noteworthy that interviewees in their twenties in both neighbourhoods as well as those in their thirties and forties in Vasant Kunj suggested that their values were different to those of their parents in values as regards social institutions such as marriage, the status of women, caste, religion, and family. The attitude of the young middle class seems to be more evolved from their parents' generation because their practical, egalitarian and liberal values were commonly noticeable in their narratives. One of the outstanding features in this regard is greater individualism and autonomy among young middle class women. They demand equality with men, contrary to their mothers, in their desire to be recognized for their self-identity in society through expression of sexuality or their profession.

On the whole, interviewees between their twenties and their forties in Vasant Kunj and those in their twenties in Vijay Nagar had a tendency to be more open-minded and tolerant of different castes and religions compared to their parents, in particular in terms of caste practice and choice of marriage partner. Most of the case study interviewees were general caste Hindus, and while their parents often showed antagonism towards Muslims and lower castes on issues of marriage and food, these prejudices seemed to have vanished in the younger generation. According to the young interviewees, their parents display more hostility and bias towards Muslims – including images of them being 'dirty', 'polygamous', 'poor', and 'inferior to Hindus' – than towards the lower castes.

5.2 Characteristics of New Indian Middle Class

New forms of consumption and lifestyle changes are generally referred to as the primary features that distinguish the new Indian middle class from the traditional old middle class, which was characterized as praising anti-materialistic values inherent in Nehruvian socialism and Gandhian asceticism (Fernandes, 2006: 30; Brosius, 2010). The new Indian middle class represents groups of people who were born or raised in the era of economic liberalization around 1991, and who are employed especially in

the private sector as a result of new opportunities from the benefits of liberalization, and urban educated people from white collar positions with English linguistic identity. They are accustomed to expressing themselves through consumption, and construct their social identities through cultural markers such as 'good taste' and style in order to distinguish themselves from the past middle class and from the lower classes of the present (Baviskar&Ray, 2011:8; Sheth, 1999)

Many scholars have emphasized that attaining a middle class membership is not simply a matter of economic and social capital but of cultural resources accomplished by self-discipline and imaginative training (Baviskar&Ray, 2011:13). In this sense, individuals from subordinated social strata strive to gain access to different forms of capital to achieve this desirable status (Fernandes, 2011:61). This process is paradoxically both fluid and structured (Ibid.). On the one hand, the formation of a new middle class identity takes the form of homogeneous, hegemonic collectivism with dominant section of middle class interests. On the other hand, the internal forms of social differentiation within the middle class seek to find the ways in which these different social subdivisions try to access membership in this new social group (Ibid.).

With this framework, this section will attempt to draw the characteristics of the new Indian middle class based on an analysis of narratives of interviewees including not only residents of young white collar workers but also college students. Although these two groups had different backgrounds in income, property, native origin and residential neighbourhoods, they showed similarities in their values, which implies that not being confined to traditional and conservative customs in conjunction with open-minded, liberal personalities is what distinguishes them from their parents' generation. Their common features are, first, they were born or grew up during the period of India's liberalization as liberalization's children. These age cohorts exhibit new consumption behaviors and new composite identities shaped by absorbing the impact of westernization and globalization. Second, they were all highly educated, attended English-medium private schools and formed class-based peer groups made up of different castes, communities and religion backgrounds. Also, migration to a metropolitan city such as Delhi for superior education and employment plays a very important role in enhancing their exposure, which encourages them to have liberal

attitudes in customs and values.

5.2.1 Consumption Pattern: Westernized, Money-Mindedness and Showing Off

The new Indian middle class is primarily characterized by indulgence in consumerism and spending money. The way young people spend and their attitudes towards money are quite different from their parents' generation. Older generations value the ideal of simplicity, saving, living frugally and pursuing neither enjoyment nor status through consumption (Wessel, 2004: 99), which is a typical Indian way of thinking, while the motto of the younger generation is to enjoy the present and give priority to spending over saving, which is westernized way of thinking. They do not think it is wasteful to spend money on personal grooming, clothes and entertainment, unlike their parents (Mathur, 2014: 101). Eating out and consumption in the café culture (see Platz, 2014) is a significant part of the socializing process for them. Saving money for several months in order to buy few thousand rupees worth of shoes or global brand clothes can give a feeling of instant gratification and is not considered extravagant behavior, rather this is natural 'habitus' (Bourdieu, 1984) for the new Indian middle class.

Increased attachment to practices of consumption and desires for a privileged lifestyle with conspicuous consumer culture have become crucial factors in determining social and class identity in the new Indian middle class.⁶⁵ In this regard, buying and possessing branded commodities is recognized as a way to heighten status in society (Mathur, 2014: 103). Actually, this conspicuous consumption seems to be associated with the psychology of the pursuit of two dreams in capitalist society: the 'dream of identity' (which means 'to be oneself, and to have this self recognized by others') and the 'dream of otherness' to be changed into desired other through practices of consumption.⁶⁶

⁶⁵ Conray, 1998, quoted in Mathur, 2010: 212.

⁶⁶ Roland Barthes, 1983: 255-6, quoted in Lietchy, 2003: 221-2.

Pressure from peer groups also leads the new middle class to consume high-end commercial brand commodities because individuals tend to estimate their success and status by the consumption of brand name consumer goods (Mathur, 2014:102). A person who participates in consumerism is considered to be in the mainstream, while others feel alienated (Ibid.:103). Accordingly, the young middle class has begun to place more value on fashion and style than on utility when choosing products for the purpose of showing off to others (Ibid.).

Following are explanations about three different themes associated with consumption patterns of new middle class women in their twenties and forties. The first dialogue, from, Alisha discusses the differences in relationships between spending habits, class and values of Indianness and westernization compared to the consumption patterns of her parents. She suggested that her consumption attitudes were more practical than those of her parents with complaining about their excessive spending on wedding ceremonies and dowries.

a. Westernized Way of Spending: Alisha in Vijay Nagar

To Alisha, a traditional way of spending entails engaging in ostentatious consumption such as large monetary investments in marriages or dowry. On the contrary, in the current generation such behavior is regarded as both unnecessary and unproductive, and instead, the young citizens engage in practical consumption and spend for their satisfaction. Alisha mentioned that this too implies that a certain Westernization of spending has become prevalent.

Similar to the other young interviewees, Alisha claimed that she was Westernized in many aspects outside of methods of spending. Apart from physical elements such as the way of eating or dressing, Alisha asserted that there has also been a Westernization in the way of thinking.

If I look at my parents their way of thinking, it will be lower middle...But if I look at myself and my brother, it will be upper middle....In terms of the way of thinking and the

way of spending, my parents would not like to spend big amount on small things, but we look at the quality.... We go to the café, they would not like to go the café, but we like to go there...Even if it is expensive... So, we belong to upper middle and they belong to lower middle...

Such disparities between the Western ideas of the parent generation and current generation also surface within ways of spending. The Westernization in expenditures that Alisha discusses means that compared to the past, spending has risen while saving has generally declined. Parents do not spend their money in activities such as going to cafes or Western food restaurants. Although these people believe that such activity is a complete waste of money, Alisha enjoys such method of spending. As members of the present-day generation have, in this way, become increasingly Westernized, members of the parent generation have are still confined within the Indian culture of consumption.

Now, our way of spending is less of saving, more of consumption. If person is earning 100rs., according to our culture, they would save Rs.70-80, they would spend Rs.10-20.....Even while spending 10-20rs., they would be thinking for 100 times....But in western culture, if you earn Rs.100, you spend Rs.50-60 happily, and you can keep the rest of it...So, our way of spending is more Westernized.

As is depicted through Alisha's responses, the consumption patterns of the younger middle class also reflect their values of enjoying and "living in the present." Although the old Indian culture prioritized saving over spending, the Western-influenced young generation values spending over saving. Consuming for the present is a source of massive joy to these young people. These people, recognizing consumption as a component of Western culture, engage in such spending behavior and believe that it is a process of becoming more Westernized.

b. Changes in Food Consumption Habits: Diviya in Vasant Kunj

The following is a dialogue with a new middle class woman who has experienced changes in food habits as a result of exposures to transnational culture. The strong

connectivity between food consumption and religion has become meaningless in her life.

Diviya in Vasant Kunj

Married female, 42 years old

Place of Birth: Delhi

Occupation: Employed in Government of India

Education: Studied in Private school/ Post Graduate

Household composition: 5 members (self, parents in laws, husband, 1 son)

Number of persons working in the household: 2

Total household income: Above Rs.3lak

Religion and Community: General Hindu

Diviya is a working mom in her 40s who was born in the 1970s, experienced neo-liberal reforms in her 20s, and is currently experiencing the advantages of the new economic policy that has been accelerating after the 1990s, as well as changes spurred by the influence of globalization. With her 9-year old son who is currently attending the best private school in Gurgaon, husband, and parents-in-law, Diviya is living in a 3BHK in Vasant Kunj. Her case study shows a case in which through her direct experience starting from her 20s of the economic liberalization that steadily began from the 1980s, her values went through change along with those that occurred in the urban Indian society, and she came to accept such changes. Thus, she can also be called an example of liberalization's children who are directly accepting the benefits and influences of globalization.

The changes in lifestyle and values of the urban elite middle class in their 40s, who were born during an era of famine and chaos in the 1970s and directly experienced liberalization in the 90s as well as acceleration of globalization in the 2010s, are able to be viewed in relation to the changes in food preferences that occurred over the course of time which Diviya had mentioned continuously throughout the interview. To start, the woman disclosed that although the entirety of food dishes in her parent's generation were ruled to be homemade by the mother, nowadays there are more females working outside who enjoy outside dining and do not engage in things such as making curd at home.

Her childhood as well consisted mostly of eating homemade dishes. Of course, the foremost reason for this was because most of the mothers of that time were housewives that did not work, and it was not common for a middle class family to hire a cooking maid. However, apart from this, there were no opportunities at all at the time to try a variety of different foods, and furthermore, even if such opportunities to attempt at various foreign dishes were available, she did not have a sort of food preference that would allow her to enjoy it. When the woman had first tried Thai red curry in Thailand after she had grown up, though because of its strange scent and taste she did not wish to try the food ever again, the next time she visited and reattempted at the dish, she claimed that it was surprisingly delicious. Due to the characteristics of her job, as Diviya faced more situations in which she was required to travel to foreign countries, her aversion towards foreign foods had incrementally declined as well.

When I was young, I only ate Indian food because there are two things...One is availability. It's very important... "Do you have options?". If your country doesn't provide options, how would you know? Till that time, you could not access to other kinds of food...If you come out of country for leisure or visit, then you can access to other cuisine, then only you can taste it for the first time.... Second thing is, "When you have the option, what is your palate?" When I had Thai food for the first time, I didn't like it... That time I was 20s or 30s and there was also access to some kinds of foreign food... But even when you get the access, what is your liking and what is your palate is important... Maybe your country, or your working environment or your situation takes you out to another countries make accessibility to variety of food because when I had Thai curry for the second time while I was travelling, I feel "Wow...What is this....this is fantastic.... My taste changes.

The woman stated that sushi was one of her favorite foreign dishes. The first time that she had encountered sushi was at a 5 star hotel. An important point that the woman mentioned here was that though they are both foreign foods, Chinese food and sushi were different in accessibility as well as in the level of being Indianized. Thus, sushi which is impossible to become Indianized, is only accessible in luxurious areas such as at a 5 star hotel, therefore allowing the class that is able to access such areas only the privilege of tasting the cuisine. However, because Chinese food, despite also being

a foreign food, is relatively highly Indianized and able to be consumed on the streets, those in or above the upper middle class are comparatively able to encounter ‘real’ foreign cuisine. Thus, differences in the exposure to foreign foods according to class are becoming evident, and such truth allows us to infer that the beneficial influences of globalization are mainly visible within and above the elite middle class.⁶⁷

Now, people eat cow... My husband and son like the taste.... We don't cook cow at home. But, when we go out, we don't miss opportunity to eat that....We like it. So, what I'm trying to say is that we are evolving...Our generation has more the idea of acceptance. We become more practical... We can eat chicken and another meat, but why we should not eat cow? We are not connecting religion to it because our ideology is changing...It is evolving... There's no point to getting into religion... Religion has no meaning. This is how we evolving... Our generation, we believe in that.

Another change regarding food is the fact that consuming cows are no longer becoming taboo to the woman's family. Although there was an aversion to eating cows before because cow consumption was traditionally banned for the Hindu, currently, Diviya stated that she along with her husband and son, did not miss the opportunity to eat cow meat when dining outside. Diviya regarded such phenomenon in which the taboos upon eating cows were vanishing as proof that the middle class was, indeed, evolving. Her reason for this claim was that they no longer draw connections between food and religion.

c. Money-Mindedness and Showing off: Kiara in Vasant Kunj

Lastly, Kiara reveals that the characteristics of indulgence in consumerism—money-mindedness, preferences for luxury brands, aspirations for upper middle class lifestyles, and showing off commodities—are prominent among the young middle class.

⁶⁷ In the study of Ganguly-Scrase&Scrase (2009: 69-73), non-elite middle class individuals who have not benefited from neoliberal reform claimed that these days luxuries are evidently related to food consumption habits, for example habits of eating out and consuming branded food items, but stated that pressure to follow this trend is not applied to their lives.

Kiara in Vasant Kunj

When I asked Kiara during our first meeting what her ideal type of husband was, the woman jokingly replied that she wished to marry an IIT graduated man for his money. Following, Kiara informed us that a characteristic of the middle class of the young generation was that they were very materialistic. Apparently, these people would go as far as to telling lies if it were for money. The reason for this was that they wished to adopt the lifestyles of the rich, who engaged in extravagant activity, such as spending and drinking, hanging out with friends, enjoying the nightlife culture, or occasionally holding parties. In actuality, behavior such as enjoying nightlife, drinking, or having parties, is not the lifestyle of the middle class after all, according to her. But due to the exposure of media that displays both Western culture and the lavish lifestyles of the rich, the young middle class has cultivated an admiration for as well as desire to follow in such lifestyle. They even have the tendency to show off their wealth and possessions when being with their friends.

*Indian young generation middle class, they keep running behind money... Money has become main motive for them. No matter what means has come from, there should be money... Even foul means they can get... Actually they follow foul means, cheating somebody, getting somebody into wrong thing, taking money from people with cheating.... Today's generation, they even do this to their parents. My friend's friend, he used to live in college. What he used to do is, even though money is in hostel, he used to ask more money from his parents, and parents also used to give him extra expenditure money since he was living in hostel. He used to ask for larger amount of money from parents for spending, drinking, having fun with friends, going out at night, house party. **These days young generation, they like drinking and party?** Yes...especially among middle class... Middle class ones, I believe, follow rich people....They want to follow their lifestyle.*

Our generation middle class people are running behind money, following the rich life style, aspiring good life, show off... Actually, middle class people have lot of show-off. They want to show off to the rich people. They want to show to rich people that "I can do that kind of thing like you" in every sense...I have more money than you, I have more clothes than you...Even between friends, this happens... We are showing off to friends as well, like "Look, I can dress up better than you"

Kiara said that the beauty culture had also developed rapidly between women around her age. Elaborating upon this notion, she claimed that many women were showing higher interest in perfecting their bodies by going to beauty parlors or exercising. Kiara mentioned that she too jogged in the park in hopes of attaining a more attractive physique.

The woman said that although she wasn't the type to enjoy showing off to others, she had the tendency of aspiring to become Westernized. Claiming that this aspiration was a trait often shown by those in her generation, she went on to explain that such Westernization was evident in all areas including clothing and lifestyle. To her as well, Westernized clothes were much more comfortable than general Indian clothing.

Referring to how Kiara informed us during our first meet that she was a shopaholic, the woman, indeed, displayed a considerable amount of interest in clothing brands. She was well-aware of luxuriant brands such as Louis Vuitton and Gucci, and expressed a longing desire to purchase their products.

I prefer brand. But what I prefer and what I wear, there's a big difference now... Everybody likes to dress up with costly clothes, and big brand, like I have Louis Vuitton, that kind of thing...I cannot afford to buy right now but someday I'll buy luxury brand.....Girls in my generation, they do want to dress themselves up good and they do want to dress themselves up by brand...They want to tag themselves like I'm wearing Zara, Im wearing Gucci... Because we have influenced by lot of TV commercial and we always see lot of celebrities dressing up good clothes and good tag, good brand which is kind of we influenced by them.

A lot of her friends bought and wore clothes from luxury brands, but Kiara said that she was not envious of them. Despite the gap between the brand she currently wore, and the brand that she desired to wear, the woman claimed to be satisfied with public brands that she could afford, such as Zara. Although she wasn't financially capable of buying clothing from luxury brands at the moment, Kiara declared that if she was able to earn a lot of money in the future, then she would definitely shop from such brands.

5.2.2 Exposure: Education, Diversified Social Network and Migration

Exposure is ‘the process of enhancing social skills and cultural knowledge through new opportunities, experiences, social contacts and sources of information’ (Fuller & Narasimhan, 2006: 48). It is promoted by experiences of a high quality educational system, working environment such as the IT industry and migration to more modern and cosmopolitan domestic cities or overseas (Fuller & Narasimhan, 2006).

Exposure signifies an individualistic yearning for success in a competitive educational and career arena, and children of the young middle class are even encouraged by their parents to achieve it (Fuller&Narasimhan, 2006:261). In this globalized and economically liberalized world that creates competition among people, there can be no equal opportunity because some people have more exposure than others, and the only solution is trying to achieve more for the people who lack of it (Ibid.). In addition, people with exposure are much more likely to be aware of the significance of it than those who are deficient in it (Ibid.). Consequently, more inequality can be produced between them (Ibid.)

Those people who are aware that the core element of success is exposure are middle class people who are already equipped with it and who perceive the significance of social and cultural capital for career success (Fuller&Narasimhan, 2006:262). In other words, exposure is the key to success in competitive society for middle class India in that it enables them to become more involved in multiple cultures, thereby broadening their minds and making them internalize a composite of cultures within their identities (Titus, 2015: 49).

5.2.2.1 Education

Indian middle class families put importance on education as the most primary way to improve their children’s chances for future success.⁶⁸ Simply put, ‘middle-classness

⁶⁸ Dickey, 2002: 218; quoted in Kumar, 2011: 230.

is defined and supported by the success of the child, and destroyed by the child's failure' (Kumar, 2011: 220).

In this sense, the education system functions as a crucial institution for the production of cultural capital so that it contributes to reproduce middle-classness (Baviskar&Ray, 2011:16).

The educational system is actually linked to the exposure of the middle class since differences in experience and knowledge of students can occur depending on the school. Recently, leading schools have trained students to participate in sports activities or to learn music and arts, or have taken them for field trips to other places outside the city in order to expose them to new environments and various activities, a practice that is prasiad among professional middle class parents (Fuller &Narasimhan, 2006: 260).

5.2.2.1.1 Education for Upward Mobility

The leading schools, which is mentioned above, are not generally attended by students from most subaltern groups that do not belong to the elite middle class. Even so, they often make every possible effort for upward mobility by sending their children to private schools, coaching centres or after-school institutions that they believe increases the chances of success.

The following narrative is from Rajesh, who desires the upward mobility of his child as he does not have membership in the new Indian middle class, and he expresses his eagerness to invest in the education of his child, unlike his parents

Rajesh in Vijay Nagar

Married male, 39years old

Place of Birth: Delhi

Occupation: Shopkeeper

Education: Studied in Government school/ Graduate

Household composition: 5 members (self, mother, father, wife, son)

Number of persons working in the household: 2
Total household income: About Rs.2 lak- 3 lak
Religion and Community: Hindu/ General caste

Rajesh, the owner of the shop, was apparently running the business along with his father. Like many of the residents in Vijay Nagar, Rajesh was a Punjabi Hindu who was both born and raised in this neighbourhood. Having a graduate-level education, he could understand only simple English and had to converse in Hindi. His father and mother, who were both in their sixties, both possessed a 12th and 10th pass-level education, respectively. Rajesh, through an arranged marriage, married a woman from the community who was one year younger than him, and together they had a twelve-year old son. At the time, Rajesh was currently living with his parents in the Double Storey.

Rajesh was feeling in many ways the difference between the lifestyles of his generation and those of his parent's generation. Most of all, the difference occurs within the area of children's education. Although he received education at a government school, he claimed to be having his child attend a private school. The reason why he wanted only one child in the first place was because he wasn't confident in being able to persist through the financial burden of education fees. Rajesh implied that he was receiving not-little pressure and stress from paying for his child's education.

Sending his kid to a private school was not merely for higher-quality education, but at the same time, also for showcasing his middle class status. Thus, sending his child to a private school indicates the fact that the child's family is part of the middle class. Unlike Vasant Kunj, most children in Vijay Nagar attend both government schools as well as private schools. However, most parents with children born in Vijay Nagar make arduous efforts to send their children to private schools, regardless of their financial flexibilities.

Another reason for sending children to private schools, according to Rajesh, is because he hopes that his offspring will not live a life similar to his. The man stated

that he wishes that his child will become a white-collared salary man working in either the private sector or the government sector. To Rajesh whom we met at the Vijay Nagar Double Storey, a parent's passion regarding their children's education coincides with their desire for their kids to live better lives than them, whether economically or socially.

With respect to the education of children, Rajesh believed that upward mobility for their aspirational class will be achieved when their offspring find employment in different occupations as a result of investment in their education. This strategy of social mobility through education as a result of parents' wishes for a better life for their children is similarly displayed in the study of Jeffery et al. (2011), which deals with rural Jat families in Uttar Pradesh who make an effort to support their children to become white-collar employees in urban areas, getting out of agriculture and rural areas.

5.2.2.1.2 Education System as the Site for the Formation of Class-based Group

Recently, the education system has become the site for the new middle class to form class-based peer groups rather than groups based on caste or ethnicity. (Lietchy, 2003: 213). The new school system determines which schools children will attend according to the economic standings of their families (Ibid.). In other words, schools become sites in which to make children imagine their identities in terms of economic class (Ibid.). Accordingly, class identity is becoming a more powerful ingredient in understanding identification, while ethnicity or caste and community lose their significance (Ibid.: 214).

Due to this educational system, the new middle class naturally congregates peer groups based on economic class and accepts the social rank according to access to capital based on occupation and income, not on the hierarchical distinctions of caste and community or religion (Nisbett, 2007: 947).

In this regard, the new middle class tends to form 'consumerism-based relationships' (Mathur, 2014:116) with similar class-based social networks. Although emotional

relationships with neighbors or colleagues can be very superficial and different from relatives, people tend to adapt their spending habits to suit the requirements close at hand (Wessel, 2004: 98)

According to Sanjay and Rohan, as regards social interaction, the new middle class sees class-based divisions as stronger than caste- and community- based ones. Feelings of demarcation of the self and the other within their social circles, such as colleagues or friends, are generated by class-based inequalities, especially in terms of distinguished consumption patterns according to class, rather than by caste- and religion-based differences.

a. Rohan in Vasant Kunj

I prefer brand clothes, I always buy brand clothes because of my social circle. The person whom I hang out with, in my club, in my society, there are upper class people. Clothes, these things are visible. I have to care about audiences..... But food, I don't eat outside. I'm happy to eat at home. Food is going inside me... If I am with my friends, I'll take them to good restaurant, because I have to concern about them....But, when it comes to for myself, I just eat at home or buy cheaper one.

He can't just wear any clothes from any brands to get along with his co-workers or people in his social circle. Since he has social network with people in similar class, he spends money on nice restaurants to go with them as a social activity. This shows where his social status is about. He spends less when he is alone. Suitable amount of consumption for upper middle class he makes for his social activities with others plays an important role to maintain his class status. Therefore, in order to maintain some level of decency, they don't begrudge money they spend on dining, brand clothes and leisure occasionally.

When upper class people hang out, they usually go to bar which is very expensive. One beer costs around 1000 rupees. But, actual price of same thing is only 250 rupees. So, I feel hesitate to go there with them. Even if I go to that expensive bar, I just say "I want to have a tea". I feel uncomfortable when I have to go somewhere with them ...If I go to upper class marriage, I may buy clothes which meet their standard. It gives me pressure.

But caste difference for people like us is no bar. I can go out with Muslim, Christian...I don't feel any differences. But economically, I will. If I know a person who has lot of money to spend, I will always, at the back of my mind, have cautious and pressure...I can go out for play or exercise with them because sports doesn't cost money. But when I go to service sector, to eat or to drink, I have pressure to spend something to meet their standards.

In this regard, caste does not matter anymore. He said he feels more uncomfortable to meet up with people in different class rather than people from different caste. Most people he meets through his social life like work or clubs usually have social network for upper middle class or upper class. He feels pressure on consuming like them in order to hang out with them rather. He feels completely fine with hanging out with people from different caste or different religion.

b. Sanjay in Vasant Kunj

Just like Rohan, Sanjay feels that for the middle class of his generation, class is much more of an important problem than caste. As a white-collar worker, with his status, people would imagine that he drives a car to work instead of a motorcycle, but he does not own a car, and such matters make him somewhat stressed. Also, living in Vasant Kunj is to him a means of displaying his social status. This shows that the name value of 'living in such a neighborhood' indicates the class of a person in Delhi nowadays.

Class has become a major, quite a major issue, because we have to maintain a certain standard of living now. I'm working as an associate media director, but I don't have a car. I have only a bike. Because of my profile, I might not go by bike to my office. Because I might be expected to drive a car. So that sort of class conflict exists, so we would choose to live in Vasant Kunj, not in a smaller locality, because somewhere we want our social status to be reflected... Like we live in a good place, we maintain a certain standard of living.

5.2.2.2 Diversified Social Network

Examining the case study of Alisha, one of the distinctions between the modern and liberal mindset of the young middle class and the mindset of their parents is derived from social capital, or social relationships among individuals. This does not mean that the former have more social networks associated with high society or politics than the latter, rather it denotes the kind of values the people with whom they communicate in their daily lives have, and the kind of society and circumstances including the different social units by which they are surrounded. Social networks and social interaction attained by exposure to people with varied identities and outside cultures are required qualifications to be a member of the new middle class as distinguished from other sections of people.

a. Alisha in Vijay Nagar

Alisha described her parents' interactions with other people as vastly narrow and limited, and attributed the cause of this phenomenon to problems with their ego. She informed us that her parents did not feel the need to associate with people who had financial abilities, associating castes, or races that were different from their own. However, Alisha was able to establish a broad and diversified social network because she judged people for who they were, regardless of their surrounding background.

We believe in our relationship with our neighbour, but our parents generation have lot of ego problem. They think like if their neighbour is earning less than them, then they think "why should I talk to him?". If my neighbour belongs to different caste, "why should I talk to him?" It's like that.... If you are from Korean family and I am from Hindu family, then they would not prefer to talk to you. The reason would be "Why should I talk to you, we are not within same caste, we don't have things in common"...They will not speak much to each other.

Interaction of different caste, different profession among young generation is more, and we are fine with it...Caste doesn't matters...So, in my life, I have 100 people from different caste, I'm not seeing them through caste. I'm just seeing them through people...We don't judge people by caste, but my parents mind it.

b. Puneet: Experience of Migration

As has been noted by Fuller and Narasimhan (2006), exposure can be enhanced by working in environments such as the IT industry, living or travelling abroad and migrating to a cosmopolitan city. The next narrative will impart a greater feeling of satisfaction in life from exposing and opening up to an unconstrained atmosphere of multiple cultures.

Puneet in Vasant Kunj

Puneet is a 37-year old single woman working in the HR department of an IT company. It has been 14 years since the woman coming from Haryana first moved and started living in Delhi. During Puneet's 14-year residence in Delhi, her living experience in East Delhi and South Delhi, approximately 20-year long residence in Haryana, as well as her working environment in an IT department has all played important roles in establishing and altering her set of values. Thus, what we intend on finding through the woman's case study are first, the level of influence that the residential environment, surrounding society, and social network impose upon the formulation of a person's values, and second, the advanced, independent, individualistic, and autonomous value set of the new middle class woman that we are able to learn through Puneet, who works in an IT department which is a white collar sector. Following, in Puneet's case study, we will be able to view how the 'psychological freedom' displayed by middle class women, as stated by Kakar, appears differently according to the changes in the residential environment and economic independence.

Considering the average marrying age of Indian women, the woman could also be called an old maid. She claimed that such late marriage of women was not an exceptional case for her, but now a common sight. Asking if she had any thoughts on marriage, Puneet replied that although she did wish to marry, she had no intentions of marrying someone she did not want simply out of fear of her old age. The woman said that her autonomous outlook on marriage was not something that she had previously possessed, but instead thoughts that had changed since her move to Delhi. Puneet

explained that her parents had begun to feel anxious after their daughter had turned 26, and through the friends of her parents, introductions by relatives, and matrimonial sites, she had met with approximately 100 different men. The woman claimed that at the time, when she was rejected by men after the meeting, it was hurtful enough to make her cry. The reason that she had suffered so much at the time was due to the standards created by society-the pressure of having to marry early, the devastation of being rejected by men, the gazes of acquaintances including relatives and neighbours that would tease her for it. However, despite being younger and more beautiful back in the time, she declared that she had more confidence in her current self, and that the fear of being rejected by men had also vanished. The reason for this, as the woman stated, was that she evaluated herself based not on the standards that society created, but those that she had made for herself. In the days when Puneet had followed her parents' instructions in meeting with prospective marriage partners, the men who had met their standards-for example, non-trimmer, no alcohol, wearing the turban within the same community and religion-were all what she herself had taken for granted as a prospective spouse. Nevertheless, the woman stated that, in the present day, it is foolish to choose a spouse based on such criteria. As expected, she did not pay attention to societal standards such as religion, caste, or age difference, and instead claimed to favor a love marriage in which she could choose the partner herself.

Such confidence, the woman claimed, had begun to appear following a transition into an independent, autonomous mindset after moving to Delhi. Even when the woman had been dwelling in a small rural village in Haryana, she had walked around with her head faced towards the ground. Making decisions on her own was not possible even at the end of her post graduate years, and speaking with a stranger was a feat that was simply unimaginable. The issue of marriage, of course, as well as career path was solely based upon her parents' opinions. Though Puneet had followed her parents' claims in graduating from the MBA, she quickly changed her path towards the IT sector. Even within the IT industry, although her parents wished for her to work in the technique department, the woman eventually moved to the HR sector. Currently, the woman only works in the IT HR department 3 times per week, and on the remaining days, draws pictures. Puneet expressed that she had just now come to realize that she should have become an artist.

The woman's claim that after her place of residence had changed to the big city of Delhi and she began to pursue economic independence, her values also became liberal and open minded, illustrates that financial ability and environmental factors are able to change one's mindset. In other words, why the new middle class is commonly introduced as urban residents is due to the exposure to sophisticated and diverse culture provided by the city environment, and also because it denotes people who come to possess modernized, globalized perspectives through interaction with the variety of people brought about by such culture.

Small town people, their map is very limited... Look at the kind of people they interact with and their daily routine...They don't have much more exposure. They just go to temple and do religious practice for two hours and go back home everyday...They do not have intellectual discussions...Even a guy I met before, he is a Hindu and I'm a Sikh...so, my parents feel furious because they think according to religion. The point they were furious was because of different religion...They think like, 'If I go into inter religion marriage, god will be upset.'

The woman claimed that the mindsets of her neighbors in the rural village where she used to live were very narrow and conservative, and that the reason for this was visible in their daily routines and the people that they usually interacted with. She said that due to their repetitive everyday routines and communication with people sharing similar environments and limited minds, they were not given the opportunity for exposure to diverse cultures and values. Following, the fact was that if she were to marry a man with a religion other than Sikh or talk with a stranger, then her surrounding neighbors or relatives would whisper behind her back, and her parents would be greatly bothered by such views of society. They were used to repeating only what was familiar all the time, and thought that attempting to change through new things was not an exemplary rule of the society that they had lived up until then. They only followed the traditional norms that were accepted by their surrounding people and society, and did not think that the personal freedom of following individual instincts and emotions was important. Such disposition portrayed by Puneet's parents shares a connection with how the Indian society is more centered around community

and the collective identity of the group, which Dumont called 'holism' (1986), rather than the individualism that was central to the Western society, also shown in Platz's study (2014).

Puneet also, at the time, could only be swayed by the gazes of others and the conservative judging criteria of the society in which she belonged. After the woman had moved to Delhi, she did not feel 'psychological freedom' from the start. During the days when she lived in East Delhi, the woman was unable to wear the revealing clothes that she currently wore freely-for example, shorts or sleeveless t-shirts. According to Puneet, the younger generation living in that area often followed the opinions and demands of their parents. She added that though the inhabitants there were literate, because their values were still vastly conservative, it was very uncomfortable for her to live there. Nevertheless, the woman states that it was after her first experience living in a foreign country for several months and residence in South Delhi that her mindset started to become more independent, individualistic, and liberal. Puneet elaborated that it was while she stayed in China for 5-6 months after leaving India for the first time in her life, when she experienced new culture, met different people, and had new experiences that she became open minded and started to feel internal change. The woman said that in addition, unlike East Delhi and South Delhi where she currently lives, because she did not have to pay that much attention to what neighbors or other bystanders thought of her, she felt a much greater happiness than before.

If you compare small town and Delhi, I have exposure all these things, so I evolve...My mindset evolve...Within this 7, 9years, I became a person which I'm so proud of...But those people (small town people), their map is still limited, they only go by what society tells them to do...If I get marry a man with a different religion, my parents will think like 'what will relative say, how will we face them'... So, for them, it's not important like what happens to my daughter is matters. They want to make you to bring into their map... This is my reality...maybe you won't believe this, when I came to Delhi, I didn't wear any western clothes because I was not allowed to...Gradually I can wear it... Now I wear shorts because the neighbours don't bother...See the change...change happens... It's not an easy game to change your parents thought...There are lot of challenges.

Through Puneet's case study, we are able to see the change in values spurred by 'exposure' through the residential environment, the growing independent nature and individuality of the young middle class, and especially the fact that such changes are occurring within women. The woman moved from a small town in Haryana to Delhi, and also lived in south Delhi where she became free of the social standards and stares of bystanders which had once bound her. Consequently, the woman said, she was much happier living her current life in which she believed in herself than she was before. Through Puneet's case in which she claimed that her level of happiness had been altered by a change in values, we are able to infer that the way of feeling happiness and well-being of the New Indian middle class is different from that of the old middle class.

5.2.3 Composite Identity: Westernization and Indianness

The internalization of the 'composite cultural identity,' the mixture of cultures that are local, national and foreign (Titus, 20159), as a characteristic of the new Indian middle class can be traced back to the British colonial period. The colonial educated middle class of India emphasized both the importance of preservation of traditional culture and religious beliefs and the acceptance of modernity from western cultures at the same time (Jodhka & Prakash, 2016: 39).

Composite identity in the contemporary new middle class has been visually exhibited in media representation and global commodities as a 'fusion between national tradition and global capitalism' (Fernandes, 2000: 615; see Fernandes, 2006; Favero, 2005; Saavala, 2010; Scrase, 2002; Wessel, 2001). For example, the image of Indian traditions incorporated into multinational products has become a dominant phenomenon to attract nostalgia among urban middle class people (Favero, 2005; Fernandes, 2000).

Young middle class people in the study of Favero (2005) also show a rejection of clear division between the West and India, national and global, similar to the interviewees of this study. These categories 'co-exist, merge and share a common

space in which they constitute and give meaning to one another' (Favero, 2005: 106). This hybridity between being Westernized and Indianized is one of the noticeable characters of the new Indian middle class as a historically lasting legacy (Favero, 2005:115).

Therefore, refusal of sharp distinctions between globalizing modernity and local traditions, thereby adjusting to a position of in-betweenness without conflict, should be a recognizable feature of new Indian middle class identity.

The following four narratives from interviewees from their twenties through their forties in Vasant Kunj, support this claim by showing ambiguity in attitudes toward the dichotomies between the western world and India, modernity and tradition, in their daily lives and their identities.

a. Sanjay in Vasant Kunj

Indianness can be food, clothes, a certain sense of value judgement like the treatment of elders. This sort of sensibility is very Indian because we have been taught to respect elders, not to be rude to them, from childhood. Maybe in an American setup, they call parents by name, but in India we never do that. In India, we have a certain name for every member of the family... chacha, mama, nana... You cannot call your grandparents by name. A lot of Western culture allows parents to be called by name. But we can't because I think that's very traditional and Indian routine.

We grew up in a small town. Globalization and modernization happened in the 90s and we were born in the 80s. So we have seen India both pre-globalization and post-globalization. There was a time we watched the TV, state-channel, Doordarshan, then Star World... The kind of upbringing we have had is very mixed. We have eaten Indian food, then started to have McDonalds after it came in... So we have a very mixed sensibility in that sense. We know what is Indian, how we grew up and what is the basic concept... It's how we have been brought up. So we tend to develop our tastes.

I think our generation's sensibility has mostly become Westernization. But we don't aspire to it... More correctly, we become very global, exposure to lifestyles across the

world like we watch English movies, we listen to English music. We meet people from different countries. Our friend circle extends beyond people we were at school with. Our friends are friends' friends as well. Every extension we live is new and I'm becoming more open to the way we live.

We are not consciously trying to be Western. At the same time, it doesn't mean we don't like our own what we do or food... If we eat pizza, we come back to dal and chawal. It's not divided. It's not clearly divided... Things are mixed. Our lifestyle is not clearly divided... We do not have an entirely Western lifestyle, nor an Indian lifestyle.

For Sanjay, respect for parents and the elderly is Indianness. He is able to define Indianness and Westernization, but he is not able to completely differentiate them in his life. This is because he grew up at the beginning of the influx of Westernization and globalization, and as he grew up he naturally came to accept it. They are familiar with eating pizza and hamburgers, while also enjoying dhal and chawal. Breaking away from a small town and moving to Delhi, he has had various experiences. Friends from school are not their only acquaintances, and by meeting friends' friends and coming across many different nationalities, they can widen their social interaction. This is definitely different to their parents' generation. However, he confirmed that this doesn't mean that he dislikes his own traditions. It seems that it is impossible for them to differentiate Westernization and Indianness clearly. Actually, that has become so natural in the lives of the middle class of their generation.

b. Puneet in Vasant Kunj

We are the first generation who is in transitional phaseIt means change has not happened yet, but we are going from one stage to the other....stage, or state of mind. So, they are becoming more open, consumption pattern and consumer behavior has changed....We are becoming financially more self-independent because our salary has increased much....That is the major important reason...So if you have more money, you have more revenue.... If you have more money, you try to spend on going to different places for experiences, and you can meet different sets of people...Phases are changing...They are going to one phase to the other...They are still going.

We are going toward a phase of totally independent from our family for decision making, financial security... We become more independent in every aspect...More individualistic also.

It seemed as if opposed to the aforementioned collective identity deeply rooted within the parent generation, as the younger generation wished to become more independent economically or decision making-wise, the individualistic identity was strengthening. According to Platz (2014) and Titus (2015), India's current young generation possess a composite identity that is neither fully collective, nor fully the Western's individualistic. The basis for their claims is that even for those in their youth, the emphasis on family which can also be called their traditional Indianness always exists. Puneet also, at the question of in what aspect she felt Indianness, replied that rather than having Indianness, although she was a person who was globalized, her affection for family was a foremost area in which she could find Indian tradition in herself.

The current young generation simultaneously holding such Indianness and globalized aspects, borrowing Puneet's exact words, are 'in a transitional phase.' According to the woman, though they have not completely changed, they are within the process of transition. Based on improved economic power than from the parent generation, as they have been given more opportunities for exposure to new culture, they have also been accepting change, especially in terms of independent decision making and economic independence.

c. Rohan in Vasant Kunj

While outside my brain is very westernized, inside I still want to maintain Indianness... I have broad thinking and open mind, I can accept anything. But when it comes to me, I don't do that myself.

Rohan said he is not really thinking of getting married after breaking up with a woman few years ago. He doesn't see anything wrong with dating a woman before marriage. He was also open to having sex before marriage, but he claimed he doesn't do one-night-stand. He said this is because his outer look is westernized, but inner

mind still has conservative, traditional Indian culture. He understands other people do one-night-stand and live with their boyfriend or girlfriend, but that is not what he wants to do. Even though he wallowed in Western culture such as clubbing, alcohol, and American TV shows, his inner part still have “Indianness.”

He said his Indianness is having a strong relationship with his parents unlike Western culture. He tells his mom about everything. He also believes that it is his Indianness that will keep relationship stronger when he dates a girl or gets married.

d. Diviya in Vasant Kunj

Diviya, as one of liberalization’s children born in the 1970s, is considered as part of the middle class that holds nostalgia for the values of the Nehruvian middle class, and are also accepting the evolving, modernized values that have resulted from the changes following economic liberalization in the 90s. The following episode demonstrates the moment of revealing her ‘transitional’ identity.

Diviya was my neighbor during the field work that I was living in a flat in Vasant Kunj for 2 months. After the interview was over, Diviya expressed that she found it rather interesting that I lived in a house with the home owner herself. “Your house owner must surely keep watch over you and intervene in situations such as arriving home late. How could you possibly live through all of that?” she wondered. Thus, Diviya knew that the young generation thought that independent, individualistic and autonomous disposition was important, and at the same time, the old generation portrayed a strong inclination for thinking that caring under the relation of ‘we’ was important.⁶⁹ By belonging to the middle generation, the woman seemed to idealize the harmony of the two aspects.

⁶⁹ A similar case is shown in Platz’s study. (Platz, 2014, Chapter 3.)

Conclusion of the Section 5.2

The characteristics of new middle class in the two neighbourhoods analysed in the case studies can be summed up as follows:

First, regarding consumption practices, as Kiara and Diviya mentioned, one of the prominent tendencies of the new middle class is an intensifying desire to show off – in other words, a growing mentality of imitating the upper class. They are stimulated to consume by the pressure of the peer group and transnational mass media like television, films and advertisements, which produce an emulation mentality of Western cultural icons, images and lifestyles⁷⁰, and the availability of diverse consumptive choices of newly produced products, global and luxury brands displayed in malls and showrooms. They boast as to who possesses more assets and material things, and are jealous or admire those who own things which impress people, whereas the old middle class during the Nehruvian period revered austerity, restraint and a modest lifestyle, and disdained the pursuit of material things as immoral behaviour.

Secondly, examining the case studies of Alisha and Puneet, one of the distinctions between the modern and liberal mindset of the young middle class and the mindset of their parents is derived from social capital, or social relationships among individuals. This does not mean that the former have more social networks associated with high society or politics than the latter, rather it denotes the kind of values the people with whom they communicate in their daily lives have, and the kind of society and circumstances including the different social units by which they are surrounded. Social networks and social interaction attained by exposure to people with varied identities and outside cultures are required qualifications to be a member of the new middle class as distinguished from other sections of people.

Thirdly, Puneet, who as white-collar professional can be representative of the new

70 Corcoran 1998: 3–7, quoted in Derne, 2008: 21.

middle class, used the term 'transitional' in her narratives of self-identification. Puneet also verbalised the term 'transitional' in order to suggest that the values and state of mind of the current young middle class including herself have neither been totally transformed nor remained unchanged, so their generation is in a transitional phase. To sum up, their ideas of self-identification in terms of class and generation, lifestyles, values and mindset of the young, urban, new middle class are in a transitional stage.

The responses of Rohan and Alisha correspond to Puneet's opinions since they could not consciously divide the dichotomy of Westernness/Indianness, traditional/modern in their everyday lives since they are from a generation of coexistence of multiple-culture identity, which means they have grown up in an environment that has triggered the embrace of the compounded influence of subculture-culture-other culture (Titus, 2015: xxiv) as 'liberalisation children'.

5.3 Heterogeneous Values in Middle Class

Many scholars contend that we should not commit the fallacy of equating the new Indian middle class, who are benefiting from the effects of economic liberalization, with generalized sociological term of the middle class in India (Derne, 2008; Deshpande, 2003; Fernandes, 2006). While globalization has enormously influenced life for the affluent middle class, changes in the ordinary middle class have been less obvious (Derne, 2008: 47). The lives of elite Indians have been changed by the new opportunities due to economic liberalization, whereas the lives of non-elite Indians have remained stationary (Ibid.: 11).

According to Derne (2008), economic and cultural globalization has particularly transformed gender practices and family arrangements of the elite middle class, while ordinary middle class identity is still attached to traditional gender and family hierarchies. That is, cultural transformation by liberalizing the economy and globalization has had little impact on the psychic orientation of social arrangements in most of the middle class. Relating to this, Derne explains that the limited impact of

cultural globalization on social practices in India results from the fact that the reality of fundamental social structure, which is the basis of these practices, has not been changed simultaneously (Derne, 2008: 17).

On the one hand, the elite middle class distinguishes itself from the ordinary middle class with cosmopolitanism and globalized and westernized values and customs in opposition to the perceived vulgar tastes and gender practices of the lower class. On the other hand, the ordinary middle class differentiates itself from the poor by cosmopolitan values and from the 'morally depraved' elite middle class by indigenous values such as appropriate gender arrangement and modest sexual practices (Derne, 2008: 18).

Results of field work in both neighbourhoods (where Vasant Kunj had a distribution of interviewees from mostly the elite and new middle classes and Vijay Nagar had a mixed class distribution) presented various values within the differentiated middle class relating to gender, caste, religion, family institutions and consumption patterns.

This section will deal with three issues: First, how values and customs are differently presented between the new middle class and the ordinary middle class; second, how self-perception of class is described according to differences in economic, social and cultural capital and the backgrounds of interviewees; and lastly, how the perceptions of the interviewees differ regarding women, caste, religion, parents' interference in family, consumption patterns and life satisfaction.

5.3.1 Self-perception of Middle Class Status

As we have seen in the previous chapter, it is not only the elite upper middle class who travels overseas and owns cars, but also ordinary Indians who own televisions and two-wheeled vehicles and aspire for the lifestyle of the new Indian middle class, who put themselves in the 'middle class' position (Derne, 2008: 18; Deshpande, 2003; Favero, 2005).

Although both groups label themselves as middle class, the reasons they think they

belong to the middle class are different. Affluent Indians identify themselves as world-wide class, situated between the Indian ordinary middle class and the consuming classes in developed countries (Derne, 2008: 18). On the other hand, the ordinary middle class defines itself as being between the poor Indians who barely maintain a livelihood and the affluent Indians who are rooted in conspicuous consumption (Ibid.: 155). This ordinary middle class tends to display its pride by differentiating itself from other classes: distance from the poor by having cosmopolitan perspectives and consumption ability and distance from the upper class by retaining traditional Indianness and moral superiority through sexual sobriety and modest consumption habits (Ibid.).

As mentioned above, all the case study interviewees in this study situated themselves in the middle class. However, their definitions of middle class and their reasons for describing themselves as middle class in the self-categorisation of class status reflected the interviewees' varied situations in terms of occupation, income, family background etc.

Accordingly, case studies will be narrated as follows: First, Alisha accentuated that, first and foremost, values and ways of thinking determine class status. Second, Sanjay, who defines himself as transitional class between upper middle class and the typical Indian middle class, explained his self-understanding of class position as young urban middle class. Meanwhile, in Vijay Nagar, Mina and Rajesh, who do not belong to the new Indian middle class, reflect their non-elite middle class status in self-perception of their class by describing themselves as 'neither rich nor poor', implying an intermediate standing between the very top and the bottom, just like the responses of many other interviewees during the fieldwork.⁷¹

a. "Values determine Class Status": Alisha in Vijay Nagar

Alisha's definition of a class standard is highly worthy of notice. The woman asserted

71 In studies of Favero (2005) and Harris (2006) (quoted in Lahiri, 2014: 38) also most respondent, even if they are residing in poor areas, are put themselves in middle class in self-perception of class.

that simple materialistic conditions could not serve as efficient methods for distinguishing between the upper, middle, and lower classes.

Of course, income can act as an indicator of an upper or middle class status. This is because, as Alisha quoted, “money makes value as well.” With money, one can fulfill their needs of buying new clothes, going on trips, etc. And following the extension of mobility across national borders, one can expose themselves to diversified environments as well as experiences, which in turn spurs the transformation of ideas. In the case of belonging to the upper or upper middle class, having high-salary parents can further expand our scope of exposure. Not only that, but we can satiate our cravings for items of luxury such as fashion or traveling. On the other hand, those that are affiliated with the lower middle or lower class can only self-refrain themselves from having materialistic desires, because they are individually well aware of their low financial flexibilities. Thus, money not only fulfills desires beyond our basic daily necessities, but also, granting opportunities to expand our horizons, can also constitute sets of values.

If you are economically satisfied and well settled, you will be open everything. For example, if I am lower middle class, I know my father earn only 10,000rs. per month, so, I should not have to spend too much, I do not have to buy fashion items...But if I belong to upper middle class or upper class, my father earns Rs.1lak per month, so I will be open to fashion trend and I will be open to new things, I can try them...So, this is big difference...I think this will be same in worldwide...If she is earning well, she can spend whatever she wants to, she goes to new places, she will exposure to new places, her way of thinking will change, so obviously something depends on money.

We inquired from Alisha whether money could be a classifying condition for distinguishing between upper middle and lower middle class. To this, she answered that because the gap between the two classes was very blurred, that it would be difficult to even say that was a difference. She also firmly stated that money cannot serve as a sufficient condition for differentiation, because most people these days have a decent level of affordability. The woman’s response correlates with what Dipankar

Gupta had previously stated⁷², that the gap between the elite and the non-elite is, in terms of aspiration, growing increasingly vague. In addition, referring to what Alisha had stated, the claim that affordability is something that everybody has can be understood as the fact that, in terms of consumption, aspiration holds little differentiating factor within the middle class.

There is thin gap between lower middle and upper middle class....There is blurring gap. Some difference is there but we can't clearly say this is what clearly under upper middle, and this is what clearly under lower middle.

It is very difficult to answer what might be this thin gap....I don't think this is connected to money because affordability is equal now (among middle class). I think education is important factor to divide between lower middle and upper middle class. And exposure also...To know how society is going toward.

Outside of economic standard, one of the distinguishing elements between the upper middle and lower middle class that Alisha had provided was education. The education that she is discussing here does not pertain to simple high-school or degree-level education. What Alisha is referring to is the quality of education and the quality of knowing. Even if one had received a high-level education, that education degree means absolutely nothing if that same person confines his wife inside of the house of a narrow-minded mindset. The second distinguishing element that was posed by Alisha was the difference between exposure. This meant that the people around a person, and his or her surrounding social network-neighbors, fellow workers, friends-was an important factor. According to Alisha, the social network of the lower middle class consists of narrow-minded people, while that of the upper class is comprised of people with relatively open mindsets.

According to me, Education doesn't mean the degree games. You must study till age of 12. But the experience you gain from people around you impact more than degree you are doing.... If you do post graduate, but not educated yet to allow your wife and

⁷² He addressed this opinion in the seminar of "The Sociology of Elites in Contemporary India" which was held on 4th and 5th of January 2016 in Jawaharlal Nehru University.

family to move out, and you are just satisfied you are earning....And that means quality of education is more important... Quality of knowing, and broad mind.

The difference between upper middle and lower middleclass is exposure as well....Exposure to society. People who around you is a big role to make your personality in the way you think...Network and connections.....For example in company, their mind broaden up easily....But, if people who are sitting with some people who don't want to make mind flexible, it will actually freeze your mind...For me, lower class people are who is sitting with those people who don't yet flexible to open their mind.

Another important standard that the woman presented was the difference between the level of Westernization. While the lower middle class has not yet accepted Western culture, the upper middle class is in the process of embracing such change, and the upper class has already become fully Westernized. With this in mind, Alisha's parents belonged to the lower middle class, and her brother and herself were associated with the upper middle class, even though they constituted a single household.

We, youngsters, have seen western culture coming in and we are open to it... But our parents who have lived different life. They are not accepting western culture. This is a big role, then you can differentiate between upper middle and lower middle class....Lower middle class, they would not allow western culture to be acceptable...But upper middle class, they try to and upper class they already have accepted Western idea, the way of thinking and the way of spending.

There are a lot of generation gap...For example, my parents won't be open to have a girl friend or boyfriend for me. But we are ok with it....Idea of thinking, idea of accepting and people who meet, people who sit with, everything is different between them and us.

Similar to the other young interviewees, Alisha claimed that she was Westernized in many aspects outside of methods of spending. Apart from physical elements such as the way of eating or dressing, Alisha asserted that there has also been a Westernization in the way of thinking. Elaborating upon this notion, the woman explained that having

male or female friends, or even boyfriends before marriage was not unusual, but a very natural phenomenon. She also claimed that the declining trend of caste discrimination is also an employed benefit of Westernization. Furthermore, Alisha said that she was attempting to accept only the merits of Westernization, instead of unconditionally focusing on its disadvantages.

b. “We are the Transitional Class”: Sanjay in Vasant Kunj

Sanjay is aware that there is considerable differentiation within the middle class, and he mentioned that there are differences between the so-called typical Indian middle class and the middle class to which he belongs. He said that there are two types of residents of Vasant Kunj – those who purchased houses when Vasant Kunj was first founded, who are the typical middle class, and people (including himself) who are currently renting in Vasant Kunj, who cannot be classified as typical Indian middle class. Renting a 2 BHK house in Vasant Kunj costs at least 20-25,000 rupees, and if they were truly middle class, they would not be able to afford such a high amount.

Anybody who lives in Vasant Kunj is definitely not middle class... Actually, there are two kinds of people in Vasant Kunj. One is those who have old houses. They bought their flats when it was established. They are middle class. The other people are those who rent houses. If we are really really middle class, we won't rent in Vasant Kunj. We will go for a cheaper place because we can save money.

Sanjay defined the class status of the new generation including himself in one word – transitional. He situated himself somewhere between the typical middle class and the upper middle class in India.

For the middle class of his generation, wages increase with every change in job, and disposable incomes grow continuously. At present, he self-identifies as between the upper middle and middle-middle, but he aspires to the upper middle class. In this way, they have middle class sensibilities, but at the same time wish to reach the upper middle class, and this is why he said that he belongs to the transitional class. This means that he clearly recognizes that there are differences between the typical middle

class and the class to which he belongs.

Our generation is not typical Indian middle class... We are not upper middle class either. We are somewhere in-between. Typical middle class, they do not spend the way we do, like eating outside or drinking. Their set of values and set of circumstances are very different from ours. I guess one thing, although we have middle class sensibility of people, we are consistently leading in a way which is helping the transition to higher class.

Through interviews with Sanjay, who self-identified his class as somewhere between middle and upper middle class, it became clear that he was conscious of the difference between a typical middle class person and himself, and this difference is not only in financial situation or the environment in which he lives.

It is certainly the case that spending habits differ according to income strata, but the difference between a typical middle class person and the class that Sanjay belongs to – and between his parents' generation of the middle class and his generation – is in their liberal values resulting from the wider exposure of the middle class of his generation.

c. “We are neither Poor nor Rich”: Mina and Rajesh in Vijay Nagar

Mina in Vijay Nagar

Married female, 38 years old

Place of Birth: Delhi

Occupation: Shopkeeper

Education: Studied in Government school/ 12th pass

Household composition: 4 members (self, husband, 2 sons)

Number of persons working in the household: 2

Total household income: Less than Rs.50,000

Religion and Community: Hindu/ General Caste

Owning a store in Vijay Nagar Double Storey, Mina is a 38 year old woman from Delhi. The first time we met her, the round-shaped woman was sitting inside of her

shop wearing a traditional Sari. Her outward appearance was very different from that of Vasant Kunj residents, because she gave off a less-Westernized, more traditional impression. Mina, born in Shastri Nagar, Delhi, had been living in Vijay Nagar for twenty years then, after an arranged marriage with a man from Vijay Nagar. Both having attained 12th pass-level educations, the couple is currently running the shop together. Mina looks after the shop from morning until afternoon, after which her husband takes over the shift. While her husband works during night-time hours at the store, Mina cares for the children at home and runs house errands. The woman claimed to not be hiring a servant, of which most middle class households have. Even though Mina was one of the most economically underprivileged interviewees that we met in Vijay Nagar⁷³, the woman still associated herself with the middle class. The reasons that she gave for claiming to belong to the middle class are as follows:

I belong to middle class....We are not poor like these girls, (pointing to the lower class girls) who are not clean and who do not have enough food to eat. We are not like them. So, we belong to middle class.

Due to the fact that Vijay Nagar Double Storey was located near a lower-class neighborhood, many of the lower class children seemed to pay regular visits to the store. I asked her how she felt about interacting with such children. To that, Mina replied that she would rather not interact with them, although it is something that she is required to do. She explained that because she is able to maintain a cleaner lifestyle than such impoverished children, and doesn't have to worry about what to eat everyday, that she is a part of the middle class. Thus, a middle class status to Mina means having both higher economic status and, in terms of sanitation, a lifestyle different from that of the poor.

⁷³ Mina's family had a monthly income of less than approximately 50,000 rs, and above anything else, she was the only in-depth interviewee who claimed to have none of the consumption items (smartphone, computer, credit card, debit card, AC, Cable TV) that were enquired during the interview. This is why I have made this assumption.

Rajesh in Vijay Nagar

I belong to middle class...Neither It's very good, nor it's very bad....Neither my position is not very bad, nor my position is very good. Bad means if people do not have anything to eat, anything to work.... I have at least this job, business...It is managing, neither its very good, nor its very bad.

Rajesh too claimed to be a part of the middle class, because he was neither too poor nor too rich, and at the very least, had an occupation and means of living. This therefore indicates that Rajesh's standard of a middle class is having a financial status that is not too poor or rich. In contrast, to the older generation, even having a scooter might mean that you are belong to the middle class. However, Rajesh claimed that even if one possessed two vehicles, it would be difficult to discern whether one is in the middle class or in a more difficult state compared to his. He also mentioned how hard it is to sustain a middle-class status.

5.3.2 Status of Women

Gender is the social arrangements that showed the most distinctly different perceptions between the two neighbourhoods. With regard to this, we can link the outcome of the field work of this study with Derne's argument that cultural globalization has not altered the gender arrangements of the non-elite class in India, while it has contributed to greater economic independence and freedom of social mobility for females in the elite middle class (Derne, 2008: 123).

For non-elite middle class women, working outside the home is not encouraged by in-laws (Shurmer-Smith, 2000: 47), meaning that they have limited social mobility and ultimately undertake most of the household work done by servants in elite families.⁷⁴

The reason for scant transformation in gender practices in the non-elite middle class is because of structures in which males are relatively satisfied with the existing family

⁷⁴ Derne, 1994b: 50, quoted in Derne, 2008: 67.

arrangements (Derne, 2008: 68). Ordinary middle class Indian males still prefer repressive gender roles as a fundamental value of Indianness, even though they feel attracted to the globalized lifestyle (Ibid.: 151). They recognize public modernized space as masculine monopolized property, but regard women's taking full responsibility for the household as essential for preserving indigenous values of Indianness (Ibid.). Fear about 'excessive' modernization led by globalization actually results in middle class males sticking to traditional gender arrangements (Ibid.).

The following narratives of four men demonstrate this, articulating antithetic perceptions of women in males of the new middle class and ordinary middle class. In the first dialogue, Manuraj, a man in his twenties in Vijay Nagar, shows prejudices about women relating to class. As a non-elite middle class man, he demonstrates a feeling of moral superiority in the middle class differentiated from the upper class by emphasizing the modest behavior of middle class females, such as keeping curfew strictly and refraining from revealing fashions, compared to upper class females.

a. The Perception of a relation between Class and Gender: Manuraj in Vijay Nagar

What is noteworthy in this case study is, as revealed in our conversation with Manuraj who is part of a non-elite middle class, the perception of class and gender that results from the biases and prejudices of the upper class and middle class.

To start, his conservative mindset about women is portrayed in his responses to various questions regarding women. At the question of what his ideal type of wife was, the man claimed that it would be someone that could take good care of his parents. He also mentioned that he favored a housewife over a woman that worked, and his reasons for such are as follows.

What will she do outside....What will she do whole day working outside, here and there running to and again she comes home, and again she has to prepare food at home ...Wife shouldn't do that. Wife should be at home....At least if she is at home, she can handle everything at home.

In other words, apart from most of the young men around his age, who preferred working women whether it was for economic reasons or to grant women equal opportunities for self-realization as men, Manuraj favored a housewife as an ideal wife. It appears as if the man holds the mindset about women that most men in the parent generation possessed when getting married, that ‘as a housewife, a wife must not roam outside of the house too often and instead be responsible for house chores such as cooking.’ In addition, he stated that as fashion trends where women enjoy wearing revealing clothing are currently rising, the number of sexual assaults is also increasing. Thus, the man holds the position that the dressing codes of women have a definite correlation to rape, and his reason for such is that if women reveal more, then men, following their instincts, want to see it.

The man stated that he enjoyed going to the club enough to go every 2 or 3 days, and he classified the women that he met there according to the biases that were related to their class.⁷⁵ Of the women that came to the club, a woman that returned home early at not such a late hour was from a ‘good family.’ On the other hand, he said, the women that stayed until 2 or 3 past midnight were mostly from upper class families.

If a girls is from a good family, she will be back to home by the dark, till evening.....If she is from high class family, she will remain out till 2 or 3am...Whole midnight she will be out....This kind of all the late night party, there will be no girls from lower or middle classes. All girls would be from high class. Till early in the morning, 5, 6 am, they drink too much and they sleep anywhere.

For example in our family, we have common rooms and sleeping close by....But these upper class girl, they have segregation like father and mother sleeping in one room, daughter and another member sleeping in another room....So, the moment the parents sleep they may go out for late night parties and come back midnight...So, nobody know what they do.

⁷⁵ The study of Nisbett (2007) also articulates perceptions of young middle class men on relations between gender and class. These young men morally criticize ‘high-class girls’ with revealing clothes who can be seen entering bars, pubs and clubs, calling these young women ‘call girls’ (Nisbett, 2007: 944).

The man explained that in the case of the upper class, because their houses were large and the rooms for parents and children existed separately, it was difficult for the parents to intervene in their children's private lives. Thus, while the level of control that the parents are able to exert upon their children is considerably small, the interior of middle class family homes are rather small and the physical distance between children and parents is very close. The logic that follows is that the level of control that parents can impose on their private lives may grow bigger.⁷⁶ Following, because a middle class family controls the time restriction and clothing of the woman (daughter), they are a good family, according to Manuraj's standards. In other words, while Manuraj here perceives a woman that does not stay outside too late and wears modest clothing as a 'good woman,' though he does not mention a woman who is the opposite as 'bad,' the man does not think positively or ideally of such. As follows, what can be inferred here is that the man's perception of gender varies according to class. This correlation about the perception of gender according to class can be seen as a result of Manuraj's preconceptions about the upper class, and such biases of the middle class regarding the upper class, as well as the biases about gender that are related to class were also visible in the other male interviewees from Vijay Nagar. Such preconceptions that the Vijay Nagar interviewees other than Manuraj hold against the upper class may be interpreted as a manifestation of their senses of superiority of the middle class to which they belong.

b. Rajesh in Vijay Nagar

Rajesh also mentioned the status of women within society as another difference between the middle class of his generation and his parent's generation. Compared to the past in which women had to rely upon their husbands because men were usually the ones earning money, in the present-day, educated women are currently receiving more job opportunities. These women have become more independent, and as a result,

⁷⁶ Platz states that major changes between the young generation and the generation of the parents in Pune came from the expansion of housing space as a result of the economic liberalisation. People could afford to buy bigger house with higher wages, and could conceal secrets by having their own space (Platz, 2014: 154).

the relationship between a husband and his wife has drastically changed from that in the previous generation. We asked Rajesh which he would prefer more: to have his wife work outside or stay inside performing house chores. In response to this question, he answered that although his wife is not currently employed, he wishes that she were working outside. His answer generated from the thought that if his wife starts working, house chores could be fulfilled through a servant, and above anything else, it would contribute significantly to his household's financial situation. He claimed that considering factors such as the inflation of goods or devaluation in money, it is logical that all young couples should generate dual-income. Unfortunately, Rajesh expressed dissatisfaction about his wife because she did not desire to pursue a job. Thus, to Rajesh, dual-income is not a means of granting his wife self-realization, but more of a means of taking mutual responsibility for the economic burden of the household.

In order to figure out his viewpoint upon women, we asked him whether he thinks that sexual harassment is linked to the fact that more and more women are walking around at night with clothes that expose. To this he answered that if he had a daughter, he would not allow her to wear any clothes such as short pants that exposed skin. The reason he gave for this was that the neighbourhood he is living in is a middle class area, where women wearing such type of clothing are viewed negatively.

Since this area (Vijay Nagar) is primarily middle class area, there is negativity towards women wearing short clothes, exposing body. If it had been upper class locality, if we go to upper class party, they are somewhat acceptable....because they don't see in negative towards exposing body. They(Vijay Nagar residents) will humiliate, they will insult. They will pass generally negative comments to her, although they don't directly say which is not desirable....That is middle class mentality.... The area where we are living, we have to adjust that surrounding.... That is according to neighbourhood...surrounding...High class, for them, this is acceptable.

In addition, he also stated that if a woman wearing showy attire at night was sexually harassed, it would be complicated to say who was at fault. This is because, in most cases, people listen to the woman's side of the story instead of the man's. Furthermore, Rajesh also emphasized the need for women to walk around in pairs when they are

going to clubs late at night, or engaging in any other night activity.

Although Rajesh seemed to acknowledge the fact that women have become much more independent and hold higher statuses when compared to the past, his overall view upon the ways of thinking of women did not seem to be so progressive.

c. Feminist Perception: Rohan in Vasant Kunj

He said this patriarchal system of India where a wife has to obey her husband is wrong. He doesn't categorize roles or positions of man and woman in a marriage life.

There is no obligation in marrying someone... there is no someone is upper and lower... I don't think women should cooking and I should work outside. If I am husband and good at cooking, I can stay and cook in home, and if she wants to work, she can go for working....

He said it's his wife's choice whether to work or stay home. He just thinks his future wife won't have to worry about working since he is already making enough money to support his family. Thus, for him, his wife working means having an equal chance to reach self-realization for well-educated woman, not sharing financial burden. He, however, said once a baby is born, one of them should concentrate on raising the baby for a few years. He did not say it has to his wife, just one of them. In fact, he said, even if his wife works it wouldn't be too hard to share house work because most middle class families own maid. For a question about how women dress up and time restriction effect on sexual violence towards women, he got furious and answered that kind of idea should be banned.

It does not depend on her clothes...not depend on timing....not depend on who she is roaming with, not depend on where she is going... I think real reason for happening rape is because parents do not teach their children specially their sons... how to control things....People who are uneducated, not be taught the values by parents are ones who commit rapes."

d. The Connections between Class, Space and Conjugal Relation: Sanjay in Vasant Kunj

As Sanjay distinguished himself from the typical middle class in terms of values of caste, marriage, etc., he suggests that the position of women in conjugal relations also varies according to residence, neighbourhoods and class; that is, differences in gender arrangements exist between themselves and the typical middle class.

He moved to Vasant Kunj from Kalkaji, which is less affluent than Vasant Kunj, and he explained that there are major differences between Kalkaji and Vasant Kunj, not only in terms of the environment but also in terms of the kind of residents.

In Kalkaji where we stayed, the roads are not very clean, and the kind of people we saw is not well-educated, maybe 10th pass, or 12th pass, maybe not undergraduates. But everybody in Vasant Kunj is educated, everybody can speak English. It is a more decent and well-mannered neighborhood, and the roads are more organized, and clean.

Maybe you will understand that some differences are according to income groups and strata of people... Conflict between couples is also different. For example, couples in Kalkaji, since people are engaging in more menial jobs, with lower incomes, their dynamics within the house would be also different. They (husbands) treat women differently. They shout and they get drunk at night. Everything is comparative by income groups, all dynamics are observed within and outside... Everything has to be approved by the earning male elder. Decisions also. Even though the wife might be working, so she is economically contributing to the household, all things are mainly decided by the man of the household. In Vasant Kunj, the relationship between husband and wife is more equal, even if incomes themselves are different and the husband earns four times of the woman, this is not reflected in the relationship between them.

In this way, Kalkaji residents have relatively lower incomes and less education than those of Vasant Kunj, leading to differences in values. According to Sanjay, patriarchy is more severe within households or between spouses in Kalkaji, and there is a

tendency for women to be treated with less respect. In Sanjay's case, he makes much more money than his wife, yet according to his wife the household chores are divided almost equally. As he acknowledged, relationships between spouses in Vasant Kunj are much more equal than in the typical middle class neighborhood where he previously lived, and it seems that this has changed considerably from his parent's generation as well.

5.3.3 Caste

Privileges of caste has began waning after the new Constitution was adopted.⁷⁷ In addition, a new occupational and educational system gradually freed people from the demands of caste (Beteille, 1991: 23). In recent years, this situation has accelerated since the processes of urbanization, industrialization, development of capitalist economy, modernization of individual consciousness and democratization have made urban Indian citizen feel that caste is a useless and unsuitable system for Indian society (Jodhka, 2016: 229). Thus, in cities, the dominant tendency is that rules of commensality relating to caste are rarely practiced outside the household, and even within the household, these rules have become loose (Sheth, 1999: 2505).

Nevertheless, the relevance between ritual roles and functions associated with caste and daily life has disappeared and it is only limited to the new middle class (Sheth, 1999: 2509), while it has not applied to other sections of the middle class. The results of our field work also indicated that some interviewees in Vijay Nagar are still concerned about commensality and untouchability related to caste pollution, even among those in their twenties.

The following narratives from Mina and Rajesh, both in their thirties, offer examples of practising rules of commensality strictly.

⁷⁷ Ghurye, 1961, quoted in Beteille, 1991: 21.

5.3.3.1 Caste-bounded Values: Mina, Rajesh, and Manuraj

a. Mina in Vijay Nagar

Mina displayed a conservative type of nature in regards to the matter of the caste practice. She claimed that it was becoming more common to address people of the lower caste, such as sweepers or cleaners, by their real names and not by the traditional derogatory names. Through this, she implied that the discrimination of lower caste people has been decreasing to a significant extent. Nevertheless, though acknowledging such downwards trend, Mina claimed that she did not eat the food made from lower caste people or Muslims. She attributed her behavior to the worry that such food may not be clean or properly sanitized.

I don't eat food prepared by lower castes or Muslims .I don't allow them to enter in the kitchen because we are trading caste, Baniya caste....I don't even eat eggs. I don't allow to bring eggs in my kitchen as well. I can't allow them in my kitchen...(she repeatedly say).....Allowing them to clean utensil is compulsion, those works which are a bit difficult, so, that kind of works we allow them to clean, otherwise, we don't allow them to enter in kitchen or food preparing for us. Slightly we are skeptical about whether she takes bath, whether she maintains proper hygienic...We are suspicious about it.

(Sang): In case if they (lower caste servant) maintain clean, hygienic, and wear new clothes, and prepare food, will it be acceptable?

(Mina): No I don't accept. I don't like them to be in my kitchen. I don't allow them. In religious rituals and practices also we don't allow them to touch...These things are not touched by them.

(Sang): If Brahman caste people prepare food, then will you allow them to do?

(Mina): For Brahman person comes, and prepare, we will accept it...High caste I will accept...It's not a problem.

However, the woman asserted that even if a lower caste people were sanitized and well-clothed, she would still not allow that person to enter into the kitchen or to cook. She also affirmed, at the same time, that if an upper caste person such as Brahman were to cook, that there would absolutely be no problem. From this, we can draw the

conclusion that her reasons for avoiding food coming from those of the lower caste are not only related to sanitation, but also to the traditional old caste practice ideology that is still dominant in her mind. To Mina, the lower caste people are not just physically unhygienic. Rather, their existence itself is contaminated and not pure. Thus, it is easy to see that the notion of categorizing a person according to his or her caste, as well as the concept of defining a person's level of purity according to each caste, is still deeply rooted within Mina's set of values.

b. Rajesh in Vijay Nagar

Rajesh explained that he is keeping the practice of untouchability and commensality because at an early age, he became associated with lower caste people and was told by his parents and other elders not to eat their food. Following, Rajesh implied that he did not want his own child to neither eat the dishes that sweepers or cleaners cook, nor establish any sort of connection with lower caste children. His rationale for this was that his child could possibly gain negative attitudes or habits from interaction with such lower caste children. He stated that although he was okay with food made from Muslims or people of other communities, he could not tolerate the cooking of lower caste communities such as sweepers.

Caste matters in marriage practices. Generally caste matters in everywhere the most. Because we help each other based on caste community. When we are in happiness, sorrow, we want to help in our own community people. Caste is the thing that never goes...It's very important. Within Hindu also, there are different people and different community. We are Punjabis....We seek help from our community. Other communities are also same as us. For example, Baniya help each other their own community and Jain community also does same....First preference is given to their own community.

The meaning of the caste still seemed very important to Rajesh. To him, the caste was not only important to marriage, but also to the exchange of emotions, and to the act of helping others. He said that such unity between communities is present not only within the Punjabi Hindu group, but also within other communities as well.

c. Manuraj in Vijay Nagar

Actually, Manuraj showed a contradiction in his claim that he felt no aversion to food made by the lower caste or Muslim. This is because he felt hesitant in hiring a cooking maid within the house. The man stated that his house had once hired a sweeping maid, but never a cooking maid before. The reason for this was that because he thought the maids had problems in sanitation, he preferred the food that was cooked by his mother. Thus, we are able to analyze his claim that he does not avoid food made by the lower caste or Muslims, despite his perception that food made by servants has sanitary issues, in a variety of ways. Due to his separation of the concept of a servant with that of a lower caste or Muslim, he is able to feel no aversion towards food made by his friends that are Muslim or from the lower caste. But on the contrary, because servants are rather poor, he is able to hold the preconception that they are dirty. Or, like his response, he may not prefer food cooked by servants because his household had never hired a cooking maid and he never had the experience of becoming independent, which is why he had grown accustomed to eating the food that his mother made. Though the exact reasons for his contradiction are unclear, in contrast to another similar aged white collar interview of Vasant Kunj who has no hesitation in hiring a cooking maid, while Manuraj holds no negative perception of food created by the lower caste or Muslims, there is a contradiction in the fact that he feels uncomfortable about the food made by servants.⁷⁸

5.3.3.2 Caste-free Values: Ruchi and Sanjay

Ruchi in Vijay Nagar did not practice commensality and untouchability based on caste discrimination, but she did not employ a cooking servant since she believes in the correlation between ingestion of food and the eater's spirit. In the case of Sanjay in Vasant Kunj, he thought that his caste-free values distinguished him from his parents

⁷⁸ We can connect Manuraj's hesitation about food prepared by servants to the study of Shurmer-Smith which explains differences in employment of cooking maids between wealthy households and lower middle class households. According to the study, in wealthy households, food preparation is associated with servants' work, while in lower middle class households, women take all responsibilities for cooking (Shurmer-smith, 2000: 50).

and the lower class.

a. Ruchi in Vijay Nagar

Married female, 45 years old

Place of Birth: Uttar Pradesh

Occupation: Housewife

Education: Studied in Government/BA

Household composition: 3 members (self, husband, 1 daughter)

Number of persons working in the household: 1

Total household income: Rs. 20,000-50,000

Religion and Community: Hindu/ General Caste

Ruchi exclaimed that as much as she was educated, her values were also very modern. A specific area in which she felt modern was the fact that she believed that the injustices of the past must be abolished. The woman rejected past injustices such as the idea of not educating women, the sati system, dowry rule, and notion of untouchability. She claimed that often she would even put food in her own bowl, and serve it to her lower caste maid. The woman, though respecting her servant in all aspects, did not permit the maid to cook food. The reason for this was quite intriguing.

I prepare food by myself. Food has our emotions and our emotions are connected with food that we prepare, so whatever flour, chapati, or curry... our emotions are attached with it....The way we prepare food with our deep emotions, the food will be nice, and it helps to keep family member's health. That emotion we can't find from other people. If other people prepare food, it will be just mechanical.

Thus, food is cooked with sincerity and genuine soul, which is why dishes must be made from good will for the family, in order to sustain the family's health. But when a person other than herself cooks, the food does not contain positive will and emotion, which is why Ruchi did not allow not just her lower caste servant, but anyone from creating dishes that her family would eat. Consequently, the fact that, to Ruchi, food influences the emotion and mentality of both the person who cooks and the person who eats, illustrates her traditional Indian values. However, by not relating food to the lower caste, it can also be seen that Ruchi does not follow in traditional caste practices.

b. Sanjay in Vasant Kunj

Caste is not important but it is still there unfortunately... Our interactions are not based on caste. When we are in the corporate sector, most people working there are either from middle class or upper middle class families, and we don't talk about caste. We talk with each other as normal people without considering what caste they come from. We don't have time to figure out who is Muslim, lower caste or not.

But if I was working in a factory or mill, not a white-collar job, there would be Dalits, lower caste, like shoemakers... So there is a possibility that if I had that sort of mentality of lower middle class or lower class, I might try to keep my distance from them (lower caste people) because I come from that kind of sensibility. My sensibility doesn't allow intermingling with that kind of lower caste people. I might separate from them... But our generation generally do not, only 10 or 20% of people might do. This is in a very lower income set-up, with interaction based on community, religion and caste these days... And those in their forties, fifties, sixties, the old generation, it should have been very prominent for them... But now we are interacting with other countries, religions and castes.

Sanjay's evolving values stand out with regard to caste and social interaction, not discriminating between people according to their caste and treating everyone equally. Social interaction in his work environment and among his generation does not rely on caste and does not question which caste people belong to, whereas his parents' generation and the lower or lower middle class continue to live with social interactions that depend on caste, religion and community. In this way, these values of breaking away from caste are values that separate him from his parents' generation, and they are also values that separate the lower class from his class.

5.3.4 Religion

As has been noted in section 1 of this chapter, religion and religiosity have begun losing their relevance for identity construction in the young middle class. Conversely, some interviewees showed steady involvement in religious rituals such as doing puja, going to temple and worshipping idols in their everyday lives. In the following, two

contrasting interviews related to the meaning of religion in interviewees' lives will be displayed.

a. Diviya in Vasant Kunj

Likewise, she also mentioned that she did not currently engage in religious rituals, such as puja, worshipping, or praying for God, which were considered as a definite part of daily routine within her parent's generation. Rather than testing her religiosity by continuously practicing religious rituals every day, she believed that performing kind acts or being nice to others was ultimately more worthy to herself. Regarding what was defined as right behavior by the Indian society, the woman claimed that she was irrespective of such.

What 'religious' mean? I'm a Hindu, that's it. It's my birth...I have no choice in that... How do you define the meaning of 'religious'? I don't know... If 'religious' means puja everyday, no, I don't do... Going to temple everyday, no, I don't do.... But 'religious' means nice to human being, then I am... I'm irrespective...I'm happy to have a world and society where people across the bridge...It's so beautiful because everybody has culture, and we can learn many things from each other. That's it.

b. Rajesh in Vijay Nagar

I go to temple and I worship at home...Everyday I visit temple after closing shop. My children should also worship....But I find among young generation, it is reducing...Earlier we used to celebrate one single god in one religious place. Earlier generation, people have more free time. They used to read religious text by themselves...They used to spend longer to read everything like Ramayana, Mahabharat, Bhagawad gita. But nowadays people do not have that kind of free time.

Related to his practices of untouchability and commensality in the above caste section, Rajesh shows his Hindu practice as regular daily duty through religious activity such as visiting and praying at the temple, and his practices of caste-based discrimination.

5.3.5 Consumption Pattern

The recent trend emerging with economic liberalization, in which consumption is a way of self-expression and a central marker of 'being middle class' (Platz, 2014: 20), is not occurring in all sections of the middle class (see. Ganguly-Scrase & Scrase, 2009).

Interviewees who belong to new middle class were not necessarily familiar with conspicuous consumption or spending for luxury brand commodities (see Fuller & Narasimhan, 2007). In addition, ostentatious consumption, such as taking a loan, is common in ordinary Indians even though they do not have new middle class membership.

This section will provide various consumption patterns appearing in diverse middle class differentiations through narratives of four case studies interviewees: Mina, Rohan, Sanjay, and Rajesh.

5.3.5.1 Moral Superiority in Spending Habits: Mina in Vijay Nagar

The consumption patterns of the ordinary middle class are distant from excessive consumption with improvement of economic status benefited from economic liberalization. They generally link conspicuous consumption with materially deprived characteristics of the affluent class and regard it as morally degenerate. In disparaging the perceived reckless, materialistic minds of the upper class, they reveal the perceived superiority of their thrifty and abstained manner in consumption practice.

This ordinary middle class often stresses their ideal of simplicity. The quality of simplicity involves moral meanings (Wessel, 2004: 99). It indicates a moderate and sober manner, pursuing neither gratification nor status through consumption, and not engaging in modern lifestyles by seeking entertainment and leisure (Ibid.). In other words, their simple lives gratify just the necessities of life such as food, clothing and a place to live, and education at an English-medium private school for their children (Ganguly-Scrase & Scrase, 2009: 74). Other things, such as enjoying entertainment,

travelling or buying something beyond necessities, are considered extravagance (Ibid.).

Mina in Vijay Nagar

In Mina's perspective, to have a middle class value is to consume in a judicious manner. Such prudent consumption behavior is, to Mina, the discerning standard between rich class and middle class. At the same time, this standard is also a way in which she distinguishes herself from the generation of her children. Although Mina was always satisfied with anything that her parents gave her, her sons were apparently not satisfied with what they were given, and always wanted more. While the interviewee usually buys products from the local market or street shops, her sons often go to shopping malls or show rooms, and aspire for sophisticated, globalized commodities such as brand-new gadgets, or clothes from brands. Therefore, the woman claimed that differences in consumption behavior are one of the key differences that exist between generations. Mina asserted that she did not buy her sons everything that they wanted no matter how hard their pleas for fresh and expensive products were. She claimed to be teaching them the methods of abstinence. The interviewee stated that this sort of wise consumption behavior was one of middle class values of her generation's.

We are in the middle neither we are rich people, nor poor people....Rich class people spend lavishly on everything. They don't think about spending, so, their children are spoiled like whatever amount of spend, they don't care. But in our home, we spend judiciously. We spend very nicely, properly according to whatever it is necessary. So, we teach our children these values....We spend according to our capacity, earning and income, then we take care of everything and we spend accordingly.

We give very limited amount of money to our children wherever it is very necessary...If they want to have momos, if it comes under Rs.15, we give only Rs.15 to them. We don't give unnecessarily as much as they want. We spend judiciously and we ask for them to save money. We ask for them we should save money.

My children, their values is like "I should be better than my parents, I should aspire

for good, I should do something much better, good job, good lifestyle”...That is what they aspire to be. But mine was not like that....Whatever my parents gave, I used to be happy and satisfied with that....This new generation they want everything hi-fi, high standard....good clothes, good car... For example, we buy clothes from Kamla Nagar, local market, but they go to showroom, shopping malls. We buy vegetables from these street vendors, my children, they ask “We should go to Big Bazaar, fresh store, Reliance”... In these big shopping stores they want to buy vegetables. They said fresh and good quality vegetable we can get there...But I don't go there. My son wants me to go there, but I feel happy to buy from here.

5.3.5.2 Consumption Habits of Typical Middle Class Sensibility: Rohan and Sanjay in Vasant Kunj

IT professionals in Chennai agree that their relatively high salaries are important for enjoying a comfortable life, and immersing in new types of consumption patterns such as spending holidays inside and outside of the country, although most of their incomes are used for housing and private education (Fuller & Narasimhan, 2007:136). Meanwhile, ostentatious consumption for status, such as buying luxury cars, going to expensive restaurants and wearing fashionable clothes and accessories does not seem to seriously preoccupy them (Ibid.: 134).

Similar to these IT professionals in Chennai, Rohan and Sanjay in Vasant Kunj, as members of the new rich and white collar workers, enjoyed spending on entertainment such as dining out and watching movies in shopping malls, drinking alcohol, clubbing and buying global branded clothes, and considered it usual consumer expenditures, while attempts to purchase luxury commodities or visit five star hotels, or signify their status through high-priced branded items like iPhones, were not visible.

This non-typical new middle class consumption pattern can be connected to Sanjay's definition of his class position, which means having both typical middle class sensibility and aspirations for the lifestyle of upper middle class. In other words, they use 'public but privatized and exclusive' spaces for enjoyment through consumption,

which differentiates this middle class from the past generation and the present lower class (Platz, 2014: 50,61). Simultaneously, they feel anxiety over buying too expensive items or luxuries. In this regard, the mentality of reluctance about spending large amounts of money without preparing for the future can be interpreted as an attitude toward consumption of the middle class in the past generations that has been inherited by the contemporary new middle class to some extent.

a. Rohan in Vasant Kunj

Rohan expressed his desire to have a luxurious car someday which is one of aspirations of the young generation in middle class. However, he emphasized that he gets cheaper ones with decent quality rather than iPhones or five star hotels. This revealed he has typical consumer value of middle class. In his case, even if he has lots of disposable income right now, his consumer value of ordinary Indian middle class, where he is from, has not changed much. Nevertheless, there is a distinctive difference between consuming patterns of him and of his parents.

For him, buying brand-name products or fancy items all the time seems luxury, but going to a restaurant in the mall once a week and buying middle-low priced global brand clothes from malls are necessary consumption in his daily life. On the other hand, his parents think even going to a movie is a luxury. It is not easy for them to spend money on something which is not necessary for living such as leisure or activities for fun. They feel uncomfortable on consuming on such their leisure.

b. Sanjay in Vasant Kunj

We are using Chinese goods. This is called Zaomi. They have a fantastic budget phone. My phone cost 6,000 rupees, but a branded phone is much more expensive – 15-16,000 rupees. Why spend that much money?

Just like Rohan, the fact that Sanjay has typical Indian middle class sensibilities is shown very well in his spending habits. Instead of buying expensive brands like iPhone, he uses a Chinese brand of smartphone that may be of slightly lower quality

but has similar functions. For home appliances, he prefers brand names, but instead of purchasing high cost global brands he uses local brands or Chinese brands that are less expensive and yet pretty good in quality. In this way, instead of spending excessively for the purpose of showing off, he has practical consumption habits. However, at the same time, as regards food consumption, he enjoys eating out, including Chinese and Western food. He said they enjoy eating new kinds of food, which means that they are more experimental than their parents' generation. Their spending habits, just as with Rohan, are fairly Westernized, but at the same time they do not pursue luxury.

5.3.5.3 Money makes Modern: Rajesh

These days, aspiring for upward economic mobility, and adjusting life towards these aims, has become the mainstream, meaning that middle class people feel pressure from following these tendencies (Wessel, 2004: 97). For them, consumption practices and possession are not just related to seeking happiness, but a requirement in order to maintain or become socially equal in status to others (Ibid.). They believe that possession of the latest modern products gives prestige (Ibid.: 98). Satisfaction from obtaining goods is actually produced through estimations of being noticed by others (Ibid.: 97).

Rajesh in Vijay Nagar

In Rajesh's case, he may be seen as belonging to the upper segment of the middle class rather than the mass segment of the middle class in terms of economic standards. Nevertheless, in regards to his set of values, he seems to have a relatively traditional and conservative nature. In addition, it is visible through his cravings for money, consumption behavior shown similar pattern of the new middle class.

Regarding appearance, the man seemed like a typical middle-class Indian man. Nevertheless, despite his seemingly ordinary middle-class appearance, it was surprising to see that he was in possession of a brand-new iPhone. Throughout the

entirety of the interview, Rajesh had given the impression that his economic conditions were mediocre. Later, however, we could only be surprised at his one-month salary that exceeded a total of 2 lacs rupees. The man explained that he would buy different products in order to impress others, because the possession of such items not only one admiration from other people, but also served as a method of indicating his social status. Rajesh said that he would go to any extreme to purchase something, even if he was not financially capable of doing so. He then explained that he even borrowed his iPhone from a friend, claiming to pay back for the device later. He also stated that he was even willing to receive loans if it would allow him to buy an object of his desire. From this, it is inferable that Rajesh's dissatisfaction with his relatively large one-month salary can be attributed to his habit of conspicuous consumption. He related his show-off consuming attitude to the community caste in which he was living.

If I go to eat out with friend, if he has good car and if I go with him, then internally I feel I need that kind of car. We, Punjabi family, these elements are there inside....I need to be like others, I need to have this....Punjabis are quite spending type....We spend more than others. Even if they have limited capacity, they would like to show...To show our status. If someone earns 1lak rupees, and spending, Punjabi will spend according to them even if they earn 40,000 or 50000 rupees. We try to spend like others because we want to show 'I'm also equal to you'. There is problem of ego that I also have to spend this much....I don't want to show to others that I have no capacity. Even if I may take loan, I'm ready to spend for that.

(Sang): Do you buy goods to impress others?

(Rajesh): *Yes. I have Apple i-phone, for example if I go to somewhere with simple Micromax or just ordinary phone, I can't talk over with it to others. Other people will notice it. To maintain social status, we need to have that. But it's difficult sometimes to maintain our status.*

Rajesh said that conspicuous consumption was a unique characteristic of the current generation, highly contrasting with the parent generation. While the older generation holds a strong tendency to save money rather than consume, the present-day generation is more inclined towards recklessly spending their cash.

Rajesh also agreed with the opinion that money is an important factor of sustaining happiness. As the head of a middle class family, the man seemed like he was having a hard time fulfilling the needs of both his family as well as himself. He continued to re-emphasize the importance of wealth in life throughout the whole interview. Drawing a parallel between the meaning of modern and money, he claimed that a person can become modern only when he or she is in possession of money. To Rajesh, modern is defined as having a nice car, going to pubs, and dressing in stylish fashion.

Now everything ends in money. If we have money now, we can live life that we wish. Money matters the most. If you do not have money, how will you be modern? If we want to wear good clothes, then we need money. If you want to fulfill some needs, we need money....To be modern means cars, going to pubs, good fashion...these everything comes under modern. If we do not have money, we can't be modern. If we have money, we will be like king. If we don't have money, we will be like just ordinary man.

Despite the fact that Rajesh lives in a Vijay Nagar Double Storey, which is the most undeveloped and unorganized area of our research's fieldwork bases, he surprised me through his dissatisfaction with his high salary. Although his revenue was similar to the amount that most middle class interviews in the Vasant Kunj earned, his views regarding the caste and gender were suited to the environment of Vijay Nagar. Thus, the trend of a disintegrated caste system due to urbanization was not reflected by Rajesh, because he still remained influenced by the environment of Vijay Nagar in which same community (Punjabi Hindu) started to live together. Furthermore, from a gender viewpoint, his awareness of community residents' condescending views upon women wearing showy attire, as well as his individual viewpoint of such women, seems to be deeply rooted within him.

Coupled with this conservative mindset, Rajesh expressed a fierce passion for money and consumption. To Rajesh, money and happiness hold a very strong relationship with each other. His desire to impress others through the possession of goods was also clearly visible. He believes that only through money can a person become truly modern. Thus, for him, the meaning of modern is more related to lifestyles that differ

by financial ability, than it is related to certain mindsets or values.

5.3.6 Life Satisfaction

Although I didn't ask "Are you happy?", some case study interviewees mentioned satisfaction with their current middle class life during long conversations. Looking into the narratives of three women who are in their thirties and forties – Diviya and Puneet in Vasant Kunj, and Ruchi in Vijay Nagar – we can notice that happiness and subjective life satisfaction of the middle class depends on the level of social interaction, gender and the extent of liberation from traditional social norms and public recognition according to the residential environment and family background.

a. Happiness being Freed from the Social Constraints: Puneet in Vasant Kunj

As we have seen from the section 2, Puneet in Vasant Kunj claimed that she was happier because of the freedom she felt as a result of decoupling from traditional social constraints, which was achieved by moving from a small village in Haryana where her behaviour was judged by a public gaze that only accepted traditional social norms to South Delhi where she doesn't need to be concerned about how her actions are perceived.

b. Gains and Losses in Her Happiness: Diviya in Vasant Kunj

Diviya declared that besides preferences for food, her values were also undergoing vast changes along with those that were occurring in society. She elaborated that behavior that was once rendered by society as taboo, such as females having sex before marriage, drinking or smoking, was no longer a problem in the current society. For example, upon learning that her neighbor, who was a foreign female and not yet married, had become pregnant, though she would have received considerable shock before, she did not regard the fact as a big problem now. What society considered as the standard of judgement for determining what was right and wrong was no longer valid to herself as an individual. Thus, the woman continued, any criticism by society

must only apply when imposing harm upon someone else, but if that were not the case, then there was no need to care about the gazes or opinions of other people. Following, the woman said that when choosing what to wear, what to eat, or how to behave, she did not act upon the standards of society nor the gazes and taunts of others, but upon her own desires and choices.

However, Diviya said, that even if she had become liberated from the societal standards that she once regarded as pressuring, she had not become happier than before. The woman explained that she did not feel that the social trends that had been shifting from her 20s until now were ultimately good. The reason was that due to such changes in society, she had become less content than in her youth. A few backgrounds apply to why the woman feels less happy than before. First, the current middle class has significantly weaker bonding with family and neighbors. They are usually busy working, and have no time. Their daily routines are repetitive mechanical lives which pertain to work, household, and when time allows, going to the mall. Even when meeting with family, it was more common to watch TV together than to have conversations. Apart from summer vacations in her youth, when it was natural to go see family and relatives, currently she goes to the shopping mall. The number of times meeting family and relatives clearly declined, and the same applied to relationships with neighbors. When encountering neighbors, she merely exchanged greetings, and knew nearly nothing about their private lives. Following, the woman claimed to feel loneliness living in the intensified individualistic society. Second, following the opening of the economy, though many options were also provided, the increase in the opportunities to a variety of choices was only causing more complication and confusion. When the woman was young, only one option had existed, and the satisfaction of achievement it was big. However, in the present where diversified options exist, it had become more difficult to feel satisfaction. The woman disclosed that while shopping, she often thought to herself, “So many items here are exactly the same.” This holds relevance to the woman’s claim that feelings of competing to appear better than others and desires to show off had strengthened within the middle class. They continuously imitated the lifestyles of the upper class within the option of various items that they were flooded with. The woman said that such behavior illustrates the middle class’s superficiality, and that she did not exactly feel happiness

living within such a middle class society.⁷⁹

I feel that there's restlessness in Indian middle class....They always want something new, something different...Aspiration for something newness... I have seen many years, they are ready to change without evaluating its repercussions....There's no guilt like kind of shame of who you are... We don't feel we are enough... We should be better...I feel middle class people are lack of confidence because they constantly try to equal to be somebody else....For example, it is very important for me and middle class women to wear nice westernized outfit with very good body. We should have very stylish fashion, nice hair style.... I don't care and I find very comfortable in myself, I don't care people...But, for most people, they are constantly aping someone, upper class people.... I feel they have sense of missing something or somewhere ...They feel insecurity... They want assurance... "Who we are? Do I look good? Am I the best among these people? Am I looking better than you right now?"... They are very superficial....Our mothers were not. They were already very satisfied in the family and our home system.

And lastly, she continued that through SNS such as Facebook, there were higher concerns for the invasion of personal privacy. She claimed that, apart from what she wanted, she had access to the private lives of people other than herself, and that the superficial, not face-to-face relationships that took place on the online medium created a situation in which it was difficult to sincerely congratulate others on their own happiness. This was because the woman inferred that the pictures that portrayed the happiness of others, as shown on SNS, were merely a method of showing off.

c. Unhappiness at Women's Subordination: Ruchi in Vijay Nagar

While passing by a colony in Vijay Nagar Single Story, I noticed that the front door to a house was open. Inside, I discovered a woman sitting inside, which marked our first meeting with Ruchi. Requesting and receiving warm compliance for an interview, I

⁷⁹ A study of adolescents aged 12-15 years found that adolescents with more traditional identity values and beliefs have higher subjective well being and happiness, while adolescents who endorse more material wealth and aspirations have less life satisfaction (See Rao et al., 2013).

began the questioning inside of Ruchi's house. Her small and dark home comprised of a narrow living room and kitchen, a bathroom, and two rooms, with furniture that was tattered and dirty. Though it was the weekend, the woman had been watching television alone and appeared to be very bored, which seemed to be the reason for her approval of the interview. Another central reason for this estimation, was that throughout the long duration of the interview, Ruchi talked in lengthy amounts, complaining about her current situation, as if she had not been able to disclose herself to anyone for a very long time.

Coming from the Uttar Pradesh, the 45-year old woman had parents who were both illiterate, her father a food supplier, and mother a housewife. After marriage she had moved to and lived in Delhi for 25 years, and had been dwelling in Vijay Nagar for about 15 years. Ruchi also had a husband who was a grocery shopkeeper, and a 23-year old daughter currently attending college.

Except for Ruchi, most of the female interviewees that we met during our fieldwork, in the case that they were young, held a similar level of education as their husbands. In the case that they were relatively of age, most were less educated than their partners. In contrast to this, Ruchi portrayed a special case in which she had attained a higher-level education than her husband. In comparison to Ruchi, who possessed both a graduate-level and MA in economics, her husband had merely held a 10th-pass level education.

Ruchi was very displeased with her parents' decision to arrange a marriage with a man who had lower-level education than her, only considering his family's economic wealth and same caste. Despite her skills and capacities, the woman had no choice but to marry a partner that her parents had chosen for her. Even after marriage, Ruchi claimed that she was not happy at all at the reality that she had to obey and fully depend upon her husband.

I respect my culture, husband and my family. Despite my education background, I have accepted and obey my parents and my husband because society will comment on me, like "After being educated, she does not obey her husband and her parents"... I didn't want to listen that kind of saying... I don't want this kind of same scenario to my

daughter.

Despite my qualification, my virtue, my talent, and my creativity, Im still working as a housewife only...Despite I'm having my ability to do many things, my families are not supportive of me and they are not happy with me. After obeying and listening to them, whatever they say, they are not still happy with me. They (Her husband and her father and mother) don't understand my sacrifice...

The woman said that, even though she was educated enough to be able to make decisions on her own, she was unable to protest against her guardians, and married a man to whom she was obligated to obey. She claimed that this was because she was afraid of the glaring views of society. In other words, a woman who did not obey her parents or husband was, at the time, criticized by society that she was “way too educated.” Since Ruchi feared such relentless criticism of society, she was left with no choice but to obey her parents. Nevertheless, the woman deplored the housewife status that she had to live with despite her talent and creativity, as well as the reality in which neither her parents nor her husband acknowledged her work and effort.

Complaining that her life had become miserable after marriage, Ruchi pointed to a picture of her when she was young, saddened by the fact that the beauty that had characterized her youth was nowhere to be seen in her current state. The woman, who had no choice in selecting her marital partner, claimed that she was experiencing difficulties in after-marriage life, due to the clashes that arose as a result of personality-wise and educational differences between her and her husband. She also mentioned that she wished that her daughter would not pursue such a life in the future, which is why the mother had continuously stressed the importance of education to her child. Ruchi thus acknowledged the fact that in order for her daughter to become less dependent on her future husband, and to achieve a life of economic and decision-making independence, education was a fundamental priority. The mother sincerely wished for her child to, unlike her own life, value herself more than anyone else, not parents nor husband, and live a life in which individual happiness was the most important.

Ruchi also asserted that even if her daughter pronounced that she would not get

married, it would not matter to her. In any aspect, the woman said, it was not right to enforce anything upon any individual.

I said my parents that whoever you want me to marry, I'll marry, whatever you say, I'll obey. But despite my obedience, my parents are also not happy. That's why I want my daughter to become independent, do everything her own whatever she wants to do.... I want her to think for herself. I want my daughter to give complete importance on her own..... Career, or whatever she wants to do, let her do freely.... I don't want impose anything on her.

Apart from the majority of Vijay Nagar residents who were Punjabi Hindu, Ruchi belonged to the Hindu Baniya, which seemed to explain why she did not socialize actively with her neighbors, and currently was out of touch with friends whom she had held close relationships with prior to marriage. Thus, it can be seen that her social interaction is very limited and shows bound relatedness, extending only to relationships with family, which also serves as the primary cause of her life characterized by boredom and unhappiness.

Conclusion of Section 5.3

From the above, it is apparent that distinction and differentiation in values emerged from divergence within the middle class.

In the case of Vasant Kunj, comprising primarily educated and white-collar professionals, interviewees tended to show homogeneous values with relative modernity and open-mindedness, while Vijay Nagar, with a mixed and varied class distribution, exhibited more heterogeneous values without consistency. The outcome of divergent values among various class compositions of interviewees seems to result from different circumstances that can construct modernity in individual identities, personal experiences and social networks.

As regards their views on women, the interviewees of the ordinary middle class seemed attached to conservative and orthodox views on women, although they conceded that the status of women has improved in Indian society in recent decades.

They had a tendency to control the mobility of daughters more so than their sons, which can be attributed to the increase in incidents of violence and fear of neighbors' disapproval regarding lack of control over daughters.

In the case studies, the interviewees in Vijay Nagar –Manuraj, Rajesh– hold conservative, traditional and negative positions on wearing skimpy attire and taking pleasure in drinking, smoking, enjoying nights out and partying. If we compare the views of Manuraj and Rajesh from Vijay Nagar with those of Rohan and Sanjay from Vasant Kunj, it is apparent that the former are less permissive and liberal on the subject of women's dress and the relation between time restriction and sexual assault, as well as their preference for women going out to work and the reasons for it.

With regard to caste practice, Rajesh and Mina from Vijay Nagar, who are both in their thirties, claimed that they do not consume food made by lower castes, unlike interviewees in Vasant Kunj, implying that they still maintain the notion of purity and pollution in food and contact related to caste practice in their daily lives.

In the case of the interviewees in their early twenties in Vijay Nagar, Manuraj said that he isn't concerned about eating food prepared by lower castes or Muslims, emphasising that this is an extinct psychology of prejudice and discrimination associated with caste and religion. However, at the same time, he expressed a disinclination to hire a cooking servant and eat food prepared by them. Compared to interviewees from the same age group in Vasant Kunj, he has quite a different viewpoint regarding the employment of a cooking servant in the household. The young middle class in Vasant Kunj are more interested in a practical lifestyle, employing a cooking maid and consuming food prepared by them, whereas Manuraj is accustomed to eat only homemade food prepared by his mother since he has never experienced decisive opportunities for change from a dependent to a self-reliant lifestyle such as independence from the family by migration. Another case of Ruchi in Vijay Nagar also presents a contrast to interviewees in Vasant Kunj in terms of food practice, since she deems the consumption of food to have a strong influence on emotions, even if she doesn't intend to follow commensality related to caste-based discrimination. Therefore, it seems as though a pragmatic lifestyle detached from

caste and religion-based taboos is becoming more and more common among interviewees in Vasant Kunj, while those from Vijay Nagar are still bound to the idea that food should only be cooked by a female member of the family.

With respect to consumption patterns, the new middle class, the so-called 'new rich', and the ordinary middle class both showed their aspirations for consumption and a good life. However, the ordinary middle class, which is similar to the middle class of the past in terms of consumption practices, believes that their ideology of simplicity and judicious spending is morally superior compared to the extravagant consumption of the affluent classes. In the case of the new middle class, although they are often described as participating in conspicuous consumption in other research, the case studies of this chapter present a tendency to purchase cheaper but lesser quality alternatives instead of high-priced, branded commodities. And Rajesh, even though he does not seem to belong to new middle class, purchased the latest products and luxury goods to impress others.

In the aspect of satisfaction of current middle class life, if we compare Diviya with Ruchi, who is from the same generation, we can see how differently globalization and westernization influenced the two women, both in their 40s, in their after-marriage lives due to their differences in growth background and choice of marital partner.

Forty-two year old Diviya living in Vasant Kunj now feels liberated having moved away from her earlier place of residence where traditional societal restrictions and the public gaze were important to her standard of living. However, at the same time, she is not released from the pressure of living in a materialistic consumer culture in the current context, which qualifies her as a member of the middle class within their social circle. According to her, the contemporary middle class can never be satisfied with consuming and possessing since their desire for material ownership will never end due to living in a market economy which promotes the continuous consumption and production of commodities, and competition with others in terms of obtaining material goods in order to feel superiority. Fromm (1976), in his book 'To have or to be', explains two aspects of consuming – as consuming is one form of having, consuming behaviour acts as removal of anxiety because what one possesses cannot

be taken away, but at the same time, it aggravates one to consume more because previous consumption will soon forfeit its feeling of fulfillment (Fromm, 1976: 24). As regards Diviya's happiness, it seems her life satisfaction can be attained in one aspect, but is lost in another according to the movement of time.

Ruchi in Vijay Nagar expressed the feeling of living a miserable life after marriage with an unwanted partner since she was entirely dependent on her parents' decision instead of asserting her autonomous free will to choose her partner, at that time being afraid of the public's vituperative gaze of her disobedience. A lack of social interaction as a result of being a housewife and only managing the household chores rather than being engaged in the working world, despite having completed higher education, and the severance of connections with friends and acquaintances after her marriage, made her feel more isolated. Accordingly, she cannot enjoy her mobility since her social interactions are confined to family members within the home, so there are few opportunities to experience the happiness of self-realisation by relating to others and maintaining social relationships with various kinds of people. The ways of pursuing happiness and space for fulfilling life satisfaction is absent, except via the family and the home in Ruchi's case. She is bound within the traditional and conservative lifestyle of women in terms of restriction of mobility, dependent decision-making, and inferior status in the family compared to women of the same age as Diviya in Vasant Kunj.

Analysis of the Chapter

This chapter has attempted to analyse intergenerational changes in the customs and values of the middle class, varied values in middle class differentiations, and distinct features of the new Indian middle class based on case studies from two neighbourhoods.

As liberalization's children, the new Indian middle class has shown differentiated values and customs from the old middle class, who has undergone different historical changes, and the present subordinated class that aspires to achieve membership in

new middle class.

Proceeding from what has been noted in this chapter, such divergent values and customs within middle class factions have been derived from economic capital undoubtedly, but social and cultural capital together help to make the distinction and differentiations within the middle classes.

In this chapter, we attempted to explore three components that constitute the features of the new middle class, which are new consumption patterns, exposure to society (including education) and composite identity.

The eagerness of middle class parents as regards their children's education is common to both neighbourhoods. All the parents I met during my fieldwork showed an interest in their children's education and were investing in it, even though there were inequalities between the two neighbourhoods in terms of the quality of the educational institutions and private tutoring due to differences in income. Enrolling their children in a famous private school reflected parents' aspirations for their children's social upward mobility, but it was also derived from pressure on parents to put as much into their children's education as their neighbours do – in other words, it is a way of maintaining middle class status in the neighbourhood. According to Lietchy (2003: 213), in Nepal also children's school has become a barometer of a family's economic standing since mostly class-based peer groups from diverse caste, ethnic and regional backgrounds are clustered in schools. In other words, children's success and failure depends on a family's economic standing and educational strategies (Kumar, 2011: 237).

As has been seen in Puneet's case study, the education system, migration to cosmopolitan cities and working environment are all elements that enable the new middle class to enhance exposure by accessing more social and cultural capital. By being exposed to multiple cultures and different kinds of people, attitudes of the new Indian middle class become more liberal and broad-minded.

The identity of the new middle class can be characterized as 'composite identity',

which means that internalized psyche has mixed westernized behaviour with the indigeneous values of Indianness without conflict. They have Indian identity within relatively westernized life style just like they love to eat pizza and pasta but do not give up on Dhal and Chawal. The balance between modern mind and “Indianness”, for instance strong feeling of solidarity with family and deep bonding with people they met even they consider themselves as individualist, arguably plays a significant role to their identity as new middle class and pride in their class position. According to Bijapurkar (2007:170), this is possible due to high levels of tolerance of ambivalence as historically formed Indian character.

As mentioned above, all the case study interviewees situated themselves in the middle class. However, their definitions of middle class and their reasons for describing themselves as middle class in the self-categorisation of class status reflected the interviewees’ varied situations in terms of occupation, income, family background etc.

Sanjay identified himself as transitional class in response to the question on self-perception of class since he regarded his position as ‘in-between’, neither typical middle class nor upper middle class. The meaning of ‘in-between’ implies he has typical middle class sensibilities, but at the same time is dreaming of a high class lifestyle since he was born and grew up in a period of change – in other words, he spent his childhood in a middle class family around the beginning of the economic liberalisation process, while after joining the workforce he is now enjoying the benefits of globalisation.

In the case of interviewees in Vijay Nagar, for Mina and Rajesh, subjective categorisation as a member of the middle class meant they were “neither rich nor poor”, implying an intermediate standing between the very top and the bottom who are below the extreme poverty line, just like the responses of many other interviewees during the fieldwork.⁸⁰

80 In studies of Favero (2005) and Harris (2007, quoted in Lahiri, 2014: 38) also most respondent, even if they are residing in poor areas, are put themselves in middle class in self-perception of class.

In this way, including the case study interviewees, almost all the interviewees I met during the fieldwork placed themselves in the middle class irrespective of their identification information such as hometown, occupation, income, family background, place of residence etc. This corresponds with the results of a survey carried out in the poorest area in Bangalore, in which Harris (2007)⁸¹ reports that most of the respondents perceived their self-defining class identity as middle class. According to Deshpande, this desire to be middle class, whether or not they are eligible, seems to originate in the attractiveness of its social location – in other words, the ‘middleness’ of its class standing (Deshpande, 2003: 130).

An especially interesting point that we should pay attention to is Alisha’s opinion about the criteria that determine internal differentiation within the middle class. According to her, class status in India depends on values and the ways of thinking of individuals, which can be modernized by education and exposure to society.

Besides occupation, education, income, wealth, and standard of living, Alisha from Vijay Nagar suggested that class has to do not so much with economic standards but rather with social networks that extend beyond caste and religion to various categories of groups by exposure, as well as a liberal and Westernised mindset, and openness to changes in urban society and traditional social institutions in terms of caste, religion, hierarchy, and consumption pattern under the influence of globalisation, Westernisation and modernisation. According to her, social and cultural capital such as social relationships, as well as values and thinking, determine differentiation within the middle class, not economic capital.

Alisha's suggestion that internal differentiation within a class is the result of thinking and values can be linked to Sanjay's opinion that there would be more struggles with caste practice and patriarchy within households in a lower class neighbourhood than in an upper middle class neighbourhood like Vasant Kunj.

The differences between the two neighbourhoods in the modernised and Westernised

81 Quoted in Lahiri, 2014: 38.

values of parents seem to depend on historical continuities, whether or not their ancestors were influenced by colonial modernity from the British colonial period. In the case of Vasant Kunj, the parents of my interviewees had been associated with English education and Western influence from the colonial period, since they were already part of the middle class, while in Vijay Nagar, the parents' or grandparents' generation started from zero-economic status, so they were not part of the environment that could have benefited from higher education and Western influence.

In the same vein, the upper segment of the middle class, who are descended from the colonial middle class who accepted 'superior' Western culture and English-educated elite professionals having grown up in socially privileged backgrounds (Jodhka, 2016: 88), while the rest of the middle class who might be first generation middle class (if they are in their twenties or thirties, they are second generation middle class), might feel more of a generational gap and conflict in the family in terms of not only economic and social capital, but also cultural capital including Westernised and modernised values. In this way, the level of infiltration of Western and modernised ideas in an individual would be different according to when they joined the middle class or upper middle class through upward mobility as a result of education, occupation or exposure.

In this way, the fact that modernised and Westernised values become decisive factors in determining class status in contemporary Indian society is the result of contemporary Indian history, now post-liberalisation having gone through the British colonial and Nehruvian socialism periods. It also proves that inequalities and discrimination produced within diversities of caste, religion, language and race have become stiffened as traditional social norms until recently. Accordingly, to move away from the traditional value system to adopt modern values based on consciousness of equality, individual freedom and individualism, which are based on the ideology of Western society, have become essential to be labelled as 'Indian new middle class'.

Chapter Six

Conclusion

As a result of historical contexts in which migrants from different backgrounds have been embraced, Delhi is a city of diversity in ethnicities, cultures, inhabitants, landscapes and residential spaces. Since being designed by British planners during the colonial period, it has been organised into a spatial formation of obvious contrast between North/Old and South/New Delhi, wherein residents have also been distributed unequally by class and occupation between these parts of the city.

The fieldwork areas of this study, Vasant Kunj and Vijay Nagar, are neighbourhoods that exemplify this contrast between South and North Delhi. Vasant Kunj was constructed by the DDA in the 1980s for middle class habitation, and those who originally settled down in Vasant Kunj were members of the old middle class – mostly educated white collar workers, professionals and businessmen. Today, their children and some newcomers – the new middle class – are living with their parents or forming nuclear families in Vasant Kunj. In contrast, Vijay Nagar started to develop with the rehabilitation of refugees who migrated from Pakistan after Partition. These pioneers who settled in Vijay Nagar started from zero economically speaking, so they attained middle class status at a different time to the residents of Vasant Kunj. There was homogeneity in terms of their experience of grief, having left their homes behind at Partition, and in terms of their community background as Punjabi Hindus. Due to this commonality of historical experience and community origin, the neighbourhood has been characterised as one of close bonds among neighbours. In this way, although these two neighbourhoods are both middle class residential areas, there are differences in the environment and spatial organisation inside the neighbourhoods as well as in the lifestyle, customs and values of their residents.

As we saw in chapter three, middle class residential spaces are organised differently according to differentiations in the middle class. The biggest differences in the spatial environments of the two neighbourhoods are in the streets, vehicles, scenery at different times of the day, schools and parks, as well as the existence of gates, security guards and RWAs.

Of the three fieldwork areas (Vasant Kunj, Vijay Nagar single and double storey), Vasant Kunj displayed the greatest contrast between residents and the lower class in terms of their appearance. The relatively high economic status of the residents in this area maximises the polarisation and distinction, while prompting a psychology of maintaining distance from the poor. On the other hand, in the Vijay Nagar double storey area, the geographical proximity of the lower class residential area means that the contrast between residents and the lower class is the most ambiguous. Interaction and even worse disputes and conflict between them cannot be avoided, regardless of time and space. Since the Vijay Nagar double storey area is not a gated residential community and does not have RWAs, there were complaints about having to solve problems on their own when internal conflicts occur, implying that ordinary middle class neighbourhoods have limited collective strategies for the mobilisation of middle class interests and concerns.

Although there are differences between the two middle class neighbourhoods in the composition and propensity of residents as well as in the spatial arrangements, the desire to maintain appropriate levels of distance from the lower class is common to both. Erecting gates and forming RWA in Vasant Kunj enclaves are essential tools in controlling ambivalent attitudes between closeness and distance towards the servants and labourers who are indispensable in managing middle class households. These facilities for the spatial strategies of the contemporary middle class to segregate themselves from the lower class can be decisive evidence of this dominant group being criticized about no longer embracing or feeling concern for the poor of the nation so that they have ultimately become distant from the lower class not only physically but also psychologically.

As a result of the different composition of residents, lifestyles, customs and values

vary between the interviewees in the two neighbourhoods. The gap between Vasant Kunj with a distribution of mostly new middle class and Vijay Nagar with ordinary middle class is considerable in terms of not only external aspects such as clothing style, eating habits and language, but also internal aspects such as values and way of thinking, for example, openness to newness, the extent of embracing multiplicity, egalitarianism, the extent of acceptance of Westernization, modernization and globalization. In other words, these two groups are totally differentiated in terms of identity, sensibility and ideology. For example, the mass fraction of the middle class reveals their moral superiority by emphasizing prudent spending habits and women's modest and virtuous behaviour while depreciating the intemperate consumption, money-mindedness and vulgar female sexuality of the affluent class. On the other hand, in the case of the new middle class, it is characterized by expressing their aspirations for an upper class lifestyle rather than asserting their superiority over the upper class.

Another example is that the new middle class naturally accept the transformation of society as a result of globalization and Westernization because they have already become accustomed to the internet and global mass media which is indispensable in their everyday lives. On the other hand, the ordinary middle class is very concerned by the adverse effects of globalization due to easy access to television and the internet because they are unacquainted with the globalized mass media and consumer goods including smartphones, the internet, watching cable or satellite television and Western movies. They feel culturally threatened because they think it undermines the traditional values and cultural identities of India.

In particular, as we saw in chapters four and five, of the six topics studied with regard to social institutions (marriage, the status of women, caste, religion, family and consumption practices), the status, empowerment and perception of women in the household is the theme that presents the biggest contrast between the two neighbourhoods. Interviewees in their forties or older in Vijay Nagar revealed negative opinions about women dressing in revealing clothes and going out at night which have actually been constructed from conservative attitudes towards women and their own bounded gender relations, as well as constraints imposed on them by the

unfavourable views of neighbours. Like Munaraj in Vijay Nagar, ordinary young middle class males tend to associate a woman's fashion, sexuality and freedom of movement with her class status. For them, the revealing fashion style of upper class women is understandable due to their high class status, while at the same time, their displays of sexuality differentiate them from the modest characters of middle class women. However, if an ordinary middle class woman tries to display her sexuality in her clothing practices, the blame directed at that woman is much harsher than it would be in response to the same behaviour of an upper class woman. For them, middle-classness is closely related to female modesty.

On the other hand, the new middle class in Vasant Kunj shows a much more liberal attitude towards women's skimpy fashion, hanging out and mobility. Due to the influence of Western media and culture, women dressing in a Western revealing style is familiar. Vasant Kunj has relatively more awareness of gender equality among both men and women, and there is no correlation between women displaying sexuality, their clothing style and mobility and sexual violence. Accordingly, the liberal perception of women in these surroundings leads to a phenomenon in which middle class females in Vasant Kunj enjoy the better status of women in the household and greater satisfaction in their lives than their counterparts in Vijay Nagar.

Despite these differences between the residents of the two neighbourhoods, young interviewees in both areas showed a convergence in lifestyle, customs, and values. As we have seen in chapter four, young middle class interviewees – those in their twenties to forties in Vasant Kunj, and those in their twenties in Vijay Nagar – have a different value system to their parents in terms of marriage, women, caste, religiosity, and hierarchy in the family, as well as in terms of consumption practices, so their liberal values and modernized, Westernized, and materialistic thinking are distinguished from those of the old generation as well as from those of the lower class and even middle class groups to which they do not belong.

The reason for the age cohort gap between interviewees of the two neighbourhoods in terms of their modernized, Westernized and liberal attitudes and values results from differences in the family backgrounds of the two areas, with the ideas and perceptions

of parents being moulded according to income, occupation and education. The residents of Vijay Nagar accessed the middle class far later than the residents of Vasant Kunj, so interviewees in their forties in Vasant Kunj have already accepted Western and modern ideology and think of themselves as globalized citizens, while the same generation in Vijay Nagar is still attached to traditional values.

In this way, we can infer that class status, even internal differentiation within the middle class, is not simply associated with economic conditions. The differences between the elite and the non-elite middle class, and between the new and the old middle class depend on whether or not they embrace modern and Western values. The interviewees' ideas are actually influenced by the level of liberal values of their parents, so it is apparent that economic, social and cultural capital within the family reproduces inequality within the differentiation of the middle class.

Nonetheless, as we have seen in chapter five, the young middle class in both neighbourhoods, as well as college students, have commonly appeared to have modernized, Westernized values with regard to marriage, the status of women, caste, family, religion and consumption practices regardless of their background such as income, occupation, property, family background, native place and caste. This means that apart from the reproduction of capital inherited from their parents and family background, the common elements among these two groups such as the historical backdrop as liberalisation's children, higher education, exposure to multiple cultures through migration to a metropolis can be factors which distinguish their values from those of their parents' generation and from the mass section of the middle class.

This young generation of the middle class has shown greater willingness to change and challenge, free from the closed and conservative mindset of their parents' generation. Examples for this are not mentioned in this chapter, but can be found in the omitted interviews of Rohan and Puneet.

Rohan and Puneet, who are working in a multinational company and the IT industry respectively – jobs to which the current young generation aspire – both argued that an emerging trend among young white-collar professionals is to leave their secure jobs to

start their own businesses. This new start-up trend among the young middle class began with the economic reforms of 1991 (Das, 2001:194). Under Nehruvian socialism, the middle class rarely engaged in entrepreneurship because of the prevalent nepotism, corruption and bureaucratic regulations as well as the lingering caste-based division of labour since most of the old middle class were Brahmins who had unfavourable attitudes towards entrepreneurship which earlier was mostly assigned to traditional business communities or '*banias*' (Upadhyaya, 2011:178, 184). However, deregulation of licensing, the availability of venture capital and the IT boom, which triggered India's 'knowledge economy' after economic liberalization, have encouraged young knowledge professionals to turn increasingly to entrepreneurship (Das, 2001; Upadhyaya, 2011).

Since this new middle class seeks to deviate from traditional social norms under the influence of Westernization and globalization, their new values based on equality, independence, autonomy and freedom often generate conflict with the conservative, orthodox and narrow minded ideology of their parents' generation. This is particularly the case with married women who have at least a bachelor's degree and work outside the home. As the opportunities for women in terms of higher education, professional jobs and geographic mobility have increased astonishingly compared to previous generations, it is estimated that urban educated women are among the few beneficiaries of the capitalist Indian economy as the so-called 'new Indian woman' (Dhawan, 2010: 46). However, at the same time, among the intergenerational changes in the six topics discussed in this study in relation to social institutions – marriage, women, caste, religion, family, and consumption practice – gender arrangements is the least changeable theme. This is because a woman should live with her husband's family after marriage following the residence norm of patri-virilocal regardless of class status, and the responsibility to her husband's family is often enforced as in her mother's generation while economic independence, autonomy and freedom are greater in the identity of the 'new woman'. While men do not change their lives visibly after marriage, for women, a feeling of burden to be a 'perfect woman' who should balance her career success in the workplace as well as an obligation to be a good wife and mother in the family make her feel more pressure in her married life than her mother's generation to some extent.

The identity of the new middle class is characterised by ‘hybridity’, implying a fusion of multiple cultures – culture-subculture-other culture (Titus, 2015) – as a result of their exposure to diverse societies since economic liberalisation. As they adopt Western values and globalized ideas, they identify with the middle class in advanced countries in terms of their lifestyle and consumption patterns, while they distinguish themselves from the middle class of the past and the present lower class of India. In other words, the new middle class tends to feel more intimate with the consuming classes of other well-off countries than with the lower class of their native land. Their sense of kinship and difference, and their awareness of self and other are drawn from class-based homogeneity such as similar economic standing and consumption habits rather than from a shared nationality. This has been demonstrated in the changed relationship between employer and servant from one of patron-loyalty based on affection to a more contractual and impersonal relationship between the new middle class and servants in their household. The young middle class employer perceives servants as human-to-human based on egalitarianism without discrimination based on caste, but emotionally and psychologically they tend to further detach from them than before. In this sense, greater individualism among this group that is promoted by the influx of Western culture leads rather to an indifference towards the poor of the nation.

This study began with curiosity as to whether a white-collar worker earning the same wage as a good *chai wallah*⁸² in Delhi who makes 30,000 rupees per month could be put in the same middle class category. If we ask their self-identification of class, they will both claim to belong to the middle class. They both have the same earnings, but they might have different levels of education, different family backgrounds, live in different residential environments and engage in different social interactions. In this way, even though they have the same economic status, we can assume that there would likely be differences between them in terms of lifestyle, customs, attitudes, ideology and values.

82 *Chai wallah* means people who sell tea.

This means that economic status does not necessarily determine class status, even though economic capital is conjunctly interconnected with social and cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1984). Accordingly, this study has attempted to give prominence to social and cultural capital as decisive elements in membership of the new Indian middle class, in particular underlining that values and perception deserve to be considered as criteria in the determination of class status, even in differentiations within the middle class.

If so, can't we consider a *chai wallah* who to some extent meets the financial condition as a member of the new Indian middle class? What this study actually wants to suggest is that if they are equipped with liberal attitudes such as modernity and openness, they can certainly access membership of the new middle class by investing in their children's education regardless of gender, and the process of absorbing multiple transnational cultures.

This bullish conclusion can actually be the strength and the weakness of this study, because of the characteristic of duality of this group. Indeed, many middle class emphasize individual merit in employment while opposing reservation policy, because they are wary of movements of lower caste and working class groups which attempt to incorporate themselves into the same category as them. In addition, the caste system continues to reproduce inequalities through marriage. Many upper segments of the middle class who belong to the upper caste support the BJP (Kapur&Vaishnav, 2014) and its Hindu nationalism. The threat of globalization has led to the rise of Hindu nationalism in order to strengthen indigenous cultural chauvinism. Contradictory ideas within their modernized values such as the perpetuation of the tradition of preference for sons among this group were also found during the fieldwork, but they could not be dealt with in this study. The results and conclusion of this study leave more to be investigated and answered in future research.

Lastly, proceeding from the results of the fieldwork in this study, I would like to close the discussion by pointing out the psychology of the contemporary new Indian middle class. It seems that the elite, educated, young Indian middle class in Delhi – the so-called new Indian middle class – feel psychologically emancipated as they pursue the

breaking of the bonds of the outdated attitudes of old generations with greater modernity, rationality and practicality in social institutions such as marriage, gender, caste, religion, family and consumption practices with the effect of the education. However, simultaneously, in terms of the psychology of consumption, as more supplies of commodities become available than ever before in the capitalist market, the desire to consume, to possess and to show off to others also increase. Accordingly, it can be said that the new Indian middle class is in a state in which it is difficult to have complete psychological freedom while being conscious of the gaze of others with increasing desire to show off through their possessions in some sense.

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Appendix

Interview Schedule

Section I

Background information:

1. Name:
2. Age:
3. Gender : 1) Male 2) Female
4. What is your marital status?
 - 1) Married 2) Unmarried
 - 3) Divorced/Separated 4) Widowed
5. Where is your place of birth?
6. How many years have you stayed in Delhi?
 - 1) Below 5 years 2) 6-10 years
 - 3) 11-20 years 4) 21-30 years
7. How many years have you stayed in Vasant Kunj (Vijay Nagar)?
8. Do you studied in government or private school?
 - 1) Government 2) Private
 - 3) Any other (specify) 4) N.A
9. Respondent's Education:
 - 1) Primary 2) Secondary
 - 3) Graduate 4) Post graduate
10. Family members' Identification:

| Family Member | Age | Education | Occupation |
|---------------|-----|-----------|------------|
| | | | |
| | | | |

| | | | |
|--|--|--|--|
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |

11. What is your current education/employment status?

- 1) Student not seeking employment
- 2) Student seeking/doing part time employment
- 3) Unemployed
- 4) Fully employed
- 5) Housewife
- 6) Partly employed

12. (even if partly or fully employed), What is your main occupation? (Gov/Private)

13. Religion:

- 1) Hindu
- 2) Muslim
- 3) Christian
- 4) Sikh
- 5) Buddhist
- 6) Jain
- 7) Parsi
- 8) Other (Specify) _____

14. Type of house where you live

- 1) House/Flat/Bungalow with 4 or more bedrooms
- 2) House/Flat with 3 or 4 bedrooms
- 3) House/Flat with 2 bedrooms
- 4) House/Flat with 1 bedroom

15. Do you or your family member have a car?

- 1) Yes
- 2) No

15.1. If yes, how many cars do you have?

- 1) 1
- 2) 2
- 3) 3
- 4) 4

15.2 If yes, what kind of car do you have (Please specify your car)?

- 1) Van _____
- 2) Jeep _____
- 3) Sedan _____
- 4) Hatchback _____

16. Do you personally own the following:

| | Yes | No |
|----------------------|-----|----|
| Smartphone | | |
| Computer/lap top | | |
| Credit card | | |
| Debit card/ ATM card | | |
| AC | | |
| Cable TV | | |

17. Please tell me for each of these how much money do you spend **within one month?**

| | Activities | Amount Spent |
|----|--|--------------|
| a | Watching movies (going to cinema/buying DVDs) | |
| b | Eating out in restaurants and hotels | |
| c | Buying clothes/Shoes/Accessories | |
| d | Buying Gadgets phones/I pads/Computer Softwares/ Watch/Music | |
| e. | Personal Mobile/Telephone Bills | |

18. Total monthly household income (Approx)

- | | |
|---------------------------|----------------------|
| 1) Rs. 20,000- Rs. 50,000 | 2) Rs. 50,001- 75000 |
| 3) 75,001-1 lak | 4) Above 1 lak-2 lak |
| 5) Above 2 lak - 3 lak | 6) Above 3 lak |

Section II

Theme 1. Self-perception of Class Status

1. Which class do you belong to and why do you feel so?
 - 1.1 (If a respondent say they belong to middle class) What would be different from upper and lower class?
2. What according to you are the characteristics of Indian middle class?
3. Do you think that there is internal differentiation in middle class? How and why do you think so? (e.g. upper middle, middle, and lower middle?)
 - 3.1 If so, what is the difference between them? What would be criteria to differentiate within them?
4. Do you feel that there are any differences between you and your parent's generation middle class? What according to you are the main differences?
5. What are the characteristics of Indian young generation middle class?
6. What according to you should be the income to belong to middle class?
7. Who do you think belongs to upper, middle and lower class? And can you recognize who belongs to these classes?
8. How do you feel living close to interacting with other classes? Lower class settlements, slums etc.?

Theme Two. Changes in Customs and Values

1. Marriage

- 1.1 Preference for marriage, partner selection, arrange or love marriage?
- 1.2 How old were you when you got married? At what age do you want to get married?
- 1.3 Would you prefer to get married within own caste/community? Why/ why not?
- 1.4 What according to you is the ideal relationship between husband and wife?
- 1.5 Do you think the relationship between you and your partner would be different from your parents?

2. Status of Women

- 2.1. What according to you is fashion / being fashionable? What do you think about men and women exposing their bodies, wearing short pants, skirts etc.?
- 2.2. Do you think there is any relationship between women hanging out late night, their dressing sense and incidences of rape?
- 2.3. Would you prefer your partner to be a working woman or a homemaker?

Or Would you prefer to be homemaker or working woman? (For Female)
- 2.4. Do you think the status of women is improved these days?
- 2.5. Do you think the distribution of household chores between husband and wife has changed compared to previous generation? Please elaborate.

3. Caste

- 3.1 Do you think belonging to particular caste is important in your life? In what sphere? How does it matter?
- 3.2 Do you feel comfortable eating food prepared by people belonging to lower castes or other religion?
- 3.3 Perception about reservation system / affirmative action / necessary not necessary?
- 3.4 Any difference between you and parent's generation in terms of caste practices?

4. Family

- 4.1 Would you prefer to live in nuclear family or joint family?
- 4.2 In matters of occupation and marriage to what extent you get influenced by your parent's decision / opinion?

To what extent do you (want to) influence your child?
- 4.3 Would you allow your child to be a sportsman/entertainer/ artist?
- 4.4 Would you bring up your child different from how you were brought up?
- 4.5 In family, whose voice is the most influential in decision making?

4.6 Do you think the relationship between parents and child has changed from your generation?

5. Religion

5.1 Is there any changes from your parent's generation in terms of religious practice?

5.2 Do you often go to temple?

5.3 Do you often do *puja*?

5.4 Are you a religious person?

6. Kinship

6.1 Do you keep close relationship with your relatives and neighbours?

7. Consumption Practice

7.1 What is your opinion about branded stuff? Do you prefer branded?

7.2 Do you often go to shopping mall?

7.3 Do you feel difference between you and your parents in terms of consumption pattern/saving and spending?

7.4 Where do you go for shopping?

7.5 Do you think money is important to make life happy? To what extent?

7.6 Do you have aspiration to buy luxury items?

7.7 Do you like to buy something to impress people?

Theme Three. Perception of Tradition and Modernity

1. Do you think you are a traditional or modern person? And why do you think so?

2. What according to you constitute Indianness?

3. Do you think you are westernized person?

4. Do you think Indian culture is diminishing these days (because of globalization)?

5. What is an Indian tradition / modernity according to you?