

MIDDLE CLASS, FAMILY STRATEGIES AND PRIVATE SCHOOLING IN RANCHI: A SOCIOLOGICAL STUDY

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DECLARATION

August 25th, 2022

I, Abhineet Kala Lakra, declare that this thesis entitled *Middle Class, Family Strategies and Private Schooling in Ranchi: A Sociological Study*, submitted by me in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy of Jawaharlal Nehru University, is my bonafide work. I further declare that this thesis has not been submitted for any other degree of this or any other University.

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Abstract

Middle Class, Family Strategies and Private Schooling in Ranchi: A Sociological Study

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In recent times, the issue of school choice along with the debate on whether private schools provide better quality primary education as compared to government schools has emerged in India. The growing demand and supply of private schools is evident in urban as well as rural areas, even among the less privileged. Quality of education in government school system in India has been questioned. Thus, the demand for government primary school is decreasing day by day from those who can afford private schools for their children as well as among those who cannot.

However, the rise of middle classes in India has led to the emergence of school choice debate. Thus, the study tries to explore the demand for private school especially from the middle classes. The study looks at the processes of school choice within the middle class(es), i.e., middle and lower middle class families' aspirations, practices, school choice processes, strategies and parental involvement in their children's schooling. It looks at how they use their resources and capitals (economic, cultural and social) in their practices to access private school for their children. The objective of the thesis is to understand the socio-economic and cultural factors that influence middle class(es) family's perspectives and decisions about private schooling for their children and their choice for specific school. It examines aspirations for children's education and family's strategies to realise the aspirations and choices and also the processes of involvement of parents in children's schooling and in building cultural capital. It tries to understand the intra class differences in their access to private school system in Ranchi and to bring in parents' use of capital for the reproduction of advantages and opportunities for their children.

The present study moves beyond the 'rational choice model' that underlies literature on school choice and is guided by the cultural reproduction theory of Pierre Bourdieu. This theoretical framework is used to understand and explore the middle class families' choices, decision making processes, strategies and parental involvement in relation to the schooling of their

children in Ranchi city. Bourdieu's analysis of education and schooling in cultural and social reproduction situates the school choice processes within the specific social context. He emphasized on the importance of social class and accumulation and possession of economic, cultural and social resources in the family. Bourdieu explained that families' class location is important for the accumulation of social and cultural capital. Bourdieu's social reproduction theory shows how middle class parents through their practices and involvement secure privilege for their children. The relationship between home and school is a key to social reproduction.

The study is both quantitative and qualitative in nature. The study is conducted in two stages - the first stage includes planning for the field study based on secondary data and literature reviews and the second stage includes field study which is exploratory in nature. The study is carried out in two localities, i.e., Jai Prakash Nagar and New Nagar in Ranchi city of Jharkhand state. Survey method is adopted for the field study given the aims to select a sample of middle class families whose children are attending private schools. It is.

The field study is done between June 2014 to January 2019. Purposive sampling method is adopted. Semi-structured interview schedule with open ended questions is developed. Interviews are conducted with family members, i.e., parents, and children. Analysis of data is done by transcribing and coding the interviews.

The study found that all the middle class(es) parents invariably preferred private schools over government schools as their school choice. However, school choice is influenced by the socio-economic differences, availability of resources and capability. Educational practices and strategies are adopted by the anxious middle class families for private schooling to provide advantages and cultural capital to reproduce their class, culture and status in society. Lower middle class families access low fee private schools for having lack of material resources and capital. Thus, the study draws attention to the failure of government school system and the need to improve the quality of education and also to eradicate inequality between the rich and the poor in accessing good quality private schools.

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Abbreviations

ATM	:	Automated Teller Machine
BA	:	Bachelor of Arts
B.Ed.	:	Bachelor of Education
CBSE	:	Central Board of Secondary Education
CD	:	Compact Disc
DAV	:	Dayanand Anglo Vedic
DPS	:	Delhi Public School
U-DISE	:	Unified District Information System for Education
Govt.	:	Government
IAS	:	Indian Administrative Service
ICT	:	Information Technology
ICSE	:	Indian Certificate of Secondary Education
ILE	:	Integrated Language Environment
ILO	:	International Labour Organization
ITI	:	Industrial Training Institute
JAC	:	Jharkhand Academic Council
JP Nagar	:	Jai Prakash Nagar
LCD	:	Liquid Crystal Display
LFP	:	Low Fee Private
LMC	:	Lower Middle Class
MBA	:	Master of Business Administration
MC	:	Middle Class
MRF	:	Madras Rubber Factory
NABARD	:	National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development
NCO	:	National Classification of Occupations
NEXA	:	New Exclusive Automotive
NH	:	National Highway
NSSO	:	National Sample Survey Office
PA	:	Private Aided

PPP	:	Public-Private Partnership
PTM	:	Parent Teacher Meeting
PUAR	:	Private Unaided Recognized
PUAU	:	Private Unaided Unrecognized
Pvt.	:	Private
RTC	:	Ram Tahal Choudhary School
SES	:	Selected Educational Statistics
SPSS	:	Statistical Package for Social Science
TV	:	Television
TVS	:	Thirukkurungudi Vengaram Sundram
UK	:	United Kingdom
USA	:	United States of America

CHAPTER-I

Introduction

The study explores how the families of particular social class, i.e., middle class(es)¹ have made their choices of schools for their children. The study is situated in Ranchi city, in Jharkhand. It studies the processes through which middle class families pass, i.e., how they strategize and use their capitals (social, economic and cultural) in their practices to access private schools for their children. It looks at the failure of government schools that lead parents to go for a range of schools owned and managed by the private sector in India. Most importantly, instead of looking at middle class as a whole, the study looks at internal fractions of the middle class(es) and their differential educational practices to achieve their class interests. It examines who (middle and lower middle class) are accessing what kinds of private schools. The study looks at families' choices, decisions, strategies. In other words, do families' choices differ according to their social location? How parenting practices in relation to schooling are influenced by the changing/competitive job and marriage markets? What material resources and social networks are used to achieve educational goals and in what way these vary among different families whose children are in different kinds of private schools? In order to understand this, it tries to understand the intra class differences in their access to private school system in Ranchi.

I. Statement of the Problem

In recent times, the issue of school choice along with the debate on whether private schools provide better quality primary education as compared to government schools has emerged in India. Since the 1990s, the role of private sector in the field of education has been on the rise at all levels of education (Tilak, 1995). The growing demand and supply of private schools is evident in urban as well as rural areas, even

¹ 'Middle class' and its plural form 'middle classes' are used interchangeably which imply the distinctive complex or compound social classes, i.e., middle middle class and lower middle class that are emerging in India. It shows the fractions within the middle class. 'Fraction' according to Giddens (1981) refers to the multiple segments of the population with a diverse educational and professional background who comprise the broad category of the 'middle class'.

among the less privileged. It has been observed that the role of fee charging private institutions in providing basic elementary education has grown rapidly relative to the growth in free government schools (Kingdon, 1996; Desai et al., 2008). Quality of education in government school system in India has been questioned. Prasad (2017) argued that until the 1970s, government schools were highly valued “due to the talented teachers, reasonably good infrastructure, and pedagogy. From 1980 onwards, however, coaching centres started attracting the talented teachers from government schools and colleges by paying higher remuneration. This is one process through which government educational institutions have been affected, thus leading to falling standards and ethics” (p. 407). Thus, the demand for government primary schools is decreasing day by day from those who can or cannot afford private schools for their children.

However, the rise of middle classes in India has led to the emergence of school choice debate. In view of the “general enthusiasm for school choice in urban India... the recent focus on the right to access seems overshadowed by a strong passion for educational success; this passion is shared by parents, planners and the global pro-market educational think-tanks, generating in turn a penchant for individuated educational choice” (Majumdar, 2017: 330). However, ‘School Choice’ seeks to provide freedom to the consumers, the parents and the students and enable them to ‘exit’ from the school if they are dissatisfied. This is similar to a typical competitive market where consumers exercise freedom to choose the seller of their product. Middle class parents know what is best for their children and they select private schools knowing that these are of better quality than existing government schools.

It was around the 1970s that the middle classes were found to be leaving government schools for lack of quality education. In the last few decades lower strata among the middle classes as well as sections among working classes have joined fee charging private schools, including those that are unrecognised/unregulated to get what they perceive as ‘quality’ education for their children (Jalaluddin, 2008). Right to Education Act was passed in 2009, implemented from April 2010 provided 25% reservation in private schools for “the weaker sections of society” which is to be reimbursed by the state government as part of the PPPs “at a rate equal to the per

child expenditure in state schools/fully aided schools and state funded pre-schools, or the actual amount charged per student by such school, whichever is less, in such manner as may be prescribed” (clause 14.2, chapter 4, Right to Education Bill, August 2005). The growth of private schooling in India is visible whether it is urban or rural areas, but the contours of this change remain poorly understood because of data limitations (Desai et al., 2008). Kingdon (2007) found that official statistics often tend to underestimate private school enrolment. Thus, the study tries to explore the demand for private school especially from the middle classes. It also looks at the growth of private schooling in India.

Middle Class and Choice of Private Schooling

Private sector education has grown significantly in India and other countries. Recent studies have shown the interest of parents (even the poor parents in rural areas) in sending their children to private schools. This shows that poverty is no longer a constraint for educating children. PROBE Report (1999) noted that it is not only wealthy households but also some poor households are actually sending, or at least willing to send their children to private schools. It is significant that the families are investing in private schools despite the fact that education along with the incentives are available to their children in government schools. But the point here is that whether all children of middle-class fractions access the same kind of private schools or of different kinds?

This research, looks at how social class is used by the families in their children’s education. In other words, how fractions of middle class families send their children to different kinds of private schools. How their occupation, income and education influence the lived realities and practices of day-to-day life. Broadly these are seen in relation to income, occupational and educational status. Hence, the present study has operationalised the class based on occupation, education and income of the families that are included in the study.

It is well known that upper middle/middle class parents, especially in urban areas send their children to ‘good’ quality schools that include private/public as well as convent. Not much is known about elite private schools and there are only a few studies on

these schools. Waldrop (2004) argued that upper/middle class choice of elite schools depends on their socio-economic background and worldview and how the aspects of their reputation match with the reputation of various schools. Educated elite parents aspire for such elite schools for their children because they want their children (both boys and girls alike) to excel in colleges (higher education) and achieve foreign university degree. Waldrop's (2004) study on elite private schools in the metropolitan city of Delhi and Thapan's (2006) study on Rishi Valley School in Andhra Pradesh show that these types of high fee charging (for e.g., rupees 55,000 per year in Rishi Valley) private schools are attended by the children of upper/elite class professionals. Schools favour those parents with high income who have the capacity to afford better quality education and who share the 'shared values' of schools (Waldrop 2004). The school and family have the business relationship between themselves, where schools as an entrepreneur provide education (seen as good) to children and parents who buy it as a consumer (Holzwarth, 2006: 2). It is a kind of give and take relationship where parents pay high fees or donation for good quality education.

However, it is also the relatively well-off classes of rural areas, who send their children to English medium convent private schools (Chopra, 2005). Kammam, a rich peasant caste in Andhra Pradesh, often send their sons to English medium boarding schools to prepare them for future (Upadhyaya, 1987; cited from Nambissan, 2010). Drury (1993) showed that private schools whether of Hindi, English or mixed Hindi-English medium are accessed by the middle class businessmen and white-collar professionals. De et al. (2002) found that in urban Bhiwani, Haryana, very few households had the access to the elite private schools (p. 5230). Children accessing private schools were of somewhat better off families and were "advantaged of better health, nutrition, self-esteem and awareness" (ibid. 5233). As Drury (1993) said "access to 'best' school is limited and competition is fierce" (p. 74).

Majumdar (2017) found that in Kolkata, middle class anxiety and fretfulness about the intense competition in the educational field has driven them to opt for 'better' quality education in private school. She further noted that "the dependence on private schools in Kolkata is more at the pre-primary and primary level" (p. 324). Gilbertson (2014) found that the rural upper/middle class families in suburban Hyderabad are keenly interested in admitting their children to international schools, which are

perceived as provider of better-quality education in terms of ‘exposure and communication skills’ (p. 211) than any other ‘modest’ private school.

Scrase and Scrase (2009) found that “English medium schools have become all the rage” (p. 141) because of the explosion in demand. Middle class families prefer English medium private over government schools to prepare their children for the best opportunities and also to maintain monopoly in education to get well paying professional jobs (ibid.). Due to such demand mushrooming of “private English medium schools (many of dubious quality) continued at a rapid pace, particularly in urban areas” (ibid. 137).

Jeffery et al. (2005) found that the rural Jat middle class families in Uttar Pradesh access private schools for higher academic credentials to secure salaried occupations either in cities or nearby towns. Further, these families shift their place of residence to cities and towns to become part of urban middle class or make arrangement for children to stay in hostel or with some relatives to attend private schools. The private schools to which lower middle class families send their children are low fee private (LFP) schools in the locality. Drury (1993) talked about children of lower income disadvantaged of urban, semi urban and rural areas and showed that most of these children access low fee private schools.

Thus, it is evident that middle class fractions access different kinds of private schools. There is a clear-cut class differences in the access to private school, i.e., ‘good’ quality high fee private schools for the rich and low fee private schools for the lower income families.

Growth of Private Schooling in India

Private schools were present in India in the early decades after independence, but they comprised a very small proportion of schools especially at the elementary stage of education and were accessed by a selected few. The private school sector in India has grown rapidly in the last decades or so (Mehta, 2011). The Right to Education Bill passed in 2009 is meant to further increase the private school choices available to Indian parents. The rising income of people in urban and semi-urban areas (Kindgon

1996) as well as growing aspirations for education of quality are the major factors that is motivating families to 'buy' private education for their children. The literature argues that families who exercise their choices are different from those who do not. On the other hand, it also encourages private education sector to expand and grow throughout the country. Increase in the private schools in the present times is the response to the marketization or commercialization of education which is one of the emerging neoliberal agenda. Tooley (2001) in his private education in India (which has private share of 15%) observed that: "Any visitor to the 'slum' of any of the big cities in India will be struck by the sheer number of private schools - there seems to be one in almost every street corner or down every alleyway. Some of these confusingly follow what they see as an English tradition and call themselves public schools but they are wholly private in every way and are certainly not elite institutions" (p. 13).

Education system in India is heterogeneous and is run by both public and private sectors. Schools under these sectors differ based on management, organisations, and structures. These are government² schools, private aided³ and unaided⁴ (recognised/unrecognised) schools. Additionally in some states, there are some schools that are run by charitable (religious missionaries) trusts or NGO's (non-profit agencies). The role of government in the expansion of the education sector is laudable but in the past five decades it has witnessed the deteriorating quality of education in this education system. Until 1970s, government schools were highly valued due to reasonably good infrastructure, talented teachers and pedagogy. However, from 1980 onwards, these talented teachers of government schools were attracted by the coaching centres for getting higher remuneration. This process affected government school's ethics and standards and led them to fall (Prasad, 2017: 407). Advocates of the private education system have a large concern that government schools do not provide quality education to children at primary level (Tooley and Dixon, 2005;

² Government schools are run by state, central or local government.

³ Private aided schools are run by their private management boards, but are heavily governed by the states (Kingdon, 2017: 3).

⁴ Private unaided schools are autonomous fee charging schools run by private management (Kingdon, 2017: 3).

Muralidharan, 2006). Many reasons have been put forward for the poor quality of education such as poor quality of resources, pervasiveness of teacher absence and inactivity in government schools (Narayan and Mooij, 2010). This has led to the great dissatisfaction over the government funded education and at this transitional phase in the country, the private sectors came in to impart education at various levels. That is why in present times, both government and private institutions have ventured into this sector in India (Muralidharan, 2006).

However, Sarangapani (2009) argued that Tooley et al.'s (2007) and Dholakia's (2009) study findings on "private unrecognised schools provide better quality education than government counterparts remain unproven" (p. 68). She criticised Tooley et al. (2007) for not discussing the findings that "children in private schools are not likely to perform better at any but the most routinised, rote memory-based task" (ibid. 69). Sarangapani and Winch (2010) criticised Tooley et al.'s (2007) conceptualization of education and its benefits and argued that "it is flawed and the evidence for proof is one sided and unrepresentative" (p. 499). Nambissan (2012) also criticised Tooley and others who advocate for unregulated private (budget/low fee) schools over government as a cost efficient and equitable solution to education of the poor. She argued that the advocacy for these schools is for business purpose "driven by powerful financial and political (pro market) interests that are linked together through transnational networks and are couched within a neo-liberal discourse of school markets for the poor through school choice and voucher programmes" (p. 57). She further argued that "much of the evidence on low-cost schools is weak and the picture we have is very fragmentary. However, it appears fairly clear that though these schools promise 'high quality'/'world class' education they are short changing low-income parents and their children" (ibid. 58).

Sarangapani and Winch (2010) argued that "as many as 75 percent of government school's teachers were actually teaching; this deserves appreciation given the extent of non-teaching duties that are officially assigned to government school teachers including maintaining ledgers, distributing materials of various incentive schemes to children, supervising and accounting for the midday meal" (p. 512). Chudgar and

Quin (2012) pointed out that “though private schools on the surface seem to perform better than government schools, after more detailed analysis their benefits seem to become statistically insignificant” (cited from Prasad, 2017: 412). Prasad (2017) also found that “the teacher quality is very poor in most of the private schools at the primary level, despite the high enrolment and popularity of these English medium schools” (p. 411). Chattopadhyay and Roy (2017) provided the critical perspective on the complex reality of private education of the poor, and argued that there is a gap between promise and reality and low fee private schools (LFP) are facing fault-lines in India.

Moreover, in today’s time the number of private schools offering primary education have grown at a rapid rate in India. Earlier, the PROBE Report (1999) stated that private schooling was out of reach of the vast majority of poor parents who cannot afford tuition fees and other expenses. However, now it is not so because since 1990s increase is visible in the unaided, recognised and unrecognised private school sector in every state of India. Tilak (1994) found that the private schools cater to the needs of the rich people only. They tend to provide quality education only to those who have the capacity to pay, i.e., upper and middle classes and those left out generally belong to poor section of society. However, current evidence on private schooling in India shows an emergence of new private schools referred as low fee private schools; that are supposed to provide quality education to children belonging to low socio-economic families. Education in these schools is not limited to few non poor or children of urban areas but is available for poor as well. Due to the increased parental demand for private education, unrecognised schools are seen reaching to those who are unable to access high fee charging private schools for several reasons. The rationale for expanding private unrecognised low fee charging private (LFP) is that poor income families, the disadvantaged and girls in particular, can be provided with schools within their reach/locality (Tooley, 2005; Muralidharan, 2009). It is found that nearly 30 percent Indian villages have access to a private school within the village itself (De et al., 2002; Kremer and Muralidharan, 2006). In comparison to government schools, private schools and, in particular, unrecognised schools are increasing rapidly. The main reason behind this rapid growth of private schools is the

poor quality of education in government schools. Muralidharan and Kremer (2009) argued that this expansion is fuelled by perception of state failings. Other factors include parents' educational aspirations, increased wealth and greater access to information (Chavan, 2014).

Table 1.1 provides the picture of the growth of private schools in India since 1970s to 2021. It is evident from the table that until 1980s primary education was provided mainly by the state and there was not much role of the private sector. It is clear

Table 1.1: Percentage of Primary and Upper Primary Schools under different Managements from 1973-74 to 2020-21 (All India)

Year	Primary Level				Upper Primary Level			
	Govt.	PA	PUAR	Private (Total)	Govt.	PA	PUAR	Private (Total)
1973-74	93.34	5.01	1.64	6.65	77.57	17.75	4.67	22.42
1978-79	93.99	4.42	1.59	6.01	78.44	16.90	4.66	21.56
1986-87	93.08	4.34	2.57	6.91	75.12	16.30	8.58	24.88
1993-94	92.10	3.78	4.12	7.90	79.45	9.53	11.02	20.55
1996-97	91.66	3.34	5.00	8.34	75.54	10.25	14.20	24.45
1997-98	91.25	3.78	5.37	9.15	74.51	9.72	15.87	25.59
1998-99	91.25	3.27	5.48	8.75	74.04	9.20	16.76	25.96
2001-02*	90.92	3.07	6.01	9.08	76.41	7.81	15.77	23.58
2002-03*	88.75	3.63	7.63	11.26	72.56	7.37	20.07	27.44
2003-04*	90.68	2.85	6.48	9.33	72.31	6.68	21.01	27.69
2004-05*	90.20	2.55	7.24	9.79	72.20	6.41	21.39	27.80
2005-06	89.53	3.08	7.39	10.47	72.48	6.11	21.4	27.51
2006-07	89.17	3.08	7.75	10.58	71.07	6.65	22.28	28.93
2007-08	86.73	5.76	7.51	13.27	73.6	9.03	17.1	26.13
2009-10	85.81	6.57	7.62	14.19	73.11	10.68	16.21	26.89
2019-20#	82.56	2.35	11.49	13.84	62.40	2.88	27.94	30.82
2020-21#	82.66	2.35	11.47	13.82	62.06	5.06	28.37	33.43

Source: Selected Educational Statistics 2004-05 and 2009-10, # DISE 2012 - 19, 2020-21 Elementary Level Total,

*Provisional, Govt. = Govt. + Local Body, PA = Private Aided, PUAR = Private Unaided Recognised

that the contribution of private institutions is still relatively small, but it has increased since the 1980s and is 13.82% in the year 2020-21. Significantly, the percentage of

privately managed but government aided school has been decreased slowly over the years and the private unaided has increased dramatically from 1.64% in 1973-74 to 11.47% in 2020-21. However, over a span of 48 years, the share of government has decreased i.e., percentage of government school at primary level has decreased (from 93.34% in 1973-74 to 82.66% in 2020-21). The growth of private unaided recognised schools is relatively higher than private aided schools since 2000. This indicates the fact that the government has stopped giving aid to private aided schools (Mehrotra and Panchmukhi, 2007) and that is why the number of these schools has declined.

Similarly, the rapid growth in private sector (aided and unaided) in upper primary schools within a period of 48 years, i.e., from 22.42% in 1973-74 to 33.43% in 2020-21 could be seen in the table 1.1. There is a rapid increase in private unaided recognised sector from 11.02% in 1993-94 to 28.37% in 2020-21. The percentage of private aided schools has come down to 5.06% in the year 2020-21. The percentage of government school has fallen from 77.6% in 1973-74 to 62.06% at the elementary level in 2020-21.

However, private schools are on rise day by day whether unaided recognised or unrecognised. Thousands of such schools are functioning even after the implementation of RTE Act 2009 which says that no school can run without obtaining a certificate of government recognition⁵. Appendix I indicates that private unaided unrecognised schools in some states such as Uttar Pradesh, Assam, Jharkhand, etc. have mushroomed more in numbers than private unaided recognised schools. It is evident that in 2020-21, Kerala and Uttar Pradesh have more private (i.e., 69.53% and 46.63% respectively) than government schools. States such as Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Rajasthan, and Haryana have more than 30% private schools during the year 2020-21. Unrecognised private schools constituted around 3.4% of all elementary schools in the country in 2020-21. In most of the states, private unaided schools are more in number than private aided school. However, the proportion of aided school is negligible in some states such as, Himachal Pradesh (0.0%), Jammu & Kashmir

⁵ 'Recognition' is a government stamp of approval for a private school, to certify that it is fit to run as a school. According to Right to Education Act 2009, all private schools are required to be legally recognised. A private school has to fulfil the conditions given in the Act to be 'recognised' and the Act allows the governments to add further recognition conditions (Kingdon, 2017: 3).

(0.0%), Rajasthan (0.0%), Madhya Pradesh (0.58%), Chhattisgarh (0.01%), and Haryana (0.07%). According to U-DISE 2019, sixteen states have over 50% of students in private schools. Six states such as Goa, Maharashtra, Kerala, Manipur, Uttar Pradesh, and Tamil Nadu have the greatest enrolment share.

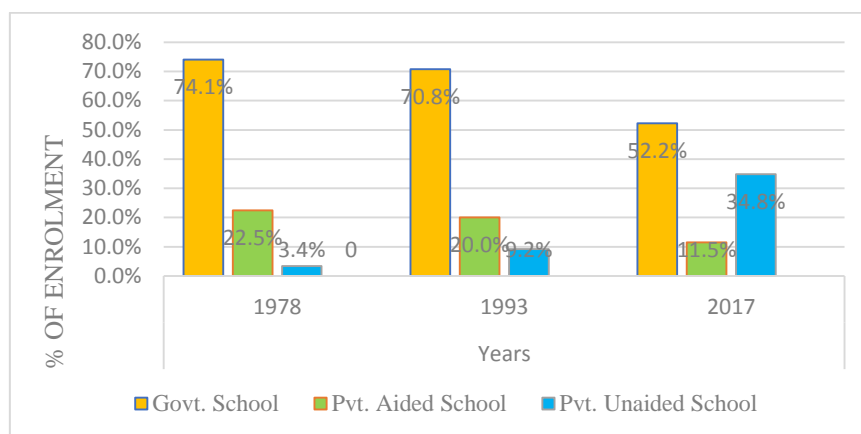
During the mid-1990s, due to liberalization and economic growth, ‘elite flight’ occurred and middle classes started leaving the government schools for better academic credentials (Majumdar and Mooij, 2011). Inter state variations could be seen in the decline of government schools and the rise in private schools. Government schools are emptying and therefore, “several state governments have been closing down government schools: three states Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh alone reportedly closed down nearly 24,000 government schools in 2015-16” (Kingdon, 2020: 19). Kingdon (2020) found that “The emptying of government schools is largely the result of an exodus of students from government schools and migration towards private schools, since there has been no drop in the child population” (p. 8).

The “major reason for the rapid growth of private schools is their affordability” (ibid. 19). She argued that “the reduction in poverty over time, which permits affordability and choice” (ibid. 8). The data shows that in states such as Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Bihar and Orissa, about 70 to 85 percent of children who study in private unaided elementary schools pay fee of less than Rs. 500 per month. Even the poor people are accessing private schools in Uttar Pradesh and thus private schools are highly utilised there (Kingdon, 2020: 13). One third or more of the private schools in Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Orissa and West Bengal are ‘low fee’ schools which caters to the very poor (ibid. 16). One of the reasons for the rapid growth of private school is the demand for English medium education (ibid). It has been “a result of the abandoning of the state-run schools by the urban middle classes in favour of English medium private schools” (Nambissan, 2017: 311). As Azam, Chin and Prakash (2013) argued that English language skill is in high demand in the labour market and it enables one to get more lucrative jobs with better promotion, opportunities and higher economic returns (p. 357). A third factor “may be a perception that private schools provide better quality education” (Kingdon, 2020: 8). These factors differ across states. For instance, “in Uttar Pradesh, private school growth is driven importantly by

the perceived low quality of the available government schools, whereas in some states, e.g., Andhra Pradesh, the desire for an English medium education is an important driver, and this is reflected in Andhra’s decision in late 2019 to convert all its government schools into English medium schools” (ibid. 8).

Kingdon (2017) and others claimed that the private sector is much larger than it is presented. DISE data typically divides all schools into two types: ‘government’ and ‘private’ schools. And that is why the true size of the private school sector is underestimated (p. 4). There is an underestimation of private schools in the official data as unrecognised, low-fee private schools are excluded from the private school’s category or underrepresented, since data from government sources only cover recognised private schools. DISE “lumps together aided and unaided schools into a single category ‘private’, leading to an over-estimation of the true size of the private school sector” (Kingdon, 2020: 3).

Figure 1.1: Growth of School Enrolment over the Years (1978 – 2017)



Source: State of the Sector Report on Private Schools in India, 2020, p. 10

These official data show that private schools are expanding and impacting the trends in enrolment of students at each level of school education. Figure 1.1 gives the picture of growth of school enrolment from 1978 to 2017. It is evident that the percentage of enrolment share in government school which was 74.1% in the year 1978 has come

down to 52.2% in the year 2017. On the other hand, enrolment in private unaided school has gone up from 3.4% in the year 1978 to 34.8% in 2017. Enrolment in private aided school as compared to private unaided has been decreased.

Table 1.2 shows that the proportion of enrolment in the year 2020-21 is higher in government schools at all levels compared to private aided and unaided schools. However, at the primary level, it has decreased from 76.3% in 2014-15 to 56.27% in 2020-21. It is also clear that the trend of enrolment in government school is getting decreased as the level of education increases. The enrolment increases in private unaided recognised schools at the primary level (35.24%) and at secondary level (34.25%) in the year 2020-21. About 48.9% students in India attend private schools, making India's private school sector the third largest school system in the world. Rural private school enrolment has risen greatly in the last three and a half decades. The proportion of students attending private schools have grown rapidly over the last thirty-five years. This is due to parents' demand for better-quality education for their children.

Table 1.2 Enrolment of Students by School Management and level of School Education, 2020-21

School Levels	Govt.	PA	PUAR	PUAU	Total
Primary	56.27	4.4	35.24	4.09	122021291
Upper Primary	54.41	11.34	32.02	2.22	65854199
Secondary	45.25	19.74	34.25	0.8	39006375

Source: DISE 2020-21

This indicates that private school sector is no longer exclusive domain of the elite. Private unaided schools have more enrolment than private aided schools. Overall pattern of enrolment is seen increasing in private sector, especially in private unaided and unrecognised sector.

The shift from government to private schools is seen by the increasing number of children attending private unaided schools and fall in enrolments in government schools. Appendix II gives the picture of children attending private schools in India during the year 2017-18. In urban as well as in rural areas, more children (of primary

and upper primary) attend private unaided schools rather than private aided. Percentages of children attending private schools are more in urban than in rural areas. During the year 2017-18, about 20.9% rural and 50.5% urban children attended private schools at primary level. At the upper primary level, the percentage of students attended private schools in rural and urban are 16.7% and 41.8% respectively. We see a wide rural-urban disparity which could vary among different states.

However, within private unaided schools in the year 2017-18, around 83.2% in rural and 88% students in urban areas attended recognised unaided private schools at primary level (see Appendix III). It is also evident that percentage of students attending unaided unrecognised private schools was more in rural than urban areas at both primary and upper primary levels. It shows the fact that due to the demand for private schools, low fee private unrecognised schools have come up in rural areas too.

In urban India, private schooling surged rapidly ahead compared to government or government aided private schools. For example, in the year 2013, “private unaided schools comprised 60% of schools in urban India, and 69% of all enrolment” (Nambissan, 2017: 310). According to Juneja (2015), “Enrolment in private schools is far higher at the secondary stage than at the elementary level ... In a study of ten cities carried out in 2001, it was found that the proportion of private primary schools varied from 38% in Coimbatore (Tamil Nadu state) to 76% in Jaunpur, in the state of Uttar Pradesh” (cited from Nambissan, 2017: 310).

Reviews of literature on private schooling in India have shown that in recent years there has been a rapid migration of students towards private schools, deserting government schools for the perceived benefits of a private school education. Kingdon (2017) in her study showed that between the year 2010 and 2016 the number of private schools increased by over four times the number of government schools and the actual number of students in government schools decreased by 11.1 million students. In contrast, the number of students enrolling in private schools increased by 16 million over the same time period. Surprisingly, “private schools in underdeveloped states such as Bihar and Jharkhand apart from Odisha have witnessed

a sharp increase in student enrolment, while those in other states, which are not underdeveloped, have only seen a steady rise’ (Sharma, The Print, 2019).⁶ It has ‘gone up from 6.9 crore in 2013-14 to 8.3 crore in 2017-18. On the other hand, in government schools, it has gone down from 19.9 crore in 2011-12 to 18.9 crore in 2016-17. According to the data, the number of enrolments has gone down by over 91 lakhs in government schools’ (ibid.).

The reason behind decreasing enrolment in government school is the low-quality education. Lack of accountability and frequent teacher absenteeism is found in government school (Chaudhury et al., 2006; Muralidharan and Kremer, 2006). Studies have found considerable absenteeism among school teachers in rural areas (ranging from 11 to 25 percent) compared to private school teachers who are 2 to 4 percent points more likely to be present in school than government school teacher (Muralidharan and Kremer, 2006). According to DISE 2019-20, government schools have less proportion of teachers compared to private unaided school. Overall, 68.48% government schools in India, had only 50.1 percent of the required teachers while 22.38 percent private unaided schools had 37.18 percent of the required teachers (Bhattacharya, News Click, 2021).⁷

In Jharkhand, the percentage of government schools at elementary level is 79.19 percent while of private is 15.5 percent. However, within private, we see more private unrecognised schools (14.81%) than private recognised (3.40%) school (see Appendix I). Enrolment at primary level in 2020-21 is more in private schools (30.59%) than aided school (3.83%) (see Appendix IV). In Jharkhand, the number of students attending private schools has gone up to 12 lakhs in 2017-18 from 8.7 lakh in 2013-14. According to R. Govinda, the reason behind the increase in student enrolment in private schools is that the performance of government schools is not “up to the mark, especially in underdeveloped states where no attention is paid to running schools

⁶ Sharma, Kritika. 18 July, 2019, Sharp Rise in Number of Students opting for Private Schools, Even in Poor States. theprint.in/india/Sharp-rise-in-number-of-students-opting-for-private-schools-even-in-poor-states/264088/ (Accessed, August 2020).

⁷ Bhattacharya, Dista, 11 July, 2021. Government Schools Have Much Lesser Teachers Compared to Private Schools, Shows UDISE+ Data, News Click. Accessed, July 2022). [news click.in/government-schools-much-lesser-teachers-compared-private-schools-shows-UDISE-data](https://news.click.in/government-schools-much-lesser-teachers-compared-private-schools-shows-UDISE-data).

properly” (cited from Sharma, The Print, 2019). Thus, we can conclude that the overall pattern of enrolment is increasing in private sector, especially in private unaided, unrecognised sector.

II. Family Choices, Processes and Strategies: Theoretical Framework

The present study moves beyond the ‘rational choice model’ that underlies literature on school choice and is guided by the cultural reproduction theory of Pierre Bourdieu. This theoretical framework is used to understand and explore the middle class families’ choices, decision making processes, strategies and parental involvement in relation to the schooling of their children in Ranchi city. Bourdieu’s analysis of education and schooling in cultural and social reproduction situates the school choice processes within the specific social context. He emphasized on the importance of social class and accumulation and possession of economic, cultural and social resources in the family. Bourdieu (1996) argued that family plays a decisive role in the maintenance of the social order, through social reproduction. It “is one of the key sites of the accumulation of capital in its different forms and its transmission between the generations. It safeguards its unity for and through this transmission. It is the main ‘subject’ of reproduction strategies” (ibid. 23). Bourdieu (1996) also explained that families’ class location is important for the accumulation of social and cultural capital.

Bourdieu’s social reproduction theory shows how middle class parents through their practices and involvement secure privilege for their children. Social reproduction, according to Bourdieu (1990) is “brought about by the knowledgeable use of rules and resources by actors engaging in the routine practices of life” (cited from Reay, 1998: 195). The relationship between home and school is a key to social reproduction. The concepts of *capitals* and *practices* are used to give insights into ways in which middle class parents’ strategies and practices in their children’s education contributes to our understanding of social reproduction of privilege through the daily activities of parents. In *‘The Forms of Capital’*, Bourdieu highlighted three kinds of capital that gives advantage in people’s quest to increase their wealth and social status: 1)

economic capital (for e.g., money or property rights), 2) cultural capital (educational qualification), and social capital (social network/ status).

The first kind of capital, i.e., economic capital, “which is immediately and directly convertible into money and may be institutionalised in the form of property rights” (Bourdieu, 1997: 47). The second kind of capital, i.e., cultural capital, “which is convertible, on certain conditions, into economic capital and may be institutionalized in the form of educational qualifications” (ibid.). It consists of three forms: a) embodied state, such as culture, cultivation or refinement, and tastes etc.; b) objectified state, such as books, pictures, dictionaries, instruments, machines etc.; and c) institutionalised state, such as educational qualification (Bourdieu, 1997: 47). Lamont and Lareau (1988) defined cultural capital as “institutionalized i.e., widely shared, high status cultural signals (attitudes, preferences, formal knowledge, behaviours, goods and credentials) used for social and cultural exclusion” (p. 156). Bourdieu (1997) explained that cultural capital “is linked to the body and presupposes embodiment. The accumulation of cultural capital in the embodied state, i.e., in the form of what is called culture, cultivation, *Bildung*, presupposes a process of embodiment, incorporation, which, in so far as it implies a labour of inculcation and assimilation, costs, time, time which must be invested personally by the investor” (p. 48). Further Bourdieu (1997) stated that “This embodied capital, external wealth converted into an integral part of the person, into a habitus, cannot be transmitted instantaneously (unlike money, property rights, or even titles of nobility) by gift or bequest, purchase or exchange” (p. 48).

Bourdieu (1997) discussed that objectified cultural capital

“exists as symbolically and materially. Active, effective capital only in so far as it is appropriated by agents and implemented and invested as a weapon and a stake in the struggles which go on in the fields of cultural production (the artistic field, the scientific field, etc.) and, beyond them, in the field of the social classes – struggles in which the agents wield strengths and obtain profits proportionate to their mastery of this objectified capital, and therefore to the extent of their embodied capital” (p. 50).

Bourdieu (1997) stated that “With the academic qualification, a certificate of cultural competence which confers on its holder a conventional, constant, legally guaranteed value with respect to culture, social alchemy produces a form of cultural capital which has a relative autonomy vis-à-vis its bearer and even vis-à-vis the cultural capital he effectively possesses at a given moment in time” (p. 51).

The third kind of capital is social capital, which “is the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession or a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition – or in other words, to membership in a group – which provides each of its members with the backing of the collectivity – owned capital, a ‘credential’ which entitles them to credit, in the various senses of the word” (Bourdieu, 1997: 51). It is associated with having network of social contact such as within family, class, tribe, party or school, etc. All these capitals are interconnected and can be transformed from one form of capital into another. Different families possess different kinds and volumes of capitals. Bourdieu (1997) also recognised social capital as “the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition – or in other words, to membership in a group – which provides each of its members with the backing of the collectivity – owned capital, a ‘credential’ which entitles them to credit, in the various senses of the word. These relationships may exist only in the practical state, in material and/or symbolic exchanges which help to maintain them” (p. 51). He further explained that social capital, or social networks can be mobilised for particular purposes. Again “the volume of the social capital possessed by a given agent thus depends on the size of the network of connections he can effectively mobilize and on the volume of the capital (economic, cultural or symbolic) possessed in his own right by each of those to whom he is connected” (1997: 51). It is “seen a resource together with economic and cultural capital. For the reproduction of social capital, “an increasing effort of sociability, a continuous series of exchanges in which recognition is endlessly affirmed and reaffirmed” (ibid. 52).

Bourdieu explained that school success is not the measures of individual achievement

or talent rather it is the amount and type of cultural capital inherited from the family background:

“The notion of cultural capital initially presented itself to me, in the course of research, as a theoretical hypothesis which made it possible to explain the unequal scholastic achievement of children originating from different social classes by relating academic success, i.e., the specific profits which children from the different classes and class fractions can obtain in the academic market, to the distribution of cultural capital between the classes and class fractions” (Bourdieu, 1997: 47).

Cultural capital is seen as acquired unconsciously is influenced by social class and is transmitted to next generation (Bourdieu, 1997: 49). For example, “the kinds of books or the type of entertainment (such as film, theatre, music, or museum) expose to their children provides them with different bases of knowledge, upon which they draw when trying to create new meanings in relation to education given them in school. Educators favour students who possess the cultural capital of the dominant groups” (Harker 1984; cited from Wells, 1997: 423). Cultural capital “encompasses a broad array of linguistic competencies, manners, preferences, and orientations, which Bourdieu terms ‘subtle modalities in the relationship to culture and language’” (Bourdieu, 1977a; cited from Reay, 1998: 25).

The social capital a family possesses is seen to play a crucial part in their ability to mobilize their economic and cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1997: 52). It includes social networks and is generated through social processes between the family and wider society (Reay, 1998: 26). It can thus provide actual or potential support and access to valued resources (Bourdieu, 1993; cited from Ball, 2003: 80). Education also builds social capital as parents buy a broad and complex body of social capital by investing in private education for their children. It is available to the children and is used by them in developing their own investment skills (Ball 2003: 86).

Bourdieu (1996b) emphasised the “importance of the family as a site of social and cultural reproduction” (cited from Reay, 1998: 56), where capital is accumulated and used to secure educational success. And through education, cultural capital is

accumulated to facilitate the reproduction of the prestige and status (Ball, 1997). In ‘The Forms of Capital’ Bourdieu writes:

“... it is because the cultural capital that is effectively transmitted within family itself depends not only on the quantity of cultural capital, itself accumulated by spending time, that the domestic group possess, but also on the usable time (particularly in the form of the mother’s free time) available to it ...” (Bourdieu, 2004: 25).

Educational systems “constitutes primary sites for the accumulation and legitimation of cultural resources, as well as for the institutionalisation of cultural capital via degree... Bourdieu did not focus on school-family interactions, his analysis points to the importance of class and class cultures in mediating children’s and parents’ negotiations in the schooling system” (Symeou, 2007: pp. 474 - 475). The home-school relationship is seen as a key element in cultural reproduction, where some families share the same ‘values/culture of the school’ and others do not. Bourdieu’s theory claimed that “social class inequalities in educational attainment lie in the social distribution of cultural capital... educational reproduction leads to social reproduction. Education allocates occupational positions and thus legitimates social inequalities” (ibid. 475).

Bourdieu’s work largely focussed on elite groups or middle classes. The framework of cultural and social reproduction theory is useful in understanding the influence of family background on school experience, and differences in school-family relationships between social classes (Lareau, 1987). Given the rising demand for private schooling among middle and lower middle class families, this study tries to look at practices and strategies to understand the processes that underlie decision making within these families, i.e., how families perceive and strategize for private schooling of their children.

III. Rationale, Objectives and Methodology

Available data, studies and reports on school education (in private and public schooling) show rapidly increasing enrolments in private schools, particularly in the

unaided sector. More recently as mentioned earlier, there has been a mushrooming of private unaided unrecognised schools in India. The private school is hence a highly heterogeneous that is responding to parental aspirations across social classes. While there is increasing advocacy for private schools especially for lower classes, we know very little about the nature of middle class access to private schools and the experiences of children and their parents of such education. Few studies have focussed on low-income groups and their choices in relation to what are being called low fee private schools/budget schools. The practices, strategies and choices of middle class(es) that are accessing private schools have not received research attention in the Indian context but they are critical in building up a picture of private school choice. This study is an attempt in that direction to offer empirical evidence for studying the complexity of the families' practices within the household with regard to private schooling of children. Such a picture is essential given the larger debates about children's right to education, the growing advocacy for parental choice in relation to private schools, and the future of the public school system of education in India.

The site of the present study is located in Ranchi, the capital of Jharkhand. After the formation into a separate state in the year 2000, there has been major socio-economic and political development. Due to urbanisation and technological cultural changes, a rapid socio-economic transformation could be seen in Ranchi. The study attempts to explore the middle class families' choices and demand for private school. It focuses on families' aspirations, practices, strategies and parental involvement in private schooling. The present study could be relevant from applied points of view. At an applied level, the present study may help identify the aspirations of the middle class. In other words, it may provide an indicator for measuring aspirations regarding child's education, efforts and strategies (to achieve those aspirations) of the middle class for advancement of their status in the social class structure.

Objectives of the Study

The study has five broad objectives which are as follows:

- 1) To study factors that influence family's perspectives about private schooling for their children and their choice of private school.

- 2) To examine aspirations for children's education and future mobility that shapes the family's school choices.
- 3) To examine variations in school choices within the fractions of middle class(es).
- 4) To understand the family's strategies to realise the aspirations and choices.
- 5) To understand the processes of involvement of parents in children's schooling and in building cultural capital.

Research Questions

- 1) What are socio-economic and cultural factors that influence family's perspectives about private schooling for their children and their choice of specific school?
- 2) What is family's aspiration for children's education and future mobility (higher education, career, marriage)?
- 3) What factors influence intra family decisions regarding education of children?
- 4) What is the role of gender in education as parents aspire for and plan for their children's (sons/daughters) future - education, career, marriage etc.?
- 5) How economic capital and social capital (networks) are used for information gathering etc. regarding private schools?
- 6) What are the differences that are evident within fractions of middle class families in the inputs and supports given to children? What is the mother's role in schooling in different families?

Methodology

The study is both quantitative and qualitative in nature as “number depends on meaning and meaning is informed by number” (Dey, 2005: 3). Or to say, both complement each other. The study is conducted in two stages. In the first stage, preliminary planning of survey study is done, which includes purpose and objectives of the study, construction of tools, selection of a set of research questions, planning for the field visit and identification of a target population. It also includes the analysis of secondary data (such as DISE, NSS, SES, etc.) to support the primary data and literature reviews based on international and national study to help justify the need for

the study and to establish a theoretical framework. Before visiting the field, the interview schedule is prepared keeping in mind the research objectives and is tested by visiting eight families in R.K. Puram, Delhi. On the basis of the findings and discussion with the supervisor, more questions are added in the interview schedule to get the required data.

The second stage is field study which is exploratory in nature. It is located in Ranchi city, the capital of Jharkhand state. The reason behind selecting this site is my keen interest to conduct the study in my hometown. Ranchi has a large migrant population that includes people from far and nearby villages who migrated to the city in search of work and settled down along with people from other states in India. This process began during the beginning of industrial development (1960s) of the region and has accelerated over the decades. Ranchi is today a hub of people from different regions and states staying here and working in industries and other government offices. A change in the expansion of education could be seen here. The educational institutes are growing which shows the demand for schools from different social classes. Therefore, it is decided to study the school choice processes and strategies in Ranchi city.

For the field study, survey method is adopted given the aims to select a sample of middle class families whose children are attending private schools and cover a broad subject range. This method is found suitable to gather information from families to understand their ways and views on the issues related to the study. According to Groves et al. (2009), “‘survey’ is a systematic method for gathering information from (a sample of) entities for the purposes of constructing quantitative descriptors of the attributes of the larger population of which the entities are members” (p. 2). According to Snyder (2007) “Survey research refers to systematic investigations designed to gather information from populations or samples for the purposes of describing, comparing, or explaining phenomena” (p. 4906). The study tries to investigate variation or diversity in a given population in a qualitative way.

The field study is done in different durations of time period between June 2014 to January 2019. It is due to family issues and demand of my work place. In the first

round, in June 2014, the city is visited to select the field site. Four to five places⁸ are visited to select the site. It is first thought to select the site (Mesra) in the fringes of Ranchi city. But after visiting and observing the place and fetching information from the locals about schools, the idea of selecting a particular site is dropped as there is not much population and private schools. Other areas called Rani Bagan and Badgain in Bariatu are visited. Around ten households are visited for the pilot study to get a sense of the study area and also to check and modify the questions based on field inputs to ensure that they are capturing the information that is wanted. I came back to Delhi. The findings of the pilot study show that these families are from lower middle and lower classes and their children access government or Central school. Since most of the children were accessing government schools, I felt that it will not satisfy the thematic interest, mainly private schooling and decided to change the field site. After the analysis of the pilot study, more literatures are reviewed and the interview schedule is transformed accordingly.

I again visited the field in June 2015. In the second round I visited several other places and decided to choose the study site in the inner circle of the north-east part of the city which is developing as a residential area (detailed description of the site is in Chapter III) and where private schools are in reach and easily accessible in the neighbourhood and within 1 or 2 kilometres. In Ranchi, one cannot access public vehicles after 6 or 7 o'clock in the evening and it is difficult to return after this time from the field site. I need to visit households in the evening for taking interviews, especially with fathers who come late from their office or work. Therefore, keeping safety in mind and the requirement of the research, I chose to select two localities, i.e., Jai Prakash Nagar and New Nagar.

The field survey is carried out in Jai Prakash Nagar. The field survey of New Nagar is done in the year 2016, in different phases of the year. The field is revisited from 2017 to 2019 as and when needed to complete and update the data. The population under study includes the inhabitants of these two localities, who are mainly the fractions of middle class families. In the beginning, the purpose was to cover all the social classes

⁸ Places such as Mesra, Khelgaon, Samlong, Kanke, Bariatu were visited for the selection of site.

but after the completion of the field work, it is found that the locality has only middle class families. Therefore, I had to change my initial interest in studying inter class differences to the differentiation within the middle class.

For the field survey, purposive sampling method is adopted for the selection of sample families as the research study needed to select those families from these two localities whose children are at primary/elementary/secondary (class I-X) stage in the range of private schools. According to Patton (2007), “the logic and power of purposive sampling lies in selecting information rich cases for study in depth” (p. 4006). This gives insights and in depth understanding and illuminate the questions under study. In few cases, Snow Ball sampling is applied to reach few families to get their views. A sampling procedure is “defined as snowball sampling when the researcher accesses informants through contact information that is provided by other informants” (Noy, 2008: 330). It helps researchers to enrich their samples and “access new participants and social groups when other contact avenues have dried up” (ibid. 330). I faced difficulty in entering the residential apartment, as I was stopped at the gate by the guard, who was strictly ordered by the residents not to let the entry of an unacquainted outsiders for their safety purpose. Therefore, I thought of adopting snowball method to get the entry. I visited two to three families residing adjacent to the apartment. Fortunately, one of the families had better relationship with two families of the apartment and their children play together. I used the opportunity without fail and entered the apartment with the respondent’s help. I used this method to contact a few families from Scheduled Castes (though caste is not taken into account) as it is difficult to find them in the mixed community.

The sample includes 120 middle class families out of which 45 families belong to middle and 75 families belong to lower middle class families. The middle class sample is not predetermined, but has emerged because of the nature of the field sites. The two localities where the field works are done are mainly resided by the middle and the lower middle class families. Both the parents participated in the interviews. Among these, a total of 116 fathers and 118 mothers are interviewed. Some of their children are also interviewed to explore the variations within the broad categories of

private schools to understand some dimensions of ‘quality’ (such as infrastructure, teaching learning processes, using of teaching aids, and so on) of education offered by specific private schools (see Chapter V).

The focus of the study is on the processes underlying parental choices, strategies and decision making as well as family – school relations in the context of private schooling. Hence, face to face interview is conducted and for this semi-structured interview schedule is developed that lists the questions or issues to be explored during the interviews. However, in order to go beyond gaining strictly quantitative data, a qualitative component is included in the interview schedule in the form of open-ended questions. These questions concern such issues as aspirations, reasons behind school choice, processes, strategies and explanation on involvement in child’s schooling at home, and so on.

Interviews are conducted with family members, i.e., parents, and children at home. Interview as a qualitative research technique is useful to get detailed information about a person’s thoughts and perceptions to explore new issues. Interviews are used to distinguish individual opinions on the school choice processes. The houses are visited twice or thrice according to respondents’ availability and convenience.

The households of respondents are visited either in the morning around 10 o’clock or so to talk to mothers or in the evening to talk to fathers. In the beginning, I faced difficulty in convincing parents for the interviews as they were not ready to spare their valuable time to interact with me. Some refused to talk as they did not see any benefit for themselves. Some were reluctant to answer some of the questions for they did not have patience to spare time to answer every questions. Some mothers saw me as a data collector from government office or an NGO personnel and posed the question of providing some jobs to them in the school. I had to convince them that I am a student from a university and conducting my field study so that my research could help in bringing some change in the condition of government schools. I faced difficulty in asking some questions as respondents instead of answering threw back the same question on me. Moreover, I was welcomed pleasantly by most of the families except few who were suspicious about my work.

However, sometimes my visit in the morning or afternoon got wasted as parents refused to talk to me for different reasons. So, I had to visit these houses again to take their interviews. In many of the cases, I had to visit houses in the evening too to catch the fathers. The interviews took one to two hours as sometimes I had to be involved in an informal discussion to make the respondents comfortable in speaking and sharing their views openly. Interviews are conducted in Hindi. All the respondents are interviewed in their household except very few. A few fathers are interviewed in their shops. In-home interviews allow observation of the home environment and material conditions. Observation of the households is done to see the size of the house, the consumer items kept inside the house, living style and so on.

Responses are tape recorded and some important points are noted down in the field diary. Attention is paid to the day-to-day perspectives, strategies and actions in relation to children's education that are part of the lived reality of parents/families.

Analysis of the Data

After the data collection, analysis of data is done by transcribing the interviews and discussions. The data is audio recorded in Hindi. It is later translated into English. Field diary based on observation and narratives in the field are used to analyse data. Coding is done by transforming the text data into numeric data. Coding of text material is crucial for the ability to analyse statistically the results of survey. For this code structure is given to make the mapping effortless. After coding, data entry is done. SPSS is used for quantitative analysis of the household's data. Each question is entered in the SPSS to get the clear picture of the data. Later, these transcriptions, field notes and coded data are categorised under different themes across the data sets and different chapters are developed on the basis of these themes in sequencing order.

The study has its limitation. It is specific to the context of Ranchi city based on purposive sampling and therefore, findings may not be generalised for the other city in the country. The application of class and its findings in the study is limited to the definition of class taken for this study purpose only.

Organisation of the Chapters

Chapter I: Introduction

This chapter sets the background of the research study. It presents a scenario of rise and growth of private schools in India and middle class families' demand for private schooling for their children. Apart from this, it provides the theoretical framework for the study, objectives of the study, the research questions raised by the study and rationale. It also discusses the selection of the site and methodology used in the field.

Chapter II: Aspirations, Choices and Strategies for Schooling among Middle Class Families: A Review of Theory and Literature

This chapter provides the reviews of theory and literatures on various aspects and themes of the study. It gives the detailed account on the conceptual underpinnings of middle classes, aspirations, choices, family strategies and involvement of parents in the private schooling of their children.

Chapter III: Study Setting, Family Profiles and Their Social Class Categorization

This chapter discusses the context of Ranchi city and its localities selected for the study. It provides a detailed discussion on socio-economic, educational and occupational profiles of sample middle class families. It also discusses the operationalization and categorization of class and their positions in occupational hierarchy.

Chapter IV: Gendered Aspirations and Rationale for School Choice

This chapter provides gendered parental aspirations for further education, career and marriage for their children, i.e., both for son and daughter. It also describes the rationale behind choosing private school.

Chapter V: School Choice Making Process: Strategies, Determinants and Experiences

This chapter presents detailed discussion on family strategies to realize the goal of private schooling. It also discusses the determinants to access private school and parents' experiences about the school.

Chapter VI: Parental Involvement in Children's Schooling

This chapter discusses about parental involvement at home, provision of additional resources and support, encouragement and parental engagement with school.

Chapter VII: Summary and Conclusion

The concluding chapter presents a comprehensive analysis of the field. It gives the summary of major findings of the study. It draws out the implications of the study for understanding school choice processes and strategies adopted by the middle class families.

CHAPTER-II

Aspirations, Choices and Strategies for Private Schooling among Middle Class Families: A Review of Theory and Literature

The chapter reviews the literature on aspirations, choices and strategies for private schooling among the middle class families. There is dearth of literature on middle class practices and strategies in terms of school choice and private schooling, especially in the Indian context. Therefore, the objective of this review is to look at, identify and to articulate the findings in the current literatures as a basis for this present study. It includes studies that examined social class and the influence of class on middle class families in their educational aspirations, school choice processes, strategies and parental involvement at home and in school for the reproduction of social and cultural opportunities and privileges for their children. The first section is on the conceptual understanding of social and middle class.

I. The Middle Classes: Conceptual Underpinnings

In Sociology, social class has been defined and explained in diverse ways, depending upon the contexts. It is noted by Wright (2008) that “the concept of class is one of the most contested within sociology” (p. 25). Marx and Weber explained the concept of social class based on economic capital, i.e., in terms of structures and distribution of material resources. However, the place of middle class (who were highly educated and did not own the means of production) in Marxist class scheme is unclear (Erikson, 2015). Wright (2004) criticized Marx for being ‘ethnocentric’ (p. 187) and argued that Marxist class analysis does not provide class locations to “‘middle class’... who do not own their own means of production, which sell their labour power on a labour market, and yet do not seem part of the ‘working class’” (p. 15). The analysis of class however, began to transform by the 1970s.

Weber modified Marx’s analysis of social stratification and included two other aspects along with class, i.e., status and party (power). These three elements of stratification produce a various possible position within society. According to Weber, the concept of ‘class’ refers to “any group of people found in the same class situation.

Thus, a class is not a community but merely a group of people in the same economic or market situation” (Ritzer, 2011: 123). It can be understood “in terms of a person’s relations with production (bourgeoisie or working class) on the one hand. On the other, it connects to the consumption of goods and services in the market. A person’s social status conveys lifestyle, education, training and socialization” Liechty (2003: 13). Class is formed of a variety of economic factors. Thus, the control over economic resources is central to both Marxist and Weberian class analysis. However, Weber differ from Marx in his theory for greater emphasis to the market that directly shapes life chances (Wright, 2004: 28). Economic differences based on resources (such as qualifications and skills) affect the type of job a person is able to get. Weber believed that “an individual’s *market position* strongly influences his or her overall life chances. Status is referred to the social honour and prestige, which is expressed through people’s *styles of life*” (Giddens, 2006: 302-303). He distinguished class situation from status situation (social position and prestige) and emphasised that status varies independently of class divisions (ibid). It is this element of status (honour and prestige) that is included in the present study to look at middle class(es).

Ogbu (1997) highlighted different forms of stratification based on caste, colour and gender. He argued that social class system, “occupational, social and political positions are often based on training and ability rather than ascriptive criteria” (Ogbu, 1997: 768). Postmodern and poststructuralist focused on how class interacts with other inequalities such as gender and ‘race’. They saw class as a ‘lived’ process that is tied to ‘identity’. They saw “social class position, differences, identities and inequalities as never ‘achieved’ or ‘complete’ but constantly socially constructed and reconstructed processes (Hall 1992), asserted through discourses, talk, actions and embodied relations” (Archer, Hutchings and Leathwood 2000; cited from Archer et al., 2003: 11-12). Thus, these approaches take “class not as a fixed, categorical concept, but as produced through interactions between individuals, groups, institutions and policies” (Gegen, 1985, cited from Archer et al., 2003: 11-12).

However, Bourdieu (1984) criticized the classical approaches to social class and developed his own theories of social class based on the concepts of habitus, field and capitals. He provided new concepts to understand class along with the status and

discussed how inequality is reproduced through patterns of thought, lifestyle, consumption patterns and everyday practices, etc. Bourdieu argued that “class analysis cannot be reduced to the analysis of economic relations; rather, it simultaneously entails an analysis of symbolic relations, roughly along the lines of the status differentiation referred to by Weber” (Weininger, 2005: 84). He viewed that “differences in status (i.e., of lifestyle) may be seen as a manifestation of social class differences” (ibid). He argued that “economic capital – which consists of material goods such as property, wealth and income – was important... but it only provided a partial understanding of class” (Giddens, 2006: 322). Bourdieu saw class as cultural processes and pointed out that “life style choices are an important indicator of class” (ibid).

In *The Forms of Capital*, Bourdieu highlighted four forms of ‘capital’ that gives advantages in people’s quest to increase their wealth and social status: 1) economic capital (for e.g., money or property rights), 2) cultural capital (educational qualification, skills), 3) social capital (social network, status) and 4) symbolic capital (honour, prestige). The first kind of capital, i.e., economic capital refers to material assets and income. Cultural capital is again consisting of three forms: a) embodied state, such as culture, cultivation or refinement, and tastes etc.; b) objectified state, such as books, pictures, instruments, machines etc.; and c) institutionalised state, such as educational qualification (Bourdieu, 1997: 47). Bourdieu defined social capital as those actual or potential resources associated with having a network of social contacts, such as within family, class, party or school, etc. (ibid. 51).

Bourdieu developed a systematic theory of cultural classes. The principal idea in his work is that “power is connected with symbols, and that the ruling class in any society is, by default, the class which decides that ranking of symbols and the form of dominant discourse” (Erikson, 2015: 190). Bourdieu distinguished three main classes: the bourgeoisie, the petty bourgeoisie and the working class which are unified through their symbolic capitals and cultural consumption. Thus, there exists a “field of social classes” (Bourdieu, 1984; cited from Weininger, 2005: 96) which are the “battlefield or playing field”, where individuals (from a more or less advantageous position) compete with each other and maximize their capitals and increase their position

within the field (ibid.). Bourdieu (1986) emphasized on the importance of ‘cultural’ processes in the monitoring of existing social and economic structure. He viewed sum of knowledge as cultural capital which is gained through education.

Bourdieu emphasized on the importance of life style in class practices based on consumption practices and preferences. It includes “canonized” forms of culture such as music, art, theatre, literature, etc. and wider culture of clothing, food, interior design, sports, etc. (Weininger, 2005: 93). Class fractions are distinct in their pursuit of wealth and goods, distinct in their tastes, lifestyles or cultural practices. Middle classes for Bourdieu, located between the bourgeoisie and the working class, are “the professions, whose incumbents exhibit a relatively symmetrical asset structure” (Weininger, 2005: 88).

Ball (2003) argued that “the class is realized and struggled over in the daily lives of families and institutions, in consumption decisions as much as in the processes of production, and particularly at moments of crisis and contradiction as parents think about the well-being and happiness and futures of their offspring” (p. 7). Class in this context, as Ball (2003) stated, is basically about “knowing how to act at these defining moments” (ibid). This knowledge provides advantages to the middle class parents over others.

Goldthrope et al. (1967) argued that “‘Middle Classness’ is not after all simply a matter of money; it is more a matter of attitude” (cited from Craft, 1970: 17). Savage (1992) in his study found that intra middle class differences is based on assets and life styles and not simply on occupational differences, where life style categories are connected with types of occupation (cited from Reay et al., 2011: 15). Lichty (2003) suggested that we should not see the middle class as a stable or fixed category and wrote “if we understand middle classness as a cultural project or practice – rather than a social category or empirical condition – we can begin to see how the local and the global are brought together in cultural process, not cultural outcome” (2003: 21). He further suggested to look at class formation as both a material and cultural project. In Indian context, it is argued that this class steadily developed a *selfish* and *individualistic* character (Varma, 1998). Gupta (2000) argued that it is actually the

elites who call themselves 'middle class' in India and who imitate the Western cultural norms.

Sociologists (Varma, 1998; Beteille, 2002; Sridharan, 2011) have tried to study the size, composition and nature of 'middle class' and found it difficult to define or give an exact figure about its size (Varma, 2007) for its contradictory location in the class structure. The middle class is an intermediate social group between the upper strata and the lower strata of the society. It is a capitalist era phenomenon and the size may vary substantially. It is the section within the class structure, which is heterogenous in nature. It is diverse on the basis of the compositions and volume of the various capitals, i.e., economic, social and cultural capital. Giddens (2006) explained middle class as a "broad spectrum of people working in many different occupations, from employees in the service industry to school teachers to medical professionals" (p. 313). The members of the middle class are involved in diverse occupations, have different status situations and life chances. Middle class of a locality or country may vary in terms of income and consumption. Giddens (2006) argued that "members of the middle class, by merit of their educational credentials or technical qualifications, occupy positions that provide them with greater material and cultural advantages than those enjoyed by manual workers" (p. 313). Further Giddens argued that it is difficult to define the boundaries of the middle class because the nature of the occupational structure is dynamic and it is possible for this class to have upward or downward social mobility (ibid).

The question arises, who is the Indian middle class(es)? It is difficult to define Indian middle class(es) for lack of existing data on Indian household's income, as opposed to their consumption pattern (Kapur and Vaishnav, *The Hindu*, 2016). Indian middle class is the class between the rich and the poor. Sociologists have noted the variation within the middle class differences (Deshpande, 2003). According to Krishnan and Hatekar (2017), the estimated size of these class(es) is half of India's population, i.e., over 600 million individuals in 2011-12. This growth was "primarily led by the lower middle class, while the middle-middle and upper-middle-categories were relatively subdued" (Krishnan and Hatekar, 2017: 46). It is geographically and socially diverse. It is a very large and varied group who are employed in white collar jobs and are seen

as an educated in the urban society (Sridharan, 2004). It is a group whose incomes does not make it rich or poor. Nambissan and Lall (2011) pointed out that “the middle classes have their historical roots, cultural traditions and institutions which influence what constitute ‘middle classness’ – respectability, status and opportunity as well as the elements of cultural capital” (p. 18). We see the differences within the middle class, in terms of education, income, cultural and social capital (Kapur and Vaishnav, *The Hindu*, 2016).

According to Varma, “in the Indian context, anybody who has a home to live in and can afford three meals a day, and has access to basic health care, public transport and schooling, with some disposable income to buy such basics as a fan or watch or cycle, has already climbed on to the middle class bandwagon” (2007: xviii). Sen and Stivens (1998) viewed middle class as class fractions and argued that, “in rapidly changing societies, it may be useful to think about these groups as class fractions rather than as a single, unified class” (cited from Scrase and Scrase, 2009: 10). Scrase and Scrase (2009) found that the middle classes at the upper and lower ends cannot be combined into one due to the economic and cultural differences. According to Jodhka and Prakash (2016), middle class is not a homogenous category; it has many diversities within based on wealth, income and status and are classified as the ‘upper’, ‘lower’ and those in between segments based on education, income, occupation and so on. Similarly, those who call themselves “middle class” maintain their other identities such as of caste, religion and ethnicity. Thus, we have notions such as “Bengali middle class” or the “Muslim middle class” or the “Dalit middle class” (ibid. xxi).

In the present times, the proportion of middle class has expanded. Middle class expansion in India could be seen during the 1990s when there was liberalization and economic reforms. Economic liberalization has “restructured service and industrial sector across the country, many of which hold unprecedented opportunities, benefiting not only those living in the metropolis, but also several provincial parts of the sub-continent” (De Neve, 2011: 73). Middle class has been in transition period in the new phase of globalization. It is becoming complicated due to modernization in India. Development has affected “the society so much that differences and stratification can be seen in the middle class, i.e., as an ‘upper middle class’ and the ‘lower middle

class” (Jaffrelot and Veer, 2008: 12). Studies by Varma (1998), Fernandes (2006), Deshpande (2003), etc. have defined it as a consumer class, individualist, hegemonic in orientations. Varma (1998) viewed that liberalization has greatly benefited middle class and its size has increased substantially. Deshpande (2003) argued that “if there is one class for whom the benefits of globalization seem to clearly outweigh the costs, it is the middle class, particularly its upper (managerial-professional) segment” (p. 150). Scrase and Scrase (2009) found that “conspicuous consumption has become an increasingly important determinant of status” (p. 11). They argued that there is a “complex linkage between economic position, status and caste relations, and the dynamics of political power continue to shape the formation of social classes in India” (Scrase and Scrase, 2009: 12) and there is no fixed definition of analyzing class relations. They further stated that middle class in India “have been the principal beneficiaries of liberalization, profiting immensely from the new opportunities for education, job and consumption” (ibid. 2) after liberalization process since 1990s.

In sociological theory, “the middle class has been internally differentiated by prestige (‘upper’ and ‘lower’); by distinguishing a ‘Service Class’ of professional, administrative and managerial employees from an ‘Intermediate Class’ of routine non-manual workers and a petite bourgeoisie of small scale proprietors; by market situation as determined by employability, job security and prospects of career progression; by work situation, particularly in relation to levels of autonomy or supervision; and by the kinds of asset or ‘capital’ which can be transmitted to the next generation” (Power et al., 2003: 2). They further argued that the twentieth century distinctions between ‘white collar’ and ‘blue collar’ workers have become blurred (ibid). There are complex internal divisions within intra middle class. Thus, middle class is not a homogeneous group. Due to the “ever-increasing income differences between high and low earners, and the rapid changes to the work force, there are growing disparities and distinctions between the middle classes” (Reay et al., 2011; cited from Rowe, 2015: 947). In Reay et al.’s (2011) study, these differences are referred to as vertical, horizontal, political and geographical. Middle class fractions have some commonality, as Savage et al. (1992) stated that “while process in the labour market tend to fragment the middle classes according to different types of

careers they pursued, those based around family, structures and neighbourhoods tended to unify them” (p. 151). However, Reay et al. (2011) found that middle classes’ relationship to education “has become a central mechanism of white middle class identity formation” (p. 19).

However, Bilton et al. (1996) talked about two features of middle class position that have

“provided a boundary between the middle and working classes. First, middle class occupations enjoy significant material advantages over working class jobs: not only are levels of pay much higher, they are more secure over the working life of employee, enabling the middle class to plan to cover future medical, schooling and housing costs. Jobs are typically less dangerous to health, and involve more autonomy and responsibility than blue collar work. Secondly, the middle class has enjoyed a cultural advantage derived from significantly higher levels of education and training, especially among the professions, and administrative and managerial groups” (pp. 173-174).

According to Bilton (1996), there are two forms of middle classes - the ‘established’ and the ‘new’, where the former are involved in white collar occupations or established professions such as medicine, law, accountancy and civil service, etc. While the ‘new middle class’ are those “new professional salaried groups working in administration, banking or business recruited in part from an increasingly educated and mobile working class” (Bilton, 1996: 174). He further argued that these ‘established’ and ‘new’ middle classes were “accompanied by more junior ranks of white-collar office workers, a lower middle class often also drawn from working class ranks” (ibid. 174).

Brosius (2010) argued that “class position and social status must be understood as dynamic, not as stable entities” (p. 15).⁹ Middle class “identities are constantly being

⁹ According to Weber, class is a function of a person or group’s position in the capitalist market. It can be understood in terms of a person’s relations with production (bourgeoisie or working class) on the one hand. On the other, it connects to the consumption of goods and services in the market. A person’s social status conveys lifestyle, education, training and socialization. See Liechty (2003:13).

constituted and reconfigured through a range of material and symbolic struggles (Wacquant, 1991; cited from Archer, 2012: 130). Dickey (2013) argued that middle class work to gain and maintain recognition as middle class in their everyday practices. Class is “indeed played out, experienced and negotiated...also lived in and through highly mundane processes” (ibid. 218). Weis (2010) argued that in addition to economy,

“class rests fundamentally in the ‘lived’ realm in that it organizes the social, cultural and material world in exceptionally powerful ways. The book we read, or if we read at all; our travel destinations and model of travel; the clothes we wear; the food we eat; whether we have orthodontically straightened teeth; where (and if) our children go to school, with whom, and under what staff expectations and treatment; the “look” and “feel” of home – and school-based interventions if our children “fail”; where we feel most comfortable and with whom; where we live and the nature of our housing; ... are all profoundly classed experiences, rooted not only in material realities but in culturally based expectations and practices” (p. 415).

Ball (2003) discussed the lived experiences of class and argued that “for the middle class it is the best of times and the worst of times; a time of affluence and risk, opportunity and congestion, celebration and anxiety” (p. 4). They have overcome their contentment and are anxious because of the uncertainties in their life. Further it is found that middle classes have moved ahead of the attitude of mere individual breadwinner, and are dread and confident towards their future and “are beset with worries” (Lewis and Maude, 1950; cited from Ball, 2003: 4)¹⁰. They regenerate themselves through education (Ball, 2003; Power et.al, 2003) as “education has great significance for this class’s maintenance of its existence” (Ozmantar and Karatasoglu, 2019: 77). They are strategic and self-interested profit maximizers (Ball, 2003) who work towards their own class interest. The following section looked at middle class families and school choice processes.

¹⁰ Lewis and Maude, *The English Middle Classes*, London: Phoenix House, 1950.

II. Middle Class Families and School Choice

It is important to look at how school choice processes are affected by social class and how middle classes practice for selecting a particular private school for their children. Also, how they preserve their educational advantages and what strategies do they use to preserve and acquire social status. Ball et al. (1996) argued that “choice is very directly and powerfully related to social class differences. Choice emerges as a major new factor in maintaining and indeed reinforcing social-class divisions and inequalities” (p. 110). Reay (1996) argued that “choice is a continuous process, day-to-day process. It includes a number of key stages while decision making” (p. 581).

However, Ball et al. (1996) argued that middle class exercise the “choice as a process to maintain social distinctions and educational differentiations” (p. 110). They further argued that “choice means different things to different people in different settings” (ibid. 92). Middle class as “skillful and resourceful parents were always able to ‘work the system’ or buy a privilege education or other forms of advantage for their children” (ibid. 110). Middle class parents as a privileged or skilled choosers have economic, cultural and social resources “to engage with and utilize the possibilities of choice” (ibid. 93). School preferences also have a class dimension where better educated middle class parents have long term plans and perceive education as a strategic advantage. School’s social composition play an important role in the process of parental decision making (Ball et al., 1995).

Ball (2003) stated that the choice policies “offer a social and political context, and produce social fields or social spaces, in which the middle class feels both at home and at risk, comfortable but uncertain” (p. 167). Middle class are uncertain about child’s future and employment. They do not believe in the effectiveness of state schooling, because of its declining quality and inadequate teachers (Ball and Vincent, 2001: 184). They fear of increased competition and risk of failure in education. Ball and Vincent (2001) argued that middle class parents intervene into “education practice to defend and further their class interests” (p. 181). Ball and Vincent (2001) suggested that “the contemporary educational perspectives and practices of the middle classes are shaped and informed by a set of fears and concerns about social and economic reproduction” (p. 183). Ball et al. (1996) pointed out that “middle class

'choosers' are much more active in the education marketplace" (p. 56). They "strategize to preserve their family's positional advantage" (Ball, 2003: 185). Their strategies are not new but "the changing labour market context and policy context have encouraged and made possible, respectively, an increase in the use of such strategies" (ibid. 193). Ball and Vincent (2001) further suggested that "the changing economic condition of education make the middle class more alert to their competitive interests and that the changing interests in this field and that the changing political (and economic conditions) of, and in, education make them more able to pursue their competitive interests" (p. 195).

Academic success is an important means of providing better jobs to middle class. It is a route for children's upward social mobility. Parents are more concerned about their child's future and strategize accordingly. Archer (2012) showed how "parents engage in educational 'strategizing', deploying class resources to promote their children's educational achievement and maximizing their opportunities within the school choice market" (p. 130). Bratlingers (2003) argued, "this has meant uncovering the 'crafty' ways in which parents attempt to secure privilege through their engagement with their children's education" (cited from Archer, 2012: 130). Middle classes use their financial capital to "purchase an English medium private education and to send a child abroad for university education, and so to build one's stock of cultural capital" (Scrase and Scrase, 2009: 11). Thus, in terms of Bourdieu, education plays an important role in the reproduction of middle class privileges (Archer, 2003: 5).

Family's Economic and Social Background

Family plays a crucial role in ensuring access to education early in life. Families' socio-economic backgrounds affects children's academic attainment because of having knowledge and skills regarding schooling and education. According to Coleman, family background consists of three capitals: financial capital (wealth or income), human capital (parents' education), and social capital (relation between parents and children and others) (Coleman, 1997: 88). More useful for this study is Bourdieu's complex capitals: Economic, Cultural, and Social. Choice and decisions of a school depends on the interplay of all these capitals. It depends on cultural context

of the place, availability of the schools, world view of parent and how this match with that of various schools (Waldrop, 2004: 208). What makes for the 'world view' or 'environment of the family' that is critical to decisions regarding education. Drury (1993) argued that some families negotiate and are better endowed with resources than others in ensuring educational transitions.

Drury (1993) observed that the parents' educational histories, values about education and diverse experiences, folk lore, social networks are important because it is these factors that continue to influence families' decisions. He found that middle class mostly upper caste Hindus had stable jobs, large incomes, more urban property, large inheritance, and had savings for future expenses. But there was a difference among the middle class groups, i.e., business class had slightly less education than the white collar employees but make more money; white collar employees were more elite and better educated with their counterparts in the industry (Drury, 1993: 60).

Actual choice in education "is not mechanical or unreflective" process and needs prior discussions and negotiations. It also needs consent of a set of persons for social security. Thus, choice is not an issue of 'good' schooling but about family's plans about future which is further related to the series of other acts and events (Picouer 1981; cited from Chopra, 2005: 306).

However, during the decision-making process, it is important to see who actually decides? How are the decisions made within the family? Who are the important members such as father, mother, child, siblings or relatives for this responsibility of child's education? (David et al., 1994: 16). Drury (1993) and Chopra (2005) found that in joint family in India, grandparents, elder members, elder siblings or relatives, well-educated wives and mothers were an active participant in decision making process. It is important to keep in mind that gender and age are also important factors in intra familial allocation of resources and entitlements.

There have been a number of studies in the West that have studied processes underlying school choice. In India this is a theme that is only beginning to be explored. Vincent (2010) in her study in the UK found that, the basis of school choice

for middle class families depends on the management and reputation of the schools. For instance, for middle class mother, friendliness from teachers and peer group is an important factor in choosing a school (Vincent 2010; Reay and Ball 1997). As Ball (2003) and Gewirtz et al. (1995) showed that “matching individual children with particular institutions is commonly alluded to by middle-class parents as a mechanism of choice” (cited from Vincent, 2010: 117). In the case of India, Drury (1993) pointed out that middle-class parents choose schools on the basis of type of management (government, private, reputation and recognition status) and language of instruction (English). Waldrop (2004) in her study on upper-caste, upper-middle class professional Punjabis found that parents choose schools on the basis of the philosophy and school’s reputation, and also the family’ and friends’ opinion, including the ‘old school ties’. Thus, school is selected by the middle class to fulfil their aspirations for school success and career and to gain opportunities and privileges for their children.

Aspirations and Perceptions of Opportunity Structure

Family makes crucial early decisions about school, academic and career paths based on their perceptions, aspirations and resources. Aspirations and perceptions of opportunity structure depend on how much parents value education for their children. Middle class parents, especially higher-level professionals see higher level of mobility. While working classes aspire for lower-level jobs for having limited aspirations for their children. Varma (2007) found that “almost every member of the middle class is a traveller on the same highway of upward mobility and aspiration” (p. xix). Drury noted that ‘Folk theories of making it’ (Ogbu, 1980; cited from Drury, 1993: 8) “are crucial because they help to shape individual’s aspirations and family mobility strategies in general and ideas about the value of education in particular” (ibid).

Educational aspirations of parents “are a key mechanism by which parental socio-economic status is transmitted to the next generation” (Zhang, Kao and Hannum, 2007: 132). These educational aspirations are based on parents’ educational level, their socio-economic and cultural status. Aspirations for children’s academic credentials become important for getting employment in job market and for marriage

(ibid). Waldrop's (2004) study showed that parents holding jobs as senior officers in civil services and army, as managers in big Indian and International companies did not expect vocational training for their children but expected higher education from foreign university for both boys and girls.

Drury found that middle class parents' aspirations were open ended at the top and closed ended at the bottom. Graduation was seen as minimum qualification for jobs and manual jobs were resisted by them. That is why they preferred for specific courses for their sons in secondary and higher education, such as science or engineering or diploma was preferred by businessmen and technician while commerce for wide range of opportunities was preferred by white collars (1993: 99). Education is seen as important for success and further mobility in life. Education is thus valued differently among the families of middle class fractions for different purposes.

Chopra (2005) in her study of Punjabi families found that schooling was seen by parents as a help in self-improvement, existence of hybrid nature, transformation and preparation for future. Drury (1993) in his study found that middle class family valued formal education for employment, skills and credentials. Lareau (1987) argued that parental aspiration for education and their involvement differs according to their social class and ethnicity. Thus, it depends on families how much importance and value they give to education for their children's future.

III. Family Strategies and Practices

School choice is a complex process. It is an initiative that focuses on giving parents scope of opinions to choose schools for their children. It offers parents the freedom to select the school they want their children to attend. It introduces competition between schools and families. It is a "kind of consumption and symbolic process in the making of the middle class subject" (Ball, 2003). Middle class parents have been the ones that best fit as the "ideal of the democratic citizen individualistic, rational, responsible, participatory, the active choosers" (Reay, 2008 b: 1072). Advocates of school choice policies favoured the market model in education and proposed that competition in the education market and parental choice will improve schools (Lauder and Hughes, 1999). This choice process in education gives the idea that the ability to choose a

school promotes the personal freedom of individuals and improves school effectiveness and the quality of an educational system (Ball, 1998).

Gewirtz and Ball (1994) argued that the choice is not free floating. It involves costs and investments and carries a complex process of decision making that occurs over time. The market-oriented practices of school choice advantages the middle class families who possess more economic, social and cultural capital than working class families. Through school choice practices middle classes take advantage of their economic, cultural, social and emotional capital cling with logics of competition and exclusion (Lareau, 2003; Ball, Bowe and Gewirtz, 2006; van Zanten, 2007). To reap the benefits of education, middle classes use strategies for educational investments. For this, they become active and “enormous amounts of time and energy are devoted to ensure social reproduction. For the middle class privilege requires continuous and intensive work” (Ball, 2003: 95).

Further, family as a unit engages in school choice and decision-making process to ensure that their children attend desired school. Families strategize in diverse ways to maintain and improve their economic and social position. Members of the family use their resources and social channels to achieve goals and aspirations they have for their children (Drury, 1993). Bourdieu (1986) argued that, “in order fully to understand the distribution of academic capital, we must look at the work done inside the family in the transmission of cultural capital, as this form of capital increases the efficiency of the cultural transmission by the school” (Vincent 2010: 113). According to Ball, choice involves both ‘logic and taste’. Parents always choose their best, based on their socio-economic disposition and knowledge. The process of choice involves emotional, material and social expenditure (Ball, 2003).

Choice of school is made keeping in mind the future job prospects of the child. Choosing school in the present time has become, as Drury (1993) noted, a burden on parents as “good education is costly, access to the best schools is limited and the competition is fierce, and information about suitable schools is hard to obtain” (p. 74). Before choosing the school, parents have to keep in mind the cost, quality, distance and other attributes of the school and the capacities/abilities of parent in this regard are likely to vary according to their social class and other characteristics.

Parental Involvement in Children's Education

Recent changes in economy, culture and education “have created new contexts for parental action inside and outside schools... They do create new conditions and possibilities for winning or losing at the educational game for various middle class fractions.” (van Zanten, 2005: 156). Middle class and education are related because of its dependence on educational qualifications than other social classes (Ball, 2003). Middle class families are competitive (Beteille, 2001), anxious and strategic (Ball, 2004). They are “fearful, alert and strategic... They work on to realize their interests and ends” (ibid, 168). They have “enough capitals in the right currency, to ensure a high probability of success for their children. Their tactical deployment of these capitals more often than not enables them to gain access to and monopolize advantageous educational sites and trajectories” (Ball, 2003: 168).

According to Crozier et al. (2008) “Educational strategies are key to contemporary middle class social reproduction, which normally require ‘acting in self-interest’” (p. 261). They found that middle class “anxious about the quality of academic experience, employed various strategies to ensure success” (ibid. 268). In the process of reconversion, these strategies points toward the transformation of one form of capital into another (Bourdieu, 1998: 128). Middle class families strategize for children's entry into ‘good’ schools that they aspire for. With the changing landscape in education parents have to strategize for their children's education as entry into a reputed school has become very difficult (Drury, 1993). As Drury observes, family strategies are linked to the ‘mobility strategies’ for their children – for different avenues of status – more importantly jobs and marriage.

What parents know or do to choose a desired school? They try to choose the best school for their children. For this they collect information for better decision making about schooling. They use their social capital, referred by Bourdieu (1986), as resources linked to social networks, i.e., membership of a group that gives access to collective capital. Middle class families are highly strategic and plan for long-term goal (Ball, 2003). They make efforts and use their capacity to process information by using social networks and connections. They depend on ‘hot knowledge’ to select

reputable schools (Ball and Vincent, 1998). Vincent et al. (2012) argued that middle class families have a “range of strategies intended to enhance their children’s educational experiences, and were all ready to intervene at school if they thought necessary” (p. 339).

According to Chopra (2005), the social and cultural location is significant for understanding family’s assessment of education in general. Lareau (1987) argued that socio-economic factors such as parental education and income influence parental involvement. She found that parents having low incomes were not much involved in their children’s education compared to high income parents. Middle class parents “use their wealth to buy high quality education for their children to whatever level they want” and also “buy extra help for their wards (tutors, books, games, and trips) to increase their ability to compete” (Drury, 1993: 117). Middle class parents used full range of material and social resources, backdoor methods (bribery, gifts, *tikrambazi*, *jugarbaji*¹¹ and intercession of powerful people) and some other means to admit their children in high-cost convent schools (ibid). Chopra (2005) found that the Panjabi parents sent their daughter to English medium convent school in order to open pathways to foreign jobs for their sons.

Parents thus could be seen strategizing for their children’s education. Vincent et al. (2013) found that black middle class parents in the UK strategize and encourage and plan extra-curricular activities for their children to advance over others in a highly competitive education and job markets. Drury’s (1993) study of middle class families in Kanpur city shows that some parents sent their children to relatives and kin staying in cities and towns for further education. Middle class families are involved and support their children at home.

Parental involvement bears a significant value in the overall academic achievement and learning process of child’s educational journey. Support at home is an important strategy to ensure children’s progress in school. It strengthens home-school relationships, where parents fulfil the needs of the school in educating children. Support varies according to the various family backgrounds and the ways in which it

¹¹ Tikrambazi or jugarbaji means using an insider contacts or extra-ordinary methods for the benefit.

is promoted. Educational choices are based on differential access to cultural and material resources within the middle class (Power et al. 2003). Parents' time for their children at home is a vital family asset that may have important significances for children (Lareau, 1987). Spending time with children can have positive emotional benefits and that help in accessing social and intellectual development.

Middle class parents provide their children with structural resources and the direction/guidance and encouragement at home. Children are pushed and prepared by their parents since early childhood (Kaufman, 2005). Lareau (1987) in her study found that "the level of parental involvement is linked to the class position of the parents and to the social and cultural resources that social class yields" (p. 81). Parents with increased educational status and material resources participated more in their children's schooling, such as taking care of children, meeting with teachers, hiring tutors, etc. Lareau found that "middle class parents (at Prescott) saw education as a shared enterprise and scrutinized, monitored and supplemented the school experiences of their children... middle class parents had educational skills and occupational prestige that matched or surpassed that of teachers. They also had the necessary economic resources to manage the child care, transportation, and time required to meet with teachers, to hire tutors, and to become intensely involved in their children's schooling" (1987: 81).

Drury (1993) pointed out that middle-class children's success in school partly depends on help and encouragement at home mostly by the mother or elder siblings and cousins (in joint family), apart from paid tutor although the home environment was not 'ideal'. Fathers particularly of business families spent less time and not much involved in their children's education. Mothers in business families, even with little education were pro-education and more effective in discipline and encouragement than actually teaching them (Drury, 1993: 61). Thus, parental support and assistance varies within the class and social and cultural resources, which further help or hinder in children's progress in education. In case of transmission of cultural capital within the family, "its accumulation depends heavily on the family's usable time (particularly in the form of mother's free time)" (Bourdieu, 1986 b; cited from Ball 2003: 105).

Vincent (2010) argued that, apart from a common experience of all mothers, mothering practices, are imbued by class. She cited Hays (1996) who pointed out that “mothers in paid employment try to meet the different demands – the ‘cultural contradictions’ – of the workplace and home, but always prioritise the moral narrative of ‘doing the best for the children’” (cited from Vincent, 2010: 110). Mothering depends on “material and cultural circumstances in which women live their lives” (Miller, 2005; cited from Vincent 2010: 112). Professional mothers provide an environment in which the child’s physical, intellectual, and creative skills are fully and widely developed (Vincent 2010).

Reay (1998) found that middle-class mothers in their mothering practices were better able to utilize resources in order to practise as effective consumers and were more involved in the everyday education of their children (Coffey, 2001: 30-31). Ball in his study found that almost all the middle class mothers were involved in the process of choosing school or university and were the main gatherers of information and ‘hot’ knowledge. Mothers were involved in joint exercise with their daughters and less with sons in choosing processes and were “focused on achieving and assuring forms of educational success and distinction for their children, and the processes of sculpting aspirations and expectations” (Ball 2003: 105).

Lareau (2002) illustrates the way in which social class has an important role in family life. She found that middle class parents were involved in ‘concerted cultivation’ of their children and concentrate on developing their children’s special talents. For this “they enrol their children in numerous age specific, organized activities that dominate family life and create enormous labour, particularly for mothers. The parents view these activities as transmitting life skills to children” (2002: 748-749). Lareau’s concept of ‘concerted cultivation’ illustrates the process of transmission of cultural capital. Bourdieu argued that “cultural capital is not simply a matter of what is transmitted in families, it is a statement about an unequal system in which ‘what is transmitted’ in middle class families holds a correspondence with ‘what is valued in society’” (cited from Irwin, 2009: 1124). Vincent et al. (2008) found that “middle-class mothers in their friendship networks were much less likely to have local family

members and had instead, through antenatal groups and other child-focused activity, established networks of similar mothers” (cited from Vincent 2010: 115).

There are few Indian studies that have looked at the role of the mother in children’s education. Drury (1993) noted that highly educated women in middle-class families today give their children “greater educational advantages than ever before”, as “mothers are now well qualified to act as academic coaches and not simply as disciplinarians, at least up to the high school level. They are most apt to work regularly with the children in the first years of school, making sure that they learn the fundamentals of reading, writing and calculating. Though it can be a time-consuming task, few of these women work outside the home... Even for those who do work there is usually the advantage of being able to afford domestic help full or part time” (pp. 85-86).

Crozier et al. (2008) found that a mother “intensively monitored her children’s progress. She did not go out to work and always made sure that she was at home when the children returned from school, even though they were in their mid to late teens. They spent time together talking about the school days... it is indicative of the commitment parents in Norton had to their children’s success and also the children’s compliance in this” (p. 269). Zhang, Kao and Hannum (2007) found that “it is the mother who remain at home, taking care of family... A mother has a great deal of influence on her children’s schooling through the daily emotional support and normative discipline she provides” (p. 135). In this way, educated mothers play an important role in educating and guiding their children at home.

Thus, the journey of choice is not just simple and smooth. It involves various sorts of risks and constraints which relates to parental social capital or social class they belong to (Zeng and Xie, 2008). Middle class parents unconsciously work hard, to give often unconsciously to provide tools to their children to maintain their social class status. In this way they help to reproduce the social class structure. They act and practice in the reproduction of social advantage through education. They use and mobilise their economic, social and cultural resources to increase the advantages and to help their children to achieve middle class position. Bourdieu (1986) argued that through

investments of time and resources of various kinds, middle class parents give their children the cultural capital they need to succeed.

Summary

This chapter discussed the conceptual understanding of social class and middle class. Bourdieu saw class as cultural processes (Giddens, 2006), which is “realized and struggled over in daily lives of families and institutions, in consumption decisions as much as in the process of production... crisis and contradiction” (Ball, 2003: 7). Middle class(es) as a complex group is geographically and socially diverse and heterogenous. They work to gain and maintain recognition as middle class in their everyday practices (Dickey, 2013). Social class influences the decision-making processes of choice of school. Middle class families are strategic and self-interested profit maximisers (Ball, 2003). They are better endowed with resources than others in ensuring educational transmissions (Drury, 1993). Through choice of school, they reproduce social and cultural opportunities and advantages for their children.

The literature on social class guided the research question and in operationalizing class. Most of the research on parental involvement has examined working class families. Little research has attempted to show how middle class parents participate in choice processes in India. Therefore, we do not know much about the extent to which middle class parents carve out distinctive forms of parental involvement or whether they create distinctive ways of supporting their children’s education. Thus, the present study tried to fill these gaps by exploring in terms of middle class families’ aspirations, strategies and practices related to school choice processes and parental involvement at home and in school.

CHAPTER-III

Study Setting, Family Profiles and Their Social Class Categorization

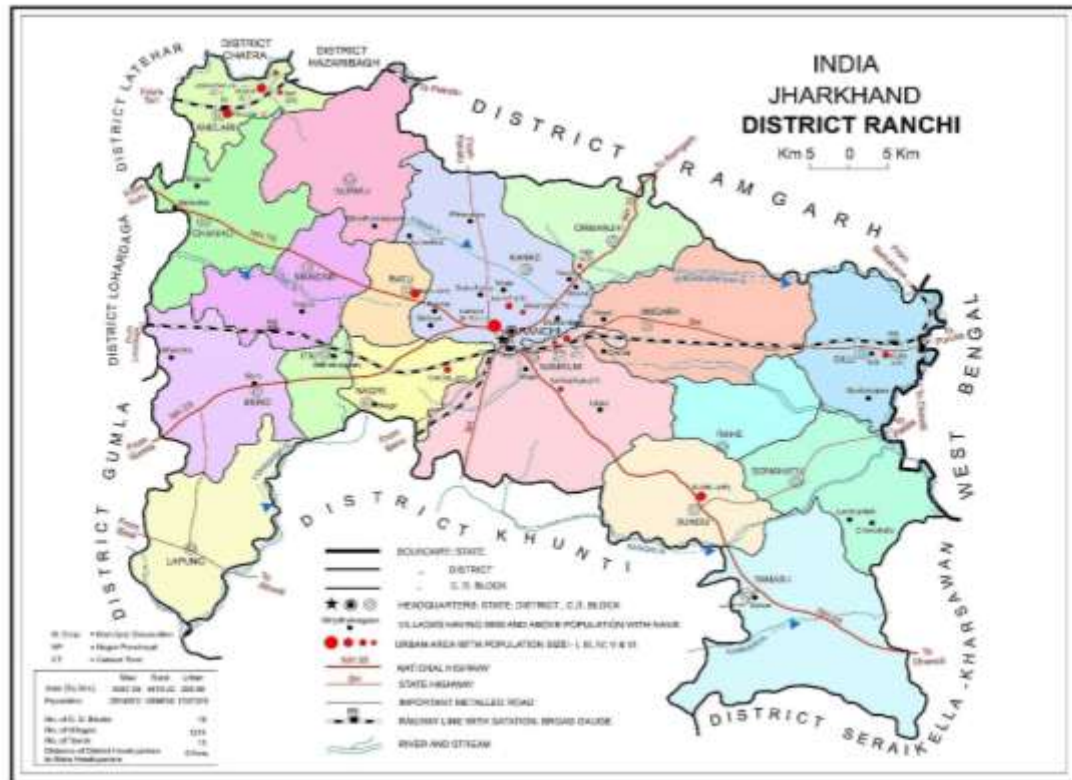
This chapter describes the localities in which the study is located and the socio-economic profiles of the sample families. It discusses caste, tribe, religious background, residential background, educational and occupational status, family income, etc. It provides the operationalization of the concept of social class in general and the categorization of the middle class(es) in order to understand their position in class hierarchy and distinction within a particular middle class urban set up of Ranchi city. The chapter is divided into three sections. The first section of the chapter describes the study settings and the respondents' residential status. The second section talks about the social background of the families. The third section describes operationalization and categorization of social class.

I. The Study Settings in Ranchi: Jai Prakash Nagar and New Nagar and their Inhabitants

Ranchi, the capital city of Jharkhand is located in the southern part of the Chota Nagpur plateau. It is popularly known as a "City of Water Falls". It is divided into two subdivisions, Ranchi and Bundu, which is further subdivided into 18 blocks and 305 panchayats. There are 14 blocks under Ranchi and 4 blocks under Bundu sub division. The "total area of Ranchi's Urban Agglomeration (UA) is 197.36 sq. km, which includes the Ranchi Municipal Corporation (RMC), Kanke Census Town (CT), Arsande CT, Ara CT, Bargarwa CT and Tundil CT. The total area of the RMC is 175.12 sq. km, with a population of 1.07 million and a population density of 6,129 persons/sq. km" (Mehta and Kumar, 2019: 5-6). According to the Census of India (2011), the overall population of Ranchi district was 2.91 million, an increase from 2.35 million in 2001 (ibid).

Ranchi has a "rich mineral resource and industrial base and is also fast developing into a major economic and commerce center. The national highways, NH-23, NH-31, NH-33 and NH-75; two railway junctions, Ranchi and Hatia; and the Birsa Munda

Airport connect the city to the rest of the country. Ranchi has also developed an elaborate ring road around the city”. (Mehta & Kumar, 2019: 3).



Map 3.1 Map of Ranchi (Source: <https://images.app.goo.gl/o4AHW1fiLUpbg92Q6>, downloaded on 14.06.22, at 11 pm)

Ranchi has some prestigious institutes like BIT Mesra, IIM, NIFFT, NUSRL, CIP, RIMS etc. It has the head offices of some crucial government organisations like HEC, Central Coalfields Limited (CCL) and Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL). In Jharkhand, Ranchi alone “has six industrial areas, they mainly specialize in the field of general engineering, foundry, electrical, steel casting, electronics, chemical, refractory, and ancillary” (Mehta and Kumar, 2019: 3). It is also known for quality sports infrastructure as there are plenty of international level stadiums for different kind of sports.

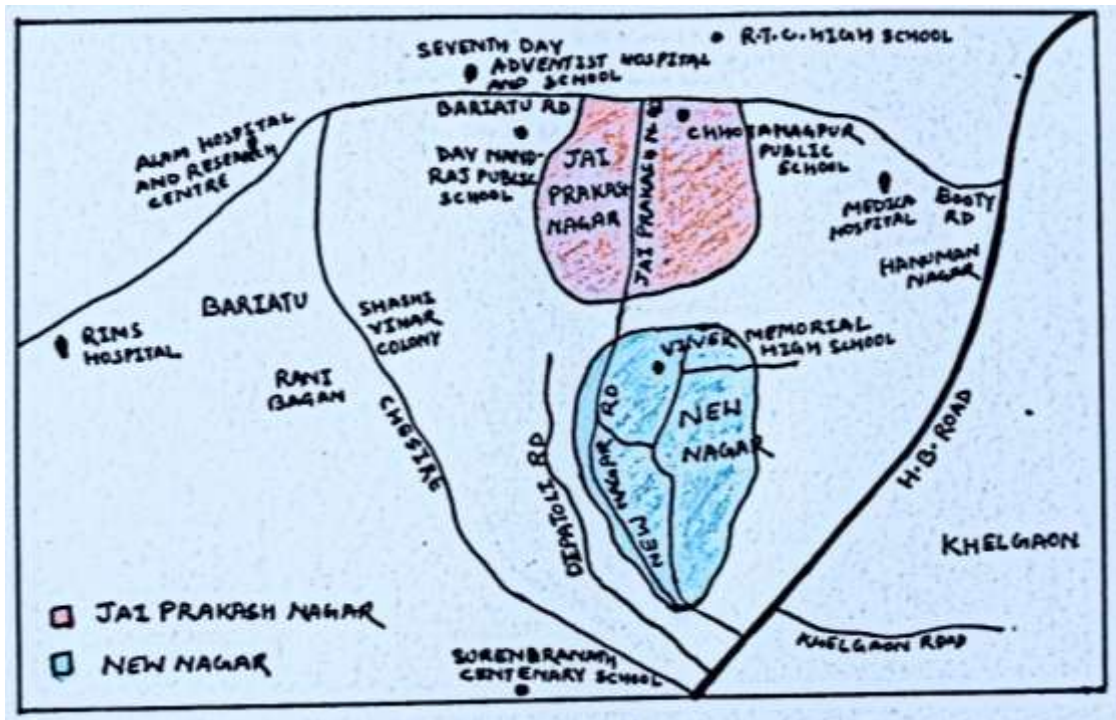
Before the year 2000, “this city was a district headquarters. It was almost a semi-urban area with relatively wider roads, medium population density, and reasonable expanse of greenery as well as reservoirs or dams of significance. It had medium

sized commercial centers as well as adequate transportation systems”. (Krishna and Mitra, 2007:1). Now a change is evident in the urban set up of Ranchi city. Urban growth has taken place more rapidly after the formation of Jharkhand as a separate state and Ranchi as its capital city in the year 2000 (Kumar et al., 2011). Industrial growth around the city has increased the population which has led to new urban agglomerations and to the growth of new census towns. The city’s rural periphery is urbanized as people from villages and other states moved in search of livelihoods and better living conditions (Ahmad and Goparaju, 2016). There is a “stark spatial inequality in Ranchi. Neighbourhoods with high Standard of Living (SOL) are mostly clustered in the central and north-western part of the city, while large peripheries are relatively impoverished. The urban poor constitute 30% of the population. (Mehta & Kumar, 2019:10).

Given its “rapid industrialization, Ranchi has spread outward along radical corridors such as Kanke Road (NH-23), Ratu Road (NH-75) and Dhurwa – HEC Road” (International Transport and Development Policy 2012; cited from Mehta and Kumar, 2019:10). The city has witnessed growth and development in north-east, north-west, west and south from the core of the city. During the year 2002, the northern side of the city has had more urban growth. The major growth has been concentrated along the national highway (NH-23), i.e., Hazaribagh highway road as it serves as a major transportation corridor (Kumar et al., 2011). There is an army training center in Deepatoli. In 2007, Khelgaon Sports Complex has been established at Hotwar (along NH-23) during the national games (Ahmad and Laxmi Goparaju, 2016: 12). National highway (NH-23) in north-east leads to Mesra which is an educational hub with various new technical education institutions such as BIT Mesra (Ahmad and Goparaju, 2016).

The selected localities for the study are Jai Prakash Nagar and New Nagar (map 3.2), situated in the north-east part of Ranchi. These are newly developed residential areas in the inner circle of the city. The residential development in Jai Prakash Nagar came into existence during the year 2000. There is no empty space in this locality. While New Nagar came into existence later during the year 2005 and is still developing. Increase in built up area has been at the cost of agricultural and open fields. Some

people had bought land earlier but did not build houses as they lived in some other places in Jharkhand or out of the state. But after the creation of Ranchi as a capital city, many people have migrated from villages, towns, and other states mainly from Bihar for jobs, education and livelihoods and built up their own houses.



Map 3.2: Map of the Study Setting, Ranchi (based on Google map)

Jai Prakash Nagar and New Nagar are located near Booti - Bariatu road which is connected to national highway (NH-23), i.e., Hazaribagh highway road. Jai Prakash Nagar is near the main road while New Nagar is extended part of it but little far away from the main road. On its eastern side, there is Army War cemetery, Army Cantonment near Booty More, Khelgaon (Sports Complex) and Shivaji Chowk. There is firing range in the northern side of Booti-Bariatu road. There are number of small and big shops, internet cafes, mobile shops, automobile showrooms (Royal Enfield, Sai TVS, NEXA Premsons Motor Car Dealer, MRF Tyre Showroom), ATMs, restaurants, hospitals and doctor's clinics, schools and colleges, shopping marts (Hi5 Mart, Vishal Mega Mart), NABARD and other banks, and residential complexes (having 3 to 7 floors) in the main Booti - Bariatu road. Earlier there was only one

private hospital, i.e., Metas of Seventh Day Adventist College/Hospital but now several new hospitals have come up in this area such as Life Care Hospital, Bhawani Children Hospital, Ranchi Nursing Hospital, Balpan Children Hospital, Mahavir



Plate 3.1 Jai Prakash Nagar Locality



Plate 3.2 New Nagar Locality

Medica Hospital, Berlin Diagnostics and Day Care, Synergy Global Hospital (opening soon), Kidney Clinic and some more coming up. Small grocery and other shops and a big super market (Ayang) have opened up in the year 2019 in the locality of Jaiprakash Nagar and Sagar Orthopedic Hospital and other shops in New Nagar.

These localities are growing up as residential areas of Ranchi city with prospering middle classes. They are located at a distance of 7 kilometers from the railway station and 14 kilometers from the Ranchi airport. The main center of the city is over populated and there is no space to have residential areas. That is why the middle class families are making this space as their preferred destination for living. Markets, hospital facilities, various commercial establishments, residential apartments, educational facilities, etc. in this area have also attracted the middle class families. In terms of educational facilities, some schools are located within 1 to 2 kilometers distance in the main Booti - Bariatu road. There is a play school (Small Wonder) in Jai Prakash Nagar. There is a low cost¹² private secondary school and a government primary school within ½ kilometer in Bandh Gadi locality near New Nagar and a government secondary school in Booti More.

These two selected localities are of mixed type, mainly resided by the middle classes. What is distinct here is that a majority of the inhabitants of Jai Prakash Nagar belong to higher socio-economic backgrounds, mostly professionals such as judges, doctors, lawyers, engineers, administrative officers, lecturers, bank officials, businessmen and so on. While inhabitants of New Nagar are mostly from lower middle and some from middle class backgrounds. They are engaged in various occupations in formal and informal sectors. Middle class(es) have spacious, neat and clean residential neighbourhoods with self-owned houses having modern designs (with the possibility of adding of one or two extra floors). Jai Prakash Nagar is fully developed while New Nagar is still developing. Some houses are recently built and developed. The locality is quiet with heterogenous residential spaces. The distinction is seen in the size and design of the houses. Middle class families have big houses with three to four rooms, where some rooms are given on rent to tenants, while lower middle class families

¹² Low-cost private schools are unrecognized private schools that charge low fee. These schools are used by the poor fee-paying population in the locality.

have small houses with two to three rooms. There is however lack of open spaces such as playgrounds and parks. The West and South sides of New Nagar is resided by the army personnel, associate professionals and government officials, etc., while most of the petty businessmen families reside in the East and North sides.

A change is evident within the five years span (2014-2019), the period between the researcher's first visit to the area till the last. It is found that the left-over lands and open spaces in New Nagar have been sold out and some houses and housing complexes of four to seven floors have been built up between adjoining houses and buildings. Earlier there were no pucca roads in the colonies during the year 2014 but by the year 2019 concrete roads, sewer systems, drinking water connections, and street lights, etc. have been provided by the Municipal Corporation of Ranchi. Many shops have come up near the main road and within the localities.



Plate 3.3 Apartment is constructed during 2018-19 in Jai Prakash Nagar locality

A few middle class families in Jai Prakash Nagar live in residential apartments where neighbourhoods are formed on the basis of their respective social class backgrounds. These apartments or housing complexes (with two to three bedrooms) have three to seven storey buildings. These buildings were built up seven to eight years back

by the real estate developers, who sold the units to individuals before or after their completion.¹³ These “residential apartments, which are occupied by the ‘educated’ middle class population, are seen as offering more suitable environment for a homely, quiet and restrained life, focused on education and white-collar work” (Wessel, 2001: 79). These recently developed housing estates form a middle class locality and “middle class culture: people come together here in new social and cultural configurations, based on socio-economic position” (ibid. 75).

It is noted that some families had bought the land in low prices before the separation of the Jharkhand state from Bihar. After the separation in the year 2000, the price of land has risen and those families who could afford to buy have bought the land. A large part of the middle classes lives in their own built-up houses. A majority of the families (25.8%) had moved to Ranchi city 4-5 years back. About 12.5% families have completed 15-21 years of stay, i.e., they are staying in this locality since the year 2000.¹⁴ The rest (18.3%) are staying here beyond 38 years. They are born and brought up here and are permanent residents of Ranchi. Respondents perceived the localities as secure and ‘good’.

A large number of families who reside in these localities are migrants from six to seven states such as Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Odisha, Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka, besides those from the interior villages of Jharkhand. Most of the families had their ancestral home, land or property in the villages. Families staying in these localities are still in touch with their relatives in the villages and visit their ancestral homes whenever they get time or during some festivals or ceremonies. Among these families, some have their native place in Ranchi city. These localities are a mixed kind of settlements. A majority (54.7%) of the families are from Bihar and these have their native place in the villages. Around 39.2% are from the villages and cities of Jharkhand. A few families (6.7%) from other states reside in Ranchi due to their transferrable jobs. One of the respondents who is an Inspector in Central Excise and

¹³ Officially, developers who build and sell these houses are bound by law to build houses that members of lower-income groups can afford. However, there are ways to bypass these laws and in reality, much of the housing ends up in the hand of people with higher incomes.

¹⁴ After the existence of Jharkhand as a separate state in 2000.

Customs reported: *“Earlier I was posted in Patna. Five years back I got transferred to Ranchi. Now I am staying in a rented house in this locality”*. The main language spoken at home or other places by these residents is Hindi (74.2%). A few families use their own native dialects at home such as Bhojpuri, Maghi, Sadri, Kurukh, Urdu, or Bangla/Odiya/Tamil.

The respondents cited various reasons for migrating to Ranchi. The most cited reason is job or work that reveals the requirement of job or some kind of businesses for livelihood that forced male members of the families to leave their native place and settle down in Ranchi city. Most of the families (58.3%) are the first-generation migrants from Bihar and the villages of Jharkhand. There are some second-generation families (18.3%) who stay in Ranchi by birth as their fathers had migrated to Ranchi for jobs and settled here. Some, especially the Scheduled Tribes, have the domicile of the villages of Jharkhand. A few families (4.2%) have built their own house in this locality. For instance, a middle class mother from New Nagar said, *“Earlier we stayed in a rented house in Morabadi. Now we have constructed our own house in this locality and moved here to stay”*. Due to social environment and lower quality schooling in the villages, a few families (7.5%) had migrated to Ranchi for proper education of their children. A middle class father who works as a Senior Research Assistant in Sericulture Industry shifted to Ranchi for better schooling of his children for better future prospects. He stated:

“Earlier I worked in Lohardaga. I was not satisfied with the education provided in the school of Lohardaga where my children studied. I wanted my children to study in a better school and that was possible only after coming to Ranchi. Here, schools are good compared to Lohardaga. So, I took transfer to Ranchi and admitted them in good schools. Here I have constructed my house too”.

One of the middle class respondents reasoned that he had moved from Namkum to the New Nagar due to his children’s schooling. He said:

“Earlier I stayed in Namkum but moved here due to my child’s schooling. My son gave tests in many schools and got selected in Surendranath Centenary School. So, I had shifted here to this locality as the school is far away from Namkum”.

Not only middle but lower middle class families (9.3%) also attributed child’s better schooling for their migration from village to Ranchi city. They were not satisfied with poor or lack of teaching at village schools and migrated to Ranchi city for proper schooling of their children. One of the lower middle class mothers, who is a graduate, justifies her stay in the city by saying:

“When children grew up a little then there was problem for their schooling at my in-laws’ place in the village in Jahanabad, Bihar. People do not send their children to school at an early age. So, I came to Ranchi for my children’s schooling. Here children are sent to school at an early age of 2 ½ years”.

Those families for whom children’s education is important and who know that it would only be achieved by staying in the city had migrated to Ranchi. One of the respondents migrated due to flood and economic problems in his village. Some families (4.2%) have their native or ancestral home in Ranchi. Thus, a majority of the respondents hailing from rural background have adequate experiences of urban living, though they are related, in one way or the other, to their relatives staying in the villages and other towns. They visit their villages for having strong ties with them.

House is one of the essential necessities of all human beings and having a house is also a dream of the middle classes. It is seen that many residents from Bihar have built their own houses. The areas surveyed have mostly private accommodations. It is observed that some apartments are coming up in between the private residential areas that are already occupied. Overall, 54.2% of the families have their own houses with different sizes and modern designs while the remaining 45.8% of the families stay in the rented houses. About 57.8% of these belong to the middle and 52.0% to the lower middle class families.

Most of the families who have their own houses have 2 to 4 rooms in their houses. About 92.3% have one storey houses while the remaining 7.7% families from middle class have two storey houses with 6 to 8 rooms. Some families stay in the rented accommodation in the apartment buildings. Families pay rent according to the number and size of the rooms and conditions of the houses. The rent amount varies between rupees 1,000 and rupees 12,000 per month.

It is found that 50% of the families in the lower middle class pay rupees 1,000 to rupees 2000 per month for one or two rooms while there is no middle class family live in this range. Around 42.1% of the middle class families pay rent between the range of rupees 6,000 to rupees 10,000 compared to the lower middle class families who are absent in this range. The following section gives the details of the socio-economic background of these families.

II. The Family Profile

Social Background

This section discusses the socio-economic profile of the sample families. It presents the social composition, religious backgrounds, types and sizes of the families, educational levels and occupations of the families. It is seen that the middle class fractions in Jai Prakash Nagar and New Nagar localities are no longer limited to upper caste Hindus but comprised of different castes or sub-castes, tribes and religions. The fact is that these localities are newly developed and hence, caste based residential segregation is not evident. Hindu families belong to different castes and sub-castes. General castes include Brahmin, Rajput, Kayastha and Marwari. OBCs include sub-castes such as Bhumihar, Kurmi/Mahto, Yadav, Kuswaha, Vaishya/Baniya, Teli, etc. Scheduled Castes include castes such as Chamar/Mochi, Bunkar, Dhobi, and Scheduled Tribes living in Jai Prakash Nagar and New Nagar are from Oraon, Santhal, Munda and Kharwar tribes.

The table 3.1 shows the social composition of families according to the localities. It is evident that a majority of the sample families (44.2%) belong to general castes,

Table 3.1: Social Composition of Families according to Locality

Residential Location	Social Groups				Total
	General	OBCs	SCs	STs	
Jai Prakash Nagar	28 (56%)	13 (26%)	3 (6%)	6 (12%)	50 (100.0%)
New Nagar	25 (35.7%)	26 (37.1%)	6 (8.6%)	13 (18.6%)	70 (100.0%)
Total	53 (44.2%)	39 (32.5%)	9 (7.5%)	19 (15.8%)	120 (100.0%)

Source: Field Data

followed by OBCs (32.5%) and STs (15.8%). These are mixed kind of localities. General caste families (56%) are mostly from Jai Prakash Nagar while OBCs (37.1%) are from New Nagar locality. Concentration of STs (18.6%) is more in New Nagar. The percentage of SCs is very low (7.5%) in both the localities.

Table 3.2 shows that a majority of the families, i.e., 85% belong to Hindu religion and 15% families are Christians. Percentage of Christians (18.6%) are more in New Nagar.

Table 3.2: Distribution of Families by Religion

Residential Location	Religion		Total
	Hindu	Christian	
Jai Prakash Nagar	45 (90%)	5 (10%)	50 (100.0%)
New Nagar	57 (81.4%)	13 (18.6%)	70 (100.0%)
Total	102 (85%)	18 (15%)	120 (100%)

Source: Field Data

All the Scheduled Tribe families except one are of Christian religion. These families are of different types and sizes.

Family: Size and Type

Respondents are from both nuclear and joint families. Nuclear family consists of husband and wife living together with or without unmarried children. Joint family consists of nuclear family and in-laws or other siblings and relatives. A majority of the families belonged to the nuclear families. Among 120 families, around 69.2% families are nuclear and 30.8% families are joint families. Within middle classes,

about 39.8% middle class families are nuclear compared to 60.2% lower middle and 32.4% middle class families are joint compared to 67.6% lower middle class families.

The size of the family/household¹⁵ includes the number of adults and children in the family. The household composition or the average size of the families varies from 3 to 7 and above. There are few households who have more than 8 family members. It is seen that 43% of the nuclear families have 3 to 4 members within the family which include mother, father and children. A few nuclear families (35.8%) have 5 to 6 members while 12.5% of the families have 7 or more than 7 members in their households. Joint families include mother, father, children and grandparents or respondent's brothers and sisters. There are 8.7% lower middle class who have more than 7 members in their households. As per the number of children, 37.5% families have one child, followed by 44.2% families with two children and 18.3% families with three to four children. A majority of the middle and lower middle class families have two children. The next section discusses the educational and socio-economic profiles of the residents of these localities in order to understand their class locations and involvement in schooling of their children.

Educational Level of Parents

Education is a key site that offers opportunities for social mobility and reproduction. Education is important for the quality of life too. The level of education influences parents' "knowledge, beliefs, values, and goals about child rearing, so that a variety of parental behaviours are indirectly related to children's school performance... high level of education may enhance parents' facility at becoming involved in their children's education and also enable parents to acquire and model social skills and problem-solving strategies conducive to children's school success" (Kainuwa and Yusuf, 2013: 1). Taiwo (1993) argued that parental educational background influences the academic performance of students because educated parents "would be in a good position to be second teachers to the child; and even guide and counsel the child on the best way to perform in education and provide the necessary materials

¹⁵ Family and Household is used interchangeably throughout the text.

needed by the child” (cited from Kainuwa and Yusuf, 2013: 1). Educated parents encourage and support their children in academics and provide decent and good environment for academic work.

It is a known fact that education is one of the most significant escalators for socio-economic development of any person. The more education one has, the higher his/her income earning potential. It is a major element of occupational achievements of any individual.

Table 3.3: Highest Educational Qualification of Fathers

Educational Level of Fathers	Residential Location		
	J.P. Nagar	New Nagar	Total
PG & above	8 (53.3%)	7 (46.7%)	15 (100.0%)
Graduation & Professional Degree	35 (46.7%)	40 (53.3%)	75 (100.0%)
Higher Sec. & Diploma	6 (30%)	14 (70%)	20 (100.0%)
Secondary	1 (10%)	9 (90%)	10 (100.0%)
Total	50 (41.7%)	70 (58.3%)	120 (100%)

Source: Field Data

That is why it is important to look at educational background of parents. The father’s educational background given in the table 3.3 shows that a majority of the fathers are highly educated and have graduation degrees. It is clear from the data that some fathers from J.P. Nagar and New Nagar possess post graduate degrees. However, percentage of secondary educated fathers are found more in New Nagar, i.e., 90% compared to Jai Prakash Nagar, i.e., 10%. Fathers who have higher levels of educational attainment are mostly of those families from small cities and towns and who had better financial and educational environment in their families. These fathers had better access to higher education and vocational/professional courses. Fathers having higher secondary or secondary education are those born and brought up in villages and due to financial and other problems they were unable to achieve higher level of education. There are none at the elementary level. Thus, the differences in fathers’ education level are due to the differences in urban and rural origins and other reasons.

Table 3.4: Highest Educational Qualification of Mothers

Educational Level of Mothers	Residential Location		
	J.P. Nagar	New Nagar	Total
PG & above	8 (50%)	8 (50%)	16 (100.0%)
Graduation & Professional Degree	22 (55%)	18 (45%)	40 (100.0%)
Higher Sec. & Diploma	10 (27.8%)	26 (72.2%)	36 (100.0%)
Secondary	8 (36.4%)	14 (63.6%)	22 (100.0%)
Elementary	2 (33.3%)	4 (66.7%)	6 (100.0%)
Total	50 (41.7%)	70 (58.3%)	120 (100%)

Source: Field Data

On the other hand, it is evident from the table 3.4 that mothers of J.P. Nagar are highly qualified than the mothers of New Nagar. Majority of the mothers are graduates (55%) or post graduates (50%) in J.P. Nagar compared to mothers of New Nagar. More mothers of J.P. Nagar had attended college or university. These mothers are those who were born and brought up in small towns or cities. Their parents gave importance to education and they achieved higher levels of education. While in New Nagar, a majority of the mothers have higher secondary qualifications (72.2%) or secondary qualifications (63.6%). Percentage of elementary educated mothers is low in J.P. Nagar (33.3%) compared to mothers of New Nagar (66.7%).

The reason behind being elementary educated is shared by some mothers. They mentioned that they stayed in villages and their parents did not pay attention to their schooling. They were unable to access schools in the villages as these were far away and their parents did not allow them to go so far. Not only this but also due to societal beliefs, their schooling and education were not given importance. Mothers reported that early marriage is an important factor behind women's low literacy. They recalled that their parents' lack of awareness about the value of education hindered their education. It is thus noted that the educational level of parents differs somewhat in these two localities.

Occupation of Parents

The occupational position depends on the educational qualifications of the person in the job market that place him/her higher, middle or lower in the occupational ladder.

Those who have higher educational qualifications got better occupations than those with lower educational qualifications. The occupation contributes significantly and positively to children's education.

Due to increase in new service class jobs and decline in manual jobs, there is a change in class structure, i.e., the middle class expanded and working class contracted (Vaid, 2005). According to Tilak (1989), in the occupational hierarchy, white-collar workers figure at the top, with blue-collar skilled workers coming next, followed by unskilled labour and farm workers (p. 71). Here also, we see the middle class respondents are fragmented according to the career/occupations they pursue. They are engaged in various kinds of white collar (upper and lower) and administrative/professional jobs, businesses and so on.

Indian National Classification of Occupation (NCO), 2015 is used in this study for classification. Occupations are defined and categorized on the basis of codes of various occupations listed in the sample in NCO, 2015. The NCO is based upon a classification scheme adopted by the International Labour Organization (ILO), suitably modified for Indian conditions. It divides workers into 10 categories such as: 1) legislators, senior officials and managers; 2) professionals; 3) technicians and associate professionals; 4) clerks and support workers; 5) service workers and shop and market sales workers; 6) skilled agricultural and fishery workers; 7) craft and related trade workers; 8) plant and machine operators and assemblers; 9) elementary occupations (e.g., street vendors, sweepers, loaders, etc.); and 10) workers not classified by occupations. This classification or scheme has focused more on the nature or similarity of tasks performed rather than the formal education in determining the occupational levels of skill. In the Indian context, the skills can be acquired through informal training and experiences other than formal education. In this way NCO organized workers accordingly into broad skill or status groups, for e.g., technicians and associate professionals occupy a status higher than the clerks and support workers, who themselves occupy a status higher than the unskilled labourers. Thus, based on the occupation classification of NCO, the occupation of the male sample (fathers) of this study has been divided and grouped into a five-fold class schema for the purpose of the present study. Arranged in descending order of hierarchy and prestige, these are:

1. Senior Government Officials and Managers: Administrative Officer, Professional Manager, Business Employer.
2. Professionals: Engineer, Doctor, Advocate, Lecturer, Judicial Services, Bank Managers, Chartered Accountants, Accountants, Senior Research Assistant.
3. Associate Professionals: Class II Government Officers, Inspector, Private School Teacher, Account Officer (Govt./Pvt.), Subedar, Social Worker, Graphics Designer, Audio-Video Director, Interior Designer.
4. Clerks and Support Workers: Class III employees (Govt./Pvt.), Clerks (Govt./Pvt.), Assistant, Private Secretary, Telephone Operator, Constable, Havildar, Nayak, Lab Technician, Computer Operator, Court Writer, Receptionist.
5. Proprietors, Shops and Market Sales Workers: Store Keeper, Food Supplier, Retail Dealer, Property Dealer, Contractor, Commercial Sales Representative, Shopkeepers.

Table: 3.5: Occupation of Fathers

Occupation of Fathers	JP Nagar	New Nagar	Total
Senior Govt. Officials & Managers	3 (100.0%)	0 (0.0%)	3 (100.0%)
Professionals	19 (90.5%)	2 (9.5%)	21 (100.0%)
Associate Professionals	9 (39.1%)	14 (60.9%)	23 (100.0%)
Clerks & Support Workers	10 (31.3%)	22 (68.8%)	32 (100.0%)
Shops/Proprietors/Market Sales Workers	9 (22%)	32 (78.0%)	41 (100.0%)
Total	50 (41.7%)	70 (58.3%)	120 (100%)

Source: Field Data

Table 3.5 indicates a broad picture of the occupational pattern of the heads (fathers) of the households who are the main breadwinners. There is a considerable variation in the occupational structure among the surveyed families. The table shows the occupational status of fathers as majority of the mothers are homemakers. They are positioned in five occupational categories. The above occupations in which these fathers are employed are either in government or private sectors. Those who are engaged in government sectors, have job security, regular salary and other benefits but those who

are in private sectors or in self-employed petty businesses have no job security with irregular salary or income.

The table 3.5 clearly shows that a majority of the fathers of J. P. Nagar are positioned in the upper top in the occupational hierarchy than the fathers of New Nagar who are positioned at the bottom in these five occupational categories. Occupation wise, fathers who are at the top position in the occupational ladder as senior government officer, and professional managers and those who are professionals are from J. P. Nagar compared to fathers of New Nagar whose percentage is nil or very low (9.5%) in these occupational positions respectively. Fathers are engaged in professional occupations such as engineers, doctors, advocate, lecturers, judicial, bank managers, chartered accountant, accountant, senior research assistant. These fathers are placed in such positions in the job market due to their levels of education and skills needed in the job market. They differ hierarchically with each other on the basis of their positions and the kind of work they perform in the job market.

However, in New Nagar, a majority of the fathers are engaged in proprietorship and petty businesses or work as sales workers and as clerks and support workers compared to fathers of J.P. Nagar in such positions in the occupational hierarchy. They work as shopkeepers of grocery, mobile, clothes, medicine, cosmetics, furniture and tour and travels, contractors, dealers, etc. Among these, many fathers had struggled through education to gain secure jobs in the public or private sectors but failed and are in self- owned petty businesses and so on. To get a better job, good quality higher education and technical skills are essential. It is found that some of these fathers possess secondary or higher secondary education and diploma and not more than that and thus, are engaged in petty businesses. Fathers are engaged in clerical jobs too as class III employees, clerks, assistants, private secretary, telephone and computer operators, lab technicians, constables, receptionists and court writer. Around 60.9% fathers in New Nagar and 39.1% fathers in J.P. Nagar are engaged as associate professionals, as class II government officers, inspectors, private school teachers, account officers, graphic designers, audio-video director and interior designer.

On the other hand, a majority of the mothers are home makers. There are around 14.2% mothers who are involved in some kind of occupations such as, associate professionals (9.2%), clerk & support workers (0.8%), shops and proprietors, market/sales (4.2%). The incomes of fathers depend on their positions in the occupational hierarchy.

Income and Ownership of Life Style Symbols

The middle class families can be seen as belonging to a particular economic category. The income depends on the position of the respondents (fathers) in the occupational categories. Those who are placed high in the occupational ladder have higher income compared to those at the lower. The incomes of fathers range between rupees 6,000 to rupees 65,000 and above per month. Disparity in income is visible due to the type of jobs, whether government or private and also due to the location of fathers in the job markets. Some of the individuals are not earning much income (less than rupees 10,000) due to working in private jobs which pay very less. Middle and lower middle classes are formed of two main groups of occupations, i.e., (i) high salariat services and businesses and (ii) lower salariat and petty businesses.

Table 3.6: Income of Fathers

Income Category	Income Range (Rs.)	J.P. Nagar	New Nagar	Total
High	65,001 – above	1 (100.0%)	-	1 (100.0%)
	55,001 – 65,000	6 (100.0%)	-	6 (100.0%)
Middle	45,001 – 55,000	17 (94.4%)	1 (5.6%)	18 (100.0%)
	35,001 – 45,000	6 (85.7%)	1 (14.3%)	7 (100.0%)
	25,001 – 35,000	6 (46.2%)	7 (53.8%)	13 (100.0%)
Low	15,001 – 25,000	5 (20.8%)	19 (79.2%)	24 (100.0%)
	6,001 – 15,000	9 (17.7%)	42 (82.3%)	51 (100.0%)
Total		50 (41.7%)	70 (58.3%)	120 (100.0%)

Source: Field Data

The income range of fathers is between rupees 6,000 to 65,001 and above. These income ranges are divided into three income categories, i.e., high, medium and low as shown in table 3.6. It is clear from the table that there are no fathers in the high-income category in New Nagar. Fathers in the middle income category are more in Jai

Prakash Nagar compared to fathers of New Nagar. Most of the fathers in New Nagar falls in the low-income category.

Along with economic and employment status, cultural factors such as life style and consumption patterns are also important to evaluate class location. Maitra (2009) argued that ‘Ownership of durable goods’ is a signifier of the existence of the middle class. According to Bourdieu (1984), the status situation has to do with the specific

Table 3.7: Ownership of Household Consumer Goods by Families

Consumer Goods		Middle N=45 (%)	Lower Middle N=75 (%)	Total N=120 (%)
TV	Yes	45 (100.0%)	75 (100.0%)	120 (100.0%)
	No	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Mobile	Yes	45 (100.0%)	74 (98.7%)	119 (99.2%)
	No	0 (0.0%)	1 (1.3%)	1 (0.8%)
Computer	Yes	31 (68.9%)	31 (41.3%)	62 (51.7%)
	No	14 (31.1%)	44 (58.7%)	58 (48.3%)
Refrigerator	Yes	43 (95.6%)	55 (73.3%)	98 (81.7%)
	No	2 (4.4%)	20 (26.7%)	22 (18.3%)
Washing Machine	Yes	28 (62.2%)	22 (29.3%)	50 (41.7%)
	No	17 (37.8%)	53 (70.7%)	70 (58.3%)
Car	Yes	24 (53.3%)	13 (17.3%)	37 (30.8%)
	No	21 (46.7%)	62 (82.7%)	83 (69.2%)
Scooter	Yes	7 (15.6%)	19 (25.3%)	26 (21.7%)
	No	38 (84.4%)	56 (74.7%)	94 (78.3%)
Bike	Yes	19 (42.2%)	39 (52.0%)	58 (48.3%)
	No	26 (57.8%)	36 (48.0%)	62 (51.7%)
Cycle	Yes	2 (4.4%)	7 (9.3%)	9 (7.5%)
	No	43 (95.6%)	68 (90.7%)	111 (92.5%)

Source: Field Data

choices and life style selections which individuals and groups make in “surrounding themselves with furniture, cars, books, electronics, art, perfume, clothes and houses” (cited from Morrison, 2006: 305). Wessel (2001) in her study on Baroda city found that a sizeable middle class is employed in profession, managerial profession in public and private undertakings and education. Consumer goods such as “colour television

sets, refrigerators, telephones, scooters, mopeds and sofa-sets are now not novel luxuries; these are more and more becoming part of the normal middle-class home” (Wessel, 2001: 75). According to Jodhka and Prakash (2016), middle class person as an economic agent is a consumer par excellence. It is the “middle class that sustains the modern bourgeois economy through its purchasing power. Given its location, middle class is presumed to be obsessed with consumption. Consumption for the middle class is not simply an act of economic rationality but also a source of identity” (Jodhka and Prakash, 2016: 2).

Availability of consumer goods in the households are taken into account to get an idea of their engagement in status consumption because “occupational titles alone are not sufficient indicators of an individual’s wealth and overall assets” (Giddens, 2006: 307). It is seen that “conspicuous consumption has become an increasingly important determinant of status” (Scrase and Scrase, 2009: 11). Ownership of the household consumer goods by the middle class families illustrates the standard of living of the households. It displays the consumption pattern of the families. As Scrase and Scrase (2009) viewed, “for the middle classes, consumption - the acquisition of material objects and cultural capital - is one of the key aspects that defines their social standing, constitutive of their rank on the hierarchy or order and privilege” (p. 41). As Liechty (2003: 1) also argued, “... goods become a kind of social currency that is transacted in middle-class life” (cited from Scrase and Scrase, 2009: 41).

In order to have a better understanding of the standard of living, it is necessary to analyze the availability of basic household assets or durable goods. Therefore, the household variations in having certain assets have been considered. For this, nine household consumer goods have been considered. They are television set, computer, mobile phone, refrigerator, washing machine, car, scooter, bike, and cycle. Strong increase in consumption as a common experience could be seen in these families. They have more than the basic necessities of life such as TV, computer, mobile, refrigerator, washing machine, cycle, scooter, bike and car. From the table 3.7, it is evident that recreational and household goods appear to be more commonly owned by middle class fractions than transport goods. Of these, television sets, mobile phones and refrigerators are the most popular among these classes. Mobile or cell phone is

most common item in 99.2% households. Dickey (2013) argued that “Of all the wide range of material goods that signify middle class standing and its gradations” - including clothing, gold, housing, etc. the display of the mobile phones “signify taste and technological literacy, social networks and relative wealth (and thus cultural, social and economic capital)” (Dickey, 2013: 230).

Krishna and Bajpai (2015) defined the new middle class in India on the basis of ownership of transportation assets. They defined the lower middle class as those whose best available means of transportation is a motorcycle or a motor scooter. The upper middle class consists of those who possess a car (Krishnan, 2017). Some of the lower middle class families share the similar pattern of economic consumption. Bourdieu claimed that “life style choices are an important indicator of class. We see stratification within classes and between classes due to differences in consumption and life style” (Giddens, 2006: 322).

Consumption is a social act. Bourdieu (1984) in his *Distinction* viewed that the things that one buys and the ways in which one displays or deploys them are an important means of self-consciously presenting one’s aspirations and social status. Consumer goods are powerful means of communicating one’s social position in society. Consumption has become central to the experience of modern life. Consumer items or “goods that were previously out of the reach of local people have come to be seen as requirements to live a satisfying life” (Wessel, 2004: pp. 96 - 97). Consumption practices vary from family to family. It is observed that much money is invested by the middle-class families in home decorations, furniture, other appliances, food, clothing, etc. compared to lower middle class. Middle class maintain status by their consumption practices. Standards of living of the middle class differ from that of lower middle class in terms of expenditure on goods, clothing, life style, patterns of thought and other practices. Certain kind of consumption distinct families from each other as it makes one ‘visible’ in society. Some middle class families have certain types of expensive objects of certain brand to show that they are modern. While, few lower middle class families at the lower end have consumption patterns close to the poor. They have to manage in some way to meet the needs of households. Along with these, middle class families’ speeches, behaviours, attitudes, dresses, bodily

expressions, life styles, taste, practices, and so on make them distinct from lower middle class families.

Further, it is found that a majority of the middle class families' income is spent on housing. Expenditure on housing is "ostentatious consumption, as well as generally sound investment" (Fuller and Narsimhan, 2007: 134). Some of these middle class families owned property in the form of land or house. Gurchain Singh (1985) viewed that the middle and the top levels of white collar category own property while the lower levels does not. And the property that they have is of unproductive nature. Further he argued that, "They own a house in an urban area, a chunk of land, or a car and so on. This kind of property, no doubt, supplements the incomes of white collar at various levels, yet the purpose remains to be that of consumption only.... White collar workers invest their life's savings in secure and sure investments, like laying a house, as a chunk of land or safety deposits in insurance companies and banks...what so ever property white collar owns, at any level, generally applied and used in such a fashion, that it may help him maintaining his standard of particular living style. Or this property acts as a kind of security for his next generation, and a safeguard to prevent downward mobility" (Singh, 1985: 75). With the expanding economy, ownership of house is becoming a reality for a relatively larger proportion of the population (van Wessel, 2001). Having house or land as property is the key status symbols of middle class identity. The following section discusses the ways in which the middle class is categorized for the study.

III. Operationalization and Categorization of Social Class

This section discusses the operationalization and construction of the concept of social class. It talks about the criteria adopted to operationalize and categorize social class, i.e., middle class fractions. Though defining social class is problematic, however, it is tried to define it. There seems to be no consensus on the classificatory schemes in the literature on class and different sociologists have used different class schemes for their purposes, even when they have examined the same country (Erikson & Goldthrope 1992; cited from Motiram and Ashish Singh, 2012: 60).

There are multiple ways to conceptualize class and this conceptualization influences the results of the study. In order to measure social class, various studies have been looked at to get a sense of measuring the class. According to Wright (2003), the central question while looking at class is, “How are people objectively located in the distribution of material inequality? In this case class is defined in terms of material standards of living, usually indexed by income or, possibly, wealth. Class in this agenda, is a gradational concept; the standard image is of rungs on a ladder, and the names for locations are accordingly such things as upper class, middle class, lower middle class, lower class, under class” (Wright, 2003: 2). Otto (1975) advocated occupational position as the basis for measuring class and occupational prestige to indicate family social position.

Beteille (2007) argued that “a class has to be defined in relation to some significant feature of society, such as property structure or the occupational structure” (Beteille, 2007: 289). Occupation is seen as one of the most acceptable defining indicators for class by many scholars (Vaid, 2004). However, Scrase and Scrase (2009) argued that “sociological attempts to derive class from occupational categories and income are only partially successful at explaining the position of our informants; these groups are best understood as class fractions” (Scrase and Scrase, 2009:11-12). Kumar et al. (2002) in their study on ‘social mobility in India’ have constructed a system to show the reality of the Indian situation. They have used four main groups of class schema to measure the class. These are:

- 1) “**Salariat** (subdivided into high and low), consisting of salaried employees with relatively secure and permanent employment in business corporations and the civil service (although also including self-employed professionals); 2) **Bourgeoisie or business class** (subdivided into business and petty business), consisting of independents who are directly exposed to market forces and are not cushioned by the bureaucratic employment of the salariat; 3) **Manual labourers** (subdivided into skilled/semiskilled and unskilled), with relatively high risks of unemployment and poor promotion prospects; 4) **Agriculture** (subdivided into farmers with more than five acres of land and ‘small’ farmers and agricultural labourers)” (Kumar et al., 2002: 2983).

However, Vaid (2004) in her study on 'gender inequality in educational transition' has used the modified version of 8 - class schema of Heath et al. (2002). She found the schema relevant to explain educational inequalities in India. These modified categories are: 1) Class I = higher salariat + business, 2) Class II = lower salariat, 3) Class III = skilled and semi-skilled manual + petty business + farmers and 4) Class IV = unskilled manual labourer + lower agriculturalists (p. 3931). Vaid's (2012) class schema distinguishes between "discrete classes on the basis of employment relations for example, distinguishing between people who occupy salaried positions...with regular 'service' contract; the self-employed who are essentially independents, and wage labourers who supply their labour power in a 'wage-effort' bargain".¹⁶ She has used two versions of class schema in her work, first is an expanded 11- class version and second is a collapsed 5 - class version. The 11- class schema with NES 2004 occupations are: 1) high professionals, 2) low professionals, 3) routine non-manual service, 5) business, 6) petty business, 7) large farmer-cultivators, 8) small farmer-cultivators, 9) skilled manual workers, 10) semi- and unskilled manual workers (not in agriculture), 11) low agriculturalists. The 5 - class schema that she has used provides a broad but informative account of the main class divisions. These collapsed classes are as follows: 1) Professional class (made up of the high professionals, low professional and the routine non manual clerical class); 2) Business class (made of business and petty business class); 3) Farming class (comprising large and small farmers); 4) Manual class (including the routine non manual service, Skilled and Semi-skilled classes); 5) Low agriculturalists. She argued that this scheme is not "strictly hierarchical", but there is a rough ordering with the professionals at the top and the skilled manual workers and lower agriculturalist at the bottom (Vaid, 2002: 408).

Motiram and Ashish Singh (2012) in their study of intergenerational occupational mobility have used 7 occupational categories based on NCO 2004. These are: 1) farmers; 2) self-employed in non-agriculture; 3) agriculture labourers; 4) professionals, officials and related; 5) clerks, service workers, skilled agriculture and fisheries workers and related; 6) craftsmen, plant operators and related; 7) elementary occupations and others (pp.59 - 60).

¹⁶ Vaid and Heath, "Unequal Opportunities", p. 160; cited from Vaid 2012.

It is noted that social class is important and helpful to develop a conceptual system within which parental choice can be analyzed sociologically. For this, there is a need to translate the abstract concept of class into a measurable variable. It has to be defined clearly and concretely in order to be tested through empirical research. Class scheme is operationalized to map the class structure of sample population of the study. “Such schemes provide a theoretical framework by which individuals are allocated to social class categories... A common feature of most of class schemes is that they are based on the occupational structure... occupation is one of the most critical factors in an individual’s social standing, life chances and level of material comfort” (Giddens, 2006: 305). However, categorization of class schema in Vaid’s study seems to be based on occupational categories rather than class. She has used the occupation as the sole basis to categorize class rather than including education, occupation, income and consumption pattern.

Though, the occupational structure of the sample population is complicated, it is tried to look at it thoroughly as an indicator of social class because it is believed that “individuals in the same occupation tend to experience similar degree of social advantage or disadvantage, maintain comparable life styles, and share similar opportunities in life” (Giddens, 2006: 305). In this study, social class structures/categories are operationalized on the basis of occupational structure, education and income, a typical Weberian construction of social class. It is derived from a composite of father’s occupation, father’s and mother’s education and father’s income. Mother’s occupation and income are not taken as almost all of the mothers are housewives except few who are involved in self or paid employment. It is an attempt to understand where the respondents are placed in relation to these composite variables of occupation, educational status and income level. Here, class is conceptualized as an objective measure, rather than subjective, i.e., not based on the notions of identity or class consciousness.

However, educational level of parents helps in looking at the occupational differences between social class groups. Higher occupational attainments could be explained by the higher levels of educational qualifications and lower occupational attainments by the lower levels of educational qualifications. A major factor that affects income

distribution is the hierarchical structure of different occupations and the occupational distribution of workers. Therefore, to examine the occupational distribution of respondents, the Indian NCO-2015 classification is used to give the current socio-economic group of the respondents.

The respondents have been divided into five occupational groups. Arranged in descending order of hierarchy and status, these are: (1) **Senior government officials and managers**, (2) **Professionals**, (3) **Associate professionals**, (4) **Clerks**, and (5) **Service, shops and market sales workers**. Occupational structure is discussed in terms of this structure. Agricultural and Subsistence Farmers, Skilled and Unskilled Manual Workers are omitted from the occupational category as there is nobody in these two categories. Monthly incomes of fathers are divided into seven ranges. Each respondent is given a score on these composite indicators to define the class for the present study. Appendix V provides the details of composite indicators and its scores.

In order to allocate class to respondents' families, the class composite is taken that consists of four equally weighted components. These includes father's and mother's educational attainment, father's occupational status, and father's income. For this, a formula is used to calculate the scores of the respondents. This formula is:

Educational level of (father and mother) + occupation of father + monthly income of father

The highest score = father's and mother's education (5+5) + father's occupation (5) + monthly income (7) = 22

The lowest score = father's and mother's education (1+1) + father's occupation (1) + monthly income (1) = 4

After the calculation, scores are divided into two ranges of scores, as the category of middle and lower middle class to allocate respondents in it according to their scores. For example, a father whose educational qualification is post-graduation and above, mother's educational qualification is graduation, father's higher occupation is professional, and monthly income is between rupees 55,001 to 65,000 rupees, then his total score would be 21 (6+5+4+6). The respondent would belong to middle class.

Similarly, if a father's educational level is secondary, mother's educational level is elementary, father's lower occupation is shops and proprietors, and monthly income is between rupees 6,001 to 15,000 rupees, then his total score would be 7 (3+2+1+1). He would belong to lower middle class.

Table 3.8: Classification of Middle Class on the basis of Scores Achieved

Category of Middle Class	Range of Score	No. of Families
Middle	18 – 24	45 (37.5%)
Lower Middle	9 – 17*	75 (62.5%)
Total		120 (100.0%)

Score: Field Data

Note: * The range of score of lower middle class is wider compared to middle because of some father's and mother's higher qualifications

There are 3 respondents in the higher occupation of senior government officials and managers who are clubbed in the middle class. In this way, the total respondents of 120 families are divided into two sub-categories of middle class and located in the middle and lower middle class.

Thus, the middle class is classified into two categories, i.e., 37.5% families in the middle while 62.5% in the lower middle class families. These are arranged according to the scores they have achieved and are divided into two ranges of scores (Table 3.8), i.e., middle class in the range between 18 – 24 and lower middle class between 9 – 17. These class categories are based on level of education, occupational hierarchy and income. The first group (middle class) is between rupees 35,001 to rupees 65,001 and above per month. The income range of second group (lower middle class) is between rupees 6,001 to rupees 35,000 per month (Table 3.9). It is noted that very few fathers are there in the income range of rupees 55,001 and above. A majority of the fathers (42.5%) earn an income between rupees 6,001 to rupees 15,000 per month. Some of the fathers' incomes are related to the promotion and seniority in the job or work places.

Table: 3.9 Occupational Category and Social Class

Social Class/ Occupational Category	Monthly Income	No. of Sample (%)
Middle Class		
Senior Govt. Officials & Managers	Higher Salariat + Business (Rs. 35,001 – Rs. 65,001 & above)	3 (6.7%)
Professionals		20 (44.4%)
Associate Professionals		16 (35.6%)
Clerks & Support Workers		3 (6.7%)
Shops/Proprietors/Market Sales Workers		3 (6.7%)
Total		45 (100%)
Lower Middle Class		
Professionals	Lower Salariat + Petty Business (Rs. 6,001 – Rs. 35,000)	1 (1.3%) *
Associate Professionals		7 (9.3%)
Clerks & Support Workers		29 (40.0%)
Shops/Proprietors/Market Sales Workers		38 (50.7%)
Total		75 (100%)
Grand Total		120 (100%)

Source: Field Data

Note: * The respondent is a professional working in a private company but falls in the lower middle class range due to his low salary.

The sample belongs to the middle class(es); but there is a diversity within the middle class along all the variables of social class identification. Hence, the study focuses on identifying class fractions within the middle class rather than looking for inter-class classifications. This division is hierarchical, yet there is fluidity within these two middle class fractions. As Kumar et al. (2002) argued, the given class schema is not strictly hierarchical and there is certain kind of arbitrariness in the boundary of classes. In this way, class is operationalized and classified and is used for the purpose of present study. This class structure is used along with Bourdieu's concept of capitals to study how social class influences families' practices, school choice processes, strategies and involvement in private schooling of their children. As Ball (2003) argued that middle class is a phenomenon, a process, in search of something better and more than what they have. And this is true in terms of the private schooling of middle class children.

Summary

This chapter discusses the locality and the socio-economic status of the families selected for the study. The growth of the localities in the north-eastern part of Ranchi could be seen since the year 2000 (after the existence of Jharkhand as a separate state). Jai Prakash Nagar and New Nagar localities as sites of the study are newly developed and are still developing as a result of the expanding urban population that is moving towards the periphery of the Ranchi city. The sample families of the study live in these selected localities. They had migrated from villages/towns of Jharkhand and other states such as Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, etc. Most of the families are living here since 4 to 5 years while some more than 21 years or so. These families are mainly from General castes followed by OBCs, SCs and STs. Majority of them belong to Hindu religion followed by Christians. More than 50% families own their own houses. Majority of the families are nuclear families.

Most of the fathers possess graduation as a higher level of education, where the percentage of middle class fathers is more than lower middle class fathers. Most of the middle class mothers have graduation as a higher level of education while lower middle class mothers have higher secondary. Most of the middle class fathers work as professionals or associate professionals while lower middle class fathers are in the occupation of petty businesses, i.e. shops and proprietors or market sales workers and clerks and support workers. These middle class families fall in the monthly income range between rupees 35,001 to rupees 65,001 and above while lower middle class between 5,001 to rupees 35,000. Most of the families whether from middle or lower middle class except few have ownerships of property. Along with the variation in social class position and privileges, lower middle class families face more financial restraints and self-control compared to middle class who are able to “maintain the higher standard of living that upward mobility and the availability of new consumer goods have made ‘normal’” (Wessel, 2004: 97). Thus, middle class fractions differ in terms of level of education, occupation, income, consumption pattern and life style.

The next chapter discusses aspirations and choices of these middle class families for further education and career and seeks to explore how the demand for private schooling really has grown and how do families provide rationale for such choices for private schools.

CHAPTER-IV

Gendered Aspirations and Rationale for School Choice

Educational aspirations are shaped and influenced by the occupational structures of the society. Due to globalization and economic liberalization, there is a demand for various kinds of jobs. These changes have influenced occupational patterns in the society and middle class parents' aspirations are shaped and influenced by these changes.

Parents' aspirations about children's future education and career are important as these prospects directly or indirectly influence parents' involvement with their children's schooling and they invest in education accordingly. Aspirations "usually connote the achievement of something high or great. They also address both present and future perspectives" (Gutman and Akerman, 2008: 2). In this sense, aspirations can be defined as an individual's "ability to set goals for the future, while being inspired in the present to work toward those goals" (Quagila and Cobb, 1996; cited from Gutman and Akerman, 2008: 3). The "meaning and importance of aspirations therefore vary according to the context in which people live as well as their own individual characteristics and development... Aspirations do not exist within a vacuum, but rather occur within a social context" (Gutman and Akerman, 2008: 3).

This chapter deals with parental aspirations for children's education, career, and marriage; parental demand for private schools and rationale behind the school choice. The first section discusses the parental aspirations for sons and daughters in terms of their education and career. The second section talks about the failure of the government school system and the rationale behind choosing a private school. The third section discusses the determinants of private school choice.

I. Gendered Parental Aspirations for Children

Parental "educational aspirations are a key mechanism by which parental socioeconomic status is transmitted to the next generation... In the case of young children, parental aspirations represent a motivation toward higher educational outcomes in the future"

(Zhang, Kao, Hannum, 2007: 132). A number of “factors influence parental aspirations for their children. These factors could be socio-economic factors, gender, age, ethnicity of child and their abilities as well as their child’s abilities and involvement” (Gutman and Akerman, 2008: 6).

Change in society has led parents to change their beliefs and perceptions on their son’s and daughter’s education. The gender differences in educating children, especially girls, is seen diminishing in middle class parents’ views. A majority of the middle class parents state that they do not differentiate between sons and daughters and they want to provide better education to both of them equally.

Aspirations for Sons

Aspirations and expectations of parents about their “children’s educational careers were grounded in reality” (David et al., 1994: 109). Middle class fractions are aware of the present-day reality of the job market where educational credentials and skills are in high demand and to grab the opportunity in the job market, one is needed to have higher educational qualifications. After grabbing a position in occupational hierarchy, the status of one’s class in society is automatically maintained, which the middle class fractions aspire for. Parents from these middle classes reach their present status in society by labouring hard and experience how tough it is for them to grab these opportunities in adverse social contexts. Many times, they fail to get the jobs they aspire for. Facing various situations in life, these parents want to provide all possible resources and help to facilitate better education for their children so that children might achieve what they did not. However, parental educational and occupational aspirations depend on their location within the socio-economic hierarchy and their perceptions.

It is found that most of the parents aspire to provide higher education to their sons. It is evident from table 4.1 that a majority of the parents aspire graduation for their sons. Some parents aspire vocational or professional education for their sons. Some parents are uncertain about their sons’ further education and mention that it depends on children’s performance and their wish on how much they want to study.

We see from the table that the middle class parents want their sons to complete post-graduation. It is clear that almost an equal proportion of the middle class and the lower middle class aspire for graduation for their sons. A majority of those who are uncertain about educational aspirations for their sons from the lower middle class mention that child's wish would be preferred in this matter. In fact, the lower middle class parents aspire for vocational education for their sons than their middle class counterparts.

Table 4.1: Parental Educational Aspirations for Sons

Aspired Educational Level	MC	LMC	Total
Post-Graduation	2 (66.7%)	1 (33.3%)	3 (100%)
Graduation	32 (50.8%)	31 (49.2%)	63 (100%)
12+Voc. Education	2 (11.1%)	16 (88.9%)	18 (100%)
Child's Wish/Uncertain	1 (4.3%)	22 (95.7%)	23 (100%)
Total	37 (34.6%)	70 (65.4%)	107 (100%)

Source: Field Data

Note: 13 out of 120 families (i.e., 8/45 in the middle and 5/75 in the lower middle class) did not have sons.

Majority of the parents aspire for higher education at least till graduation for their sons as “the possession of a graduate qualification represents a passport into professional and managerial occupations” (Brown, 1997: 741). Parents who aspire for post-graduation for their sons are of the view that graduation is not sufficient for a job in today's times, as the competition is very tough. Most of the middle class parents show their interest towards Science and Commerce subjects. They believe that simple graduation in the subject of liberal arts is not worth getting a job of one's choice. They state this on the basis of their own experiences faced during job search. Some of the lower middle class who are government employees or associate professionals too aspire Science for their sons. For instance, a lower middle class father from New Nagar, who is a simple graduate, is not satisfied with his job, said:

“I want my son to study beyond graduation. I did a simple graduation. But today I see that there is not much scope after graduation. Employment and vacancies have decreased. That is why it is necessary

to be multi-dimensional and have additional qualifications after graduation. So, I do not want my son to follow the same tradition of doing graduation only”.

Parents who are aware of the situation and demands of the job market are of the view that simple graduation is not enough and would not work in this age of tough competition.

However, aspirations differ within the middle class fractions. The middle class parents have higher aspirations for their children’s future than lower middle class families. They seem optimistic about children’s better future because of their better income, resources, information and networks. They are determined to achieve their motive by allowing their children to have higher qualifications or professional degrees to get success in the job market. Highly educated middle class parents who are in better occupational status have higher and more clear aspirations for their children. Few ambitious parents aspire to see their sons in higher positions in prestigious jobs such as doctors, engineers, IAS officers, chartered accountants, managers and so on. For instance, a middle class father from Jai Prakash Nagar, who is an accountant in Eastern Coalfield Limited, said: *“I want my son to do engineering and MBA”*. Likewise, another middle class father from the same locality said, *“I want my son to go for an engineering degree and become a software engineer. It would give him status in society”*. What is clear from these perspectives is that the ambitious middle class parents already have in mind what is worth for their sons. They are confident because of resources and networks they possess and have a clear vision about their son’s future education and put more concerted effort in their children’s education to fulfil their aspirations.

Some lower middle class parents’ interests seem more towards Science or Commerce subjects rather than liberal arts for their sons. They are aware of the demands of the job market and the decreasing value of liberal arts courses. For instance, a mother from lower middle class said:

“I would prefer Science subject for my son in graduation. I had studied liberal arts. In today’s times, Science subjects are opted more and there is not much value of arts courses”.

Likewise, a lower middle class father said, *“I did MA but I want my son to study more than me. I would prefer Science course for him”* This clarifies the fact that lower middle class families aim to have aspirations for the Science stream for their son’s education.

On the contrary, there are few lower middle class families, who are not highly educated (who have either completed matriculation or intermediate) and who are economically disadvantaged are unable to mention what their aspirations are for their sons. They have lower aspirations and are uncertain about their son’s higher education as they are more concerned about everyday survival rather than the child’s future. Lack of financial resources, adverse circumstances and struggle for survival restrain them from aspiring because parental educational aspirations for their children are related to socio-economic conditions. According to Gutman and Akerman (2008), *“socio-economic deprivation may influence parental aspirations because those living in economic hardship have less financial security and fewer material resources of their own for investing in their child”* (p. 6). These parents lament that they did not complete their studies and failed to achieve what they wanted to do in life and that is why they want to do their best to avoid those adverse situations or shortcomings in their children’s lives. A few lower middle class parents from New Nagar who have high hopes mention that they are ready to provide financial and material support to their children according to their economic status and capacity. They want to educate their sons by any means for they have aspirations for higher levels of educational attainment for their children than their own levels of education. Families are ready to make compromises by cutting their expenditures and doing as much as possible. For instance, a lower middle class father said: *“I will educate my son till he wants to study. I did not complete my study after Intermediate. Therefore, I want him to study further even if I have to cut my pocket”*. Parents’ personal failure to achieve what is wanted or expected in life makes them more ambitious about fulfilling those unfulfilled dreams through their children’s success in career and life. For this, parents want to manage and accommodate according to their economic status.

However, as children grow older, parental aspirations change. Clair and Benjamin (2011) viewed that those aspirations are not static in nature and keep on changing

with respect to certain circumstances, people’s experiences or one’s reaction to those circumstances. All these affect parents’ aspirations. Parents’ “perceptions of their children’s skills and abilities also influence the aspirations they had for their children (Sacker, Schoon and Bartley, 2002; cited from Gutman and Akerman, 2008: 9). There are multiple career opportunities in today’s changing times. But it is found that parents are unwilling to impose their expectations and aspirations on their children. Some parents view that they would leave the decision of further studies on their sons and would not force to take particular subjects of their choice in the higher education as they are aware of the present-day reality of children taking wrong steps (such as suicide) in their life due to failure in examinations and also for not achieving according to parents’ expectations. Parents have some expectations but son’s wish and interest in the selection of courses seem to be given preference by the parents. At the same time future education depends on their sons’ achievements and interests in the preference of courses.

Parents are asked whether they want the same or different types of occupations for their sons. Responses vary within the middle class fractions depending on the socio-economic and future perspectives of the families. Their aspirations about their children’s career are grounded in reality and personal experiences, as can be seen in table 4.2, that the majority of the families want their sons to be in government job.

Table 4.2: Parental occupational aspirations for sons

Parent’s Occupation Aspiration	MC	LMC	Total
Engineer/Doctor/CA	14 (70%)	6 (30%)	20 (100%)
IAS/Judiciary	3 (60%)	2 (40%)	5 (100%)
Government Job	8 (24.2%)	25 (75.8%)	33 (100%)
Professional/Vocational Job	2 (11.8%)	15 (88.2%)	17 (100%)
Child’s wish/Capability/Uncertain	10 (31.3%)	22 (68.8%)	32 (100%)
Total	37 (34.6%)	70 (65.4%)	107 (100%)

Source: Field Data

Note: 13 out of 120 families (i.e., 8/45 in the middle and 5/75 in the lower middle class) do not have sons.

Some of the families aspire to see their sons as engineers, doctors, chartered accountants, and so on. While some aspire for jobs related to professional or

vocational skills. However, few families are uncertain and want to leave it on son's wish or capability. Within the middle class fractions, a majority of the middle class families (70%) compared to lower middle class families (30%) aspire to see their sons as engineers, doctors, chartered accountants, and so on. On the contrary, a majority of the lower middle class (88.2%) families aspire professional or vocational jobs for their sons. The table shows the variations in the aspirations of the middle class fractions according to their positions in occupational hierarchy.

Newman (1993) argued that "the task of recreating the middle class is a total preoccupation" for some parents, who stake "much of their own sense of success on the lives of their children" (cited from Kaufman, 2005: 253). Highly educated parents have higher aspirations for their sons. It is found that occupational aspirations are higher in middle class senior government officials, professionals and associate professionals than others at the lower position in the occupational hierarchy. It is determined by their own education and beliefs on a child's academic ability. Around 60% of the middle class and 40% of the lower middle class aspire to see their sons as IAS officers or in the judiciary. For instance, a middle class father who works as an assistant in Employees State Insurance Corporation said: "*Every parent dreams to see their sons in better positions. I want my son to go for the Civil Services. It will give him power and status in society*". He aspires to this career for his son because it provides power and status in society. These parents have aspirations for productive professional occupations which have higher value and demand in society and which provides and enhances social status. It helps in reproducing cultural and symbolic capital.

One of the lower middle class parents has higher occupational aspiration for their son irrespective of their socio-economic status¹⁷. They plan in such a way to achieve career aspirations, a better life and status for their son and for themselves. Parental aspiration remains stable over time, hence long-term strategy is made keeping high hopes in mind. They have strong belief in education and decide to have only one child to provide better education to him.

¹⁷ The father works as a lab technician in Gumla, and earns rupees 13,000 a month.

Some parents do not want to exert pressure on their children. They leave it to their children to decide according to their abilities and interests. For instance, a middle class father said:

“I am an open-minded person. It’s not that I would force my son to do this. What I feel is that I should let him decide on his own. It’s not like that you have to become a doctor, engineer or a sports person. He would decide in which field he wants to go”.

Likewise, a middle class mother from Jai Prakash Nagar who holds a degree of M.Sc. and B.Ed. and who works as a teacher for some years in a private school stated:

“It would depend on the son’s interest in what he would like to do. We would not compel him. My son wants to go to IIT. I told him if you do not qualify for the IIT, then try for BIT. We should not put children in depression. They would do according to their own level and interest. They should not become hopeless if they do not qualify”.

It is noted that parents want to give preference to their son’s choice or interest in terms of career. However, the lower middle class parents want to secure their son’s future so that he may not wander around searching for jobs as they had wandered. This is seen among the business and commercial class families. Lower middle class parents who are involved in petty businesses do not want their sons to continue in their parents’ footsteps. They do not wish for the same occupation or career for their sons as they are not satisfied with their present situation which is challenging and always changing due to ups and downs in the business and uncertain income. They need to work hard day and night to earn money. They feel that there is so much tension and no job security in business. They are actively engaged all the time in running their businesses and do not get time for themselves and their families. They want their sons to work either in government or in the private sector and to be better off in future. One of the lower middle class mothers from business family from New Nagar said:

“I want my son to have a government job so that he may live peacefully in life. My husband faces problems. When the business runs smoothly

there is benefit but when it does not then there is loss. I feel like it would have been better if my husband worked in government office. I want my son to be in better position than us”.

Lack of economic security (due to ups and downs) in running a business leads business class families to think about other occupations for their sons. The attitude towards children’s education has changed as they do not want their sons to follow the same traditional business. Parents aspire for a salaried job (seen as a cool job ‘*aaram ki naukri*’) whether government or private for sons for better life prospect. They do not want their children to experience or face what they had faced or are facing in life. For instance, a lower middle class father who has completed intermediate (10+2) and is involved in the business of construction materials expressed:

“It depends on my son what his interest is and how much he wants to study. I do not want him to do business. He should study hard and have a government job. I do not want him to do petty business that I am doing. I do not have any routine life, sometimes I go to work early in the morning and come home very late at night. I am busy 24 hours and do not have time for myself and my children”.

Lower middle class parents, in spite of economic limitations, aspire to see their children in better jobs and do not want them to struggle and face miserable life conditions as they had in their life. A lower middle class father, who is a matriculate and own a shop of Tour and Travels reported that in spite of financial constraint, he supported his elder son to do Chartered Accountancy. He is trying to do his best for the younger son to provide whatever is in his hands.

Due to lack of higher education and information, parents seem to be in a dilemma. A few lower middle class parents are uncertain about occupational aspirations for their sons. However, they want their sons to do some vocational or professional courses such as IIT or polytechnic, diploma courses, etc. as these courses are seen as an immediate provider of livelihood. They mentioned that they would decide according to the child’s academic result in secondary school. Yet they are ready to put in all possible efforts to provide for them from their limited resources. For poor parents at

the lower end of the hierarchy, aspiring for child's future seems difficult due to economic limitations. They do not aspire for a particular job as they do not have the required financial capital to achieve it. Their aspirations are lower for having no social security or resources. In spite of such limitations, parents do wish to escape their children from miserable life conditions. Thus, socio-economic status and everyday experiences influence aspirations and desire to achieve. Parents have educational aspiration for daughters also which could be seen in the following section.

Aspirations for Daughters

The trend towards education among males and females has changed in this present times. Females are exposed to the same socialization process in most of the educated families. The changing times and changing social expectations related to girl's education and empowerment has influenced the perceptions of middle class families in Ranchi city. Scrase and Scrase (2009) found that in the present times, female education is a source of pride for middle class parents. Parents recall their past and argue that earlier parents did not educate girls much thinking that they were less worthy of education and less capable than men in many workplace related tasks. But today the situation has changed and educated parents do not differentiate in their upbringing between a son and a daughter. They equally value daughters as they value sons.

Majority of the families mentioned that they see their sons and daughters equal and pay equal attention to both in their education and schooling. For instance, a middle class father from Jai Prakash Nagar stated:

“Both son and daughter are equal to me. They should be highly educated. It is not that I will not provide higher education to my daughter. My mother never discriminated between me and my sister. That is why it is not there in my mind that she is a daughter so I would educate her less and he is a son, so I need to educate him more. The daughter will have the same opportunity and benefit that the son will have after getting educated. It depends on my daughter how much she would like to study. If she would like to do the job then she would do it”.

This statement clarifies the fact that educated middle class(es)' perceptions towards their daughters' education have changed over time and they are not opposed to their girls' higher educational qualifications.

Parental educational aspiration for girls is shaped by their cultural attitude and social upbringing. The type of atmosphere that parents believe in is that one has to step outside home and face many types of people and not getting educated does not make any sense anymore. It is a must for individual's development. However, middle class parents view that for educated parents, girls are not less than boys in any way. Mindsets of better educated middle class families have changed and have become wider. Parents aspire to provide equal opportunities to daughters in gaining access to further higher education. They mention that earlier girls were denied education because of the conservative societal thinking of girls as a '*paraya dhan*' (wealth/member of another house after marriage), who are transferred to their marital homes after marriage. But now they are lifted up from this belief. However, discrimination still persists between a boy and a girl where there is no education.

Table 4.3: Parental Educational Aspirations for Daughters

Aspired Education Level	MC	LMC	Total
Post-Graduation	3 (75%)	1 (25%)	4 (100%)
Graduation	33 (50.8%)	32 (49.2%)	65 (100%)
12+Voc./Prof. Education	2 (15.4%)	11 (84.6%)	13 (100%)
Child's Wish/Uncertain	2 (6.7%)	28 (93.3%)	30 (100%)
Total	40 (35.7%)	72 (64.3%)	112 (100%)

Source: Field Data

Note: 8/120 families (i.e., 5/45 in the middle and 3/75 in the lower middle class) do not have daughters.

Table 4.3 shows that the middle class families aspires graduation and post-graduation for their daughters. There are some who aspire vocational education after higher secondary education. While some families are uncertain about the future and express to leave it on their daughter's interests. This shows the changing perceptions of middle class families towards their daughters' education. Within the middle class

fractions, both middle and lower middle equally aspires graduation for their daughters. Around 75% of the middle class families aspire post-graduation for their daughters which are very high compared to lower middle class (25%) families. Most of the lower middle class families (93.3%) are uncertain about their aspirations for daughters' higher education and leave it on their daughters' wishes or interests.

Vaid (2017) argued that families where “parents have a high level of education (especially mothers education), doing a B.A. was considered to be the minimum and the choice to drop out after school does not exist” (p. 359). Some educated middle class mothers express that daughters are performing better than boys in academics and are excelling and leaving boys behind in academic race.

However, it is found that attitudes of parents towards higher education of their daughters are much higher in middle rather than in lower middle class families. Educated middle class families perceive that completion of secondary schooling is not enough for girls in today's times and they should have higher education. Parents seem ready to provide full support to their daughters to let them pursue higher education at any cost. They are hopeful to see their daughters studying beyond high school and pursue their college or University education. Few parents reported that they could only make their efforts and push their daughters for further studies but it is their interests and abilities that matter. Few parents from the middle class who are highly educated and have cultural resources aspire professional courses for their daughters. For instance, one of the middle class mothers who is a graduate said: “*Girls should be given higher education. It has benefits from all sides. I want my daughter to go for engineering or medical*”. The aspiration and hope of this educated mother seem very high for her daughter's future education and career. Educated mothers want to see their daughters in some position in the job market.

Gutman and Akerman (2008) argued that parents' aspirations are “positively related to their confidence in their children's academic abilities. Parents' aspirations are raised for those children who do well in school” (Gutman and Akerman, 2008: 9). It is seen in one of the middle class mothers' statements who is determined to educate her daughter as much as she could in the field of Architecture. She stated:

“My daughter is very good in studies and gets the highest rank in her class. She wants to become an Architect. We are ready to provide all possible support and resources. Once, we even visited Saudi Arabia to show her architectural designs of the city and buildings”.

Here, parents’ aspirations are dynamically related to their “perceptions of their children’s abilities where each influences the other throughout the school years” (Gutman & Akerman, 2008: 9). It is also the cultural and economic resources that motivate parents to achieve what they aspire for their daughters. Daughters of these middle class families have access to quality education and have choices. Some better educated lower middle class families also aspires graduation for their daughters.

A few middle class parents do not think about their daughters’ future education as their daughters are in primary school and a few reports that it depends on their daughters how much they want to study further. They do not want to force their daughters to opt according to their wishes because their daughters might want to study or do something else. For instance, a middle class father from Jai Prakash Nagar mention about his elder daughter’s interest and said:

“I proposed Mathematics for my elder daughter but she opted to study Biology. I did not force her to do what I wished. Now she is preparing for medical examination. I am satisfied with her decision”.

Parents manage according to the interest of their children as they knew that their children would perform better in the field of their interest.

Higher education level of the parents positively influences their attitude towards daughters’ higher education. This positive attitude is seen more in the middle than in lower middle class families who like their daughters to study and do some jobs, supporting the idea that “employment is a road to independence” (Scrase and Scrase, 2009: 89). Education provides social and economic empowerment to girls. On the contrary, some lower middle class families’ aspirations differ due to their socio-economic status and financial limitations. They aspire higher secondary or vocational education as a minimum level of education for their daughters. Low occupational

level hinders them to have high aspirations for daughters as they would not be able to afford enough money to educate them. Also, son's higher education would be preferred rather than daughter's as it is the son who is going to look after them and not the daughter who has to marry out of the family.

However, parents are asked how education or higher education is important for daughters? Various reasons are provided by them. Some middle class parents believe that "education frees from the dependence on others; education gives 'power'" (Vaid, 2017: 353). For instance, a middle class mother from New Nagar said:

"I will let my daughter study as much as she wants. I will let her do job. Today, girls are becoming confident, independent and courageous after getting educated. They stand on their own feet. They can handle any type of problem. Earlier if something happened to a girl or she was not satisfied with her marriage, or separated from her husband, then she was dependent on her parents. But now it is not so. Now educated girls have the power to lift up their own burden".

Parents perceive that higher education empower girls/women to be independent by accessing freedom and opportunities, which they were denied in the past only because of being women. Education improves girls' position in society to fight with old customs and other social barriers to survive. For parents who "believe that education should make daughters employable in an emergency, an educational credential is appropriate insurance against the husband's death or disablement" (Drury, 1993: 86). Educated women have the capacity to regulate their day to day lives in social and economic terms. It is evident in Scrase and Scrase's (2009) study that girls' education is a "safety net, insurance against a daughter's failed marriage or widowhood" (p. 90).

It is believed that education provides strength and courage to step outside home and face the problems. Parents accept that it is the time to change oneself according to the changing times and needs in order to support their daughters. Daughters of these middle class families have "access to all forms of modern education. Now they have a range of choices which were earlier denied to them" (Thapan, 2001; cited from Kohli,

2017: 64) because of gender bias and early marriage of girls. A few middle class parents wish to see their daughters in the position of doctor, engineer, teacher, etc. Two middle class families are determined to see their daughters as doctors and a lower middle class father wants to make his daughter an IAS officer and for this he is ready to manage resources.

It is noted that middle class families are positive in their aspirations and concerns for their daughter's higher education and believe that girls and boys are equal for them and girls should enjoy the same educational opportunities as boys. This suggests that at least in principle, parents hold egalitarian ideals. Through higher education, it is believed that girls are "able to empower themselves in other aspects such as being able to lead financially secure lives by accessing different social and material resources and building self-reliance" (Kohli, 2017: 65). Higher education of girls seems important for these families for making their daughters independent (stand on her own feet), empowered by entering into paid employment to know their potential and have self-respect in the family and society. For mothers, higher education is equally important for daughters to walk equal with boys. They do not have to beg in front of others during their difficult/adverse times. Parents express that higher education would increase the thinking and understanding power of their daughters which would enable them to make any decision on their own. Mothers think that it would open and broaden their minds and let them see what is right and what is wrong and would stop suppression/oppression against themselves. This shows that "independence is seen in terms of significant life decisions, and education goes a long way in giving women the "power" to make those decisions" (Vaid, 2017: 21).

Highly educated professional middle class parents mention that higher education is expected to broaden one's perspective and thinking capacity. Three middle class parents emphasize their understanding on the importance of girls' higher education by referring to the proverb of a Ghanaian scholar James Kwegyir Aggrey. For instance, a middle class father from Jai Prakash Nagar said:

"It is said that if a boy gets educated then only one person gets educated, but if a girl gets educated then the whole family gets

educated. Those who are aware are educating their daughters. Marriage is a different thing. Education has its own importance. Those who embrace education get the capacity to think and reflect. It enhances the world view. There is no such joyous occasion than this in life. Everything is for a short period; money also gives happiness for a short duration. But there is no such thing greater than education that gives you the capacity to think, act and to share your wisdom to others”.

It is noted that education provides wisdom and broadens the horizon. It changes one’s mindset, builds confidence and the capacity to make right decisions. Most of the middle and lower middle class mothers irrespective of their educational background mention girls’ education to be of supreme importance.

However, the data unfolds several other patriarchal views behind parental aspirations for daughters’ higher education. Most of the lower middle and a few middle class families want their daughters to pursue college or vocational education because “it makes girls valuable brides and ‘better mothers’” (Chopra, 2005: 300). Daughters’ further education is aspired to fulfil the demand for highly educated girls/bride in the marriage market, to secure a better husband from a good family and to take better care of children and family at home. Page, (2005) argued that “most parental aspirations for their daughters centred on a ‘good’ marriage, and most home experiences were a preparation for this future” (cited from Chopra and Jeffery, 2005: 188).

Simultaneously, “the adoption of women’s education model is also used to accommodate the traditional patriarchal needs, for example, finding a suitable educated marriage alliance for the daughter or the performance of social gender roles efficiently” (Kohli, 2017: 64). Daughter’s higher education has become a tool as bride’s families have a strong demand to find good and suitable grooms for the young brides. Educated grooms are highly valued and are considered to be a good match in the marriage market. Lower middle class families accept that their daughters would get a good groom if they attain higher qualifications.

Most of the mothers share the same views regarding the importance of girl's education "for accommodating traditional gender roles and for women's financial independence and personal growth" (Kohli, 2017: 62). The middle class families are very much influenced by this belief that the daughter "will get a good groom if she studies more". For instance, a middle class mother from Jai Prakash Nagar said:

"If a girl is highly educated it is natural that she will get a good groom. When you make a bio-data for an arranged marriage the qualification of a girl matters in the prospect of marriage. Boy's family will say that she is compatible to walk with my son. If a girl is highly educated and chooses a boy of her own level then it's quite easier. But if parents choose for their daughters, they become highly ambitious in choosing a boy. Yes, for my daughter, I will see that the boy should be well qualified, have good earning and good status. Everybody wants well for his or her daughter".

Educational investments on girls are seen as the best gift parents could give to their daughters, to prepare them for the best future to be married into a good family (Page, 2005). Jeffery et al. (2005) noted that within the patriarchal notions, girls' education is viewed to make them 'good wives and mothers'. Education decreases the bride price (dowry) in societies. Parental awareness of the girl's higher education may result in delay in marriage until the girl has reached an appropriate age. Some parents have the view that higher education of girls lessens the amount of dowry. Thus, it is clear from the data that somewhere the societal demand and purpose of marriage is kept in the mind behind the aspirations for daughters' higher education.

Vaid (2017) argued that "at one level women's education helps them achieve some level of parity with men at home and educated women are seen as an asset in the household not only as they can help educate their children, but also as they may be able to draw upon job opportunities" (p. 354). The "value of education for women seems to extend to their role or responsibility of socialisation of the children, and for household maintenance" (ibid. 355). They would become better wives; and educated mothers who could help their children in their studies at home and also play role of

family caretakers. This would contribute to children's better performance in academics. For instance, a middle class father stated: "*After marriage an educated girl teaches her children at home if the husband does not have time for them. She is the one who takes care of the child at home, whether he/she is studying or not*". This account explains that girl's education is not only important to get a good job, "it is also an important tool to allow women to perform their traditional gender roles efficiently" (Kohli, 2017: 65). Educated mothers play a key role in reproducing and providing more social and cultural capital to their children through rearing and caring at home rather than an uneducated mother.

Thus, the above findings suggest that female education has gained popularity among the middle class families in Ranchi. Better educated middle class parents have a positive attitude towards girls' higher education than those of lower middle class parents. Some lower middle class parents who are a bit positive, want their daughters to be highly educated but their desire is quite low. However, despite these transformations gender inequality still persists. The next section discusses the reasons and rationale behind the choice of a private school for advancing various kinds of parental aspirations among the middle class families.

II. Government Schools are for 'Them', not for 'Us'!

The section discusses issues regarding the rationale of parental preference for private schools, however, the reasons behind the choice of a particular school for their children is discussed in the next chapter (Chapter 5). Rapid expansion of knowledge, educational consciousness of parents, their desire for better education of their children and tough competition in job opportunities motivate parents to choose the right kind of schools for their children. It is to help them to cope up and be up to date with the changing education system. Ball (2003) pointed out that "marketization in education forces middle class families to gain a competitive advantage for their children" (p. 20). They find themselves struggling to maximize their chances of accessing private school. Middle class fractions are aware that education is a means for maintaining status in society and upgrading social mobility. This is the reason parents appear to

differ according to their capacity while making school choices. The “concept of school choice is not straightforward. The capacity of households to make choices for their children is shaped by multiple considerations: School availability, perceived quality, accessibility, and most importantly affordability, for one or more children in the household” (Zoe and Woodhead, 2014: 4).

There is a visible trend in India where parents have the option to choose between the government and private schools. It seems a more complex option of choice for urban dwellers where they have a wider range of schooling whether of the government schools or of private schools with “varying financial affordability and physical accessibility. The very notion of choice is to make informed decisions between viable alternatives” (Zoe and Woodhead 2014: 4). Parents need to balance the sacrifices while exercising choices of schools for one or more of their children. On the other hand, they also have their educational aspirations in mind while making school choices. However, “in the context of a rapidly changing educational landscape and often constrained household resources, decision making processes for school choice may be much more fluid than is implied by a singular concept of choice” (ibid.).

The declining quality (teaching and learning) of government schools have forced the middle class parents to abandon it and go for private schooling for their children. The gross neglect of education which is clearly visible to parents has a profound effect on their perceptions on government schools. For instance, a lower middle class father from New Nagar locality remember the school days of his time when most children studied in government schools and are in good positions (at present) in the occupational hierarchy. He said:

“Earlier there were very few private schools and that is why most of the students studied in government schools. The standard of government school was good at that time. At least 6 to 7 students of every batch got good posts in government jobs. But, now the level of teaching-learning is so low in these schools that students hardly pass class VIII or complete class X”.

It is expressed that the quality of education in government schools has undergone tremendous change and the standard has deteriorated over the years. According to parents, even after being free and getting so much incentives from the government, the quality of teaching and learning remain inferior and unattractive. As a result, it leaves little scope for their children's further higher education. This leads not only the middle but the lower middle class to prefer private schools for their children where the quality of education is said to be good and English is used as a medium of instruction.

Several reasons are explored here to get a deep sense of understanding behind the selection of private schools. Almost all of the reasons discussed in the review of literature could be seen in the respondents' reasons for not opting for government schools for their children. Whether it is middle or lower middle class parents, they almost express somewhat similar views on the failure of government schools. They point out that the schools do not have proper physical facilities such as classrooms, furniture, drinking water, separate toilets for girls and boys, teaching learning materials, sports equipment, safe compound and playground. Even some existing facilities are not child friendly due to lack of maintenance and regular sanitation. Books are not provided to children on time to maintain pace to complete the syllabus. Some primary schools do not have boundary walls and the premises are unclean.

Due to inadequate classrooms, classes are mixed at the primary level and children of classes II to III share a single room. High pupil teacher ratio and lack of teachers at primary levels compelled a teacher to teach 90 to 100 students in one classroom. Lack of teachers and lack of training in multi-grade teaching are also a problem for having no classes. In this regard a middle class mother from Jai Prakash Nagar stated:

“Nobody asks for government school in today's date even if everything is free here. There are more children in a class and teachers are less. How would I send my child to such a school where no classes are held? It may be alright for poor people”.



Plate 4.1: Government Middle School within 2 ½ km in Karamtoli, Ranchi



Plate 4.2: Private Unaided Recognised School in the main Booti-Bariatu road within 300 meters

Inadequacies in government schools makes parents to have strong dislike for it and even the lower middle class parents do not opt for these schools as their choice. They perceive that government school is not for them but for the poor, for whom everything is free.

Parents mention that the situation of the government school is unlike the private school. Even after the provision of facilities there is less concentration on teaching-learning processes in government school. Teachers are qualified but they hardly care or pay attention to children's educational needs. It is felt that teachers do not focus on improving basic foundation of children in terms of reading, writing and mathematics. Most of the time teachers are involved in the distribution of mid-day meal, in keeping records of it, in other duties such as elections, Census data collection and so on and devote less time to teach.

However, parents also view that the government authorities do not pay attention towards timely recruitment of the permanent teachers, providing training to them and supervision of teachers' performance. Consequently, para teachers are appointed who are not well versed in teaching due to lack of academic qualifications and experiences. According to a lower middle class father from New Nagar said:

“Trained teachers are there but they do many other things besides teaching. Teaching in primary school is not good. Para teachers do not know how to teach properly. They are paid less. You will find 80% of teachers like this. They are just making children literate and nothing more. Government does not have the motive of making their career”.

It indicates that parents are not happy with the provision of para teachers in school and their teaching performance. What they think is that para teachers are less paid and not accountable to the authorities as well as parents. This situation corroborates with the view that the pervasiveness of teacher absence and inactivity in government schools certainly deteriorates the quality of education (Narayan and Mooij, 2010). In government schools the chain of accountability is much weaker, as teachers have a permanent job with salaries and promotions unrelated to performance.

Narayan and Mooij (2010) argued that lack of teaching learning material, burden of non-teaching tasks, inadequate training to deal with multi ability classes deteriorate the quality of education in the government primary schools. It is also because of inadequate supervision and monitoring system, procedures and practice from the educational authorities to improve teaching methods and techniques adopted by the teachers and enhance the overall learning environment in school. Parents have also raised questions about school management and roles and responsibilities of teachers as they do not follow the actual time schedule in reaching the school on time.

It is argued that high teaching standards are not maintained due to lack of inspection and supervision. Teachers' commitment is seen low towards their profession compared to those of the private school. Parents mention that teachers do their formalities, give tasks on the blackboard and chat outside the classroom. No time table is followed and no discipline is maintained. The atmosphere of the school is not conducive to learning. Students do not respect or listen to their teachers. They roam inside or outside the boundary wall of the school and there is nobody to check them. Teachers are criticised for taking salary without teaching properly and are compared with that of private school teachers. For instance, a middle class father from Jai Prakash Nagar stated:

“Teachers in private schools have pressures that they have to teach which you would not see in government schools. Government school teachers get salaries for doing their duties from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. and then also they do not pay attention to students. Children of poor people having ration cards go there to study but in vain. I do not think teaching takes place there. They learn the same Hindi alphabets and A for Apple. They do not use anything to teach. Nobody is there to check and monitor teachers. If teachers are not disciplined then how come children would be in discipline?”.

This statement indicates that middle and lower middle class families have the perception that teachings in government schools have deteriorated in the present times because of lack of teachers' accountability and sensitivity towards children and lack of monitoring of teachers.

Parents view that insensitivity might be because of erroneous entry of teachers in the school. Few middle-class parents are of the view that corruption in the system is such that even if one qualifies or does not qualify the exam, he/she is asked to pay donation to get the post of a teacher. B.Ed. degrees are sold and hefty money is taken. The teacher is not solely responsible for the deterioration. It is the system that puts pressure on him/her to take another path to enter into this profession. For instance, a middle class mother reported:

“Some teachers entered in the profession by giving donations, some through sources or ‘pairwee’ (influence). Nobody looks at whether they are capable enough to teach or not. If teachers are not appropriate then how would they teach children? If government schools had hard working teachers like private schools, then people would have sent their wards to these schools”.

This shows that it is the system that allows corruption in the appointment and such kind of entry in the education system further leads to deterioration in the quality of teaching. Here, Drury is right in arguing that corruption entered in hiring teachers. Applicants are selected or taken not on the basis of qualifications and ability but on the basis of bribes or influence. The authorities in the system are involved in corruption and favouritism, which prevents them from hiring the ‘best and brightest’ of the teachers available (Drury, 1993). Thus, all teachers are not appointed professionally.

Some teachers being incapable enter in the profession due to their political backup and do not perform their committed tasks. Lack of commitment to one’s profession hinders better academic outcomes. They do not know how to teach and how to behave with students. The teacher is the main source of providing education and that is why compromise in recruiting teachers leads to deterioration in teaching quality. It is found that along with teaching, various kinds of non-academic duties are given to teachers that prevent them from teaching. A middle class father expressed that *“Government schools are good but political interference has deteriorated its quality. Education should be the first concern of society”*. It is the system that puts pressure on

teachers, demotivates them and then the same system places the teacher to take the blame for all ills of the system.

Distinction of 'Us' vs 'Them'

It is evident that there is a 'we feeling' within the middle class families. Families who choose private school for their children, distinguish themselves and their children from those whose children are going to government primary or secondary schools. Middle class families who have the capacity to pay, distinguish themselves from those who do not. They see them as poor who do not need to pay, as everything is free of cost, whether it is books, uniforms or scholarships.

Middle and lower middle class parents perceive that government school is not for people like 'them' but for the poor "*whose child's future is in danger*". They are aware of the situation and the background of children studying in these schools. They know that government school children only go for food. They do not want to experiment with their children's future. A lower middle class mother from New Nagar stated:

"The main thing is the atmosphere of the school. In government schools, children of labourers and poor families come to school and their way of talking, eating and behaving is very different (rough). Children from a good socio-economic background come to private school. The atmosphere of the school affects children – how they interact with their peers and friends, what they learn, how they behave. The way of talking, eating, behaving is taught differently in private schools".

Middle class parents are of the view that if they put their children in government schools, the socio-economic backgrounds of children of these schools would affect their children's speech, personality and behaviour. They do not want the negative impact of peers on their children from poor families who do not value academic success. Instead, they want a particular kind of atmosphere unlike government schools so that their children would learn and interact with children from similar backgrounds.

They view that poor who cannot afford, send their children to 'free' government school for they have no option. For instance, one of the middle class mothers said:

“Children of lower backgrounds such as Rickshaw pullers attend government school. If a child of an officer would go to this school, then his/her language would change and the atmosphere would also affect him/her. My children are locked inside the house and study and do not go out to play. Government school children are out for the whole day to play and loiter around and do not study”.

This statement shows how the middle class mother distinguishes her class from the poor in terms of lifestyles, ways of speech or talking and behaviour. The mother is very particular about her children's studies and control their activities at home. She perceives that her children are unlike government school children, who instead of studying play and loiter around wasting their time. Middle class parents do not want their children to be mixed with poor children. One of the lower middle class fathers from New Nagar said:

“Hundred meters away from New Nagar, in Gadi Basti, a government primary school runs dependent on God (bhagwan bharose chal raha hai). Children from poor backgrounds come to this school. If I put my child in that school dependent on God then what will happen to him?”

This shows that middle class parents perceive that government school where not much teaching takes place is for 'them' and not for 'us'. They do not want to spoil their children's future by sending them to government schools. This shows class differences in selecting a school.

Thus, it is clear that middle class families dislike and do not choose government school because it does not meet their expectations and is not for 'people like us'. In times of competition, anxious middle class parents do not want to take risks of their children's education. Parents raise the issue of the quality of education saying that, *“if the quality of teaching were good in government schools, then why do we need to spend so much money in private schools by cutting our expenses”*. Middle class

parents' awareness and involvement in their child's education have increased. Low-quality state-run school system has been abandoned by everyone who can afford for an alternative. Children of middle and lower middle class families whose parents can afford are going to private schools and the rest of them whose parents can not afford remain in government schools.

Government schools are judged by families on the basis of ability to teach and produce better students. Even the lower middle class families whose income restrict them, prefer affordable low fee private schools instead of government schools for they believe that their children would learn something. Parents are concern about their position in society. Thus, it is noted that middle class families' trust in government school system has gone (based on their own and other's experiences) and this led them to refuse it for their own children.

III. Middle Class Rationale for Private Schooling

This section discusses the factors behind the choice of private school. For middle class families, education is an important tool to achieve their aspirations and goals for better life prospects. Majumdar (2017) expressed that due to discouraging employment scenario, the middle class is anxious about "the intense competition that their children will have to face in their educational journey and beyond. It is possible that this fretfulness has driven them to opt for ostensibly 'better' quality education in private school, while at once remaining keen to have 'better' quality jobs in the public sector" (p. 324).

To know the factors behind the choice of private school, parents are asked why they preferred private school for their children and they justify their choices differently. Parents from middle class fractions view that they never thought of putting their children in lower quality government school as they are able to afford a better¹⁸ private school (quality may vary). They do not compromise with the quality of school. Private schools take money but according to them, they provide better education than

¹⁸ The meaning of 'better' private school differs from family to family. For middle class families, 'better' means renowned or good quality school; while for lower middle class families it is good quality school or low fee private school compared to government school.

government schools. For some parents, perceptions of other benefits such as job opportunities, discipline, curricular activities, good educational atmosphere, and better results are important considerations.

Middle class fractions select private schools¹⁹ for a variety of reasons. For some parents, issues of good quality education, status, proficiency in English language, are primary motivating factors. Middle class compared to lower middle class families have sound earnings and good economic status to afford better private schooling for their children. The quality of schools and education was in the priority list of parents. They select good quality schools keeping in mind the long term returns from it. The private schools work harder with students to produce good academic results in order to attract more and more children from middle class families. Thus, parents and schools together put effort into their children's education to make them do better.

Middle class parents report that they choose private schools for 'good' quality education. What they mean by 'good' education is quality teaching by using teaching techniques and materials other than textbooks. For instance, a middle class father from Jai Prakash Nagar mention that the school in which his child is going has smart classes based on EDUCOMP. He said:

“Now a days competition is tough. I want a strong base for my son from the beginning so that he may not face any problems later. The school uses EDUCOMP classes and LCD projector in teaching to make children understand better. Activities are used to clarify the concept. The standard of teaching is good. The educational atmosphere is friendly. Well trained teachers are there who understand children's psychology and academic needs and handle them accordingly”.

Father's statement shows his anxiety and consciousness for the strong foundation of his son's education from the early age to avoid the problems of future. He and some

¹⁹ These private schools are of different qualities. There are around 21 private schools where children from families of these middle class fractions are going. Among these 21 schools, 18 schools are recognized and 3 schools are unrecognized schools. Among these 9 schools are high fee, 7 are medium fee and 5 are low fee private schools.

other middle class parents view that good private schools use various new teaching techniques and technologies such as LCD projectors and other activities, etc. in the classrooms to provide ‘good’ quality education to children. Parents feel that principals and teachers of private schools are responsive towards their concerns and demands. Middle class parents are more vocal in demanding good education and private schools work hard to provide it. Teachers focus on teaching for the better educational foundation of students.

According to parents from middle class families, teaching in private school is good because teachers have pressure upon them from parents and school management. In this regard, a lower middle class mother said:

“Parents are vocal against teachers and control them and this gives good results. This helps in raising the name and fame of the school and to attract more children for admission. Second thing is teachers know that they will be kicked out if they do not teach well. Due to this pressure, they work hard”.

Parents pay money and are vocal against low quality teaching and learning. They use their voice to have control over teachers and school and they believe that this control produces good academic results that enhances the status of the school as well as that of their children too. This attracts more parents towards these private schools. Another reason parents give is that teachers work hard to provide quality education because they know that they have a job till they perform well and if there is any complaint against them then they will lose their job.

Parents from middle class families believe that private schools are sincere from the beginning and always try to improve their ways of teaching and learning. However, today although the income of non-literate and poor people is low, they also want to educate their children in private schools because the teaching and educational atmosphere is good. They make every possible effort to support their children’s education. Private schools attract these families due to English medium instruction.

Motivation due to English as a Medium of Instruction

English has long been a social class marker in the modern society. Many scholars see 'English' as an "ideological vehicle" because "it has value that exceeds its practical use" (Francis and Ryan, 1998; cited from Park and Nancy, 2004: 646). It is seen that "the practical mastery of English is an increasingly valuable commodity throughout the world" (ibid. 646). It has been "the language of domination, status and privilege in India" (Scrase and Scrase, 2009: 131). Fernandes (2006) argued that "Command over English represents a form of cultural capital of middle class identity since the possession of such language skills can be transformed into social and economic capital in the labour market. Language in this context is not merely a transparent medium for the expression of predefined class identity; rather, the distinctiveness of this middle class identity is constituted by language" (p. 69).

However, the influence of English language is evident in the middle classes who are motivated to choose private schools for having English as a medium of instruction. They are aware of the fact that English language proficiency and skills are the market demand and crucial for gaining entry to higher or professional institutions and the job market. They know that one cannot do without it as it is an important means to fulfil one's aspirations and to gain a better position in the occupational hierarchy and society. Parents choose English medium private schools for they are aware, as La Dousa (2007) argued, that the schools that separate themselves on the basis of medium of instruction "provide a vehicle of middle class aspirations in India's liberalizing economy" (p. 972).

There is a broad consensus among parental preferences for English medium private schools rather than the poor-quality Hindi medium government schools for their children. Almost all the children of respondents of Jai Prakash Nagar and New Nagar localities except one²⁰ child are going to English medium private schools.

Middle class(es) provide several reasons for choosing English medium private schools. It is evident from the table 4.4 that for majority of the middle class(es) English

²⁰ A girl from a lower middle class family of New Nagar goes to an unrecognized private school where the medium of instruction is Hindi.

medium education is a must to get a job. Some of the families see English medium education as necessary for higher education and professional courses and some view that it enhances fluency in English. However, within the middle class fractions, a majority

Table 4.4: Benefits of English Medium School

Benefits of English Medium School	MC	LMC	Total
To get job	21 (35.6%)	38 (64.4%)	59 (100%)
For higher education and professional courses	13 (52%)	12 (48%)	25 (100%)
Fluency in English	7 (31.8%)	15 (68.2%)	22 (100%)
English is an international language	2 (66.7%)	1 (33.3%)	3 (100%)
To go to other states for study or job	1 (16.7%)	5 (83.3%)	6 (100%)
For strong base in English	1 (20%)	4 (80%)	5 (100%)
Total	45 (37.5%)	75 (62.5%)	120 (100.0%)

Source: Field Data

of the middle class families (66.7%) give importance to English for its international value and for going abroad for higher studies and jobs. They (52%) perceive the importance of English education for higher education and professional courses. On the other hand, most of the lower middle class families (83.3%) value English medium education for it helps in going to other states for study or job purposes where English is in demand. More middle than lower middle class prefer for total English medium private schools.

Middle class fractions see the practical necessity of the English language and express that, *“English is in demand everywhere. Hindi has no value as nobody asks for it. One cannot do without English”*. Parents look down upon Hindi and opt English rather than Hindi medium schools for they do not want their children to experience what they had experienced for lacking hold on English. Some middle class fractions regret for not having an opportunity to study in English medium private schools. Government schools of their time did not emphasize much on teaching of English and that is why parents do not have command over it. Few middle class parents feel shame and humiliated for not gaining proficiency in English and they do not want the same for their children. One of the middle class fathers expresses his sadness for not being able to study in English medium which later hindered him to study Science in a good

college and also to compete in competitive exams. Parents had to struggle to rise from the bottom and they have learn to manoeuvre the system by strategizing and getting things done.

Some lower middle class parents have experienced similar problems due to studying in Hindi medium schools and decide to educate their children in English medium school so that their children might not face the same situations that they had faced. For instance, a lower middle class mother from New Nagar described:

“The time that we see today, nothing happens without English. I had studied in a Hindi medium government school in a village and the teacher did not teach us English properly. When I was in university doing a Master of Arts in Psychology, I had my theory classes in Hindi medium but practical in English and I faced problems. In university, due to lack of English, I feel as if I have not done anything even after completing graduation. I feel like there is no point in having an educational degree without English. Your education is a waste even if you have studied so much and do not know English because English is required everywhere”.

The statement shows that not only middle but lower middle class families feel the necessity of English language according to the need of the present times. Parents choose private schools based on their real-life experiences in order to avoid hindrances that children might face due to lack of English which is a gateway for children to enter into higher studies, for a career or a job. Both middle and lower middle classes see English as an important tool for getting a job. Scrase and Scrase argued that “There is a global rising popularity of English, driven largely by economic and cultural globalisation... English is essential for further education. In any job, an employee has to know English, Hindi alone will not take you anywhere” (2009: 136). Parents want to secure future success for their children by sending them to private English medium schools. Middle class parents who attended government schools note that they are weak in English and are unable to understand or speak because of less importance given to teaching of English language at schools in their times. By

comparing their past with the present time, they realize that fluency in English makes them ‘modern’.

Some middle and few lower middle class families prefer English medium private school for their children keeping higher studies and professional courses in mind. They state that English is required as most entrance exams or standard admission tests and interviews for professional courses like medical, engineering, law, etc. are held in English. As Drury pointed out that “English is seen as more necessary than ever for the competitive examinations (Civil Services, Bank, etc.), for studying science, engineering, or medicine, and for mixing in the right circles. As the national *lingua franca* of the middle and upper classes, it expands the effective ‘catchment area’ for employment; the boy is not limited to the Hindi speaking states, or to India for that matter” (Drury, 1993: 76). Middle class families are more concern for their child’s upward and social mobility and it could be provided by English language skills.

Majumdar (2017) found that “learning and speaking English and a command over the learning language has become the most sought after educational goal of this class” (p. 326) and this craving is linked to employability in the neo-liberal climate. The English language plays a key role in shaping one’s career. It not only boosts one’s career graph but also adds a different dimension to one’s personality. English medium education is thus perceive as opening the scope for further progression in education and career both nationally and globally.

Parents from middle class fractions recognize the need for a better foundation and ‘base’ for their children from the early stage in order to make them comfortable with the language and to increase their linguistic ability and proficiency to benefit them at a higher level of education. It is vital for their future and for that private schools are considered very important for offering better English learning from the early stage of schooling. For instance, a middle class mother said:

“I put my children in English medium school because I want to provide a strong base in English. If the base in English is not strong then the child will not perform better at upper levels. The child will face language problems in understanding. All the books in higher education

are in English whether it is medicine, engineering or law. English from the beginning will strengthen their foundation and children will be proficient in English”.

Parents believe that children will not be able to compete in English till their basics become strong in English. It will help them not to fall behind at the higher levels. They express that English from the beginning develops the fluency in speaking, communicating and expressing one’s thoughts in English. Private English medium schools provide the platform and opportunity to learn it.

However, the desire for English proficiency and fluency is more seen in lower middle rather than in middle class families. They view that English medium schools provide opportunities to become fluent in English which is the language of the elite. “It was the English language itself that counted most for these parents, for its prestige value as well as its practical usefulness. This held true for those who knew some English themselves, and for upwardly mobile parents who did not” (Drury, 1993: 76). English proficiency is required in the job market and those who have command over it have the power to grab the opportunity in the market. Parents aspire for it as the issue of “English language is closely connected to issues of social class, i.e., as shared experience of an aspiring middle class” (Vaid, 2017: 356). Parents “aspire to enable their children to speak English fluently, which is a mark of respectability and prestige. They want to develop that taste (of English/linguistic skills) into their children to fit in the globalised/glocalised/modern society in India or abroad. Knowing and speaking fluent English (linguistic skill) is the means to achieve symbolic capital (that Bourdieu talked about) related to respectability and power” (Das, 2002: 280).

Middle class families express that India is fast becoming a global player. The prosperity of Indians staying abroad attracts more and more Indians to English medium education. By the time children become adults, they will have access to people from various countries, speaking various languages. Possibly the only language that will bind them all together is English. In addition, poor English skills will not help the child to grab opportunities in the multinational companies mushrooming all over the country. These aspirations lead them to go beyond the

national. The parents view English as their ticket to mobility – for going abroad. Similarly, if a child or his/her parent wants the child to study overseas in the USA, UK, or somewhere else, the child will need to prove his/her proficiency in English before he/she could get admission. They see English as a must for communication, especially when one goes for a tour or journey in India or abroad. According to a middle class parent from Jai Prakash Nagar:

“English is required for today’s date. If you see in a broader perspective then English is more accepted internationally. That is why it is indispensable to know English. There are lots of benefits in educating in English medium. If a child studies in English medium, then he would go out of India for higher education or a job in future”.

Middle class families having economic capital and resources desire for English education keeping their child’s future. They aim to send them abroad for better prospects of job opportunities. As Scrase and Scrase (2009) put it, “English is recognised as an important global or international language, essential for professional employment and significantly, a key component of the cultural capital of middle class Indians” (p. 132).

English is seen as valuable for enhancing one’s status and prestige in society by the middle class. Parents believe that people get respect due to English. Even the lower middle class parents aspire to enable their children to talk fluently in English to gain prestige in society. A lower middle class father from New Nagar said: *“English increases your prestige. One becomes smart by speaking English. It is very much needed to attain one’s status”*. They want their children to be part of high societies by speaking fluently in English. Thus, as Scrase and Scrase (2009) argued, “it is an imperative goal for the middle classes to attain English language proficiency as a cultural resource” (p. 132). However, there are some lower middle class families who choose English medium private school but do not seem much concern about English fluency of their children or its effect on their status. The following section talks about other school characteristics that influence school choices.

School Characteristics as Source of Choice Making

Some middle class fractions choose private schools for having good school administration and management. They view that the management of schools differ from each other. It is committed to provide a better learning atmosphere to students and is responsible and answerable towards parents who pay the fees demanded by the school. That is why teachers are strictly governed by the school to monitor their teaching and other activities. In this regard a middle class mother stated:

“If teachers do not come on time in private school, they are questioned for not coming on time. If they are absent, they are asked the reason. If they sit during teaching then they are questioned. If children do not progress then the question is asked, why are children not progressing? Everything is observed. Principal and administration are there to watch whether teachers teach or not. In any school it is necessary to have strictness, routines and discipline which is lacking in government school. That is why teachers do not work hard in government schools”.

In private schools principals have control over teachers and teachers are fired for not teaching properly. A middle class mother said: *“Teachers get salary for each period/class. If they miss even one period then their salary gets deducted”*. Parents are aware of the conditions of private school teachers who are paid for each period. They are not paid for missing the class. Therefore, these teachers of private schools work hard in teaching children and are accountable to the school manager or authority, who can fire them anytime and to the parents, who can withdraw their children from school. Parents view that private school teachers are less absent than government school teachers and are more engaged in teaching activity at any given point in time (Gouda et al., 2014). Middle class families are aware of the work culture and management of private schools, and therefore they choose it for their children.

Discipline

Private schools have reputation for maintaining high standards for discipline and respect. Discipline is found as a reason for choice of private school among middle

class families. Some middle class fractions are concerned more explicitly about discipline, order and control in the school. They see the “notion of learning about the limits of behaviour as extremely important” (David et al., 1994: 138). For some middle class parents discipline is the most important factor for choosing a particular private school for their children because it discourages dangerous behaviour. Parents are concern about instilling some notion of self-discipline at school where children learn to behave in a particular manner. Tribal Christians and a few other families send their children to missionary schools because they believe that missionary schools are good in providing an educational atmosphere and disciplining children. A mother from middle class emphasizes on strict discipline of Convent/Missionary school by stating:

“Background counts a lot. My husband studied in Saint Xavier School. We preferred Convent School because it teaches discipline and manners. Here teachers are very strict and children stay in discipline. There is discipline in other private schools too but children cross their limits in higher classes. Children of missionary schools follow discipline at home also”.

Some middle class parents passed out from the missionary schools and recollect how discipline and the decorum of the school was maintained during their own school days. They know that Fathers and Sisters teach good manners and behaviour to children that is followed at home also. Drury (1993) pointed out that Convent Schools are preferred for ‘atmosphere’ and ‘discipline’. Other than Christian parents, some parents select other private schools for having good discipline for they believe that discipline and manners counts a lot and it remains for life long. Discipline is seen as important for children as it improves their rates of success in academics and help them to acquire ‘good manners’. In this way, parents endeavour what Bourdieu (1986) calls “institutionalised” cultural capital for their children.

Co-Curricular and Extracurricular Activities

Middle class parents opt private schools by looking beyond mere textual transactions. Some parents look for co-curricular and extracurricular activities, music, sports and

games in private schools for the overall development of the child. They select schools that have activities and see celebrations like Parents Day, Teachers Day, Christmas Day, Sports Day, etc. These schools organise several programmes and functions to bring out the innate qualities and talents of children. All these activities are absent in government schools. It is mentioned that there is a difference in the ways games and other activities are being taught in these two types of schools. For instance, a middle class mother from Jai Prakash Nagar said:

“Government schools do not give importance to physical or curricular activities; they only teach the textbooks and courses. Private schools focus on overall development of the child and have lots of activities, programmes, yoga, dance, music, Karate, etc. These are important to enhance the talent of a child”.

Middle class opt private schools that have co-curricular activities, for they view that these schools provide exceptional and challenging educational experiences through these activities. These activities along with the academic studies are seen as good for children to make them active during school hours and also for the development of overall personality. Involvement in these enriched activities help stimulate students in their studies, enhance their talents and skills and develop them as a whole person. Middle class parents are very particular about these activities to enhance and maintain cultural capital. On the other hand, lower middle class are not much concerned about the extra and co-curricular activities.

Private School as a Status Enhancer

Middle class parents and students prefer “schools with students whose families were economically and culturally similar to them in their choice of school” (Ozmantar and Karatasoglu, 2019: 89). Some middle class families prefer to send their children to famous private schools for their status symbol and also to provide the same class society of ‘people like us’ to their children. They believe that it has become a status symbol to admit children in expensive and famous or branded schools. People in the society see each other and compare whether they are of their status or not. Sending

children to a particular school has become a show business. Parents compete with friends and colleagues or with others in society to show which school their child goes to.

Some professional middle class families perceive that government school is for lower class children while private school has children from better homes and backgrounds. They are very conscious about their status and strategize to maintain and demonstrate their status in society by sending children to branded schools. For instance, one of the middle class fathers explains why people yearn for private school:

“We need to maintain our status in society. I feel that sending children to a particular private school is a concept of ‘branding’. People are very particular about the status of the school. They ask where does your son study? Parent feels very proud that his/her child studies in that particular or renowned private school. The fact is it should be a branded school. Friends’ and colleagues’ children are studying in better schools. Many people of my generation studied in government schools but we cannot think the same for today’s generation”.

Those who have economic capital and resources thus, seek to place their children in expensive and famous private schools as sending in these schools is a display of status symbol. In other words, parents prefer schools “whose families were economically and culturally similar to theirs in their choice of school” (Ozmantar and Karatasoglu, 2019: 89). Thus, some middle class parents who are concerned about the competitive environment try to maintain their status by choosing better and renowned private schools for their children. This kind of attitude is not found in the lower middle class. Lower middle class are not conscious about their status for they lack economic capital and resources to maintain it. Even though they aspire for such schools, they are unable to meet the expenses.

Summary

The chapter discusses the middle class parental aspirations for their sons’ and daughters’ further education, occupation and marriage. It is found that majority of the parents from middle class fractions aspire for higher education at least till graduation

for their sons as “the possession of a graduate qualification represents a passport into professional and managerial occupation” (Brown, 1997: 741). However, aspirations differ within middle class fractions where highly educated middle class parents have higher educational aspirations than lower middle class parents. Occupational aspirations are higher in middle class senior government officials, professionals and associate professionals than others at the lower position in the occupational hierarchy. However, despite economic limitation some lower middle class parents want to see their sons in better employment.

Attitudes of parents towards daughters’ future education are much higher in middle rather than lower middle class families. Some middle class parents aspire their daughters to study and do some jobs supporting the idea that “employment is a road to independence” (Scrase and Scrase, 2009: 89). Daughters’ further education is seen important for marriage purposes, i.e., for finding a suitable match, for “accommodating traditional gender roles” (Kohli, 2017: 62), for better socialization and education of children and for household maintenance (Vaid, 2017).

Further, it is found that private schools are chosen by both the fractions of middle class due to the failure of government school system. The choice is justified by providing reasons such as declining quality of teaching learning in government school, good academic teaching in private schools, good discipline, co-curricular activities, good management and so on. Private schools are seen as status enhancers by some of the middle class families. The most preferred factor behind choosing a private school is the motivation due to English as the language of instruction as Majumdar (2017) argued that, “learning and speaking English and a command over the learning language has become the most sought-after educational goal of this class” (p. 326). It is seen as most vital for children’s future and for brightening job prospects.

CHAPTER-V

School Choice Making Process: Strategies, Determinants and Experiences

The “processes by which school choices are made, or indeed whether one gets an opportunity to choose, are complex” (Gibbons and Machin, 2006: 77). Parental choice is part of a social process influenced by social class and social networks (Coleman, 1988). Parents invest their time and efforts in choosing a school. Hatcher (1998) pointed out that “choices are not one-off events but a recursive process” (p. 22). Further Balu and Condliffe (2017) also explained that “School choice is not just one choice. It is a multi-step process that requires families to move through increasingly complex decisions: (1) when and how to start the process, (2) where and how to look for information, (3) how to compare schools, (4) which school(s) to select, and (5) when and how to submit choices and ultimately enroll” (p. 1).

Due to tough competition in educational and job markets, anxious middle class families with school age children worry about getting the best school for their children. They go through the processes and strategies by using different kinds of “resources and powers or assets-property, organization and cultural” to achieve the advantage and reproduce their social class and secure their relative advantage and mobility (Ball, 2003: 18). They act according to their capacities which vary in relation to the assets and other relevant resources available to families” (ibid. 24). Middle class parents as rational actors, try to select better performing school as these schools are part of their plan to pass cultural capital to their children.

This chapter thus discusses the processes of school choice, i.e., how parents go about making choices for their children based on the availability of information and the presence of options and opportunities. It discusses family’s practices and involvement in school choice processes and describes how they decide to go for the private school. The social networks and strategies used by the parents to search about particular school is also presented. The chapter looks at the determinants, factors and past experiences that influence parental decision of selection of schools and examines

these reasons in light of the characteristics of the schools chosen. It therefore in short, seeks to show how parents act as an active choosers of schools.

I. Choice Making Process

Before admitting a child in the preferred school family members go through decision making processes and strategies, i.e., they participate in discussions, seek information, and visit schools to gather all necessary information. Social networks and other sources are used to acquire information and finally decision and selection are done.

Social Networks and Types of Information

Social network is all about how people or groups interact with others inside their networks. These networks comprise of the actors and the relations between those actors. Networks can be a neighbourhood, relatives, friends, colleagues and so on.

Information about various schools is important for parents to select better school for their children. The very first step taken by the families in their choice processes is to use their social capital²¹ to gather necessary information about the available schools in the educational market in and out of the locality. Coleman (1988) explained that “information is important in providing a basis for action” (p. 104) and can be acquired by using one’s network of social relationships. Social capital as defined by Bourdieu (1992), is “the resources that individuals or groups gain by virtue of possessing a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition” (cited from Giddens, 2006: 322). This is possible when parents use different sources and social relations to acquire the information. Francis, Becky and Hutchings (2013) argued that a higher proportion of middle class rather than working class use multiple information sources to choose a school. These sources are “school visits on open days, talking to other parents at the school, school prospectus, local authority, websites, advisers, and other sources” (2013: 3). They approach others as experiences of neighbours, friends and relatives have a great role in choosing the school (Ball and Vincent, 1998).

²¹ Bourdieu and Coleman offer two theories of social capital that have been used in educational research. Bourdieu’s (1986) theory of social capital focuses on different access to institutional resources while Coleman (1988) focuses on “social closure” and emphasizes solidarity, social control, identity and the enforcement of pro-academic norms.

According to Ball (2003), “ties, encounters, links and networks work in various ways in relation to higher education choices and access. They provide important and useful advice and information about choice and careers. This is ‘hot knowledge’, direct and first hand” (p. 85). It means that parents do not have to rely on secondary sources for information. Further, Ball and Vincent (1998) argued that, “Different networks, different grapevines can and do exist within one small locality. Some are loose and amorphous, others tightly knit and firmly bounded. They are constructed within and across localities. They are placed differently in relation to sources of knowledge, are marked by different concerns and priorities, and contain different social resources” (p. 381).

Parents collect information to introduce it into their decision making and process of choosing. Information about the school is obtained from various sources. The use of social capital or network is evident in the data as an important asset for choosing a school. Parents use “social network that provide access to useful information channels” (Coleman, 1990, cited from Diamond and Gomez, 2004: 391). Parents use their “hot knowledge” and “cold knowledge” (Ball, 2003) to navigate and obtain information about particular schools.

Table 5.1: Sources of Information about the School

Sources of Information	MC	LMC	Total
Neighbour	14 (66.7%)	7 (33.3%)	21 (100%)
Friends/Colleagues	16 (51.6%)	15 (48.4%)	31 (100%)
Relatives/Brothers/Sisters	4 (15.4%)	22 (84.6%)	26 (100%)
Children/Other parents	2 (33.3%)	4 (66.7%)	6 (100%)
Newspaper/Media/Internet	4 (57.1%)	3 (42.8%)	7 (100%)
Do not consult others	8 (27.6%)	21 (72.4%)	29 (100%)
Total	45 (37.5%)	75 (62.5%)	120 (100.0%)

Source: Field Data

In this study, parents reported using multiple sources of information to get as much information as they could in order to choose a better school. From the table 5.1 it is evident that majority of the parents (75.8%) rely on their social networks of neighbours, friends/colleagues, relatives, and other parents to inform their decision,

including media or newspaper reports, etc. and school visits. While around 24.2% do not consult with others. Consulting friends/colleagues, relatives and neighbours are the most frequently used networks by the middle class fractions.

Middle class(es) give importance to different sources for seeking information and consultation. Middle class rely more on their neighbours (66.7%) and friends/colleagues (51.6%). Apart from these, they also navigate and search information in the newspaper/media/internet (57.1%). While lower middle class rely more on their relatives (84.6%) and other children or their parents (66.7%) for fetching information. All these sources influence the process of information gathering and decision making. On the contrary, there are 72.4% lower middle compared to middle class (27.6%) families who do not consult others as they lack social networks and connections and do not know whom to contact. Middle class families do not search because they have the necessary information and some knowledge about schools and do not feel the need to consult others.

However, middle class parents actively search schools, acquire needed information and knowledge by using their diverse social networks and contacts. Parents do not want to be dependent on informal or 'cold' knowledge provided by the school. Therefore, they collect 'hot' knowledge from their social connections that are crucial to them. Hot knowledge or "grapevine knowledge is often seen as more reliable than other official sources of information" (Ball and Vincent, 1998: 380) provided by the school. Access to information varies with parental network diversity. Multiple sources of information are used but it's use differ among middle class fractions.

However, neighbours are the easily available, most reliable sources within ones reach from whom one can get information, advice and help. Middle class families rely on neighbours to get as much information as they could for their utility. Neighbours are highly influential in advising and helping to select a particular school for a child. A middle class mother from J. P. Nagar explain that the shift in residence pushed them to seek information from neighbours as they had not much idea about the local private schools. She said:

"I and my husband thought why not talk to neighbours as we were new in the locality. I asked them which school is good in the area? In which

schools are their children going? They said that they send their children to DAV (Bariatu) which is a good school. They updated us with the information of other schools in and outside the locality”.

Middle class parents want inside knowledge of school before selecting the school. “used their networks to gather information about particular schools, learn about new schools, and gather multiple perspectives on a single school” (Bell, 2009: 202). It is found that “first-hand accounts of institutions and their foibles are considered infinitely superior to the second-hand or artefactual information provided in reports or tables and to promotional information like brochures and open days” (Ball, 2003: pp. 100-101).

However, middle class parents are in touch with their larger networks of friends and colleagues, discuss with them, take their opinions, information and advice about the options. It is seen that middle class families especially professionals have strong networks of educated people, colleagues or friends on whom they rely for better information. For instance, a middle class father, who is an officer in sales tax office, elaborated:

“My job is such that I get postings in different places in Jharkhand. So, I decided to put my family in Ranchi. I did not have much idea about the schools. I talked to some of my friends who live in Ranchi. They told me about the schools where their children were going and also about other schools. I also consulted my relatives”.

Another middle class father of Jai Prakash Nagar exclaimed:

“Yes, I consulted my friends and colleagues. I talked to my neighbours to get an idea where their children are going, how these schools are? I mean how is everything inside, the kind of environment, teacher student relationship, activities and so on”.

Middle class parents’ anxiety and their sense of obligation towards their children’s better education make them active to contact their social ties. Information based on rich experiences related to child’s schooling gained from these networks are

important, valuable and useful for middle class parents in choosing schools. In this process of choice, a father uses his strong ties of friends to activate his social capital and network. He talks and consults his friends who are scattered across the city and gets cooperation from them. His friends share their experiences and knowledge about various schools. Middle class families who are more educated and in better position have broader networks of people who could provide rich experiences of child's schooling. It is noted that parents trust on the information giver and utilise information to get benefits in the schooling of children. In this process of choice making, the father uses his skill to activate his social capital and network. Middle class make more efforts than lower middle class families in "networking, visits, collection of materials and information processing" (Ball, 2003: 102).

In majority of the lower middle class families, local and distant relations are used to consult before choosing a school. These parents consult and discuss with their brothers, sisters and other relatives. A lower middle class father from New Nagar, who is a teacher in a private school has a strong bond with his sister, takes suggestion from her regarding the choice of school. One of the lower middle class father expressed: "*My uncle's children studied in a good school. Now they are in college. So, I talked to my uncle who guided me in selecting school*". Children and their parents of the same locality are approached to get the lived experiences and knowledge about different schools. However, it is found that these lower middle class families with low education level have limited social contacts with others. Even after having formal information, due to anxiety and doubts about their own judgements, middle class parents use their ties to achieve information. They use their significant amount of time and social skills to talk to school children and their parents near the school gate or in the bus stop to confirm their information.

Some middle and lower middle class families come to know about schools, activities, service qualities and board results through the advertisements and information in the media/internet, newspapers, pamphlet, announcements, roadside posters, teacher's personal visit to home, and so on. Examination results of different schools are useful

as a guide to help parents to compare the standards and quality of the school. On the other hand, this also informs parents about the school's expectations and performance of their students. Through these examinations results, schools create an environment to attract parents and better performing students.

It is the competitive pressures and the need for sustainability in the education market that motivate private schools to use marketing strategies and tools to influence parental attitudes, increase awareness of school qualities/facilities and enrollment. According to O'Connor (2019) "Individual schools took different tactics both to position themselves as desirable and to have some control over their applicants" (p. 1023). David et al. (1994) found that "advertisements featured is a function of the changing climate under open enrollment, with schools trying to maximize the number of applicants and hence new entrants (and associated funding) to the school" (p. 65). Middle class parents as a consumer, strategize and actively search to grab the opportunity to put their children in a better private school for future academic success and mobility in the occupational hierarchy.

However, there are some middle class fractions who do not approach or consult others. Some of the middle class parents had attended private schools in Ranchi themselves when they were young. They had been socialised to see school choice as an option. Therefore, they do not see the need of approaching others for help as they rely on their own experiences about the school.

These parents "who did not conduct search were not lazy or disinterested but they knew the local schooling market" from prior experiences, felt confident that the school in their mind was what they wanted (Bell, 2009: 198). While on the other hand, some lower middle class parents are 'limited choosers' who used none of the source of information (Francis, Becky and Hutchings, 2013). In other words, they are isolated individuals who are not rich in having social networks. This shows that for "these parents, choice of school is not the anxiety ridden process" (Ball and Vincent, 1998: 384).



Plate 5.1: Advertisement through buses for private school admission



Plate 5.2: Advertisement of Private school through a wall painting

It is noted that parents choose not to conduct searches as they are comfortable with the nearby school. For instance, one of the lower middle class father from New Nagar stated: *“I did not search for school. I did not need to consult others. The school is in the locality, near to my home”*. It is evident that some lower middle class do not consult others for being disconnected or having low social networks and they rely on their own. They do not really bother as all schools are the same for them. Nevertheless, middle class families strategize according to their needs to get better, adequate and instant information on school quality, curriculum and teaching, teachers, discipline, fee structure, school atmosphere, reputation and so on. To gather information and use it effectively is an important form of social capital.

However, along with this informal information gathering, middle class parents visit schools for formal information or ‘cold knowledge’ (Ball, 1998). Bauch and Goldring (1995) found that parents as educational consumers “engage in a greater number of search activities in choosing a school such as visiting more than one school, gathering information during school visits, and seeking the advice of parents who already had children enrolled in the schools” (p. 2). Majority of the parents visit several private schools (3 to 4 or more schools) in and out of the locality. More middle than the lower middle class parents who visit to enquire and consult the principal, teachers and other staff members directly for first-hand information and advice. They have gone through the prospectus for details which is a good source of ‘cold knowledge’ generated by the school.

The percentage of lower middle class parents is higher than the middle class parents who do not visit the schools. They do not see the importance of visiting and fetching information about it. Parents of lower middle class in the lower professions are less educated and less informed and that is why they hesitate to visit the school to collect information about the school. They consult with the children and their parents. On the contrary, few middle class parents who are old dwellers and studied in the same locality, have some knowledge about particular school where they want to put their child and that is why they do not feel the need of visiting the school.

Thus, it is found that middle class fractions strategize and look for school information on practical matters specific to their needs and convenience and these are provided by

multiple social networks and sources. Even though parents visit schools and have ‘cold knowledge’, they rely on first hand experiences as they believe that school data does not tell the whole truth in assessing and evaluating a school for their children. Network ties facilitate valuable and useful information and help in the selection of a better school. Lower middle class compared to middle class families do not have adequate social networks and social capital to access information. They are restricted to few sources such as relatives, neighbours, and other parents. Middle class parents are more active in fetching and accessing information for having sufficient social capital compared to lower middle class.

The question that arises then is what type of information parents look for or access through these networks and visit to school. Bell explained, “The information that flows across social networks is another type of social capital that has been linked to parents’ school selection” (Bell, 2009: 195). Different types of information are sought out about various schools according to the needs to make apt decisions about which particular schools they should apply for their child. According to Bridge (1978), “parents’ information changes over time and that lower income families eventually receive information similar to that of higher income families, indicating that socio-economic status may not play a decisive role in determining how and why parents make school choices (cited from Bauch and Goldring, 1995: 3).

There are various kinds of information parents sought to know about a particular school. These can be put into two categories, i.e., academic and non-academic. Academic is related to teaching learning processes and studies, curricular activities, and so on, while non-academic is related to infrastructure, management of the schools, fee structure, etc. The table 5.2 gives the details of types of information collected by the families. The findings show that information about teaching-learning and academic results are more important for middle class fractions. Majority of the families try to know about the teaching learning processes, i.e., the quality of teaching or how the study goes inside the classroom and the school results. Some families enquire about the teacher’s quality and some about the distance between home and school. Other school related information is also sought by the families, such as about school fee, and discipline. Within the middle class fractions, around 83.3% middle class families enquire about the reputation and management, 80% about curriculum,

Table 5.2: Types of information sought by families

Type of Information	MC	LMC	Total
Teaching-learning/study/result	20 (48.8%)	21 (51.2%)	41 (100%)
Discipline/rules	4 (33.3%)	8 (66.7%)	12 (100%)
School reputation/Management	5 (83.3%)	1 (16.7%)	6 (100%)
Teacher/Teacher's care	6 (37.5%)	10 (62.5%)	16 (100%)
School fee	2 (11.8%)	15 (88.2%)	17 (100%)
Curriculum/activities/sports	4 (80%)	1 (20%)	5 (100%)
Distance and Bus facility	2 (11.8%)	15 (88.2%)	17 (100%)
Atmosphere/infrastructure/Facility	2 (33.3%)	4 (66.7%)	6 (100%)
Total	45 (37.5%)	75 (62.5%)	120 (100.0%)

Source: Field Data

activities, sports and 48.8% about teaching-learning and results in the school. On the contrary, around 88.2% lower middle class families navigate information about school fee and distance, and 66.7% about discipline, rules and regulations. These are the kinds of information that middle class fractions particularly look for.

However, middle class families are more explicit about the type of information they look for. They navigate various kinds of information according to their children's educational needs and priorities. Majority of the middle class fractions enquire about the quality of teaching. For instance, a middle class father from J. P. Nagar said:

“Quality education was in the priority list. I sought about the quality of teaching in a particular school, how do teachers teach there? Because low quality education is of no use for us. If I want my child to excel and do the best then quality education is must. Competition is such that there is no option but to choose the best school”.

Middle class families value quality education and they enquire each and every detail whether it's of teaching-learning, students' performances, teacher's quality or school results. All these details matter a lot to these families for the final selection of a particular school. Schneider and Buckley (2002) found that academic and teacher quality are the most important reasons given by parents in their choice of school.

Along with this, middle class parents look for the reputation and status of the school based on academic results and other things because the choice of these schools, however, is much more than an investment. It is also an expression of family tradition. A middle class father from J. P. Nagar said:

“I wanted better academic environment for my children. I searched about how the school is in terms of its academic reputation. Whether the school has good academic results? What is the quality of teaching faculty? How are the teaching-learning and discipline in the school? The reputation of the school depends on all these things”.

Another middle class father has the same view. He stated:

“I wanted to put my child in a branded school. Why I say branded is because in branded school you will get good education and good discipline. The child’s performance makes the school branded”.

Some middle class families from Jai Prakash Nagar locality, mainly professionals and government officials are very particular about the status of the school. They perceive that the status of the school is enhanced by good quality education and discipline. They want their children to be in such a school which has name and reputation based on students’ academic performance. They want their children to be in such schools where children come from similar backgrounds. They also check the background of the children in these schools whether it matched with their backgrounds or not. One of the middle class families enquire about children’s background i.e., the type of families (*ghar ka mahaul kaisa hai*) they are coming from and the school environment.

Middle class parents navigate about the curriculum and other activities in the school. They want non-academic activities along with academics for their children. For instance, one of the middle class fathers from J. P. Nagar stated:

“I wanted extra-curricular activities for my child. So, I searched about the curriculum, and other activities that schools have for student’s development. I checked in the internet about activities, where do they go for outing or picnic, for e.g., tour to other places or states, etc. I

checked about competitions (inter schools or inter-state) in which these schools participated, etc. These are essential for the development of children and they get motivation from it”.

Middle class parents are concern about the all-round development of the child and therefore, they are particular about extra-curricular activities to make children active and energetic in every aspects of learning at school and for the enhancement of cultural capital.

On the other hand, it is not the same with lower middle class families with lower income who are more concern about the school fee. They enquire about the fee that schools charge. For instance, a lower middle class father from New Nagar said:

“While consulting my relatives and neighbours, I first enquired about the school fee. I told them to suggest me those schools that provide better education in low fee. I asked about the distance and preferred to search nearby school so that I do not have to pay for transportation”.

Lower middle class are restricted by their economic constraints and therefore they search for information that suit their pocket and their ability to pay. They search for school keeping fee structure in mind. They see the distance of the school to save the expenses on transportation. Thus, parents enquire or sought various types of information about school, study, teachers, result, discipline, school environment, school fee and so on. After seeking needed information parents discuss among themselves in the family and take the final decision about the school.

Final Decision about the School

Studies show that the context of parental decision-making is far more complex than the result of individual rational calculations of the economic return of their investment in particular education options (Hatcher, 1998). Decisions about which school a child would go are “arrived at via the rational calculation were the key figures of risks, benefits and the possibilities of success and failure within a framework of ends or

goals and an awareness of competition” (Ball, 2003: 16). In the school choice processes, it is a matter of fact to know about “who actually were involved in the decision-making process and who actually decided. How decisions were made within the family or household context” (David et al. 1994: 16). Both parents participate in decision making process to maximize benefits for their children. They “seek information, evaluate prospective schools and select their preferred school. Parents also enter the market place with differing values, beliefs, information and resources. All of these things help determine the schools that parents desire and are able to choose for their children” (Wilson, 2005: 175).

In majority of the families of middle class(es), both the parents i.e., mother and father are the key figures involved in conversation and discussion regarding child’s schooling. In three families especially joint, elders take part in providing opinions and views. In some families (almost all from lower middle class except one) both parents and the respondent’s father are involved in the discussion. In few middle class families it is the mother and others (her sister and daughter) who take part in deciding about school selection. Parents and other family members discuss about both academic and non-academic issues related to school. Gender roles in decision making process differ at the level of family. The key figures who take final decision differs in the families as “the constitution of the family and the household varies” (Ball, 2003: 24). After the discussion and consultation with others, the final decision is taken by the family members.

Table 5.3: Family participation in taking final decision about the school

Persons	MC	LMC	Total
Both parents	25 (51.0%)	24 (49%)	49 (100%)
Father	12 (21.8%)	43 (78.9%)	55 (100%)
Mother	5 (55.6%)	4 (44.4%)	9 (100%)
Grandparents	2 (40%)	3 (60%)	5 (100%)
Daughter/uncle	1 (50%)	1 (50%)	2 (100%)
Total	45 (37.5%)	75 (62.5%)	120 (100%)

Source: Field Data

The Table 5.3 shows that in majority of the families, the main responsibility in the family for deciding on children’s education is entirely on fathers. In some families

both parents take the responsibility. In few families, it is the mothers who take the final decision. If we see within the middle class(es), then participation of both parents is 51.0% in the middle and 49% in the lower middle class families. However, the percentage of fathers in the lower middle class (78.9%) is more than the middle class fathers (21.8%) in taking the final decision. In middle class families, large number of mothers (55.6%) have the sole responsibility in taking the final decision. Grandfathers take the final decision in around 60% of the lower middle class families. In one of the middle class families where the father stays away from home, the final decision is of daughter's.

Families in which mothers get the chance to take final decision is due to certain reasons such as mothers are highly educated, are local residents of Ranchi and know better about schools, a few are teachers, fathers are involved in business and have no time to search schools. These mothers are graduates and post graduates. A middle class mother from J. P. Nagar who is a law graduate, explained:

“My husband is a doctor and is very busy in his work. So, child's educational responsibility is upon me. Therefore, I searched for and decided in which school to send my daughter”.

Highly educated mothers participate in taking final decision regarding child's admission in particular school. Another mother, resident of New Nagar, from middle class family is a post graduate and a teacher in an elementary school, shares her view that her decision to put her child in the same school where she is teaching and not in other school is due to convenience. She stated:

“I am a teacher in Cluny School and decided to put my child in Cluny. There was nobody to rely on if I put my child in other school. In this school the child will not face any difficulty as the matter of dropping and picking up from and to school is easy”.

Middle class mothers who are educated and working are empowered to take the final decision in some families. Their participation matters a lot in the family. Not only middle but highly educated lower middle class mothers also participate in taking final

decision in terms of school selection. For instance, a lower middle class mother who is a post graduate, decides keeping in mind the nearby school to avoid wastage of time. She said:

“I wanted to send my child to nearby school to avoid the bus issue. I know how the time is wasted in bus and the child gets tired. Also, you keep worrying if the child comes late. That is why I insisted to admit child in the nearby school”.

Mothers get the chance to fetch information and take the final decision as fathers do not have time due to their work or business. Important factors are kept in mind by the parents and other family members based on their priority while deciding and selecting the school. The particular school is chosen on the basis of the school background, board, school environment, status of the school, discipline, distance, and so on. After choosing a particular school for children, parents apply in different private schools for children’s admission.

Applying for Children’s Admission in Private Schools

The next step after the final decision is to apply for children’s admission in a particular private school. Parents conduct a “closed search procedure to select a school for their child. A closed search is a process in which parent has two, sometimes three schools in mind” (Bell, 2009: 198). Parents explore all the possible options to get their children admitted in a good preferred private school. However, this endeavour varies according to the situations and capacity of parents to fulfil the criteria of admission process. The table 5.4 shows the number of schools parents apply for their children’s admission.

Parents have a range of options of private schools. A majority of parents apply in one private school and their children get admission in that school. Some parents try for second school, some in three, a few in four schools and a very few in more than four schools; so that their children may get admission in any one of these schools. Only those private schools are applied that have certain attributes that parents prefer. About 51.1% middle and 60.0% lower middle class families apply in one private school. A

few middle class families (4.4%) apply in four private schools so that they may not miss the chance of admission in preferred schools.

Table 5.4: Number of private schools applied to for admission of a child

No. Of Schools	MC	LMC	Total
One School	23 (51.1%)	45 (60.0%)	68 (100%)
Two Schools	6 (13.3%)	21 (28.0%)	27 (100%)
Three Schools	10 (22.2%)	6 (8.0%)	16 (100%)
Four Schools	4 (8.9%)	3 (4.0%)	7 (100%)
More than four Schools	2 (4.4%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (100%)
Total	45 (100%)	75 (100%)	120 (100%)

Sources: Field Data

Middle class parents “did ‘open search’, began with a large set of schools and over time... narrowed to smaller set of schools from which they ultimately selected” (Bell, 2009: 198). Around 48.9% middle class parents apply in more than one private school that they had in their mind. They do not seek out other schools and apply in these private schools. Due to stiff competition and parents’ fear of child’s inability to get through the first choice led them to try for the second or the third best options available to them hoping that their child may get admission in any one of these. Thus, parents apply in those schools which have those factors that satisfy parental desires. For instance, a lower middle class father from New Nagar stated:

“I had applied in four private schools, i.e., Oxford, Bishop Westcott, Saint Thomas and Saint Xavier. I did not want to take risk and miss the chance of admission of my son. My son’s age was not complete for class I admission in Saint Thomas. I was told that there is no seat in Bishop Westcott but later I succeeded in getting my child admitted in this school”.

The father’s statement shows that he applies in more than one private schools so that if the child does not get selected in one school, he has the chance of getting selected in the second, third or fourth school. He does not want to miss the opportunity by applying in one private school. He strategizes and uses his skills accordingly to get his

child admitted to the preferred school. The next section discusses the determinants of school choice among middle class families.

II. Determinants of School Choice

Parental “choice is a complex matter and is not easily arrived at or satisfied” (David et al.,1994: 78). It depends upon the social context, parental experiences, their aspirations and expectations of the future. This section endeavours to explore the factors that influence parental choice of a particular private school. In other words, what aspects of school that parents look for or prefer in choosing a particular school? It is found that middle class parents from different socio-economic backgrounds having different educational histories and resources, look for different school characteristics according to their aspirations and needs. They do not have equal access to information and resources. This is the reason why they differ in their choices. The reasons for the preference of a particular private school vary between families. Some parents attempt to make an informed decision based on what they think is best for their children with different features of schools appealing to different people.

Middle class fractions are quite selective, strategic and well informed about the education system (Hatcher, 1998). After getting the needed amount of information from different sources, parents reach to take decisions and opt particular private school on the basis of some specific characteristics important for them. Different families are motivated by different factors and different priorities based on resources and contexts. Several studies have shown that parental choices are influenced by the reasons such as good academics, discipline, good teachers, curricular activities, school environment, distance, convenience, school status and so on. Parents base their school choice decision on factors related to quality of education and on factors that have nothing to do with the quality of education (Schneider and Buckley, 2002).

However, Bell (2009) in his study coded these reasons into six categories: i) “Holistic (child’s overall development), ii) Academic (classroom teaching learning, curriculum, good teachers, learning resources), iii) Social (friends are going there, child knows people there, students are too rough, relational concern), iv) Logistic (location,

transportation, cost issues), v) Administrative (school's paperwork requirement, missed application deadline), vi) Other such as Cultural" (p. 199). Bauch and Small (1986) developed a "typology listing four dimensions of parents' reasons for school choice in private schools. These are academic and curriculum, discipline and safety, religion and values, and transportation and proximity reasons" (cited from Bauch and Goldring, 1995: 2). David et al. (1994) stressed that "these reasons should not be seen in isolation as they were always given in combination (p. 81).

In this study, determinants of choice of a particular private school are categorised into four main factors, such as: (1) Good School, (2) Geographical Proximity and Transportation, (3) School fee, and (4) Religious/Cultural values. These factors include many variables such as good teaching, English medium²², academic achievement, good teachers, teacher's care, distance and convenience, fee, discipline, school environment, moral education, school status, and so on. Parents are motivated by different factors kept in their priority list while choosing a particular private school for their children. It is found that both middle and lower middle class families emphasise equally in giving some of the reasons.

a. 'Good School'

When asked by the parents why they choose a particular private school for their child, it is answered that it is a 'good school'. Every parent wants to send his/her children to a private school which is 'good' in all or some aspects. What parents mean by a 'good school' is important in knowing the reason behind their choice of a school because the choice is influenced in some or the other way by their perceptions of a 'good school'. The general perception is that a 'good school' has everything, i.e., good quality teaching-learning, instruction in English, curriculum and syllabus, good academic results, good and caring teachers, good discipline, safe and good school atmosphere, co-curricular activities, spaces, reputation and status, good buildings, infrastructure and all the facilities such as electricity, drinking water, toilet, sports/games equipment, libraries, labs, and so on.

²² The reason behind the choice for English medium private school is discussed in Chapter 4 under the title 'Motivation due to English as a Medium of Instruction'.

However, the understanding of what constitutes a 'good school' is desperate within the middle class(es) and the meanings of good school vary. There are specific factors that some parents emphasise on. Irrespective of their occupational position, a large number of middle class parents view good quality education as the most important marker of a 'good school' where the private school is committed to provide standard education through a stimulating curriculum and facilities. These parents give priority to academic results. Waldrop (2004) viewed that private schools are "consumer goods and therefore hierarchically ordered by the consumer in terms of prestige, educational quality and popularity" (p. 204). Middle class parents choose these famous private schools because of its "strong academic reputation' (Goldring and Hausman, 1999). Some middle class parents who are highly educated and from professional backgrounds with good financial status, give importance to the reputation of the school because it has its history of toppers (highest test scores) created by the academic excellence of the students of that particular private school. For instance, a middle class father from J. P. Nagar expressed:

"I admitted my children in Bishop Westcott because it is a renowned school. It remains the top most school since the earlier times. Good quality education is provided here. Maximum students of this school become doctors, engineers, IAS, etc. The school has good teachers, good administration, various curricular activities, big play ground, horse riding, and so on".

This shows that good quality education and good academic results that lead to good occupational position influence parents to choose a particular private school. Parents want their children to study with children of similar ability (Power et al. 2003). It is noted that the father knows that this particular school works better towards academic standards and is famous for "an environment in which academic success would be encouraged and celebrated" (Power et al., 2003: 51). Schneider and Buckley (2002) found that "higher income individuals with a concern for academics choose better performing schools, leaving the children of lower income parents behind in low performing schools" (p. 134).

There are few middle class parents for whom the size, space and infrastructure of the private school building matters as these indicate the reputation and status of a 'good school'. The big school building with much space is seen as essential for children to play and do activities. Few private schools are considered to be at the top in the education market. These schools are Bishop Westcott (Boys and Girls), Saint Thomas, Delhi Public School, DAV Shyamli, Loreto Convent, Sarla Birla, Surendranath Centenary School and so on. Lareau et al. (2016) found that "These schools also consistently appear as the 'best schools' in the list, and they receive relatively high ranking on websites and blogs" (p. 283). Jeffery, Jeffery and Jeffery (2006) argued that "school campuses are clearly major contributors, but they also help to give meaning to the buildings that surround the schools. School buildings copy models derived from India and elsewhere..." (p. 328). These buildings attract middle class fractions. Also, parents want to maintain their social status by boasting that their child studies in this particular private school and by distancing themselves from others they perceive to be of lower socio-economic backgrounds.

One of the middle class fathers prefers Sarla Birla School for his son for having experienced faculty, teaching techniques (use of ICT, EDUCOMP) and other facilities. Teacher's quality is what parents value most because students' achievement is affected by their teachers. The father does not see the distance of the school which is far away (8 – 9 km away) from home because he is aware of the quality of services and reputation of the schools of Birla group in India and abroad. It is evident that high fee or costlier private schools are preferred by advantaged middle class parents for having students from similar family backgrounds and status. It is to provide better school environment with similar student peers and culture. Lareau et al. (2016) found that "parents were able to access high status schools, which they hope will transmit advantages to their children" (p. 280). Middle class families are status conscious and select school which suits their taste they have based on certain standards.

It is found that preference for academic aspects is as strong among lower middle class parents as it is among middle class parents. Some of the parents from lower middle class see the quality of education as an important factor in a 'good school' regardless

of infrastructure or big buildings. The size of the school building does not matter in terms of studies and parents do not believe that any school that has a big and good building is really a 'good school'. A lower middle class mother feels that all private schools are good and emphasises that necessary education is provided in a small private school too. Low socio-economic status constraints these parents to believe that their children would be able to read and write even in low fee private schools.

Few middle class parents emphasise on good care given to children in school. Regarding care, one of the middle class mothers from J. P. Nagar stated:

“Cluny Convent is a good and nearby school. Teachers are very good and caring. They take care of little children – in the class, during lunch break, toilet, or anything. They are like guardians. If the child is sick then they call parents through phone. They allow parents to take their sick child after signing on the leave application. The principal is also very good”.

Middle class parents especially those whose children are at primary levels, emphasise on good care given by teachers in the school. They see teachers as a significant factor in choice of good school. They feel connected with the school where teachers take good care of students and pay individual attention to them.

Middle class fractions believe that a 'good school' maintains proper discipline and everything under control, whether it is bullying or violence or entry of outsiders in the school premises. It instils moral values, good manners and habits to shape children's lives. Here by discipline, parents mean the behaviour of a child and “about setting rules and boundaries to children's behaviour” (David et al. 1994: 90). For middle class parents, school atmosphere is important for children's learning which has its influence for life long. They are concerned about their children's safety and security and particularly about “whether their children would 'cope' and whether they would 'fit in'” (Power et al. 2003: 52). Middle class families are conscious about children's peer group relations and they want their children to remain distant from the company of bad students as it affects the academic result and children's behaviour. They are particular about discipline and worried about children's exposure to 'wrong' types of

socialisations (Byrne, 2006, 2009). A few lower middle class parents want their children to be safe from falling into unwanted wrong crowd, quarrelling and wrong activities.

Along with all these, some parents feel that a ‘good school’ focuses on the all-round development of the child and, therefore, has several co-curricular activities and sports/games along with education. A lower middle class father mention that a ‘good school’ has all the arrangements along with education for the all-round development (*sarvangeen vikas*) of a child. In his words:

“It is not that only teaching-learning is better in a good private school. There is focus on all round development (sarwangeen vikas) of a child. All types of arrangements along with education such as of art, music, dance, sports and games are there. All these help in the development of a child”.

Parents strategize and select those private schools that cater to education as well as arrangements for personality development of the child. As Ball (2003) described that “families themselves... engage in the enterprise of education with a dual agenda; on the one hand are the developmental needs of their child and on the other their concerns about ensuring that their child acquires credentials for use in the labour market and thus the reproduction or enhancement of position and advantage” (p. 98).

Moreover, in the processes of choosing a school, parents who have “more education are more likely to place higher value on education attainments, therefore, their attitudes and actions tend to reflect their interest in education” (Coleman and Hoffer, 1987). They believe that education is important, therefore, they are familiar with the types of education different types of schools have to offer, and they find themselves in a position where they could make informed decisions and choices about their children’s education. Along with good school, distance of school from home matters a lot in school choice.

b. Geographical Proximity and Transportation

Geographical (location/area) factor or place of residence influences school selection. Proximity is significant for easy access. Distance seems to be an important factor and

serious concern in parents' decision-making processes as they want young child to be safe and close to home. According to Schneider and Buckley (2002) "Location of a school is important for a variety of obvious reasons, distance from home, access to public transportation and so on" (p. 138).

However, some of the middle class parents do not see the distance of the school. They prioritize quality of education rather than geographical proximity and transportation. Goldring and Hausman (1999) argued that middle class parents "having high income levels, have little concern about the distance required to attend the school" (p. 486). They send their children to long distance schools on buses.

On the contrary, the geographical location of the school is an important consideration for majority of the lower middle and some middle class parents and it affects their choices. Some quality private schools are conveniently located within their reach. They put their children in the nearest private schools due to ease of travel, and to save time and energy. It is convenient for some parents to drop and pick young children from school. Sometimes children come alone by auto.

Lower middle class parents have strong preferences for proximity due to transport costs and practical considerations of travel. They prefer schools fairly closer to their home address. The distance of some chosen schools from home in this study is between ½ - 2 kms, compared to other private schools. The strategy of moving into a particular area is not applied by parents because they have found a better school in the vicinity and this eases their tension of children's travel to school.

Despite the quantity of private schools throughout Ranchi city, proximity is more important over quality of education to those lower middle class families who have lower incomes. As one of the lower middle class fathers from New Nagar describes why he chooses particular school for his daughter:

"I put my daughter in the neighbourhood school because she is the youngest in the family to go to school and I did not want to send her to school that is outside of a short walk away. There is nobody to drop her to school. The school that she attends is located within walking distance, i.e., hardly 400 meters away from home and she walks to school which takes 5 minutes to reach the school".

The father chooses nearby school due to convenience and safety of his daughter. Goldring and Hausman (1999) found that parents see “what they have in the most favourable light” (p. 486). A lower class mother views that to send to a distant school means to waste time and energy in going to and coming back from school by bus. She said:

“We choose this school because this is nearby. Other schools are far away. It takes 1–1½ hours in the bus to go to distant school. Children who go by bus leave home early in the morning because bus covers some of the areas to pick children and come back very late after school. Children become tired after coming back from school and they do not want to study in the evening. Time is also wasted”.

For lower middle class parents, the distance of school, time, and transportation matters. They do not want their children to be exhausted in going to and coming back from school. Their main reason for choosing the present schools include proximity and convenience (Goldring and Hausman, 1999). One of the middle class fathers from Jai Prakash Nagar, shifts his daughters from the distant school and put them in the neighbourhood school due to convenience in dropping them to school. Some lower middle and middle class parents do not choose far away schools to save child’s time and energy and to let children spend some more time at home in recreational activities and study.

A few lower middle class parents especially mothers explains that it is convenient for them to visit school during parent teacher meeting or whenever needed. For instance, a lower middle class mother expressed:

“We did not want to put our children in faraway schools because time is wasted. For sending children to distant schools, you need to let children wake up at 5.30 a.m. Children reach home in the evening. My husband remains busy in his business, and I need to look after my children. That is why I preferred to put children in the nearby school according to my suitability, so that I would be able to go to school whenever needed and attend parent teacher meeting”.

A mother mentions busy schedule of her husband and explains how she decides in selecting school by seeing her convenience of visiting school during parent teacher meeting or whenever needed. It is found that location of school in the proximity eases parents' worries of transportation and its extra cost. Two middle class families move to New Nagar locality to access preferred schools. Residential location is seen as a part of school choice strategies. Boterman (2021) argued that "residential mobility, moving into the school catchment area of good public/state schools, is often a central pillar of school choice strategies of parents in these urban contexts" (p. 2). Along with geographical location parents see school fees while choosing schools which is discussed in the following section.

c. School Fees

Cost of schooling as a factor affects parents' decisions. Highly educated parents with good financial status and resources have several options and greater participation in navigating 'good school' with higher quality education. They make informed decision and choices about their children's education. Though some schools are expensive but those middle class families who are located in good occupational positions and are good consumers, cost is not a major issue or criterion for school choice. As one of the middle class fathers from J. P. Nagar pointed out:

"Choosing a school is not a financial decision. For me, quality education is more important and I am able to pay for it. So, a school fee is not a big matter for me. I am earning for my children and I do not have problem in paying. The right choice of school is very important for child's future".

The level of fees is not a major factor for many middle class families in the selection of a specific private school. Choice of a school is based on quality of the school. Power et al. (2003) argued that parents from higher socio-economic background, choose the most renowned schools, the 'respectable' private schools without worrying about the fee. On the contrary, it is not so with some lower middle class families who are in lower occupational positions and who earn meagre income to run their

households. These families believe that income is associated with an increased access to resources and this influence school choice. Some of the lower middle class families indicate that they have not looked at high fee schools and have selected low fee schools in the locality. Their income restricts their aspirations for high fee school and lead them to eliminate those schools from their preference list while selecting. They have no choice options due to lack of economic capital and resources and are forced to put children in affordable private schools. A lower middle class mother from New Nagar stated:

“We do not have much income to select better private school for children. High income families send their children to high fee private schools. How could one apply in such schools if he/she does not have ample money? We have to spend on basic needs and run our house”.

The costs of some schools are very high. Lack of economic capital hinders and does not provide options to lower middle class families to have their choice. Instead, it forces them to be satisfied with the option of low fee private schools that charge minimum school fees under their budgets. They are constrained by their economic status. So, they strategize in such a way to manage their home as well as school expenditure. They compromise to choose what is available to them and overlook their own preferences and choices.

Though lower middle class families perceive that a ‘good school’ is one where the teaching-learning is good and where all the educational facilities (computers, sports/games equipment, music/dance activities, etc.) are available for children; they compromise these qualities while choosing a school for their children. They keep aside their perceptions and views of a ‘good school’ and decide according to their financial status and convenience. For instance, a lower middle class father who is a contractor earning around rupees 10,000 a month, selects RTC School for both his son and daughter. He stated:

“The RTC School where my children are going is nearby and the fee is low. I put them in this school according to my ability to pay. I cannot send my children to high fee private school. This school is affordable.

It's so difficult to manage school and household expenses. If I had money, I would have admitted children in high fee private school".

Lower middle class parental aspirations for high quality schooling for their children are unfulfilled due to their inability to bear the cost of education. One of the lower middle class fathers who has a small saree shop hardly earns around rupees 6,000 to 7,000 a month, admits his son and daughter in Vivek Memorial High School which is a low fee private school in New Nagar locality. The father reports that his earning is not enough to put his children in high fee private school. He further said:

"Even though the fee of this private school is low, we need to cut our household expenses in order to educate our children. How could we think of sending children to other private schools where fee is very high?"

Parents face difficulties in paying school fees. They suffer hardship to educate their children in private school. Thus, fee is a major factor that affects school choice of lower middle class families. The following section discusses cultural factor that has influenced school choices of parents of Jai Prakash Nagar and New Nagar localities.

d. Religion/Culture as Dominant Factor

Along with academic factors, "non-academic factors often play a significant role in the evaluation of school choices. Schools are complex social organizations that not only provide academic training, but they constitute communities with ties to the world outside the walls of the school" (Bulman, 2004: 513). The school's religious identity and ethnic composition is important for parents. They consider religious and academic factor together in selecting a school (Trevena et al., 2015) as the "willingness of the middle class to preserve its religious values by providing their children with a school environment where their religious values are put in practice" (Ozmantar and Karatasoglu, 2019: 90).

It is found that religious belief plays a key role in the school choice among tribal ethnic families (mainly Christians) who select school for academic as well as for

moral/religious education. Almost all tribal Christian families from middle class fractions select mission or Convent Schools for their children so that their religious or cultural beliefs and identities being valued by the aspects of the informal curriculum (Chen, 2012). Parents are more concerned about school culture for character development, manners and social standing. Some parents themselves educated in mission school prefer the same for their children. For instance, a middle class mother from J. P. Nagar said:

“I studied in Convent School and I know about the school environment. The good thing is that children will learn about Christianity which is not there in other private schools”.

Tribal parents tend to choose mission or Convent School for religious and ethical component of the curriculum where certain religious practices are an integral part of the school culture. They appreciate the sense of community within Convent School. They want children to be comfortable within a particular educational and domestic environment. They choose “Christian Schools in order to help shield their children from the morally corrupting effects of those broader social changes and to offer their children a schooling experience that is consistent with their experiences at home and at church” (Bulman, 2004: 508). The “Christian faith of these parents is the cultural guide they use to make sense of education and their school options” (ibid. 509). Christian faith and moral values are prioritised by parents to socialise children in Christian environment and values. One of the tribal middle class fathers from New Nagar said:

“Hindu religion is followed in Surendranath Centenary and DAV School. If I had selected these schools then my children would have been away from our own Christian religious faith. That is why I put them in mission school, where children are taught catechism during Moral Science period”.

This view is supported by Bosetti (2004) who described that the primary factor for parents is that “their child is in an environment that shares their religious values and beliefs” (p. 397). Goldring and Bauch (1995) found that Catholic Schools are chosen

for moral reasons. However, there are four families from Hindu religious faith who also prioritised religious education in preferring school for their children. For instance, a middle class father said:

“I chose DAV school because there is some speciality in DAV group. There is no cultural practice or no classes on moral education in other private schools. Whereas, in DAV there is a special provision for moral education. They perform ‘havan’ for teaching morality. There is a separate period (on Saturday) for moral education and have special provision for ‘havan’. Children and teachers do ‘havan’ by chanting mantra in Sanskrit. This is what I like in this school because moral education is very important for me. It is my priority in DAV”.

Here, father’s statement shows his priority for such school where religious and cultural practices are followed. Another middle class father has the same view said: *“I saw whether my culture is there or not in the school. That is there in DAV. Mission schools follow different culture”.*

Thus, it is noted that some parents “support the education of their children in a way that would be consistent with their religious beliefs” (Ajuwon and Bradshaw, 2009; cited from Ozmantar and Karatasoglu, 2019: 90). However, it is not much important for majority of the middle and lower middle class families and do not focus on religious or cultural aspect while choosing a school.

e. Choice Within Family – Particular School for Girls and Boys

Choice within family based on gender seems less important for middle class families. Both son and daughter are sent to the same school except few families for different reasons. Not only that, they are sent to co-ed schools where the sons are going, except two girls who are going to girl’s schools for cultural/atmosphere reason.

However, it is found that in a few families, boys and girls are admitted in different private schools due to several reasons such as son and daughter do not get the admission in the same school, both have different abilities, choice of single sex school

for girls, shift in locality and inability to afford same school for both son and daughter. In seven families, children (both boys and girls) do not get admission in the same school for they could not pass the entrance test or/and they are admitted in different durations due to shifting from one place to another. Shift in locality causes four families to put their children in different schools. After the change in locality, older children (son/daughter) from four families remain in the same school where they are studying while younger ones (son/daughter) are admitted in different schools nearby the locality. Two families mention that they prefer suitable school for children (son/daughter) according to their academic abilities. Both the families put their daughters in better schools according to their performances. For instance, a middle class mother from J. P. Nagar expressed:

“I wanted to educate my son in CBSE board (Surendranath Centenary) school because it seems suitable for him and my daughter in ICSE board (Bishop Westcott) school because her intelligence level is high. Her performance is excellent in school. I always want my children to study according to their ability. There is no pressure on them”.

Ability of daughters to learn influences the choice. Parents value daughters' educational ability, appreciate and accept their academic needs and provide what is best for them in their education. Due to cultural belief two lower middle class families opt single sex school as they do not want to put sons and daughters in co-ed schools. One of the middle class families wants to make daughter independent and therefore admit both son and daughter in better but different schools. One of the families gives importance to safety and security of the daughter because she is a girl and chooses nearby school (Surendranath Centenary School) while son is admitted in a faraway school.

Woodhead et al. (2013) found that “at younger ages, private school enrollment of boys and girls looks similar. But as children get older, around age 10 or as they leave primary school, gender gaps begin to appear and widen in urban areas... it widens as the children get older” (p. 6). However, gender bias is evident in two families from lower middle class, where sons are sent to better schools than daughters who are sent

to relatively low fee private schools. These families defend themselves that they do not discriminate between sons and daughters by giving reason of economic burden of paying the private school fees for two or more children. And that is why sons and daughters are in different schools. For instance, a lower middle class father explains that he has three children and it is difficult for him to afford school fees. He has admitted his daughter in Holy Cross High School for it is affordable and under his budget, while son in DAV Nandraj because the school is better.

Likewise, a lower middle class mother whose daughter is going to low fee unrecognised private school compared to son reasons that both schools provide the same education and there is no difference between them. In her words:

“My daughter goes to DAV Birjanand and son goes to DAV Nandraj School. Both the schools provide same education. Books are almost same”.

But when asked from the daughter about the differences in quality of teaching in her and her brother’s school, she pointed out that, *“Teaching learning in DAV Nandraj is better than DAV Birjanand”*. The mother immediately defends and justifies herself by saying that *“we do not differentiate between son and daughter. We take care of our daughter’s education more than our son’s”*. The reality is evident that due to the belief that one day daughter has to go to other house, she is not provided better school as the son is. Lower middle class strategize in this way to provide education to their children where these strategies and processes are influenced by their socio-economic capital. All these factors influence parental decisions based on their present and past experiences.

III. Parents’ Experiences about the School

It is important to look at parents’ views of their own educational experiences and multiple factors and contexts of the families that influence their decision-making processes. This section unfolds the memories and experiences of parents of their own school days and how their educational experiences influence in guiding their thoughts and processes in reaching a decision about schooling of their children. In other words,

how experiences of attending a particular type of school (government/private) has influenced their aspirations, attitudes, views and decision-making processes; what differences/changes they see between their own and children's schooling.

Rothenberg (2004) argued that "memories are not necessarily impartial or even accurate, but serve an individual's personal truth, upon which beliefs, actions and thoughts are built" (cited from Miller, 2015: 154). Taylor, Clayton & Rowley (2004) suggested that "childhood memories of school are reactivated as parents prepare their own children for similar experiences" (ibid) and that "both positive and negative school memories remain with individuals for decades" (Turunen 2012; cited from Miller 2015: 154).

Parents have "personal memories, good and bad ones, of going to school. As a child starts schooling, the parents' own school memories are likely to activate themselves and to function as a basis for their evaluation of the child's schooling. For instance, parents usually make comparisons between particular aspects of their own and their child's school: in what respects their own school was better and in what respects things have improved" (Metso, 2004; cited from Raty, 2007: 387). Furthermore, parents' "evaluative school recollections can be seen as one potential social - psychological factor in the chain through which the meanings of education are transferred from one generation to the next. Examining parents' school recollections helps us, then, to better understand the dynamics of the social reproduction of education" (ibid. 388). However, "Parents' current choices are frequently powerfully influenced and informed by their own experiences of schooling. Parents' educational histories have its impact on their decisions" (David et al., 1994: 98). Parents' school experiences contribute to the formation of a more general attitude towards education.

Parents from middle class families have more positive experiences of education and view that their past experiences of schooling have affected their decisions. Highly educated parents from these families remember their own school in more positive terms. They recall how school environment and values influence their life and they reactivate the same for their children so that their children would learn and have similar experiences.

David et. al. (1994) found that “parents gave a lot of attention to the ... emotional quality in thinking back to their own school days in relation to what they wanted now for their children” (p. 103). They appreciate their relationship and emotional attachment with teachers, teachers’ commitment and devotion in teaching, and discipline of their times. Now they see change in teacher’s teaching and behaviour and criticise them for lacking all these qualities particularly in government schools.

Some of the middle class parents appreciate the present day private school education system and teachers and parents are satisfied with it. Parental school “memories are not wholly individual but seem to vary according to the parents’ social background” (Raty, 2007: 388). However, some lower middle class parents have negative experiences of schooling and they do not want it to be reactivated for their children. They do not have the options of choice of private schools and had to walk a long distance to reach the school. Their education in government schools in the villages left them with despair for lacking many facilities (had to sit on the sack on the floor) when they compare it with that of their children’s school. Due to bad experiences, they are determined not to put their children in government school to have similar experiences and hence choose private schools. They regret their bad schooling experiences due to socio- economic problems and other issues, but are ambitious for the bright future of their children and want them to have good academic performance.

Parents did not have much private schools in their times and the whole school system changes in the present times. Now they see all the facilities in urban private schools. Earlier they had limited syllabus (in Science, Mathematics and Social Science) compared to today’s syllabus and courses which are so different and tough. Children of class I study the course that their parents studied in class IV. Today’s knowledge has expanded. There were not many books in their times and now varieties of good books are available. They find curriculum and syllabus so different from theirs and various teaching-learning materials and techniques are used to teach children. Curricular activities are seen as valuable aspects of education that parents had not experienced during their own school days.

Some middle class parents express that along with the past educational experiences their decisions are affected by the need and the demand of the present times for their children. For instance, a middle class mother explains by stating:

“Everything is different from the past. Change is there, people are moving forward. Earlier people had the thinking that I have this much of land and this much of field in the village or town and it is sufficient for me. But now everybody thinks of getting educated to go out for job, to earn money. There is a change in society”.

This shows mother’s and other parents’ views that the times have changed and one has to be equipped with the demands of time. Having land as a property is not sufficient and one has to work hard to earn money for their livelihood.

Few lower middle class mothers lament that they did not complete their studies due to gender issues and discrimination and did not get the same opportunities as boys in getting educated. Social perceptions and early marriage were big hindrances in their education. There is a negative self-evaluation in their opinions. One of the lower middle class mothers, a resident of New Nagar, said:

“I wanted to study further, at least till intermediate (10+2) but I had to leave my study because of my father. He wanted me to marry when I was in class VII. It was because of my mother that I was able to complete matriculation. She forced her decision on my father. She wanted me to study further but my father did not listen to her and I got married after completing class X”.

Another lower middle class mother stated:

“Earlier girl’s education was not important but now it is important. Today’s girls are studying hard and are performing better. I did not study much but I want my daughter to study hard. I will do all possible things to provide her higher education”.

It is noted that even the lower middle class mothers are aspirational and determined in providing better and higher education to their daughters. They have hopes and expectations for their daughters to excel high in education and achieve what they did not in their life. Mothers mention that their parents did not value their education due

to patriarchal thinking and social pressure but now things have changed and they will not repeat the same for their daughters.

However, majority of the parents from middle class fractions appreciate modern day private schools for catering to the educational needs of children. They seem contented with the present-day schooling of their wards when they compare it with their own schooling. They are happy with the improvement and facilities in private schools and that their children do not have to face hindrances in schooling and education that they had experienced.

All these show the complexity of factors that are taken into account in the decision-making processes. Thus, for most parents, their own school experiences are seen as relevant in reaching a decision about school choices for their children. Middle class parents recall their own school days in positive terms, whereas lower middle class parents have more diverse experiences. They commonly cite incidences of disappointment. Their own educational experiences characterised by failure, make them have aspirations for their children. Parents' perceptions of their own school experiences have a strong impact on how parents view their children's schooling.

a. School's Selection Criteria

After deciding and selecting a preferred school, the next step is to ensure that the child gains a place in that particular school. The selection process of admission of a child is a two-way process, where parents decide first in which school their children would go and at the same time it is the school that enforces its selection criteria to select the type of child it wants in its school. According to Schneider and Buckley (2002), schools have their own ways to select students and some schools skill off the best students. This choice of schools on the one hand creates possibilities for the parents but on the other does not completely empower them to admit their children in whichever school they wish to send. It is the known fact that "educational markets are class biased... schools are allowed to select pupils, modes of selection tend to favour children from middle class backgrounds" (Moore, 1990; cited from Gewirtz et al., 1994: 4).

Schools have some selection criteria to select the type of children they want in their school. Most private schools take a standardized tests and interviews of applicants as a part of the admission process. Essentially what the school tries to determine is how prepared one is for the academic work that it wants him/her to be able to do. The test is designed to assess a specific skill set and knowledge level of a child. Admission of a child depends on the availability of seats and is based on first come first serve basis. Some schools conduct tests for the children and hold interviews of parents as well as children to decide inclusion of those who are meritorious and who can sustain the demands of schooling.

It is found that in most of the schools, children are required to pass the written exam and interviews to get admission. The only thing in the minds of parents is to get their child accepted in the preferred schools. They buy as many admission forms as their pockets allow and spend as much as they could for their child's admission.

Majority of the middle class fractions from Jai Prakash Nagar and New Nagar mention that their children have to clear entrance test in order to get admission in a particular school. Few families report that their children are interviewed for the nursery class while few report that they directly admit their children in the school without any interview or entrance test.

It is asked whether parents have faced any problem during their children's admission. Majority of the families report that there is no problem during admission time. They just fill the forms given by the schools and fulfill the criteria of admission. There are few middle and lower middle class families who face some difficulty in getting child's admission. In some cases, children's failure in entrance test creates problems for parents to admit them in a particular school. In few cases, it is the odd time (no admission time) when parents want their child to be admitted in a particular school²³.

Waldrop shows "how the admission criteria used by the private schools focus on the values shared between parents and schools and how this 'quest for shared values' rules out the children of lower class backgrounds, even before they start school. In the

²³ Due to transferrable job, few parents shift in these localities and want to admit their children in schools when admission is closed.

process, class segmentation is strengthened” (2004: pp. 203 - 204). Evidence from the data shows that how schools administer and control the intake of pupils. Private schools (especially prestigious and reputed ones) make efforts “to admit the ‘right’ kind of children” (Waldrop, 2004: 210). The “schools call for a meeting with applicants and their parents as one step in the process of making a final selection” (ibid). For instance, one of the mothers from lower middle class, who is a resident of New Nagar described:

“We filled the form in DPS and DAV Shyamli Schools. These schools did not ask anything about the child but about us. DAV Shyamli School asked to submit our educational qualification certificates. They take children of high-status families. We filled the form but due to these do’s and don’ts (taam-jhaam) we thought that we would not be able to afford it. But this is wrong. I told them that if I were illiterate then my child would not have been studying in that school. They asked our income. This means they expected donation from us. I told them, I will pay the fee- whether I pay it smilingly or crying or by borrowing from others”.

It is noted that lower middle class parents also aspire and try to get a place for their children in a high performing school but fail to get it because of their low educational level, low income and status that schools seek to maintain their reputations in the educational market. They feel excluded from such types of schools. This clarifies the fact that private schools control the school choice processes. Lareau et al. (2016) argued that “the lack of flexibility and transparency within each system exacerbates the challenges for parents” (p. 295).

Moreover, poor level of English challenge middle and lower middle class parents in making their choices. Parents’ level of education and knowledge of English is seen in some private schools. Reputed private schools control the admission of children by checking their parental educational level, income, and status in society and screen out children accordingly. For instance, a mother from lower middle class is asked whether she knows English or not or how fluent she is in English. In her words:

“The teacher asked ‘How is your English? Will you be able to help your child in doing his homework?’ The private school expects parents to help child at home”.

Private schools prefer English educated parents who could help their children in studies at home. They want to select/take children (best) from English educated families. Their main goal is students’ results as the branding and marketing of a school depends on academic achievements. Private schools are viewed and selected by their products (students). Schools take admission on the merit of the candidates. Parents prepare children to pass the screening procedures (during admission process) at an early stage. This helps in maintaining the prestige and reputation of English medium private schools (Waldrop, 2004: 212). Some of the schools do not give forms easily so parents have to run to get the forms. A lower middle class mother reports that she did not get admission form from the school she wanted to put her child in.

Another thing is, it is the mother who is asked whether she could help the child in his/her homework or not. Mothers are expected to be well educated with the knowledge of English language in order to help children at home - because they stay at home and it is assumed that it is their duty to assist children at home. This increases mother’s duty from cooking, rearing/caring, to assisting children in their studies. And this is one of the reasons why girls’ education is given so much importance in our society.

Thus, it is noted that choice works more effectively for better educated families and those with higher incomes. It does not work for a few lower middle class parents who are unable to place their children in high performing or socially advantaged private schools, as their children are excluded from these schools for not fulfilling the criteria of school selection. In this regard, Burgess et al. (2009) argued, “If in area where there is a lot of potential competition between schools, more advantaged families have a higher chance of achieving their more ambitious choice than do poorer parents, this could tend to exacerbate social segregation in our schools” (p. 18). Lower middle class parents aspire for good English medium private schools for their children to acquire cultural capital for them to change their position in society but face social segregation in private school’s admission.

b. Recommendation and Donation for Admission

Due to stiff competition in the job market middle class parents do their best to educate children in good private schools. The shortage of schools has forced them

“to compete for school places using the full range of their material and social resources, deploying them within the legitimate admissions channels of the schools, but also in temporary and informal channels of their own making. The ‘good schools scramble’ is a paradigm case of middle class resourcefulness and ambition. It illustrates how a privileged stratum of society reproduces its privileges in the next generation by giving its young ones competitive advantages whenever possible, and by circumventing competition when the need arises” (Drury, 1993: 112).

Parents use numerous strategies, whether legal (such as moving into the catchment area for their preferred school, or purchasing tuition to access entry to selective schools), ethically dubious or possibly illegal (using a false address) to gain child’s entry in the school.

The other selection criteria are recommendations and donations through which the ‘big’ private schools select the type of children they want. They over charge parents in the name of development fund for schools. Social capital seems important for parents to avail better opportunity and to solve school admission problems and constraints that influence the process of school choice. However, a few middle class families succeed in gaining admissions through gifts, donations and recommendation/negotiation of influential persons. Middle class parents as successful strategists draw on useful social networks and use their financial resources to secure children’s educational advantage. Parents have the capacity to access the best educational opportunities for their children that depends on their ability to pay for schooling. Those with money, education and confidence are more able to give their children the best possible chances of succeeding. Middle class and professional parents gain advantages for their children at every turn.

It is found that majority of the families do not face any problem in child’s admission. Their children pass the entrance test or interviews which is the basic criteria for entry

in a private school. However, a few families from the middle class report that they need help from others for which they use their networks and contact influential persons to get their child's admission in that particular private school in which they want them to be. These parents go to school for admission in between the school sessions when admission procedure is closed and need some approach for admission.

The use of social network or contact is seen as important in some cases that helps parents to a great extent in solving school admission problem. Parents strategize and use 'backdoor' selection by recommendation. For instance, after getting transferred from Dhanbad to Ranchi, one of the middle class father who is an engineer, requests the principal of the previous school (DAV, Dhanbad), to talk to the principal of the present school (DAV, Bariatu) where he wants to put his child. This solves his problem and his son gets admission in the preferred school.

All viable options are used by the middle class families to grab the opportunity to get admission by any means in order to establish better foundation and better direction in their children's lives. For instance, one of the middle class families shifts its residence close to school but the problem of getting child's admission in a particular private school still persists. So, the father takes recommendation of additional commissioner for this purpose and his children get admission. Other reason given by a middle class parent for contacting influential person is the absence of child's name in the first list and failure in the entrance test. They use 'backdoor' selection and approach somebody who could help them in this process.

Some middle class parents are of opinion that connections with other is important and required than child's intelligence. Sometimes there is scam (dhandhli) in admission procedure. Schools do not admit the meritorious students even if they pass in the entrance tests. Parents believe that *"Today, admission through recommendation is done in most of the schools. It has become the tradition of the school"*. Paying donation is criticized for there is the provision of free education for 6 to 14 years old children. It is believed that donation should not be given but when it comes to their own child, these ideal words are forgotten and donation is paid willingly for their own benefits. However, parents do not need to pay donation except a few.

Three parents have been asked for an extra financial donation. Parents feel that they are under pressure to pay. In two cases the donations are not paid directly but are taken by those persons who negotiate with the school principal. One of the middle class fathers from J. P. Nagar who pays donation expressed:

“Reality is very different from the principle. We set aside our principle to fulfill our motives. We do not want to suffer by following the ethics. We do not want to face any trouble regarding child’s admission in a good private school when it is the question of child’s future. We do not hesitate to follow unethical means. The school is supposed to take the test and admit the child. I myself paid rupees 25,000 in Sarla Birla School thinking that I should follow what is there in the school system. Thankfully, admission was done in such amount only. If I had to put my son in Sarla Birla School in Kolkata then I would have been asked to pay rupees 1 lakh or so. Here it worked in rupees 25,000 only”.

The father’s statement shows that parents are forced to follow the unethical means to fulfill school’s demand and to fulfill their responsibility towards children for their better future. When other means fail, parents make unlawful moves and willingly use their economic capital for the benefit of their children as there is no other way to support them. One of the fathers approaches church treasurer for recommendation and gives bribe in the form of gifts.

However, one of the lower middle class parents aspire for renowned private school for their two children and is asked to pay rupees 60,000 for the admission. Lack of economic capital and resources restrict them to pay and insist them to step back from what they aspire. Private schools say that money is taken only to maintain the standard of facilities provided by the school, which also includes co-curricular activities. Parents are required to tolerate school related system because of child’s future.

In principle, donations and bribes are considered morally wrong but in reality, parents are compelled to resort to it for having no option but to pay. It is evident that it is

“quite common for people to condemn such practices in the abstract but to shrug when presented with specific cases” (Drury, 1993: 114). Parents provide several views to excuse these practices by saying that corruption is everywhere and everyone gives money if they have. For instance, a middle class father from J. P. Nagar, who is a businessman said: *“Getting my child into one of the best schools of the city is a kind of achievement. My child deserves the best. Both of us are working so we were ready to give donation”*.

Some renowned private and convent/mission schools select children of particular families who have good academic support and socio-economic background. This institutionalised favouritism is reported by some parents who face problems during admission. Parents are not given forms to fill saying no seats are vacant just because they do not know or speak English. The principal does not care to listen to the parents. These parents lack something the school requires, their qualifications, their knowledge of English language, their pocket, their lifestyles. Schools do not ask much about the child. Parents report being treated rudely by the school staffs.

Moreover, “parents are entitled to use their wealth to buy high quality education for their children to whatever level they want, provided that the children meet some minimal standard of performance” (Drury, 1993: 117). They are ready to pay and grab the opportunity for their children’s future by buying seats anyhow for their children in a good reputed private school. Schools make under the table arrangements more convenient to take the demanded amount and less risky to be caught (Drury, 1993: 115). Reputed private schools see the socio-economic background of the child in the selection criteria.

Moreover, it has become a business of the school to take hefty amount from parents in the name of school development and education. Middle class fractions perceive that bribe has become necessary for those who want to put their child in a preferred private school. However, those who cannot not pay lament on the present system of education that favours the rich causing restraint and lack of opportunity for the poor to compete in education and job markets. However, after the entry in the schools, the next section looks at the quality of private schools that children of middle class fractions are accessing.

c. Access to Different Private Schools

Children from middle class fractions access different kinds of private schools in Ranchi city. A large number of children are enrolled in private unaided, recognised schools while a few in unaided or unrecognised private schools. It is evident from the table 5.5 that a majority of the middle and lower middle class families of Jai Prakash

Table: 5.5 Access to different Private Schools

Class	High Fee	Medium Fee	Low Fee	Total
MC				
PUAR	23 (51.1%)	22 (48.9%)	0 (0.0%)	45 (100%)
PUAU	0	0	0	0 (0.0%)
LMC				
PUAR	9 (13.6%)	44 (66.7%)	13 (19.7%)	66 (100%)
PUAU	0	0	9 (100%)	9 (100%)
Total	32 (26.7%)	66 (55.0%)	22 (18.3%)	120 (100%)

Source: Field Data

Nagar and New Nagar have chosen private unaided but recognised schools for their children. A few lower middle class families from New Nagar have selected private unaided, unrecognised schools for their children. Variations within middle class(es) are clear in terms of fees where a majority of families access medium fee schools (55.0%) followed by high fee (26.7%) and low fee (18.2%) schools. However, more than 50% middle class families send their children to high fee schools and around 48.9% in medium fee schools. Not a single middle class family select low fee private school. On the other hand, a majority of lower middle class families send their children to medium fee schools (66.7%) compared to middle class families. A few lower middle class families have selected low fee private unaided unrecognised schools. Families pay monthly school fee between rupees 400 to rupees 2500 depending upon the levels of schooling of their children. High fee schools charge fee between rupees 1,000 to rupees 2,500 as compared to medium fee schools that charge between rupees 800 to rupees 1,500. Low fee school charge between rupees 140 to rupees 500.

Children's concentration in high and medium fee private unaided, recognised schools indicate that anxious middle class(es) are very much aware of the quality of education

provided in these schools. It indicates their rational choice based on quality and facilities and their ability to pay. Middle class parents who select medium or high fee private unaided recognised explain that they do not consider small, unrecognised private schools as these schools are not good, for they do not have quality education. One of the middle class fathers from J. P. Nagar said:

“There are so many small private schools. I cannot think of sending my children to those schools. Those schools are running because lower strata also desire to educate their children in private schools. But they are not much educated to see how the teaching learning goes on in these schools. These schools are opened at home. These schools are running because of its demand. The fee in reputed school is so exorbitant that a rikshaw puller would not think of putting his child in such a school. He thinks that he just has to pay rupees 100 in school and his child would study in English medium school. These schools are making people fool”.

Middle class(es) parents who are able to pay do not prefer low fee private schools. They know that such private schools lack quality education and is accessed not by people like ‘us’ but by children of lower class such as rikshaw puller and so on. Thus, it is clear that after searching through networks and strategizing, parents select better school for their children and these are mainly private, unaided recognised schools.

d. Quality of Private School: Children’s and Parents’ Experiences

This section discusses the quality of range of private schools²⁴ accessed by the middle class(es) children of Jai Prakash Nagar and New Nagar (see Appendix VI). It is based on parents’ and children’s experiences. Here, it is attempted to get a picture of inside stories of the classrooms/schools to see whether the schools chosen by the middle class families are satisfying their expectations and hopes or not.

In terms of quality, considerable variation could be seen among these private schools. On the basis of fee structure, these are high fee (9 schools), medium fee (7), and low

²⁴ There are a total of 21 private schools attended by the children of middle class fractions. Among these, 18 schools are recognized and 3 schools are unrecognized.

fee (5) private schools. Almost all these private schools have their own buildings except one (DAV Birjanand Public School). Some big private schools have two to three blocks or wings for junior and senior students. The school buildings have either one floor or 2 to 3 floors in each block. Some schools have 14 to 60 classrooms while some have 11 to 12 classrooms. Renowned private or Convent/missionary schools have good buildings and playgrounds. Most of the schools are from Nursery to Class X or XII. Some schools have 2 to 3 sections in each class and some have 4 to 5 sections in each class. Total number of teachers in each school is around 20 to 70 depending upon the number of students. While there are hardly 12 to 13 teachers in two schools i.e., Vikek Memorial High School, and DAV Birjanand Public School. These schools have different pupil teacher ratio according to the capacity of the classrooms. The pupil teacher ratio is between 20 to 55 depending on the size of the school. In some private schools, greater number of students are enrolled than the prescribed number.

Water as an essential facility is available in the school for making school environment clean and hygienic. Almost all the schools have functional drinking water facility. Schools have 1 to 10 taps in each floor in its building. Around four out of thirty-one schools have aqua guards for drinking water facility. In one of the schools where fee is low, well is used for drinking water, 5 taps are there but not in use. Toilets are available in these schools. Around 12 private schools have more toilets (between 20 to 45 in numbers) for both boys and girls. These schools have equal number of toilets for boys and girls in each floor. While some private schools have 2 to 4 toilets for boys and girls in each floor. One of the low fee private schools has 5 toilets, 2 for boys and 3 for girls. One unrecognised private school (DAV, Birjanand Public School) has 2 toilets in each floor, 1 for boys and 1 for girls.

These schools are equipped with electricity facilities. Most of the schools have classrooms with 2 to 5 bulbs or tubes and 2 to 6 fans. Unrecognised private schools have 1 bulb and 1 fan in the classrooms. Some private schools that have big buildings and spaces, have big playgrounds including volleyball court, cricket ground, basketball court, etc. Some schools have small playgrounds. These schools have

sports/games materials such as table tennis, cricket, basketball, volleyball, racket/badminton, etc. Three unrecognised schools, i.e., Holy Cross Girls School (I to VI), First Mark Public School (Play to VI) and DAV Birjanand Public School (I to VIII) have no playgrounds for lack of spaces. Some private schools have dance, music, karate, yoga, as co-curricular activities and students are supposed to choose any one of these activities. They have a separate period for these activities. Along with these, schools organise programmes related to festivals, dance and music competitions, debates, science projects, etc. to enhance students' skills, interests and performances.

Based on the children's information, 20 schools have library facility in the school. In some schools around 3000 to 5645 books are there in the library while in Vivek Memorial High School (LFP) around 600 books are there. In unrecognised school, there are around 200 books in the library. Some private schools have Science, Computer, and Mathematics laboratories also.

All the schools are equipped with furniture and blackboards. These schools use some teaching aids at the primary level but not at the high school level. Teachers are always present and take classes. In case the teacher is absent then the class is managed by some other teacher or if the teacher is in a meeting with the principal, class monitors are asked to manage the class discipline. During classroom teaching learning processes, the teacher first asks students to read aloud the paragraphs of the lesson one by one and after each paragraph the teacher explains the meaning of the lines read from the book. Teaching aids and charts are used while teaching in the primary classes. In high schools only globe and charts are used to teach. After completing the whole lesson, the teacher discusses the question answers with students. Questions given in the exercise are asked and discussed by the teacher and students are asked to write it in their notebooks. Whenever, something is not clear or there is problem in understanding the lesson/subject then the student asks the teacher to explain it again. Officially the medium of instruction in these private unaided schools is English but in practice it is not so in all the schools. Children reported that instructions are given bilingually to explain the lesson properly.

However, students express that the teacher student relation is good and students talk to their teacher when they feel the need. They like their teachers for their care and attention given to students and for teaching and explaining properly. All children respond in positive regarding liking the teacher's way of teaching. Some report that some teachers are very good in teaching and explaining and are ready to explain again to those who do not understand properly. They are satisfied with teaching of English language. They get regular homework in all subjects and is corrected regularly by the teachers. Most of the private schools have class tests weekly and monthly.

Parents are asked whether they are satisfied with the quality of education provided by private schools that their children are attending. Majority of the parents from middle class fractions answer in affirmative except some who are dissatisfied with the schools their children are attending. They view that even after spending good amount of money, private schools do not provide the clear basic concepts of learning to children. For instance, a middle class mother who is not satisfied with both of her children's schools (Surendranath Centenary School and Bishop Westcott School) said:

“Teachers do not provide clear concepts. The basic knowledge (base) is not clear to the child. I am scared that children would face problem in future. We pay high amount of fees but do not get the outputs accordingly”.

The mother's statement shows that schools do not provide the desired quality of education that parents expect and pay for. One of the middle class fathers criticise school for giving importance to money. He said:

“Education system has become money centred. It is a kind of business. You will get good education, if you invest more and more on it. Teachers have become less accountable”.

However, one of the lower middle class fathers viewed that running schools have become a type of business where parents as a consumer buy education from school. Most private schools are running as businesses in a competitive education market,

whereby students as a consumer are expected to pay large amounts of money in exchange for higher standard of learning. These schools make money and profits through their services. They often ask for higher tuition fees and there is often little to show in terms of academic progression. For instance, a lower middle class father stated:

“Private schools are more of a business than learning. We give money and the schools give education. Teachers are after money without teaching properly”.

Middle class families view that private schools are so expensive because they claim to provide good quality education. However, all these claims by the owners of these private schools have proved wrong as parents are dissatisfied with the teaching-learning in the schools. For instance, a middle class mother from J. P. Nagar stated:

“I am not satisfied with teaching. Mathematics is solved on the blackboard but not explained properly. My son could not solve Mathematics problems at home. I have to read the book and explain it. Second thing, the school has so many sections in one class. Students are more in numbers and teachers are less. They solve the questions in one class (section) and ask students of other sections to note down the solutions from the class section where it is explained”.

Some parents are dissatisfied with the lack of facilities in the school. For instance, a lower middle class father from New Nagar reported:

“The first thing is there is no facility of bench on the ground to sit and eat during lunch time. Children sit on the muddy ground. Second, good teachers are lacking in senior classes because the school has to pay more for hiring good teachers. Teachers leave the school if they get good salary in other schools. Private school has become a site of commercial business – pay less and get more work (kam se kam de kar zyada se zyada wasulo). Girls who are needy are ready to teach in low salary. The principal bargain with them because he/she has to run a private school”.

Due to low salary, good teachers are lacking in some private schools. Private schools hire teachers by paying less to run their school business. Teachers change school if they get better salary in other school. Another middle class mother is not satisfied with transportation services, said:

“There are no separate bus services for the junior and senior students. Little children who travel by buses have to wait for senior students to come because primary class gets over early”.

It is found that though some middle class families are not satisfied by the performance of private schools according to their expectations yet they yearn for it for no other options. They do not believe in government schools’ existence for proper education. But then even after sending children to private schools parents need to resort to private tuitions for better results. This shows that private schools are not giving satisfying results as expected. For instance, a middle class mother from J. P. Nagar said:

“I am not satisfied with the school. Why do children need tuition when they are regularly going to school? The school should take children as much as it can take care of them. Private school takes more and more children and is unable to take care of them. Earlier Saint Thomas School was very good but now I feel that good teachers are lacking there. My son takes tuition. These days children take tuition whether of ICSE or CBSE board”.

Some middle class and lower middle class parents lament that even after sending to good private schools, their children need tuitions after school. They view that the school admits a greater number of children against its capacity and are unable to take care of them. Good teachers are lacking and this affects the quality of teaching. Parents are dissatisfied with teachings and the school teachers for having low commitment towards their duties. Parents send their children for tuition for having no option. They feel that teaching is there in schools but not of that level as it should be. For instance, a middle class businessman who send his children to Bishop Westcott School which is an old and renowned school said:

“My children take tuitions. I have extra burden of tuition upon me even after spending so much money on schooling. This is unjustified but then it is there because teachers are not committed. I cannot say that teachers are bad today but the level of commitment is low. There are certain teachers in certain schools who are very good in teaching and interacting with students. Teachers should generate more interest in critical thinking of the child. In my time there was a teacher (Father Lombard) who used to teach us Mathematics and Geography. I remember him till today for his way of teaching was different and effective. I did not need tuition but my children are dependent on tuitions”.

Tuition as an extra burden is not favoured by parents yet they are compelled to resort to it as they believe that children's future would be spoiled if they leave them to depend only on school teaching. Even the private schools that claim to be 'best' is not fully reliable. On the one hand middle class parents discard government school education for not providing quality education at all and send their children to academically oriented private school for better learning but on the other hand even after choosing priority school ('good school' in their view) they still need to depend on shadow education or tutoring to give strong steer in providing future direction for academic success.

Thus, it is noted that even though parents select private schools for their children perceiving better teaching learning in these schools yet some of them are not satisfied with these schools for different reasons. Their statements show that they are aware of the fact that private schooling has become a commercial business where schools sell their education in the competitive education market and parents as consumers buy it.

Summary

This chapter discusses the choice making processes and parents' involvement in making decisions about school. It looks at how parents search for information about school by using various social networks and contacts and make diverse choices.

School choice making processes involves “the gratuitous expenditure of time, attention, care and concern” (Bourdieu, 1986 b: 253). Middle class fractions strategize differently to realize their aspirations and goals of private schooling for their child. They employ their social capital and resources based on their past experiences, abilities and constraints to access each and every minute details and information regarding private schools before reaching to final selection.

Middle class families are more advantaged in terms of having wider social networks to have various necessary information to take final decision related to particular school the child would attend. Ball et al. (1996) argued that “skilful and resourceful” middle class parents were always able to “work the system” to their advantage. Ball (1998) argued that there is “a degree of scepticism” about the information provided by the schools, whereas there is “a general preference for and sense of greater usefulness about the information received through personal networks. But the latter are not always digested uncritically” (p. 38). On the contrary, few lower middle class families (with lower socio-economic status) are disadvantaged in terms of social networks and amount of information. Few middle class families intervene in the admission process by activating social and economic capitals to get their children in aspired school.

Majority of the middle and lower middle class families prefer private unaided but recognised schools for their children as they are aware of the quality of these schools. Schools are carefully selected in search of the “right mix” (Raveaud and van Zanten, 2007). Such types of high-quality branded private schools provide exclusive social class grouping within schools where “students settled into academic and social circles of ‘people like us’” (Power et. al., 2003: 60). Ball (2003) argued that some parents seek “firm and clear boundaries which cut their children off from ‘others’ and provide exclusive access to institutions and routes of social advantage – class enclaves” (p. 76). Studying in private schools has become more of a status symbol. Parents boast about themselves that their children study in such a renowned school.

Very few lower middle class families have to go for private unaided, unrecognised schools for having low economic resources and other reasons. Middle class parents with better socio-economic positions choose the high fee, better quality and branded

private schools while lower middle class with low socio-economic positions choose the low fee private school for their children. However, though parents strategize and select better private school for their children, still some of them are discontented with the chosen school for not delivering what was promised.

CHAPTER-VI

Parental Involvement in Children's Schooling

In contemporary Indian societies, we see a change in the traditional family structure, especially in urban areas. There has been a huge transformation from a family structure that was essentially a joint family oriented to the nuclear family-oriented structure. This change in the structure of the families affected the responsibilities of family members towards their children's schooling. Private schools demand parental involvement as parents "play tremendous roles in the child's educational and environmental transformation" (Sapungan and Sapungan, 2014: 42). Parental involvement is an interaction between a parent with the child or school and "is a part of more comprehensive, deeply embedded cultural pattern that guide and are recreated by parents" (Bodovski, 2010: 140). According to Reay (2002) the schools made clear to parents through parent teacher meeting, etc. that they too have responsibilities toward their children's learning and academic success, which affects their educational outcomes. Parents' roles and involvement in schooling have been understood largely in terms of parental practices or "what parents do" and in what ways. To maintain child's academic progress, middle class(es) strategize and involve in differential practices according to the economic or cultural capital and resources they possess. This study shows that both mothers and fathers value children's education and ensure their involvement in it.

Parental involvement is all about how and what they do at home. Home is the primary place where children are taken care of their physical, emotional and mental needs and development. Lareau (2002) mapped the "connections between parents' resources and their children's daily lives and showed how middle class parents... tend to conform to a cultural logic of childrearing" that she called "concerted cultivation" (p. 748). She conceptualised child rearing practices as a strategy of "concerted cultivation" and explained that it is a practice where parents "made deliberate and sustained effort to stimulate children's development and to cultivate their cognitive and social skills" (ibid. 773). Keeping in mind this 'concerted cultivation' or parenting style of middle class families, assisting children at home in studies and other activities in order to

gain advantages later in life and to build cultural capital, the following sections unfold parental involvement as an everyday family responsibility. The discussion includes parental conversations with children, their studies and home assignments, children's motivation to learn, providing extra resources and materials, extra-curricular activities, outings and leisure time activities, provision of private tuitions and attending parent teacher meetings in schools.

When we talk of parenting at home, it is generally assumed that there is equal involvement of both the father and the mother in the childrearing practices. Parental verbal discussions and talk with their children on school matters is essential to know what situations their children are facing in schools. Children need a sense of security and emotional support at home. Dialogue with children makes parents aware of children's educational and emotional needs, and let them help their children navigate through any problem. Lareau (2002) explained that "in middle class homes, parents placed a tremendous emphasis on reasoning. They also drew out their children's views on specific subjects...matters of health and safety, but most other aspects, of daily life were potentially open to negotiation" (p. 763). Through interaction with families, children learn to share their emotions and problems related to studies and other things with their parents.

The chapter thus discusses the role of middle class families and their involvement in schooling of their children. It highlights parental participation at home and in the school, i.e., the practices and strategies used and followed at home to support child's schooling and how these vary within the fractions of the middle class namely, the middle and lower middle classes. It explores how social class influences the interactions and involvement inside the family and how families transmit advantages or disadvantages to their children.

I. How do Parents Involve in Their Child's Schooling?

In this study, it is found that parents from middle class fractions are involved in daily conversations with their children. A majority of the middle class fractions except a few respond in affirmative when they are asked whether they talk to their children and

ask them about their studies or how they are doing in school. In these households, both parents are engaged in having discussion with their children about schooling and other issues related to it. Middle compared to lower middle class parents are more responsible towards spending some time in interaction with children to provide them emotional support and security. These parents have positive relations with their children. However, the amount of talking in the families varies.

A majority of parents from middle and some from lower middle class ask and discuss children's days with teachers, peers and friends in school and children share school experiences and happenings and other things with them, for example, "*what happened in school, how was their day with friends, what did they do and what did they talk among friends*" and so on. Furthermore, some parents discuss about the problems and the negative influence or experiences in the school and classroom. For instance, a middle class father from J. P. Nagar said:

"I ask my son how he is doing in his class. Does he have any problem with the teacher's teaching or understanding? How does his teacher treat him? Whether he fights with his peers or is there anybody who bully or beat him in the class?"

The statement highlights the parenting style and parent's every day and emotional engagement with their child. Parents discuss each and every detail regarding classroom, teacher and peer behaviour i.e., teacher's lack of care and attention, treatment and problems of behaviour. Along with these, they discuss the school activities such as programmes, functions, debates, etc. in school and about the projects children are asked to make at home and try to arrange to help children participate in these activities. Hence, through conversations and discussions during lunch or dinner or while coming back from school, parents from middle class provide emotional and educational support to their children. However, on the other hand, there are some parents from lower middle class families who are not conscious of discussing or providing support to children's emotional and educational needs. One of the lower middle class fathers from New Nagar said: "*What should I ask? I sometimes tell my child to study. I have admitted him in private school and teaching is good in that*

school'. The father is disengaged in having dialogue with his child thinking that he has fulfilled his responsibility of schooling by putting his child in a private school.

Parents undertake children's educational work at home as "schools depend upon them to be *compliant* and thus to accept and support the way they (schools) educate their children" (Connolly, 2005: 123). Also, parents assist in order to develop study habits among children for their academic progress. During parent-teacher meetings in schools, parents are asked by the teachers and school to take interest in child's academic work, provide support and guide them more routinely in their studies at home for better academic results. In this way parents accept and support the school to perform well academically and to maintain its reputation (Connolly, 2005).

However, parents' own experiences and educational histories appear to influence their level of involvement. They remember the ways their parents were involved in their education and that influence their motivation in monitoring their children's education. By looking at middle or lower middle class parental educational backgrounds or histories, it is found that those who studied in villages or small towns were hardly supported by their parents and siblings or others during their own school days. Instead of support they got motivation from them to study hard and sometimes this was also absent. There were financial crises and social constraints that hindered their studies. Yet, whatever success they have achieved in their life is attributed to their own rigorous labour. Based on their past experiences middle class fractions put all their efforts, money, guidance, tuitions, enrichment activities, materials and other resources to help their children to gain what they did not get in their life. They strategize and involve in different ways to translate their aspirations and choices in practice and these vary according to their engagement with and mobilisation of resources.

Father's involvement in some of the middle and the lower middle class families is low as fathers' employment²⁵ serve as a barrier for them to devote time and supervise their children's studies at home. For instance, a middle class father from Jai Prakash Nagar stated: "*I do not have much time to talk to my children. My office is far away from home and I come late. My wife stays at home and she is there to talk to them*". The

²⁵ Some middle class fathers are posted in other states and some come late from their office or work.

statement illustrates that some fathers do not have time for their children and a majority of the mothers are more engaged in prolonged discussions with their children than fathers (Lareau, 2002). Few fathers from lower middle class families help their children in studies at home, mostly these fathers belong to lower white collar occupational category.

In some households from middle class(es) nobody helps the child. There are several reasons, such as children are in higher classes and parents think that children do not need any assistance as they take tuitions. Another thing is the parental level and medium of education. Lower middle class parents who are less educated feel they are incapable to help their children with school work. Some middle and lower middle class parents find themselves in a position where they cannot help the child as the courses and books have changed a lot and are in English medium that hinder them to assist their children in their studies. Lack of hold in English language prevent some parents to support and guide their children. A lower middle class father from New Nagar stressed: *“I do not help. I studied from Hindi medium school. I was good in Mathematics but my children’s books are in English. So, I could not help”*. Some lower middle class parents with little education experience language barrier and difficulty in helping children in their studies at home.

The question that arises is whose involvement is more in facilitating educational environment at home? The study reveals that it is the mothers who are expected to and who really play an active role in monitoring, guiding and helping children in their studies at home. In line with this, Reay (1998) argued that parental involvement “seemed to be powerfully shaped by a gendered division of labour. In such a division, ‘parent became elided with ‘maternal’ and mothers were to be found undertaking the vast majority of the work involved in supporting children’s education” (p. 60). Fathers are mainly bread winners and financial providers, so mothers are mostly involved in “intensive mothering” (Hay, 1996). Vincent (2017) too found that fathers are in “search of emotionally intimate relationship with their children, but less concerned with submerging themselves in the details of the organization and management of children’s lives, a range of tasks still largely delegated to mothers” (p. 6). Lareau

(1989; 1992) and Ribbens (1993) too found that fathers are often distant from the day-to-day maintenance of home-school relationships (cited from Reay, 1998: 60).

Vincent (2010) discussed what she calls ‘intensive mothering’²⁶ and suggested that parenting is an unequal process, where the mother retains the ultimate responsibility of child rearing practice. Thus, mothers have the responsibility to take “care both intensively and extensively for all aspects of the child’s physical, moral, social, emotional and intellectual development” (Hays, 1996; cited from Vincent and Maxwell, 2015: 4). This task mainly depends on mother’s level of education which is an important factor in children’s education at home – the more educated the mother is, the more knowledge and skills she could provide to her children compared to the less educated mothers who are mostly concerned with disciplining and monitoring their children at home. This shows how mother’s free time is spent and used to increase cultural capital (Reay, 1998).

However, this involvement of mothers in their child’s studies depends on their age, number of children they are raising and on child’s level of schooling, i.e., the class in which the child studies – whether in primary, middle or secondary level. Drury (1993) pointed out that qualified mothers act not simply as disciplinarians but as academic coaches at least up to the high school level. They are “most apt to work regularly with the children in the first years of school, making sure that they learn the fundamentals of reading, writing and calculating” (ibid. 86). They find out the difficulties that bother their children in understanding and learning the lessons. They try to solve those issues so that children could concentrate in their studies and move ahead without any difficulties.

The study found that mothers from middle class fractions are more active and involved compared to fathers in the daily routine of helping little children in dressing and getting ready for school on time, in dropping children to bus stop or to the school

²⁶ Sharon Hay (1996: 46) defines ‘intensive mothering’ as an ‘expert-guided and child-centred’, ‘emotionally absorbing, labour intensive, financially expensive’ ideology in which mothers are primarily responsible for the nurture and development of the ‘sacred’ child, and in which children’s needs take precedence over the individual needs of their mothers” (cited from Vincent, 2010: 110).

and picking children from bus stop or school. They take proper care of the diet and health of their children. Mothers are the main care givers in many households and are “involved with the minutiae of the child’s daily life” (Vincent and Maxwell, 2015: 3).

Some middle class mothers have domestic helpers (full or part time) and they take out their time for their children. Whenever they get time, during lunch or dinner or while coming back to home from school or bus stop, they talk to children about every matter related to school, i.e., about the everyday teaching-learning practices in class, homework given to them, class tests or exam and other happenings and activities, etc. For instance, a middle class mother stated:

“I go to pick my daughter from bus stop and we talk while coming back to home. I talk to her on every matter. I ask every day, what happened in class? What did your teacher teach and what did she ask? What lessons did you read? Did you get homework? My daughter shares everything with me”.

The statement shows mother’s concern and engagement with her daughter’s schooling. Mothers are actively involved in having dialogues with their children where children share details of everyday happenings of their schools. While some lower middle class mother’s engagement with household chores and low level of education and disinterest restricts them to engage themselves in talking and providing emotional support to their children.

In a majority of the families, educated mothers are involved in guiding, helping and supporting their children at home in their homework and studies. It is viewed that children’s academic success depends on the supportive home environment that support learning, exploration and self-directed behavior. They emphasize on the importance of parental involvement in education which is the key to their children’s successful education.

Lower middle compared to middle class mothers are involved in monitoring or helping at home because more children are at primary levels in the lower middle class families. Some middle class children are taking tuitions and thus their mothers do not

sit with them. Educated mothers are aware of the fact that the amount of time spent is an important factor in influencing child's learning outcomes. To fulfill the private school's expectation, middle class mothers sit with their children, discipline them, regularly monitor and check their progress, listen to their oral reading, help in writing by holding their hands, teach and explain them what they can, and help them in doing homework and studies and the academic areas in which children are weak. Children are provided home environment conducive for their study. Mothers are active participants in their children's education and provide academic supplement. The data supports the view that "parental educational background influences the academic achievement of students" because they guide and counsel children on "the best way to perform well in education" (Kainuwa and Yusuf, 2013: 1).

Mothers are concerned about their children's education and want them to understand and learn everything and do the best. Some middle class mothers find it difficult to teach as the school courses have changed a lot yet they are prepared to teach till they could. A middle class mother from J. P. Nagar who is a Commerce graduate, emphasized:

"I help my daughter who studies in Class II. I sit with her for 1 to 2 hours. When I teach her English, I explain the meaning of each word in Hindi and then ask her to learn it. There are many lessons in the course for a child. At home, I have to think what to teach first; General Knowledge, Mathematics or other subjects. If I teach Mathematics then other subjects remain. Patterns of courses have changed a lot and sometime it is difficult to explain. I will teach till I can do".

The mother is supportive and committed and tries all possible effort to provide good foundation at an early age. Private schools have different courses and she faces difficulty in explaining yet she puts all her efforts to monitor and help her child. One of the middle class mothers, who is a graduate, elaborates that she sits with her younger daughter for two hours to help her in completing homework. She explains lessons to her and faces difficulty in English grammar. Some less educated mothers do the same. However, lower middle class mothers differ from the middle class

mothers in their engagement at home. Some lower middle class mothers, even though they are school educated, make all possible efforts to help in children's academic progress in spite of difficulties. One of the lower middle class mothers who has matriculated from non-English medium school, searches for meanings of English words from the English to Hindi dictionary and explains it to her child. School educated lower middle class mothers also try in some way or the other to extend their support to children either in reading or teaching them Hindi or searching for meanings of English words from the dictionary and so on. Hence, it can be said that parents with low educational attainments lack the required sets of skills and knowledge to assist their children with homework especially beyond the primary or elementary level (Trotman, 2001). However, there are some lower middle class mothers (with low educational qualifications) who only discipline their children at home while studying.

Moreover, the number of mothers knowing their children's syllabus is more than the fathers. It is because of the fact that mothers teach children at home and thus are aware of what children are studying at school. Middle class mothers take out their time from other works to sit with their children and guide them seriously in their academic work. One of the middle class mothers does her child's homework also when he has difficulties. School educated lower middle class mothers sit besides their children during their study time to let them not to get distracted while studying. One of the lower middle class mothers expresses that she cuts vegetables or make flour dough and side by side helps children in doing homework or understanding the lessons. Some parents do not hire tutor as mothers are playing active role in teaching their children of primary classes at home. Other siblings also help in studies. Educated middle class mothers with their educational skills are comfortable in helping their children who are at primary level. They take it as their responsibility to help children gain success in academic achievements.

Mothers believe that staying at home is important for child's care and gives them strong base in academics and life. It is believed that mothers need to play an active role in their children's education in the present times where fathers' involvement and contribution are lacking. It has become the need of an hour for children's academic

progress in private schools where competition is tough. Two middle class mothers mention that their career options are sacrificed for children's care at home. A mother who is a law graduate and wanted to practice as a lawyer sacrifices career for her children. She expressed:

“I am a Law graduate and I should have been in a job. I could have lived as I want. But I and my husband decide that one person would stay at home to take care of children's needs. Children are young and we should not play with their life. Neither a father nor a teacher can do better than a mother. Mother is a primary care giver who teaches children everything. Mother is a friend and teacher of a child. I sit with my son who is in Class III. When I sit with my son to guide him, first I read the book in order to explain him. I need to be involved fully to help and guide him”.

The mother sacrifices the job of being a lawyer. Likewise, another mother has done B.Ed. and is a post graduate but do not teach in school. Her teacher training is not used for teaching in school due to child care at home. She said: *“My husband stays in Garhwa. He did not let me teach in school because of my children. I help and guide my children in doing homework and studies”.* Thus, middle class mothers practice cultural values of self-sacrifice which is the essential feature of the urban middle class (Kumar, 2011; cited from Kohli 2017: 62). They act as a ‘good’ mother in terms of devoting their time, energy and effort.

Some mothers from middle class fractions whose children are older (in elementary or secondary levels), do not have to discipline or sit with their children. Routines are made for them to sit on time to study. Children are old enough to study on their own and they are checked on by the mothers whether they are studying or not. For instance, a middle class mother asserted: *“I helped my son till class VI. Now he is in class IX and the level of studies is tough and is in English medium. I am unable to guide him so I hired a tutor for him”.*

The mother provides academic help at home till she is able to do it. Older children are guided in the past by their mothers when they were young studying at primary level.

They see the great difference between what they had studied and what their children are studying as the courses have changed a lot and all the books are in English. This hinders them to read books and guide their children as almost all of them have done their schooling in Hindi medium. Even though mothers are unable to satisfy their children's academic need, they put their non-work time and efforts to closely monitor, discipline and guide where they could in school work.

In a majority of the families from middle class(es) there is no strict time table as such for children to study at home. Most of the time mothers need to ask children to study. However, strict time table is followed in some of the middle as compared to lower middle class families. Authority and control are used by some middle and a few lower middle class mothers to improve children's achievement. For instance, one of the lower middle class mothers, whose son is in class I, has fixed the time schedule (time table) for everyday activity, be it studying, playing, drawing, cursive writing or watching TV, etc. She has not hired tutor for him and herself looks after her son's studies. She thinks that she could help him in his studies till class V. She helps to inculcate and communicate cultural values and behaviour in her son by letting him learn and write '*gayitri mantra*' hundred times a day (between 6:30 pm to 7:00 pm everyday) before starting to study. After this he has to complete his homework. The mother has established a daily routine, controls him in watching television excessively and closely monitor out of school activities. She has provided variety of materials (cursive writing book, drawing book, computer, etc.) to encourage her son in studies and creativity. She teaches him some basics (copy, paste, painting, etc.) of computer as she has done the basic course in computers. She keeps him in full discipline. This "sense of routine, therefore, reflects a certain middle class disposition for organisation and control" (Connolly, 2005: 128). In this way "the practice of schoolwork is internalised within some of the middle class children's habitus... and its value and importance is also clearly learnt through the keen interest and active involvement of some parents in their child's work" (ibid. 129).

Differences could thus be seen in the time invested and the way it is invested at home on children due to differences in social, cultural and economic resources among the

middle class fractions. It is also due to inadequate or inferior educational levels and skills, English medium instruction and change in the syllabus and courses of private schools. Those mothers or parents who are not involved in children's studies are proactive in monitoring academic achievements by providing private tuitions for them.

II. Provision of Resources and Additional Supports

Private school demands parental involvement and support regardless of their social class. Parental additional support to children at home depends on the resources they have. According to Lareau (1987), the “resources tied directly to social class (e.g., education, prestige, income) and certain patterns of family life (e.g., kinship, ties, socialization patterns, leisure activities) seem to play a large role in facilitating the participation of parents in schools” (p. 83). This section discusses the resources and support provided by the middle class fractions at home, to facilitate children's adjustment to school and academic achievement and to transform cultural resources into cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1977a).

Private Tuition

Tutoring is the fastest growing form of private education. Private tuition has become a matter of necessity or say universal necessity of all students whether they are average, weak or bright students (Sujatha and Rani, 2011). Bray and Lykins (2012) argued that now tuition is not just the preserve of the rich families but is in reach of the less well-off families. And that is why it is sought by most of the students. The trend of private tuition has increased due to commercialisation of education and lack of devotion of teachers (Rana, Sethi, and Chhikara, 2001).

Tuition as a support teaching is seen by a majority of middle class parents as important and unavoidable to further improve their children's results. Parents “spend extra money on private tuition of their children with the hope to get higher return in future” (Sujatha and Rani, 2011:105). Demand for tuition is linked to other educational preferences. A large number of children at primary and secondary levels attend private tuitions. In this regard a middle class mother from J. P. Nagar stated:

“These days many children take tuitions whether of ICSE, CBSE or Jharkhand Board; private or government schools”.

This statement shows that tuition has become a necessity and it is in everybody’s reach. Employing a private tutor is a strategy most frequently used to support children to perform well. Tutor is available to help children in completing their homework, to explain properly, to improve performance at school and to prepare them for their

Table 6.1: Number of Families who have employ/not employ tutor

Hire Tutor	MC (%)	LMC (%)	Total (%)
Yes	16 (30.76%)	36 (69.23%)	52* (100%)
No	29 (42.64%)	39 (57.35%)	68 (100%)
Total	45 (37.5%)	75 (62.5%)	120 (100.0%)

Source: Field Data

Note: *In this table, one child is taken from each family who is taking tuition.

This means, 52 children from 52 families are taking tuition.

examinations. It is evident that (Table 6.1) overall, more than 40% families from middle class fractions have employed tutors for their children and rest of the families do not employ tutors for various reasons. Employing private tutors depends on the level of schooling, i.e., the class in which children are studying. About 30.76% families from middle and 69.23% families from lower middle class have hired tutors for their children. Almost all these families have employed tutors for the full academic year, i.e., from the beginning of the session till the end of the year. There is no single family that have hired tutor for examination purpose only. It is a continuous tuition for the whole year. Children are tutored for one to two hours for five or six days a week after school hours. The percentage of middle class (42.64%) is higher than the lower middle class families (57.35%) who do not hire tutors for their children.

Private tutoring is in demand for all educational stages. Earlier it was limited to higher classes and parents employ tutors for children when they reach class IX or X but now even primary class students undertake private tuitions from the beginning in order to

meet the challenges of examination (Sujata and Rani, 2011; Bray and Lykins, 2012). Children who avail tuitions are at different levels from class I to X. However, most of the children of lower middle class are in primary grades and that is why tutoring of primary level children is higher while in middle class tutoring of children at secondary level is higher.

Tuitions cover subjects and lessons which are already covered in school. However, majority of the children who avail private tuitions are from primary and elementary grades, and they seek tutoring in all subjects that includes Hindi, English, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies. A majority of the children are taking private tutoring in all subjects, while some children of elementary or secondary grades avail tuitions in Science and Mathematics only. There are a few families whose children avail tuitions in English along with Science and Mathematics.

Three types of private tuitions are visible from the data. These are: 1) home tuition (one-to-one tutoring) in which a tutor teaches a student at student's or tutor's home, 2) group tuition in which a tutor teaches some students in a small group at his/her home, and 3) coaching centre/institute in which teachers of different subjects teach a large group of students (mostly of secondary grades) in a centre or institute. The percentage of home tuition is higher because most of the children are in primary or elementary grades and parents prefer home tuitions for them. Again, higher number of children from lower middle than middle class families take home tutoring because many parents in the lower middle class do not assist and guide their children at home for different reasons and depend on private tuitions for academic assistance. This is followed by the group tuition which is taken by the children of class VI – X. A few children of secondary grades avail private tutoring from coaching institutes.

Income and living in urban areas are positively associated with private tuition uptake (Bray and Lykins, 2012). Parents pay extra money on supplementary instruction to support children's academic needs at home and to get good return in school education and ahead. The amount of tuition fee depends on four factors, i.e., 1) the level/class in which the child studies, 2) the number and type of subjects in which he/she receives tuition, 3) the type of tuition, whether home tuition, group tuition or coaching

institutes, 4) the type of tutors, whether graduate/under graduate students or professional teachers.

Table 6.2: Tuition Fee

Fee Range (Rs.)	MC	LMC	Total
901 & above	3 (100%)	-	3 (100%)
701 – 900	2 (100%)	-	2 (100%)
501 – 700	1 (50%)	1 (50%)	2 (100%)
301 – 500	7 (33.3%)	14 (66.7%)	21 (100%)
150 – 300	3 (12.5%)	21 (87.5%)	24 (100%)
Total	16 (30.8%)	36 (69.2%)	52 (100%)

Source: Field Data

Table 6.2 shows that parents spend between rupees 150 to rupees 1600 or above on tutoring per child per month. The cost of home tuition or group tuition is low for primary class children and, as mentioned earlier, the cost increases according to the class. Parents pay more for Mathematics and Science subjects compared to Social Studies and other subjects. A majority of the middle class(es) spend between rupees 150 to rupees 300 on private tuition every month, followed by some of the families who spend between rupees 301 to rupees 500. A few families spend between rupees 501 to rupees 900 and above in a month. Within middle class fractions, a majority of the middle class families spend more than rupees 700 or above a month compared to lower middle class families who spend between rupees 150 to rupees 500.

Parental demand for tuition has risen for they feel that it acts as a substitute for receiving help at home. They either do not have time or are unable to help children with their studies at home and therefore tuition has become essential to overcome school inadequacies (Sujatha and Rani, 2011). Several reasons whether academic, personal and social are cited by parents for seeking tuitions for children. It is found that higher number of lower middle class families hire tutors compared to middle class for their inability (due to low academic level) to monitor and support their children at home. They hire those tutors who charge less money. Middle class officers and professionals having better economic resources pay more for tuitions.

Sujatha and Rani (2011) pointed out that “academic reasons include inability to understand classroom instructions, unavailability of subject teachers, non-completion

of course, poor teaching etc. Personal reasons constitute interest to learn more, desire to score higher percentage of marks, not-doing well in the class etc. and social reasons comprise parental expectation, peer group pressure etc.” (p. 137-138). The reasons for employing tutor or sending for coaching are: lack of good teachers or incompetent teaching faculty, poor teaching in school as not much time is spent by teacher in explaining the lesson, non completion of courses/syllabus on time, Mathematics and Science subjects need special attention, children’s lack of attention towards their studies at home, their inability to grasp or understand classroom instructions, all children’s minds are not alike, revision is done through tuition, it’s time of competition and children will have additional help and benefit over their counterparts from tuition, they will achieve higher academic results, parents do not have time to guide children at home and to maintain standards in society.

The problems within the educational system seem to have given way to the spread of private tutoring. The problem faced by children is the large class size that hinders teachers to interact and pay individual attention to each and every child. This leads to child’s inability to understand classroom instructions. Heavy teaching load on teachers leads to lack of quality teaching and interaction in the classroom processes. Large class size produces negative environment and deprive students of the needed individual attention (Alotaibi, 2014) which eventually makes private tutoring an evitable solution. A middle class mother from J. P. Nagar complains that private schools have many children in a class and children who need help in understanding the lesson are not taken care of individually. She expressed:

“Why do children need tuition when they are regularly going to school. You take children as much as you can take care of them. Private schools take more and more children and are unable to take care of them”.

The mother complains that she hired private tutor because not much teaching takes place in the class. Private schools admit a large number of students and have bigger class size. Alotaibi (2014) argued that “teachers rush lessons and do not provide a detailed explanation. As a result, most of the students do not understand the content of the lessons. The way to meet the requirements – a key alternative that students may

seek in order to make up for their lack of understanding in private tutoring” (p. 81). Some middle class fractions gave the same reason for tutoring children that teachers do not explain the lessons clearly and do not complete the course/syllabus on time. For instance, a lower middle class mother from New Nagar stated:

“We need to hire tutor. Almost all private schools are acting in the same way. The teacher who teaches Mathematics solves one or two sums from each chapter and this means the whole chapter is completed. The child does not understand from solving one or two sums in the class and he/she needs tutor’s help to understand”.

The mother expresses that Science and Mathematics are tough and tuition is needed in difficult subjects because everything is not covered up in the school. One of the middle class mothers from J. P. Nagar argues that tuition is a must in the higher classes for lack of detailed explanation and teaching in the private school. She elucidated that:

“Children are scared to ask from the teacher if they do not understand the lesson, not because they will be punished in front of others but because the teacher would degrade him/her saying that all children have understood and you do not.”

Thus, instead of explaining and repeating the lesson again in the class, teachers use negative approach to demoralise and discourage students for asking whatever they do not understand in classroom teaching. This leaves parents with no option but to go for private tutoring where children can share their problems without any hesitation as they feel free and more comfortable with the tutor. It is clear that lessons or chapters are not completed fully. All the children do not grasp or understand at first hand whatever is taught in the classroom.

Teachers’ low commitment towards their profession and their own involvement in giving private tuitions insist children to take private tuitions. Sujatha and Rani (2011) pointed out that “teachers involved in private tuition do not take classroom teaching seriously and at times coerce the students to seek private tuition either from them in

certain coaching centre” (p. 136). One of the lower middle class fathers criticises teachers for not teaching properly at school and at the same time tutoring after school hours.

A lower middle class mother from New Nagar criticises the principal of a neighbourhood school²⁷ who as a tutor does not deliver the expected level of teaching and tutoring. She complains against group tutoring²⁸ by him for she does not get better academic results of her children that she expects. Children are compelled to take tuitions and even school teachers as tutors do not teach very well and effectively. Lower middle class parents hire tutors by paying little money and yet they do not get quality tuitions. On the other hand, teachers are driven to earn additional income by engaging themselves in the shadow education market.

Vincent et al. (2012) found that “despite the parents’ choice of strongly academically-oriented schools, all of the children have extra tutorial because... parents believe in giving their children a strong steer in terms of their future direction” (p. 339). The private school teachers themselves ask parents to either monitor and guide children at home or to hire tutors. They defend themselves by saying that they are unable to handle so many children in the classroom. In this regard, a lower middle class father from New Nagar stated:

“Class teacher asks us to pay full attention at home. She says, ‘what will we teach in 5 hours? Half an hour is for lunch, half an hour for games and half an hour for drawing. What will we teach in 3 ½ hours? You look after your child’s studies at home. But then I do not have time so I hire a tutor for him’”.

It is evident that most of the fathers do not spare time for their children due to their job/business schedule. They leave their homes in the morning and come back late at night. Sujatha and Rani (2011) argued that “the trend has changed - working parents, mainly fathers do not get time to assist and educate children at home. So, they invest

²⁷ The school is Vivek Memorial High School is a low fee private school till class X in New Nagar locality.

²⁸ The principal of Vivek Memorial School teaches 12 children (of different levels, i.e., from Nursery till class IV) at a time. He lets them sit together and does not teach each child separately.

on tuition to “get over the guilt of not doing enough for their children” (p. 106). Majority of parents have lack of time to invest on children’s studies at home. Therefore, tuition is regarded as a compensatory measure to provide educational support to children.

Parents employ tutors for their children so that revision is done and children get good marks in examinations and achieve academic success. By employing a tutor, they maximise children’s chances of being successful and save them from failing. Tutors mark out important questions that would come in exams, provide summaries of the lessons and answers of the questions and help children prepare accordingly to get good academic grades. Anxious middle class parents put their children (who are at secondary level) in the coaching institutes for further preparation for the competition. These families deploy their economic resources in support of their children to transform resources into cultural capital.

Tuition as an extra burden is not favoured by middle class parents yet they are compelled to resort to it as they believe that children’s future would be spoiled if they leave them to depend only on school. They believe that even the private school that claims to be ‘best’ is not fully reliable. Tuition is a substitute for parental help.

Middle class families “worry about status preservation” and they do not want to “slide down from the social ladder on the one hand or grab opportunity to climb the social ladder on the other...” (Becker & Lauterbach, 2010; cited from Entrich, 2014: 21). Here, tuition or “shadow education advance to become a chance to at least preserve the social status or even climb the social ladder. Of course, parents are also measuring it further investment in education” (ibid. 21). Some middle class parents mention that they hire a tutor because other children are receiving it and it seems necessary to maintain their standard in society. Peer group pressure and social comparison force parents to hire tutors for their children. It is perceived by parents as a matter of necessity and “a symbol of pride and social prestige” (Sujatha and Rani, 2011: 105).

Attending a tuition has also become a status symbol. Achievement in examination has become a symbol of social prestige, for which parents as well as children work hard to attain this prestige (Rama, Sethi and Chhikara, 2001: 42). Thus, despite choosing

academically oriented private schools, children are seeking extra private tutoring because “it makes you go that extra step” (Vincent et al., 2012: 339). Parents also “believe in giving their children a strong steer in terms of their future direction” (ibid) and in this way they differ from other parents who do not want to employ tutor for their children.

However, Sujatha and Rani (2011) argued that some parents do not avail tuition for having different view: “as to them, the coaching institutions only aim at making money and the students waste their time and money, learning nothing” (p. 140). Some middle class parents who do not hire private tutor, for their children are good in studies and are able to study on their own at home. Parents are satisfied with school teaching and their children’s performance. Some children are in primary school and therefore parents give time to their children and help them at home in their studies. Few middle class parents feel that parents have *phobia* for hiring a tutor. A middle class mother from J. P. Nagar who is a teacher (not teaching at present) criticises tutoring that it makes children handicapped who do not concentrate at home in studying and depend on tuitions. She guides her children at home and encourages them for self-study and her children are performing excellent in every class.

However, some middle class parents express that they would hire private tutor in future when children will reach higher classes because syllabus and courses in private schools are tough and children need tutorial support for their academic success. It is noted that middle class parents are “clear about their long-term planning” (Vincent, 2012: 344) and strategize and activate their economic capital to provide extra tutorial for better academic achievement. On the other hand, lower middle class parents show their dismay in hiring tutors for having no economic capital and resources.

Encouragement and Providing Extra Resources

Even though parents help or do not help their children in studies at home they consciously provide emotional support and encouragement to them. Almost all of the middle class families except a few from lower class families respond in affirmative saying they offer praise and encouragement to their children for academic

achievement. They encourage children to study hard with some aims/objectives in life, gain wisdom and knowledge, and do well in exams because without labour they would not be able to move forward. They do not show disappointment for achieving below their expectations.

Middle class parents appreciate and make children aware of their performances and ask for improvement. Keeping in mind their high expectations, they stress strongly on focusing to achieve the best or excellent results and get the top position. For instance, a middle class father from Jai Prakash Nagar said:

“I tell my children that there is no option but to study. If you do not study, then you will fail. To study is not to get 75% marks, but to get 95% marks. Today, anybody can get 75% marks”.

Middle class parents who have high expectations put pressure on children to study hard as they do not want to sit for long duration to study at home. They “*want good result and nothing else*”. A middle class mother expressed:

“I tell my children to study hard and get first division. I do not want them to fail. The pressure on children has increased but what to do. Books are also tough so we need to give pressure”.

Some middle class parents encourage by threatening children of failure and ask them to study hard and “*get good grades*”. Otherwise “*you will feel bad if you get bad result*”. Some encourage their children to “*do better in future even if they did not achieve good grades in their exams*”. Children are always asked to “*study hard whether there is exam/test or not*”. They are motivated to “*do slow but good study*”. Some parents “*do not put pressure or load on children*”. However, some lower middle class with lower income rarely encourage or put pressure on children to study hard and get good results.

Middle class parents transmit educational values and beliefs and encourage children to study and work hard to get success in life. They motivate children through narratives and examples of other children or persons and do comparison and ask them to concentrate in their studies to move forward in life. Some parents give examples of

great or famous persons citing how they got success and fame in life. They relate it to fortunes and career opportunities, heroic actions, and hard work. They give examples of Sachin Tendulkar, APJ Abdul Kalam and so on.

Some lower middle class parents with middle income motivate children by giving examples. For instance, a lower middle class mother from New Nagar stated:

“I give examples of great persons or leaders. I say that if you study hard you will become like one of them. Nobody will give importance if you do not study. I say that nobody has become great on the basis of money. They all achieved on the basis of hard work and educational merits”.

Parents “incorporate material from the wider environment, and they are passed on to others as *stories* with recognisable themes and patterns, much like folktales” (Drury, 1993: 64). Some middle class families encourage their children for study by using biography, and their own past educational histories and struggles in life and how they had faced difficulties in their life (in terms of food, clothing, education, etc.). It is the fruits of their hard work that helps them to move from the bottom to the present position. In the words of a middle class tribal mother from Jai Prakash Nagar:

“I give example to my children of their father. I tell them to see how their father faced difficulties in his time for not having enough food and clothing in the village. He studied in spite of all these difficulties and became an officer. Now he is there for you and you have everything. What not is there? From God’s grace you have food, clothing and all other facilities. There is no lacking. You just have to work hard and pay attention to your studies. And if you do not work hard then the fruits would not be sweet. You will move forward if you work hard and you will have good life. We will be happy if you have a happy life”.

Through these examples and stories parents convey their children that educational achievement is important and it is expected from them. Past life histories are told to

children to pass the value of education and to motivate them to study hard to become a good person with bright future. Parents encourage them to do what they did not in their life due to difficult circumstances. Children are expected to fulfil parents' aspirations of seeing them as doctors, engineers, managers, officers and have more prosperous life than their parents. Drury (1993) argued that "one's own history and sacrifices serves as an example of how education is related to family resources and attitudes and to later success and failure, and the connection is made in an intensely personal and emotional laden way" (p. 64). Some lower middle class parents encourage children to study well and excel high in academics otherwise they will have to do the same job that their parents are doing.

Some middle class parents encourage children to study hard in order to get success in the competition which is tough and seats are limited due to reservations. Middle class parents' encouragement and motivation is influenced by their academic aspirations for their children that insists them to push their children to perform better and acquire cultural capital for future job opportunities and advantages. However, on the other hand there are few lower middle class families with lower incomes who are found passive and do not participate much in encouraging or motivating due to their educational experiences, habitus and disposition.

Moreover, along with encouragement and motivation, parents adopt the practice of rewarding children by verbally appreciating or by offering material incentives for studying properly and performing well in examinations (Drury, 1993: 87). They reward for progressing in their studies. A majority of middle class(es) reward children except a few who do not. They reward in two ways, one is appreciate verbally and second is reward materially. More middle than lower middle class parents reward their children materially.

However, there are different levels of family involvement. Families' knowledge of education system and their ability to work it to the advantage of their children varies within middle class(es). Professional-managerial families are seen more able to mobilise goods, status and social connections, and sophisticated scheduling capacities in order to advance their children's education (Lareau, 2000). Along with appreciation

and rewarding, parents encourage or ask children to read books and provide extra readings/materials for information and knowledge enhancement. They supplement their children's education by providing extra learning materials or resources and activities at home to help and motivate them to study and enhance their knowledge and skills. These families have financial status, resources and purchasing power. Middle class parents are well aware of the fact that extra resources are beneficial for the skill development and academic success of children. In this way they assist in 'concerted development' (Lareau, 2003) of children by providing extra reading materials such as story books/comics, novels, general knowledge books/current affairs, puzzle books, drawing/colouring books, puzzle/video games and Science/Mathematics books, magazines and Encyclopaedia. Some families provide story books or comics such as '*Champak*', '*Nanhe Samrat*', '*Nandan*', '*Amar Chitra Katha*', etc. to their children. Only a few families from middle and lower middle class motivate them to read English novels such as *Ruskin Bond's* and *Enid Blyton's* novels for good English.

Children of a few middle class families have laptops or computers to search and have extra knowledge and to play video games. A middle class father, who is an engineer, teaches his daughter (in Class II) to search for the meanings of difficult words in the Internet/Google. She knows to operate You tube and shares knowledge with her mother. Few middle class families provide games and toys related to learning Mathematics or puzzles and Nursery rhymes cassettes/CDs. A mother reports that she has bought Cursive Writing and Drawing books for her son who is very much interested in drawing pictures. So, by providing resources she is actually motivating her son to excel in that field of his interest. All these learning materials and activities help in motivating and increasing reading habits at home and sharpen the minds of children. Thus, these are the resources through which middle class children are motivated to gain and increase cultural capital in the form of knowledge, skills and talents for better school performance and future use. However, on the other hand, lower middle class parents with lower incomes do not provide such resources for having different dispositions and different priorities based on limited resources. They seem less conscious in providing resources for the 'concerted development' of their

children. Their social, economic and cultural position hinder them to do so.

During the leisure time at home, i.e., after school hours, children of many families are involved in informal activities such as playing at home or with neighbour's children; watching television or engaged in various activities at home. Some middle and a few lower middle class families have enroll their children in extra-curricular activities and classes to enhance their interests and skills. Children go for formal activities such as computer classes, dance, music, drawing/painting and games/sports after school hours. They are encouraged for these enrichment activities to perpetuate their interests, as parents consider that learning several kinds of extracurricular activities would not only develop children's skills and talents but also provide them opportunities to express and perform and make it a profession in future.

Table 6.3: Types of Extracurricular activities/class

Extra classes	MC	LMC	Total
Computer Classes	2 (33.3%)	4 (66.6%)	6 (100%)
Music Classes	1 (50%)	1 (50%)	2 (100%)
Drawing Classes	6 (100%)	0 (0.0%)	6 (100%)
Dance Classes	4 (66.6%)	2 (33.3%)	6 (100%)
Swimming, Tennis, Guitar	1 (100%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (100%)
Football Training	0 (0.0%)	1 (100%)	1 (100%)
Total	14 (63.6%)	8 (36.3%)	22 (100%)

Source: Field Data

It is clear that the involvements of children in activity classes are more from middle than lower middle class families. Non-involvement in activities is more in lower middle rather than middle class families for different reasons. The types of classes or activities in which children are enrolled are shown in the Table 6.3. The most preferred classes are computer, dance and drawing/painting classes. Two families send their children for music classes. Two daughters from a family are doing their classes from Prayag University (Allahabad) which has its branch in Ranchi. Children from a middle class family go for swimming and a child from a lower middle class family go for football training. Majority of the families do not send their children for extra courses apart from their studies because they are too young to go for classes.

Some parents assert that children come late from the school and do not have time for all these activities and some gave excuses that children have activities in school whether it is dance, music (instruments such as Guitar, Casio, and Harmonium), yoga, sports, computer or karate. Few parents express that children should not be burdened with other activities as they are already burdened with studies. Lack of centre or institute nearby home is also a reason as parents do not want to send children far away for courses because they need time to drop and bring back from the institute. Two parents from lower middle class families follow their old and rigid thinking of society, where singing and dancing is not seen as good for children in a society. One of them said: “*we do not like our daughters to go out and dance*”. Two lower middle class parents grieve that they do not have money to send children for extracurricular activities. For instance, a lower middle class mother from New Nagar stressed:

“We want to send children for some classes but we could not. We do not have much money to do so. We have to pay school fees. My daughter dances very well. She has got many prizes in school. When she was small, she learned to dance from my sister and won the prize in dance competition. But we do not send her for dance classes due to money problem.”.

Lack of economic capital prevents lower middle class parents to augment their children’s talents and cultural capital. However, those middle class who have money send their children for some courses to enhance their skills and talents. They see the importance of other activities for personality development of a child. All these activities whether learning art/craft, music or dance are must and are crucial along with studies because “*it makes child free and fresh in every field*”. It helps in concentrating their mind in studies. Children’s talents come out through these activities that enhance creativity and increase the energy level and help in their development in every field. It is felt that learning creative things in leisure time is better than sitting idle or roaming around. A middle class father feels proud of his children for being multitalented and expressed:

“Yes, my children are multitalented. My son plays guitar. My daughter plays tennis. They go for swimming. They go for dance and French classes. It’s very important for children’s personality development. They will become better person. Activities increase the energy level. It is better to do creative things rather than go for wrong doings. You play guitar instead of loafing/roaming around. You develop some skills in any area – be it tennis, sports or swimming, playing an instrument, painting, singing or reading. Today’s children do not want to read books. They have so many options to do which we did not have in our time”.

Parents try to do ‘good’ parenting through ‘enriching’ activities. A middle class mother from J. P. Nagar believes that emotions could be expressed through painting. She said, *“you can express your emotions, you can create something new”.*

According to parents, extracurricular activities refresh minds and change moods of children to let them feel relaxed for some time even if there is pressure of studies. It helps in self-improvement and development because *“when the mind is fresh, they do better in studies. It’s not good to become bookworm and study all the time. Freedom should be given to a child”.* In this regard a middle class mother from J. P. Nagar said:

“Yes. I send both of my daughters for drawing classes. This helps to enhance creativity. This is necessary along with studies. It refreshes and changes one’s mood”.

The statement clarifies that enrichment activities provide self-satisfaction and pleasure. Therefore, what children want i.e., their interest is important. It should be enhanced and maintained. A middle class mother from J. P. Nagar expressed:

“Yes, my daughter goes for dance classes. She developed her interest in dancing when she was four years old. Earlier she learned Bharatnatyam. Once she participated in Boogie -Boogie and got the rank in top five at all India level. My daughter loves dancing and she dances very well since the beginning. When she was small, she used to

dance by watching dance on television. So, we thought that why not let her learn dance. She started learning dance since she was in Class IV. The teacher comes home to train her. It is a five-year course. A person should have a hobby of some kind and should do something interesting in order to get self-satisfaction and pleasure instead of sitting idle during leisure time”.

Parents’ preference for computer classes as extracurricular activity is associated with the employment prospects in India (Vincent and Menon, 2011). Parents believe that activities boost confidence in children and they participate in programmes with confidence. It’s good to have extra quality in oneself that motivates one to move forward whether in speech, debate, dance, music or anything.

Thus, few middle and lower middle class parents believe that extracurricular activities are essential for the enhancement of extra quality and for all round development of the child. They invest their economic capital in their children’s enrichment activities to boost their interest and enhance their skills to accumulate opportunities and advantages for them. Vincent and Maxwell (2015) found that “engaging in extra-curricular activities is becoming a fundamental part of what is understood as constituting a ‘good’ childhood amongst affluent populations and thus, an indicator of being a ‘good’ parent is that s/he provides such opportunities to their children” (p. 3).

Education of children can be enhanced by visiting to interesting places and providing exposure to more than the school studies such as books, films, theatres and so on. Part of the parental job is to extend the child’s horizons by offering experiences which broaden their understanding of the world. This parental responsibility is evident in the study where parents are concerned of taking children out for recreational activities. A majority of the families from middle class fractions take children for outings during weekends or holidays. However, some families do not visit to any place for some or the other reasons. The lower middle class families mention lack of money while middle class parents reason lack of time to take children out and give them experiences. Families who go for outings are more from middle class compared to lower middle class families. The most visited places by both middle and lower middle

class families are local parks such as, Birsa Jaivik Udyaan, Sidhu Kanhu Park, Rock Garden, Aqua World or Machli Ghar and zoo. Few middle and lower middle class families visit to Book Fair with their children. A few middle class families take their children to watch films in the cinema hall. There are some other places where they go such as Khadi Mela, Rajbhawan, Fun Castle, Flower Show, Circus, Disney Land and Vehicle Expo. It is seen that both middle and lower middle class families are involved in broadening children's experiences according to their capacity and time.

Mothers are socially active and use their social capital/networks to talk and discuss children's educational progress, problems and other things related to schooling. It is found that majority of mothers from middle compared to lower middle class families are involved in talking to others. Some mothers are not involved in any kind of discussion as they are too busy in household chores to talk or they hardly meet their neighbours to talk for lack of time. A mother from New Nagar reports that her family is new in the colony and is not acquainted with her neighbours. Those mothers who are active participant in children's schooling are in contact with their neighbours, relatives, friends, child's friend's mothers and teachers. Most of the middle class mothers talk to their neighbours and friends about studies, child's progress, teachers, school activities, results and about guiding children at home. However, lower middle class mothers talk to their relatives.

It is evident that neighbours are socially contacted as they are easily accessible. Through their talk and discussions, mothers receive and share extensive information about classroom and school life, academic reputations of most of the teachers, academic ranking of children in the class, specific academic problems, etc. (Lareau, 1987: 81). They discuss about children's studies, their problems, progress, tuition, extra books, school fees, other expenses, school environment, and so on.

Social practices are more important – in Bourdieu's 'habitus', the focus is on process and not much on position (social location) (Reay, 1998: 58). Reay utilized "'habitus' mainly as a way of understanding the impact of women's own past educational experiences on their contemporary activities in support of children's education" (ibid. pp. 58-59). Factors structuring parents' participation- "A variety of factors influenced

parents' participation in schooling. Parents' educational capabilities, their view of the appropriate division of labour between teachers and parents, the information they had about their children's schooling and the time, money, and other material resources available in the home all mediated parents' involvement in schooling" (Lareau, 1987: 79).

Reay (1998) found that mothers school days are characterized by 'separation between home and school' (p. 61) and the nature of the separation was differentiated by social class (working class mother) - 'you learnt at school, not at home' because parents are not undertaking educational work at home. She further expressed that "historical continuity in middle class women's account. In all, over two-third of the middle class mothers had been taught by their own mothers" (ibid. 61).

III. Parental Engagement with the School

The partnership between home and school is important where parental involvement in children's schooling is required for their academic development. According to Lareau (1987), "Family school relationships are socially constructed and are historically variable" (p. 74) and "relationship between parental involvement and academic performance was important" (p. 76). Schools have parent teacher meetings where private school administration and teachers invite parents to communicate with them about child's schooling and academic achievements. Teachers share updates on child's progress - their weaknesses, strengths and growth areas. It is an essential way to communicate with parents and build a partnership that sets students up for success.

When asked whether parents are called for parent teacher meeting in the school, a majority of the middle class families answer in affirmative while a few say they do not know. Parents who are aware of parent teacher meeting, are seen active and participating in their children's education, inside the school. All private schools (where respondents' children are going) except a few organize parent teacher meeting.

However, parents vary in reporting the frequency of parent teacher meeting in private schools. Some middle class fractions mention that parent teacher meeting is held two to three times a year while a majority of parents say that they are called three to four

times a year. It is mostly organised after the terminal examinations. It is reported by a middle class parent that monthly meeting is held in Sarla Birla School. Another middle class father from J. P. Nagar states that schools have meetings on every Wednesday in Delhi Public School. A few lower middle class mothers are unaware of parent teacher meeting and report that teachers directly call parents to talk to them or meet them or the principal any time during the school hours.

In some families of middle class(es), both the parents together attend the parent teacher meeting. A majority of the middle class parents, both mothers and fathers are regular in attending the meeting because they are aware of the importance of parent teacher meeting. In few families, it is either father or mother who attend the meeting according to their free time. In some of the families, mothers alone attend parent teacher meeting as fathers do not get time due to their jobs and in a few cases, fathers stay out of Ranchi. Most of the mothers are housewives and it is their duty and hence, are expected to attend the meetings. On the other hand, some lower middle class mothers alone attend the meeting as fathers do not have time due to demand of job schedule. A few lower middle class parents (lower income) are unaware of such meetings and do not attend the PTM. For instance, one of the lower middle class mother from New Nagar said, *“I don’t know about the meeting. Schools do not call for meeting. But if there is problem with the child, they directly call parents to meet”*.

The lower middle class mother’s statement shows her non-participation in child’s schooling. The child goes to low fee private school where parents are not called for such meeting. A few lower middle class parents fail to participate in parent-teacher meetings for they are non-serious about their involvement and do not give importance to such meetings. Here, Lareau (1987) rightly argued that, “the level of parental involvement is linked to the class position of the parents and to the social and cultural resources that social class yields” (p. 81).

The main concern of parent teacher meetings is children’s academic performance. Majority of the parents from the middle class fractions report that teachers talk about children’s results, performance/progress or drawbacks in their studies, about children’s concentration or lack of attentiveness in class/studies, their weaknesses or

difficulties in particular subjects. Teachers complaint of children's incomplete homework, their study and guidance at home, discipline and behaviour, lack of respect for teachers, complaint about bad/quarrelsome child, problems that children face in the classroom/school, children's bad handwriting, their inability to converse in English, non-participation in class, non-completion of homework, their lack of participation in the activities. Few middle class mothers mention that teachers insist on giving a particular type of lunch and no junk food and so on. The interaction between home and the school is limited to conversation with teachers to address problems related to children's studies, distributing report cards, educational and behavioural problems of children only and not more than that. Parents state that teachers mostly talk about performance of students in school examination. Teachers ask parents to be proactive at home. Most of the lower middle class parents are asked to help and guide children who need extra practice in their studies at home. PTM is not beyond this. For instance, a middle class father from Jai Prakash Nagar said:

“The motive of the meeting is result oriented. Parents say their children are not doing well, or they ask from the teacher how the child is doing, or they say that children do not concentrate in their studies. This is what happens in PTM. Teachers just do the formalities”.

Hence, parent teacher meetings in private schools are limited to teachers' complaint about children's academic progress and drawbacks and not more than that, where sometimes parents also join teachers in blaming children for not studying or doing well according to their expectations. Parents, mostly from lower middle class, are blamed for neglecting children's studies at home and are expected to share the responsibility of teaching and helping at home. Through PTM parents are made aware of what their children are learning and are requested and pressurised by the private school teachers to become more involved in their children's learning activities at home²⁹. Private schools ask and expect parents to support and be compliant to the school for its academic success. Through this the private schools attempt to manage the pressures exerted by the parents on them. It is a “careful and strategic negotiation” that schools try to do (Connolly, 2005: 127).

²⁹ Private schools demand a child-centered and study-centered environment at home.

Parental ‘Voice’

Parents’ ‘voice’ is important in child’s schooling. Parents from middle class(es) are asked whether they have raised any issue regarding child’s schooling or any other matter in the meetings and with school authorities. Also, whether they are called to the group meetings? Almost all the responses are in negative except a few responses from middle class. Parents report that sometimes they are asked to express what they feel or want from teachers or school but are prevented from speaking up or suggesting measures to apply in improving the teaching learning processes. Although parents are allowed to ‘voice’ their concerns it is just for formalities. Teachers or schools never try to see what parents have to say and this is the reason why many parents do not raise their voice regarding children’s schooling knowing that it is of no use.

However, very few middle class parents who are professionals or officers raise their concerns when they have some problem with the school. They speak up and question teachers for their teaching when children (who are good in studies) do not do well in the concerned subject in the examination. Relating to this point, a middle class mother from J. P. Nagar stated:

“My daughter is good in her studies but once she did not do well in one subject in the exam. It was because the teacher was absent for some days and the lesson was not completed. So, I talked to the teacher during parent teacher meeting and complained about her absence”.

The middle class mother is concern about her daughter’s academic result and raises the issue with the concerned teacher. Her educational level and class provides her such power to speak up against the teacher for her incomplete teaching that affected her daughter’s result.

It is viewed that visiting schools are limited to communication with teachers to address problems related to children’s academic progress, educational and behavioural problems. Parents in private schools are never called for group meetings and there are no interactions on school inadequacies or the requirement of improvement in the quality of school education/activities. Schools do not discuss or

listen what parents want from them. Parents are not called in a group to deter them from forming a group against the school and to silence their ‘voice’.

Schools always complain about children’s performance and drawbacks and do not bother about parents’ ‘voice’. Private schools follow their own rules/regulations and strategies. They neither provide platform for parents to speak up nor act upon parents’ concern regarding school improvement. One of the middle class fathers from J. P. Nagar is disappointed by the school management as once he raises his ‘voice’ against the school transportation but nothing has been done by the school. He stated:

“We definitely raise our concern regarding development of the school or whatever lacking we see. But we do not see any action or improvement on that. Private school takes hefty fees and does not take care of children. The school bus loads children like lambs and goats and children do not get seats. There is a problem of school bus. When motor vehicle department takes control over it then it gets up from its sleep otherwise, they do not listen to us (hamare bolne se kaan pe joon tak nahin rengta hai). Private school increases fees every year. It does not care/bother about any of our concerns. it just bothers about filling its own stomach... there is no doubt that private school is very cruel/mean in this matter”.

The statement shows the father’s hatred against private schools that charge big amount of fees in the name of several developmental activities and do not do anything. Private schools are scorned/disliked for not providing proper bus facilities for children even after paying heavy fees. They do not bother about parents’ ‘voice’. Parents want schools and teachers to listen to their concerns about their children but schools avert their ‘voice’ and do not pay attention to their concerns. They want to meet school members in collective so that they could ask and insist on improving private school facilities. They also know that their ‘collective voice’ against private schools and their management is repressed and are called individually to resist their demands in public.

When the respondents are asked whether they have raised any of their concern regarding children's schooling or any other matter in the meeting, a majority of them except a few report in negative. They are aware of their children's educational need but hesitate to raise their 'voice' for that. The concerns of these parents are related to school development, less marks in exam, teacher's attention to students if they are weak in any subject, children's study at school/home, homework, activities in class, teacher's lack of proper teaching, children's lack of understanding, quarrel with other students, and children not eating lunch at school.

Lower middle class parents are unhappy with the school environment for not paying attention to children's education and discipline. They complain about teacher's inattentiveness towards children's fight in the class. Instead, students are blamed by teachers for not studying. One of the lower middle class fathers from New Nagar said:

“No school tells its inadequacies. It only points out child's weaknesses but not its own. Teachers say that they teach but the child does not learn, so it's not their fault. They complain that your child does not participate in any activities or sports. Now what to do? If I say something then I would become bad”.

Lower middle class parents are hesitant to speak up and are discouraged to raise their concerns against private schools' inadequacies related to teaching learning and other matters of schooling. Fear of principal's hostility towards them restrain them to complaint against school's shortfalls. They are left with no option but to 'exit' the school. Parents might express their interests and concerns but the agenda is still set and controlled by the private schools. Lareau and Horvat (1999) argue that, “Parents who go along with what the school asks are seen as “good”; those who dissent are considered “problematic” (cited from Perez, 2005: 467). Thus, middle class(es) families do not show their dissent for they fear that their children might be harassed. They silently follow what the private schools ask them to follow.

Summary

The chapter discusses the parental involvement in children's private schooling which includes parental additional home support and provision of resources to children and

parental engagement with the school. Private schools expect and demand parents to support school in better academic levels by supporting their children at home. It is found that parental support at home varies on the basis of class fractions, educational level, material and economic resources. Lareau (1987) argued that various factors influence participation of parents in schooling. These factors are “parents’ educational capabilities, their view of the appropriate division of labour between teachers and parents, the information they had about their children’s schooling, and the time, money, and other material resources available in the home all mediated parents’ involvement in schooling” (p. 79).

Parents from middle class(es) try to provide home environment conducive to learning. Fathers are busy in bread earning, so mothers are mostly involved in “intensive mothering” (Hay, 1996), i.e., in child rearing, having dialogue with children, disciplining, monitoring, helping in homework and other aspects of educational support at home. Thus, “parenting responsibilities still fall most heavily upon mothers” (Vincent, 2017: 2). They are “firmly positioned as the individuals responsible for the child’s emotional, social, educational and physical development” (ibid).

Middle class parents are involved in “concerted cultivation” and strategize to do all possible effort by providing tuitions, books other than courses, enrichment activities, etc. as they perceive it their “responsibility to develop and ‘make up’ an individual, with a range of talents and skills” (Vincent and Maxwell, 2015: 10). They mobilise a “range of resources to ensure their continuing social advantage” (Reay, 1998). However, some lower middle class parents are less actively involved or disengaged due to their habitus and lack of material and economic resources. Parents are individually invited for parent teacher meeting to meet the teachers regarding child’s academic progress and drawbacks but they are not called in collective to suppress their ‘voice’ against school’s inadequacies which remains unheard by the private school.

CHAPTER-VII

Summary and Conclusion

In recent times, the issue of school choice along with the debate on whether private schools provide better quality primary education as compared to government schools has emerged in India. Since the 1990s, the role of private sector in the field of education has been on the rise at all levels of education (Tilak, 1995). The growing demand and supply of private schools is evident in urban as well as rural areas, even among the less privileged. It is felt that research on middle class(es) families' involvement in private schooling of children has received little attention from researchers. Little focus is given on the relationship between family, school and parental aspirations for children's further education and career. To see what school choice and private schooling means to families, it is important to look at "the family or household as a far more appropriate unit of analysis than the individual, especially in familistic countries like India" (Drury, 1993: 8).

The present study explores how the families of particular social class, i.e., middle class(es) have made their choices of schools for their children. It studies the practices and processes through which middle class families pass, i.e., how they strategize and use their capitals (social, economic and cultural) in their practices to access private schools for their children. It looks at the failure of government schools that leads parents to go for a range of schools owned and managed by the private sector in India. Most importantly, instead of looking at middle class as a whole, the study looks at internal fractions of the middle class(es) and their differential educational practices to achieve their class interests. It examines what kinds of private schools are accessed by the middle class(es).

The study is guided by the cultural reproduction theory of Bourdieu to explore how social class influences the practices and processes of school choices and parental participation in children's private schooling among the middle class(es). It explores issues raised by the theory in the Indian context. The study tries to understand socio-economic and cultural factors that influence families' perspectives about private

schooling for their children. The issue of parental aspirations, practices and choice processes underlying family strategies and involvement through which middle class families gain access to private schools for their children are the main themes of the study.

The study is situated in Ranchi city in Jharkhand. Ranchi has a large migrant population that includes people from far and nearby villages who have migrated to the city in search of work and settled down along with people from other states in India. This process began during the beginning of industrial development (1960s) of the region and has accelerated over the decades. Ranchi is today a hub of people from different regions and states staying here and working in industries and other government offices.

Two localities, i.e., Jai Prakash Nagar and New Nagar are selected for the study. These two localities are situated next to each other in the north-east part of Ranchi. These are newly developed residential areas in the inner circle of the city. The residential development in Jai Prakash Nagar came into existence during the year 2000. While New Nagar came into existence later during the year 2005 and is still developing. These are a mixed kind of localities and inhabited by the middle and lower middle-class families. These families are engaged in various kinds of occupations ranging from professionals to government staff to shops and proprietors/market sales workers. This is the reason they are distinct from each other in terms of occupation, education and income.

The field study is exploratory in nature. It is both quantitative and qualitative in nature. Field study has been done in different durations of time period between June 2014 to January 2019. Survey method is adopted to collect the field data. Purposive sampling method is adopted to select middle class families (belonging to middle or lower middle classes) from these two localities whose children are at primary/elementary/secondary (class I-X) stage in a range of private schools. Around 120 middle class families are selected, out of which 45 families belong to middle and 75 families belong to lower middle class. Among these, a total of 116 fathers and 118 mothers and some of their children are interviewed.

Hence qualitative methodology is adopted and interviews (semi-structured interview schedule with open ended questions) with parents and children are conducted at the respondents' homes. Snow Ball sampling is applied to reach a few families to get their views. In-home interviews allowed observation of the home environment and material conditions. Secondary data from various sources such as DISE, NSS, SES, etc. is collected to support the primary data.

The study finds that these sample families are from middle class fractions, i.e., middle and lower middle class families. The families who reside in the areas of Jai Prakash Nagar and New Nagar are the migrants from six to seven states such as Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Kolkata, Odisha, Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka and the interior villages of Jharkhand. They stay in these localities since the past 4 to 38 years or so. These families are mainly from General caste followed by OBCs, STs and SCs. Majority of them belong to Hindu religion followed by Christians. More than fifty percent families own their own houses. Majority of the families are nuclear families having three to four members in the households. Joint families have five to six or more than seven members in the household.

Operationalization and classification of class(es) is done on the basis of occupations of fathers, education of both fathers and mothers and fathers' income. Classes are defined and categorized on the basis of codes of various occupations listed in the Indian sample in National Classification of Occupation (NCO), 2015. This classification has focused more on the nature of work performed rather than the formal education in determining the occupational levels of skills. In this way, classes are divided into two categories i.e., middle and lower middle class(es). Their ownership of household consumer goods and properties are also taken into account to see their social status.

Bourdieu (1997) argued that educational qualification is also a form of capital and it bestows its holders with a certain degree of privilege and arbitrary power (p. 47). Majority of the fathers are highly educated and are graduates and post graduates, where the percentage of middle class fathers is more than the lower middle class fathers. A good number of the middle class mothers have graduation as a higher level

of education while lower middle class mothers have higher secondary education. Fathers are fragmented according to the career/occupations they pursue. They are engaged in various kinds of professional jobs, white collar (upper and lower) jobs, business and so on. Most of the middle class fathers work as professionals or associate professionals while lower middle class fathers are in the occupation of petty businesses, i.e., shops and proprietors or market sales workers and clerks and support workers. These middle class families fall in the monthly income range between rupees 35,001 to rupees 65,001 and above while lower middle class between rupees 6,001 to rupees 35,000. Middle class have more than the basic consumer goods and they maintain their standards of living compared to lower middle class families. Most of the families whether from middle or lower middle class except a few have ownership of property. Thus, middle class is divided into two intra class fractions, i.e., middle and lower middle class.

Aspirations, expectations and goals of middle class parents are important for their children's lives. The future of anxious and ambitious middle class parents rest in the achievement of their children and they differ in their educational aspirations. Economic resources are deployed for educational ends – to achieve their aspirations and goals. A majority of the middle class(es) parents aspire college or University education for their children (both sons and daughters) as “the possession of a graduate qualification represents a passport into professional and managerial occupations” (Brown, 1997: 741). Few middle class parents want to educate their sons beyond graduation for it is seen as not sufficient for getting a job. Science or Commerce is aspired instead of Arts courses in the higher studies for their sons. Highly educated middle class parents in better occupational status have higher and more clear aspirations to see their sons as professionals, administrative officers or in managerial positions. While less educated lower middle class parents aspire for vocational courses and skills for their sons. Parents' aspirations are deeply influenced by their socio-economic deprivation, past educational experiences, personal failure in educational and occupational field that make them more ambitious for their sons. They have their own notions about what is the best for their sons.

Higher education is seen as important for daughters' future and is aspired for them at least till graduation level. Parents believe that "education frees from the dependence on others; education gives "power" (Vaid, 2017: 353). Higher education is aspired for her future, self-independence and marriage purposes. Parents' aspirations are dynamically related to their "perceptions of their children's abilities where each influences the other throughout the school years" (Gutman & Akerman, 2008: 9). It is also the cultural and economic resources that motivate parents to achieve what they aspire for their daughters. Daughters of these middle class families have access to all forms of modern education. In the present times they have range of choices which were earlier denied to them (Thapan, 2001; cited from Kohli, 2017: 64).

A majority of the middle class parents state that they do not differentiate between sons and daughters and they want to provide higher education to both of them equally. Middle class parents are aware of the demand of educational credentials in the job market and mention that the simple graduation is the minimum qualification and not sufficient for job in today's date. Not only this but few parents believe that simple graduation in Arts subject is not worth for getting a good job. They state this on the basis of their own experiences faced during job searches. They believe that children should have multi-dimensional training because competition is tough in job market.

Parents highly favoured higher education because it is a key to gaining knowledge and skills for the best opportunity for success in life. It is seen as significant for both boys and girls because the thinking and attitudes have changed according to the changing times. Middle class parents know that spending on children's education would bring better future for them as they believe that education ensures financial security in living a decent life. They aspire higher education for children to position them advantageously in the job and marriage market and in this way, they want to reproduce their class.

The changing time and changing social expectations related to girl's education and empowerment has also influenced the perception of middle class families in Ranchi city. They equally value daughters as they value sons. They argue that earlier parents did not educate girls much thinking that they were less worthy of education and less

capable than men in many workplaces related tasks. But today the situation has changed and educated parents do not differentiate in their upbringing between a son and a daughter. They see them equal and pay equal attention to both in their education and schooling. Middle class parental aspiration and support for girl's further higher education shows that the old thinking of social norms related to gender bias is washed away by the changing perceptions of families. Parents have positive attitudes towards girls' higher education and most of them thought that their daughters deserve higher education. The motive behind aspiration for higher education for daughters is self-independence, marriage, and better management of households.

Further, parents' justification behind choosing private schools for their children has been discussed. They justify their choices of private school by providing reasons such as failure of government school in terms of poor infrastructure and maintenance, high pupil teacher ratio, Hindi as the medium of instruction, low quality education, low level of teachers' commitment towards their profession, lack of permanent teachers, non-accountability of teachers towards authority and parents and so on. Middle class parents perceive that government school is for the poor "*whose child's future is in danger*". These schools are not prioritised by the parents for not meeting their expectations, aspirations and is not for 'people like us'. The process of school choice is not static or passive but active (Ball, 2003), where families act according to their ability and resources. Middle class families exercise their choices freely and admit children to high or medium fee private schools. Lower middle class families exercise choices but it is circumscribed by lack of economic resources. Due to financial and material constraints they strategize and select either low fee private schools for both children or for daughters only.

Middle class families are unwilling to put their children's future at risk by putting them in government schools. Instead, fretfulness of intense competition leads middle class parents to opt for better quality education in private schools. For these families "private schools provide environments and opportunities and forms of provision that are simply not available, as they see it, in the state sector" (Ball, 2003: 170). They have good earnings and good economic status to afford good private schools for their

children that are chosen keeping in mind the long-term return from it. These are seen as ‘good’ schools as these have good academic teaching, English medium instruction, good discipline, co-curricular activities, good management, good educational atmosphere and so on. These schools are seen as status enhancers by the middle class.

The most important factor behind choosing a private school is the motivation due to English as language of instruction. English is recognised as an important global language and is most vital for children’s future. It is seen as the vehicle for the brightening job prospects and upward social mobility. Command over English is important and private school seems best option for increasing linguistic ability and proficiency for the enhancement of cultural, social and symbolic capital. Middle class see English medium education as “pathway to elite status and better life chances” (Nambissan, 2012: 52).

It is found that children of all the middle class families are accessing 21 different private schools in the Ranchi city. The private school accessibility is influenced by the heterogeneous nature of the private unaided school market. High and medium fee private schools are accessed by the middle class as compared to few lower middle class families who are forced to access low fee private schools for their children. These private schools differ in terms of facilities, quality education, teachers, and so on.

Parents acknowledge that government schools have changed and they do not provide ‘good’ or quality education. Also, there is little scope for government school students if they further want to study in higher education, because they do not provide standard education. Private schools take money but they provide good education that government school does not. Choice of school is important for parents as there is competition between schools and between parents and success and failure in schools depends on the type of school chosen. Ball et al. (1997) argued that “parents’ choice making is humanistic rather than technological. Parents are oriented culturally and materially differently towards the education market. They expect different things from it. Some see it as a market and others do not” (p. 419).

Parents go about making educational choices for their children based on the availability of information and the presence of opportunities/choices. Families are involved in choice processes by their involvement in decision making processes, gathering information through social networks. Various sources of information and networks are used by the parents to know about a particular school. Parents approach others as experiences of neighbours, friends and relatives have a great role in choosing the school (Ball and Vincent, 1998). Middle class parents use their various networks but mostly the networks of friends, colleagues and neighbours to collect information to select the best private school for their children. Social networks of educated people as social capital or resources is used by the middle class families to accumulate required information for the benefit of the child. Whereas, the relatives and other children or their parents are the main sources of information for the lower middle class families. Information networks are used according to class position and experiences.

Information about schools is navigated and obtained through ‘hot’ and ‘cold’ knowledge (Ball, 2003). Parents from middle class(es) strategize differently to realize their aspirations and goals of private schooling for their children and rely on social networks for accumulating information while deciding about school selection. Social capital and resources are employed based on their past experiences, abilities and constraints to access each and every minute details and information regarding private schools before reaching to final selection. Information accumulation is based on families’ usage of networks linked with their class position and also based on their own knowledge and experiences of schools. Middle class families who are old dwellers use various social networks as they are more in touch with their wider and stronger networks of friends, colleagues and neighbours compared to lower middle class who rely on their relatives and kins to get information.

More middle than lower middle class parents visit schools and go through prospectus for details which is a good source of ‘cold knowledge’ generated by the school. Few middle class parents who are old dwellers and studied in the same locality, have some knowledge about particular school where they want to put their children and that is

why they do not feel the need of visiting the school. Parents seek both academic and non academic information about school. After obtaining the information majority of the parents apply in one school while some parents in two to four schools. Middle class parents “did ‘open search’, began with a large set of schools and over time... narrowed to smaller set of schools from which they ultimately selected” (Ball, 2009: 198).

Middle class families are more advantaged in terms of having wider social networks to have various necessary information to take final decision related to particular school the child would attend. Ball et al. (1996) argued that “skilful and resourceful” middle class parents are always able to “work the system” to their advantage. Ball (1998) argued that there is “a degree of scepticism” about the information provided by the schools, whereas there is “a general preference for and sense of greater usefulness about the information received through personal networks. But the latter are not always digested uncritically” (p. 38). On the contrary, few lower middle class families (with lower socio-economic status) are disadvantaged in terms of social networks and amount of information. Few lower middle class parents do not use their limited personal networks because they do not want to choose. They have already decided to put children in nearby school. Few families do not consult anybody for they are definite about which school to opt for their children and they already have some existing knowledge about those schools (whether in the neighbourhood or at a distant). A few middle class families intervene in the admission process by activating social and economic capitals to get their children in an aspired private school.

Majority of the middle and lower middle class families prefer private unaided but recognised schools for their children as they are aware of the quality of these schools. Schools are carefully selected in search of the “right mix” (Raveaud and van Zanten, 2007). Such types of high-quality branded schools provide exclusive social class grouping within schools where “students settled into academic and social circles of ‘people like us’” (Power et. al., 2003: 60). Ball (2003) argued that some parents seek “firm and clear boundaries which cut their children off from ‘others’ and provide exclusive access to institutions and routes of social advantage – class enclaves” (p.

76). Studying in private schools has become more of a status symbol. Parents boast about themselves that their children study in such a renowned 'private' school.

Very few lower middle class families have to go for private unaided, unrecognised schools for having low economic resources and other reasons. Middle class parents with better socio-economic positions choose high fee, better quality and branded private schools while lower middle class with low socio-economic positions choose low fee private schools for their children. However, though parents strategize and select better schools for their children, still some of them are dissatisfied with the chosen school for not delivering what was promised.

Parents opt for various kinds of private schools for their children. They mainly choose between private schools and not between private and government schools. Most of these schools are unaided recognised schools based on different positions in the education market. Most of the middle class parents' awareness of the quality of the low cost private schools lead them to choose recognised private schools for their children. Thus, choices made by middle class families and lower middle class families are not equal but different based on their financial status, past educational experiences and information, future aspirations and motives. Children's access to different private schools is influenced by the parental social class position and their purchasing power.

It is found that almost all the children are attending private schools. Government schools are not attended even by the children of the lower occupational families of lower middle class for perceiving it of low quality. Rather private schools are preferred for having good quality teaching in English medium and for having better educational atmosphere. Rana and Das (2004) in their primary education in Jharkhand found that "although the quality of teaching in the private schools is not assured (and, in some cases, is worse than that imparted in government schools), the illusory positive perception about these schools has taken firm root among the people" (p. 1175).

Various reasons are given for choosing a particular private school for children. Parents' choices are influenced by the factors that they see as important for them in educating their children. There are many variables such as school in the same locality,

distance, good school, good teachers, good results, reputation of the school, curriculum, discipline, moral education, and fee structure, etc. are kept in the priority list by the parents while choosing a particular private school for their children. However, medium of instruction in English is already there in their priority list. Rana and Das (2004) argued that parents believe that children's learning achievement in private schools "especially in learning the English language (which is one of primary selling points of these schools, who advertise themselves as 'English medium schools, even if this is far from being the actual state of affairs), would help the children in building their future (p. 1175). Middle class families perceive that "since the private schools charge fees, they must be imparting quality education. Another thing is... better management and apparently disciplined atmosphere of such schools" (ibid) gives the impression of the better environment of the schools. All these factors influence parental choices of schools.

Some of the middle class parents prefer schools fairly closer to their home address. Proximity to the school is more important over quality of education to lower income lower middle class families. Parents do not want their children's time and energy be wasted in going to and coming back from school by bus. The level of school fees is not a major factor for many middle class families in the selection of a specific private school. On the contrary, it is not so with some lower middle class families who are in lower occupational positions and who earn meagre income to run their households. Tribal Christian parents select Convent or mission schools for valuing religious or cultural education.

Due to stiff competition in education market, private schools use some selection criteria in selecting the type of children they want. Through tests and interviews the schools select the meritorious students who can sustain the demands of schooling. It is evident that in few cases, the school control the intake of pupils. The prestigious and reputed schools make efforts "to admit the 'right' kind of children... The schools call for a meeting with applicants and their parents as one step in the process of making a final selection" (Waldrop, 2004: 210). The aspirations (of putting their child in reputed schools) of few lower middle class parents are not fulfilled because of the

school's control in admission processes³⁰ and practice of inequality that negates parental power to choose. Here, "parents and schools contribute actively to the reproduction of inequalities of social class" (Weis, 2010: 414).

Majority of the families do not need to contact or use their social network for admission purpose. Very few middle class families use 'backdoor' selection by recommendation. All viable options are used by these families to grab the opportunity to get admission by any means. Children of these families face problems in getting admission in schools for coming late or at odd times for admission. It is believed that in today's time, children's intelligence or test is not so important but connections and networks are.

Middle class parents do not want to force their children to pursue specific careers rather they would let them be independent to decide and make their own choices and decisions in career of their own interests. They are not much determined for particular course or job for their children and seem "careful not to appear as 'pushy'... The individuality of the child, their developmental self, has to be recognised, at least to some extent as having an autonomy, an unpredictability, a 'landscape of possibilities'" (Gersheim, 1996; cited from Ball, 2003: pp.172 - 173).

It is found that though some middle class families are not satisfied by the performance of private schools according to their expectations yet they yearn for it for they do not believe in government schools' existence for proper education. They still find private education as better place for learning. But even after sending to private schools, parents have to resort to private tuitions for better results. Private schools are unable to meet their expectations. Parents manage to give their time and effort to provide tuition to raise successful children. They are dissatisfied with private school teachings and teachers for having low commitment towards their duties. On the other hand, promised by the private providers of tutors, parents are pressurised to provide tuitions to their children (Vincent and Maxwell, 2015). It is mainly to give their children a competitive edge. Families invest wealth in school and in private tuition to provide

³⁰ During the admission time, private schools checked parental educational level, income and status and screened out children accordingly.

education and convert economic capital into certified cultural capital which would give their child access to dominant positions in the economy or job market. Many middle and few lower middle-class families adopt this course of action to let children achieve high academic results. This is one of the strategies adopted by the families for social reproduction.

Tuition as an extra burden is not favoured by parents yet they are compelled to resort to it as they believe that children's future will be spoiled if they leave them to depend only on schools. It is believed that even the private schools that claims to be 'best' is not fully reliable. On the one hand middle class parents discard government school education for not providing quality education at all and send their children to academically oriented private school for better learning but on the other hand even after choosing priority private school ('good school' in their view) they still need to depend on shadow education or tutoring to give strong steer in providing future direction for academic success.

Past educational histories and memories are used by mothers to motivate children. In this regard Drury (1993) found that "where education is concerned, biographical stories and traditions all serve in some way to hold up or validate an ideal state of education in the family" (p. 66). Through these stories middle class parents convey their children the value of education and how it is achieved by making sacrifices. Therefore, they guide their children to concentrate on receiving proper education so that "they do not miss out on later opportunities" (ibid). Parents' own experiences and educational histories influence their level of involvement. Based on their experiences they put all their money, efforts, guidance, tuitions, enrichment activities, resources, etc. to help their children gain what they did not in their life due to wants. They strategize and are engaged in different ways to translate their aspirations and choices in practice and these vary according to their engagement with and mobilisation of resources.

Middle class parents are not static but active in their everyday actions in reproducing their social class. They are engaged at home in their children's studies and invest time and energy in the development of their children as successful learners. Their support

at home vary on the basis of class fractions, educational level, material and economic resources. Lareau (1987) argued that various factors influence participation of parents in schooling. These factors are “parents’ educational capabilities, their view of the appropriate division of labour between teachers and parents, the information they had about their children’s schooling, and the time, money, and other material resources available in the home all mediated parents’ involvement in schooling” (p. 79).

Parents’ social class location continues to have a direct impact upon their ability to intervene in their child’s schooling. Parents try to provide home environment conducive to learning. Fathers are busy in bread earning, so mothers are mostly involved in “intensive mothering” (Hay, 1996), i.e., in child rearing, in having dialogue with children, disciplining, monitoring, helping in homework and other aspects of educational support at home. Thus, “parenting responsibilities still fall most heavily upon mothers” (Vincent, 2017: 2). They are “firmly positioned as the individuals responsible for the child’s emotional, social, educational and physical development” (ibid). This task mainly depends on mother’s level of education which is an important factor in children’s education at home – the more educated the mother is, the more knowledge and skills she could provide to her children compared to the less educated mothers who are mostly concerned with disciplining and monitoring their children at home. This shows that how mother’s free time is spent and used to increase cultural capital (Reay, 1998). In majority of the families, educated middle and lower middle class mothers are proactively engaged in guiding, helping and supporting their children at home in their homework and studies – a support mechanism to provide help to school actions in educating their children. They view that children’s academic success depends on the supportive home environment that support learning, exploration and self-directed behaviour. However, lower middle class mothers (with low educational qualifications) who lack cultural capital are engaged in disciplining children while studying.

Few middle class parents are involved in ‘concerted cultivation’ and strategize to do all possible effort by providing tuitions, books other than courses, enrichment activities, etc. as they perceive it their “responsibility to develop and ‘make up’ an individual, with a range of talents and skills” (Vincent and Maxwell, 2015: 10). They

mobilise a “range of resources to ensure their continuing social advantage” (Reay, 1998). The study shows that fathers’ role is limited to providing economic support, whereas ‘concerted cultivation’ of the child is diligently performed by the middle class mothers, informed by their class position. Mothers are more engaged compared to fathers in childrearing practices, disciplining and supporting their children’s studies at home. They play a role in the processes of social reproduction.

Some mothers consciously monitor the child’s studies and other activities with strict control and discipline at home. All these become an integral part of childrearing or ‘concerted cultivation’ (Lareau, 2002). Parents “deployed a range of strategies, and these strategies draw on a range of social, cultural, and economic resources commonly associated with the middle classes” (Vincent et al., 2012: 150). They strategize to help children to gain success in schooling. It is found that professionals rely most on cultural capital to secure or enhance their children’s social position. Middle classes use strategic capacity and resources in favour of privilege school destinies for their own interest (Nogueira, 2010: 261). However, some lower middle class parents are not in a position to arrange for private tuition or material related to activities. They are disengaged due to their habitus and lack of material and economic resources. Thus, practices of mothering or parenting are influenced by class distinctions.

Some of the middle class families with higher income not merely send their children to better private schools, but also make conscious efforts to build ‘cultural capital’ of their children through enrolling them in some enrichment activities such as music, dance, painting, games-sports, computers, foreign language and reading habits. Parents provide their children’s interests, creativity, innate talents and skills and cultural taste in them. Children are taken for outings for exposure to different places and informational resources. Parents believe that all these help in productive usage of leisure time, refreshing minds and personality development of their child.

Thus, the study shows that all middle class(es) exercise choice equally. However, anxious middle class families exercise their choice strategically in the education market keeping long term goals in mind and admit children to high/medium fee (English medium) private unaided recognised schools. They choose to pay money in

private instead of free government schools for children's better future and opportunities and to perpetuate their benefits. The meanings of choice differ within middle class(es). Lower middle class families are able to exercise choice but their choices are constrained by lack of capital and material resources. They are restricted to do careful selection within the limited options and strategize accordingly to choose a school. A few families are constrained to select low fee unrecognised private schools for having no options.

Middle class(es) selection of private school as a school choice based on perceived quality of 'English medium', quality of education, having discipline and facilities, stress on academic achievements are also strategies for achieving aspirations and academic distinctions. The choice of private school distinguishes them from the poor who largely access government schools. However, school choice does not guarantee educational privileges even within the middle class families because of socio-economic differences, lack of resources and capability. Lower middle class families access low fee private schools for having lack of material resources and capital. Social differences are observed in the parental involvement and motivation for learning activities at home where middle class parents adopt various ways to enhance children's academic performance while lower middle class find it difficult to do or arrange for it.

The study draws attention to the failure of government and the need to improve the quality of government school education. The deteriorating government education system has failed to attract middle classes. Middle class refrain to access these schools as their cultural values are absent in government schools and is accessed by the lower class and disadvantaged children. Harma (2010) stated that, "the equity effects of the market in education are negative in that with the exit of all wealthier families more capable of exercising voice to the private sector, the government has become a ghettoised option of last resort for the poorest and most marginalised in society" (p. 38). On the other hand, demand for good quality education has created a space for private providers that leads to social inequality between the haves (rich) and have nots (poor). The demand of private schools has increased as an alternative among the

middle class that provide a variety of promises. However, market-based school choice is not used by everyone. It is beneficial for those who have the resources while not for others who lack these resources. It creates the divide between government and private school goers, i.e., the notion of ‘us’ and ‘them’ or what Bourdieu (1987) called “class attributive judgement” which clarifies the fact of social class distinctions and positioning in society and education system.

The study has its limitations, as it is restricted to two localities of middle class in an urban area. The study has not focused on other social classes to get better comparative picture of inter class differences in educational aspirations, school choice practices and strategies. School visits could not be done to see home - school relationships and parental involvement in the school as the focus remained at the level of family and parents. However, there is a need for further exploration to get all these insights of schooling in order to understand sociology of private schooling in particular.

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Appendix – I

State wise Percentage of Schools by Different Management at Elementary Level, 2020-21

States/ School Management	Govt.	PA	PUAR	PUAU	All Private
Andhra Pradesh	70.93	3.34	24.93	0.44	28.71
Assam	71.69	7.64	9.27	11.39	28.3
Bihar	80.84	0.78	8.48	9.9	19.16
Chhattisgarh	86.06	0.01	12.62	0.55	13.18
Gujarat	64.22	10.35	25.41	0.00	35.76
Haryana	61.28	0.07	34.65	3.99	38.71
Himachal Pradesh	84.82	0.0	15.17	0.00	15.17
Jammu & Kashmir	80.07	0.0	19.52	0.39	19.91
Jharkhand	79.19	2.59	3.40	14.81	20.8
Karnataka	64.74	9.33	25.89	0.02	35.24
Kerala	30.45	43.63	19.66	6.24	69.53
Madhya Pradesh	74.39	0.58	23.64	1.37	25.59
Maharashtra	59.69	21.72	17.83	0.74	40.29
Odisha	78.29	9.10	9.96	2.63	21.69
Punjab	67.36	1.58	30.99	0.05	32.62
Rajasthan	64.08	0.0	33.54	2.36	35.9
Tamil Nadu	63.81	14.13	21.05	0.99	36.17
Telangana	69.93	1.63	28.01	0.41	30.05
Uttar Pradesh	53.35	3.16	37.65	5.82	46.63
Uttarakhand	71.86	2.65	23.28	2.19	28.12
West Bengal	87.62	0.09	10.55	1.72	12.36
All India	68.38	5.58	22.57	3.44	31.59

Source: Researcher's calculations from DISE 2020-21

Note: 'Government schools' includes Dept. of Education schools, Tribal and Social Welfare

Department schools, Local body schools and Central schools. PA = Private Aided, PUAR = Private Unaided Recognised, PUAU = Private Unaided Unrecognised.

Appendix-II

Percentage of Students Attending Private Institutions in India, by level of Education and Area, 2017-18

Level of Education	Private Aided		Private Unaided		Private Aided	Private Unaided
	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural + Urban	Rural + Urban
Primary	5.3	18.2	20.9	50.5	8.6	28.3
Upper Primary	7.1	19.9	16.7	41.8	10.4	23.1

Source: NSS Report 2017-18, 75th Round

Appendix-III

Percentage of students attending recognised and unrecognised private unaided institutions at primary and upper primary level in India, 2017-18

Level of Education	Recognised		Unrecognised		Total Recognised	Total Unrecognised
	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural + Urban	Rural + Urban
Primary	83.2	88.0	11.0	6.9	85.3	9.2
Upper Primary	84.9	90.6	10.2	6.7	87.5	8.6

Source: NSS Report 2017-18, 75th Round

Appendix-IV

Enrolment of Students by School Management level of School Education, 2020-21 (Jharkhand)

School Management	Primary	Upper Primary	Secondary
Govt.	65.56%	67.28%	57.87%
PA	3.83%	4.65%	5.09%
PUAR	9.24%	13.81%	14.25%
Others	21.35%	14.25%	3.88%
Total	3803579	2055203	1001965

Source: UDISE + 2020-21

Appendix-V

Composite Indicators for the Calculation of Class

Indicator 1 (Educational Level)	
Level of Education	Score
Post-Graduation & above	5
Graduate & Professional Degrees	4
Higher Secondary & Diploma	3
Secondary	2
Elementary	1
Indicator 2 (Occupations of Fathers)	
Occupation	Score
Senior Government Officials and Managers	5
Professionals	4
Associate Professionals	3
Clerks and Clerical Support Workers	2
Shops & Proprietors, Market Sales Workers	1
Indicator 3 (Income Range)	
Monthly Income (in rupees)	Score
Rs. 65,001 – above	7
Rs. 55,001 – 65,000	6
Rs. 45,001 – 55,000	5
Rs. 35,001 – 45,000	4
Rs. 25,001 – 35,000	3
Rs. 15,001 – 25,000	2
Rs. 6,001 – 15,000	1

Appendix-VI

Access to Different Kinds of Private Schools

SN	Kinds of Private Schools	Estab. Year	Affiliation Board	Recognition Status	Classes
High Fee Private Schools					
1	Bishop Westcott, Doranda	1921	ICSE/ISC	Recognized	Nursery-XII
2	Bishop Westcott, Namkum	1927	ICSE/ISC	Recognized	Nursery-XII
3	Saint Thomas	1972	ICSE	Recognized	KG-X
4	Delhi Public School, Hinoo	1989	CBSE	Recognized	Pre-Nursery-XII
5	DAV Shyamli (JVM), Doranda	1972	CBSE	Recognized	Nursery-XII
6	Loreto Convent	1943	ICSE/ISC	Recognized	Nursery-XII
7	Sarla Birla Public School	2009	CBSE	Recognized	KG-XII
8	Bridgefords, Tupudana	2001	CBSE	Recognized	Nursery-XII
9	Saint Xavier	1962	ICSE/ISC	Recognized	Nursery-XII
Medium Fee Private Schools					
10	DAV Public School, Bariatu	1990	CBSE	Recognized	KG-XII
11	Surendranath Centenary	1988	CBSE	Recognized	Nursery-XII
12	DAV Nandraj	1981	CBSE	Recognized	Pre-Primary-X
13	Cluny Convent School	1989	ICSE	Recognized	Nursery-VIII
14	Seventh Day Adventist, Bariatu	1957	ICSE/ISC	Recognized	Nursery-XII
15	Carmel School	1968	ICSE/ISC	Recognized	Nursery-XII
16	Bishop's School	1990	ICSE/ISC	Recognized	KG-XII
Low Fee Private Schools					
17	RTC High School	1985	JAC/CBSE	Recognized	Nursery-X
18	Vivel Memorial High School	1997	JAC	Recognized	Nursery-VIII
19	Holy Cross Girls School	2010	CBSE	Unrecognized	I-VI
20	DAV Birjanand Public School	1989	-	Unrecognized	Nursery-VIII
21	First Mark Public School	2007	CBSE	Unrecognized	Play-VI

Appendix - VII

Interview Schedule for Family (Father/Mother and Children)

S. No. :

Date :

A. Social Background

1. Name :
2. Place :
3. Sex :
4. Age :
5. Caste/sub caste :
6. Religion :
7. Language spoken at home :
8. Family Type: Nuclear/ Joint/ Extended family

B. Household Particulars:

1. All the members of the household :

Sl No.	Family members	Age	Educational Level	Marital Status	Occupation	Income
1.	Father					
2.	Mother					
3.						
4.						
5.						

2. How much land do you own?
3. Do you have employment generating resources like farms/business?
4. House: a) Rented house b) Own house
5. If rented house, then amount of rent paid:
6. Number of rooms in a rented house:

7. If owned house, then number of storeys/ rooms:
8. Since when (which year) you are staying here in this locality?
9. Where did you stay before (village/city)?
10. Why did you come (shift) here in this locality?
11. Physical assets and amenities: TV/ CD player/ Computer/ Radio/ Mobile/ Refrigerator/ Washing machine/ Car/ Scooter/ Bike/ Cycle.

C. Perception and Attitudes of Parents:

1. What do you mean by 'good school'?
2. Why are you sending your child to English medium school? Does the medium (English/Hindi) of school affect child's education? Explain.
3. Up till which level do you want to educate your son?
4. Would you like to see your son in the same occupation (position) that you are in? If not, then what do you aspire for him regarding future job?
5. What do you think is it difficult to get a good job without sifarish even if you have good qualification?

D. Memories and Experiences of School Days (of father- respondent):

1. Where did you spend most of your life : a) Village b) Town c) City
2. What was the medium of instruction in your school?
3. Whether the language of instruction was important at that time?
4. How was the atmosphere (in terms of discipline) of the school at that time?
5. Did you face any problem (economic or social, etc.) that hindered your studies?
6. Who encouraged and supported you more in your studies and how?
7. How was your own experience of your school days?
8. According to you, whose time is/was better in schooling (in terms of teaching, discipline, etc.)— yours or your children's time? How?

E. Memories and Experiences of School Days (of mother- respondent):

1. Where did you spend most of your life: a) Village b) Town c) City
2. What was the medium of instruction?
3. Whether the language of instruction was important at that time?
4. How was the atmosphere (in terms of discipline) of the school at that time?
5. Did you face any problem (economic or social, etc.) that hindered your studies?
6. Who encouraged and supported you more in your studies? How?
7. How was your own experience of schooling?
8. According to you, whose time was/is better in educating (in terms of teaching, discipline, etc.)– yours or your children’s time? How?

F. Children’s Educational Status:

S. No.	1	2	3	4
Name				
Age				
Gender				
Name of the present school				
Name of the previous school				
*Type of school				
Class (completed)				
Drop out				
Class (present)				
Medium of instruction in previous school				
Medium of instruction in present school				
School fees				
Tuition fees				
Distance of school from home				
Mode of transportation				
Expenditure on transport				
Cost of Textbooks				
Cost of Uniforms				
Job				

G. Shift in schooling

1. Why did you shift your child from the previous school to the present school?
2. What is the reason of sending child to this school (location, fee, etc.)?
3. Do you have plans of transferring your child from the present to another school?
Why so?
4. How much do you spend (on stationeries etc.) every month on your children's studies?

H. Process of Making Decision (for pre-primary or primary)

1. When did you start thinking about sending your child to school (for different children: boys and girls)?
2. Who took the primary role in deciding to send the child to a particular school?
3. Did you (mother) take part in decision making process for your children? How?
4. Any other family members or relatives were also involved in this decision-making process?
5. Whether your own educational experiences (of learning and discipline, etc.) as students affected your decisions? How?
6. Where and how did you seek out the information about particular school (what were the sources of information)?
7. What kind of information did you seek?
8. Did you visit or see the admission brochure (prospectus) of the particular school?
9. How many schools were considered by you before deciding where to send your child? Can you give some names of those schools?
10. What are the reasons for thinking about named schools in your priority list (near to home, siblings went there, good reputation, good academic results, facilities, technologies, well funded, discipline, atmosphere, no other choice, just know these schools)?
11. Do you think that in present time, contact with teachers, principal and other reputed people is important for getting children admitted in a good and reputed school (high fee)?

12. Did you ever use your social network or connection for admission purpose?
How?
13. On what basis did you choose this particular school for your child?
14. What are the reasons for not choosing other school?
15. The fee is low in government schools compared to private schools. Yet you choose private over government school. Why?
16. What was the criterion (sex of the child, size of the family/birth order of the child i.e., eldest or youngest) of choosing school (private or government) for a particular child?
17. Why did you prefer different schools for your son and daughter?

I. Procedure for Child's Admission in School

1. Whether your income/occupation affected your preference of school choice?
2. Are you aware whether the school is recognised or unrecognised where your child is going?
3. Did you face any problem during admission time (from taking form till submitting it)? If yes, what kind of problem?
4. Whether you were interviewed during admission? What did the principal asked from you?
5. What do you think is it necessary to pay donation for getting admission in a 'good school'?
6. How do you consider bribery or donation (morally wrong or right)?
7. Did you pay donation during your children's admission time?
8. Are you satisfied with the fee structure of the school? If no, give reasons.
9. Are you happy and satisfied with the curriculum, teachers and their teaching, etc. (quality of education) in the present school?
10. Do you think that there is the need for some improvement in the present private school that your child is attending? What are those improvements?

11. Do you think that your child is progressing in this English medium school? How?
12. Why did not you admit your child to a reputed (high fee) or 'best school'?
13. Do you see any differences in the atmosphere (of study and discipline) of the private and government schools?
14. Do you see any differences between low fee and high fee private schools? If yes, what are those differences?
15. What are the things that you think that government schools should improve?

J. Family Support for School at Home

1. Do you know the syllabus and books of your children?
2. Do children work at home? What do they do?
3. Who (mother/father) asks how the child is doing in school?
4. Who sits with children while they study at home?
5. What do you do when your children do not want to sit and study at home?
6. Do you ever discuss with your children about their studies in school? How frequently do you talk to them (in a week/month/year)?
7. Do you hire tutors for your children? In which subjects?
8. Do you consider private tuition as essential for your child? If yes, why? If no, why so?
9. How do you help your children while studying (discipline them, encourage them, teach them)?
10. Do you solve problems or help with difficult material (especially in mathematics, Science, English and Hindi etc.) or do the lesson systematically?
11. How do you (father) encourage your child to study?
12. How do you (mother) motivate or encourage your children to study?
13. How much time and when (morning/evening/night) do you (father) devote to help children in studies?

14. How much time do you (mother) devote in helping them in their studies or homework?
15. Till which class (primary/elementary/high) do you help children on their studies?
16. Are you aware of your children's specific educational problem? Can you tell any of their problems?
17. How do you reward your children when they perform well in their studies?
18. How do you warn them against 'failure' in schooling?
19. Do you punish them if they do not perform according to your expectation level?
20. What are the resources and study materials (story books, children's magazine or puzzle books etc.) that you provide to help and motivate your children at home?
21. Do you ask your children to read anything else apart from their assigned homework?
22. Do you send your children for courses such as computer, spoken English, music, and dance class etc.?
23. How much do you pay for it?
24. How do you manage all these expenses on schooling and tuition apart from other household expenses?
25. What do children prefer to do in their leisure time?
26. Do you (mother) talk to your neighbours/friends/relatives regarding your children's schooling? What do you discuss with them?

K. Girls' Education

1. Do you think it is necessary for girls to be educated? Explain.
2. Do you think girls should have higher education? Why or why not?
3. Up till which level do you want to educate your daughter?
4. Do you aspire for career other than marriage for your daughter?
5. Do you think girls are burden on the natal family? How?

6. According to you, how education is important for your daughter's marriage?
7. Do you think that it is difficult for educated girls to get married? Why?
8. How much qualification would you consider while choosing a bride for your son? Why?
9. What do you think about your daughter's marriage?
10. What factors (education, occupation, rural/urban) would you consider for the groom for your daughter's marriage?

L. Parent Teacher Meeting

1. Does the school have parent teacher meeting (PTM)?
2. Are you called for the PTM in the school? How frequently?
3. Who attend all the PTM?
4. What types of issues are discussed in PTM?
5. Have you raised any of your concerns regarding children's schooling or any other matter in the meeting?

For Children

1. School Building : No. of floors :
2. Whether the school is till class 5th, 10th or 12th :
3. No. of classrooms :
4. No. of sections in each class :
5. Total no. of teachers in the school :
6. No. of students per teacher in a class (teacher-pupil ratio) :
7. Availability of infrastructures, such as :
 - (i) desk/benches :
 - (ii) blackboards :

(iii) playground : (iv) electricity (lights and fans) :

(v) charts/teaching aids : (vi) sports material :

(vii) separate toilets for boys and girls (no. of toilets) :

(viii) drinking water facility (no. of taps) :

(ix) library/book bank :

8. Teacher-student relations :
9. Are your teachers always present in the school or are they absent frequently?
10. Which medium (English or Hindi) is mostly used by the teachers while transaction?
11. Do your teachers use chalk-board method while teaching? Do they ask you to note down the answers written on the blackboard?
12. Do your teachers teach you with the help of teaching aids? What are those teaching aids?
13. Does teacher ask questions from you in the class while teaching/transacting?
14. Do you talk to teachers when you face any problem in understanding the lesson/subject? Explain.
15. Do your teachers always take classes or sometimes do not take classes? Which subject teacher does not take class?
16. Do you have games/arts period (how many days a week)?
17. Are you satisfied with teaching of English language?
18. Do you get regular homework (in which subjects)?
19. Do you have class test regularly (how frequently, once a week/month)?
20. Do teachers punish students in class? What kind of punishment and for what reason?
21. Who helps you in your study/homework at home (mother/father/siblings/etc.)?