

**SOCIAL CONTEXT OF ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE
IN A SECONDARY SCHOOL**

*Dissertation submitted to the Jawaharlal Nehru University in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the award of the degree of*

MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY
(SOCIOLOGY OF EDUCATION)

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DECLARATION

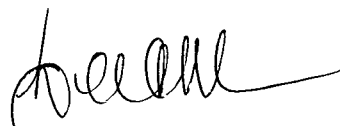
I, Lipsa Das, declare that this dissertation entitled “**SOCIAL CONTEXT OF ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN A SECONDARY SCHOOL**”, submitted by me in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Master of Philosophy of Jawaharlal Nehru University, is my bonafide work. I further declare that the dissertation has not been submitted for any other degree of this University or any other University.


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CERTIFICATE

We recommend that this dissertation may be placed before the examiners for evaluation.


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*Dedicated to my
Loving Parents
and
Sweet Sister*

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ABBREVIATIONS

AHSCE	Annual High School Certificate Examination
AP	Andhra Pradesh
AP	Average Performer
BSE	Board of Secondary Education
CBSE	Central Board of Secondary Education
FLO	First Language Oriya
GEN	General
HBCSE	Homi Bhabha Centre For Science Education
HP	High Performer
HSC	High School Certificate
HSE	High School Examination
HSBE	High School Board Examination
ICSE	Indian Certificate of Secondary Education
ICSSR	Indian Council of Social Science Research
IQ	Intelligence Quotient
ISC	Intermediate in Science
LP	Low Performer
MATHS	Mathematics
MHRD	Ministry of Human Resources Development
MIL	Mother Indian Language
MP	Madhya Pradesh
M.SC	Masters in Science
MTA	Mathematics- Algebra
MTG	Mathematics- Geometry
NAEP	National Assessment of Educational Progress
NCERT	National Council of Educational Research and Training
NELS	National Educational Longitudinal Study
NEUPA	National University of Educational Planning and Administration

NIEPA	National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration
OBC	Other Backward Classes
RVS	Rishi Valley School
SC	Scheduled Caste
SCL	Science- Life Sciences
SCP	Science- Physics
SES	Socio-Economic Status
SLE	Second Language English
SSG	Social Sciences- Geography
SSH	Social Sciences- History
ST	Scheduled Tribe
TIFR	Tata Institute of Fundamental Research
TISS	Tata Institute of Social Sciences
TLH	Third Language Hindi
TLS	Third Language Sanskrit
UP	Uttar Pradesh
US	United States

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CHAPTER-I

INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER- I

INTRODUCTION

There has been an enormous body of literature within the field of sociology of education since the sixties on the social context of educability, differential access in the educational progress and the inequalities in the academic performances within the school. Most of the research has originated in the American and the British context which grappled with the influence of race, ethnicity and social class on the educability, educational progress, and academic performances. Debates have also occurred among the sociologists on the relevance of home backgrounds to the intelligence (IQ) among the children, rejecting thereby the genetic and hereditary explanations of why some children perform better than the rest. Studies by Coleman (1966) and his team have also brought into sharp focus the social context in which academic performance and educability of a child is shaped and affected. This has succeeded in generating interest even today among the western sociologists on the sociological determinants of academic performance. However, in the Indian context there have been little direct references to these issues though main studies such as those of Field studies in the Sociology of Education of 1966, ICSSR's study "A Long Way to Go" by Suma Chitnis have shown the social context of schooling in the Indian setting. However, the social context of academic performance has not adequately received attention in the field of sociology of education in India. It is this gap that the present study has tried to do.

Thus, the study examines the social context of academic performances of students within a secondary school. It tries to explore why some children perform better than the others or why children from privileged home backgrounds do better than the less privileged home backgrounds and why do or don't children from Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe homes perform poorly in their examination. Precisely, the objective of the study is to examine the influence of home, parents, schools, teachers, peer-groups, etc. on the academic performance of the children. It also throws light on the

impact of socialization, parental background and expectations, attitudes and perceptions of teachers and of the peer group and also the discriminatory classroom processes on the academic achievement as well as failure.

UNDERSTANDING MULTIPLE CONTEXTS OF UNEQUAL ACADEMIC PERFORMANCES

The inequalities in academic performances have been discussed by many sociologists who have tried to explore the reasons for such inequalities. Firstly, ethnicity has been studied as a basis of discrimination in the educational field in terms of equality of opportunity, access, treatment and performance. In the US, the discriminatory treatment of whites towards the blacks is said to be mainly responsible for the poor performances of black children in schools. As Lisa D. Delpit (1997) argues, the lack of culture of power of the blacks leads to their academic failure. She further notes, "What seemed to be clear was that black pupils were under-achieving academically and that black youth (and some parents) were increasingly disaffected from schooling". It is equally clear from the studies by Hargreaves (1967) and Lacey (1970) that similar 'anti-social' and what were termed 'delinquent' sub-cultures among white boys were related to the pupils' social class. In the cases of both race and social class, disaffection from school and relatively poor scholastic performance was connected (Fuller, 1988: 77). Ogbu (1997) mentions that an enduring educational gap is one major consequences of the racial stratification between blacks and whites. According to Ogbu (1997), "The school performance gap was created by forces of racial stratification: white treatment of blacks in the educational domain and black responses to schooling. The gap remains as long-as these forces remain".

Ogbu (1998) also argues that the differences in school performances between minority and dominant group students in society at large and in school as well as by the perceptions of the minorities to school are due to such unequal treatment.

Ogbu calls his explanation of minority school performance as 'cultural-ecological theory'. This theory considers the broad societal and school factors as well

as the dynamics within the minority communities. The theory deals with the way the minorities are treated or mistreated in education in terms of educational policies, pedagogy and returns for their investment or school credentials which is called the system and the way the minorities perceive and respond to schooling as consequence of their treatment. Minority responses are also affected by how and why a group became a minority which is designated as community forces (Ogbu, 1998). “Understanding how the system affects minority school performances calls for an examination of the overall white treatment of minorities. The latter includes the barriers faced by minorities qua minorities. These barriers are instrumental discrimination (e.g., in employment and wages), relational discrimination (such as social and residential segregation), and symbolic discrimination (e.g. denigration of minority culture and language). Ogbu calls these discriminations collective problems faced by the minorities” (Ogbu, 1998: 161). According to this theory, the treatment of the minorities in the wider society is reflected in their treatment in education. The latter takes three forms, all of which affect school adjustment and performance. The first is the overall educational policies and practices toward the minorities (e.g. policy of school segregation, unequal school funding, and staffing of minority schools, etc.). The second is how minority students are treated in school and classrooms (e.g. level of teacher expectations, teacher-student interaction patterns, grouping and tracking, and so on). The third is the rewards, or lack of them, that society gives to minorities for their school credentials, especially in employment and wages (Ogbu, 1998). Structural barriers or discriminations in society and school are important determinations of low school achievement among minorities. Ogbu feels that cultural and language differences cause learning problem.

Social class affects educational opportunities and performance in a number of ways. Many studies have shown that manual working class is associated with poor educational attainment, while middle classes are associated with good educational attainment. “The social class factor is also reflected in early school leaving and academic performance of children. For example, the working class children are more likely to perform poorly and leave school as early more possible than the middle class

children” (Muniswamy, 1994: 6). According to Floud (1970), “At any given level of ability, it is both cause and consequence of inequalities of educational opportunity, in the sense of unequal chances of facilities to educational institutions or facilities; or, again at a given level of ability, it may influence the volume and direction of pupils’ energies, and hence their educational output; or, finally and more radically, it may affect the very structure of ability itself”.

Hurn (1978) argues that schools reinforce inequality among students and that they channel lower class students into vocational tracks; they place poorly achieving students in the back of the classroom and condemn them to further failure. Most importantly, Hurn argues that teachers in schools are likely to expect lower class children to fail. Instead of seeing success in school as an outcome of ability and motivation, this perspective directs attention to ‘self fulfilling prophecies’, whereby students from low social origins are expected to perform poorly, are treated differently and eventually fulfill these expectations for them”. Further Pierre Bourdieu and Jean Claude Passeron (1977) argue that schools reproduce class relations by reinforcing rather than reducing class based differential access to social and cultural capital. “Through mechanisms of discipline and punishment, schooling habituates working class students to the bottom rungs of the work world, or the academic world, by subordinating or spelling them” (Aronowitz, 2005: 12).

Thomas P. Carter (1997-2001) talks about the cultural deprivation theory which accepts that there are significant differences in ‘intelligence’ between social classes and between black and white students, but it argues that such differences are environmental rather than genetic origin. The lower classes, particularly the black lower classes do not so much possess a different culture from the dominant culture, but a ‘deficit’ culture. “Lower class black culture therefore, came to be seen as a culture of deficiency rather than a set of distinctive cultural patterns at variance with middle class white culture. It has been argued that “cultural deficits” provide an inadequate environment for the development of intellectual ability and that reasons

why poor children do badly in school we must focus upon the early childhood environment” (Hurn, 1978: 134).

In the Indian context, Dubey (1994) argues that the reason for failure of tribal children to continue education is not merely economic but is related to social and cultural milieu of tribal community. According to him, the education level of parents, their occupation, size of family, awareness about education, exposure-to mass media and outside world, student-teacher interaction, school environment for teaching-learning process are some of the factors which affect educability of tribal children.

Similarly very less number of dalit children enroll themselves in the school. The reasons for a fewer enrollments can be attributed to their low socio-economic background. According to Nambissan (2000), teachers and school heads tend to relate the poor performance of dalit and adivasi children to their social backwardness: caste status, apathetic attitudes of parents, the fact that parents prefer to make children work, as well as their lack of ability and basic intelligence. She also talks about the classroom processes and highlights the manner in which the educational experiences of dalit and adivasi children are influenced by the larger context of social marginalization of these communities. According to her, the exclusion of children’s language and culture from the medium and context of school knowledge, as well as messages of inferiority that are conveyed to them through the hidden curriculum, are critical factors that are likely to adversely affect children’s motivation to learn and their interest in their studies.

Caste is a very crucial factor in the academic performance of the students. It is observed that the dalit children’s academic performance is lower than the others. As members of the dalit and adivasi communities, children often find that their languages and cultures are other than that which is officially the statement ‘mainstream’ in school. Classroom culture is the context of the hidden curriculum of social discrimination as reflected in teacher attitudes, classroom interaction and peer culture, and so on is little documented. However, the discrimination within schools is largely

in terms of avert acts of discrimination such as segregation in seating arrangements, not allowing dalit children to drink from the common source of water and so on (Nambissan, 1996 & Velaskar, 1998). This affects their academic performance badly. “The poor quality of education offered by is a critical reason as to why dalit children perform badly in their studies. While there is the realization that these children are usually first generation learners and are often engaged in work as well, there is no understanding of the need for the school to provide positive academic support which children are unlikely to receive at home. On the other hand, teachers frequently use corporal punishment in the classroom (Nambissan, 2000: 53).

Further, gender is another important factor which affects school performance. Chanana (2001) argues, “In the past, practices such as segregation, female seclusion, the relative rigidity of the division of labour and the notions of naturalness of males’ and female’s work contribute to the educational backwardness of women in the society”. Gender socialization also plays an important role in the school performance of the girls. She further observes that the parents’ reluctance to send their daughters to mixed schools and male teachers is another reason for the fewer enrollments of girls in schools. “Separate schools for girls with women teachers involved an overall higher cost which coupled with initial reluctance of parents, resulted in fewer schools for girls and fewer girls availing of the educational facilities” (Chanana, 2001: 50).

Chanana (2001) talks about the education of girls and women in India and South Asia. She feels that it is not possible to view women’s education without reference to their social context, which is rooted in culture, religion, and in the patrifocal family structure and ideology. She argues about the concern with protection of female sexuality accounts for whether girls have access to education or not which determines the quality, type and duration of education they receive and what they do it with later. She emphasizes on the impact of socialization on the education of girls. Nambissan (1995) talks about social processes within the family and school that have implications for the education of girls. She also observes the cultural norms and expectations regarding women’s role and gender socialization within the family and

also the manner in which it influences roles and abilities that are pertinent to education. According to her the discriminatory class processes specific to gender that include teacher attitudes and pedagogic practices have impact on the achievement and future life chances of girl children.

Fuller has described a group of black girls whose acute awareness of their double subordination as women and black as accompanied by refusal to accept the facts of subordination for them. When racial exclusion is overlaid and combined with sexual exclusion, it becomes necessary to begin to recognize that black ethnicity may take different forms and point to differing strategies for females and males” (Fuller, 1984: 87). Working class women face double challenge in education. “Working class middle class girls and young women watch their mothers’ struggle to combine work and family and are only too aware of how exhausting this can be. They don’t want to have to always work this hard but know that if they want a family of their own, then this is precisely the future they face. Indeed, more than that, working class women may also have to cope with men who are taking the loss of previous modes of masculinity very hard (Lucey, 2001: 187). It is well documented that dalit women have not gained much as compared to dalit men counter parts. The dalit women suffer dual disadvantage of being dalit that is socio-economically and culturally marginalized group and qualities and subordination (Kumar, 2001).

Bourdieu also tried to find out the reasons of inequality of education. The chances of entering higher education are dependent on direct or indirect selection varying in severity with subjects of different social classes throughout their school lives. The son of a manager eighty times as likely to get to university as the son of an agricultural worker, forty times as likely as the son of a factory worker and twice as likely as even this son of a man employed in a lower-salaried staff grade. It is striking that the higher the level of the institution of learning, the more aristocratic its intake. Bourdieu feels that we need a description of the objective processes which continually exclude children from the least privileged social classes. According to him “each family transmits to its children, indirectly rather than directly, a certain cultural capital and a

certain ethos. The latter is a system of implicit and deeply interiorized values which, among other things, help to define attitudes towards the cultural capital and educational institutions. The cultural heritage, which differs from both points of view according to social class, is the cause of initial inequality of children when faced with examinations and tests, and hence of unequal achievement. He further holds that the attitudes of the members of the various social classes, both parents and children, and in particular their attitudes towards school, the culture of the school and the type of the future the various types of studies lead to, are largely an expression of the system of explicit or implied values which they have as a result of belonging to a given social class. He mentions that the cultural experience in the home facilitates the child's adjustment to the schools and his/her academic achievement. This perspective points to the structure of schooling and to community life to understand the different levels of participation and performance in schooling. According to Bourdieu (1967), the school system is such that it works on behalf and in favour of inherited status. It selects the elites but also forces the children of under-privileged class to dropout. He used the concept of 'cultural capital' which suggests that schools draw unevenly on the social and cultural resources of members of society, for example, schools utilize particular linguistic structure, authority patterns and the types of curricula. The curriculum in the school is oriented to the interests, needs and values of middle class children. It predominantly reflects the language, heritage and values of the middle class. Middle class oriented teachers tend to view neatly and are unable to show socially desirable behaviour as per middle class standards. Bourdieu (1973) further holds that schools may theoretically offer the same knowledge to every one; but the use of this knowledge depends on one's class position and size. In addition, schools have many subtle ways (such as streaming pupils by ability, counseling subject choice on the basis of class, sex or ability) by which they indicate to children what needs to be absorbed and what is to be left out (Muniswamy, 1994: 12).

According to Bourdieu (cited in Dumais, 2002), education transmits the cultural capital of the dominant class. "Bourdieu's theory of social reproduction and cultural capital posits that the culture of the dominant class is transmitted and rewarded by the

educational system. To acquire cultural capital, a student must have the ability to receive and internalize it” (Dumais, 2002: 44). He also said that the school, do not provide the cultural capital to the students rather it is given by the family and the social class.

Bernstein (1961) holds that the socio-linguistic codes are responsible for the unequal academic performances of the children. The concept of socio-linguistic code points to the social structuring of meanings and to their diverse but related contextual linguistic realization. He further argues that the forms of socialization orient the child towards speech codes which control access to relatively context-tied or relatively context-independent meanings. Elaborated orient their users towards universalistic meanings (where principles and operations are made linguistically explicit) where as restricted codes orient their users to particularistic meanings (where the principles and operations are relatively linguistically implicit). Where the codes are elaborated, the socialized has more access to the grounds of his own socialization, and so can enter into reflective relationship to the social order he has taken over. Where codes are restricted, the socialized has less access to the grounds of his socialization and thus reflexive ness may be limited in range. One of the effects of the class system is to limit access to elaborated codes. He finds that the lower class child experiences inadequate verbal communication in the home where parents are uneducated and have little time or ability to develop the necessary language skills among the children through conversation.

SOCIAL FACTORS AFFECTING ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

School performance can not be defined in isolation. It is affected by many social and cultural factors like caste, class, gender, tribe, race, family, cultural background, parental involvement, etc. Thus it is important to understand the reasons of variations in academic performances of the students. In order to analyze the school performances of students, one has to understand the social context in which it is rooted. Thus, without understanding the social context, we can not reach at any

conclusion regarding the academic performances of the students. Keeping in mind the importance of the socio-cultural factors in explaining the inequalities in academic performances, the study tries to explore the social context of academic performances of the children in a secondary school.

It is established in the sociological literature that home factors play crucial role in the academic performance of the children. Craft (1970), Jencks (1972), Musgrave (1972), Lavin (1973), Chitnis (1977), Bridge, Judd and Mook (1979), Govinda and Varghese (1993), Glick and Sahn (1997), Brunello and Checchi (2004), Neves and Morais (2005), Symeou (2007) have all emphasized that social, cultural and economic factors significantly influence the academic performance of the children.

School performances of the children are influenced by the family size and type. The studies like Dale and Griffith (1970), Floud (1970), Chatterjee (1971), Nundy (1978), Bridge, Judd and Mook (1979), Goux (2005) show that the presence of a large number of siblings is an adverse element in the educational attainment of the children and also low intelligence is usually associated with large families.

Parental education is the most important factor affecting the academic performance of the children. Studies like Dale and Griffith (1970), Chatterjee (1971), Aphale (1976), Chitnis (1977), Subramanian (1977), Nundy (1978), Bridge, Judd and Mook (1979), Rath and Dash (1979), Desai (1991), Govinda and Varghese (1993), Glick and Sahn (1998) and Ganzach (2000) confirmed the impact of parents' education on the educational attainment of the children. . In the Indian context, studies like Chitnis (1977) and Govinda and Varghese (1993) confirmed the impact of parental education on the child's academic achievement.

It has also been established in sociological literature that parental occupational background has a strong impact on the children's educational achievement (Floud, 1961; Morton and Williams, 1964; Cohen, 1965; Dale and Griffith, 1965; Chatterjee, 1971; Chitins, 1977). The higher occupations of the parents lead to the better result of

the children. It has been established in sociological literature that the Socio-Economic Status (SES) of the students is the most crucial variable determining students' academic performance (Floud, 1961; Chopra, 1964; Morton and Williams, 1964; Craft, 1970; Jencks 1972, Lavin, 1973). These studies show that children from high socio-economic background perform better than the children from low SES background. In the Indian context, Chitnis (1997) observes that the occupation of the parents plays a crucial role in the child's academic achievement. She finds that children of parents engaged in white-collar occupation, particularly the professions, are not only better prepared for school than the children of parents following blue-collar occupations at the point at which they enter school but they also continue to gain from their background throughout their careers. She also notes that fathers on services are likely to be in a somewhat a better position to guide their children than the fathers who work in the villages or are farmers or farm labourers. R. Govinda and Varghese (1993) also observe that the socio-economic background of the parents is perhaps the most crucial variable determining students' academic performance. They find a positive and direct relationship between socio-economic background and occupation levels of the parents and the academic performance of the children. Mathur (1963) has studied the effect of socio-economic status on behaviour and achievement of secondary school students. He has noted that socio-economic status is significantly correlated to educational achievement, intelligence and conduct of the students. In his studies, Chopra (1964) has examined the relationship between socio-economic factors and academic achievement, keeping the effect of intelligence. He has found that nearly ninety six percent of students who discontinued education attribute the reason to poor economic condition of the family. On the basis of parents' education, occupation, family income, type of lodging, size of the family and cultural level of home, students belonging to the higher qualitative group show significantly higher achievement.

However, some studies like Singh (1965) and Barial (1966) show that there exists no significant relationship between achievement and social class. Similarly, Strodback (1958) observed that parents of upper SES did not always produce overachieving

sons. Evidence quoted by McClelland (1974) from Japan also indicates that SES does not always predict an achievement level.

Pimpley (1979) argues that the parents of many SC students were largely illiterate and their occupation was mainly farming. Their economic conditions are poor and their academic performance was less than satisfactory because they have to spend lots of time in domestic duties. Aggarwal and Sibou (1994) observe that acute poverty of the households is also an important factor affecting the access to educational opportunities by the SC population. Because of economic deprivation it is impossible for many Scheduled Caste groups to provide for the education of their children. The poorer the family, the greater is the significance of the economic contribution (direct and indirect) by the children, howsoever marginal it may be in real terms.

Home facilities are another important factor in the school performance of the child. (Dale and Griffith, 1965; Bridge, Judd and Mook, 1979; Desai, 1991 and Govinda and Varghese 1993). Children who get the facilities at the home level outperform those who do not get these facilities. The home facilities or home atmosphere help the child doing his/her homework. "Though this provision is sometimes merely a reflection of the attitude of the parents towards education, and the priority which they give to other things, such as radio, television, and entertaining, it is often largely determined by limitations of accommodation and by finance". Many studies like Govinda (1993) focus on the impact of the facilities at home on school performance. The facilities are in terms of Radio, T.V, News Papers, sitting arrangements like stools, chairs, and sofas and also the home environment. He also observes that home assignments operate as one of the instruments in maintaining the quality of learning among the children. Jain (1965) also finds that there is a positive relationship between home environment and academic performance of children.

It has also been established in the sociological literature that atmosphere and environment of home play very important role in the academic performance of the children (Jain, 1965; Coleman, 1966; Chatterjee, 1971; Bridge, Judd and Mook,

1979; Shah and Salunke, 1984 and Desai, 1991). It is often difficult or impossible to separate this factor from the home background of the children. Studies like Metcalfe (1950) found that emotional disturbance is detrimental to school progress. Dale and Griffith (1970) also confirmed that disharmony in the family leads to low performance of the child. Disharmony in the home leads to educational failure. Uncooperative parents, drunken father, ailing family members, divorce parents are responsible for the poor performance of the child. Emotional disturbances, which is often impossible to separate from the home background also contributes to the low school achievement of the child. Srivastava (1967) in his study finds that the poor social and emotional adjustment due to problems concerning family and school leads to be under achievement of students

Another important factor affecting the academic performance of the children is parental attitude. Studies like Douglas (1964 and 1967), Morton and Williams (1964), Cohen (1965), Dale and Griffith (1965), Musgrove (1966), Kahl (1967), Wiseman (1967), Sewell et al (1970), Shapira and Yutchman (1974), Jha (1977), Chitnis (1981), Aggarwal (1986), Stevenson and Baker (1987), William (2005), Christa (2007) have shown that parental factor and academic achievement of the children are positively correlated. Parental attitude means to what extent parents' encouragement contributes to the child's success. The most obvious indication of parental encouragement of academic progress is seen when parent give high priority to the provision of good facilities for quiet study and homework. Aggarwal (1986) finds that parental encouragement and educational development are positively correlated. Parental encouragement has a pervasive influence on the educational development of children regardless of gender, districts and urban-rural variations. Amirthalingam (1991) notes that most of the parents of under achievers do not devote any time to their children's educational development. They don't pay attention to inculcate good study habits in children. Joshi (1991) finds that the educated parents rear up their daughters more appropriately as compared to less educated parents. Sahay (1991) found that the level of intelligence remaining the same, students with higher level of parental support achieved more than the students with lower level of parental

supports. Jha (1977) holds that lack of parental encouragement was found to be highly responsible for low level of education among the SC girls at all levels of education.

Various studies show how school success may be a function of the relation between social class and family socialization. The fact that socio-affective dispositions required by the family form of control are inconsistent and not always in accordance with -the regulative context of the child's school practice may explain low achievement of the child. Neves and Morais find a strong correlation between social class and the general coding orientation of families. Socialization also plays a crucial role in the academic achievement of the girls. The gender roles are learnt through the process of socialization within the family. The girls are expected to learn the feminine qualities like nurturance, obedient, homeliness, submissiveness, etc. where as boys are socialized to be strong, aggressive, less dependent etc. According to Bourdieu, "boys and girls receive the same cultural training if they are in the same social class, their habitus may be quite different on the basis of their socialization and the views they form of the opportunity structure available to them (Dumais, 2002: 45). Socialization also affects the learning abilities of children. Girls are given toys like dolls and kitchen ware which are linked with women's domestic roles and thus constrain their perceptions of future options and future aspirations. Where as the boys are given mechanical toys, puzzles, which enhance their reasoning ability making them choose science and mathematics (Nambissan, 2004: 536).

The internal dynamics of schools play an important role in defining the nature of inequality in education among children resulting the variations in academic performances. Schools make tacit social and cultural demands on children. Working class children appear to be unable to perceive cognize, communicate verbally and behave socially as the middle class children do. Social behaviors exhibited by the deprived children are appropriate and adequate for their home environment, but are seen as inadequate for a middle-class oriented curriculum (Muniswamy, 1994: 12).

Teachers' perceptions of the students and expectations from the students affect the performance of the children. Studies like Brookover, Beady, Flood, Schweitzer and Wisenbaker (1979) also show that teachers' expectations affect the performances of the children. Streaming and labeling of pupils is very crucial in the school performance. Studies show that there is a tendency for lower stream children to be labeled as failures. Among the subtle mechanisms that have been found in such a situation is the lowered expectation of teachers and administrators. There is evidence that the teachers also expect the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe students to perform badly in the examinations (Pawde, 1992; Ilaiyah, 1996; Muralidharan, 1997; Talib, 1998; Sarangapani, 1999). The dalit children are not only subjected to verbal and physical abuse by the teachers, they are also discouraged and demotivated by the teachers from learning (Subramanian, 2005). He holds that an upper caste teacher's casteist attitude or behaviour towards his/ her students is enough for the dalit students to internalize a sense of low self-esteem which affects their performance. Muralidharan (1997) presents a teacher who expected Ahir (a backward caste) children to perform badly and thought that education held little meaning for them. Pawde (1992) states how renowned scholars refused to believe that a dalit girl could learn Sanskrit. Similarly, Sarangapani (1999) found teachers behaving like the patrons of the lower caste children and singled them out for praise. Even though he SC/ ST, he has shown himself worthy.

Self fulfilling Prophecy says if a teacher defines a particular pupil as stupid or lacking in quality for successful school performance, then the future behaviour of the pupil will tend to be regarded as evidence of "stupidity" even though it may not in fact warrant such a description, and the student will in fact behave in a way that tends to confirm the teacher's periphery. Some teachers make judgments of pupil ability on the basis of their social origins and skin colour. Many teachers also act differently toward pupils whom they define as promising than they do toward pupils they define as less promising or stupid. Differential expectations followed by differential treatment, therefore should have importance consequences for student attitudes, behaviour and learning.

Official curriculum or the text books also contributes to the low academic performance of the children. Stereotypes in stories, text books and examination materials are gender biased. Nambissan (1995) also observes that the roles of women are depicted as wives, mothers and in a passive and restricted way in the curriculum which does not reflect the diversity of roles of women play in the society. Similarly, the scheduled caste and tribe students find huge differences in their own culture and school culture. Often the text book depicts them as 'cultural deprived' and thus leads to their poor class performance.

Hidden Curriculum also plays crucial role in the performance of the children. The attributes as stereotypes which underlie the classroom interaction comprises hidden curriculum which further contributes to the school performances of the children. The teacher's attention, differences is the reinforcement and the sitting arrangement in the classroom. The inequalities in the time and attention given by the teachers and also the unequal teacher attentions leads to differences in the academic performances of the children.

Jha and Jhingran (2002) observe that discrimination faced by dalit children at the hands of teachers takes many shapes. At some places, dalit children are unnecessarily beaten, abused and harassed by upper caste teachers. In some villages teacher asks the lower caste to do a number of personal tasks such as fetching firewood and if the children don't oblige physical punishment is meted out to them. Sheer neglect of dalit children by teachers by making them sit in the last row and excluding them from all activities is also common.

Studies have shown that reinforcement, both positive and negative, has strong impact on the academic performance of the children (Brookover, Beady, Flood, Schweitzer, Wisenbaker: 1979). Studies also show that positive reinforcements or rewards enhance the performances of the children whereas negative reinforcements or punishments hamper the performance of the children.

Peer groups strongly influence the academic performance of the children (Bridge, Judd and Moock, 1979 and Johnson, 2000). It has also been established in the sociological literature that peer attitude affects the academic performance of the children (Velaskar and Wankhede, 1990; Pawde, 1992 and Ilaiah, 1996). Peer relations in schools are influenced by caste and class relations. Friendships in the classroom are formed on the basis of caste and class lines (Balagopal and Subramanian, 2003). Jha and Jhingran (2002) observe that dalit students face hostilities from their upper caste friends. They are bullied around and disallowed from mixing with others.

Hence, the variations in the academic performance of the children are caused by various social and cultural factors. The next section seeks to focus on the varieties of studies conducted over the years to reflect on the determinants of academic performance of children both in western countries and India.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The variations in the academic performances of the students have always attracted the sociologists and social educationists for undertaking comprehensive research studies. The social, cultural, economic and institutional factors are very crucial because they have a direct impact on the academic performances of the children. Thus, various studies have examined the influence of home and school factors on the academic performances of the children.

There are many studies in the literature of sociology of education in the western countries. Some of these sociologists and educationists have emphasized on the inequality in educational opportunity and outcome. As Jencks's (1972) book *"Inequality: Reassessment of the effect of family and schooling in America"* summarizes the results of three years of research at the centre for Educational Policy Research. He focuses on the concepts like equal opportunity and equal results in

American context. His work also throws light on the factors which cause inequality in the cognitive skills of the students. He also tries to analyze the impact of economic background, race, family background, academic aptitude and academic credentials, school quality, high school resources, segregation, curriculum placement on the academic attainment of the children. Similarly other scholars have also tried to explore the impact of various social and cultural factors on the academic performance of the children.

Scholarly works of Lavin (1973), Marjoribanks (1987), Ogbu (1987), Stevenson and Baker (1987) and Ogbu and Simons (1998) have focused on the factors affecting the academic performance of the children. Lavin (1973) in his article "*Sociological Determinants of Academic Performance*" reviews studies concerned with the effects of social factors on academic performance of children. His study emphasizes on the effects of ecological and demographic variables which indicate that there are positive relations between socio-economic status and academic performance at all levels except the upper, where the relationships become inverse. He also tries to explore the impact of sex differences, religious background, regional and rural-urban variations, high-school size and academic load on the students' academic performances. The author discusses the effects of specific role relationships in the educational context and its impact on the academic performance. He sheds light on the student-to-student relationship, the student-teacher relationship, the effects of teacher behavior on student behavior, influence of informal peer group norms, family relationships, sibling structure of the family, family interaction patterns etc. and deals with how and to what extent the academic performance of the student is affected by all these factors.

Similarly, Marjoribanks (1987) in his article "*Individual environmental correlates of children's maths achievement*" has analyzed the impact of family on the academic performances of the children. He collected data from 883 Australian families to examine associations between family contexts and children's school outcomes. Results showed that in the boys' sample, family social status and parents' instrumental orientations interacted positively with intellectual ability and were

related to the achievement scores. For girls, however, family status only had a linear association with achievement. Some authors have tried to deal with the differences in the school performances of minority children. Like Ogbu (1987) in his article "*Variability in Minority School Performance: A problem in search of an explanation*" tries to analyze the differences in the school performances of the minority children. The article traces historically the different research approaches in educational anthropology. In doing so, the author presents a theoretical approach-to minority school performance based on the important differences that arise from a minority community's experiences in the post school opportunity structure and how minority community members' perceptions of dismissal future opportunities influence their perceptions of and response to schooling. The author also gives a typology of anthropological study of minority education and also the cross-cultural variations in the minority school performances in this article. Using a micro ethnographic approach, the focus of the study is process, how the assumed cultural/ language differences interact with teaching and learning to cause the problems experienced by the minorities.

Further, Ogbu and Simons (1998) in their article "*Voluntary and involuntary minorities: A cultural-ecological theory of school performance with some implications for education*" deal with the theoretical approach towards the variations in the school performances of the minority children. This work also deals with the classification of minorities, Ogbu's explanation of minority school performance thorough cultural-ecological theory. Here, the authors also suggest some implications of the theory for pedagogy. They regard the typology of minority groups as a heuristic device for analysis and interpretation of differences among minority groups in school experience.

Some researches have tried to examine the relation between family and school factors and the academic performance of the children. As Stevenson and Baker (1987) in their article "*The family-school relation and the child's school performance*" examined the relation between parental involvement in schooling and the child's

school performance using a nationally representative sample of American households. With a sample of 179 children, parents and teachers, they investigated the hypotheses: (1) the higher the educational status of the mother, the greater degree of parental involvement in school activities, (2) the younger the age of the child, the greater the degree of parental involvement, and (3) children of parents who are more involved in school activities do better in school than children with parents who are less involved. In an analysis of cross sectional data, they discovered support for 3 hypotheses. The educational status of the mother is related to the degree of parental involvement in schools, so that parents with more education are more involved. Parental involvement is related to child's school performance. Also parents are more involved in the school activities, if the child is younger. The mother's educational level and the age of the child are stronger predictors of parental involvement in schooling for boys than for girls. They did not find a direct effect of maternal educational status on school performance independent of parental involvement in school activities.

Musgrave (1972) in his book "The Sociology of Education" concentrates upon the way in which children become members of society where the influence of family and social class has been taken into consideration. He also deals with the position of teachers in the schools on the grounds that teachers who have thoroughly examined the forces at work on themselves will be more effective in their vocation. Four facets of the teacher's position are also examined in his work. He also examines the relationship of the contemporary British educational system with other social institution. The main concern here is with the schools, though higher education and other forms of education are mentioned.

It has been established in the literature of the sociology of education that the social factors influence the academic performance of the children. Bridge, Judd and Moock (1979) in their book "*The determinants of educational outcomes: the impact of families, peers, teachers and schools*" discuss the impact of the social factors on the academic performances of the children. The authors have discussed the influence of family, friends, teachers and school system on the academic achievement of the

children. They have also analyzed the impact of these variables as different inputs such as individual student inputs, family inputs, peers inputs, teachers inputs and school inputs. They have studied the educational outcomes of the children as the output of the variables like family, peers, teachers and school.

Glick and Sahn (1998) in their paper "*Schooling of girls and boys in a West African country: the effects of parental education, income and household structure*" investigates gender differences in the determinants of several schooling indicators- grade attainment, current enrollment, and withdrawal from school- in a poor urban environment in West Africa, using ordered and binary probit models incorporating household level random effects. Increase in household income lead to greater investments in girls' schooling but have no significant impact on schooling of boys. Improvements in fathers' education raises the schooling of both sons and daughters (favoring the latter), but mothers' education has significant impact only on daughters' schooling; these estimates are suggestive of differences in maternal and paternal preferences for schooling daughters relative to sons. They also throw light on the fact that domestic responsibilities, represented for example by the number of very young siblings, impinge strongly on girls' education and not on boys'. The study also emphasizes that policies such as subsidized child care that reduce the opportunity cost of girls' time in the home may therefore increase their ability to get an education.

Neves and Morais's (2005) paper "*Pedagogic Practices in the Family Socializing Context and Children's School Achievement*" describes a qualitative study about pedagogic practices in the family. Students' achievement is discussed in relation to family and school pedagogic practices. The analysis of family pedagogic practices was based on a model derived from Bernstein's theory. The study shows that families differ in their coding orientation and pedagogic practices, and suggests that there are factors other than social groups to determine family's pedagogic practice. It also suggests that specific familial practices may explain children's differential achievement at school. William (2005) in his article "*Effects of parental involvement on the academic achievement of African American youth*" has attempted to study the

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impact of parental involvement on the academic performance of the children. Using the 1992 National Educational Longitudinal Study (NELS) data set, the study assessed the effects of parental involvement on the academic achievement of African American 12th grade youth, using several models. The results indicate that parental involvement had a positive impact on the educational outcomes of these youth. However, this influence was no longer statistically significant when variables for socioeconomic status (SES) were included in the analysis. All the sets of results were reasonably consistent across the different kinds of academic variables. The analyses also indicated that parents were slightly more likely to be involved in the education of their daughters than they were in the education of their sons.

Similarly, Symeou (2007) in his article "*Cultural Capital and Family Involvement in Children's Education: Tales from two Primary Schools in Cyprus*" presents the findings of a study which explored teacher-family collaboration in state primary schools in Cyprus. The research, based on the ethnographic approach, shows that participants parents, regardless of their background, valued their children's educational success, wanted their children to do well in school, and correspondingly saw themselves as supporting their children in one way or another. The evidence demonstrates a variation in familial perspective and needs a considerable distinction in how families of different background use their school contacts. The conclusions of the study draw on Bourdieu's views of cultural capital and seem quite consistent with the findings of other researchers elsewhere. Foon (1988) in his article "*Effect of mother's employment status on adolescent's self-perception and academic performance*" investigated the effect of mothers' employment on adolescent orientation and academic performance over 1975 students (896 males and 779 females). The results of his study showed that boys having mothers employed in low status occupations tended to have more external control orientation and lower preference for math than males whose mothers were employed in high-status occupations. For females, mothers' employment status was associated with high preference for math and a favorable attitude to perform well in school.

Some studies have established the impact of the social class factor on the academic performance of the children. As Floud's (1970) article "*Social Class Factors in Educational Achievement*" focuses on educational opportunity in post war Britain, outlining the marked social class variations in access to grammar schools and universities primarily in quantitative terms, but also in terms of the quality of home environment and of the relationship of the middle class expectations of teachers and of the capacity of the working class pupils to respond to them. Since social class is a prime source of 'unnatural' inequalities in education, the purpose of this paper is to explore the manifold ways in which it makes its obstructive influence felt, and to suggest practical measures for the consideration of policy-makers and administrators. The study emphasizes that due to the existence of fundamental differences between the social classes in ways of life, values, attitudes and aspirations as well as in material circumstances, the children respond differently to school, even at the same level of measured intelligence. Similarly, Anyon's (1981) study "*Social class and school knowledge*" is reflective of the differences in pedagogic methods used in classroom. The study reveals that while the children of privileged class are taught to think and make decisions, the working class children were taught to obey orders. The author holds that there is an emphasis on memorization for all children but for the disadvantaged it becomes more difficult as the content as well as the language of curriculum is incomprehensible.

Kniveton (1987) in his article "*Misbehaving peer models in the classroom: An investigation of the effects of social class and intelligence*" discussed about the impact of students' intelligence and socio-economic status on their behavior in the classroom as well as their academic performances. He divided a group of students on the basis of intelligence (high and low), and SES (working class and middle class children). Results showed no difference by intelligence, but SES was positively correlated with behavior. It was found that irrespective of intelligence, students from working class background misbehaved more in classroom than their counterparts belonging to middle class.

Many studies have shown that school factors play crucial role in the academic performance of the children. Brookover, Beady, Flood, Schweitzer and Wisenbaker (1979) in their edited book "*School social systems and student achievement: schools can make a difference*" deal with the impact of schools on the academic achievement on the children. This volume is the report of a major study of the relation of elementary school social systems to educational outcomes. The authors focus on the fact that school social-cultural variables may significantly affect the learning of the students which is in contrast to some indication that only the family background explains the differences in educational outcomes. Although variation in the socio-economic status and racial composition of schools' student bodies are related to reading and mathematics achievement, this study of random samples of Michigan elementary schools indicates that school social climate and social structure variables explain the differences between schools in achievement as well. They also emphasize that school social climate variables explain much more of the differences in mean self-concept of academic ability and mean student self-reliance than the student body composition.

Similarly, Rutter, Maughan, Mortimore and Ouston (1979) in their book "*Fifteen Thousand Hours: Secondary Schools and their Effects on Children*" try to explore whether a child's experiences at school have any effect, whether it matters which school he goes to and also which are the features of school that matter. The research confirms that schools indeed more an important impact on children's development and it also matters which school a child attends. The study also deals with the particular features of school organization and functioning which affect children's behaviour, attainments and academic performance as well. The study divides the school feature into seven broad headings, namely, amount of teaching experienced by the children; the size of the school; organization of teaching groups; the effects on pupils of differing teacher expectations' teaching styles and classroom management; pattern of discipline and overall school climate. The authors also shed light on the studies which reflect the impact of other types of institutions on the academic performance of the children. Brunello and Checchi (2004) in their article "*School*

quality and family background in Italy” have studied whether the combined significant reduction in the pupil-teacher ratio and increase in parental education observed in Italy between the end of Second World war and the end of the 1980s have had a significant impact on the educational attainment and the labor market returns of a representative sample of Italians born between 1941 and 1970. They found that the lower pupil-teacher ratio is positively correlated with higher educational attainment, but that the overall improvement of parental education has had an even stronger impact on attainment. They also found that the positive impact of better school quality on educational attainment and returns to education has been particularly significant for the individuals born in regions and cohorts with poorer family background. Parental education has had asymmetric effects; positive on attainment and negative on school returns. Better school quality has also had asymmetric effects on the returns to education, positive for individuals with poor family background and negative for individuals born in regions and cohorts with relatively high parental education. The study also suggest that better school quality, measured by a lower pupil-teacher ratio, is a technical substitute to parental education in the production of individual human capital. When school quality and family background are substitutes, an increase of public resources invested in education can be used to reduce the differences induced by parental education.

There are some studies which have tried to examine the role of gender in the differences in the academic performance of the children. Like Rodriguez’s (2003) study “*School social context effects on gender differences in academic achievement among second –generation Latinos*” considers involuntary minority concentration effects on gender differences in achievement and finds increasing levels of involuntary minority enrollments decrease grade point averages and math scores for immigrant boys versus girls, net of individual and school socioeconomic status. Immigrant achievement declines in involuntary minority schools where a climate of apathy and failure inhibits performance. Yet, differences in gender roles and socialization render girls less vulnerable to assimilation of adversarial attitudes and behaviors responsible for academic failure.

Johnson (2000) in a report "*The peer effect on academic achievement among public elementary school students: A report of the heritage centre for data analysis*" discusses current research findings on the effects of peers and social interaction on academic achievement, then analyses current national data, comparing results to the existing academic literature. Data from the 1998 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) database on reading were used to test the influence of peer attitudes on academic achievement. The NAEP examines academic achievement in various fields. It is administered to the students in 4th, 8th and 12th grade. Besides providing data on academics, it offers information on students, teachers and administrators' background. This study analyses 6 factors: the effect of peers, race and ethnicity, parents' educational attainment, number of reading materials at home, free or reduced price lunch participation and gender. Results indicate that the peer effect is strong influence on academic achievement, particularly in 4th grade. The significance of peer effect wanes by 8th grade. Family background characteristics also have an important influence. Both have effects that are independent from the effects of gender and race/ethnicity.

Hamberlin (1985) in his doctoral work "*The effect of classroom environment on academic achievement, classroom behavior and attitude of inner city students*" studied the effects of classroom environment on academic achievement, classroom behaviour and attitudes of 9th grade students in one public school. He concluded that students instructed in the stimulating classroom environment in comparison to students instructed in the non-stimulating classroom environment performed better academically, prepared for class more frequently, completed more house work assignments and attended more classes. The study also found that students instructed in the stimulating environment had more positive self-reported attitudes and perceptions than their counterparts.

In the Indian context, Gore, Desai and Chitnis (1967) in their work "*Papers in the sociology of education in India*" focus on the systematic study of various problems

concerning education in the context of a modernizing Indian society. On the basis of the available material on the social and economic background of the students, teacher and parents, their values, attitude, and aspirations and the general conditions obtaining in educational institutions of different kinds in the country, the authors have tried to present trend reports and postulate hypotheses for further research. Desai's (1991) paper "*Determinants of Educational Performance in India: Role of Home and Family*" addresses the impacts of family and pupils characteristics on children's academic learning in primary schools in India. The study focuses on the children who have dropped out before completing primary schooling. The study emphasizes that education supplies and the sanitary facilities at home have a remarkable relationship with the academic performance of the children. The paper shows that the locale of a child's home, its distance from the source of drinking water, the child's father's work status and literacy and the level (grade) of schooling that the child has completed before dropping out, also have significant influence on child's performance. The study also stresses that the child's gender. Age at enrollment, reason, for dropping out, and parent's income, literacy and caste do not have significant influence on performance. He also observes that sex, age, child's work status, primary occupation, year of schooling, parental income, parent's work status, father's primary occupation, parental literacy, educational expenses and supplies, caste, housing, housing condition, home amenities influence the school performance of the children in India.

Many studies in India focus on the problems of the disadvantaged groups like the Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribes, etc. and also try to explore the reasons of their low academic performance. Chitins (1974) in her book "*Literacy and Educational Enrollment among the Scheduled Caste of Maharashtra*" tries to estimate the status of literacy among the scheduled caste in Maharashtra based on the census of 1961. She also studies the scheduled caste enrollment in schools and colleges during the year 1969-70 and examined the extent to which the percentage wise representation of the scheduled castes in school and pre-school education during their period matches their percentage wise representation in the population as recorded in the census of 1971. The study also deals with data on the increase and decrease in school enrollment,

during the four year period between 1965-66 & 1969-70 and examined whether the increase in the scheduled caste school enrollment compares favorably with the increase in the total enrollment.

Rath, Dash and Dash (1979) in their book "*Cognitive abilities and school achievement of the socially disadvantaged children in primary schools*" presents the findings of the first major and systematic study in India of the cognitive abilities of children from different socio-economic backgrounds. The study highlights that attempts at improving the academic achievements of children belonging to disadvantaged groups must be based on an understanding of the cognitive disabilities which become manifest in them because of their social and cultural environment. The book also emphasizes that the ineffectiveness of the present educational pattern for such children is indicated by the high drop-out rates and stagnation of tribal and scheduled caste children in elementary schools. While children from all social groups start with similar cognitive endowments, the cognitive development of children from disadvantaged groups is retarded during their school years resulting in increasing gaps between the higher and lower caste groups in achievement, aspirations, and in cognitive and learning skills. Some possible remedial measures have also been discussed by the authors which are beneficial for redesigning of education for the disadvantaged groups. Similarly, Viswanandham and Reddy (1985) in their explorative study "*Scheduled Caste: A study in educational achievement*" observe the determinants of educational achievements among the SC students. They have tried to explore the role of socio-economic backgrounds, social class, and study habits on the educational achievement of the children. They also find a positive correlation between these factors and academic achievements of students.

Agarkar, Chunawala and Kulkarni (1988) in the report "*Improving the performance of Scheduled Caste students*" describe briefly the important features of the experiment undertaken by the Homi Bhabha Centre for Science Education (HBCSE) of the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research, Bombay, to study the factors, hindering the scholastic progress of SC students and to design specific remedial measures to boost

their scholastic achievements. The experiment shows that the scholastic progress of SC students can be boosted substantially if the remedial measures are designed properly. The study also shows that such academic experiments should be supplemented by programmes for creating awareness among parents, and among the public in general, to enable the better performers to derive full benefits from their academic achievements. Chitinis (1997) in her report "*A long way to go*" presents the findings from a study commissioned by the Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR) as part of a scheme for studying the situations and the problems of the SCs and STs as backward and disadvantage sectors of Indian society. The report aims at indicating situation of the SCs students pointing out the gains and the advances they have made, identifying the shortcomings and the inadequacies that continue to prevail in the path of their progress and offering suggestion for both action and for the research.

Chattopadhyay (1998) in his study "*Quasi-experimental study on the educational backwardness of SC secondary school students in some districts in West Bengal*" has examined the levels of academic achievement and motivational intensity for learning and achievement of SC school students of West Bengal in comparison to those of non-SC students. The grades chosen for investigation were VIII and X and the academic subject chosen was basic algebra. It was found that SC students with lower levels of motivational intensity for learning and achievement showed significantly lower academic performance than the other students; however SC students with the same level of motivational intensity as of other students showed the same level of academic performance. Hence, the study concluded that if the backwardness of SC students is to be removed, their motivational intensity for learning and achievement should be given a boost.

Velaskar's (2005) article "*Education, Caste, Gender: Dalit girls' access to Schooling in Maharashtra*" is concerned with examining the implications of the interaction between caste, class and patriarchy for educational access of women belonging to dalit communities, who were subsumed hitherto under two homogenizing categories

of 'woman' and 'dalit'. Using an interactive approach, the paper explores the specific educational situation of dalit women who have historically occupied a distinctive subordination as result of their location in untouchable castes and their multiple oppression under traditional caste patriarchy. The paper also examines the extent to which dalit (viz. ex-untouchable) women have able to cut across the barriers of caste, class and gender to gain to schooling and also to what extent and to what educational level they have achieved parity with dalit boys and-'general category', patriarchy, non-dalit girls. The author begins the paper with a brief history of dalit women's education in the colonial context, and of modern educational development among Maharashtra's dalits and women. The paper also attempts to understand the main trends in dalit women's educational trajectory and chronicle patterns of caste, gender inequality in the post-colonial period. The paper also attempts, on the basis of existing research and writings and field observation gathered by the author, to hypothesize on the reasons for the patterns found in terms of ideology, structure (caste, class, gender) and state policy on equalizing opportunity in education.

Some studies have also been conducted on the variations in academic performance of children in Orissa. Devi's (1996) paper "*Regional Inequalities in education in Orissa*" examines the extent of inter and intra – district inequalities in education in rural Orissa in terms of literacy rates at three points at time, i.e., 1971, 1981 and 1991. The disparity in literacy rate is estimated by using Sopher's disparity index. The study reflects that the variation in literacy between different districts of the state is found to be higher among females, SCs and STs than their counterparts (males, non-SCs, non-STs respectively). It was found that the gender disparity in literacy is relatively more serious among SCs and STs than the non-SCs and non-STs as well as in the backward regions. The study also found disparity between SC and non-Sc as well as between ST and non-ST population in the state. The study concluded that inter and intra-regional disparity in literacy exists in rural Orissa.

Kar and Kar (2002) in their article "*Promoting girls' schooling in Orissa*" have attempted to analyze the impact of some factors influencing gender inequality in

education. They have explained the factors influencing the primary and secondary school enrollment in Orissa. The study also attempts to assess the extent to which enrolment in primary and secondary schools in the state of Orissa is determined by access to schools and quality of schooling. The authors have also tried to ascertain the degree to which the patriarchal structure of the society explains women's position, more specifically, the extent to which the economic value and worth of women influences their educational level as well as the gender gap in education. The study also examines the magnitude of influence exerted by socio-economic development across the several districts of the state on the gender gap in education.

Indian literature of the sociology of education has been enriched by the studies conducted by Padma Sarangapani and Meenakshi Thapan on the school factors. Thapan (1991) in her book "*Life at School: An Ethnographic Study*" seeks to answer questions concerning the character and functioning of a public school-the Rishi valley school-in southern India run by Krishnamurthy Foundation (India). This work also deals with questions regarding the internal organization and authority structure of the school, the nature of the school ethos or the form and context of interpersonal relations between different categories of 'actors' in the school. The author tries to render the educational institution intelligible sociologically, that is, in terms of certain selected sociological paradigms of social reality at both the societal and the institutional levels through the ethnographic study of the Rishi valley school (RVS).

Sarangapani's (2003) book "*Constructing School Knowledge: An Ethnography of Learning in an Indian Village*" is about children's experience of schooling in a village government primary school in India. Using the tools of an anthropologist, the author explores the process of meaning of rural schooling as constituted by the teacher and children themselves. It is based on a detailed ethnographic study of a village school and draws upon philosophy, epistemology, and cognitive psychology of education for its interpretive frameworks. The book also deals with the ethos of the village, the process of urbanization, occupational diversification in order to explain the social structure that the children inhabit. The author also discusses about local conceptions of

childhood, educated person and failure, the teacher-taught relationship, memorization as a process of learning, children's understanding of schooling and the relationship between schooling and everyday knowledge. In this book she does not observe the social factors affecting the academic performance of the children.

So far, through a review of studies, the social context of academic performance has been reflected in this section. It is found that the researches have emphasized on family factors like parental education, occupation and school factors on the academic performance of the children. But there are many other factors which are neglected by these studies. These factors may be family type and size, facilities available at home, academic atmosphere at home, emotional disturbances, role of siblings, teachers' time, attention and attitude, teachers' expectations, self-fulfilling prophecy, peer attitude, etc. These factors may also have strong influence on the academic performance of the children. Besides this, very few studies have been conducted in Orissa on the academic performance of secondary school children.

Therefore, the present study is an attempt to fill the gaps by undertaking an exploratory study of the social context of academic performance of children in a secondary school in Orissa. The aim is to explore the impact of those factors, which are not studied by other researches, on the academic performance of the children.

RELEVANCE OF THE STUDY

The review of literature draws us to the perception that the variations in the academic performance of the children are analyzed at the macro level. Therefore, there is need to study the issues from a closer range of ground realities related to the deep-rooted factors that have affected the performance of the children at the secondary level of education. The studies show that academic performance of the children are affected by home and school factors. Hence, a micro-level understanding is required to have a clear understanding of the role of the family and school on the academic performances of the children. The study, thus, is an attempt to examine the impact of

home and institutional factors on the academic performance of the children in a secondary school in Orissa. The study also explores how caste, class, gender and tribe affect academic performance in a secondary school class.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study aimed to analyse the academic performances of the students at the secondary level of education. Since students' examination results vary, the study tried to look at the reasons of variations in the academic performances of the students. In other words, the study explores and analyses the social and cultural factors which cause the variations in the academic performances of the students.

Broad objective

Therefore, the prime objective of the study is to understand the social context of academic performances of children in a secondary school. In other words, it explores why some children in a secondary school class perform academically better than the others or why some children perform poorly in the classroom or whether we can offer sociological context for understanding the differential examination results in the secondary school classroom.

Specific objectives

There are 5 specific objectives of the study. These are:

- I. To examine the social background of children in the secondary school class.
- II. To examine whether the academic performance varies according to the caste, tribe, social class and gender and if so, how do they vary. In other words can we explain the academic performance differentials in terms of caste, tribe, social class and gender?

- III. To understand the linkages between the home backgrounds and the variations in the academic performance.
- IV. To examine the linkages between the institutional (school related) factors and the academic performances of children.
- V. To explain the interplay of both home and the school factors in producing better or poor academic performance among the children.

METHODOLOGY

The relevant data and information pertaining to the study has been collected from various sources. The study has relied upon both primary and secondary sources of data collection. The study undertook field work in a secondary school in the Puri Zilla School in Puri district in Orissa. A sample of 24 students from class IX has been taken for the study. The results in the annual examination have been taken as the indicator of the academic performances of the students. These students have been interviewed for in-depth information and their previous year's exam results (class VIII, Annual) have been analyzed to know their performances in the school. Simultaneously, the half-yearly exam results of class IX have also been analyzed to know whether they maintained their standard.

These twenty four students are categorized into three groups on the basis of marks they have scored in the class-VIII annual exam. Those students who have scored 70% and above are categorized as high performers, those who have scored in between 50% to 70% fall under the category of average performers and those who have got below 50% are taken as low performers. The study explores the variations in the percentage of marks among the students on the basis of information collected from their parents, teachers and peers. The required data for the study has been collected through the use of an interview schedule for parents, children and teachers of the class that is chosen for intensive fieldwork. The study has also relied on the information collected from the informal conversations with the students, their parents and teachers.

Apart from this, the study also presents data from the secondary sources as well. A number of documents have been referred for the work like reports, Census records, records relating to education and academic performance of the students, District Gazetteers, school records and also newspaper cuttings. Internet sources have also been used for getting recent data pertaining to education.

ORGANISATION OF THE CHAPTERS

The study has been divided into 5 chapters.

The first chapter begins with an introduction to the study. It deals with the understanding of multiple contexts of academic performances of the students. The chapter focuses on the theories related to unequal school performances. Apart from this, it also deals with the empirical studies related to the factors responsible for the inequalities in the academic performances of the students in India and in other countries as well.

The second chapter looks at the variations in the academic performances in both India and Orissa. It deals with the results of the students in class X board examinations. The chapter gives a clear picture of the comparative figures of the results obtained by the students in the Class X examinations in India and other states. It also deals with the comparative analysis of the results in the class X board Examinations in Orissa with the results in other states and also in India. The chapter specifically deals with the academic performances of the students in the Annual High School Certificate Examination in Orissa focusing on the variations in the results on the basis of caste, tribe and gender. The chapter finally gives a brief account of Puri district in Orissa where the field study has been conducted.

The third chapter deals with the home factors and its impact on the academic performances of the students. It tries to look at the child's social and family background, socio-economic status, parents' educational background and occupation,

parental attitude towards the child's studies and the facilities available at home in Orissa. The chapter has attempted to analyze the impact of these factors on the examination results of the students in the context of Orissa.

The fourth chapter tries to look at the impact of institutional factors on the academic performances of the students. It deals with the impact of some of the school related factors such as the teachers' perceptions of the children and their attitudes towards the children's education, children's perceptions of themselves as well as the teachers, role of peer groups, children's classroom performances and activities, school related problems, parents' perceptions of the children, their schooling and education and of the teachers on the academic performances of the children in Orissa.

The fifth and final chapter analyzes the data collected from the field and explains to what extent the home and school factors are responsible for producing better or poor academic performance of the children. In other words, this chapter presents a summary of the findings and the conclusions drawn from the study.

CHAPTER-II

ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN INDIA AND ORISSA

CHAPTER- II
ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN
INDIA AND ORISSA

The chapter attempts to examine the trends in the examination performances of the secondary school students at both national level and state level. The chapter begins with the demographic and literacy profiles of India, Orissa and Puri district. It presents the results of the students in the high school examinations conducted by different states boards in India. It also gives the performance of the students in the examinations conducted by the Central Board of Secondary Education both in India and Orissa. The main focus of the chapter is the academic performance or the results of the students in the Annual High School Certificate Examinations conducted by the Board of Secondary Education in Orissa. It also gives a brief account of the academic performances of students in Puri district as the study has been conducted in this district. In sum, the chapter tries to present the variations in the academic performance of the students in India and Orissa.

DEMOGRAPHIC AND LITERACY PROFILES OF INDIA

According to the 2001 Census of India, the total population of the country is 1,028,737,436 while the male population is 532,223,090 and female population is 496,514,346. The Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes constitute 16.23% and 8.21% of the total population of the country respectively. On the other hand, the total population of Orissa is 36,706,920. The male population of the state is 18,612,340 and the female population is 18,094,580. The Scheduled castes and Scheduled Tribes constitute 16.57% and 22.19% of the total population of the state respectively. (Census of India, 2001)

The literacy rate of India is 64.8. For males, it is 75.2 and for females the literacy rate is 53.7. The literacy rates for the general population is 68.9, for the Scheduled Castes,

it is 54.7 and for the Scheduled Tribes, the literacy rate is 47.2 (Census of India, 2001). The literacy rate of the state of Orissa is 63.06; the male literacy rate is 75.35% while the female literacy rate is 50.51. (Census of India, 2001)

TABLE-2.1
LITERACY RATES BY GENDER AND CASTE/ TRIBE (2001)

	SC			ST		
	Persons	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females
INDIA	54.69	66.64	41.90	47.10	59.17	34.76
ORISSA	55.53	70.47	40.33	37.37	51.48	23.37

(Source: Registrar General of India; Census of India, 2001, Series I, Paper I, Primary Census Abstract for SCs and STs)
NOTE: SC-Scheduled Caste, ST-Scheduled Tribe

The table 2.1 presents the gender wise literacy rates of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes both in India and in Orissa. It shows that Orissa's Scheduled Castes have good literacy rates in comparison to the Scheduled Castes in India. But the Scheduled Tribes are not at a good position in literacy compared to the tribals in all over India. The literacy rates for the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes India are more than Orissa.

ACADEMIC PERFORMANCES OF THE STUDENTS

This section tries to look at the results of the examinations conducted by the state boards in different states.

The table 2.2 presents the year wise examination results of board high school examinations. It presents the data from 1981 to 2000 and gives a clear picture of the gender wise distribution of pass percentage of the students in class X. The figures show that there is no significant change in the pass percentage for two decades. The pass percentage was the highest (56.80) in the year 1991 where as in 1986 least number of students was passed out, i.e., 47.29. The highest pass percentages of the boys, i.e. 53.17 and lowest 43.30 were in the years 1991 and 1986 respectively. The

highest and lowest pass percentages of girls were 60.67 in the year 1999 and 50.33 in 1986 respectively. The data also indicates that girls have always better percentage of pass than the boys.

TABLE-2.2
**YEARWISE EXAMINATION RESULTS OF BOARDS AT ALL INDIA LEVEL-
HIGH SCHOOL EXAMINATION (1981-2000)**
(ANNUAL & SUPPLEMENTARY)

SL.NO.	YEAR	PASS PERCENTAGE		
		BOYS	GIRLS	TOTAL
1.	1981	49.44	57.63	52.63
2.	1982	50.88	55.21	53.16
3.	1983	48.54	54.93	51.22
4.	1984	48.03	54.77	50.33
5.	1985	47.87	55.42	50.84
6.	1986	43.30	50.33	47.29
7.	1987	46.97	53.89	48.61
8.	1988	45.08	51.39	47.95
9.	1989	46.50	54.09	48.70
10.	1990	47.26	57.85	49.97
11.	1991	53.17	58.71	56.80
12.	1992	39.39	51.17	48.33
13.	1993	46.02	57.35	50.11
14.	1994	47.82	56.22	52.09
15.	1995	49.47	57.01	54.07
16.	1996	43.47	51.28	48.49
17.	1997	46.81	56.13	51.69
18.	1998	43.90	56.49	48.92
19.	1999	50.64	60.67	54.31
20.	2000	49.97	53.77	51.42

(Source: Results of High School and Higher Secondary Examination, 1999-2000, Boards of Secondary and Higher Secondary Education in India, Planning, Monitoring and Statistical Division, Department of Secondary Education and Higher Education Ministry of Human Resources Development, Government of India, New Delhi, 2003, page-ix)

The state wise distribution of pass percentage of students in the annual high school board examinations, 1999 reveal that Haryana had the highest pass percentage for both boys and girls. It had also the highest total pass percentage in the year 1999. Jammu and Kashmir had the lowest pass percentage for boys while Assam was at the last position having lowest girls' pass percentage and total pass percentage. The total pass percentage for boys, girls and total was 45.85, 55.69 and 49.45 respectively. Orissa's total pass percentage was 48.19, boys pass percentage was 48.37 and for girls

the pass percentage is 47.94. The comparison of the pass percentage of Orissa with that of Haryana shows that Orissa's pass percentage is much lower than Haryana. However, there is not much difference between the pass percentage of Orissa and that of India.

The state wise distribution of pass percentage of the Scheduled Caste students in the High School Board Examinations conducted by the state boards in the year 1999 shows that total pass percentage for the Scheduled Caste students in 1999 was 37.30 which shows low achievement of SCs in India. The total pass percentages of SC boys and SC girls were 33.23 and 45.72 respectively. Nagaland had the highest pass percentage for boys, girls and total SC population, i.e. 92.93%, 87.72% and 91.03% respectively. Uttar Pradesh SC boys had the lowest pass percentage (19.85) that year. U.P. also had the lowest total pass percentage (27.66) where as U.P. Scheduled Caste girls were at a better position than their male counterparts having 57.87 pass percentage. Manipur SC girls had the lowest pass percentage (29.25%). Orissa had an average percentage of pass of Scheduled Caste boys, girls and total SC population, i.e. 39.24%, 36.59% and 38.29% respectively that year while Orissa's total pass percentage was 48.19, boys pass percentage was 48.37 and for girls the pass percentage was 47.94. This shows that the SCs had lower performance than the overall performance of the state.

Similarly, the state wise distribution of pass percentage of the Scheduled Tribe students in the annual high school examination conducted by different state boards in the year 1999 reveal that the total pass percentage for the ST students in India was 38.41 where as the pass percentages for boys and girls were 38.00 and 39.15 respectively. Boys' pass percentage was the highest (85.34) in Goa and the lowest (13.60) in Tripura where as girls' highest pass percentage (96.43) was recorded in Goa and the lowest (0.99) was in Nagaland. The total state wise pass percentage was the highest (90.00) in the state of Goa and the lowest (12.93) in Tripura. The Scheduled Tribe boys and girls in Orissa had 39.24 and 36.59 pass percentages respectively where as the total pass percentage of the state was 38.29. The figures

show that the performance of the STs in Orissa is much lower than that of Goa. The reasons of the low performance of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in Orissa could be their social and cultural backwardness or the stigma attached to their social category. The hidden curriculum, that is the unequal teacher attention and the biased attitude of the teachers and the friends could also be responsible for their low pass percentage.

TABLE-2.3
EXAMINATION RESULTS OF BOARDS AT ALL INDIA LEVEL- HIGH SCHOOL EXAMINATION, 2000 (ANNUAL)

SL. NO	STATES	PASS PERCENTAGE								
		SC			ST			TOTAL		
		B	G	T	B	G	T	B	G	T
1	Andhra Pradesh	35.23	36.86	35.81	37.11	38.36	37.46	44.24	48.98	46.03
2	Assam	38.71	25.88	33.20	32.52	23.54	28.43	39.40	29.66	34.71
3	Bihar	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	56.90	62.48	58.58
4	Goa	57.94	66.06	61.70	61.90	48.28	54.00	66.75	66.25	66.50
5	Gujarat	47.45	55.00	50.06	52.89	58.73	55.07	55.62	64.14	58.85
6	Haryana	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	65.64	13.67	45.87
7	Himachal Pradesh	74.39	54.27	65.24	32.03	36.85	33.95	50.28	68.96	58.86
8	Jammu and Kashmir	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	23.58	17.01	21.76
9	Karnataka	26.74	31.70	28.97	31.41	38.54	34.26	68.61	53.24	61.78
10	Kerala	40.23	41.79	40.92	33.28	37.97	35.58	55.30	54.73	55.03
11	Madhya Pradesh	35.34	41.66	36.99	32.41	28.68	31.34	41.24	21.58	31.12
12	Maharashtra	32.22	34.70	33.16	42.99	50.95	45.56	47.92	52.61	49.78
13	Manipur	54.20	46.42	49.84	51.17	44.04	47.72	42.09	35.71	38.86
14	Meghalaya	58.39	57.41	57.96	25.67	29.48	27.45	41.48	35.54	38.42
15	Mizoram	27.77	11.95	20.24	41.17	35.15	38.05	37.76	29.53	33.58
16	Nagaland	78.82	54.10	68.49	49.95	43.13	46.82	51.77	44.74	48.57
17	Orissa	30.04	27.70	29.16	30.35	25.32	28.67	38.66	37.38	38.11
18	Punjab	45.32	34.78	43.57	0.00	0.00	0.00	49.21	51.00	49.88
19	Rajasthan	34.82	35.88	34.99	41.41	42.92	41.70	46.91	52.17	48.34
20	Tamil Nadu	54.46	58.70	56.49	58.08	61.56	59.51	48.58	68.51	56.96
21	Tripura	47.04	39.70	44.18	26.99	18.88	24.02	48.64	36.44	43.15
22	Uttar Pradesh	18.55	41.82	23.35	27.96	37.40	30.06	24.47	47.19	30.36
23	West Bengal	31.16	38.24	33.99	34.90	42.84	38.07	65.21	60.59	63.27
24	CBSE, New Delhi	49.83	43.07	46.93	44.34	36.28	41.21	65.57	65.12	65.37
	TOTAL	29.42	37.25	31.96	38.02	38.77	38.27	45.28	48.92	46.67

(Source: Results of High School and Higher Secondary Examination, 1999-2000, Boards of Secondary and Higher Secondary Education in India, Planning, Monitoring and Statistical Division, Department of Secondary Education and Higher Education Ministry of Human Resources Development, Government of India, New Delhi, 2003, page-20, 27, 33)

NOTE: B- Boys; G-Girls; T-Total; SC- Scheduled Caste; ST- Scheduled Tribe

Table 2.3 presents the pass percentages of the total population as well as SC and ST population in the annual high school examination conducted by different state boards and also the Central Board of Secondary Education in the year 2000. The table shows that the total, boys and girls pass percentages were 46.67, 45.28 and 48.92 respectively in India. The table shows that the girls outperformed boys in 2000. The boys' highest (68.61%) and lowest (23.58%) pass percentages were recorded in Karnataka and Jammu and Kashmir respectively. Similarly, the girls' highest (68.96) and lowest (13.67) pass percentages were recorded in Himachal Pradesh and Haryana respectively. Goa had the highest total pass percentage (66.50) where as Jammu and Kashmir had the lowest total pass percentage (21.76). Orissa's total, boys' and girls' pass percentages were 38.66, 37.38 and 38.11 respectively. The table also shows the pass percentages of the SCs in the annual high school examination, 2000. The highest (74.39) and lowest (18.55) pass percentages of Scheduled Caste boys were recorded in Himachal Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh respectively. Similarly, the highest (66.06) and lowest (11.95) pass percentages for SC girls were recorded in Goa and Mizoram respectively. It is interesting to find out that the Scheduled Caste girls in Uttar Pradesh outperformed their male counterparts in the examination. The highest and lowest state wise total pass percentages were recorded in Nagaland (68.49) and Mizoram (20.24) respectively. The total, boys and girls pass percentages in the country were 31.96%, 29.42% and 37.25% respectively. Orissa had a low pass percentage that year as the pass percentages of boys, girls and total population were 30.04, 27.70 and 29.16 respectively. The low performance of the Scheduled Caste students in Orissa could be the lack of facilities provided to them for their education. The table also shows the pass percentages of the Scheduled Tribe students in the board examination. The total pass percentage of STs in India was 38.27 where as for boys and girls the figures were 38.02 and 38.77 respectively. Orissa's total pass percentage for STs was 28.67 where as for boys and girls the figures were 30.35 and 25.32 respectively. The highest and lowest pass percentages for ST boys and girls were recorded in Goa (61.90) and Meghalaya (25.67) respectively. Similarly, the highest and lowest pass percentages for ST girls were recorded in the states of Tamil Nadu (61.56) and Tripura (18.88) respectively. The highest and lowest total state wise

pass percentages were recorded in Tamil Nadu (59.51) and Meghalaya (27.45) respectively.

ACADEMIC PERFORMANCES OF THE SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN ORISSA

This section throws light on the academic performance of the children at the secondary level of education in Orissa. It also gives a brief account of the secondary education in the state. There are 3496 government secondary schools in Orissa and 658 private secondary schools also get grant-in-aid from government. There are, in addition, 1530 private schools recognized by the state government. Secondary stage of education from Classes VIII to X is under the academic control of the Board of Secondary Education. During 2003-04, 7,011 high schools were functioning in the State which 3,556 were Government High Schools and 657 were aided schools. During 2003-04, there was one High School for every 22.2 sq. km. The dropout rate in high school has decreased from 69.5% in 2001-02 to 64.4% in 2003-04. 62.5% boys dropped out while 66.7% girls dropped out of high school in 2003-2004.

In order to examine the academic performance of children at the secondary level of education in the state, the chapter tries to look at the results of the examinations conducted by Board of Secondary Education, Cuttack, Orissa as the study has been conducted in a school in Orissa which comes under the State Board, i.e., BSE.

Table 2.4 presents the results of Annual High School Certificate Examination in Orissa. It shows the comparative figures relating to Annual High School Certificate Examination from the year 1999 to 2006. The figures show that the total number of students who appeared the examination was the lowest in the year 2003 and the highest number of students appeared in the year 2005. The number of students who appeared the examination increased gradually in the year 2004, 2005 and 2006. Where as the Scheduled caste students who appeared the examination increased in the year 2005 and 2006 and the highest was in 2005 and the lowest in the year 2003. The

pass percentages of the students show that the lowest pass percentage was in the year 2001, i.e. 38.38% where as year 2006 had the highest pass percentage (56.4%). There was a high increase in the pass percentage in the year 2003 (50%) which continued till 2006. The division wise pass out figures show that in the year 2002 least number of students secured first and second divisions where as the lowest third division pass out was recorded in the year 2001. The highest number of students got third division in the year 2005 while the highest number of students secured first and second positions in the year 2006.

TABLE-2.4

**RESULTS OF ANNUAL HIGH SCHOOL CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION, ORISSA
1999-2006**

		1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
No. of Candidates Appeared (Regular)		270069	273754	263617	246803	241395	265083	283650	298982
Percentage of Pass		54.64	40.04	38.38	41.01	50	52.54	55.66	56.4
Division Wise Pass Out	1 st	33618	23633	21818	21686	26001	29071	32967	37848
	2 nd	60548	41480	36280	35971	43856	50219	64681	74841
	3 rd	52319	43272	41997	42816	49851	59119	82792	78217
Sex Wise Pass percentage	Boys	55.81	41.13	39.9	43.31	51.87	54.46	57.42	58.29
	Girls	53	38.6	36.42	38.07	47.67	50.17	53.54	54.2
No. of SC and ST Candidates Appeared (Regular)	SC	35653	36975	35319	31951	30521	34118	49636	48571
	ST	25971	26105	26887	26193	26468	30819	48102	46579
No. of 1 st Divisions among SCs and STs	SC	2221	1332	1224	1146	1497	1750	2084	2100
	ST	1047	660	635	641	880	1045	1302	1284

(Source: Results of Annual High School Certificate Examinations, Board of Secondary Education, Orissa, 2006)
NOTE- SC- Scheduled Caste, ST- Scheduled Tribe

The sex wise distribution of the pass percentage shows that the lowest pass percentage for both boys (39.9) and girls (36.42) was in the year 2001 where as the highest pass percentages for boys (58.290 and girls (54.2) were in the year 2006. Since 2001, there

has been a gradual increase in the pass percentages for both boys and girls. The table also shows that the girls' pass percentage has always been less than the boys every year in Orissa

TABLE-2.5
TOP 10 RANKS IN THE BOARD EXAMS, BSE, ORISSA (1999-2006)

	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
No. of candidates in the Top 10 ranks	22	23	16	19	13	24	24	20
NO. of Girls in Top 10 ranks	4	5	5	5	7	7	8	6

(Source: Results of Annual High School Certificate Examinations, Board of Secondary Education, Orissa, 2006)

Table 2.5 shows the figure of top 10 ranks in the board exam in Orissa from 1999 to 2006. The table shows that maximum numbers of students were in the top 10 position in the years 2004 and 2005. Where as the number of girls are very less compared to the boys in the top 10 position. In the year 2005, 8 girls were in the top 10 list which was the highest number in 7 years.

TABLE-2.6
SUBJECT WISE PASS PERCENTAGE IN THE ANNUAL HIGH SCHOOL CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION IN ORISSA FROM 1999-2006

Subject Wise Pass Percentage		1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
First Language Oriya		72	74.21	74.3	74.39	55.84	78.08	81.17	78.08
Second Language English		64.99	42.36	41.9	46.88	55.9	56.46	62.51	59.76
Third Language	Hindi	88.94	82.94	83.37	86.82	54.02	82.32	87.86	85.13
	Sanskrit	91.66	78.29	80.74	87.4	59.26	81.48	85.98	87.15
M.T.A.(Mathematics Algebra)		58.9	40.4	44.45	34.98	43.8	57.29	52.82	52.09
M.T.G. (Mathematics Geometry)		58.51	55.31	38.76	44.33	48.86	57.31	53.13	65.45
S.C.P. (Science Physics)		72.52	55.9	39.96	55.95	56.26	63.19	60.58	66.15
S.C.L. (Science Life Sciences)		69.17	60.39	55.44	62.01	66.14	63.21	64.86	68.18
S.S.H.(Social Science History)		79.23	59.23	57.66	52.91	72.08	72.54	71.46	70.74
S.S.G (Social Science Geography)		81.8	69.23	57.57	71.27	72.11	72.58	77.83	81.72

(Source: Results of Annual High School Certificate Examinations, Board of Secondary Education, Orissa, 2006)

The table 2.6 shows the subject wise pass percentage of the students in the board exam from 1999 to 2006. The figures show that maximum number of students have passed in their mother tongue paper (First Language Oriya), Hindi and Sanskrit where as less students have passed in Mathematics, both Algebra and Geometry, compared to other subjects. The figures indicate that the low pass percentage of students in Orissa may be because of the fact that less number of students pass in subjects like mathematics and sciences.

TABLE-2.7
PASS PERCENTAGE OF HIGH SCHOOL CERTIFICATE (ANNUAL AND SUPPLEMENTARY) EXAMINATIONS, ORISSA, 1999-2006

Year	Pass Percentage	
	Annual	Supplementary
1999	54.64	34.84
2000	40.04	30.53
2001	38.38	26.71
2002	41.01	27.27
2003	50.00	33.85
2004	52.54	30.23
2005	55.66	31.78
2006	56.40	30.69
2007	59.09	-

(Source: Results of Annual High School Certificate Examinations, Board of Secondary Education, Orissa, 2006)

The Table 2.7 presents the figures of the pass percentage of the High School Certificate Examinations (both Annual and Supplementary) from the year 1999 to 2006. The table shows that the highest pass percentage (59.09) in the Annual High School Certificate Examination was in the year 2007 and the lowest (38.38) was in the year 2001. There has been a gradual increase in the pass percentage of the students every year except 2001 when the pass percentage decreased from the previous year's percentage. The highest (34.84) and lowest (26.71) pass percentages in the Supplementary High School Certificate Examination were in the year 1999 and 2001 respectively.

TABLE-2.8
**SECONDARY/HIGH SCHOOL (CLASS-X) EXAMINATION, INDIA, 2005 PASS
OUTS**

Category	Number of Students (in lakhs)						Pass Percentage		
	Appeared			Passed					
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
All	78.9	53.6	13.25	49.1	36.3	85.4	62.2	67.7	64.4
SC	12.6	7.8	20.4	6.7	4.7	11.4	53.5	59.6	55.8
ST	4.0	2.6	6.6	1.9	1.2	3.1	47.6	47.0	47.4

(Source: Selected Educational Statistics, 2004-2005, Planning, Monitoring and Statistical Division, Department of Secondary and Higher Education, Ministry of Human Resources Development, New Delhi, 2007)

NOTE- SC- Scheduled Caste; ST- Scheduled Tribe

The table 2.8 shows the pass percentage of the high school board examination at the national level in the year 2005. The figures show that total pass percentage of the SCs was 55.8%, while for SC boys and girls the pass percentages are 53.5 and 59.6 respectively. The pass percentages for the Scheduled tribe boys, girls and total ST population are 47.6, 47.0 and 47.4 respectively. The figures show that the pass percentage of the SCs and the STs were lower than the total pass percentage. The pass percentage of the STs and particularly the Scheduled Tribe girls are much lower than the total pass percentage and even the pass percentage of Scheduled Castes.

TABLE-2.9
**EXAMINATION RESULTS OF BOARDS: HIGH SCHOOL EXAMINATION:
COMPARISON BETWEEN ORISSA AND INDIA, 2005
PASS PERCENTAGE**

Name of the Board	All Students			SC			ST		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
BSE, Orissa	58.9	56.6	57.9	50.1	45.9	48.4	46.5	43.3	45.3
Total	62.2	67.7	64.4	53.5	59.6	55.8	47.6	47.0	47.4

(Source: Results of Annual High School Certificate Examinations, Board of Secondary Education, Orissa, 2005)

NOTE- SC- Scheduled Caste; ST- Scheduled Tribe

The table 2.9 shows the comparative figures of the results of the board examinations of Orissa with that of the total result at the national level. The table shows that Orissa

had a lower pass percentage irrespective of all students, SC and ST students compared to the total pass percentage. The low performance of the tribal students in Orissa may be because of their socio-cultural backwardness as well the lack of awareness among the tribals about education. Another reason could be the low literacy rates of the Scheduled Tribes in the tribal districts in the state.

In the year 2006, about 31.03 percent of students passed in High School Certificate (HSC) supplementary examinations conducted by the Board of Secondary Education (BSE). Total 121 students passed in first division, 1,490 students in second division and 7,042 students passed in third division. Mayurbhanj and Sonepur, students of other tribal districts like Kalahandi, Nuapada, Balangir, Phulbani, Koraput, Malkangiri, Nawarangpur, Rayagada and Kandhamal registered poor pass percentage in Supplementary examinations. The poor performance of the students in these districts may be because of the educational backwardness of these districts. However, students from Deogarh district did remarkably well to top the list among the districts with a pass percentage of 54.23 while Bhadrak stood second with a pass percentage of 54.02. Nawarangpur was at the bottom of the list as only 13.61 percent students from this district could secure pass marks. Interestingly, not a single student from as many as eight districts, Nuapada, Jharsuguda, Koraput, Malkangiri, Nawarnpur, Jagatsingpur, Kendrapara and Nayagarh, secured first division. Similarly, not a single student from Deogarh or Malkangiri districts got second division. While over 34 per cent general category students passed in the examination, the pass percentage of SC and ST students was 23.80 and 20.35 respectively.

The pass percentages of the students in the Annual High School Examination in Orissa in the year 2006 show that the total pass percentage of the state was 65.77 where as for boys and girls the pass percentages were 67.44 and 62.66 respectively. The pass percentages for the Scheduled Tribe boys and girls and the entire ST population were 66.13, 63.45 and 65.31 respectively. Similarly, the pass percentages for the Scheduled Caste boys, girls and total population were 70.13, 60.63 and 66.63 respectively. In the 'others' category, the total pass percentage was 66.43 where as for

boys and girls in this category the pass percentages were 69.93 and 62.35 respectively.

However, the pass percentages of the students in the Annual High School Examination, Orissa in 2007 show that the total pass percentage of the state was 73.93 where as for boys and girls the pass percentages were 74.04 and 73.72 respectively. The pass percentages for the Scheduled Tribe boys and girls and the entire ST population were 73.71, 74.45 and 73.94 respectively. Similarly, the pass percentages for the Scheduled Caste boys, girls and total population were 74.06, 71.02 and 72.91 respectively. In the 'others' category, the total pass percentage was 74.63 where as for boys and girls in this category the pass percentages were 75.31 and 73.82 respectively.

TABLE-2.10

**ANNUAL HIGH SCHOOL CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION, ORISSA, 2007
SEX AND CASTE WISE RESULT STATISTICS**

	Men				Women				Total			
	SC	ST	OTHERS	TOTAL	SC	ST	OTHERS	TOTAL	SC	ST	OTHERS	TOTAL
Pass Percentage	51.78	49.48	65.04	60.94	45.24	41.31	61.40	56.93	48.88	46.11	63.32	59.09

(Source: Results of Annual High School Certificate Examinations, Board of Secondary Education, Orissa, 2007)
NOTE- SC- Scheduled Caste; ST- Scheduled Tribe

The table 2.10 shows the sex and caste wise result of the students in the Annual High School Certificate Examination in Orissa, 2007. The figures show that the pass percentages for the SC men, women and total population were 51.78, 45.24 and 48.88 respectively. The pass percentages for the ST men, women and total population were 49.48, 41.31 and 46.11 respectively. The pass percentages for the others men, women and total population were 65.04, 61.40, 63.32 respectively. The total pass percentage of the state was 59.09 where as the total pass percentages for the boys and girls were 48.88 and 46.11 respectively.

The result of Annual High School Certificate Examination, Orissa, 2007 shows that total 394320 students appeared the board examination in 2007 where as 322979

regular students appeared the examination. The total pass percentage was 57.19 while the total pass percentage for the regular students was 59.09.

TABLE-2.11
ANNUAL HIGH SCHOOL CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION, ORISSA, 2007
DISTRICT WISE OVERALL RESULT STATISTICS

Districts	Total Appeared	Total Passed	Total Failed	Pass Percentage
Kalahandi	9398	5717	3544	61.73
Nawapada	4427	2899	1464	66.44
Bargarh	11979	5062	6757	42.82
Sambalpur	7508	3306	4053	44.92
Deogarh	3065	1831	1198	60.44
Jharsuguda	4334	2048	2237	47.79
Subarnapur	4413	2044	2331	46.72
Balangir	11388	5732	5528	50.90
Sundargarh	14855	8268	6505	55.96
Gajapati	2527	1079	1436	42.90
Ganjam	18827	10814	7952	57.62
Boudh	2376	1370	993	57.97
Kandhamal	4183	1730	2450	41.38
Koraput	4417	2524	1886	57.23
Malkangiri	1226	651	573	53.18
Nawarangpur	2975	1125	1846	37.86
Rayagada	3106	1389	1710	44.82
Jagatsinghpur	14359	10318	3993	72.09
Angul	11601	8639	2923	74.71
Dhenkanal	13676	11749	1887	86.16
Jajpur	10277	5006	5159	49.24
Jajpur	11908	6294	5432	53.67
Kendrapara	18113	9113	8854	50.72
Cuttack	14773	9230	5532	62.52
Cuttack	4218	2554	1662	60.57
Keonjhar	16718	9856	6470	60.36
Balasore	20219	12776	7344	63.49
Bhadrak	17267	11584	5623	67.32
Mayurbhanj	21917	12512	9179	57.68
Puri	12939	7657	5232	59.40
Nayagarh	6957	3864	3051	55.87
Khurda	17033	10663	6308	62.83
Total	322979	189404	181112	59.09

Source: Results of Annual High School Certificate Examinations, Board of Secondary Education, Orissa, 2007

The table 2.11 presents the district wise overall result of Annual high School Certificate Examination conducted by the Board of Secondary Education, 2007. The figures show that Mayurbhanj district has the highest number of schools (508) where as Malkangiri district has the lowest number of schools (53). Dhenkanal district had

the highest pass percentage (86.16) where as Nawarangpur had the lowest pass percentage (37.86). The reasons of the variations in the academic performance of the children in the districts may be the educational status and literacy rates of the regions. The pass percentage of Puri is 59.40 which is very close to the total pass percentage of the state.

The Board of Secondary Education, Orissa published the Annual High School Examination result of 2008 on 25th of June, 2008. A total of 367698 students appeared for the examination while among them 314442 students were regular students and 53256 students were ex-regular students. Among the regular students, 160707 students passed while 141730 students failed in the examination. In the ex-regular category, 22465 students passed and 27609 students failed. Among the regular students, 27784 students got 1st division while 59938 and 72901 students got 2nd class and 3rd class respectively. The pass percentage for the Regular students was 53.14% which was 6% less than the previous year's pass percentage. The pass percentages for the Ex-regular, Correspondent regular and Correspondent ex-regular students were 44.86, 29.42 and 30.66 respectively. Balasore district had the highest pass percentage (69.35%) where as Kalahandi district had the lowest pass percentage (32.58). Balasore, Cuttack and Khurda districts showed good pass percentage and secured top 3 positions in the list while Kalahandi, Phulbani and Mayurbhanj districts recorded showing poor performance of the students. The sex wise distribution of the result shows that boys outperformed girls in the exam like every other year. Total 86810 boys and 73892 girls passed in the examination. The pass percentages for the boys and the girls were 54.52 and 45.48 respectively. 22 students were in the top 10 rank in the state. Among them 15 were boys and 7 were girls which again show the lower academic performance of the girls in the state.

TABLE-2.12
HIGH SCHOOL CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION, ORISSA, 2008
PASS PERCENTAGE BY SEX

Year	Pass percentage	
	Boys	Girls
2008	54.52	45.48

(Source: Results of Annual High School Certificate Examinations, Board of Secondary Education, Orissa, 2008)

The table 2.12 shows that the pass percentage of was 54.52 while for girls, the pass percentage was 45.48. The figures also show that the boys had a better pass percentage than the girls in the high school certificate examination in Orissa in 2008

TABLE-2.13
CENTRAL BOARD OF SECONDARY EDUCATION (CLASS-X), INDIA, 2006
PASS PERCENTAGE

Total	Boys	Girls
77.16	76.77	77.70

(Source: Annual Report, Department of Elementary Education and Literacy, Department of Secondary and Higher Secondary Education, Ministry of Human Resources Development, Government of India, New Delhi, 2007)

The table 2.13 shows the pass percentage of the students in the class X Examination conducted by the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) in India in the year 2006. The table shows that the total pass percentage was 77.16 where as the pass percentages of boys and girls were 76.77 and 77.70 respectively. The figures show that the girls pass percentage was higher than that of the boys.

In the board examination conducted by the CBSE, the overall pass percentage 82.87 in 2008 against the pass percentage of 77.18 in 2007. Government schools performed exceptionally well with a pass percentage of 83.68 compared to 77.12 percent in 2007. The pass percentage of the Government schools in the class X examination improved from 48 % in 2002-2003 to 84% in 2007-2008. Government aided schools

had a minor decline from 72.66% in 2007 to 72.57 in 2008. Similarly, the pass percentage of the private candidates declined from 22.65 in 2007 to 21.61 in 2008. The Delhi region made an impressive jump of 5.69% points in the examination in 2008. Total 4,503 students in Delhi region, including 2,580 girls secured more than 90% marks. Class X students of schools affiliated to the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) in the Chennai region which comprises Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Andhra Pradesh, Daman and Diu, Goa, Karnataka, Kerala, Lakshwadeep, Maharashtra, Puducherry and Tamil Nadu recorded an overall pass percentage of 95.25 in 2008 showing a 2.25 % percentage point increase from the previous year's 93% pass percentage. Puducherry secured the top position in this region with a pass percentage of 99.69 where as Tamil Nadu secured 98.69% of pass.

The result of 2008 shows that once again, girls outperformed boys in the Indian Certificate of Secondary Education (ICSE) class X examinations. Girls secured a pass percentage of 98.63 while their male counterparts attained 97.57%. The overall pass percentage for ICSE, 2008 was 98.04% and the percentage point increase from the previous year was 0.08. Total 101,998 students, including 44,732 girls appeared the examination. The Southern region had the highest percentage entry of girls at ICSE (47.13%). Total 2,400 SC and 3,022 ST students appeared the examination respectively where as 7,794 students from the Other Backward Classes appeared the examination achieving a pass percentage of 98.18%.

Total 10,128 students of Orissa appeared the Central Board of Secondary Education, 2008. Among the total 10,022 students passed and the pass percentage was 98.95 while 7,483 students (73.88%) students got 1st class in the board exam.

In India, total pass percentage of regular students was 76.62 and that of private/patrachar (correspondence) candidates was 28.71% in the year 2004. The total pass percentages of boys and girls were 71.46 and 73.28 respectively. The overall pass percentage of candidates in 2004 was 72.225.

POFILE OF PURI DISTRICT IN ORISSA

Puri is a district (7439 sqkm) in Orissa which is situated on the coast of Bay of Bengal. Its total population is 1,502,682 among them 763,389 are males and 739,293 females. The total population of SCs in the district is 273,917, SC male and female populations are 138,550 and 135,367 respectively. The total, male and female ST populations in Puri are 4,482, 2,355 and 2,127 respectively. The percentage of SC population to the total population of the district is 18.23 while the male and female SCs constitute 18.15 and 18.31 percentage of the total population of the district. Similarly, the percentage of ST population to the total population of the district is 0.30 and the percentages of ST male and female to the district population were 0.31 and 0.29 respectively. (Census of India, 2001)

TABLE-2.14
COMPARATIVE FIGURES OF THE LITERACY RATES OF ORISSA AND
PURI (2001)

	All Communities			SC			ST		
	Boys	girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
Orissa	75.35	50.51	63.08	70.47	40.33	55.53	51.48	23.37	37.37
Puri	88.08	67.57	77.96	78.51	49.30	64.05	73.37	42.11	58.72

(Source: Orissa Reference (Annual), Government of Orissa, Information and Public Relations Department, 2003 & Census of India, 2001, Registrar General, Census Commissioner of India, New Delhi)
NOTE- SC- Scheduled Caste; ST- Scheduled Tribe

Table 2.14 shows the comparative figures of the literacy rates between Orissa and Puri. The figures show that the literacy rates of Puri is much higher than that of the state irrespective of caste, tribe and gender. The total literacy rate of Puri is 77.96. The male and female literacy rates of Puri are 88.08 and 67.57 respectively. The figures show that the female literacy rate is lower than the male and total literacy rates of the district. The literacy rates for the male, female and total SC population are 78.51, 49.30 and 64.05 respectively where as the literacy rates for the male, female and total ST population are 73.37, 42.11 and 58.72 respectively. (Census of India, 2001)

From the preceding discussions, it is found that the performances of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes are lower than the overall performance of the state. The reasons of their low performance could be the lack of awareness among them. The social backwardness could also contribute their low pass percentage. The social stigma attached to their category could also be responsible for their low performance. Sometimes the attitudes of the teachers hamper the performance of the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe students. Subramanian (2005) holds that an upper caste teacher's casteist attitude or behaviour towards his/ her students is enough for the dalit students to internalize a sense of low self-esteem which affects their performance. Similarly, Jha and Jhingran (2002) observe that the dalit students are beaten, abused or harassed by the teachers in some tribal districts in Orissa. This may lead to the low performance of the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe students in Orissa.

In this background, the present study attempts to bring out the social context of the variations in the academic performance of the students at the secondary level of education in Orissa which throws up some important findings that are presented in the next two chapters.

CHAPTER-III

HOME FACTORS

CHAPTER-III

HOME FACTORS

It has been adequately established in sociological literature that the academic performance of children is affected by social, cultural and economic factors in various societies. Studies have brought out the fact that the parents, family, cultural environment and socio-economic status of the family are responsible for variations in academic performance of the children. Desai (1991) in his study “Determinants of Educational Performance in India: Role of Home and Family” confirms that factors like home environment, family background and parental educational backgrounds and occupations have strong impact on children’s academic performance in India. Ryan (1999) in his work “How do Families Affect Children’s Success” acknowledges the impact of family on the academic achievement of the children. Craft (1970), Jencks (1972), Musgrave (1972), Lavin (1973), Bridge, Judd and Mook (1979), Glick and Sahn (1997), Brunello and Checchi (2004), Neves and Morais (2005), Symeou (2007) have all emphasized that social, cultural and economic factors significantly influence the academic performance of the children. In the Indian context, Chitnis (1977), Subramanian (1977), Desai (1991), Govinda and Varghese (1993) have examined the impact of parental education, occupation, social class and other family factors on the academic performance of the children. These studies had mainly referred to the home and family context as the basic indicators of the child’s social, cultural and economic background. It is in this context, the chapter aims to understand the effects of home factors on the academic performance of the children in secondary schools. The chapter gives a picture of how type and size of the family affect the education of children. It focuses on the impact of educational and occupational background of parents on the performance of children. The chapter deals with the daily activities of the children, academic atmosphere at home, and facilities provided by the parents. Emotional disturbances in families, which are considered to be instrumental in the poor performance of children in exams, are also given a serious look in this chapter. The chapter also describes parental attitudes towards the education of their children.

FAMILY TYPE AND SIZE

Family size plays a crucial role in the child's academic performance. The presence of a large number of family members and siblings has an adverse effect on the academic attainment of the children and also low intelligence is associated with large families. It is a well established fact that children from small families at all social levels tend to perform better both in intelligence tests and at school. Dale and Griffith (1970), Floud (1970), Chatterjee (1971), Nundy (1978), Bridge, Judd and Mook (1979), Goux (2005) have emphasized on the fact that family size affects the academic performance of the children.

The study has attempted to analyze the effects of the type and size of the family on the academic performance of the students. It is found that a large chunk of students in the sample of 24 live in nuclear families. A girl who performs moderately in the examinations and lives in a joint family thinks, "*Our family is always too overcrowded. Our house is small and there is hardly any place in our house to sit quietly and study.*" Similarly, another low performing OBC girl who lives in a joint family shares her feeling that in a joint family many members have different views about the future which leads to confusion. However, no significant difference is found in the academic performances of the SC, ST, OBC and General category students on the basis of the size and the type of family in the study.

Thus, the data supports the view that joint family is no more seen as a source of support to enhance a child's academic performance in the sense that the child is in a secure, emotionally bound and protective environment of a joint family. Rather, the size of the joint family is thought to be a hinderance in the academic performance of the children.

The study has examined the inter-connection between the family size and the academic performance of the children. The data shows that the total number of the

members of the family including children varies from three to nine. An SC girl who does not score well in the examinations says, *“We are seven members in the family and the house is too small to live in which is very inconvenient for us. I do not have a separate room to study and I always get disturbed by the presence of others. Due to this reason, I can not concentrate on my studies.”*

Similarly another low performing OBC girl who belongs to a family where the total number of the members is nine thinks, *“Our house is always noisy because of the presence of a large number of members which affects my studies.”* A Scheduled Caste boy, who performs moderately in the examinations, feels that large number of members in the family means more consumption, more expenditure, noisy atmosphere etc which affect the studies of the child. Contrary to this, a boy who performs moderately and lives in a middle class family of five members does not feel so and feels that he and his studies have never been affected within the family.

Parents also believe that large family influences the performance of the children. Parents of a high performing student who belongs to a middle class family mention, *“We have two children and we are trying to give them whatever they want. We will also try our best to give them good higher education. But if we had more children or more members in the family, we would definitely have reduced the expenditure for the children and their education.”* Similarly, parents of a moderately performing boy from a middle class family say, *“Large families definitely matter in the education of the child because it is directly linked to the economic condition of the family. Large family means more expenditure and therefore less expenditure per head and fewer savings also.”* Father of a low performing Scheduled Tribe child, who is a clerk, also feels the same. According to him, *“Sometimes I feel that it is difficult to bear the educational expenditure of four children. So when there is a financial problem in the family, I have to compromise with the education of my children.”*

The teachers also share similar views regarding the role of the *size of the family*. According to them, the size of the family has a role to play in the academic

performance of the children. One teacher argues, *“Small family means less overall expenditure and more per head expenditure. Again, in small families, children can concentrate more.”* Another teacher says, *“Large family means many guardians and they have different future programmes for the child and, as a result, the child’s mind gets diverted.”*

However, a few teachers don’t agree that size and type of the family have any role to play. According to a teacher, *“If the child has to study, he or she can study in any situation and home environments. The only thing he or she needs is the hard effort and determination and not small family.”* Thus, though large family size affects the performance of the child, it is not a very crucial and the sole factor in hampering the child’s studies.

The number of siblings in the family is also taken into consideration to find out how it impacts the academic performance of the children. It is found that the number of siblings of the children varies from nil to five siblings. The data shows that most of the students, in the sample of 24, have two or less number of siblings. The most significant aspect of the study is that most of the children who have more than three siblings realize that the large number of siblings affect their studies. As one Scheduled Caste girl who does not perform well thinks, *“If I am the only child of my family, things could have been different for me in terms of food, clothing, education, and everything.”* Another low performing child thinks in the similar lines and mentions, *“The house is always noisy because of my younger siblings. I find it very difficult to concentrate because of them.”*

Contrary to this, a few children think that the number of the siblings does not play any role in their studies. According to a Scheduled Tribe student who performs moderately in the examinations, *“I have three brothers and sisters. But it has never affected my studies because they never disturb me. We study together and talk to each other during study time and, after the study hour, we play together.”*

However, the parents and teachers do not agree with the children that the number of siblings affect the studies of the children. As parents of a low performing boy who blames his siblings for disturbing him say, *“He is solely responsible for his poor marks. He is blaming his brothers and sisters only to save himself from getting scolded by us.”*

Similarly, some of the teachers also think that number of siblings has nothing to do with the studies of the children. As one teacher says, *“It depends on the child how he or she will concentrate on the studies in the presence of many siblings. Blaming the siblings for poor result will not help the child improve his performance.”* However, few teachers believe that the number of the siblings in the family matter in the performance of the child because it is related to economic factor and the also to the pressure on the expenditure on child’s education.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC BACKGROUND OF THE STUDENTS

It has been established in sociological literature that the Socio-Economic Status (SES) of the students is the most crucial variable determining students’ academic performance (Floud, 1961; Chopra, 1964; Morton and Williams, 1964; Craft, 1970; Jencks 1972, Lavin, 1973). Singh (1979) observed that the main cause of poor performance as well as of threatened discontinuity of education in the case of Scheduled castes is their economic condition. Similarly, Lott and Lott (1963) found that the middle class children are more strongly motivated towards achievement than the lower class children. Mathur (1963) also noted that the socio-economic status is significantly correlated to educational achievement, intelligence and conduct of the students. It is also seen that many children from poor families are forced to discontinue their education and drop-out from the schools. Green and William (1965) have also concluded that SES more than ability or I.Q. correlated highly with expectation of occupational and educational success. Similarly, Govinda and Varghese (1993) find a positive and direct relationship between the socio-economic background of the children and their academic performances. Other studies like Dale

and Griffith (1965), Jha (1977), Lightfoot (1978), Bridge, Judd and Moock (1979), Rath, Dash and Dash (1979), Chitnis (1981), Frierson (1985), Halsey (1985), Knieveton (1985), Desai (1991), Glick and Sahn (1998) have also shown that the socio-economic background of the family is closely linked with the academic performance of the children. However, on the contrary some studies like Strodback (1958), Singh (1965), Barial (1966), and McClelland (1974) find no relationship between the SES of the family and the academic achievement of the child.

Family Income

In order to know to what extent the economic status of the child plays an instrumental role in their academic performance, the children are divided into five economic brackets on the basis of total income of the family per month. These categories are family income below 5,000, income between 5,000 to 10,000, income scale from 10,000 to 20,000, income between 20,000 to 30,000 and lastly, above 30,000. The data shows that students who perform well or moderately perform belong to families where the monthly income varies from 10,000 to 30,000 while the low performing students belong to low economic backgrounds. It is interesting to note that the Scheduled caste students who do not perform well belong to low economic background.

The students and their parents are asked about the expenditure per child's education per month. Parents whose income is below 5,000 per month spend only 100 or 200 rupees on the education of their children per month which is quite low. Sometimes this monthly expenditure is reduced or stopped. According to one OBC boy, "*The money is not sufficient to buy copies, books, and stationary. Sometimes I can not do home work because I do not have new copy and note books.*" Another low performing Scheduled Caste girl mentions that she gets scolding and beating by her parents for hundred rupees every month. Similarly, some low performers note that their parents don't even give hundred rupees every month because of acute financial crisis in the family. According to an SC wage labourer father whose son does not perform well,

“We have to think of our stomach first. Education comes later and is also not important. If we spend our whole month’s earnings for his education, then what will we eat and how will we live?” However, there are few students belonging to middle class do not perform well in spite of the fact that their parents spend 800-900 rupees for their education per month. The teachers have also expressed their views regarding the role of the economic status of the family in the performance of the children. It is found that the teachers think that the economic background is crucial in the performance of the children. According to one teacher, *“Economic background is very important for a child’s education. In our school, 80 percent of high performers are from good economic background.”* But contrary to this, another teacher mentions, *“Though most of the good students are from good home backgrounds, every bright student need not be from a rich family. There are exceptions also. Last year, there was a very bright student in my section but he was not from a rich background.”*

Educational Backgrounds of Parents and Siblings

Parental education is the most important factor in affecting the academic performance of the children. Studies like Dale and Griffith (1970), Chatterjee (1971), Aphale (1976), Chitnis (1977), Subramanian (1977), Nundy (1978), Bridge, Judd and Mook (1979), Rath, Dash and Dash (1979), Desai (1991), Govinda and Varghese (1993), Glick and Sahn (1998) and Ganzach (2000) confirmed the impact of parents’ education on the educational attainment of the children. Satyanandam (1969) found that children of graduate parents perform better than the children of matriculate. Subramanian (1977) found parental education to be positively related to the dropping out phenomenon. The Dharmapani study (cited in Nundy, 1978) revealed that 85% of the dropouts’ parents were either illiterates or had not gone beyond the elementary education. It is in this context, the present study has tried to study the impact of parental educational background on the academic performance of the children.

It has been established in the literature of sociology of education that father’s educational background has a strong influence on the academic attainment of the

children (Chitins, 1981; Desai, 199; Govinda and Varghese, 1993). In the study, on the basis of the responses of the fathers and the children, the educational qualifications of the fathers are divided into eight categories, namely, non-literate, primary, upper primary, secondary, higher secondary or intermediate, graduation, post graduation and others which includes medical degree. The data reveals that the most of the high and moderately performing students' fathers have a Bachelors degree. A few high performing students' fathers are post graduates. The data also shows that the low performing students come from families where the fathers are not educated beyond secondary school. Fathers of a few students, who do not perform well, are non-literates.

The children's responses indicate how fathers' educational level is an important factor in the performance of the children. As an SC girl who does not perform well says, *"My marriage is more important for my parents than my studies. My father thinks that it is better to save money for my marriage rather than wasting it on my studies."* Similarly, some of the low performing students whose fathers are non-literates or less educated also revealed that their fathers often scold them or shoo them away when they ask their doubts. According to one SC boy, *"Whenever I ask my doubts to my father, he scolds me for disturbing him."* This indicates that lack of education of the parents may lead to helplessness which may force the fathers to abuse their children.

It is interesting to note that the educational level of fathers affect their perceptions about children's education. It is found from the responses of the fathers that fathers with higher education have higher aspirations and expectations from their children which positively affect the performance of their children. Whereas some of the fathers with lower education, whose children are mostly poor performers, think that their low level of education affects education of their children. According to a father who has studied up to class IX says, *"Sometimes, my son comes to me with doubts in Science or Mathematics or English. But I am not able to answer his questions because these days courses are much advanced than that time when we were in class IX. I feel very bad for this."* Similarly, a few less educated fathers of low performing students say

that they feel bad to go to the school or even to talk to teachers because of their lack of proper education.

Similar to the views of the fathers, the teachers also give much importance to the educational background of the fathers of the children. The teachers do acknowledge the fact that the fathers of better performing students are educated. As one teacher says, *“An educated father guides a child in a better way than a non-literate or less educated father.”* Another teacher mentions, *“Unless fathers are educated, they can not understand the value of education.”* Similar views are given by another teacher, *“Father is the head of the family in most of the families in India and he is the one who controls and influences the behaviour of other members of the family. So, if the father is educated, he will also influence his children to have good education.”*

Thus, the educational level of the father influences academic performance of children and low educational level of the fathers may act as a hindrance in the education of the children.

Mother's education is considered to be another crucial factor in influencing the academic attainment of the children. Studies like Chitins (1981), Desai (1991), Govinda and Varghese (1993) have shown that children's education is strongly affected by the educational background of the mothers. The present study has also tried to analyze the educational level of the mothers of the twenty four respondents in order to know its impact on the performance of children. On the basis of the responses of the mothers, their educational qualifications are grouped into 5 categories namely, non-literate, primary, upper primary, secondary, higher secondary or intermediate, graduation and post graduation. It is found that the high performing and moderately performing students come from homes where mothers have higher secondary or graduation level education whereas mothers of the students who do not perform well are mostly non-literates and educated up to primary level. None of the mothers of the low performing students have gone beyond the school level.

It is also interesting to note that higher educational level of the mother leads to the high performance of girls. For instance, mothers of two girls, who perform well, are graduates. It is also observed that low educational level negatively affects girls' performance. According to one OBC girl who does not perform well observes that her mother who has studied up to class II always wants her to stay at home and look after her younger siblings. *"She scolds me whenever I want to go to school. So I have to bunk classes and do the domestic work."* Another significant aspect of the study is that most of the low performing students' non-literate or less educated mothers don't understand the percentage or secured marks except pass or fail. According to a mother of a Scheduled Caste boy who does not perform well in the examinations, *"My son has done well in the half-yearly examination because he has scored more marks than his friends in the Sahi (colony)."* Whereas the boy reveals that he has scored 66 out of 750 marks which shows the ignorance of the mother regarding the education of her son. The study also finds an interesting fact that none of the mothers of the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe students have studied beyond school. However, another mother who is a graduate and whose daughter does well in studies thinks, *"It is the right of every girl child to study. We are not doing any favour to her. I want my daughter to study more than I have studied."* Similarly, an OBC high scoring girl's graduate mother mentions, *"I wanted to study more but at that time, the time and situation was different. So I could not study. Now I want my daughter to study as much as possible."*

Further according to one general category mother who has a Masters degree and whose son performs well academically, *"I always guide my son in his studies. It would not have been possible if I was not educated."* Similarly, the teachers also think that mother's education is important for the child's performance. According to one teacher, *"Mother's education is considered to be more crucial than that of the father because mother is the first teacher of the child and plays a very important role in shaping the child's personality and future also."*

Besides parents, the educational level of the siblings also matter a lot in the academic performance of other siblings at home because they often spend most of their time with their siblings (Chitnis, 1981). It is found from the data that students whose siblings have higher education perform well or moderately in the examinations. According to one general category boy who scores well in the examinations says, *“My sister, who is a graduate, always motivates me to perform well.”* Similarly, another girl who is a good student and belongs to general category says, *“My sister always guides me in my studies. She helps me in my home work. She is a very bright student. This is her 2nd year (+2) and she has her final exams this year. Despite her busy time table, she finds some time for me and checks my studies.”* However, it is interesting to note that siblings of the students who do not perform are either married or going to get marry without education or with very low level of education. The study also finds that siblings of a few low performing students are drop-outs from school at an early age. The teachers and parents also believe that the education of the siblings affect the academic performance of the children.

Occupational Backgrounds of the Parents

It has been established in sociological literature that parental occupational background has a strong impact on children’s educational achievement (Floud, 1961; Morton and Williams, 1964; Cohen, 1965; Dale and Griffith, 1965; Chatterjee, 1971; Chitins, 1977). Ranade and Oommen (1974) have found educational aspirations of parents in Punjab are positively related to their income levels. Subramanian (1977) points out that most of the parents of dropout children in Tamil Nadu are bread winners who go on shifting their residences according to their employment needs and thus fail to provide a permanent footing for their children in any recognized school. Similarly studies like Bridge, Judd and Moock (1979), Bridge, Judd and Moock (1979), Rath and Dash (1979), Desai (1991), Govinda and Varghese (1993), Glick and Sahn (1998), Ermisch and Francesconi (2001) have shown that there is a positive relationship between the occupational background of the parents and the academic performance of the children.

The study has attempted to find out effects of occupational backgrounds of the fathers of the twenty four students. The occupations of the fathers are divided into seven groups; the following are the occupations under these categories.

1. Businessmen- garment shop, stationary shop
2. Class II Government jobs- Accounts Officer, bank employee, doctor, advocate
3. Class III Government jobs-clerk
4. Petty businessmen-vendor, shopkeeper
5. Low technical jobs- electrical mechanic
6. Artisans-carpenter, goldsmith
7. Labourers

It is found that the high and moderately performing students' fathers are occupied with class II government jobs, lectureship and teaching profession. It is interesting to note that fathers of the students who hold top five positions in the class are in teaching profession. However, a few fathers of those students who perform moderately are in class III government jobs and low technical jobs. It should be noted here that fathers of majority of the students who do not do well are petty businessmen, labourers and artisans. The responses of the students show that the occupations of the fathers affect their studies. As one low performing OBC boy whose father is a carpenter says, *"When I ask my father for tuitions, he scolds me and says that he does not have money for the tuitions."* A majority of the parents also think that their work statuses influence the performance of their children. According to a wage labourer father of a Scheduled Caste boy who does not perform well, *"Everyday we have to struggle in order to feed ourselves. Where is the time to think about his school and homework? Isn't it enough for him that at least he is going to school?"* Similarly, most of the teachers also agree that the occupational categories of the fathers have strong impact on the academic performance of the children.

The occupational status of the mothers strongly influences the academic performances of the children (Foon, 1985; Desai, 1991; Govinda and Varghese, 1993). The

mothers' occupations are divided into five groups, namely, housewife, teacher, government jobs, and maid servants. It is found that a majority of the mothers are housewives and also mothers of most of the students who perform well are teachers. It is interesting to note that none of the SC and ST students' mothers are in the categories of teaching profession and government jobs. It is also interesting to note that the low performing girls' mothers are housewives. It is found that home-maker mothers' children are not good in studies because they are either less educated or busy in their domestic work. According to one Scheduled Tribe boy who does not perform well, *"My mother is always engaged in her work. She starts working from early morning till night. How will she get time to look after my studies?"* Similarly, most of the mothers also feel that their occupations affect studies of their children. As one mother who is a nurse and whose son is an average performer says, *"My duty compels me to stay away from my son for most of the time in the day. I can not even take care of his food and health properly. I also do not get time to look after his studies."* Similarly, another mother says, *"I am always busy working and cooking. I can't manage to get time to give him attention but I always tell him to study attentively."*

The teachers also believe that the occupations of the mothers affect the performance of the children. These teachers think that mothers whose occupations do not demand much time from them guide the children in a better way than those who have a very hectic schedule in a day. According to one teacher, *"Mothers have more influence on the child than their fathers. So if a mother spends quality time for the child's studies, the child will definitely perform well."* Contrary to this, another teacher thinks, *"Home maker mothers are better than the working mothers because they can spend enough time for the child's education. But most importantly, the mother should be educated."* Thus, mothers' occupational status affects the academic performance of the children. In sum, higher level of occupations of the parents, both mother and father contribute to better academic performance of the children.

Thus, the socio-economic background of the children is an important factor in the performance of the children. However, it is not the only factor which affects the

education of the children because it is found from the data that some students who belong to good socio-economic background are not good performers and those from poor home backgrounds are always not poor in their academic work.

EVERYDAY ACTIVITIES OF THE CHILDREN

The study has attempted to look at the daily routine and activities of the children in order to explore whether and how their everyday activities affect their performance. Thus, the students are asked to give account of their everyday activities which include their morning activities, evening activities, and activities on holidays, study time and duration etc.

The responses of the students show that the good and average students spend their mornings in tuitions whereas a large portion of the low performing students spend their mornings in doing domestic work and taking care of their siblings and most importantly all of them are girls. According to girl belonging to general category who does not perform well, *“I get up very early in the morning to fetch water. I cook the lunch. Till 10 in the morning I do all the work of the house. After that I go to school. But sometimes I have to miss the class because of extra work and visits of the relatives.”* Similarly, another OBC girl who performs moderately says, *“I want to study. But the work load is too high in the mornings that I don’t even get time to breathe.”*

Mother of an SC girl who does not do well says, *“I can not manage to finish my work alone. So, she helps me in the mornings. She fetches water, looks after her younger brothers and sisters and also cooks.”* It is found from the study that the most of the girls engage themselves in the domestic work which affects their studies and also their academic performance.

Similarly, the data shows that the bright students go to tuitions in the evenings and those students who moderately perform in the examinations spend their evening in

playing, watching T.V., roaming around with friends etc., whereas most of the low performing students spend their evenings in domestic work and most importantly all of them are girls. It is found that none of the students in this group study or go to tuitions in the evening. The most important aspect of the study is that those students, who play or visit their friends in the evening after their school, are all boys and not a single girl is found to be playing in the evening. According to a low performing OBC girl, *“when I come back from school, I feel so exhausted but I have to prepare dinner for the family and also feed my younger brother.”* Similarly, another SC girl who does not perform well says, *“I also want to play with my friends in the evening like my brother but my mother scolds me for this and never lets me play.”* Her mother, when asked why she does not let her daughter play in the evening, says, *“She has a lot of things to do in the evening, if she plays and roams around in the evening, who will wash the utensils and clothes. She also has to cook for the night. She is trying to be her brother which is not good.”* It is observed that when it comes to the activities in the evenings, the girls are again the sufferers. They have to compromise their studies for their work.

The children are also asked on what they do on holidays. The high performers state that they study on holidays as they don't have tuitions on holidays and they get extra time to finish off their course. The moderately performing students play, entertain and have fun on holidays while most of the low performing students do domestic work on holidays. It is interesting to note that there are no boys among those students who work on the holidays except a Scheduled Tribe boy who works willingly and there is no compulsion to work. He says, *“I want to make things easier for my parents and want to help them.”* But interestingly, the girls are forced to work even if sometimes they don't want to work and want to have fun like their brothers. According to a girl who does not perform well in the examinations, *“On holidays there is more work pressure as guests visit our house. So I have to cook for more people.”* According to a mother of a low performing general category girl, *“On holidays me and my daughter cleans the house and she also make papads and pickles. There is so much of work to do on holidays.”*

The everyday activities of the children show that there is gender differentiation in the activities of the children. Girls are found to do a particular kind of activities while boys engage in particular kind of activities. The gender stereotypes are found in the attitude of the parents. The parents do not want their daughters play like their brothers. Rather, they force their daughters to work. Such type of gender bias affects the academic performance of the children.

FACILITIES AVAILABLE AT HOME

Facilities at home play a crucial role in the success or failure of the children (Dale and Griffith, 1965; Bridge, Judd and Mook, 1979; Desai, 1991 and Govinda and Varghese 1993). The study has attempted to find out what kind of facilities are provided to the children by the parents and whether there is any impact of these facilities on the academic performance of the children.

It is found that the high performers are sent to tuitions by their parents and it is interesting to note that some students go to three tuitions everyday. Those students who moderately perform also go to private coaching classes. Further, a significant fact is revealed that most of the girls and Scheduled Caste students are not provided with tuitions while Scheduled Tribe students get this opportunity. According to a Scheduled Caste boy who performs poorly in the examinations says, *“Everyone in my class is going to tuitions but I don’t go because my father has no money to send me to tuitions. So how can I score good marks?”* The parents, on other hand, think that tuitions are important for children. According to a father of an average performing boy says, *“The teachers do not finish the course and so we have to send our child to tuitions. There he gets his doubts cleared.”* Contrary to this, a teacher parent of a high performing OBC girl says, *“Tuitions always do not help the child. Academic performance of the children depends on the children and their parents”*. The teachers also do not seem to acknowledge the importance of private coaching classes. They feel that children give much importance to tuitions these days and according to one

teacher, *“Students tend to bunk classes during exams because they get their course finished in the private coaching classes.”*

The children are also asked about whether they read news papers in order to know the kind of resources they get at home. It is found out that most of the high performers and average performers subscribe and read Oriya and English newspapers while the low performing students do not subscribe and read news papers. It is interesting to note that a few of the students who do not perform well subscribe newspapers but do not read it because of lack of interest. According to one boy who belongs to middle class background, *“Papa always asks me to read newspaper everyday but I don’t read it because I find nothing interesting in it.”* Few other students mention that they don’t subscribe newspapers because of lack of parents’ interest and awareness whereas most of the low performing students can not afford newspapers. As one SC boy says, *“I go to my friend’s house to have a look at the newspapers quite often because my father doesn’t have that much money to spend (100 rupees per month) for newspapers.”*

The children are asked whether they are provided with stationeries like books, copies, pens, pencils, school bags, uniforms, shoes, etc. regularly and on time in order to know how this affects the performance of the children. The responses by the children show that almost all the high and average performers are provided with books, copies, etc. regularly while a very few low performing students get this facility. According to one low performing OBC girl, *“I can’t buy new books every year. Because we are very poor. I borrow books from my friends, but during exams they also have to read at that time. So they always don’t lend books.”* Another low performing SC girl who belongs to low SES says, *“I often get punished by the teachers in the class because I don’t do the home assignments. The main reason is that I don’t have books. In the classroom my friends share their books with me when the teacher takes the class.”* Similarly, an SC boy who does not perform well says, *“I want a new pair of uniform because my uniform is one and a half year old. It looks so dirty and old. I feel bad. I don’t feel like going to school wearing this dress where others wear new and clean*

uniforms. But father said that he will get me new uniform after 2/3 months.” It is observed from the study that resources provided at home affect the performance of the child.

The students are also interviewed on how they do their home work in order to know whether they get any support at the home level. It is found that the students who perform well or moderately get help from parents and elder siblings. A few average performing students do not get any help at home and depend mostly on the tutors and school teachers. It is important to note here that most of the low performing students get help neither at home nor from tutors or school teachers because a majority of such students do not go to tuitions. A few low performing students get their homework done by their friends. According to one such boy who does not go to tuitions, *‘I often go to my friend’s house to take his help. He always helps me except during exam times.’* Two other children ask their doubts to the tutors. So they don’t have to face any problem. Similarly, another OBC girl who belongs to low SES background and doesn’t get any help says, *“I often get punishment in the school for not doing homework because there is no one to help me at home. I don’t go to tuitions also. Friends also don’t help even if they are already done with their homework.*

Another such girl says, *“I am too scared to ask doubts to the teachers because sometimes they scold me in front of the class which is very insulting.”* It is observed from the study that help at the family level positively affect the child’s performance.

ACADEMIC ATMOSPHERE AT HOME

It has been established in the sociological literature that atmosphere and environment of home play very important role in the academic performance of the children (Jain, 1965; Coleman, 1966; Chatterjee, 1971; Bridge, Judd and Mook, 1979; Shah and Salunke, 1984 and Desai, 1991). The students are asked about the activities of their fathers, mothers, and siblings during their study time in order to know to what extent

the activities of the family members and the atmosphere affect the performance of the children

It is observed that the most of the fathers of the students who do well in examinations spend time with their children in the evening and give attention to their studies. They sit with them, help them do their assignments, check their progress, teach them, etc. It is also found that some of the fathers of moderately performing students also give attention to their children during their study hour. However, it is stated that a few fathers stay out for work. The data also finds that most of the fathers of the students who do not perform well stay out for work and some of the fathers watch T.V. and sleep. It is also found that very few fathers of the low performing students give attention to them during their study time. According to one boy who does not perform, *“Father always watches TV in the evening with very high volume and if he is asked to reduce the volume, he gets irritated. So we keep quiet and do our own work.”*

On the other hand, mothers of high performing students look after the studies of their children. These mothers don't want to compromise their children's education by watching TV. A teacher mother of a high performing student says, *“Usually, I don't watch TV. But when there is something on TV and I can't miss that I watch with very low volume so that the child would not get distracted.”* Mothers of most of the average performing students keep themselves busy in the domestic work most of the time and so they can't give time to their children. According to one girl who belongs to general caste category and who performs moderately in studies, *“My mother and my aunty can never miss their serials on Star Plus from nine in the evenings. So when it strikes nine on the clock, I have to leave the room and go to another room to study. It breaks the flow of my study.”* The data also reveals that a majority of the mothers of low performing students are engaged in domestic work during the children's study time and a few mothers work as maid servants and go out to work for wages.

Activities of the siblings are also important in order to understand the home atmosphere. If the siblings distract and do not allow a child to study, it may prove

detrimental to his/ her studies. It is found that the high performing students study along with their siblings in the evening. According to one OBC girl who performs well, *"I and my elder sister (doing her I.SC) study together. It has become a routine for both of us. When I feel sleepy in the late nights, she wakes me up and also makes tea for me to make me fresh. I get inspiration from her to study."* The data also shows that most of the average performers' siblings also study with them. According to one boy, *"I and my brother study together and there is competition between us over who can sit to study for more hours."* It is found that the low performing students' siblings either play or sleep or watch T.V. during their study hour.

Moreover, it is often difficult or impossible to separate interpersonal relations among and between parents and children from the home atmosphere. Studies like Metcalfe (1950) found that emotional disturbance is detrimental to school progress. Dale and Griffith (1970) also confirmed that disharmony in the family leads to low performance of the child. Similar results have also been found by Srivastava (1978). The study, therefore, has tried to explore the home conditions and environment in order to know if there are any such factors which affect child's academic performance in a positive or negative way. On the basis of the responses of the children, it is observed that children face problems like over crowded and noisy atmosphere, uncooperative parents, disharmony in the family (which includes drunken fathers, wife beatings, fighting between parents over money matters, and fight over property, etc.). The data shows that most of the high performers live in peaceful home atmosphere whereas a few of the moderately performing students have such atmosphere at home. According to one girl, an average performing student who lives in a joint family says that her family is too overcrowded and always noisy. Another girl in this group says that there is always disharmony in their family over property matters. She says, *"My uncles always fight with my father over the issues of property and profit money in the business. As a result we always have tensions in the family. I get scared when they start fighting."* A girl who does not perform well complains that her parents are not cooperative and says, *"When I ask for something (new clothes or books), the parents get irritated. I get disturbed by this."* It is important to note that

some of the low performing students belonging to low SES whose parents are non-literates or less educated mention that they are living in tensed atmosphere as there is always disharmony in the family. As one Scheduled Caste girl who does not perform well says, *“Parents often quarrel over money matters as a result of which we have to suffer. At that time we get scolding for nothing.”* Similarly, another Scheduled Caste low performing boy says, *“Father often drinks and beats mother which bitters the home environment.”*

PARENTAL ATTITUDE TOWARDS CHILDREN’S EDUCATION

Parental attitude is another important factor in the academic performance of the children. Studies like Douglas (1964 and 1967), Morton and Williams (1964), Cohen (1965), Dale and Griffith (1965), Musgrove (1966), Kahl (1967), Wiseman (1967), Sewell et al (1970), Shapira and Yutchman (1974), Jha (1977), Chitnis (1981), Aggarwal (1986), Stevenson and Baker (1987), William (2005), Christa (2007) have shown that parental attitudes and academic achievement of the children are positively related.

In the study the parents are asked as to why they send their children to school. The data shows that the parents of the students who perform well have positive attitude towards their education. Some of the parents of good students say that they educate their children for bright future and also think that good education will give them good reputation in the society. All of them give high value to the education of the children. The study reveals that most of the average students’ parents give importance to good jobs and self-dependence in future and give importance to the education of the children. However, a few parents of average students have negative attitude because they consider their daughters’ education as an obstacle in their marriage. Parents of a girl who is an average performer say, *“She should get married soon as girls in our family never stay unmarried till this age. But she does not want to marry now because she wants to continue her education. Who will marry her after few years?”* It is interesting to note that most of the parents of the low performing students have

negative attitude towards the education of their children. While some of them think that the children's education is valueless and wastage of time. Father of a low performing Scheduled Caste says, "*She should help her mother in cooking and in looking after her infant brothers and sisters but she is wasting her time in school. She is also wasting my hard-earned money which I am saving for her and her elder sister's marriage.*" What is disturbing is that a majority of the parents of the girls show negative attitude towards their education whereas a few parents of girls have positive attitude. The data shows that most of the Scheduled caste parents that think their children's education is valueless and wastage of time. If we see the parental views on the importance of their children's education in terms of their own educational qualifications, it is found that parents who have positive attitude towards the child's education are well-educated (Intermediate, graduation and post graduation) and fathers with negative attitude towards the child's education have not gone beyond school (up to class 10). Similarly most of the educated mothers have positive attitude towards the child's education.

The children are asked whether their parents show any interest in their performance. The data shows that the good and average students' parents show interest in their school performance. These students mention that their parents are very much concerned about their performance. According to a high performing OBC girl who belongs to upper middle class, "*My parents are very much concerned about my studies. They teach me with so much pain, send me to tuitions, give ample time to me and also expect a lot from me. So it is very natural for them to show interest in my results.*" Similarly, another high performing boy who belongs to general category says, "*The competition is so high that even one mark can make a difference. So my parents are always worried about my studies.*" However, the low performing students' parents are not interested in their studies. According to a low performing SC boy who belongs to low socio-economic background, "*My parents are non-literates. So they can't understand anything about my school.*" The data also shows that majority of the parents of girls, Scheduled Caste and Scheduled tribe do not show interests in the performance of the children. According to one low performing

Scheduled Tribe boy, *“Father has no interest in my results. He just signs on my progress report and at that time sees my marks and that’s it. He does not even look at the report card properly.”* Similarly, another girl who is an average student and belongs to the general category says, *“My parents always ask my brothers results with much interest while no one asks me about my result even if I do better than him. I feel very bad for this.”* According to a low performing girl who also belongs to general -category, *“My parents always tell me to leave school and get married but it is because of my requests that they are still sending me to school.”* The teachers also maintain that parental attitude and interest towards the education of the child is important for a child’s performance in examination.

The study has tried to analyse the attitude of the parents on the role of regular school attendance in the performance of the children. While most of the good and average students are found to be regular in school, not a single low performing child is regular in the school. Most importantly, gender wise comparison of the regularity in the school attendance shows that a bulk of the irregular students is girls. The parents are asked about the reasons of the irregularities of the children in attending the school. The responses show that most of the irregular students who bunk classes due to domestic work and sibling care are girls. Mother of one low performing OBC girl says, *“She usually does not to go to school because her school starts from 10 in the morning and at that time of the day the work load is too heavy. She often bunks classes to help me.”* However, the data also reveals that some students are not regular in attending the classes because of some other reasons which include poor health, inferiority complex. Mother of a moderately performing boy says, *“He is very weak because he is very choosy in eating. Every other day he falls sick and stays at home bunking classes.”* Similarly, father of one irregular Scheduled tribe boy mentions that because of his child’s inferiority complex, he does not like to go to school. He says, *“He often feels very bad because of his poor marks and so avoids going to schools regularly.”* However, a few students bunk classes due to their lack of interest in studies. Mother of one such low performing boy says, *“He bunks classes and roams around and plays with friends.”* The most important aspect of the study is that the

parents don't react much when the girls bunk classes because of domestic work but when the boys bunk, they are noticed by the parents which shows the bias of the parents.

Parental Time

The students are asked about the time spent by their parents (both fathers and mothers) for their studies. The data shows that the high performers' fathers give time to their studies everyday. However, a very few parents of the good students can not give them time because of their hectic schedule. According a high performing boy who belongs to general category, *"My father is a Doctor. He has to stay out most of the time and so he doesn't get time."* According to another high performing girl, *"My father is a good teacher. Everyday he gives at least 1/2 hours to my studies. He teaches me mathematics and science in the evening."* However, fathers of most of the average and low performing students do not give them time for their studies. Few of the students believe that because of the non-literacy or low level education, their fathers do not give time to their studies. It is interesting to note that most of the girls who show poor performance think that their fathers do not have any interest in their studies and as a result do not give time to their studies. According to one such girl, *"Even if my father stays at home in the evening, he never asks me about my school, home work and exams."*

However, what is note worthy is that the mothers of high performing students give time to their children and also help them in studies everyday. It is found from then study that the high performers' mothers give them time everyday. As one high performing OBC girl says, *"My mother sits with me everyday in the evening. She also teaches me. She prepares notes for me for Oriya because this subject needs good skill of writing and she is excellent in this. I don't have to worry about this subject in the exam."* The responses of the average students show that some mothers give them time everyday. According to a general boy who performs moderately *"My mother gives me two hours everyday in the evening and after that she goes to the kitchen to prepare*

dinner. She helps me in history. I am not good in history. So she has to put extra effort for this.”

However, it is interesting to note that a very few mothers of the low performing students mothers give proper time and attention to them. The children are also asked about the reasons for not giving time by their mothers and it is found from their responses that a large chunk of the mothers are busy in their domestic work. As one low performing Scheduled Tribe boy “*Maa (mother) never gets free time. She is always busy in cooking, taking care of us and doing other domestic work. By the end the day she becomes too tired. It is difficult for her to give me time every day.*” It is noted here that most of the parents and teachers also agree that time spent by the mothers for their children’s education influence their performance profoundly.

Reinforcements given by the Parents to the Children

Reinforcement whether positive or negative has a strong impact on the children’s education. (Muralidharan and Topa, 1970; Murlock, 1972, Clark, 1973; McClelland, 1973). The study has, thus, tried to find out what kind of reinforcements are given by the parents to the children and to what extent they affect the child’s educational attainment. On the basis of the responses of the students and their parents, the reinforcements given by the parents are divided into two types, namely, positive reinforcement or reward and negative reinforcement or punishment. Positive reinforcement includes appreciation in front of others, encouragement and motivation by the parents, show happiness, gifts while negative reinforcement includes beating, scolding and stop talking to the children.

The data shows that a few parents believe in positive reinforcement and also practice it. According to parents of one high performing OBC girl, “*We always encourage her to do well. But we never pressurize her. If she does not perform well, we encourage her to do better next time. We try to help her get back her confidence instead of scolding, beating or punishing her.*” Similarly, another parent of a high performing

boy thinks, *“Punishment spoils children and makes them rebels. They are teens now. So we parents are supposed to handle them with love and care.”* Another mother of a high performer thinks, *“Now the parents are expecting too much from the children and as a result when the children fail to achieve success, they prefer to commit suicide and this is the main cause of increase in the suicide rates among the school children.”*

According to one girl, a high scorer, who gets positive reinforcement from the parents, *“My parents always praise me in front of others for my good result which gives me more confidence and the spirit to keep up this standard.”* Contrary to this, one low performing boy gets punishment from the parents. He notes that his father beats him for his poor marks and he confesses that this affects his studies as he gets very scared of his father.

It is also found that most of the low performing students' parents do not show any reactions to their results. The study also reveals an interesting fact that majority of the parents of girls and Scheduled Caste students show no reaction to their performance. When the children are asked about the impact of these reinforcements on their academic performance, it is found that a majority of them who get positive reinforcement from the parents for their good results think that positive reinforcements or rewards help them in a very positive manner which includes gaining confidence, improving performance, increasing spirit to do well and increasing seriousness where as one child in this group said that it does not have any impact on him. On the other hand, those who are punished by their parents for securing poor marks admit that their performance is affected in a negative way. According to one low performing boy, *“I often get nervous in the exams because I know that I will be punished by the parents if I score bad marks.”* However, a few students who do not get any reinforcement from parents find it very demoralizing. According to a low performing girl, *“Even if I score more than the previous exam, my parents do never appreciate me and as a result of which I lose interest in the*

studies.” It is found from the study that reinforcements given by the parents affect the performance of the children.

Thus, the chapter explores the impact of home factors on the academic performance of the children. It has also tried to describe to what extent parental educational and occupational backgrounds, aspirations, attitudes towards children’s education and time spent for children affect the performances of the children. It is found from the study that home backgrounds of the children play crucial role in the academic performance of the children. The socio-economic background of the children is found to be the most important factor in the variations in the academic performance of the children. Children from good economic bracket seem to perform better than those from low economic background. Similarly, higher educational and occupational backgrounds contribute to the good academic performance of the children. It is also observed that children from disturbed home environments tend to perform poorly in examinations. Those who get all facilities at home do well in studies. The study also shows that most of the parents have differential attitude towards the education of their daughters and because of the gender bias of their parents, the academic performance of the girls may be affected. In sum, the home factors are strongly related with the academic performance of the children.

CHAPTER-IV
SCHOOL FACTORS

CHAPTER-IV

SCHOOL FACTORS

School plays an important role in the academic performance of the children. There is evidence in sociological literature that the level of academic achievement varies greatly from one school to another and also from one home background to another. (Eggleston, 1967; Floud, 1970; Jencks, 1972; Ogbu, 1987; Stevenson and Baker, 1987; Coleman, 1973 & 1990). Studies by Musgrave (1972), Dunkin and Biddle (1974), Rist (1977), Brookover, Beady, Flood, Schweitzer, Wisenbaker (1979), Rutter, Maughan, Mortimore, Ouston (1979), Anyon (1981), Brunello and Checchi (2004) have also shown that these variations in academic achievement of the children are due to many institutional variables like the size of the school, teachers' attitudes towards children, official curriculum as well as hidden curriculum, classroom organization, patterns of discipline, type of reinforcements given by the teachers, etc. These literature have shown that in addition to the family, parents and home backgrounds of the children, the school also has a role to play in the academic performance of the child. The chapter, therefore, has attempted to look at the impact of institutional factors on the academic performance of the children. It describes the children's perceptions of themselves as well as the school and the teachers, the teacher's perception of the child's education, role of peer groups, classroom performances of the children and their activities, school related problems, etc. The chapter also deals with the parents' views on issues like quality of schooling, teachers' attention and attitudes towards the child's education, difficulties faced by children in the school, parent-teacher meetings, etc.

CHILDREN'S PERCEPTIONS OF THE SCHOOL

The children are asked whether they like to attend school. It is observed that the students who score well in the examinations love to go to school because they observe that they get knowledge from the school. According to a student who has scored more

than 70 percent marks in the annual examination of class VIII, *"I love to go to school because, after going to school I get to know about the space, the environment, the whole world and many things. Otherwise, it would not be possible. I am gaining more knowledge and I am getting promotion every year."* Similarly, a majority of the students who do not perform well in the examinations mention that they always like to go to school but due to lack of parental support or pressure of domestic work, they can not go.

A general girl who belongs to a large family says, *"I like to go to school but due to heavy work load at home, I have to give importance to the domestic work."* However, a few of the students who are not good in studies state that they do not like to go to school as they want to play with friends, sleep and watch TV. As one Scheduled Caste boy who does not score well and whose parents are non-literates, says, *"I do not like to sit in the classroom from eleven to five in the evening. So I often bunk classes and move around with friends."* Similarly another child whose father is educated up to class II and mother is non-literate says, *"I do not like to go to school because I can never finish my home work. I play cricket with my friends during school hours."*

Thus, the attitude of students towards schooling differs from one child to another on the basis of their performance and their family background. It is found that children from poor home background and of non-literate and less educated parents appear to be less serious towards their schooling and education while children from middle class and educated families seem to give much importance to their education. It is also found that gender seems to play a role in the attitudes of the children towards education because most of the girls give more importance to domestic work than their studies. However, the study does not find any differences in the attitude of the children towards schooling on the basis of their caste/ tribe.

When asked, the parents of a student who scores high percentage of marks in the examinations say, *"We educate our child for his bright future."* Similarly, parents of a high performing boy who belongs to the general category state, *"Education has*

become important in today's society. If you do not have education, you are not fit for the society." Contrary to this, less educated parents of a general category girl who do not perform well in the examinations think, *"What would a girl do with a degree or certificate? Every girl has to engage in domestic work after marriage."* Similarly, parents of a Scheduled Caste seem to be less serious about the child's education.

The children are also asked about their aspirations of life. They are asked: *why do you want to study? How is it going to help you in future?* Students think that education will help them gain knowledge, give them prestige in the society and also help them get good jobs. One child whose father is a teacher in a school says, *"I want to be a space scientist and therefore I am studying."* Another child who is from a middle class family background says, *"If I have education, I will be well established in future."* Similarly, a girl, who belongs to *Other Backward Classes* category and whose parents are teachers, argues that in order to fulfill her high ambitions in life, she is studying. The responses of the low performers are slightly different from the high and average performers. Among the low performers, a few children want to study because of getting good jobs in the future. The responses of the students also show that a few of the children, who do not perform well in the examinations, study because their parents want them to study and send them to school. However, some children think that education is necessary to save themselves from the society. As one SC child whose parents are illiterate and belong to a very poor family background says, *"I have seen my parents being deceived by educated people only because of their lack of knowledge and education. I do not want to face similar situations in life. So I want to study so that I won't be cheated by people."*

Significantly, it is found that the children's aspirations in life also vary on the basis of their socio-economic background, parental education and occupation and their social category.

CHILDREN'S PERCEPTIONS OF THE TEACHERS

The children are asked as to what they think about the teachers in the school. All the students say that they like their English teacher most. As one student says, *"It is not only because he teaches very well, but he is very friendly too. We enjoy his class very much and everyday we eagerly wait for his class. We do not have to read much for his subject for the exams."* Similarly, another girl says, *"The English teacher is an ideal teacher in true sense."* The *Symbolic Interactionism* of Hargreaves (1975) is applicable here where he has defined 'Ideal Teacher' as a teacher who should be strict and fair (the disciplinary role), should be clear and interesting (the instructional role). However, the students do not like the Chemistry and Algebra teacher. One student says, *"Our Chemistry teacher is very strict. We are very scared of her class. We try to listen to her through out the class even if chemistry is very boring."* Another student says, *"We often do not understand what our Physics teacher teaches us in the class."* Thus, it is found that the children have their own perceptions about the teachers and their behaviour.

An important dimension of effective teaching is the teacher's teaching styles through which he exerts influence on students and on their learning outcomes. Fiedler (1967) and House (1971) emphasized the task and person orientation of styles as sources of orientation. Flander (1970) maintained that depending on the method of teaching, teachers could be classified as direct teachers (who deliver lectures in the class and give specific directions to students about their work) and indirect teachers (who put questions to students and permit a lot of student-initiated behaviour). He also found that students taught by indirect teachers-learnt more than students taught by direct teachers. The study also found that the students like the English teacher's class because of his indirect teaching.

The parents are also asked about the quality of teaching and teachers in the school because quality of teaching matters a lot in the educational attainment of the children. Most of the parents are happy or satisfied with the quality of teaching in the school.

Parents of a boy, a high scorer, who belongs to general category say, "*We are quite happy that the teachers are teaching well in the school. The teachers are taking proper care of the subjects and finish it before the exams.*" Parents of a few students, however, feel the opposite. They think that the teachers are always in hurry to finish the syllabus and as a result the quality of teaching is lacking. It may be noted here that parents of some students, who show poor performance in the examinations, do not have any idea about the teaching in the school.

The study has also conducted some classroom observations in order to explore the effect of some institutional factors on the academic performance of the children. It is found that the teaching styles vary from teacher to teacher. One teacher teaches only through question-answer method and the children enjoy his class and they are very active in his class. Another teacher reads out the books and the indifference is visible on the faces of the children. This shows the teaching style of the teachers also affects the students' behaviour in the classroom and also their performance because the students reveal that they like to read the subject of the former teacher than of the latter. As mentioned earlier, the English teacher is very friendly with the children. The moment he enters the classroom, smiles can be seen on the faces of the children. He teaches in a different way and gives the everyday activities as examples and the students have fun in his class. On the other hand, the students are scared of the science teacher and the algebra teacher. It is observed that when they enter the classroom, there is a pin-drop silence everywhere. In all classes, it is noticed that the teachers are able to manage the classes in a proper way and all the classrooms are closed organizations as the students are not allowed to go out of the class without the permission of the teachers every now and then.

TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE STUDENTS

Teachers don't always perceive all children in a similar manner. They have different notions of children. Many people believe that children from poor and socially backward families can not perform and only some exceptional cases with good family

background can do this. Most teachers also think in such manner and their thoughts are reflected in the classrooms as well as in their behaviour with the children, etc which affect the children.

In order to know how teachers perceive their students and to what extent their perceptions affect the students' academic performances, the teachers are asked to describe their students and their performances in the classroom as well as in the examinations. It is found from the responses of the teachers that none of the teachers remember the names of the low performers and they have to look at the attendance register in order to confirm that the student in fact is in his/ her class. One teacher says, "*We have 60 students in each section and it is not possible for the teachers to remember the names of all 60 students. It is only the bright students who attract our attention through their good academic performance.*"

TEACHER EXPECTATIONS

Teachers' expectations affect the students' performance. In 1968, Rosenthal and Jacobson (1968) published *Pygmalion in the Classroom*, an experimental study which claimed to show that teacher expectations had an impact on pupil performance. Studies like Brookover, Beady, Flood, Schweitzer and Wisenbaker (1979) also show that teachers tend to expect much from the high achieving students. There is evidence that the teachers also expect the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe students to perform badly in the examinations. (Pawde, 1992; Ilaiah, 1996; Muralidharan, 1997; Talib, 1998; Sarangapani, 1999). The present study has also tried to know what the teachers expect-from their students. When asked about the performance of the children, the teachers talked about the performance of only high performers. None of the teacher talked about the low performers. Even in the teachers' common room, the teachers discuss the work of good students, how they are doing in the exams, what their advantages and disadvantages are, and the possibilities of their securing positions in the board exams. Asked about an OBC girl student who is a high performer, the teacher says, "*That girl is a bright student and we have much*

expectations from her. I hope she will definitely hold a position in the board exam next year and we are taking care of that."

It is also found that where as the teachers expect a lot from the high performers, they do not expect the same from the low performers. One teacher says, *"There is no doubt that the good students will bring reputation for the school and so we are giving extra time and attention to such children. But there is no hope that the low performers will also do the same. But we also expect from the low performers to keep improving each year. We expect those who fail in the exam, will pass. So expectation is always there whether from a good student or an average student or a poor student. But the only difference is that the levels of expectations vary according to the standard of the children"*. Thus, the teachers' responses that teachers' expectations are based on certain Presuppositions about the children. The teachers tend to expect much from those students who score high percentages of marks and even from those who are average performers.

The children are also asked about the expectations of their teachers in order to know whether it has any impact on the performance of the children. The responses of the students show that the teachers' expectations have definitely some impact on the behaviour and performance of the children. The students who perform well in the examinations say that their teachers expect a lot from them and in order to fulfill their teachers' expectations they have to improve their performances. One such student who belongs to a middle class family says, *"I had topped in the annual exam of class 8 and my teachers were expecting me to top this year (half-yearly) also. They always motivate me saying, 'see, you have to keep up your standard and top again.' This gives you more confidence and determination and as a result I topped again. They are again expecting me to be there in the top 10 in the board exams and I am trying my best to achieve that."*

Similarly another student who is a high performer observes, *"When teachers expect good result from you, you have to live up to their expectations. It is a feel good factor*

because you feel distinct from others and it naturally improves your performance.”

The responses of average performers also show that the teachers also expect them to improve and this has a positive impact on their performances. One Scheduled Caste student who is an average performer notes, *“I got bad marks last year. But the previous year I had good marks. On the basis of this my teachers were hoping that I will improve this year and that helped me gain my confidence and I have again scored good marks in the half-yearly exam.”*

Contrary to these statements, all the low performers mention that their teachers do not expect anything from them and thus they don't have any reason to perform well in the exams as the high performers have.

STREAMING OR LABELING

Streaming or labeling is very crucial in the academic performance of the children. It has been proved that labeling affects children's behaviour, attitudes and also their academic performances (Hargreaves, 1967; Lacey, 1970 and 1974; Rist, 1977; Rutter, Maughan, Mortimore and Ouston, 1979). Streaming or labeling of children is the result of teachers' expectations. It is often seen that teachers tend to evaluate children on the basis of the first hand information gained through face-to-face interactions in the classroom, their performances in the classroom and the amount of spent together in the classroom and label them as 'bright', 'dull', 'intelligent', 'duffer', 'slow', 'useless', 'stupid' etc., 'socially backward' for 'Scheduled Caste' and 'Scheduled Tribe' students, and also behave with them accordingly. (Rutter, Maughan, Mortimore and Ouston, 1979). It is found from the study that the teachers label students with terms like 'good', 'bright', 'intelligent', 'excellent' for high performers and 'slow learners', 'dull', 'low achievers', etc. for low performers.

In the study, the students are asked about the labeling by the teachers to know its impact on their performance. The responses of the students show that the teachers behave differently on the basis of labeling of same kind. A student who is a low

performer and belongs to the general category mentions, “*The high performers (whom the teachers call ‘bright’, ‘intelligent’, etc.) are praised more frequently for their correct answers and criticized less for their wrong answers in the classroom.*” It has been found from the classroom observations that the ‘bright’ students are given more chances of answering in the classroom even if some of them do not know the answers. It has also been observed that the ‘dull’ students are scolded for not giving the right answers and due to this reason, some low performers do not raise their hands even if they seem to know the answers. A girl who is a low scorer and belongs to general category says, “*Sometimes I know the answers but I don’t raise my hand in the class. Because I think if I give wrong answers, the teacher will scold me and everybody will laugh at me*”.

SELF-FULFILLING PROPHECY

The self-fulfilling prophecy is the outcome of streaming or labeling of children by the teachers. The term was defined by Rosenthal in 1968. When the teachers write-off the students or think that they are destined to fail, they don’t waste their time in teaching them and in giving them proper attention and instead devote time for the good students. As a result, such children tend not to learn a great deal, thus justifying and perhaps reinforcing their teachers’ perceptions of them. If a teacher defines a particular pupil as stupid or lacking in quality for successful school performance, then the future behaviour of the pupil will tend to be regarded as evidence of “stupidity” even though it may not, in fact, warrant such a description, and the student will in fact behave in a way that tends to confirm the teacher’s periphery (Brookover, Beady, Flood, Schweitzer, Wisenbaker, 1979).

Some teachers make judgments of pupil ability on the basis of their social origins and skin colour. The disadvantaged children such as the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe students have to battle labels and ‘Self-fulfilling Prophecy’ apart from stereotypes and prejudices (Menon, 2003; Muralidharan, 1997; Pawde, 1992). Many teachers also act differently toward pupils whom they define as promising than they

do toward pupils whom they define as less promising or stupid (Hargreaves, 1967). Differential expectations followed by differential treatment, therefore should have important consequences for student attitudes, behaviour and learning.

In the present study, the teachers also followed this pattern. They gave more time and attention to those who are capable of succeeding. But there is one teacher who thinks differently. According to him, *“This type of attitude is not good. All children are not from same background. All do not get similar support, facilities and encouragement outside the classroom. So it is the duty of the teachers to take care of that aspect and give equal attention to everybody. Although it is quite difficult in a huge classroom, I try my best to do it. For me every child has the potential to excel.”*

The teachers are asked about the performances of the Scheduled Caste, Scheduled tribe and girl students in order to know whether they have any prejudices and stereotypes about these students. The responses of the teachers reveal that the teachers do not have any such prejudice against these students. A teacher says, *“Very less number of SC and ST students perform well and those who are from well-educated family and whose fathers are service holders tend to do well.”* Majority of the teachers think that girls out perform boys in every field these days. A teacher who teaches Geography says, *“Boys are performing quantitatively where as girls are performing qualitatively. That means while more number of boys are passing out from our school, whereas the girls are scoring high percentages.”* Similarly, another teacher says, *“Girls are very outspoken in the classroom and curious to know everything.”* But one teacher does not agree with these teachers and thinks differently. She holds, *“Boys are genetically intelligent. But the only problem is that they do not concentrate on their studies.”* She also thinks, *“The main reason behind the good performance of the children is that they are brainy children and it is completely genetic. Those who are born intelligent, perform well.”* Contrary to the teacher’s view the studies in the Sociology of Education have shown that the reason behind the good performance of the students is not the result of genetic ability of the children but the social, economic and cultural factors. Craft (1970), Jencks (1972), Musgrave (1972),

Lavin (1973), Chitnis (1977), Bridge, Judd and Moock (1979), Govinda and Varghese (1993), Glick and Sahn (1997), Brunello and Checchi (2004), Neves and Morais (2005), Symeou (2007).

TEACHERS' TIME, ATTENTION AND ATTITUDE TOWARDS CHILDREN

In order to know whether the teachers' time and attention are important indicators for enhancing the performance of the children, the students are asked, "How much time your teachers give you?" The responses present an interesting scenario. The children do mention that their teachers give extra time to clarify their doubts. What is interesting to note is that the teachers seem to give more time to those who are good in studies and high performers. According to a child who is an average performer and belongs to Scheduled Caste category says, "*Teachers give us extra time during the exam time, but not always.*" Interestingly, the teachers also give time to those who have the potential to perform, but due to the lack of proper guidance, fail to achieve. According to an ST student who is an average performer, "*Last year, I got very poor marks. So the teachers gave me extra time in the recess or whenever they were free in the teachers' common room.*" Similarly another high performing OBC girl states, "*I go to the teachers' common room after the class gets over and get my doubts clarified from the teacher and the teachers are also very good because they explain things to me in details.*"

However, it is important to note that the teachers always do not give time equally to all students in the class. A few low performers do observe that the teachers care more about those who perform well and not those who do not perform well. One of the students who has not scored well in examinations argues, "*The teachers always give proper attention to the front benchers (mostly good students). They ask questions to them and if they do not understand something, the teachers repeat that until they understand properly. But when we do not understand anything, they do teach the same things repeatedly. The teachers always checked their home work.*" Similarly, a student who is not good in studies and also belongs to general category says, "*I feel*

very scared to ask my doubts to the teachers because of the scare of getting rebuked or punished. I don't even ask questions in the classroom."

Another low performing student who belongs to general category and comes from an upper middle class family notes, *"The good students are always called by the teachers to solve the problems on the board even if we also know the answers."* Thus, the data show that the teachers' attention in-the classroom is not equally divided among all students. The teacher's attention is given more to those who do well in studies than those who do not do well or those who do moderately well in the examinations. The significant aspect in this regard is that the children believe that the teachers do not discriminate them in terms of caste or class or gender. However, what is disturbing is that some low performing children believe that the teachers assume that the low performers can not achieve academic success and therefore do not show interest in their work.

The teachers are also asked about the time and attention given to the student. Contrary to the views of the students who believe that the teachers' time and attention is not equally divided among the students, the teachers think that they always give equal attention to everybody in the class. As one teacher says, *"It is not that we are giving time only to the good students. But when a student comes to you with a doubt, you have to explain it to him / her with details which are not possible in the classroom because of the time restraint. So it is up to the students whether they want to get answers for their doubts."*

The parents are also asked about the *time and attention* given by the teachers to the children in order to explore any differential treatment of the teachers and also to find out to what extent the time and attention are devoted to the children by the teachers affect their academic performance. It is interesting to note that most of the parents believe that the teachers give unequal time and attention to the students on the basis of their performances. The parents of a low performing OBC girl say, *"The teachers give more time and attention to the high performers while the low performers are ignored*

by the teachers". Similarly, parents of a low performing student who belongs to general category mention, *"The teachers have time only for those who have scored good marks and who are more likely to secure positions in the board exams."*

However, it is interesting to note that some parents of the children who do not perform well or perform moderately in the examinations think differently and give explanations for the unequal distribution of teachers' time and attention. A father of a moderately performing student, who is a doctor, argues, *"The teachers can not give equal time and attention to the children in the class not because of any bias but because of their lack of time. It is not feasible for a teacher to give time and attention to the whole class where the strength of the children in each section is around 50 or 60 and that to within short period of time."* A low performing child's father who is an Accounts Officer also shares the similar views, *"Within a class of 30 minutes, the teacher can not give time to every child and as result the dependence on tuitions are increasing rapidly."*

Contrary to these views, some parents think that the teachers give equal time and attention to everyone on the class. As advocate father of a student who performs well in the examinations says, *"The teachers are very cooperative. They have always given proper attention to them. Whenever the child has any problem in understanding, they help him. In the classroom also they make it sure that the child is getting the lessons."* Similarly, a mother of an OBC girl who has topped in the annual examinations of class VIII says, *"We rely so much on the teaching of the teachers at school and so we don't send our daughter to tuitions. The child gets every doubt clarified by the teachers in the school. This shows that the teachers are giving each child proper time and attention."*

Interestingly, parents of a student who is not a good scorer think that their child gets equal time and attention of the teacher in the classroom. The parent of another student who performs moderately in the examinations says, *"I do not know what is going on in the class. I have never asked my son about this. But there is no problem since we*

are giving him tuitions.” Thus, the responses of the students, parents and the teachers show that the teachers, on the basis of their expectations, tend to give more time and attention to those who perform well than those who do not perform well or moderately perform in the examinations which has impact on the students’ performance.

TEACHER-CHILDREN INTERACTIONS

The parents are also asked on the *teacher-child interactions* in the class. The data show that the parents of the students who perform well in the examinations think that the students share very cordial relation with the teachers. According to parent of a girl who performs well, *“The teachers are very friendly with the children and the children feel free and comfortable to ask their doubts to the teachers without any hesitation.”* Contrary to this, a few parents of those students who do not perform well do not think so. Parents of a low performing OBC girl say, *“The teachers are very strict in the school and therefore the students can not express themselves freely. The teachers are not at all cooperative.”* It is observed that the parents assume that teachers do not behave similarly with every child in the class. The responses of the parents also show that teachers behave differently with the children on the basis of their performances in the examinations as well as in the classroom. The study has also tried to find out what the parents think about the attitude of the teachers towards the children in the school. The parents think that the teachers have positive attitude towards the children while the rest think that the teachers have negative attitude towards the children. These parents think that the teachers do not have any bias towards the children on the basis of class, caste and gender. Some other parents think that the teachers are biased towards the high performers irrespective of their class, caste, religion, ethnicity and gender. However, all parents do not agree with this. As one parent who belongs to ST category says, *“Although the teachers are not biased towards any particular child, sometimes I feel that they have a notion that the tribals are socially backward and they are less likely to perform.”*

REINFORCEMENTS BY THE TEACHERS

Studies have shown that reinforcements, both positive and negative, have strong impact on the academic performance of the children (Brookover, Beady, Flood, Schweitzer, Wisenbaker: 1979). The students are asked about different kinds of reinforcement given by the teachers in the school. Their responses show that the students who score good marks get positive reinforcement or rewards from the teachers. The positive reinforcements or rewards include pat of praise, appreciating in front of others, giving prizes, etc. A girl who is a high performer and belongs to general category says, *“The rewards by the teacher definitely encourages me and gives me more strength and determination to keep up my standard and also move up.”* Whereas a few students mention that the teachers give negative reinforcements or punishment also for poor performance which includes scolding, making the child kneel down, get out of the class, etc. It should be noted here that the negative reinforcement has negative impact on the children as the children said that they often get nervous in the exam, fear for the teachers and their questions, etc. due to punishments. However, some students who are moderate performers get both rewards and punishment for good and bad results respectively by the teachers. It is interesting to note that none of the low performing students gets positive reinforcement by the teachers. Some students, who do not perform well in the examinations, get punishments by the teachers while a few of the students showing poor result get neither positive nor negative reinforcement by the teachers. The students also reveal that this lack of reinforcement leads to lack of interest in their studies.

The teachers are also asked about their views on the *reinforcement* and their impact on the performance of the children. The responses of the teachers show that majority of the teachers do not believe in the negative reinforcement while a few think that punishment is essential to control the behaviour of children both inside and outside the classroom. One teacher says, *“I believe in rewards rather than punishment because punishment is negative and it hampers the performance of the children.”* Another teacher said, *“I always appreciate children in front of others and the class*

which gives them confidence and motivation to do well. I am not in favour of corporal punishment.”

However, a teacher who teaches science thinks differently, *“Punishment is required to discipline the child but it should not be strict.”* Another teacher also shares the similar view and says, *“Punishment should not be strict. Some children need punishment, otherwise they will be spoilt.”* Another teacher says, *“When children bunk classes, I punish them. I make them kneel down so that they would not repeat this. Mostly students who are poor performers tend to bunk classes. But the good students never bunk the classes.”*

The study also tries to know the views of the parents on the *types of reinforcement* given to the child by the teachers in the school. The data shows that a majority of the parents and mostly of those students who perform well or moderately in the examinations believe that the teachers give positive reinforcements or rewards to the children for good performances which includes pat of praise, appreciating in front of the whole class, giving prizes etc. A parent of a general category boy who is a good student says, *“The children get motivation because of the rewards given by the teacher. It increases their performances also.”* Similarly, parents of an SC student, who has got average marks in the annual examination of class VIII, say, *“When a teacher praises you in front of the class for your good result, there is nothing more than this as a reward for the child. Because I can see the self-confidence on the face of child whenever he gets such reward.”* Parents of few students who are not good in studies think that the teachers give negative reinforcement or punishments (scolding, kneeling down, standing on the bench, etc.) to the children for not doing home work, or bad result or for some other mistake. It is important to note here that some parents feel that punishment has negative impact on the performance of the children. As parents of a Scheduled Tribe student, an average performer, say, *“When a child gives wrong answers or can not answer in the class, he gets punished by the teachers. It brings fear in the minds of the children and they do not want to answer in the class even if they know the answer.”* However, parents of a few students who perform

moderately mention that the teachers give both positive reinforcements and negative reinforcements to the children for their good and bad results respectively. The responses of a few parents of low performing students reveal a surprising fact that the students who do not score well in the examinations do not get any reinforcement from the teachers either for good result or for bad result. In other words, the teachers do not react to the performance of such children and as a result, the students loose interest in studies and their performance further deteriorates.

It is found from the classroom observations that the teachers give punishments (such as making them stand up on the bench and kneeling down) to students who try to violate the discipline of the class. The students who do not do the home work or can not answer also get punishments from the teachers. The teachers are also found to give rewards to the children for correct answers, good behaviour, discipline and good results.

Thus, the study shows that the children get both positive and negative reinforcement for good and bad results as well as behaviour and they also admit that the reinforcements affect their academic performance both in positive and negative ways. The responses of the children also show that those children, who do not perform well, do not get any reinforcement from the teachers. Similarly, the parents also think that reinforcements given by the teachers affect the children's performance and punishments have the worst impact on the children.

PARENT-TEACHER INTERACTIONS

The teachers are asked about the parent-teacher meetings organized by the school in order to know whether such meetings play any role in enhancing the performance of the children. Interestingly, most of the teachers complain that the parents do not give proper time to the children because of their heavy work pressure. A teacher holds, *"These days, the parents are always busy in their work. They have hardly any time for their children. Children, at this stage, need their time and attention. But children,*

whose parents give time to them, perform well.” The teachers also reveal that due to this reason, most of the parents don’t come to the parent-teacher meetings organized by the school. Another teacher opines, *“80% of the parents do not turn up for the meetings. Sometimes even the parents of good students also do not come. Very few parents come for the meetings. The parents usually show their work load as the main reason for not turning up in the meetings.”* Similarly, another teacher thinks, *“It is very unfortunate that some parents come to the meetings after several requests from us and blame us for wasting their valuable time.”*

The parents are also asked on the *parent-teacher meetings* organized by the school. Some parents have given completely contradictory views of the teachers. The parents of the high performers say that they always go to the meetings in order to know the teachers’ views of their children and their academic as well as extracurricular activities. They discuss the children’s classroom performance, attendance, exam papers, and their children’s performance, etc. and, most importantly, the teachers’ suggestions to improve their performance. Some of the parents say that they are never informed of such meetings by the school authorities. Parents of a Scheduled caste student who is a moderate performer say, *“They (teachers) have never asked us to attend the meetings. It is their job to inform us. Otherwise how would we know about the meetings?”* These parents show their interest in attending the meetings provided they are informed of the interactions with the teachers by the school authorities. However, a few non-literate parents of low performing students view differently. Parents of a Scheduled Caste boy who does not perform well in the examinations mention, *“We are non-literate people. We do not understand anything about our son’s education. What will we do there? These meetings are for educated people only.”*

The children are also asked about the parent-teacher meetings organized by the school. The responses of the children show that though their school organizes parent-teacher interactions, some of the parents do not always go to such meetings. Majority of the students who perform well or moderately perform note that their parents

regularly go to such meetings. A high performing boy who belongs to general category and whose parents are well educated says, *“My parents always go to the meetings in any situation because they are always curious to know about my progress and the teachers’ remarks on my classroom performance and manners.”* It is interesting to note that a low performing general boy whose father is an M.SC says, *“My parents go to the meetings because there are always complaints from the teachers against me because of my poor performance in the exams.”*

The students also argue that the parents and the teachers discuss their performance in the exams as well as in the classroom, their attendance, discipline, behaviour with others, mannerism, study time at home, activities at home, etc. A moderately performing Scheduled Tribe student states, *“My parents often complain to the teachers when I do not study mindfully or give less time to my studies. As a result, the teachers call me to their rooms and ask me to increase my study hours.”* However, some of the parents of those students who do not perform well or moderately perform do not go to the meetings regularly because of their busy work schedule. According to one low performing Scheduled Caste child who belongs to a very poor family says, *“My parents do not know reading and writing. What will they do there? They can’t even understand anything.”*

Similarly, a general category girl, whose parents are also non-literates, observes, *“My parents do not go to the meetings despite my many efforts. They say that they will feel bad and inferior in front of others’ parents who are highly educated.”* The statements of a low performing girl indicates a different aspect of unwillingness of the parents to attend the meetings as she says, *“My parents never go to the parent-teacher interactions. My teachers have also told them many times to come. But they do not give importance to my studies. They do not have any interest in my education.”* The children also reveal that they get scolded by the teachers for this reason. Thus, interestingly, teachers believe that most of the parents do not give much importance to the studies of the children and do not come to the parent-teacher meetings organized by the school. Contrary to the views of the teachers some parents blame the teachers

for not informing them about the meetings. However, the responses of the students regarding the parent-teacher meetings reveal the most interesting facts. While parent with good educational and occupational background go to the meetings regularly, the Scheduled Caste and Tribe parents seem to be not showing interest in the parent-teacher meetings. Further, the non-literate and less educated parents feel shy or bad to attend the meetings.

PEER GROUP RELATIONS

The students are asked about their peer group relations in order to know to what extent peer relations influence their academic performance of children. The responses of children show that there is a sense of competition among the children which is very high among those students who score high percentage in the examinations. The study finds an interesting emotional element in the high and moderately performing students as most of such students mention that they feel jealous or bad when their friends outperform them. A student who has got average marks in the annual examination of class VIII notes, *“Last year I got less marks than my friends and I felt very bad. But I was determined to score more than him in the next exam and this year I have got more than him.”* The children also exchange help among themselves in doing their homework. According to an average student who does not go to tuitions states, *“As I do not have any other source of help, I go to my friend for his help.”*

It has also been established in the sociological literature that peer attitude affects the academic performance of the children (Velaskar and Wankhede, 1990; Pawde, 1992 and Ilaiah, 1996). The study has also tried to explore the attitudes of the peers and its impact on the performance of children and it has been found that most of the students who perform well do not make friendship with the low performing students. They have friendship with those who are good students. Similarly, the low performing students also do not mingle with the good students and try to keep themselves aloof from them. A child who does not score well, says, *“They (high performers) have their own friendship group. They do not mix up with us.”* Similarly, another child who is a

poor performer and belongs to Scheduled Caste category mentions, *“The good students do not talk to us. So we are very scared to ask them our doubts in studies.”* Contrary to this another low performing child who is also an SC says that his friend who is a good student and belongs to OBC category always helps him.

The study shows that peers have a strong influence on the academic performance of the children. Competition among the peers may have a positive impact on the performance of the students because they try to outperform each other in studies and as a result improve their own performance. But attitudes of the peers sometimes have negative impact on the children as well as their performance. It is observed from the study that the attitude of good students towards the low performing students has negative impact on their behaviour and performance as well.

CLASSROOM PERFORMANCES

The children are asked about their classroom performances. Their responses show that most of the students who perform well or moderately prefer to sit in the first two/three rows while the students who do not do well and are not good in studies prefer to sit in the back rows. When asked for the reasons for such sitting arrangement, one high performing student says, *“I always sit in the front row because of which I can listen to the teachers very attentively. Sometimes students sitting on the back bench can not listen to the teachers’ voices.”*

The low performers sit on the back benches because they often do not do the home work and they also do not have books also. So in order to save themselves from the punishments, they prefer back benches where the teachers give least attention. They also do not come to the class prepared and so to avoid the questions of the teachers, they prefer back benches. The high performers always listen to the teachers attentively in the class while the low performers do not listen anything and wait for the class to get over. It is observed from the study that there is no particular sitting arrangement in the classroom (on the basis of performance, caste, gender, etc) by the

teachers. But as it is a natural tendency for high performers to sit in the front benches, most of the good students of the class sit in the front lines.

The study has also found that the backbenchers do not show any sincerity to the teacher's lessons. They laugh and gossip, throw chalks to each other and pass chits when the teachers turn their heads to write something on the board. They do not have books and 3 or 4 students share one book. They look at the trees outside, doze or yawn most of the time in the class. The teachers do not pay any attention to the backbenchers and also do not ask any questions to them assuming that they can not answer. However, it is found from the classroom observations that those students who perform well and score good percentage of marks and particularly the girls are more outspoken, active and sincere in the classroom.

Thus, classrooms are spaces where gender forms are essential component of interactions among pupils and between teacher and pupils. Gender is also used to organize children in the classroom. Bhattacharjee (1999) observes that girls and boys make separate lines, sit separately and even listed separately on registers. The study also finds that the classroom is organized on the basis of gender where the boys and girls sit separately. It is also found from the study that boys and girls sit separately in the class.

STUDENTS' SELF-CONCEPTIONS

The study tries to explore students' perceptions of themselves or the self concept of their academic ability which means the student's perception of himself or herself as a student and in comparison to other classmates and students. The students are asked about their exam result of previous year and this year. The study has also tried to know whether they are satisfied with their performances. The responses of students show that most of the high performing students are satisfied with their performances but they want to improve and score more marks. A student who has scored 81 percent

in the half-yearly exam says, *“I need to score more as there will be tough competition to get seats in the colleges.”*

The data also reveal that some of the students who have scored not so good marks in the examinations are not satisfied with their performances and thus want to improve. It is interesting to note that those students who have not done well in their examinations do not show any concern toward their results. When students are asked whether they can improve in the coming exam, the high performing students seem very confident that they can improve and the moderately performing students think that they can try their best to improve while the responses of the low performing students show their lack of confidence and negative attitude towards themselves when they say that they are not able to achieve success because they are not intelligent like the high performers. This shows the self confidence is more in the students with good academic record than those with poor results.

SCHOOL RELATED PROBLEMS

The parents are asked about the *difficulties* faced by their children in the school in order to know how and to what extent these problems affect their performances. On the basis of responses of the parents, the problems faced by the children in the school are categorized into six categories, namely, academic problems which include difficulties in memorization, learning, reasoning ability, etc., inferiority complex, feeling of loneliness, communication problem, problems in the adjustment with the environment and fear of punishment.

The responses of the parents show that none of the students who perform well in the examinations faces any problem in the class. Whereas a few students who perform moderately in the examinations face difficulties in the school. As one Scheduled Tribe student faces problem of loneliness in the class. His parents say, *“We have shifted to this place last year only. He does not have any friends in the school because of his shy nature. So he feels lonely in the school as there is no one to share his feelings.”*

Another parent thinks that their child faces a problem of adjustment in the school environment as he was in a smaller school before coming here.

The data also reveal that among those students who do not perform well, a few face academic problems in the school where as one Scheduled Caste child feels inferior to the other students in the school because of low marks. A few of the low performing children face communication problem in the class. Parents of a low performing girl who belongs to general category mention, *“Though the medium of instruction is Oriya, the child has problem in English classes because the teacher speaks in English in that class and also asks the students to speak in English. While other students are able to do it, he can’t. We are also not good in English and can’t help him.”* It is important to note here that parents of a few low performing children think that their children are scared of punishments which affect their academic performance. As parent of a general category boy says, *“My son is very scared of punishments in the school as he is often punished by the teachers for not doing home work.”*

The children are also asked about the difficulties faced by them in school. The responses of students show that most of the students who do not score well in the examinations face problems in learning and understanding lessons, memorizing and also reproducing in the examinations and as a result they get poor marks. As one child who has got very less marks in the half-yearly examination of class IX says, *“I do not understand what the teachers teach in the class. I can understand some subjects like Oriya and History. But other subjects are very difficult to understand.”* Similarly, another low performing girl states, *“I can not remember the formulae of mathematics. The dates of history seem very similar and I find it difficult to memorize.”* Another boy who has also got poor marks in the half-yearly examination faces language problem in the school. According to him, *“I can not understand English because the teacher teaches in English. Though the teacher later translates the sentence in Oriya, I do not get anything. I always fail in English paper in the examinations.”* It should be noted here that despite the fact that most of the students in the class like the English teacher the most, a few low performing students find problem in the language of the

subject. The data also reveals that few of the students who do not perform well develop inferiority complex which affect their performance in the examinations. According to an ST student who does not perform well, *“I feel very bad because of my poor marks. I feel shy to talk to other students.”*

Thus, the chapter explores the impact of the institutional factors on the academic performance of the children and it is found that school factors play an important role in the academic performance of the children. The attitude of the children towards education varies on the basis of their academic performances. The attitudes of the parents also vary according to their educational and occupational background. Teachers’ expectations affect the academic performance of the children. The teachers’ differential attitudes and behaviour are the result of their perceptions of the children. The time and attention of the teachers are unequally divided among the students on the basis of the academic performance of the children. The reinforcements given by the teachers also seem to be very important for the academic performance of the children. Thus, the institutional factors are equally important like home factors in the academic performance of the children.

CHAPTER-V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

CHAPTER-V

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Academic performances vary from one student to another. Though the environment of school is similar for all students, the ultimate achievement is not uniform. Variations occur therein obtaining marks, performing extra-curricular activities and performance of students after completing the school life. Despite the same teacher, same furniture and other infrastructural facilities available in the same classroom, results of the pupils is not the same. Someone ranks at the top and some other students fail to do so. Many students leave the school without even completing their school education. The variations in academic performance are a result of social, cultural and economic factors. Many studies in sociological literature like Coleman (1966), Craft (1970), Floud (1970), Jencks (1972), Lavin (1973), Bridge, Judd and Mook (1979) have established the fact that academic performance of a student can not be defined in isolation. It is affected by many factors like family size, parental educational and occupational background, socio-economic status of the family, the attitude of the parents towards the education of the children. In the Indian context, Mathur (1963), Chopra (1964), Chitins (1981), Desai (1991), Govinda and Varghese (1993) have acknowledged the importance of home factors in the academic performances of the children. Besides the home factors, it is also proved that schools perpetuate inequality and thus affect the academic performance of the children. Studies like Eggleston (1967), Floud (1970), Jencks (1972), Musgrave (1972), Dunkin and Biddle (1974), Rist (1977), Brookover, Beady, Flood, Schweitzer, Wisenbaker (1979), Rutter, Maughan, Mortimore, Ouston (1979), Anyon (1981), Ogbu (1987), Stevenson and Baker (1987), Coleman (1973 & 1990), Brunello and Checchi (2004) have also shown that the variations in the academic achievement of the children are due to many institutional variables like the size of the school, teachers' attitudes towards children, official curriculum as well as hidden curriculum, classroom organization, patterns of discipline, type of reinforcements given by the teachers, etc. The present study is undertaken based on this theoretical and empirical background.

The social context of academic performance, however, has not adequately received attention in the field of sociology of education in India. Therefore, the study has attempted to throw light on the social context of academic performances of children in Orissa. In this context, the fieldwork was undertaken in a secondary school in Puri district of Orissa which provided an opportunity to explore the impact of family and institutional factors on the academic performance of the children. The study has taken the annual examination results of class IX students and tried to find out the reasons for variations in the performances of students. The study is an endeavor to present the sociological analysis of school performances of children.

The fieldwork was conducted in a high school, Puri Zilla High School, in Puri district in Orissa. The school is aided by the Government of Orissa and was established in the year 1853. It is one of the oldest schools in Orissa. The school is also a co-educational school. This gave an opportunity to explore the differences in the academic performance of the children in terms of different social classes, castes, tribes and genders.

The study does not confirm the impact of the type of the family on the academic performance of the children. It is found that a majority of children from large families do not perform well. It is also observed that large number of family members affect the performance of girls in a very severe manner. Thus, the study confirms that size of the family affects performance of children but it is not the sole factor in producing differences in the performance of children. But the study finds strong relationship between the educational backgrounds of the fathers and the mothers and the academic achievement of the children because it is observed that the children of parents who have higher secondary education and above tend to perform well or moderately. The mothers' educational level is found to be more effective for the children's education because the study finds that a majority of the low performing students' mothers are either non-literates or less educated, i.e. educated up to primary level. Higher educational background of the parents leads to better performance of the girls. The

Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe students' low performance is the result of low level of education of the parents.

The study also confirms the strong impact of occupational backgrounds and the income level of the parents on the academic performance of children. It is found that parents with higher occupational background and income level result in good school performance of their wards. The study also finds that parents in teaching profession contribute to the better examination preparation of the students. But unfortunately, even though the parents' income level is high, parents are reluctant to invest for their daughters' education.

The economic status of the families show that a large chunk of the good and average students come from middle and upper middle class families and most of the low performing students belong to poor families. It is also found that a few students who belong to upper middle class are not good students. So, it is not the only factor which affects the education of the children.

The daily activities of the children play significant role in their academic performance. The study finds gender differentiation in the daily activities of the children. It is found that most of the girls spend their mornings in domestic work. Sometimes these girls have to bunk classes due to excessive work pressure at home. In the evenings, the girls have to do the domestic chores no matter how tired they are. The girls are also not allowed to play and relax like their brothers. This affects their performance in the examination.

It is also found that the facilities available at home also play important role in the academic attainment of the children. This is linked to the socio-economic status of the family. Those students, who belong to middle and upper middle classes, get the facilities at home and as a result perform well and those who do not get the facilities perform badly in the examinations. The data reveals that most of the girls, SCs and STs are deprived of getting these facilities at home. The children, who get some kind

of help in doing homework, perform better than those who do not get any help at the home level. Activities of the parents, siblings and other members also affect the performance of the children.

It is also found from the study that emotional disturbances at home have profound influence on the children and their performances. Children, who go through tensions and anxiety everyday at home, fail to achieve success whereas children who live in peaceful atmosphere achieve success in the examinations. Parental attitude is found to be the most important factor in the performance of the children. Parents of good and average students show positive attitude towards the education of their children. It is also important to note that attitudes vary according to the educational backgrounds of the parents. Educated parents encourage and motivate their children to perform well whereas non-literate and less educated parents do not seem to value their children's education.

Differences in parental attitude are found to be depended on the socio-economic conditions of the family. It is observed that parents belonging to middle and upper middle class families educate their children for bright future and reputation in the society and those from low middle class view it differently. These parents educate their children so that they will get good jobs and will be able to earn. Gender differentiation is found to be inherent in the attitude of the parents which hamper academic performance of the girls. Differentiation is clearly seen in terms of motivation and encouragement they give to their children; the aspirations and expectations they have for their children and the environment created for learning among the boys and girls.

However, the educational levels of parents affect their attitudes towards education of their daughters. It is found that non-literate or less educated parents differentiate children on the basis of gender whereas it is not found among the parents who have gone beyond higher secondary level of education. For instance, a few less educated parents think that the education of their children is a wastage of money and time.

Parental time plays important role in the performance of the children. Children whose parents spend much time for the studies of the children tend to perform well. So far as reinforcement at the home is concerned, it is found that positive reinforcements enhance performance of the children while punishments are found to have negative impact on the performance of children.

The study also found an influence of the school factors on the academic performance of the children. It is found that the teachers perceive children differently and on the basis of their perceptions they expect the children to perform. While the teachers expect the good students to perform well always, the low performing students are not expected to score well which further hampers their performance. It is important to note that teachers do not expect much from the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe children because they think that these children can not score high percentage of marks. The children and their parents accept that such attitudes of teachers affect the performances of the children. It is also found that teacher' time and attention are unequally divided among students on the basis of their perceptions. The teachers give more time and attention to high performing students. The teachers also show more attention to the 'good' student.

Reinforcements given by the teachers also affect the performance of the children. While rewards enhance the performance of the children, punishments make them more nervous and hamper their performances. Peer group relations influence performance of the children because it develops competition among the children and as a result increases their performance. But attitude of the peers towards each other sometimes has negative impact on the performances of children. The self-conceptions of the children also have impact on their performances. It is found that the good students and most of the average students have strong self-confidence which affects their performance positively whereas it is lacking in low performing students.

From the preceding discussions, it is clear that the differences in academic performance of children are deep rooted in the sociological analysis. Therefore, it is

important to understand the multiple contexts of the inequalities in the academic performance of children. From an overview of the foregoing discussions, we may conclude that the differences in the academic performances are due to different home backgrounds of the children and the institutional factors as well.

There are also some implications of this study. Firstly, the cultural background of the child is responsible for the variations in the academic performance. As Bourdieu highlights the role of culture and the way it perpetuates inequality. (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977). Secondly, the social class of the child plays a crucial role in the performance of the children. Class domination in educational sites is through systematic violence and by validating the culture of the ruling class as the approved school culture. Schools legitimize the dominant cultural capital with school knowledge. (Arnowitz and Giroux, 1986). As the knowledge of the upper classes is valued more and is the approved school knowledge, it creates advantages for children from privileged backgrounds and puts the working class children in disadvantage. It is as if children from upper and middle classes have the key to unlock the learning from school while children from working class families come without the key. Thirdly, the academic performance of the girls is affected by the gender stereotypes and bias of the parents and teachers. The same education provisions for girls may produce unequal outcomes because of gender based socialization. (Acker, 1994). The attitudes of teachers contribute to sex-stereotyped subject choices within schools and eventually to sex-stereotyped occupations for school learners. (Acker, 1994).

LIMITATIONS AND FURTHER AREAS OF RESEARCH

Notwithstanding some of the strengths of the present study, the study has certain limitations. Due to the constraints of time, many important issues still remain to be covered by the study which may be taken up as future areas of research at the doctoral level. Some of the aspects are:

- Analyzing the differences in academic performances of children more in terms of caste, tribe, social class and gender.

- Conducting more classroom observations in order to go deeper into the classroom performances of the children
- Making a comparative study of the performances of the children in a Government school with that of a private and public school.
- Focusing more on the performance of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe girls in Orissa.

All these areas may help in understanding the variations in the academic performances of the children at the secondary level of education in the state of Orissa. On the whole, the present study has made a small endeavour to understand the social context of academic performance of children in secondary level of education in Orissa.

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APPENDIX-I

BASIC PROFILE OF THE CHILDREN

SERIAL NUMBER	NAME	GENDER	CATEGORY	ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE
1	Akshaya Naik	Male	SC	Average Performer
2	Anita Pattanaik	Female	General	Average Performer
3	Anshuman Das	Male	General	Low Performer
4	Bishnu Bhoi	Male	SC	Low Performer
5	Debabrata Majhi	Male	ST	Average Performer
6	Deepika Pradhan	Female	OBC	Low Performer
7	Dolly Rout	Female	OBC	Low Performer
8	Janaki Reddy	Female	General	Low Performer
9	Kailash Mohapatra	Male	General	Average Performer
10	Kavita Jena	Female	OBC	High Performer
11	Lalit Mohanty	Male	General	Low Performer
12	Laxman Paikrai	Male	General	High Performer
13	Mitali Rath	Female	General	High Performer
14	Pankaj Mishra	Male	General	High Performer
15	Parvati Kumari	Female	SC	Low Performer
16	Pratap Majhi	Male	ST	Low Performer
17	Priyanka Mohapatra	Female	General	Average Performer
18	Ranjan Sahoo	Male	OBC	Average Performer
19	S. Lilla Reddy	Female	General	Low Performer
20	Sasmita Mohapatra	Female	General	Low Performer
21	Saswat Kar	Male	General	High Performer
22	Sonali Sahoo	Female	OBC	Low Performer
23	Sudhanshu Sahoo	Male	OBC	Low Performer
24	Suhashini Pradhan	Female	OBC	Average Performer

*Pseudonyms have been used for the students

*The students have been categorized into *High Performer*, *Average Performer* and *Low Performer* on the basis of marks scored in the annual examination of class VIII.

*High performers are those who have scored 70% and above, average performers are those students who have scored in between 50%-70% and low performers are those students who have scored below 50% in the annual examination of class VIII.

*SC stands for Scheduled Caste

*ST stands for Scheduled Tribe

*OBC stands for Other Backward Class

APPENDIX-II

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR THE CHILDREN

(I) BASIC PROFILE OF THE STUDENTS

Name of the Child:

Age of the Child:

Gender of the Child:

Class of Study:

Name of the School:

Category of the Child (SC/ ST/ OBC/ GENERAL):

-Actual Category:

Percentage of Marks in the Annual Examination of Class VIII:

Percentage of Marks in the Half-Yearly Examination of Class IX:

Father's Educational Background:

Father's Occupation:

Mother's Educational Background:

Mother's Occupation:

Educational Backgrounds of the Siblings:

Type of the Family:

Number of Members in the Family:

Number of Siblings:

(II) DAILY ROUTINE OF THE CHILD

How do you spend your time in a day?

When do you go to sleep in the night and get up in the morning?

What do you do after your school gets over?

What do you like to do after your school hours?

How do you spend your evening?

How much time do you study at home?

(i) Regularly

(ii) During examinations

How much time do you spend in tuitions?

How much time do you help your father and mother in domestic work?

How do you spend your holidays?

(III) HOME FACTORS

Do your parents encourage you to go to school everyday? (Yes/ No/ No response)

-If not, why do not they do so?

Do they show interest in your studies? (Yes/ No/ No response)

-If not, why do not they show interest?

Why do your parents want to educate you?

How much time does your father give to you for your studies everyday?

-If he does not give you time, then what is the reason behind this?

How much time does your mother give to you for your studies everyday?

-If she does not give you time, then what is the reason behind this?

How do you do your home assignments?

-If you have a doubt, whom do you go to?

Does your father help you do your homework?

-If yes, how and in what way?

-If no, why does not he help you?

Does your mother help you do your homework?

-If yes, how and in what way?

-If no, why does not she help you?

Do you help your parents in domestic work? (Yes/ No)

-If yes, how and in what way?

-If no, why?

Do you have to look after your younger siblings? (Yes/ No)

-If yes, how much time do you spend for it?

What do your parents do when you study at home?

What do your siblings do when you study?

Do you study with your siblings at home?

Do you go to private tuitions? (Yes/ No/ No response)

-If yes, for what subjects?

-How much is the fees?

-If not, why do not you go?

Do you get your uniform, books, copies, bags, etc. on time? (Yes/ No/ No response)

-If no, why so?

Do you always get peaceful atmosphere at home to study? (Yes/ No/ No response)

-If not, why so?

-Who creates problems or disturbances?

Do you face any difficulty or problem in concentration while studying? (Yes/ No/ No response)

-If yes, what type of problem do you face?

Do you get rewards from your parents for your good performance? (Yes/ No/ No response)

-If yes, how and in what way?

-If not, why?

-How does it affect your performance?

Do you get punishments from your parents for your poor performance? (Yes/ No/ No response)

-If yes, how and in what way?

-If no, why?

-How does it affect your performance?

Do your parents encourage you to perform better? (Yes/ No/ No response) -

-If not, why?

(IV) SCHOOL FACTORS

Do you like to go to school? (Yes/ No/ No response)

-If yes, why?

-If not, why?

-What else do you want to do?

Do you attend the school regularly? (Yes/ No/ No response)

-If no, why are you not regular?

-Do you bunk classes? (Yes/ No/ No response)

-If yes, why?

-What do you do instead of going to school?

Which teacher do you like most and why?

How do your teachers teach in the class?

Do your teachers show interest in your studies? (Yes/ No/ No response)

-If yes, in what way?

-If not, why?

Do you understand the lessons taught in the class properly? (Yes/ No/ No response)

Do you ask your doubt to your teachers? (Yes/ No/ No response)

-If no, why so?

When you do not understand the lessons, do the teachers clarify or simplify it? (Yes/ No/ No response)

Do your teachers give equal attention to everyone in the class? (Yes/ No/ No response)

-If no, why?

-Whom do they give more attention and why?

Do your teachers give you extra time and attention when you do not perform well? (Yes/ No/ No response)

Do you get rewards from your teachers for your good performance? (Yes/ No/ No response)

-If yes, how and in what way?

-If not, why?

-How does it affect your performance?

**Do you get punishments from your teachers for your poor performance?
(Yes/ No/ No response)**

-If yes, how and in what way?

-If no, why?

-How does it affect your performance?

How do you feel when your friends secure better and worse marks than you?

**Do you try to improve when you score less marks than your friends? (Yes/
No/ No response)**

-If no, why?

How do your friends behave with you in the class?

Do you help your friends in studies? (Yes/ No/ No response)

-If yes, how?

-If no, why?

Do your friends help you in your studies? (Yes/ No/ No response)

-If yes, how?

-If no, why?

Do the good students in the class help you out if you have doubts? (Yes/ No/ No response)

Do you face any problem in learning? (Yes/ No/ No response)

-If yes, what type of problem?

Do you face any problem in adjustment in the school environment? (Yes/ No/ No response)

What do you think about your performance in the half-yearly examination this year and also in the annual examination of class VIII?

Are you satisfied with your performance?

-If not, what are the reasons behind this?

What are the reasons of your good performance?

Do you think that you can improve?

-If yes, how can you improve?

-If no, why do you think so?

APPENDIX-III

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR THE PARENTS

What do you do?

How many children do you have?

How many family members are there in your family?

How much do you earn per month?

How much do you spend on each child every month?

How much do you spend for the education of each child every month?

What is your educational qualification?

How much time do you give to your child for his/ her studies everyday?

Do you think that your child's education is important? (Yes/ No/ No response)

-If yes, why do you think so?

-If not what are the reasons behind this?

How much time do you help the child in his/ her homework?

-During examinations

-Regularly

How and in what way do you help the child?

When the child comes to you with his/ her doubts and assignments, how do you react?

Do you send your child to tuitions? (Yes/ No/ No response)

How long does your child study at home?

What do you and your spouse do during the study time of the children?

Do you ask your children for help in domestic work?

How do you react to your child's examination result?

What does your child do after coming back from the school?

-Boys

-Girls

Do you give rewards to the child for good performance? (Yes/ No/ No response)

-If yes, what kind of rewards do you give?

-How does it affect your child's performance?

-If not, what are the reasons behind this?

-How does it affect your child's performance?

Does the school organize parent-teacher interactions? (Yes/ No/ No response)

-If yes, do you go to the meetings? (Yes/ No/ No response)

-If yes, what do you discuss there?

-How does it help your child?

Why did you send the child to this school?

Does your child go to the school everyday? (Yes/ No/ Don't know/ No response)

-If no, what are the reasons behind this?

Do you encourage your child to go to the school everyday? (Yes/ No/ No response)

-If no, what are the reasons behind this?

Is your child happy with the teachers and their teaching at school? (Yes/ No/ Don't know/ No response)

-If no, what are the reasons behind this?

Are you happy with the teachers and their teaching at school? (Yes/ No/ Don't know/ No response)

-If no, what are the reasons behind this?

Do you think that the teachers give proper time and attention to your child? (Yes/ No/ Don't know/ No response)

-If no, what are the reasons behind this?

-To whom the teachers give more attention and why?

Do you think that the teachers give equal time and attention to every child in the class? (Yes/ No/ Don't know/ No response)

-If no, what are the reasons behind this?

What do you think about the reinforcements given by the teachers in school?

How does it affect the performance of the child?

Does your child face any kind of difficulties in the school? (Yes/ No/ Don't know/ No response)

-If so, what are the kinds of problems the child experiences in the school?

How do you think about the performance of your child?

Are you satisfied with his/ her performance? (Yes/ No/ Don't know/ No response)

-If so, what are the reasons behind his/ her good performance?

-If no, what are the reasons for his poor performance in the examination?

What do you think how he/ she can improve his/ her performance?

APPENDIX-IV

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR THE TEACHERS

Which standard do you teach?

How do the children in your class perform in the examinations?

What are the reasons for the variations in the performances of the children?

How do children perform in the classroom?

Who performs better and why?

What do you think about the performance of the children?

What are your expectations from the children in your class?

What do you think about the role of the family in the performance of the children?

How do size and type of the family affect the performance of the child?

How is Socio-economic status of the family related to the academic performance of the children?

How the occupations of the parents affect the performance of the children?

What do you think about the role of the parents in the achievement of the children?

How do the educational backgrounds of the parents matter in the performance of the children?

Do you think that the parents give proper time and attention to the children's studies? (Yes/ No)

-If yes, how does it help the child?

-If no, why so?

-How does it affect the studies of the children?

How do the parental attitudes towards the education of their children affect their academic performance?

Does your school organize parent-teacher meetings? (Yes/ No)

-If not, why do not you organize such meetings?

-If yes, do the parents come for the meetings? (Yes/ No)

-If not, what are the reasons for their reluctance to attend the meetings?

-If yes, what do you discuss there?

-How does it affect the child's performance?

How do you react to the good or poor performance of the children?

How do you react to their classroom performance?

What do you think about reinforcements?

**Do you reward the children for good results or classroom performance?
(Yes/ No)**

-If not, what are the reasons behind this?

-If yes, what kinds of rewards do you give?

-How does this affect the performance of the children?

**Do you punish the children for poor results or classroom performance? (Yes/
No)**

-If not, what are the reasons behind this?

-If yes, what kinds of punishments do you give?

-How does this affect the performance of the children?

Do you give equal time and attention to every child in the class? (Yes/ No)

-If not, what are the reasons behind this?

-To whom, do you give more time and attention and why?

**Do you give extra time to the low performing children to improve their
performance? (Yes/ No)**

-If yes, does it help the child?

-If no, what are the reasons behind this?

Do the children understand the lessons properly in your class?

Do you explain the lessons to the children when they do not-understand?

(Yes/ No)

-If no, what are the reasons behind this?

How do you react when the children come to you with their doubts?

What do you think about the performance of the girls in the class?

What do you think about the performance of the Scheduled Caste students in the class?

What do you think about the performance of the Scheduled Tribe students in the class?