Global Aspirations and Local Obligations: An Ethnographic Exploration of the Construction of Classed and Gendered Identities in Three Delhi Primary School Communities

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A thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Education
May, 2018.
Declaration


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Abstract

Based on ethnographic research with Class V students (generally aged 9-11 years old), their teachers and parents, this thesis explores how gendered and classed identities are constructed in two MCD government elementary schools and one Kindergarten-Class XII (K-XII) private school in West Delhi, India. I consider how local, national and global understandings of gender, class and education shape and are shaped by these identities. Through this thesis, I highlight a conformity of aspirations, among both boys and girls, in the two government and one private school, in which education is viewed as a route achieve middle class lifestyles and careers. Across the schools, students' identities are shaped within a middle-class culture of schooling in which students are expected to be on track to become individual, self-responsiblised, entrepreneurial subjects who are committed to the development of the nation. However, more importantly, schools encourage students to develop relational identities in which they pursue individual aspirations within the broader context of an emphasis on the prioritisation of family, the nation and religion. As a result, both a (neoliberal) middle class culture of schooling and- more importantly- (Hindu) religious nationalist notions of national identity play a central role in shaping the classed and gendered identities of students in these primary schools. Within the framework of Hindu cosmopolitanism, it is the Hindu, middle-class boy that emerges as the normative school child, against which both girls and the 'poor'/working class are placed in deficit.
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Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my supervisors, Alexandra Allan and Fran Martin, for your patience and support throughout the PhD process. Your guidance and insight has been invaluable and I have really enjoyed learning from you both. Thank you for encouraging me to embark on the PhD and for helping me the whole way through.

Thank you also to my colleagues and friends in Delhi who made this study possible. Vijaya, thank you working with me to undertake research in MCD schools, for your enthusiasm for this project, your generosity and for your friendship. Thank you to Professor Zaidi, Mr. Bhatnagar, Pawaan and Shirlia for your time, advice and support through my fieldwork and thank you Latish for your help with Hindi translation and transcription.

To my friends and family, I am very grateful for your patience and support. Thank you to Kat for giving so much to this project, for being with me each step of the way, and for your unflinching love and support. Thank you to mum, dad, Do and Tash for your enthusiasm, generosity and guidance and for always having faith in me. Jo and Emmie Furey, I will always be grateful for the way that you have welcomed me into your home and given me so much support over the last four years, thank you. Thank you to Smriti and her parents for welcoming me into the family and for being such good friends. Thank you also to Mike, Ceri, Kristina, Fin, Jon, Di, Vicki and Simon.

Thank you last of all to all the students, teachers and parents in Delhi for giving up your time, sharing your experiences with me and for allowing me to spend time with you in your school communities.
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACP</td>
<td>Awakened Citizens Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBSE</td>
<td>Central Board of Secondary Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DFID</td>
<td>Department for International Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DPEP</td>
<td>District Primary Education Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EfA</td>
<td>Education for All</td>
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<tr>
<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union</td>
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<tr>
<td>GAD</td>
<td>Gender and Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GoI</td>
<td>Government of India</td>
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<tr>
<td>IES</td>
<td>Inspire English School</td>
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<tr>
<td>IMF</td>
<td>International Monetary Fund</td>
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<tr>
<td>JRM</td>
<td>Joint Review Mission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MCD</td>
<td>Municipal Corporation of Delhi</td>
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<td>MDG</td>
<td>Millennium Development Goals</td>
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<tr>
<td>NCERT</td>
<td>National Council of Educational Research And Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-Governmental Organisation</td>
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<tr>
<td>RTE</td>
<td>Right to Education Act</td>
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<td>SAP</td>
<td>Structural Adjustment Program</td>
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<tr>
<td>SSA</td>
<td>Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNESCO</td>
<td>United Nations Educational Cultural and Scientific Organisation</td>
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<td>UNICEF</td>
<td>United Nations Childrens Fund</td>
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<tr>
<td>UPE</td>
<td>Universal Primary Enrolment</td>
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Chapter 1 Introduction: Global and Local Forces and the Construction of Gendered and Classed Identities in Indian Schooling.

1.1 Background to the Study

During my first visit to India in 2012, whilst on a research internship with UNICEF India, I was told on numerous occasions that Delhi- and India- were undergoing significant transformations. The influx of cultural goods (mainly Western) from overseas had resulted in new lifestyles and practices while the growing economy had produced a diverse range of employment opportunities (Brosius, 2010; Fernandes, 2006). These aspects of economic globalisation created a strong sense of optimism about the future prosperity of India and it was widely anticipated that the next generation of Indians would be better off than their parents (Pew, 2017; Sancho, 2015). At the centre of both these new opportunities and new practices were the Indian middle class (Brosius, 2010; Fernandes, 2006). Media representations in India (and globally) highlighted the growing number of Indians entering the middle class – with vast numbers of the population, from widely different backgrounds, now identified as middle class (Baviskar & Ray, 2011; Fernandes, 2006).

There was a sense among the people that I spoke to that the continued growth of this ‘globally savvy’ group would be instrumental to India’s future on the world stage. This was especially true given the wide held contention that for continued economic growth, Indians would need to develop the skills to compete in the global knowledge economy (Fernandes, 2006; Gooptu, 2014; Sancho, 2015). In this sense global knowledge and skills, especially professional degrees and English language learning, were seen as particularly important if families were to benefit from the expanding but increasingly competitive opportunities available to them (Nambissan, 2010; Sancho, 2015).

Education, Development and Inequality

Throughout this first visit, a variety of different sources- including staff at UNICEF, government officials, mainstream media, and people that I met- seemed to converge around the idea that the future success of India was contingent upon performance in education. Beyond the attainment of future skills for the knowledge economy,
education was also perceived as a means to address different forms of inequality in India. On the basis of improving social equality and upskilling the nation, the Indian state education system had been massively expanded over the years, as part of a national (and global) attempt to provide universal access to education. Through the implementation of the Right to Education act (RTE, 2009), the Government of India legislated that education should be free and compulsory for all children aged 6-14. The result was that aspirations for education (and middle-class careers and lifestyles) were widespread (Majumdar & Moolj, 2011; Nambissan, 2010; Sancho, 2015) and more children were going to school than ever before (GOI EFA Report, 2008).

In most areas of primary education, almost all children in India are enrolled in school and enrollment increased by 19.8 per cent for girls (and 13.7% overall) between the years 2000 and 2005 (GOI EFA Report, 2008). Reductions in the number of out of school children (from 25 million in 2003 to 8.1 million in mid–2009) suggest that the retention of students in schooling has also improved (UNICEF, 2010). Increases in the number of children accessing educational services, comes alongside rises in literacy rates for both women and men (GOI Census, 2011; GOI EFA Report, 2008).

Despite these improvements, concerns remain about the quality of the education now on offer (Nambissan, 2014; Unterhalter, 2007, 2014). Influenced by global development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs, 2000) and Education for All (EfA, 1990), the education system in India was developed in the context of a global policies relating to ‘good governance’ and accountability (Colclough and De, 2010). The narrowing of the EfA agenda- to a focus on universal primary education (UPE)- has led to a focus on infrastructure development and the access to- and participation and retention in- primary schooling (Aikman and Unterhalter, 2013; Colclough and De, 2010; Unterhalter, 2007, 2014). Through this process, efforts to achieve gender equality and a concern for participation and sustainability were narrowed to a limited notion of gender parity (Unterhalter, 2014).

Under pressure to avail the opportunities that the ‘right kind’ of education could offer, families in India had already started ‘voting with their feet’. From the 1990s, large numbers left the government school system in favour of the private sector (Nambissan, 2014). By 2012- the time of my first visit to India- the perceived poor quality of government provision, and government partnerships with the private sector had led to a to a massive private education sector that was starting to rival the state education
system and included families from a diverse range of backgrounds (Chopra & Jeffrey, 2005; Kumar, 2011; Sancho, 2015).

During my two visits to Delhi prior to fieldwork- on a research internship with UNICEF (in 2012) and then UNESCO (in 2014)- I encountered a private education sector that ranged from elite schools, catering for the wealthiest in society, to a low-fee private school sector, catering for the poor (Srivastava, 2010; Nambissan, 2014). In different ways, these schools based their marketing practices around key rhetoric relating to the skills necessary for success in the national and global economy. In the numerous advertisements, I encountered on billboards or in newspaper/magazines, English language learning and high levels of academic success appeared to be central to the offer of these private schools (Nambissan, 2014; Srivasatava, 2008). The more prestigious private schools also emphasized technology, global/life skills and international awareness (Kumar, 2011; Nambissan, 2014).

The introduction of these new forms of schooling led to intense debates about whether or not private schools- especially low-fee private schools- were increasing or reducing social equality (Dixon, 2012, Nambissan, 2010, 2014; Srivastava, 2008; Tooley and Dixon, 2006). Historically, a range of policies had been enacted to reduce the disadvantage faced by groups marginalised by gender, caste and religious factors (Nambissan, 2014). The emerging, stratified choice-based education system appeared to be re-establishing disadvantage by leaving socially disadvantaged groups in the neglected state sector (Chopra & Jeffrey, 2005). Furthermore, increases in private tuition and coaching centres alongside increasing parental involvement in education led to what appeared to be a middle-class culture of schooling focused on English language, high aspirations and intense competition (Manjumdar & Mooij, 2011; Sancho, 2015). This suggested to me that opportunities for middle class lifestyles and careers were largely contingent upon the extent to which an individual or family could pay for the education that would enable them to realize these aspirations.

**Family Responsibilisation**

In the context of growing concerns about inequality, government policies- especially the hugely influential RTE (2009) and its related discourses- appeared to be taking education rights seriously (Maithreyi and Sriprakash, 2018; Sancho, 2015). However,
this rights-based approach to education sat at odds with an increasingly decentralised and privatised education system (Maithreyi and Sriprakash, 2018). Recent scholarship has shown that in policies such as the RTE (2009)-contemporary government policy in India has positioned as poor families as both in deficit and simultaneously as needing to take responsibility over their incorporation in to state goals (Maithreyi and Sriprakash, 2018). Maithreyi and Sriprakash (2018), suggest that this positioning reveals the ‘modalities of the current neo-liberal governance in Indian education: the simultaneous expansion of ‘welfare’ logics alongside an emphasis on participation and responsibility of the individual’. This transfer of responsibility has taken place through a reconfiguration of the language of ‘rights’: from government commitments to its people to individual responsibility to achieve state goals (Gooptu, 2014; Maithreyi and Sriprakash, 2018). Maithreyi and Sriprakash (2018), suggest that this “represents the harnessing of the parent/family in entrenching and legitimizing and unequal education system”.

This approach to educational development through rights based discourses, is often considered to reflect global (neoliberal) development thinking in education: where school participation is positioned more as an individual ‘moral’ responsibility than a collective commitment to a common school system and educational equality (Maithreyi and Sriprakash, 2018). Scholarship has shown that neoliberal education policies, promoting school choice, the corporatization of universities, public private partnerships and the restructuring of teaching workforces (Compton and Weiner, 2008; Connell, 2013; Connell and Dados, 2014) have helped to bring education to the service of the global economy (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010).

During my work at both UNICEF and UNESCO, I came to see how some global organisations- especially the World Bank- legitimized this approach to development while others (especially UNESCO) predominantly seemed to be struggling to redefine their educational ethos in the context of these changes. During my internship at UNESCO in 2014, UNESCO attempted to reassert the importance of public ownership of education through the Muscat Agreement: “Through governments, the state is the custodian of quality education as a public good, recognizing the contribution of civil society, communities, families, learners and other stakeholders to education” (UNESCO, 2014). However, while UNESCO’s Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs, 2015) discourse on education was couched in the language of rights, Public
Private Partnerships/Public Private Initiatives (PPPs/PPIs) were promoted as an important means of financing the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (Gideon & Unterhalter, 2017).

While PPPs have been promoted by donor agencies (World Bank, UNESCO, DFID) as a means for countries in the Global South to raise finance without increasing public sector debt, concerns have been raised that they represent a shift towards the private financing and provision of public services which ultimately alters the form of social development (Gideon & Unterhalter, 2017). Gerrard (2015, p. 857) argues that PPPs are driven by a neoliberal approach to development that has “dramatically changed the practice and understanding of the public, as markets and private interests are brought in partnership with the state in the provision of education.” In India, Krishnan Kumar (2008) argues that PPPs are “not an idea, but rather an ideology which promotes privatisation” in order to reduce the government’s responsibility for education.

Government policies emphasizing the responsibility of families (and individuals) for opportunities and success in education tend to overlook the economic and social structures that sustain inequality (Young, 2011; Maithreyi and Sripракash, 2018). Iris young (2011) argues that although individuals may experience economic and social structures as objective and exogenous, they are in fact the consequence of policies, actions and decisions. Accumulated human choices ultimately establish a larger structure which places some individuals in subordinate positions to others (Young, 2011). Rather than it simply being a case of individuals/families failing to take responsibility for their education, research has highlighted that unequal educational opportunities in India are the result of multiple social factors, including class (Gilbertson, 2017; Nambissan, 2010; Sancho, 2015), caste (Balagopalan, 2011; Gilbertson, 2017), community background (Thapan, 2014) and gender (Gilbertson, 2017; Page, 2003; Ramachandran, 2009). Rawal (2014) has argued that in India, caste, class and gender combine to create significant inequality:

“First, India is a country where inequality in contemporary times has been on the rise and has taken incredible proportions. Second, the dividing lines of inequality are drawn between classes, between castes, tribes and communities, and between men and women. And finally, that these dividing lines of class, caste and gender, drawn in thick long-lasting paint, overlap with each other in no insignificant way. As a result,
most deprived are the ones that carry the triple burden: of being landless, of belonging to a disadvantaged social group, and of being women.” (Rawal, 2014, para. 2)

As I came to see that these social factors were performed/enacted, it became clear that the intersection of gender, class and caste impacted upon the educational opportunities of children in India. It was this recognition that led me to seek to understand how students’ identities shaped their experiences of education. Gender and local cultural identity were the social factors- and elements of identity - that initially struck me as important. During my internship at UNICEF in 2012, gender equality was constantly referenced as an overarching concern that was relevant to all of the organisation’s programs and policies. The research literature also highlighted significant disparities between males and females in India and the prevalence of government efforts to reduce gender inequality through education (CREATE, 2009; Nambissan, 2014; Ramachandran, 2009). Writing my Master’s thesis- a PhD proposal to investigate teacher’s perceptions of gender in India- It was clear to me that gender inequalities in India remained a significant issue.

Gender Equality: A Global and Local Priority

In the first year of my PhD, while undertaking a four-month internship with UNESCO in Delhi, I found that gender equality had recently emerged as critical element of global development policy and programs. In 2014, UNESCO had made gender equality one of its two global priorities and aimed to achieve this through gender mainstreaming and gender specific programming (UNESCO, 2014b). Education was consistently positioned as a key tool to address gender inequality and the education of women and girls was widely viewed as being central to the empowerment of women and national economic success. Policies and programs appeared to be typically directed at the individual level of responsibility- helping women learn their responsibilities (‘know their rights’), improve their circumstances and empower themselves/ their community/the nation (Koffman & Gill, 2013). Gender inequality in India had also emerged as cause for concern in western/global media organisations/publications, especially following high profile cases of gender based violence, including the gang rape and murder of Jyoti Pande Singh in Delhi in 2012 (Goswami, 2014). Within global media and global policies these concerns led to a tendency to oscillate in their representations of women
and girls in India in relation to empowered ‘can-do’ and vulnerable or at-risk femininities (Koffman and Gill, 2013).

National policies to address gender inequality appeared to draw on elements of these global discourses of ‘can-do’ and ‘at risk’ girls whilst maintaining culturally distinct, nationalistic notions of empowerment. One policy that was prominent and celebrated during my time at UNESCO- Beti Bacho Beti Padho (Save Girl Child, Educate Girl Child)- aimed to challenge marital norms and save girls from discrimination- especially sex selective abortion or female foeticide. Much like global policy campaigns, this policy represented girls (in contrast to boys) in rather simplistic ways- as being vulnerable, abused victims- and underscored the importance of family responsibility for the education of girls. At the launch of the expansion of the policy, the Prime Minister Narendra Modi emphasised the need to ‘save’ women and girls by drawing on a quote (from Altaf Hussain Hali) that associated women and girls with purity and dignity: "O Sisters, mothers, daughters - you are the ornaments of the world, you are the life of nations, the dignity of civilizations." (Press Information Bureau, 2018). During the same speech, the Prime Minister also contrasted an individualistic, self-centred, consumption-orientated masculinity with a self-less, empowered, entrepreneurial, family-orientated femininity to highlight the important, contemporary role that women had within the family:

Some people think that the son will be a support during their old-age. However, the situation is different now. I have seen such families where there are four sons with each having a Bungalow of their own and fancy cars but their parents are spending their old-age in old-age homes. On the other hand, I have also seen such families where there is a single daughter but she takes care of her parents, works hard, earns for her parents. Often she doesn't marry just to take care of her parents so that they don't suffer. (Press Information Bureau, 2018)

National media representations of women and girls echoed these narratives of femininity by depicting women as vulnerable on the one hand and as the new icons of India - ‘beautiful and sophisticated by global standards’ but also distinctly Indian (‘showing respect to… nationalist values and norms’) on the other (Radhakrishnan, 2009). These representations also appeared to be class based- the poor woman/girl was vulnerable and marginalized while the middle class woman was ‘beautiful’, ‘sophisticated’ and ‘respectable’ (Radhakrishnan, 2011; Vijayakmar, 2014). In the
book ‘Future Girl’, Anita Harris has shown how these representations are apparent in
girl groups across the world as young women and girls are constructed as the
‘vanguard of new subjectivity’ that is both celebratory and regulatory (2004, p. 1). In
order to account for the way in which discourses of class and gender shape identities,
it is important to consider how the two factors intersect.

**Classed and Gendered Identities and Inequality in Education**

Given the importance of different social factors- in this case gender and class-
researchers (Sen, 1990; Omvedt, 1993) have argued that when attempting to
understand people’s lives, it is vital to consider the importance of their local context
alongside the intersection of these social factors. This concern has led to suggestions
that research of women per se in India makes up an “empty theoretical category” and
assumptions about the similarities of all women or all men are hugely misguided (Sen,
1990; Datar, 1993; Dietrich, 1992; Omvedt, 1993). Instead, Intersectional theorists
argue that oppression is produced through the interaction of multiple, decentered, and
coe-constitutive axes (Crenshaw, 1991). An intersectional approach enables us to
consider the relations between the systems of oppression which construct our
identities and our social locations in hierarchies of power and privilege. Rather than
taking a unitary or additive approach to intersectionality (in which different identity
categories can be ‘added together’ to understand disadvantage/oppression), in
viewing identity as shifting and multiple it is possible to consider how social categories
combine to produce different identities and positions, and analyse the relationship
between processes of identity construction and systems of domination (Dhamoon,
2008). This entails viewing ‘identity’ as being the person that one is designated to be
by a system of classification and control (Connell, 2014, p. 174).

In the context of policies emphasizing individual responsibility and school choice,
socio-economic class (alongside gender) has played an increasingly important role in
shaping people’s life chances- none more so than in education. In this context, it is
difficult to isolate gender from other forms of social inequality. While 20% of seats are
reserved in low-fee private schools for the ‘more marginalized’, research has shown
that it is the economically privileged amongst disadvantaged groups are more likely to
obtain this opportunity (Srivastava, 2008). Similarly, when family finances are limited,
boys in the family are more likely to be sent to private schools and girls to government schools (Srivastava, 2010).

A number of scholars have shown how gendered and classed identities (Fernandes, 2006; Radhakrishnan, 2011; Srivastava, 2015) continue to play an important role in nationalist constructions of Indian identity. Radhakrishnan (2009, p. 195) suggests that “constructions of the Indian home, and the middle-class woman who protects the home, continue to powerfully shape everyday articulations of national belonging, even as they are transformed through individual negotiations and a global economy”. This demonstrates that despite the more recent emphasis on individual/family responsibility and identity, contemporary articulations of national identity in India continue to be shaped by collective identities (Fernandes, 2006; Baviskar and Ray, 2011). As morality, respectability and family values continue to be important signifiers of Indian modernity gendered and classed identities have come to the fore (Fernandes & Heller, 2006; Gilbertson, 2017; Radhakrishnan, 2011).

1.2 Research Purpose

This thesis represents an attempt to explore the way in which global and local forces shape how students construct their gendered and classed identities in a rapidly changing environment. Due to the prominent role that gender and class have played in the modern history of India and the importance of gender and class in understanding contemporary Indian society, the concepts of gender and class were central to this analysis. With a focus on these aspects of social identity (gender and class), I explored the broader historical, socioeconomic, political and cultural context within which they are embedded (Barrett, 2012). This meant grounding my analysis in local realities (Barrett, 2012) to explore the power relations between global, national and local discourses in education. I focused on how gendered and classed identities were being constructed in government schools for the working class/poor and a private school for the middle class in Delhi. In doing so, I explore how the education system both perpetuates and addresses inequalities (Barrett, 2012)

The research took place in one section of Class (Year) 5 (age 9-10 years old) in three different schools in West Delhi, India. One school was a Kindergarten to Class 12 private school, called IES, and the other two schools were government MCD primary
schools catering for classes 1 to 5. As a white, western researcher from a university in the global North undertaking research in India, I foreground concerns raised by scholars about the ‘postcolonial periphery as a site of knowledge production’ (Houtondji, 1997 in Connell, 2014). The cross-cultural, international and transnational nature of this research raises a number of methodological and ethical challenges, especially because research has been implicated in “the worst excesses of colonialism” (Tuhiwai Smith, 1999, p.1).

Focusing on the perspectives of the participants, I explore their stories and experiences of schooling in Delhi. This is an attempt to consider how dominant narratives in these school communities are created and how the individual performances of identity sustaining these narratives compare to these ‘ideals’. In doing so I explore how local logics, histories, philosophies and politics contribute to issues of social justice in education; especially the implications that global and national discourses, policies and agendas have on social inequalities (see chapter 2). This research is specifically undertaken with an awareness that the world economy of knowledge is structured by the history of colonialism and current north-south global inequalities (Connell, 2007).

The focus of this research is how children in Indian primary schools construct their gendered and classed identities. While recent studies have started to explore young people’s experiences of gender (Gilbertson, 2017; Osella & Osella, 1998; Thapan, 2014) and class (Gilbertson, 2017; Sancho, 2016), only Iyer’s (2017) recent study of secondary school students’ experiences of gender and sexuality has foregrounded the role that global discourses and the institutional context plays in shaping students’ identities- and this study did not look at students of a primary age. Furthermore, while this thesis contributes to the existing body of literature on middle-class experiences and identities in Indian schools (Gilbertson, 2017; Iyer, 2017; Jeffrey, 2008, 2009; Sancho, 2015; Brown, Scrase & Ganguly-Scrase, 2017), it moves beyond an emphasis on the middle class to consider how both working class and middle class students construct their identities in the context of a middle class culture of schooling. This thesis highlights how emerging, normative notions of middleclassness are playing a definitive role in mediating global and local discourses and delineating the boundaries of identity construction (Fernandes, 2006; Radhakrishan, 2009, 2011).
1.3 Research Questions

In an effort to explore the identities of working class and middle-class students in Delhi, my research questions are:

- How are gendered and classed identities constructed in government and private primary school contexts in Delhi and what role do local and global forces play in their construction?

Sub-questions:

- How do school communities (students, teachers/other staff and parents) understand, talk about, perform and represent gender and class in these local contexts?
- How do people (students, teachers and parents) in these school communities perceive the global and local and how does this impact upon their identities?

1.4 Key Terminology

Before outlining the structure of this thesis and detailing how I addressed the research questions, it is important to elaborate on some of the key terms used.

Nation

The nation is a key term in this thesis because participants frequently talked about their identities in relation to India as a nation. In using the terms “nation”, “national” or “nation state”, I do not assume that they refer to a completely controlled, geographically bounded space that is synonymous with society (Beck, 2000; Chernilo, 2006). Instead, it is recognised that nations are situated in and constituted by local, transnational and global forces (Beck, 2000; Sager, 2014). In this thesis, the term “nation” is employed to draw a practical boundary around the context in which this research takes place. This is important given that the nation state has been “so successful in becoming a key organizing centre of modern social life” despite never
being “as triumphant and homogenous as it has portrayed itself to be” (Chernilo, 2011, p. 113). Research has shown that gendered identities have played- and continue to play- an important role in nationalist movements and identities in India (Chatterjee, 1990; Srivastava, 2015) and throughout the research project, participants drew on the nation as an important part of their identity.

**Neoliberalism**

The mobilization of nationalist identities, through economic and cultural nationalism, has often been portrayed as a “reaction” and “challenge to” neoliberal globalization (Harmes, 2012). However, Oza (2012) argues that in India the reverse is true and that neoliberal globalization has led to the ‘displacement of control on to national identity and culture’. In this thesis, neoliberalism is broadly understood as “the agenda of economic and social transformation under the sign of the free market” (Connell, 2013, p. 100). In drawing upon the concept of neoliberalism, it is important to recognise that it been used as a ‘master category…to understand and to explain all manner of political programs across a wide variety of settings’ (Rose et al, 2006, p. 97). The ubiquitous presence of neoliberalism in social science research has led Brenner, Peck & Theodore (2010, p.184) to claim that it has become a “rascal concept—promiscuously pervasive, yet inconsistently defined, empirically imprecise and frequently contested”.

According to Connell and Dados (2014), within scholarship in the global North, neoliberalism is typically viewed as either a system of ideas- a dominant ideology (Harvey, 2005)/form of governmentality (Foucault, 2004)- circulated by ‘right-wing intellectuals’ or as an ‘economic system mutation resulting from crises of profitability in capitalism’ (Hardt and Negri, 2000). Taking a Southern perspective, they argue that neoliberalism is better understood as a development strategy, that (alongside financialisation) entails the reshaping and expansion of global trade that has ‘concentrated the benefits of growth more tightly'- especially among those who have access to the formal economy (Connell & Dados, 2014). In this thesis, rather than treating the making of a (neoliberal) market society on the ground as the imperfect enactment of a pre-formed ideological template, the agency of Indian actors is highlighted and close attention is given to “the roots of neoliberalism in the dilemmas of post-colonial development and state power” (Connell & Dados, 2014).

**Class**
A number of scholars have suggested that following the introduction of neoliberal policies in India, there has been a sharp increase in inequality, especially in class inequalities (Goptu, 2014; Kumar, 2011; Sancho, 2015; Vakulabharanam & Motiram, 2016). In this thesis, I draw on Bourdieu’s theory of practice to understand class as a structure of relationships rather than a property, and as constituted by people existing in the same proximity in social spaces. Rather than class being defined by differing relations to the means of production, this means that class divisions are the result of “differing conditions of existence, differing systems of dispositions produced by differential conditioning and differing endowments of power or capital”.

As such, classes are not viewed as ‘real, objectively constituted groups’; instead, I draw on the concept of class as a generic name for social groups that are distinguished by their conditions of existence (economic and cultural capital) and corresponding dispositions. Accepting that classes have no natural boundaries- like a “flame whose edges are in constant movement, oscillating around a line or surface” (Bourdieu, 1986, p.13)- in this thesis, I explore classed identities with an understanding of class as resulting from the rough and “fuzzy boundaries” (Skeggs, 2004, p. 5) that suggest themselves as a result of the proximity of actors in social space. As such, I view class as something that “people do” and “something always in the making” rather than “something already made that people have or belong to” (Gilbertson, 2017, p. 27).

**Caste**

Although class inequalities are said to have been exacerbated in the context of India’s modern, contemporary, globalizing economy, these new economic circumstances- alongside amendments to the Indian constitution- have led to suggestions that other forms of inequality- including ‘caste’- have been reduced (Gupta, 2000; Beteille, 2013). Teachers and principals across the three schools and my research partner, all told me that it was not appropriate to talk or ask questions about caste while at the same time asserting that caste was ‘no longer an issue’ in India (Research Journal, September, 2015). This was in spite of evidence highlighting that caste continues to be an important structure of inequality (Deshpande, 2011; Harriss-White, 2013; Gilbertson, 2017; Vaid and Heath, 2010). Gilbertson suggests that the ongoing relevance of caste suggests that it has been ‘reworked” and that this results in “castelessness”- where caste is said to no longer be relevant- which serves as a “mechanism of privilege reproduction” (2017, p 90).
Research has shown that caste and class work together as largely inseparable structures of privilege reproduction and are very difficult to distinguish (Gilbertson, 2017; Froystad, 2006). Froystad (2006) describes the boundaries of caste and class as ‘blended’; rather than one acting as a code for the other (Deshpande, 2003), the two terms are intricately intertwined (Gilbertson, 2017). The decision not to include caste as specific category of identity in the present study, was based on the prevalence of classed and gendered identities in the data collected. However, where relevant- or where classed and caste identities appeared to be ‘blended’ (Froystad, 2006)- I have drawn upon caste in my analysis.

1.5 Outline of the Thesis

In Chapter 2, I outline the theoretical frameworks that have enabled me to explore the role that global and local forces play in the construction of gendered and classed identities in Delhi primary schools. I draw on different theoretical approaches including feminist post-structural theory, relational gender theory, Bourdieu’s theory of practice and Massey’s conceptualization of space in order to address my research questions. Rather than viewing these approaches as complementary or neatly aligned, I integrate these theories in order to address the complex nature of classed and gendered identity construction in school communities that are themselves constituted by their relationships with the rest of the world.

In Chapter 3, I describe the research setting, methodological framework and research methods used to study the construction of classed and gendered identities. Having outlined the different school communities in which the study took place, I discuss how the ethnographic approach used in study was focused upon exploring the participants’ experiences and shared meanings. This is followed by an explanation of the research methods used and how I negotiated my positionality- as a white, western male- in the research process. The Chapter concludes with a discussion of the narrative analytical framework used to explore the data.

Chapter 4 is the first of three analysis chapters. This chapter addresses the way in which students across the different school communities constructed their identities in relation to their aspirations for the future. Across the schools, students converged around their aspirations for middle class futures and lifestyles. Widespread optimism
about the future of India and a perception that new economic opportunities awaited the suitably educated, meant that schooling was viewed as a central to the process of “becoming” (middle class) for these students. However, students’ aspirations were shaped by both class and gender with a tension emerging between fantasies for individualistic middle class lifestyles and students’ obligations to their family.

Chapter 5 is the first of two twinned chapters exploring how students construct their identities in the present. In this chapter, I highlight how global educational policy discourses have been taken up in the context of MCD government schools in Delhi catering for students from “disadvantaged” backgrounds. I demonstrate how students’ identities are constructed in a school environment focused primarily upon the responsibilisation of students not for the global labour market but so that they can become suitably moral, respectable (Hindu) Indian citizens. This has important consequences for the way in which students constructed their gendered identities since girls were assumed to by responsibilised from a young age whereas boys were viewed as reckless and irresponsible.

Chapter 6 explores how students construct their identities in the present, in the context of the private school in this study, IES. Operating within an intensely competitive school market in Delhi, IES was under intense pressure to create self-regulating, rational and enterprising individuals who are able to compete in a neoliberal and global labour market. At the same time, students were pressured to limit or balance their engagement with global/cosmopolitan/western culture and adhere to notions of Indian “culture” and “heritage” that appeared to be influenced by Hindu nationalist notions of “Indianness” (Sancho, 2015). Students gendered identities were shaped in a masculinist culture of schooling in which the middle class, Hindu boy emerged as the normative “educated child”.

In Chapter 7, I draw together the key themes that have emerged in this study by discussing a citizenship program called the “Awakened Citizens Program”. In doing so, I aim to show how class, gender, global and national identities were brought together under a Hindu framework of citizenship. I discuss the implications for our understanding of internationalisation and neoliberalism in education and the impact that this framework had in terms of class and gender.
Chapter 2 A Review of the Literature and Theoretical Approaches: The Local and Global Dynamics of Gender, Class and Education

In this chapter, I outline the sociological approach used to study the construction of classed and gendered identities in and consider the role that local and global forces play in this process. To achieve this, I highlight the wider policy research context in relation to education, gender and class through a review of the relevant literature before detailing the theoretical approaches that underpin this study. The chapter commences with a focus on gender, followed by class before moving beyond a global/local divide to reveal the complex entanglements through which the local and the global are mutually constituted. Within each of these key areas it is important that I outline the wider policy context and review the wider research. This will be followed by a review of empirical research and following that the theoretical approaches that I draw upon in this study.

2.1 Gender, Education and Development: Global and National Policies, Ongoing Inequality and the construction of Gendered Identities

2.1.1 Global Development Policies, Discourses and the Politics of Gender Equality: Reducing Inequality through Access to Schooling

Across a wide range of development organisations and aid agencies, Gender equality has emerged as a worldwide goal (Unterhalter, 2007). Education (especially formal schooling) is considered to be a central means to redress gender inequalities, and international development organisations have prioritised education for girls through investment, initiatives and changes in policy (Unterhalter, 2013). A significant aspect of this has been heavy investment in literacy and school access for girls (Ramachandran, 2009; Colclough, 2007). Within the international development discourse, this ‘girl turn’ has emerged as a result of research and advocacy relating to girls’ education within the ‘Education for All Movement’ (EfA, 1990). Following the 1995 Fourth World Conference for Women, in Beijing, the ‘Platform for Action’ document highlighted the ‘girl child’ as a distinct demographic to be targeted by development policy and programmes (Croll, 2007). In 2000, within the Millennium Development
Goals, education for all and women’s empowerment were foregrounded as central to economic growth and education and gender became central to global development initiatives. Then, in 2004, the Nike Foundation was formed to invest in girls in the ‘developing world’ (Kanani, 2011). In the last decade, this ‘girling of development’ has become more visible and international development institutions have incorporated a focus on adolescent girls in their policies and programs (Koffman and Gill, 2013). The result is that adolescent girls living in poverty in the global south have been positioned in ‘the spotlight’ of an expert-mediated, international development discourse (Levine et al., 2009).

Over the last three decades, these global agendas for gender equality have emerged in the context of neoliberal approaches to development (Harvey, 2005; Hickel, 2014). In response to the ‘Third World debt crisis’ in the 1980s, the IMF offered to roll over developing countries debts on the condition that they implement economic reform in the shape of Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) (Carnoy, 1995; Harvey, 2005; Hickel, 2014). SAPs required governments to reduce spending on public services, deregulate trade, privatise public assets and liberalise the economy (Harvey, 2005; Hickel, 2014). The logic behind SAPs was that market deregulation would increase economic growth and enhance economic efficiency; however, in many countries in the Global South these policies exacerbated poverty and failed to promote economic growth (Hickel, 2014). During the mid-1990s, development agencies responded by maintaining the same free-market policies as necessary conditions of aid packages whilst introducing additional reforms based upon on ‘good governance’, ‘transparency’, ‘empowerment’ and ‘gender equality’ (Hickel, 2014; Stiglitz, 2004).

Hickel (2014) argues that these latter interventions also signalled a shift in language within global development agencies from the ‘amoral, technocratic language of free market econometrics and scientific management’ to a focus on the ‘intimate realities of human relatedness’ (Hickel, 2014). This approach has dovetailed with Sen’s ‘capability’ approach which has argued for the importance of non-economic measures of development and a focus on giving people the freedom to realise their own understanding of what is good what they have reason to value (Sen, 1993).

In terms of gender equality, the shift in the language of development- associated with the emphasis on ‘good governance’, ‘empowerment’ and ‘gender equality’- led the limited Women in Development (WID) paradigm- focused on including women in
development activities- to be replaced by the Gender and Development (GAD) approach (Unterhalter, 2007). The GAD approach aims to actively transform gender relations through a feminist project of social reform (Hickle, 2014). It was following the ‘second generation reforms’ to neoliberal development that the GAD approach was adopted by international organisations and gender mainstreaming has increasingly been viewed as a global priority (Koffman and Gill, 2013; Squires, 2005). This approach has led to an emphasis on the role that socially constructed relations between men and women play in sustaining gender inequalities (Cornwall et al, 2016). GAD has aimed to include women in the development process by de-institutionalising male privilege in development policy and planning (Kabeer, 1994), and using ‘gender analysis’ to explore the material bases of difference between women and men. This approach has been used to delineate distinctions between what women-in-general and men-in-general do in order to assist planning and policy development (Cornwall et al, 2016). Using sexual difference as its starting point, the GAD approach assumes that there are broad commonalities among women and among men. Hickel (2014) argues that the rationale underpinning this approach is that social structures in the global South need to change in order for (neoliberal) structural adjustment policies to work:

*The rationale has come to be that structural adjustment failed to spur development and growth not because the economic policies were wrong, but because certain social structures in the global South prevented the policies from working. In other words, if we can manage to straighten out people’s ideas about kinship, public institutions will operate as they should, the labour market will expand, and neoliberal shock therapy will work just fine.*

This rationale has located blame away from the policies of international institutions (the World Bank and IMF) and on to the poor who are said to have ‘backward’ conceptions of personhood and relationship (Hickle, 2014). The GAD movement has problematised people’s ideas about kinship in the Global South in the context of a growing focus on autonomous individualism, gender equality and the nuclear family (Hickle, 2014). The ‘modern’ forms of kinship are necessary for the proper functioning of a free-market economy. These ideas are drawn from a social-evolutionary trajectory in which societies move from ‘status to contract, from patriarchy to egalitarianism and from group to individual’ (Hickle, 2014). These ideas about personhood and freedom
in which ‘true liberation requires abstracting the self from social entanglements to achieve... disembodied, objectified personhood’ lie at the heart of ‘Western conceptions of the rights-bearing individual, the critical political subject, and the disinterested participant of the public sphere’ (Hickel, 2014). The central ontology of “Western” culture is that this form of individual autonomy enables a self-realisation where individuals are able to pursue their ‘true’ desires interests and will (Hickel, 2014). Despite the global prevalence of these ideas in the policies/programmes of aid/development agencies originating from the global North, these ‘international’ norms and discourses do not produce policy convergence in all corners of the globe (Verger et al, 2017). In the following section, I outline how these policies have been taken in the context of this study, India.

2.1.2 Complex Interactions Between Global and National Policymakers: Research Examining Indian Policies for Gender Equality

In India, rather than external discourses and policies on gender and education simply being imposed ‘top-down’, the interactions between national and international levels have been “complex and networked” (Peppin Vaughan, 2013). Following independence from British colonial rule, India had resisted international- or ‘Western’-involvement in educational programmes and policy (Peppin-Vaughan, 2013); however, following economic liberalisation in the early 1990s, financial support from the World Bank came with the condition that GoI accept donor funding for for its educational programs. This led donor agencies (DFID, the World Bank and the EU, among others) to play an important role in funding, monitoring and evaluating of major primary education programmes in India.

In 1993, the District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) was launched with the aim of achieving universal primary education (UPE) in India. Then, in 2000, India’s Education for All programme, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) was launched as the major programme for education in India. The global agenda of EfA, launched in the 1990s, played an important role in shaping these national programs and led to an emphasis on Universal Primary Enrolment (UPE) (Colclough & De, 2010). Given the pre-existing emphasis on UPE, by the time the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were launched in the year 2000, they had limited impact on Indian policy makers (Colclough & De, 2010). However, both the MDGs and EfA did have a substantial impact on donor
agencies- leading them to redefine their approach to aid in education and include an emphasis on accountability and ‘good governance’ (Colclough & De, 2010). Barrett & Sørensen (2015) suggest that the emphasis on “soft form(s) of accountability” (Langford, 2012 in Barrett & Sørensen, 2015) has:

intoned over the lifetime of the MDGs in part due to the use of evolving technologies of quantification, such as international learning surveys. The EFA goals and the education MDG have had such influence internationally that they have come to constitute global education policy, which carries the international influence of agendas generated in Western metropolitan centres.

Informed by “technologies of quantification” and notions of accountability, donor agencies played an important role in defining how gender and social equality in education came to be understood in India. The pursuit of gender equality in education played an important role in the SSA and was one of the four key programme objectives:

1. The enrolment of all children in school
2. The retention of all children to upper primary school
3. The bridging of gender and social category gaps in education
4. The enhancement of learning levels for all children.

The breadth of SSA, with its focus on the whole of elementary education, led to the development of evaluative frameworks (indicators, norms and standards) that enabled judgements about the efficiency of the programme (Colclough & De, 2010). External agencies (World Bank, DFID and the EU) played an important role in the evaluation of the SSA and- influenced by global practices of audit and accountability- they worked with GoI to establish the measurers necessary to evaluate progress (Colclough & De, 2010). Reviews were undertaken biannually by GoI and external agencies (DFID, World Bank and the EU) in the form of Joint Review Missions (JRM). Beyond evaluating progress, these reviews outlined follow-up actions.

The SSA indicators represented a consensus between GOI and major donors (World Bank, DFID and EU) about the efficiency of the programme but at the same time (indirectly) boosted or prioritised certain modes of action and restricted others (Colclough & De, 2010; Ramachandran and Chatterjee, 2014). Analysing 17 JRM
reports, Ramachandran and Chatterjee (2014) have identified a number of indicators consistently used throughout the JRM reports (Ramachandran & Chatterjee, 2014). In recent years, the SSA norms and standards have been adjusted to conform with new legislation in the form of the RTE (2009). Despite this change, the focus remains on ensuring that the necessary ‘infrastructure’ is in place, including ‘human infrastructure’ (pupil-teacher ratio, teacher attendance, teacher training, etc.).

Table 2.1 Indicators used in Joint Review Missions for SSA (Ramachandran & Chatterjee, 2014)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Indicators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Access</td>
<td>Enrolment; Sample survey findings on out of school children (OOSC); Information on average dropout, retention, attendance and transition; Opening of new schools and school infrastructure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Process</td>
<td>Student assessment carried out by NCERT; Curriculum- and textbook-related information; Purchase and use of Teaching Learning Materials; Pedagogy and classroom processes (activity-based learning (ABL); child-centred pedagogies)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>Hiring of teachers—regular and contract teachers; Number of female teachers; Pupil teacher ratio (PTR); Teacher attendance; Teacher training; Academic support system.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role of Community</td>
<td>Whether School Management Committees (SMC) and Village Education Committees (VEC) have been constituted; Structure of SMC and VEC; Role of community, SMCs, VECs and civil society.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programme Management</td>
<td>Convergence with different departments and NGOs for community mobilisation, enhancing school quality and providing school facilities; Civil works and infrastructure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance</td>
<td>Finance- allocations of the GoI; Allocation of state-government share; Expenditure.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ramachandran and Chatterjee (2014) highlight how these indicators- and the content of JRM reports- are mainly data driven and that there is more emphasis on input indicators and implementation processes than on outcomes or the school experience (Ramachandran and Chatterjee, 2014).
percentage of professionally trained teachers etc.), physical infrastructure (percentage of schools with girls’ toilets, drinking water etc.) and Learning Time (the percentage of schools with more than 200 working days) (Murkherjee, 2015). These indicators do not really address what goes on in schools. This is problematic because the indicators that constitute the review come to be the only measures by which progress can be understood (Barrett & Sørensen, 2015; Colclough & De, 2010; Ramachandran & Chaterjee, 2014; Unterhalter, 2014).

**Measuring Gender Equality: The Narrowing of Progress**

As outlined in section 2.3, international development organisations (like the World Bank, DFID and the EU) continue to rely on a free-market, neoliberal tradition of conventional economic thought (Corbridge, Harris & Jeffrey, 2013). As the indicators of the SSA (and now the RTE) demonstrate, scientific and observable knowledge (especially quantitative data) that fits into an economist model is privileged over other forms. Markets and economic thinking is naturalised in the policy process and policy and knowledge is commodified (Barrett & Sørensen, 2015; Harris-White, 2013). Knowledge and policies are therefore produced to serve market logics and policy makers approach social realities with an economist’s way of thinking that forces a narrow and statistical understanding of social situations that is tailored to their institutional needs (Reddy, 2012). One example of this on a global scale is the MDG indicators. The MDGs measured gender equality in terms of gender parity- equal numbers of boys and girls enrolling or completing certain levels of education. Access to education was assumed to be automatically empowering for women; however, gender inequality persists in India despite rising access to school (Govinda, 2011; Philip, 2015; Ramachandran, 2009; Vijayakumar, 2013) Levels of girls’ and women’s enrolment at all levels of education is rising but female infant ratio has simultaneously worsened, with gender-discriminatory views being a force behind sex-selective abortion and gender-discriminatory child-rearing practices (Patel, 2007).

Scholars have pointed out that in isolation from cultural change, improvements in education- in the form of material developments- do not lead to gender equality (Ramachandran, 2009; Unterhalter, 2007, 2014). Until recent high-profile cases of rape, there has been little social and political pressure to eliminate gender and social differences within the entire educational and societal system in India (Ramachandran,
The recent Verma Committee report (2013) was welcomed as a ‘road map’ for gender policy (Agnes, 2013) given that it foregrounded the role that schools could play in addressing ‘gender bias and discrimination’ whilst adopting a relational conceptualisation of gender (Verma et al 2013). However, the ‘deeply political process of policy formation in India’ diluted the effects of the report and failed to address the patriarchal framing of women’s subjectivities (Krishnan, 2014; Philip, 2015). Despite gender equality being a primary goal of education in the post-independence era, and despite policy efforts to direct education towards social justice goals, policy efforts have failed to address deeply held ‘gendered beliefs and practices’ in schools (Rajagopal, 2013, p. 6). In recent years, an overriding emphasis on access and accountability, and the neglect of the actual school experience including the relational nature of gendered identities, has ensured that the transformation of gender relations through schooling remains illusive (Rajagopal, 2013).

Accountability mechanisms like those used in the JRMAs (and the MDGs), compartmentalise social realities into ‘units’ (enrolment ratios, retention rates) which can be individually addressed to fix the ‘whole’ (Reddy, 2012). Through this process, gender in educational policies and programmes (like SSA and the RTE) are conceptualised in apolitical, technocratic terms (Barrett & Sørensen, 2015; Philip, 2015). The reliance of development goals, targets and indicators on “technologies of quantification”, “run the risk of closing off possibilities for education quality” (Barrett & Sørensen, 2015). This simplification marginalises aspects of boys and girls lives outside of a neoliberal framing of access to schooling (Harris-White, 2004). The complexity of girls and boys lives including home, school and public experiences, fails to fit neoliberal classificatory logic and therefore disappears into the ‘black hole of economic theory’ dominating policy processes (Harris-White, 2004; Kabeer, 1994). This helps to sustain limiting conceptions of children, education and gender across a diverse range of contexts (Rajagopal, 2013; Unterhalter, 2013; Sriprakash, 2015). This classificatory approach to gender appears to have led to simplistic representations of femininity and masculinity in the global development discourse.

**The Girl Powering of Development: “Can Do” and “Vulnerable” Girlhoods**

The ‘girl-powering’ of development (and Nike’s ‘Girl Effect’) has emerged following the increasing involvement of multinational corporations in driving funding agendas for
international development (Bent & Switzer, 2016; Gill & Koffman, 2013). Within this new development discourse, girls are depicted as “educationally successful, economically independent, and in control of their sexuality and their reproductive capacities” (Walkerdine, Lucey and Melody, 2001; McRobbie, 2007; Ringrose, 2007). Girls are depicted as “can-do girls” (Harris, 2004) within narratives of ‘choice, agency, independence and empowerment’ (Koffman and Gill, 2013). This positive representation of women in the Global South represents a shift away from older depictions of women as passive victims (‘third world woman’) (Mohanty, 1988; Wilson 2011). Instead, new (neoliberal) conceptions of women’s agency lift girls out of history and politics to recast them as individual entrepreneurial subjects- women’s collective struggles for social transformation are ignored (Wilson, 2011). Through these representations, poverty has been recast in terms of the entrepreneurial capacities it stimulates and the poor in India have been positioned as experienced entrepreneurs (Gooptu, 2014; Koffman and Gill, 2013). This overlooks the structural dimensions of poverty and ignores the role that First World institutions have played in exacerbating poverty in the Global South (Mohanty, 2003; Koffman and Gill, 2013).

Accompanying this depiction of girls as empowered and successful has been the representation of girls as vulnerable or ‘at risk’- the ‘oscillation between these constructions of girls constitutes the discursive field for talking about all girls’ (Koffman and Gill, 2013). Girlhood is considered to be an ‘unstable category’ marked by both ‘risk’ and extraordinary potential (Koffman and Gill, 2013). Development and commercial discourses often portray western girls as empowered, active free agents and girls in the Global South as subjects of a patriarchal order whose freedoms are constrained (Bent & Switzer, 2016; Koffman & Gill, 2016). This oppositional girlhood frame assumes reductive, apolitical, and ahistorical claims of divergence between girlhoods in the Global North and Global South “with highly unequal effects” (Gonick et al. 2009, p. 3). This, “reproduces classed and colonial ideas about the deserving and undeserving poor: girls are the ‘solution’ to ‘the world’s problems’ because they will buy a cow, not alcohol or cigarettes” (Koffman and Gill, 2013). These neo-colonial narratives depict the “Global South as a homogenous sphere plagued by patriarchy and ‘harmful cultural practices’” and assume that women and girls have a socially identical experience (Koffman and Gill, 2013; Mohanty, 2003). This ‘neocolonial oppositionality’ (‘Can-do’ vs ‘at risk’) leaves little room for the intersectional nature of
girlhood and the possibility that girls could be ‘both, neither or either at the same time’ (Bent & Switzer, 2016).

The contrasting constructions of an autonomous, productive girl who is engaged in formal schooling with the tradition, confinement, reproductivity and peril of the out of school girl, enables the vulnerable girl-child to become an essentialised victim waiting for the transformative power of education and economic participation (Bent & Switzer, 2016; Koffman & Gill, 2013). The narrative of the ‘girl child’ in Indian policy and media discourses ties in with global discourses of ‘at risk’ girls where girls are viewed as poor, uneducated, oppressed, traditional- and in need of assistance (from government/the west) (Fennell and Arnott, 2009; Koffman and Gill, 2013). Use of the phrase ‘girl child’ is common in India- particularly in education, health and development circles- while Government, INGO and news media literature is filled with usage of the term. The plight of the ‘girl child’ is frequently used in association with important issues such as infanticide, education and rights (Fennell & Arnot, 2008a). These girls and their lives come to be identified and labeled as requiring ‘special consideration’ which the neoliberal, masculinist state has to provide for under the rhetoric of ‘protection’ (Philip, 2015). Within policy discourses, the girl child is located as a victim who through education will be able to empower her family and the nation (Balagopalan, 2005).

The narrative of the girl child has foregrounded issues relating to women and girls while overlooking the role that men and masculinities play. In India, and across the globe, men and masculinities have historically passed as the unmarked gender and continue to be rendered invisible in Indian gender politics (Connell, 2000; Philip, 2015). Knowledge about gender in Indian policy stems from a deeply embedded discourse of masculinity in which economic logic and a hierarchy of knowledge mark ‘gender’ as women’s issues:

The deeply political process through which neoliberalism and patriarchy interplay to largely benefit men by keeping women’s labor invisibilised goes unchecked in this process. This allows the dominance of masculinities and the subordinate but complimentary normative ideas around women and femininity to continue as ‘gender’. (Philip, 2015)

The reductive, neoliberal framing of girls as vulnerable and in need of development intervention, supports notions of development as a ‘remedial civilisational pedagogy’
in which expertise from the Global North is transferred and enables ‘the Global South to ‘catch up’ with the rest of the world’ (Koffman and Gill, 2013). Contemporary approaches to gender equality and empowerment rely on western ideals of personhood and freedom (described in section 2.1), in which the self-realised individual is able to pursue their ‘true’ desires, interests and will (Hickel, 2014). Within this postfeminist moment, individual girls become responsible for their own neoliberal empowerment and rights, as well as for other more ‘vulnerable’ girls around the world. The image of empowered girlhood has become “not just an ideal for other girls to model themselves after but is also a model for contemporary citizenship more broadly” (Taft, 2014).

2.1.3 Gender, Education and Development: Education Research in India

Responsibilisation, School Choice and Girls as Symbols of Progress

Recent scholarship has shown that- in the context of discourses regarding aspirational, entrepreneurial citizenship- government policies, such as the RTE (2009), have positioned poor families as both in deficit and- simultaneously- as needing to take responsibility over their incorporation in to state goals (Maithreyi and Sriprakash, 2018). Maithreyi and Sriprakash (2018), suggest that this positioning reveals the “modalities of the current neo-liberal governance in Indian education: the simultaneous expansion of ‘welfare’ logics alongside an emphasis on participation and responsibility of the individual”. This transfer of responsibility has taken place through a reconfiguration of the language of ‘rights’: from government commitments to its people to individual responsibility to achieve state goals (Gooptu, 2014; Maithreyi and Sriprakash, 2018). This approach to educational development through rights based discourses, reflects global (neoliberal) development thinking in education: where school participation is positioned more as an individual ‘moral’ responsibility than a collective commitment to a common school system and educational equality (Maithreyi and Sriprakash, 2018). Maithreyi and Sriprakash (2018), suggest that this “represents the harnessing of the parent/family in entrenching and legitimizing and unequal education system”.

These policies have emerged alongside significant increases in the number of fee charging, English-medium instruction, private schools in India (Kingdon, 2017;
Nambissan, 2010, 2014). Now up to 35 per cent of students enrolled in elementary school are in non-government schools (Kingdon, 2017). Private schools in India cater to all socio-economic backgrounds, with low-fee private schools for the economically disadvantaged and elite, air conditioned international schools for the upper-middle class/elite (Kumar, 2011). Low-fee private schools have proliferated on the basis of offering English-medium instruction to marginalised groups while elite schools promise the cultural capital that will facilitate access to the global labour market (Kumar, 2011). While the private sector evolves by promising opportunities that will lead to the formation of the English speaking, Hindu, middle class, normative citizen-subject, the public education system increasingly serves the most socially and economically disadvantaged children- largely through vernacular medium education (Chopra & Jeffrey, 2005; Sancho, 2015; Hopkins & Sriprakash, 2015). The division and segmentation of society along these lines “has led to the… ‘bifurcation’ of the cultural imaging of Indian society, between English speaking elites (as the desired citizen subject) and the remaining vernacular aspirant groups” (Hopkins & Sriprakash, 2015, p. 153). The entrance of private institutions catering for different financial capabilities has led the school field- already divided by language, caste, community and curriculum- to become even more stratified (Chopra & Jeffrey, 2005; Sancho, 2015).

In India, girls’ aspirations for- and engagement in- education and employment are viewed as being symbolic of the social benefits of liberalisation and globalisation (Radhakrishnan, 2011; Vijayakumar, 2013) even as gender continues to play a central role in determining opportunities for women and girls (Krishnan, 2014; Philip, 2015). Research suggests that in terms of school choice, when family finances are limited, boys in the family are more likely to be sent to private schools and girls to government schools (Srivastava, 2010). Studies have also suggested that schools generally spend more money on boys than girls- particularly in private schools (Ramachandran & Aarti, 2002)- and there is suggestive evidence that teachers systematically treat girls differently and expect them to adhere to traditional gender stereotypes; requiring them to be quiet and passive (Jethwani-Keyser, 2008).

**Research into Gender and the School Experience in India**

Research exploring interactional gender issues in schools and classrooms in India has increased in recent years (Kumar, 1986; Ray, 1988; Devendra, 1995; Srivastava,
2006). While many of these studies have been positivistic in their approach, this trend continues to change following a seminal qualitative study by Bhattacharjee, addressing classroom gender dynamics (Bhattacharjee, 1999). Since then, studies have begun to explore gender and equity issues, employing a continued conceptual and theoretical framework, combined with statistical exploration and case studies (Ramachandran & Aarti, 2002).

In the last decade, there has been an increase in research focusing on the intersection of attitudes, lives and practices of school communities and the role that gender plays in these experiences (Page, 2003). Page (2003) explored the gendered dimensions of two schools in Madhya Pradesh, North Central India. She found that there was little evidence of gender bias in teacher-inspired interaction, with both teachers using inclusive strategies to engage with students and questioning styles that were egalitarian and gender aware. However, as these classrooms were located in a very hierarchical and patriarchal society, they shared many of the features of that society: boys and girls were segregated within the school; boys and girls behaved in different ways that lead boys to receive more teacher attention and the “most fundamentally excluding gender feature” was the nature of the syllabus and the teaching materials (Elspeth, 2003). Materials included very few female role models and the syllabus was generally geared towards male interests. Pupils were taught to memorise and reproduce knowledge that was deemed important by others, and this created an exclusive knowledge paradigm of objective truth. This objective truth is disseminated from other elites, Page (2003) recognises that, the “‘others’ who determine what should be taught were predominantly higher socio-economic class, and caste, urban males”.

While Page’s study largely involved the researcher’s impressions of gender issues in schools, Rajagopal (2009) used observations to consider gender issues from the perspective of teachers in several secondary schools in Rajasthan. Focused group discussions explored 36 male and female teacher’s perceptions of gender and the schooling process. When considering teachers’ perceptions of gender, teachers felt that both boys and girls should receive equal educational opportunities. Teachers noticed differences in the ways that boys and girls participated in class. Girls were generally characterised as quiet, inhibited, hard workers who completed their work on time; in contrast, boys were casual and had to be constantly pushed to work. It was
noted that boys have strong tendency to want to be one up on girls and were keen to compete with the girls. Teachers felt that all subjects were equally important for boys and girls. In some of the co-ed schools’ teachers held the view that girls were better at languages. The teachers’ views were divided on maths - some felt that girls feared maths while others felt that both boys and girls feared maths (Rajogopal, 2009 in Page and Jha, 2009). This research suggests that students are confined by the teaching materials and syllabus but also by significant cultural expectations encouraging boys and girls behave different “appropriate” ways. Teachers have a critical role to play in this process and Page concludes that “the gender attitudes and practices of the two teachers challenged restrictive, hierarchical norms: they supported girls in their endeavours, creating spaces for more girls to enroll and succeed than is the norm in comparable schools” (Page and Jha, 2009).

Recent studies have moved beyond teachers’ conceptions of gender to highlight how students construct their identities in Indian schools (Gilbertson, 2017; Iyer, 2017; Thapan, 2014). Scholars in the UK have for some time examined children’s identity formation in school, viewing schools as sites for the production and reproduction of identity (Allan, 2009, 2010; Allan & Charles, 2014; Archer et al, 2013; Francis et al, 2010; Mac and Ghaill, 1994; Reay, 1998a, 2001, 2010; Renold, 2005; Skelton, 1997, Walkerdine, 2003). In an ethnography of schooling in Ahemebad, India, Thapan (2014) highlights how normative conceptions of citizenship (Masculinist, nationlistic) shape students’ identities by emphasizing sameness and eliminating difference. Similarly, Matthan, Anusha and Thapan (2014) highlight how normative (patriarchal) citizenship values are conveyed through ‘moral education’ in schools to create notions of a ‘good Muslim and a good Muslim girl’.

Given recent transformations to Indian society, several recent accounts of gendered identities in Indian schools have considered how these are constructed at different levels, including global, national and local levels (Gilbertson, 2017; Iyer, 2017). Iyer’s (2017) study involved a mixed method approach to consider how secondary school students (and teachers) understand and experience gender, sexuality and education-and how this related to national and international conceptualisations. Iyer (2017) found that, in the context of three middle class schools in Delhi- and following the high profile case of gang rape and murder of Jyoti Singh- stories of sexual violence played an important role in shaping narratives of masculinity and femininity. Global and national
narratives of ‘Hero’ and ‘good boy’ masculinity and of ‘can-do’ and ‘vulnerable’ femininity shaped students’ experiences of schooling. Iyer (2017) found that tensions among these competing narratives led to frustrations among girls while the prevalence of concerns about sexual violence led to confusion about ‘girls’ and ‘boys’ sexuality (Iyer, 2017). Peer cultures were an important source of sexual learning and students negotiate national norms in order to develop less restrictive relationships (Iyer, 2017).

**Education as a Site for the Construction of Gendered Identities**

These studies highlight how education is one of the contexts in which gendered, classed, sexual and national identities are constructed in India. To use McRobbie’s (2007) terms, education is viewed here as a ‘teaching machine ’implicated in the practice of producing subjects. To understand how education operates as a ‘teaching machine’, Youdell (2010, p. 55) suggests that we should think of education as an assemblage in order to consider the “diverse activities of the state, institutions and subjects and to begin to draw these together”. This entails taking a complex, comprehensive of education and its “forces, orders, discourses, technologies, practices and bodies; from the legislative function of the state to the affective eruptions of the playground” (ibid). This is a viewpoint which demands a different focus of study, as researchers seek to explore:

‘...what education is, how it moves and mutates, how it defines and patrols its borders, how it renders particular educational subjects and how it provokes and corrals affectivities...” (Youdell, 2010, p. 56)

In this thesis, I explore what education is in the context of three Delhi school communities with a focus on how it “corrals affectivities” and shapes students’ identities. This means focusing students’ experiences of schooling, including their thoughts, behavior, emotions, feelings and aspirations. By exploring how students’ experiences of schooling relate to local, national and global discourses regarding gender and education is possible to understand how students are constructing their identities in this context. The emphasis on providing access to schooling in order to achieve gender equality, neglects to consider how education as a “teaching machine” shapes the gendered identities of students in schools. In the following section, I outline my theoretical approach to the study of gender in Delhi schools by highlighting how gendered identities are produced by both discourses and hierarchical relationships.
2.1.4 Theoretical Approach to the Study of Gender

Feminist Post-structuralism

In the Global North, the words gender and sex are often used interchangeably to create an impression that the state of being “masculine” or “feminine” is a manifestation of nature (LeVay, 1993). This essentialist position on gender attributes a fixed essence to women (or men) that is universal and associated with characteristics that are assumed to be masculine or feminine. This binarisation of gender relies on standard models of masculinity or femininity based upon the notion that people are biologically pre-determined in certain ways—such as men biologically programmed to be aggressive and women to be protective (Goldberg 1993, Baron-Cohen 2004). Critiques of essentialist theories, including the recognition that there are multiple different ways in which men and women do masculinity and femininity, have questioned the socially constructed nature of gender and sex (Butler, 1998; Hey, 2006). An understanding of gender as something that is socially constructed is derived from the idea that the way in which we behave as men or women is part of our social learning and identity (Weiner, 1994; Connell, 2009).

Post-structural approaches to identity have enabled us to theorise gendered identities as multiple, fluid and processual rather than as a fixed stable core (Weedon, 1997). This approach to individual identity is distinct from social constructionist conceptions which view the subject as a core that pre-exists but changes due to its shaping by language (Weedon, 1999). From this perspective, gendered identities may be socially, culturally and institutionally assigned through practices which produce discourses within which gendered subjectivity is constituted. Feminist post-structuralism contends that relationships of power between men and women are intricately linked to the ways in which we learn and act out our different gender roles.

The performatve aspect of this theory, a notion introduced by the social theorist Judith Butler (1998) is particularly important, conceptualizing gender as something that is continuously ‘done’ in a social context rather an innate characteristic (Hey, 2006). According to Butler, gender is something that one does— a “doing” rather than a “being” that is the result of “a set of repeated acts within a highly rigid, regulatory frame” (Butler, 1990). Butler argues that “there is no gender identity behind the expressions of gender…” Identity is performatively constituted by the very ‘expressions’ that are
said to be its results” (Butler, 1990, p.24-5). Feminine and masculine identities manifested in behavior, deportment and appearance do not give rise to femininities or masculinities but are the product of it.

Instead of real ‘entities’, masculine and feminine identities are actually constructions, achieved through constant social negotiation, performance and repetition. Through positioning in discourse, men and women act in ways that position themselves and others in gendered discourses (Davies and Harre, 1990). This understanding of gender also implies, therefore, that not all kinds of ‘performances’ are possible as individuals only have certain number of positions available to them (Honan et al, 2006). Becky Francis and Carrie Paechter, for example, have recently commented on the likelihood of gendered performances being ‘reinscribed’. They discuss the fact that even when women behave in a more aggressive manner it is commonly recognised or explained as a particularly feminine type of ‘bitchy’ behavior, rather than being understood as a performance of masculinity (Paetcher, 2007). The inequalities and differences that exist as a result of such constructions occur not only between genders but also within the complex, multi-faceted nature of gender, which these theorists believe to also be constituted by social determinants such as one’s class, sexuality, ethnicity, age, nationality, religion etc. Different ideas of what it means to be a “man” or a “woman”, and the diversity of positions available within “masculinity” or “femininity” exist as a result of the dominant assumptions within a specific context, dependent upon these multiple social determinants (Paechter, 2007).

**Foucault: Discourse, Power and the Subject**

The feminist postructuralist understanding of power has been very much influenced by the work of Michel Foucault, who understood power to be both productive and omnipresent in social relations, “power produces; it produces reality; it produces domains of objects and rituals of truth” (Foucault, 1991, p. 194). It also, according to Foucault, produces subjects (Foucault, 1980). As he puts it, “the individual is not the vis-à-vis of power; it is, I believe, one of its prime effects” (Foucault, 1980, p. 98). From this perspective, subjects are the effect of discourse. Our sense of self results from textual and social processes which constitute and reconstitute meaning through language. Discourses constrain and afford certain choices for individuals and therefore works to allow certain beliefs, practices, and ways of being (and not others). This
means that language that both constraints and creates identities and determines how people see themselves and how they are seen by others.

Foucault (1997, p. 291) claims that the power of discourse is transmitted through people in “relations of power… in which one person tries to control the conduct of the other”. Rather than being fixed, Foucault (1997) views these relations as unstable and open to modification where there is always the possibility for resistance. Resistance is possible because a “discourse is a series of discontinuous segments whose tactical function is neither uniform or stable” (Foucault, 1981, p. 101). This means that although “discourse can be an instrument and effect of power”, it is also “a hindrance… a point of resistance and a starting point for an opposing strategy” (Foucault, 1981, p. 101). Rather than simply being the subject of one discourse, competing, contradictory discourses seek the “allegiance of individual subjects” (Weedon, 1999). Research in India how middle class women and girls in India attempt to reconcile “cosmopolitan” and “traditional” discourses in order to find an appropriately “Indian” identity (Gilbertson, 2017; Radhakrishnan, 2009, 2011; Vijayakumar, 2013). Exposure to different discourses- and different ways of thinking- can cause to change our existing ideas of who we are and who we have the potential to be.

Post-structural approaches have been criticised for leaving little or nothing with which to conceive of a person’s individual identity (supposedly signifying ‘the death of the subject’). However, rather than signaling the death of the subject, this is an effort to refashion and relocate the subject within language. In doing so, the subject is understood as a system of relations determined by language or “inscribed within language”. The subject does not disappear but can no longer be viewed as a rational, unitary self and instead must be seen as an ‘effect of subjectification’. This approach seeks to recognise the way that the subject is always inscribed in language- rather than being a “meta-linguistic” substance or identity. By resituating the subject in this way, individual identity is given meaning and is constituted and reconstituted in language, as an effect of language that is always open to constant redefinition.

Feminist post-structural theory has been critical in revealing the shortcomings of development efforts to bring about gender equality and in highlighting the way in which development discourses have constructed men and women, girls and boys in particular ways and have overlooked power relations between men and women (Cornwall, Harrison and Whitehead, 2007; Unterhalter, 2013). Post-structural
accounts have highlighted how gender identities and roles are experienced by individual women and men within communities (Cornwall, Harrison and Whitehead, 2007). While post-structuralism has been useful in critiquing global approaches to gender inequality, the direct transfer of such theory to a country like India is problematic. In the Global North, the conceptualisation of the ‘individual’ is taken for granted but in other parts of the world the identification of an individual woman- as distinct from her relational identity- is less acceptable (Nnameka, 1997; Menon et al., 1999; Connell, 2007).

Lost in Translation: Relational Identities and Conceptions of Gender in India

The emphasis on individualism that characterises some dominant theoretical approaches to the study of gender in the global North, has been called in to question by scholars in the global south who have found that the relational roles that women take on are central to their identity (Nnaemeka, 1997; Saigal, 2007). Nnaemeka (1997) argues that it is important to recognise the role of mothering as a relational identity and a form of resistance in opposition to local power relationships (Nnaemeka, 1997). While Western literature generally contrasts a woman’s domestic life with that of her public life- stressing the dissonance between the two- research emanating from India suggests that here women can develop a working life in the community that is in harmony with their family role (Saigal, 2007).

Saigal’s study in Mumbai examined the experiences of community based teachers-trained by the NGO Pratham- who identified themselves primarily in relation to their family/the domestic sphere and who- given concerns about sexual purity and family honor- were largely confined to the domestic space. Although teaching work in the community conflicted with their primary identities, these teachers were able to empower the community and themselves whilst maintaining harmony with the community (Saigal, 2007). Research from the Global North has tended to focus on how women’s work within the home is undervalued or how this work restricts their progress in the public sphere. Yet, in the context of Saigal’s Mumbai study, it is apparent that these women have used their relational roles to further their participation in the community; by combining their domestic and professional roles, these women are able to make subtle claims for rights and traverse social boundaries. Thus when considering the relevance of western research regarding the construction of gendered
identities, it is important to remember that different understandings and definitions of gender exist within countries such as India as a result of their own unique history. In this context, people and particularly construct they own identities (and are constructed by others) not solely as an individual but also as a relational identity.

Research has highlighted the important role that religion- especially Hinduism- has played (and continues to play) in the construction of identity in India (Jaffrelot, 2007; Nair-Venugopal, 2012). Research undertaken from a Western perspective has suggested that “Hindu’s experienced self is structured more around we, ours, and us than around I, mine or me There is a preference to belong to a collective and to undermine autonomy, initiative, and individualism” (Sinha, 1982, p. 153). However, Western research into Indian collectivism has tended to homogenise Indians (and other Asians) as being motivated by collective- rather than individual- interests (Dumont, 1970; Hofstede, 1984, 2001). Criticism of this perspective, has led scholars to suggest that individualism is in fact an integral aspect of Indian collectivism (Appadurai, 1986; Kumar, 2004). Indeed, Nair-Venugopal (2012) argues that a (Hindu) Indian collective identity is not wholly collectivist but a mixture of individualism and collectivism:

‘While collective individualism depicts the collective Indian identity, individuality commingles with and is inseparable from an Indian’s sense of collective identity’ (Mines, 1993, p. 3 in Nair-Venugopal, 2012, p.159).

Scholars have argued that this conception of identity is a result of Hindu ontologies in India (Kumar, 2004; Nair-venugopal 2012). Although different schools of Hinduism hold dissimilar ontologies, one dominant ontology posits that everything - animate and inanimate- constitutes an ordered and interconnected whole that is an expression of a Supreme Being (Brahman). A belief in this ‘ultimate supreme reality’ (‘the realisation of the absolute truth’) is coupled with a belief in the importance of seeking it. Each soul (aatman) seeks to reveal this truth and reach the ‘pinnacle of consciousness where man and god are one’ (Paramasivam and Nair-Venugopal, 2012 in Nair-Venugopal, 2012, p. 159).

Since the 1990s, 19th century reformist approaches to Hinduism- in the form of the Hindutva movement- have gained prominence in India (Fernandes and Heller, 2006;
Jaffrelot, 2007; Gooptu, 2014). The Hindutva movement typically relies on a conservative conceptualization of Indian culture in which ‘Indian’ means Hindu and Hinduism is the ‘core of Indian nationhood’ (Froerer, 2007, p. 1033-34). Promulgated by the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and the current ruling party, the Bharat Janata Party (BJP), this civilisational discourse relies on the Hindu ontology outlined above (Zavos, 2013).

Given the importance of relational identities in the Indian context - particularly for women - a number of scholars have argued for a relational approach to theorising gender (Connell, 2009, 2014; Koggel, 2013; Nmaenka, 1997). This approach foregrounds the patterned relations between women and men - and among women and among men - that constitute gender as a social structure. A relational approach to gender considers the multidimensional nature of gender (economic relations, power relations, affective relations and symbolic relations) that operate simultaneously at the intra-personal, interpersonal, institutional and society-wide levels (Connell, 2009, 2014). By acknowledging the multiple dimensions of gender- and appreciating that change in one dimension can happen at a different rate to change in other- this relational approach highlights how tensions can be produced in the “gender order” (Connell, 1987, 1995; Matthews, 1984).

**Relational Theories of Gender**

Within Connell’s relational approach to gender, the gender order is a patterned system of ideological and material practices, performed by individuals in a society, that constitutes gender as a social structure (Connell, 2009). Within the social structure or “gender order” power relations between women and men are made, and remade, as meaningful. Relational theory considers how social practices are shaped and modified by this structure (Connell, 2009). Moving beyond theorizing masculinity and femininity as personality types that result from socialization or biological differences (between men and women) this approach conceptualises masculinity and femininity as organizing features of social relations and embedded within and constitutive of gender.

Within Connell’s relational theory of gender, hegemonic masculinity is the “configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee)
the dominant position of men and the subordination of women’ (Connell, 2005, p. 77). Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) write that hegemonic masculinity embodies:

*the currently most honoured way of being a man, it required all other men to position themselves in relation to it, and it ideologically legitimated the global subordination of women to men*

Hegemonic masculinity entails both ‘internal hegemony’ (over other masculinities) and ‘external hegemony’ (institutionalisation of men’s dominance over women). The benefits of the ‘patriarchal dividend’ are available not only to men who have access to hegemonic masculinity but also to those who are complicit in the current ‘gender order’ (Connell, 2005, p.79-80). Previous research regarding masculinities in primary schools in England, has indicated that, sport and embodiment (Renold, 1997; Skelton, 2000; Swain, 2006)- and more recently highly academic identities (‘boffins’ or ‘geeks’) (Archer et al, 2013; Francis et al, 2010)- are key to the ways in which hegemonic masculinity is constructed. This research has highlighted that masculinities constructed through ‘intelligence’ are not necessarily a challenge to hegemonic masculinity but are a different (perhaps ‘older’) form of hegemonic masculinity (Renold, 2004).

Post-structural critiques of Connell’s social theory of gender have argued that it evokes typologies which create fixity and a binary division of hegemonic and non-hegemonic masculinities (Mclnnes, 2008). With this in mind, in this thesis, I move away from a singular model of hegemonic masculinity to one that is multiple and plural in order to consider how local masculinities and femininities emerge in students’ constructions of gendered identities in Delhi primary schools. This includes consideration for complicit or ‘subordinate masculinities’ that can be subordinated to hegemonic masculinity, and- at other times- use ‘hegemonic masculinity for its own purposes to legitimate and guarantee the subordination of women’ (Gottzen, 2011, p.3). Connell suggests that in order to subordinate ‘femininity’ rather than ‘masculinity’, subordinate masculinities are associated with ‘femininity’- especially gay masculinities (Connell, 2005, p. 78-79). Another form of non-hegemonic masculinity- marginalised masculinities- ‘may share many features with hegemonic masculinity but are socially de-authorised’ through the interplay of gender with other structures such as class (Connell, 2000, p. 30-31).
While Connell’s relational model of hegemonic masculinity allows for the study of both masculinities and femininities, it has been criticised for emphasising masculinity and including femininity as an after thought. Connell uses the term ‘emphasised femininity’, to highlight a form of femininity which is defined by its compliance with subordination and the way in which it maintains the gender order (Connell, 1987, p. 184-185). Studies into gendered identities in primary schools in the UK, have drawn on the notion of emphasised femininity as a counterpart to hegemonic masculinity (Blaise, 2005; Epstein et al, 2001; Reay, 2001). However, these studies reveal little about what emphasised femininity entails and recent scholarship has called in to question the relevance of the concept in the context of new configurations of identity and practice, especially among younger women (Connell, 2005, p. 848). The lack of theorisation about femininities makes it difficult to theoretically examine masculinities and femininities in relation to each other.

Within Connell’s theory of hegemonic masculinity, power is viewed as oppressive and embodied in/possessed by groups of men (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005). In contrast, as I have shown earlier in this section (2.14), post-structural approaches, draw on Foucault’s view of power to understand power relations, resulting from ‘dominant discourses’, that ‘invite and persuade individuals to conform to norms and expectations’. While, I have suggested that post-structural emphasis on the individual must be met with caution in the context of India, Connell’s use of psychoanalytic theory to position subjects as unitary actors (who can resist power relations) is also unsuitable in this context. Although Foucault’s later work pays attention to the (individual) subject, Hall (1997, p. 55) argues that ‘he did not restore the subject to its position as the centre and author of representation’. Bacchi and Bonham argue that Foucault privileges the examination of discourse/knowledge and constructions of reality over autonomous subjects; showing more interest in ‘what people say’ rather than in ‘what people say’ (Bacchi and Bonham, 2011, p. 9). Drawing on both hegemony and discourse, I understand gender identities as incoherent with ‘multiple inconsistent discursive resources available for constructing gender identities’ (Wetherell and Edley, 1999, p.352). By reframing hegemonic masculinity as a discourse of hegemonic masculinity that is more influential than other discourses of masculinity, I aim to avoid potential slippage into fixed types of masculinities or femininities.
I draw on a discourse of hegemonic masculinity and hegemonic femininity in order to understand them as both a practice and an ideal. This enables me to consider how local discourses of hegemonic masculinity and hegemonic femininity are constituted in relation to national/global hegemonic masculinity/femininity and to consider how students engage in both hegemonic and non-hegemonic practices. In doing so I consider how a discourse of idealised femininity privileges a certain femininity and provides support for a hegemonic masculinity among government and private primary school children in Delhi. In doing so, I aim to overcome the equation of gender with women and girls to consider the role that masculinities and femininities play in maintaining gendered hierarchies. At the same time, I aim to avoid the tendency of studies of masculinity to overlook femininities or draw on reductive and limiting theories of femininity.

A relational approach to gender means not only expanding ‘gender’ to incorporate men and boys, but also looking at how gender relates to other factors, including class, ethnic or religious background or location (Connell, 2009). Given the stratified nature of the Indian education system, class can be understood as one of, if not the most significant determinant of how students engage with education (Gilbertson, 2017; Nambissan, 2014). In the following section, I start by outlining the policy background in relation to class and education in India, the I review the relevant research literature before highlighting my theoretical approach to the study of classed identities.

2.2 Economic Inequality, Class and Education in India

2.2.1 Economic and Social Policies in “New” India: Economic Liberalisation, Middle-class Aspirationalism and ‘Traditional’ Values

In 1991, the IMF implemented SAPs in India to stabilise and restructure the Indian economy. Following economic liberalisation, a number of scholars have highlighted the emergence of the urban middle classes in India (Fernandes, 2006; Baviskar and Ray, 2011; Radhakrishnan, 2011). Brosius (2010, p. 74) suggests that ‘it is now the new residential colonies with lakes and golf courses, and glass-bodied skyscrapers reflecting business (wo)men in western suits, equipped with laptops and BlackBerry
phones that shape the globalised imaginary of “New India”. The visibility of the middle class can be seen as representing the emergence of a new (neoliberal) political culture focused on middle class consumption as a replacement to older ideologies (of duty and sacrifice) associated with the state-managed economy (Fernandes, 2006). The ‘demanding state’ has come to be replaced by the ‘desiring self’ and ‘aspirational consumerism’ promises to ‘link the particularity of individual consumer desire with universal progress, imagined at once as material and aesthetic’ (Mazarella, 2003, p.101).

Scholars have shown how the bodies and representations of divine femininities or iconised Indian women are invoked to articulate a new global Indianness (Radhakrishnan, 2011). Educated, professional young women are ‘icon(s) of the new India’ in popular culture and middle-class narratives (Gilbertson, 2017; Radhakrishnan, 2011; Vijayakumar, 2013). Economic liberalisation- especially the growth of “global industries”, including the IT sector- is said to have signalled a gender revolution as well, where educated women come to occupy relatively well-paid positions (Radhakrishan, 2011). The success of both the professional woman and the Indian beauty queen have brought women to the centre of India’s success (Radhakrishna, 2011). These women have emerged as both producers of economic success (as working professionals) and beneficiaries of this success (taking their place among the most beautiful women in the world) (Radhakrishnan, 2011). Nationalist perspectives legitimise these gendered discourses of Indian women and draw upon them in arguing for the dramatic changes accompanying globalisation (Radhakrisnan, 2011).

Although idealised representations of the ‘middle’ class are depicted as being illustrative of the middle class as a whole- or as a realistic destination for members of the aspirational working class- they in fact represent the upper sections of the middle class (Fuller & Narasimhan, 2007; Sancho, 2013). Upper-caste and class dominance of higher education and private sector jobs, demonstrate that it is only the upper middle class and elites that are able to replicate the global, cosmopolitan lifestyles and benefit from the lucrative employment opportunities in the ‘new’ India (Fuller & Narasimhan, 2007; Sancho, 2013). Only the top 26 percent of the middle class can be considered as such, while the remaining families live on significantly less and 40 percent live below the poverty line (Baviskar & Ray, 2011, p.2). To make matters worse inequality has
increased following economic liberalisation. Chancel & Piketty (2017) have shown that since the 1980s- and the introduction of liberalization policies- the top 0.1 percent of earners in India captured a higher share of total growth than the bottom 50 percent (12 percent vs. 11 percent), while the top 1 percent received a higher share of total growth than the middle 40 percent (29 percent vs. 23 percent). This has led to global concerns about India’s ‘missing middle class’ (Economist, 2018),

Figure 2.1 Share of Income for Top 1 percent and Bottom 50 percent in India (Chancel & Piketty, 2017)

The result is that a widening number of India’s are identifying as middle class and at the same time experiencing a disjuncture between their lived realities and the promise of idealised consumer lifestyles (Jeffrey, 2010; Sancho, 2013). Anxiety, especially among the lower-middle classes, is being mediated by aspirations and the sense that the middle class is in the process of ‘becoming’ (Fernandes, 2006; Gilbertson, 2017; Jeffrey et al, 2010). This has led to the suggestion that the middle class is better understood as a social construct that ‘allows for the simplification and reproduction of inequalities’ (Fernandes, 2006; Fernandes & Heller, 2006; Sancho, 2015, p. 14). Upper middle-class power now resides in its ability to articulate the aspirations, trajectories, ambitions and identities of the nation as a whole (Fernandes, 2006). In doing so, the presumed omnipresence of the middle class conceals inequalities and the way in which certain sections of the middle class dominate the rest. According to Sancho, the middle class both distinguishes ‘what is “middle class” from those above and below’ and conceals the way that this cultural politics works to the benefit of a
middle-class elite more than it does those in middle and working-class positions (Deshpande, 2006; Sancho, 2015, p.14).

**Aspirational and Entrepreneurial Citizens**

The new politics of aspiration in India assumes that the potential of consumer-citizens is a means to economic productivity and social mobility (Raco, 2009). Raco (2009) argues that this is a form of ‘existential politics’ in which ‘dominant social values are defined and institutionalised’. At the heart of the cultural politics of the ‘middle class’ in India are (neoliberal) notions of meritocracy which offers the assurance (to aspirants) that, rather than being inherited, middle class status can be acquired through hard work and individual achievement (Fernandes, 2006; Sancho, 2015). Gooptu (2014, p. 7) suggests that one consequence of this aspirational politics is that India is now ‘imagined as a nation of individual enterprising people’. The establishment of a market has enabled the logics of enterprise to permeate of forms of human conduct and entrepreneurial citizens are now expected to act within a competitive logic of self-maximisation in all contexts (Gooptu, 2014). Rather than being viewed as stifled by oppressive circumstances, the poor are said have distinct practices, including ‘Jugaad’ (creative improvisation), that enables them to make the most of the scarce resources and engage with the market as entrepreneurs and consumers (Gooptu, 2014, p. 9). Enterprising, economically interested individuals are thought be necessary for a globalised, liberalised economy while self-governed citizens are required for a state that has partially withdrawn the provision of public services and operates as an ‘enabler of the market’ (Gooptu, 2014, p. 9). Although prevalent in the IT sector (Nisbett, 2014; Radhakrishnan, 2011), enterprise culture in India has been shown to have emerged in a diverse range of sites including Bollywood movies (Chakravati, 2014 in Gooptu, 2014), spirituality (Gooptu, 2014), education (Sancho, 2015) and romantic relationships (Mankekar, 2014 in Gooptu, 2014)

This consumption-orientated middle-class aspirationalism has been promoted through different forms of media, including films, lifestyle magazines, advertising hoardings and especially television (Brosius, 2010). The visual technologies that have accompanied economic liberalization emphasise (a post-feminist discourse of) individualism, choice, empowerment, subjective desires and a resurgence of ideas of natural sexual difference (Lewis and Martin, 2016; Radhakrishnan, 2011). However,
rather than a simple western/post-feminist discourse, newer forms of media promote ‘complex negotiations between… global cosmopolitanism and… more localised values that might be read as “middle class”’ (Lewis and Martin, 2016, p. 22). Middleclassness in India, is the result of the interaction between ‘earlier affiliations, values and narratives (… honour)’ and new orientation (merit, individual achievement) (Sancho, 2015, p.15).

**Balancing “Tradition” and “Modernity”: Appropriate Femininity**

Older middle-class values and traditions have their origins in the colonial era, when a middle class emerged through a colonial, English language education to gain access to employment and economic power (Fernandes, 2006). Distinguished by their education and engaged in professional employment, this newly formed urban elite engaged in practices of distinction- involving respectability, moral regeneration and social reform- to stake claims for leadership and to act as representatives for the masses within the colonial regime (Joshi, 2010; Chatterjee, 1993). During this period, middleclassness came to be understood as a particular orientation to modernity that combined Indian tradition with Western modernity (Osella and Osella, 2000).

The production of this distinctive, Indian modernity relied upon a ‘reconstructed body of traditions’ (Osella and Osella, 2000, p. 258) which was ‘a middle-class construct involving ideas of scientific and rational spirituality, and the assertion of a reformist, Brahmanical, Sanskritic and caste-centric Hinduism as the ‘authentic Indian’ tradition’ (Gilbertson, 2017, p. 13). According to Partha Chatterjee (1993), this led to a split in which the (modern) material sphere- the outer, public world of colonial society- was considered to be the domain of men while the spiritual sphere- the home-was the place where national culture could be protected (from western culture) by women. As a result, women’s engagement with the ‘modern’ (Western or global) was limited and the focus of being Indian came to be tied to an appropriate femininity. This appropriate femininity entailed a distancing from the ‘common’ woman who was considered ‘coarse, vulgar, loud, quarrelsome and devoid of superior moral sense, sexually promiscuous, subjected to brutal physical oppression by males’ (Chatterjee, 1993, p. 127). At the same time, overly westernised women were dismissed on the basis that they were too fond of luxury and had too little interest in the home (Chatterjee, 1993).
In contemporary India, research suggests that neoliberal, post-feminist discourses of women's empowerment have emerged alongside the resurgence of Hindu nationalist constructions of gender that argue for gender roles based on a traditional Hindu culture (Berglund, 2011). Hindu nationalist and neoliberal constructions of identity are aligned in an emphasis on the individualised subject who is encouraged to make their own enterprise and engage with global or cosmopolitan culture; however, the individual subject must do so in accordance with dominant social structures such as family and kin networks (Gilbertson, 2017; Srivastava, 2015; Radhakrishnan, 2011). Within this conception of Hindu culture and religion, the rights of individual women (and men) are recognised but they are severely limited by the traditions of the community (Berglund, 2011). This stands in stark opposition to an implicit assumption underpinning some of the feminist theories regarding equality that advocate for individual freedom of choice and gender equality.

In India, contemporary middleclassness continues to be defined in accordance with this interaction between a tradition and modernity and the burden to produce an 'appropriately Indian' identity has disproportionately fallen on women (Fernandes, 2006; Gilbertson, 2017; Sancho, 2015). As women and girls participate in the public sphere through employment and education, 'long standing associations between femininity, the domestic sphere and national culture' continue to play a central role in the production of their identities (Gilbertson, 2017, p. 18). The education and employment of women and girls have become important markers of family, community and national progress; however, concerns about women's, 'virtue, sexual choices and matrimonial alliances' continue to be 'fraught with questions of appropriateness and dogged by the assertion of caste, community and class endogamy' (Phadke, Khan & Ranade 2011, p. 23). As a result, new freedoms are subject to conditions and placed under certain limits and restrictions (Phadke, Khan & Ranade, 2011). An 'appropriately Indian' femininity is now considered to entail a commitment to (Indian) tradition and balancing or limiting their engagement with the 'global/modern' (Radhakrishnan, 2011; Fuller & Narasimhan, 2008). This balancing act takes place in the context of dramatically transformed education system in India.
2.2.2 Education Research into Class and its Intersection with Gender in India: A Middle-Class Culture of Schooling

The emergence of the private sector and a policy emphasis on choice has transformed the educational field in India (Kumar, 2011; Majumdar & Mooij, 2011; Nambissan, 2009; Sancho, 2015). These changes have enabled middle class parents to utilise their economic capital to ‘buy’ access to the ‘best’ schools and universities and purchase supplementary support (Gilbertson, 2017; Nambissan, 2009; Sancho, 2015). In contrast, a lack of material capital ensures that lower-middle class and working class/poor parents are excluded or hampered in their ability to succeed in the field of education (Gilbertson, 2017; Sancho, 2015). Sancho’s (2015) research in the South of India suggests, the capitals of students and their families equip them with skills and knowledge that- to different extents- enable them to meet the informal and formal institutionalised expectations of the school (Lareau and Weininger, 2003, P. 488). As a result of global and national policies, many children in India are new entrants to the school system and their families have little or no experience of formal education.

This has particular relevance in India where an increasingly marketised field of education ensures that parental involvement in education is ‘no longer optional’ and parents are viewed as collaborators between home and school (Donner, 2018; Sancho, 2015). In pursuit of the cultural capital deemed necessary for a middle-class future in India, middle class parents and teachers employ ‘aspirational regimes’ in an effort to instil ‘a drive to succeed, self-discipline, ambition and competitiveness’ (Nambissan, 2010; Sancho, 2015). Middle class parents utilise their cultural capital- including the use of authoritarian educational practices and communication with teachers- to ensure that their children succeed in education and gain entrance in to the prized professions- especially management, medical and engineering (Manjumdar and Mooij, 2015; Nambissan, 2010; Sancho, 2015).

A number of recent studies highlight how the Indian education system is now characterised by a dominant (neoliberal) middle-class culture of education, that privileges a competitive, economic, and status-based conception of aspiration (Gilbertson, 2017; Kumar, 2011; Sancho, 2015, 2017). This educational culture plays a central role in the reproduction of inequalities between the established and emergent
middle classes (Kumar, 2011; Sancho, 2015). The Indian education system can be seen to be steeped in the middle-class values (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977; Maneumdar & Mooij, 2011; Sancho, 2015), including a construction of the middle class child as ‘naturally endowed with enterprising qualities, such as ambition, self-reliance, and the willingness to sacrifice’ (Sancho, 2015, p.165). This language aligns with the ‘girl effect’ campaigns of development agencies and nationalist conceptions of India as an active and aspirational society where citizens ‘passions and ambition’ will drive the development of the nation (Sancho, 2015, p.165). Sancho notes that collective performances of middle class culture are revolved around notions of entrepreneurial citizenship and the language of ‘hard work, individual merit and personal sacrifice’- in contrast to previous generations that were considered ‘passive and dependent’ (Sancho, 2015, p. 166). Private schools in Sancho’s study, promoted themselves against local elites- excessively globalised and western- and the local poor to portray themselves as ‘producing competent subjects for the global economy, who were both modern and traditional’ (Sancho, 2015, p. 166).

The Intersection of Gender and Class in Education

Research has shown that the balancing of ‘global’ and ‘Indian’ practices and identities has become an important in the reproduction of middle class status, especially for women and girls (Gilbertson, 2017; Radhakrishnan, 2011). As mentioned in section 2.21, rising aspirations, new consumption practices, the spread of global media on the one hand and a resurgence of the importance of a distinctly Hindu identity on the other, has placed pressure on the middle class women and girls to produce an ‘appropriately Indian’ identity- one that delicately balances the ‘global’ (modern) and the ‘Indian’ (‘tradition’) (Gilbertson, 2017; Radhakrishnan, 2011; Srivastava, 2015).

In a study of lower-middle class, young male graduates in the North of India, Jeffrey (2010) found that his participants had clear aspirations for middle class careers-mirroring those of the elite. However, given the high rates of youth unemployment in India and the participants’ unwillingness to undertake traditional, agricultural work, young men adopted strategies of ‘waiting’ and engaged in ‘timepass’ (a masculine, ‘hanging out’) as they waited for middle class career opportunities to materialise (Jeffrey, 2010). Vijayakumar’s (2013) study of young women working in a small-town business-process outsourcing centre near Bangalore, found that women were under
different pressures to men. Marriage norms led to uncertainty about the future for young women and limited their future opportunities. As result, women adopted flexible aspirations, drawing on both gendered language of neoliberal self-improvement for the global economy and on the nationalist ideal of rural middle-class feminine domesticity (Vijayakumar, 2013). These flexible aspirations operate as a symbolic resource that distinguished participants from ‘old-fashioned’ village housewives and ‘promiscuous’ urban call centre girls (Vijayakumar, 2013). Although Vijayakumar’s (2013) research predominantly focused on women, she found that when young men were unable to attain their aspirations they adapt them to known social limitations rather than abandon them entirely.

This research demonstrates that class distinction processes are gendered and that dreams of upward mobility through individualism and self-improvement celebrate non-elite women, even as they entrench their outsider status (Vijayakumar, 2013). Scholars have shown how social mobility and individuality are ‘resources’ that are unequally distributed ensuring that some groups- especially poor/working class women- have to stay fixed in order for others to move (Massey, 1994; Skeggs, 2004; Walkderdine, 2003). Gilbertson’s (2016) study of lower and upper middle-class students in Hyderabad demonstrates how the middle class draw on the moral discourse of ‘respectability’ to distance themselves from the ‘cultureless’ poor and to distinguish themselves from the excessive and overly westernised lifestyles of the elite. According to Gilbertson’s upper-middle class informants, the poor were said to lack values and respectability completely while the lower middle class were said to be too conservative, too concerned with respectability and insufficiently ‘open minded’ (Gilbertson, 2016, p. 163). The choice of school played a central role in the realisation of these identities, and upper-middle class students were critical of the exam-orientated approach to schooling experienced by lower-middle class students and preferred an education that offered them other forms of cultural capital, especially ‘exposure’ or ‘openness’ (cosmopolitanism) (Gilbertson, 2017, p. 163). This suggests that the promise of inclusion in middle class lifestyles- especially to women- becomes a means to reassert eliteness (Sancho, 2015; Vijayakumar, 2013).

Many of the studies cited above, have drawn upon Bourdieu’s theory of social reproduction in order to highlight the important role that masculinities and femininities play in the social formation of the middle class (Gilbertson, 2017; Radhakrishnan,
2011; Sancho, 2015; Vijayakumar, 2013). In the following section, I outline Bourdieu’s theoretical approach to the study of class and describe how it can be used to explore the construction of classed and gendered identities.

2.2.3 Theoretical Approach to the Study of Gender and Class: Bourdieu’s Theory of Social Reproduction

Bourdieu’s work has been used as a framework to explore large-scale class shifts- like those of the middle class in India (Gilbertson, 2017; Radhakrishnan, 2011)- and to highlight new forms inequality that have resulted from globalization (Jeffrey, 2010; Vijayakumar, 2013. Studies have shown how education in India continues to be governed and orientated towards the upper-middle class/elites- whether old or new (Gilbertson, 2017; Jeffrey & Harriss, 2015; Kumar, 2011; Nambissan, 2014; Sancho, 2015). This recognition has led to studies that draw on Bourdieu’s theory to explore the relationship between educational structures, the cultural formation of class and the limits of social mobility for children and young people (Jeffrey, 2010; Sancho, 2015; Vijayakumar, 2013).

Bourdieu was interested in identifying how symbolic culture intersects with structure to reproduce social and educational inequality and with how cultural relations shape identities that either submit to, resist domination or enact both together. This approach can offer ‘a powerfully elaborate conceptual framework for understanding the role of gender in the social relations of modern capitalist society’ (McCall 1992, p. 837), one which incorporates the multiplicity of power relations associated with the word ‘class’. The category ‘woman’ is lived and intimately experienced ‘as a form of subjectivity inhabited through other categories’, categories which overlap to constitute a ‘nexus of power relations’ (ibid, p. 166). Given that Bourdieu views class and gender as being embodied through ‘intricate daily practices’, this approach enables an exploration of how students perform the categories gender and class as well as how the two categories intersect. Central to this approach is the notion that class and gender inequalities “represent an interaction between the social practices of cultural production (e.g. notion of society as symbolic culture) and the conditions of structural change” (Gilbertson, 2017).
Bourdieu’s conceptual tools have for some time been employed by a range of educational researchers to analyse class, gender and inequality in UK schools (Allan, 2009, 2010; Allan and Charles, 2014; Reay et al, 2008, 2011). Bourdieu’s concepts of capitals, habitus and field are highly interrelated, especially when theorizing in educational contexts (Stahl, 2015).

**Capital**

Bourdieu identified four different types of capital - economic (money and assets), social (networks, family, religious/cultural heritage), symbolic (reputation, prestige) and cultural (taste, language, knowledge) - which are relational and interdependent, operating concurrently (Bourdieu, 1984). Bourdieu argued that capital is the basis of social life and it dictates where one is located within the social order; the more capital one has the more power and status one has in social life (Bourdieu, 1986). For this reason, capital provides the resources that reproduce inequality (Reay, 2002).

Beyond the importance of economic capital, Bourdieu argues that the culture of the dominant class is conveyed and rewarded by the education system (Bourdieu, 1984; Dumais, 2002; Reay, 2001). In the field of education, it is primarily capitals that have been developed within school and the home (among other related fields) that can be converted. While cultural capital has often been conceptualised (in education studies) as knowledge of highbrow aesthetic culture (Dumais, 2002), scholars have called for a broader understanding of cultural capital that encompasses the ‘affective aspects of inequality’ such as levels of confidence and entitlement (Skeggs, 1997, p. 10 in Reay, 2010). The concept of cultural capital is useful in considering the “micro interactional processes whereby individuals strategic use of knowledge skills and confidence comes into contact with institutionalised standards of evaluation” (Lareau and Weininger in Reay, 2010). Differences between students and parental levels of cultural capital and the standards that schools (and teachers) evaluate parents/students against are particularly important (Reay, 2010).

**Field**

Fields are the sites of struggle for different forms of capital. Each different field can be likened to a game with its own unique set of rules, knowledge and forms of capital. Within fields, agents and institutions constantly struggle according to the rules of this
space of play (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, p.16). As people mobilise their capital to stake claims within a particular social domain, they place their accumulated capital at risk. Agents aim to overturn the established position of those further up the hierarchy; while fields are hierarchically organised and dominant social agents and institutions possess power to determine what happens, there is still agency and change (Grenfell, 2008, p. 73).

**Doxa**

Through recent transformations of the Indian education system, we can see evidence for Bourdieu’s (1984) claim that neoliberalism establishes itself as a doxa- ‘an unquestionable orthodoxy that operates as if it were the objective truth’ (Chopra, 2003). Chopra (2003) suggests that neoliberalism as doxa has colonised the discussions regarding- and perceptions of- globalisation and liberalisation in India. Bourdieu views doxa as a tacit, entrenched cognitive and practical sense of knowing about what can reasonably be achieved (Blackshaw and Long, 2005). Research has indicated that educational and career aspirations are heavily shaped by doxic beliefs (Swartz, 1997; Archer and Yamashita, 2003). Students evaluate the extent to which notions of their own abilities and preferences match with those of job requirements; where something is thought to be unachievable for a particular class the students do not pursue that option (Archer and Yamashita, 2003). The role of doxa is evident in Swartz’s suggestion that students from working class backgrounds internalise and resign themselves to limited opportunities for school success and therefore do not aspire to high levels of educational attainment (Swartz, 1997). These western accounts of student aspirations in education have sought to bring cultural understandings back in to the analysis, in order to ‘take up the matter of how collective horizons are shaped and of how they constitute the basis for collective aspirations’ (Appadurai, 2004, p. 61). For policy-makers, these conceptions of aspiration are useful since they enable the poor to ‘find the resources required to contest and alter the conditions of their own poverty’ (Appadurai, 2004, P.61).

**Habitus**

As mentioned in section 2.21, aspirations for middle class lifestyles/subjectivities can be understood as a force that binds different segments of the middle class together (Sancho, 2015; Vijayakumar, 2013). However, in an era of rapid generational change
in India, social norms- especially in relation to marriage and work- ensure that women and girls face different pressures to men and boys (Gilbertson, 2017; Vijayakumar, 2013). Scholars have drawn on Bourdieu’s understanding of aspirations and experience- as grounded in class habitus- to provide alternatives to the neoliberal tropes of upward mobility (Gilbertson, 2017; Reay, 2002, 2010; Stahl, 2015; Walkerdine, 2003). Bourdieu’s theoretical tool of habitus is useful in attempting to examine the tensions between identity and the dominant (neoliberal and ‘traditional’) culture(s) of aspiration in India. In my interpretations of students’ and parents’ aspirations and experiences, habitus can help to reveal how cultural practices produce certain ‘ways of being’ in schools (Bourdieu, 1990). Habitus can be understood as a “realistic relation to what is possible, founded on and therefore limited by power” (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 65). McNay (2008, p. 184) suggests that within social fields, agents constantly anticipate the future- the less mobility one has the more resignation- and this leads “the most oppressed groups in society to oscillate between fantasy and surrender”. Aspirations should therefore not just be conceived of as passive reflections of elite lifestyles but instead as emerging within specific social locations.

Symbolic violence, ‘represents the ways in which people play a role in reproducing their own subordination through the gradual internalisation and acceptance of those ideas and structures that tend to subordinate them’ (Connolly and Healy, 2004). Bourdieu (1994, p. 7) emphasised that the relationship between the individual- and habitus as a product of social practice- and a specific field is always historical and subject to constant change. In this thesis, I will consider how ‘global’ and ‘Indian’ discourses shape (and are shaped by) the identities of boys and girls in Delhi private and government school communities. According to Bourdieu, ‘habitus is a cultural agent before it is a social form of identity’ (Webb et al, 2005, p.117). Through early socialisation, especially within the family, the habitus is formed and it is reconfigured as the individual interacts with the social world. The habitus ‘sets the structural limits for action’ while also ‘generating perceptions, aspirations and practices that are consistent with the conditions under which it was produced’ (Swartz, 1997, p. 103).

As a socialised subjectivity, habitus ‘contributes to constituting the field as a meaningful world, a world endowed with sense and value’ while at the same time the field structures the habitus of individuals. Social reality therefore exists both ‘outside and inside of agents’ (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, p. 127):
‘Social structures via various socialisation processes are internalised and become dispositions (habitus) and dispositions lead to practices which, in turn, reproduce social structures’

Since the field is in constant flux, the habitus is not 'fixed', but is instead an evolving set of durable and transposable dispositions. Being the product of history and experience, habitus: ‘may be changed by history, that is by new experiences, education or training… Dispositions are long-lasting: they tend to perpetuate, to reproduce themselves, but they are not eternal’ (Bourdieu, 2002, p. 29). While the structures of the environment condition the perceptions and conceptions of the habitus, it is dependent on capitals and fields. Habitus affects how a person thinks and what a person can think about, and, consequently, delineates the parameters of thought and action, without determining thought and action per se.

Since the present study aims to understand how school communities, including students, teachers and parents, construct gendered and classed identities the use of habitus will enable me to examine individual dispositions and ‘recurring patterns of social outlook- the beliefs, values, conduct, speech, dress and manners that are inculcated by everyday experiences within the family, the peer group and the school’ (Mills, 2008). Schools serve as a ‘productive locus’ that gives rise to ‘certain patterns of thought’. Research has shown that working class students embracing ‘success’ grounded in middle-class aspiration requires difficult identity negotiations (Reay 2002, 2010; Stahl, 2015).

Given that the dispositions that make up the habitus reflect the social context in which they were acquired, as a theoretical tool, habitus allows for the examination of the role that local and global discourses play in the construction of gendered and classed identities. Through analysis of what these working-class and middle-class students do and do not aspire to, and how they experience schooling, we are able to see how global (neoliberal), national (“traditional”) and local discourses shape their identities. As such, rather than viewing classed and gendered identities as being bound to a particular place, I view these identities as being produced through their relationships between the local, national and global (Massey, 1990). In the following section, I outline the importance of considering local, national and global forces in the construction of gendered and classed identities.
2.3 A Global Conceptualisation of Place: Global and Local Forces and the Construction of Gendered and Classed Identities

2.3.1 Globalisation, the Nation and Cultural Identity

Historically, places have been thought to have their own traditions/local cultures and distinct physical, economic and cultural characters that makes them unique and different to other places (Tomlinson, 2003). However, in the context of economic and cultural globalization places and cultures are being restructured (Massey, 1990; Massey and Jess, 1995). Massey and Jess (1995, p.1) suggest that:

“on the one hand, previous coherences are being disrupted, old notions of the local place are being interrupted by new connections with a world beyond. On the other hand, new claims to the -usually exclusive- character of places and who belongs there, are being made”

As this extract suggests, rather than inevitably leading towards cultural homogenization (Ritzer, 1993), globalization can be viewed as producing a proliferation of cultural identities (Tomlinson, 2003). Some accounts claim that in response to globalization “the upsurging power of local culture… offers resistance to the centrifugal force of capitalist globalisation” (Tomlinson, 2003, p. 270). From this perspective, local and national identities are reinforced through opposition to economic globalization. In Asia, a number of scholars have shown how cultural identities have emerged to reinforce global capitalism and neoliberalism (Lewis & Martin, 2016; Ong, 1999, 2006; Oza, 2012). In South East Asia, Ong (2006) highlights the development of ideologies based upon neo-Confucianism or ‘new Islam’ which reinforce global capitalism and neoliberalism in this context. This “Asian Renaissance” is offered in contrast to the materialist orientation of “Western” nations and highlights the way in which “tradition” is being revived- and reconfigured- in the context of globalization to give nations their own distinctiveness (Ong, 2006; Zavos, 2013).

Oza (2012, p.3) argues that three overarching developments have shaped debates regarding national identity in India: neoliberal reform; the rise of Hindu nationalist political power; and, the way in which both (neoliberal) economic reform and the Hindu Right enhanced the consolidation of middle class identity and power. According to Oza (2012, p.3), the loss of sovereignty associated with globalisation ‘has resulted in the
displacement of control onto national culture and identity’. These nationalistic notions of citizenship are “built on a myth of national homogeneity and cultural identity” (Osler & Starkey, 2010, p. 88), or in Bromley’s (2009) words, “a territorially bounded polity governing a homogenous citizenry with a common culture” (p. 35). Nationalist forms of citizenship entail “a direct sense of community membership based on loyalty to a civilisation which is a common possession” (Marshall, 1963, p. 92).

A number of scholars have highlighted the presence of a civilizational discourse in India which has its roots in the colonial era and has developed in the postcolonial period (Jaffrelot, Oza, 2012; Zavos, 2013). During the colonial period, 19th century reformist approaches to Hinduism emerged in which the Vedic civilisation was constructed as deeply sophisticated and spiritual. This continues in a range of political, cultural and religious interpretations of India in the contemporary era (Zavos in Mitra, 2013). These efforts to establish sovereignty over national culture and identity have resulted in a fortification of ethnic, classed/caste, religious and especially gendered identities (Fernandes and Heller, 2006; Oza, 2012). Zavos draws on Ong (1999) to suggest that Hindu nationalist, civilisational discourse leads to suppression and exclusion by lending “spiritual authority to the practices of individual regimes in managing and suppressing profane others, who are excluded by such discourses” (Ong, 1999 in Zavos, 2013).

These studies suggest that the “global-local nexus” enables a “new world-space of cultural production and national representation which is simultaneously becoming more globalised (unified around dynamics of capital logic moving across borders) and more localised (fragmented into contestatory enclaves of difference, coalition and resistance) in every day texture and composition” (Wilson and Dissanayake, 1996 in Oza, 2012). These studies highlight the importance of understanding the interconnection between the global and the local – viewing them as mutually constitutive (Massey, 1990).

**A Global Sense of Place**

To account for these changes, this thesis seeks to move away from a static, bounded, positivistic view of space-place and culture, in order to understand how local school cultures and classed and gendered identities are produced and defined in terms of their relationship with and connection to the rest of the world (Connell, 2010).
A relational approach will enable the examination of the way in which local, national and global relationships of power pattern girls’ and boys’ lives and to consider new understandings of girlhoods and boyhoods as mutually constituted and relationally contingent. This thesis aims to account for the complex and complicated ways girlhood and boyhood “is relationally practiced, intersectionally experienced and immanently transnationalized” (Bent & Switzer, 2016).

On a global scale, this approach is important given the history of European colonial expansion where an intellectual division of labor accumulated knowledge in the global North while using the global peripheries as data mines (Hountondji, 1997). Given the hierarchical structure of knowledge production, other forms of non-western knowledge have been obscured. This historical background has shaped “the content and method of sociology, as well as the discipline’s wider cultural significance.” (Connell, 2007, p.9). Rather than attempting to discover ‘pure’ indigenous knowledge, I view cultures and societies as dynamic and shaped by outside influences. Taking a critical approach to ‘silo’ approaches to indigenous knowledge, I draw on Hountondji’s (1997) concept of “endogenous knowledge” to emphasise active processes of knowledge production that have a capacity to speak beyond indigenous societies. Central to this study will be the focus on how diverse social practices and identities within each school community shape and are shaped by relationships between the local, national and global.

2.4 Theoretical Approach to the Present Study: How Students Construct Gendered and Classed Identities and the role of Local and Global Forces

The theoretical approach outlined in this chapter represents an attempt to examine the construction of gendered and classed identities in three schools in the context of Delhi, India. The theoretical framing of this study has been influenced by my own changing perspectives as I undertook research in the field and reflected upon my experiences. While I commenced this research project with an emphasis on gender, the rapid social, cultural, economic and material change and widespread optimism about the future convinced me of the importance of considering how gendered identities were mediated by social class. I therefore adapted my theoretical approach to enable an exploration of gender, class and (unintentionally) the constitution of individual identities.
As the research project progressed, the data seemed to suggest that rather than individual sense of identity, it was relationships with others that played the primary role in determining individual opportunities and identities. The suggestion that too much individuality was inappropriate in a country and culture where family and religion were said to be a priority, arose time and time again. Many participants also described their family as a primary source of meaning and purpose in their lives. This was often accompanied by concerns that these relationships were under threat from globalization and especially new forms of media that were said to be bringing rapid cultural change. Consideration for how to factor this into my analysis ultimately led me to a fundamental reorientation of my theoretical approach.

Drawing upon a relational conceptualization of identity enabled me to account for the primacy of relationships (especially familial and religious) and the centrality of others in the construction of participants’ identities. This reorientation, led me to understand that participants did not solely or primarily view themselves as self-contained individuals but instead understood themselves as existing through their intimate relations with others. This theoretical reorientation led to me to the recognition that this was a fundamentally different way of understanding self-hood with important implications for notions of citizenship, intercultural understanding and efforts to achieve social justice.

Through a relational approach to identity, I was able to consider the role that global and national discourses played in the shaping of classed and gendered identities. In viewing the local, national and global as mutually constituted (Massey, 1990), I have considered how classed and gendered identities are constructed in a local context through their relationships with the rest of the world. Given the prevalence of particular femininities and masculinities in national and global development discourses, this thesis considers how global, national and local notions of masculinity and femininity shape how students’ construct their identities. To achieve this, I consider how social engagement at the local level shapes and is shaped by broader (global and national) discourses and power relations (Paechter, 2003).

In the context of three Delhi primary schools, this approach enables me to consider the diverse positions and dynamic practices that emerge in different school communities as a result of member (principals, teachers, students and parents) participation. I explore these school communities in Delhi with an awareness that
“which masculinities and femininities are dominant in a particular social context… is fundamentally bound up with power relations” (Connell in Paechter, 2003, p. 73). By combining feminist post-structural theory with relational gender theory, I consider the hegemonic discourses of masculinity and femininity that “convey and confer actual power to those who ‘master’ them” in each school (Paechter, 2003, p. 71). This means considering the hegemonic discourses of masculinity and femininity that lead to full participation and higher positions of power and the acceptable characteristics and behaviours that are associated with these identities (Paechter, 2003). The “doing” of identity is central to this thesis and the theoretical approaches described in this chapter. Rather than being chosen or biologically determined, gender is something that is performatively constructed in language.

In viewing gender in terms of discourses of hegemonic masculinity and hegemonic femininity, this thesis aligns with de-colonial feminist understandings of intersectionality, which view classed, gendered, sexualised, national, ethnic, cultural and religious identities and oppressions as interdependent. In the place of an additive approach to intersectionality, which can reify identity politics, this conceptualisation of intersectionality focuses on unmasking and destabilising hierarchies of oppressions that hide inequalities. This is deemed particularly important in India given research demonstrating widening economic inequality and ongoing gender inequality.

By adopting Bourdieu’s model of cultural capital in this thesis, I aim to build on previous studies that have found a space for women and men, boys and girls within their analyses (Allan, 2009, 2010; Allan and Charles, 2014; Gilbertson, 2017; Reay 1998, p. 25). Bourdieu (1987, p.107) suggests that gender (“sexual properties”) are indistinguishable from class properties” and I view both gender and class as foundational forms of status. This thesis will draw on Bourdieu’s theory of social reproduction to consider how gender inequalities in Delhi primary schools are embodied in everyday life ‘as intricate daily practices’ which intertwine with class and other social factors (caste, race, religion etc.) to become inscribed on women’s/men’s bodies and ‘played out in their social interactions’ (Reay, 1998, p. 231). In this thesis, I consider how both gender and class facilitate access to resources and shape capital conversion projects. Furthermore, I consider how class and gender distinctions mutually reinforce one another and the way in which they are inextricably intertwined.
Bourdieu’s concepts are particularly useful to the present study given that they account for both material and cultural inequality. Bourdieu’s concepts will allow me to account for the class fractions and notions of social mobility that I found in my study. Rather than focusing on taste or aesthetics, I follow Skeggs in viewing moral discourses as central to the constitution of classes (Skeggs, 2011). Skeggs argues that moral evaluations of class categories divert attention away from economic inequality (Skeggs, 2011, p. 276). Through moral discourses participants are able to distance themselves from those above and below and construct the class group to which they belong. Consideration for the ways in which moral boundaries are caught up with and reinforce cultural and socioeconomic boundaries (Gilbertson, 2017, p. 28), will enable me to consider the distinctions that are made by teachers, parents and students on the basis of certain configurations of cultural capital in the schools.

I use the terms ‘middle class’ and ‘working class’/’poor’ in my study to denote the way in which participants described themselves (and others). In doing so I do not view social class as actually existing- in a ready made independent reality- but I approach my research as such in order to attempt to understand the social positions that participants claim to occupy and to consider the contradictions of these positions (Allan, 2009; Gillies, 2004). In doing so, I do aim to avoid viewing identities as being the sole result of positioning and repositioning in discourse (Francis, 2001) or, conversely, as being freely selected by individuals who take up particular discourses at will (Skeggs, 1997).

Limitations

A number of researchers have criticised Bourdieu for an “oversocialised” concept of the individual who is said to be rendered “a mere bearer of social positions, one who comes to love and want his/her fate” (Lovell, 2000, p.15). Lovell (2000, p. 17) argues that women and girls “do not slip easily into the feminine position marked out for them by their sex”. In this thesis, I follow Lovell (2000) in attempting to balance Bourdieu’s recognition of the social conditions in which practices take place with the “politics of the performative” (Butler, 1990) found in feminist post-structural accounts. Lovell suggests that Bourdieu’s approach can offer, “a powerful conceptual antidote to post-modern voluntaristic politics, insofar as it permits us to focus on the social conditions of existence of resistance” (Lovell 2000, p. 18). In this thesis, this means paying
attention to hegemonic discourses and the way in which these are shaped by global, national and local social structures and ultimately taken up or performed by individuals within school communities. Consideration for how students’ identities are shaped by discourses can reveal the links between knowledge, power and governance, enabling an understanding of how social structures shape the construction of students’ identities.

By using Bourdieu’s concepts to explore the structures that influence daily existence, it is possible to bring “unquestioned concepts and habits” to the attention of the “conscious mind so they can be queried and... negated” (Hook, 2005). Bourdieu’s tools enable an exploration of the social structures that shape gendered and classed identities and the identification of these structures means that there is the possibility of resistance (Skeggs, 1997). While this does not necessarily leave room for individual agency, it does not mean that the oppressed should accept their fate willingly. This conceptualization of agency as relational rather than individual is something that I draw upon in this thesis.

Rather than emphasizing individual agency, relational theory underscores how women’s agency is often contingent upon men’s choices in asymmetrical relationships (Connell, 2012). Furthermore, the relationships themselves are embedded in broader networks that are also shaped by relationships of power. Given the importance of relational identities to this thesis and to Indian identities (Nair-Venugopal, 2012), I draw on Deneulin & McGregor’s (2010) conceptualization of agency as socially and collectively embedded. Rather than agency being an individual choice, this approach claims that ‘a broader and socially informed telos is required; this encompasses the good of oneself and others, including future generations’ (ibid, p. 4).

This conceptualization of agency posits that it is enacted for both the individual and for others, embedded within social relations that give value to certain goals and outcomes. Beyond accounting for individualistic, self-interested choices, this approach enables us to consider how relationships with others- especially family members- play an important role in shaping our identities, including individual aspirations, thoughts and emotions. This approach enables me to explore how both individual and relational identities shape how students construct classed and gendered identities.
Research drawing on this conception of agency has explored how agency is socially constructed and embedded in current and future aspirations (Dejaeghere, and Wiger, 2013; DeJaeghere, 2016; Unterhalter, 2014). This enables me to consider the capacity that each participant has to shape their life through the engagement with others in a network of relationships. Furthermore, the relationships and possibilities for evaluating or exiting networks of relationships are in themselves “nested in and shaped by social practices and political contexts” (Koggel, 2013). It is through this approach, that I consider how young people are enmeshed in complex networks of relation at multiple levels, including the intrapersonal, interpersonal, institutional, national and global levels, and the impact that this has on how they construct their identities (Connell, 2012).

**Conclusion**

In this chapter, I have drawn on a range of theoretical accounts to consider the construction of classed and gendered identities in Delhi primary schools and the role that global and local forces play in this process. Rather than presenting a seamless theoretical account, I have aimed to outline the theoretical frameworks and ideas that have informed my research and that will be used to understand the data. These different approaches have enabled me to think about the complexities of identity and the role that global and local forces play in its construction. In the following chapter, I outline the context in which this research took place and the methods used to explore these ideas.
Chapter 3 Methodology

In this chapter, I describe the methodology used to explore gendered and classed identities in relation to the theoretical framework outlined in the previous chapter. The chapter starts with a description of the sampling framework used in this study and of the (student and teacher) participants drawn from each of the three schools. I then outline the research setting before describing how access was negotiated and the ethical issues that arose in the study. Within a theoretical framework influenced by relational theory and Bourdieusian theory, I describe how the ethnographic approach to this study focused upon the ‘quality of people’s experiences’ and their shared meanings of social lives (Skeggs, 2001) by drawing participatory, grounded and reflexive research activities. Given that this approach to research demands that attention is focused not only on participants but also on the role that the researcher plays in the production of knowledge, I describe how I attempted to negotiate my own positionality during the research process. Finally, I describe the narrative and thematic approach to analysis used in this study.

3.1 Sampling Framework and Participants

In this study I used purposeful sampling to select a sample based on the dynamics of the research population and the nature and purpose of the research aims (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). I worked with, a local NGO (EHD) in West Delhi to select the government and private schools in the study. This decision was made following advice from academics and colleagues at UNESCO who advised me that accessing schools directly would be very difficult. Although, I was able to work with EHD to select from a range of schools, my choice was still restricted by the NGOs network which covered approximately 50 schools in West Delhi. Working with EHD, I was able to select three schools that were located within the same middle class neighbourhood but that were all on the border of a working class/”poor” neighbourhood. This enabled me to focus on the research aims of examining both gendered and classed identities and ensured that I could obtained detailed responses that directly related to the research questions (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2003).
In each of these three primary schools, research was undertaken with the ‘A’ section of Class V (Class 5). Given that one of the schools was a “split shift” primary school, we ended up undertaking students with four classes across the three schools. In MCD schools, Class V(A) was comprised by students who were the first to enrol in the school at the time of registration. At IES, Class V(A) was comprised of the highest performing students in the year group. Given that prior research has focused on the construction of gendered and classed identities at the secondary level, primary schools were selected to consider how these identities are constructed at this level. Class V aged students were selected given that they were the oldest students in primary school and were more suited (than younger students) to the participatory methods used in this study. Once the schools and classes had been selected, we recruited students in each class randomly, by inviting them to write their name on a piece of paper and place it in to a bag. This random approach was taken within each class given that almost all students wanted to participate in the research and they deemed this to be a fair way of deciding who could take part. Given that, in schools and education systems, boys and men are as “deeply enmeshed” in gender processes as women and girls, both boys and girls were included in the present study (Connell, 2010). To ensure that equal numbers of boys and girls were selected, boys and girls were given differently patterned paper in the co-ed schools (MCD school 2 and IES).

Names were then drawn out of the bag until 10 students had been selected from each of the four classes. In each school, we aimed to recruit 10 student participants. However, recruiting girls proved to be more challenging that recruiting boys and we ended up with 6-10 participants per class. While all boys selected at random returned the informed consent forms, a number of girls did not. Parents in some families were unwilling to let their girls participate in the study; one girl at IES explained that she had asked her father if she could participate and he had replied ‘you will not do this!’ (Research Journal, 2015). This meant that although I attempted to recruit equal numbers of boys and girls, this was not possible. In total the study included 37 students from Class V, with a total of 16 girls and 21 boys (see table 3.1 for more details). Although all students were from class V their age range varied from the expectation that students would be aged 9 or 10. Many students had joined school late and this meant that students in the study were 11 years old, three students were 12 years old and one was 15 years old.
Table 3.1 Student Participants in the Present Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Pseudonym</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Religion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MCD School 1 (Girls' Shift)</td>
<td>Archana</td>
<td>Girl</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Hindu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Zainab</td>
<td>Girl</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Muslim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Simran</td>
<td>Girl</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Hindu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Anita</td>
<td>Girl</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Hindu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kavita</td>
<td>Girl</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Hindu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sonali</td>
<td>Girl</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Hindu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Eshal</td>
<td>Girl</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Muslim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MCD School 1 (Boys' Shift)</td>
<td>Sumit</td>
<td>Boy</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Hindu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Satish</td>
<td>Boy</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Hindu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Vikash</td>
<td>Boy</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Hindu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Saif</td>
<td>Boy</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Muslim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rohit</td>
<td>Boy</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Hindu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rajinder</td>
<td>Boy</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Muslim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Naufal</td>
<td>Boy</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Hindu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Vikram</td>
<td>Boy</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Hindu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pankaj</td>
<td>Boy</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Hindu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sarwan</td>
<td>Boy</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Sikh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MCD School 2 (co-ed)</td>
<td>Kambli</td>
<td>Boy</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Hindu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dinesh</td>
<td>Boy</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Hindu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ankur</td>
<td>Boy</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Hindu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mohan</td>
<td>Boy</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Hindu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sanjay</td>
<td>Boy</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Hindu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rani</td>
<td>Girl</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Muslim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Neetika</td>
<td>Girl</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Hindu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Aarti</td>
<td>Girl</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Hindu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Aisha</td>
<td>Girl</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Muslim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mahek</td>
<td>Girl</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Muslim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inspire English School (co-ed)</td>
<td>Sneha</td>
<td>Girl</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Hindu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bloom</td>
<td>Girl</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Hindu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rosshni</td>
<td>Girl</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Hindu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Prithvi, I</td>
<td>Girl</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Hindu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Itshant</td>
<td>Boy</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Hindu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rocky</td>
<td>Boy</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Hindu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mikhail</td>
<td>Boy</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Hindu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Arjun</td>
<td>Boy</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Hindu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Michael</td>
<td>Boy</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Hindu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Golu</td>
<td>Boy</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Hindu</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

School Teachers and NGO Teachers

The study included, three principals, one vice-principal and eight teachers. The criteria for selecting teachers in the school was that they had to be qualified teachers and with over two years’ experience. From my personal teaching experience, I recognise that the first and second years involve a lot of familiarisation with teaching practices and duties. It was felt that participant teachers with more than two year’s experience would
have had substantial experience working alongside a range of different students and will subsequently be able to offer more insight into their perceptions of gender and education. In each school, having introduced the project to primary school teachers, I requested that those willing to participate get in contact with us. In each MCD school, teachers came in groups of two or three and said that they were willing to participate but that they did not want to be interviewed individually and would prefer a group discussion. At IES, several teachers volunteered to participate but only one teacher completed the reflective journal and attended the interview- two other participants said that they were unable to participate because they were ‘too busy’ (Reflective Journal, October, 2015). Principals/Vice-Principals were also requested to participate in the study and they requested to be interviewed individually.

Table 2 Teacher and Principal Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Pseudonym</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Teaching Experience</th>
<th>Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MCD School 1 Boys’ Shift</td>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>Principal Sir, MCD School 1 (boys)</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>33 years</td>
<td>Interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Class V Teacher</td>
<td>Class V Sir, MCD School 1 (boys)</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>7 years</td>
<td>Teacher Diary Focus Group Discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Class III Teacher</td>
<td>Class III Sir, MCD School 1 (boys)</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>20 years</td>
<td>Teacher Diary Focus Group Discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MCD School 1 Girls’ Shift</td>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>Principal Sir, MCD School 1 (girls)</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>35 years</td>
<td>Interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Class IV Teacher</td>
<td>Class IV Maam, MCD School 1 (girls)</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>22 years</td>
<td>Teacher Diary Focus Group Discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Class II Teacher</td>
<td>Class II Ma’am, MCD School 1 (girls)</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>16 years</td>
<td>Teacher Diary Focus Group Discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MCD School 2</td>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>Principal Maam, MCD School 2</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>32 years</td>
<td>Interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Class III Teacher</td>
<td>Class III Maam, MCD School 2</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td></td>
<td>Teacher Diary Focus Group Discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Class IV Teacher</td>
<td>Class IV Maam, MCD School 2</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td></td>
<td>Teacher Diary Focus Group Discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Class V Teacher</td>
<td>Class V Maam, MCD School 2</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td></td>
<td>Teacher Diary Focus Group Discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inspire English School</td>
<td>Vice-Principal</td>
<td>Vice-Principal Sir, IES</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>10 years</td>
<td>Interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Class V Teacher</td>
<td>Class V Ma’am, IES</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Over 10 years</td>
<td>Teacher Diary Interview</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In addition to full-time contract teachers in the MCD schools, there were several teachers from the local NGO- which had supported us in access negotiations- who worked on a program supported by the Gates Foundation to provide ‘low achieving’ students with additional support in literacy and mathematics. These teachers were included in the study given that they had spent extensive periods working in the school (1-2 years) and could offer a unique insight into the school experience. In MCD school 1, the same two qualified NGO teachers worked together across both the boys’ shift and the girls’ shift. During the latter part of our research activities, one of the teachers was absent from school with illness as a result only one teacher participated in an interview. In MCD School 2, the two qualified teachers that supported students in the school were both present for the duration of research activities and requested to be interviewed together.

Table 3.3 NGO Teachers in the Present Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Pseudonym</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Teaching Experience</th>
<th>Research Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MCD School 1 Boys’ and Girls’</td>
<td>NGO Teacher</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>10 years</td>
<td>Interview</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MCD School 2</td>
<td>NGO Teacher</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>15 years</td>
<td>Group Discussion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NGO Teacher</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>6 years</td>
<td>Group Discussion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.2 The Research Setting: Two Government Primary Schools and a Private School in West Delhi

Following the RTE, (primary and lower secondary) education in India is now free and compulsory for children aged six to fourteen. Education in India is segregated as Primary (1st standard to 5th standard), Upper Primary (6th standard to 8th standard), Lower Secondary (9th standard to 10th standard), and Higher Secondary (11th and 12th standard). At the primary level, most schools in North India follow the NCERT curriculum children in classes I to III are taught English, Hindi, Mathematics, Environmental Science and General Knowledge. These subjects are continued in classes IV and V; however, in many schools Environmental Science is replaced with General Science and Social Studies. Elementary schooling in Delhi starts at age 5-6
and lasts for 5 years until the child is 9 or 10 years old. In all schools, children learn the basics in Hindi, Mathematics and the social sciences. Schools in India are owned by either the government or private sector. Government schools are managed by central, state-level or local government bodies. Private sector schools are owned by individuals, trusts or societies. There are four main types of school ownership in Delhi: government schools, local body schools, private aided schools and private unaided schools.

Government schools are run by the central government, state/NCT governments, public sector bodies or autonomous organisations. They are all financed by the government. The majority of National Capital Territory (NCT) government elementary schools (Class I to V) in Delhi are under the remit of the Municipal Corporation of Delhi. Historically, the Municipal Corporation of Delhi has been responsible for the provision of primary schooling in Delhi; however, the introduction of Sarvodaya and Pratibha Vidyalaya schools has led to greater involvement from the Directorate of Education at the primary level. At the primary level, there are three main types of local body schooling:

1. Sarvodaya (‘Universal uplift’) Vidyalaya (‘schools’) for classes I to XII (run by Directorate of Education)
2. Prathiba Vikas Vidyalaya (for ‘bright’ students from poor families and run by Directorate of Education)
3. Non-sarvodaya Vidyalaya (for all students and run by the Municipal Corporation of Delhi)

In general, pratibha vidyalaya’s are considered the best equipped schools, followed by sarvodaya schools and then non-sarvodaya schools. Pratibha vidyalaya and Sarvodaya vidyalayas are selective schools and entrance to a Pratibha requires an admission test while Sarvodayas use a lottery system to select students. Because the non-sarvodaya schools have an open admissions policy, the majority of disadvantaged students end up in these schools (Ohara, 2013). The two MCD schools in the present study were both non-sarvodaya government schools. These schools are reported to be the most dysfunctional in the Delhi school system (Ohara, 2013).
Schools in the Present Study: MCD Schools

The Municipal Corporation of Delhi is one of the largest municipal bodies in the world and provides civic services to approximately 19 million people. In 2012 the MCD was split into three smaller Municipal Corporations representing the different areas of Delhi. Over the last few decades, MCD schools have primarily been orientated towards expanding access and retaining students. The two government schools in the present study have been shaped by the discourse of education for access and specifically efforts to implement the Right to Education Act (2009). The stated aim of all MCD schools is the offer of free and compulsory primary education to all children aged 5-11 years residing within the MCD jurisdiction. The thrust in elementary education is, therefore, on:

(i) universal enrolment and universal retention of children up to 14 years of age;

(ii) a substantial improvement in the quality of education;

(iii) Provision for education to Children with Special Needs;

(iv) Imparting special training to out-of-school children and bring them into mainstream

(v) Preparation and maintenance of records of each child from 0 to 14 years of age.’

(MCD Website, 2016)

Through these aims, the major focus of the MCD schools is on school infrastructure development and the enrolment of children from disadvantaged communities (MCD Website, 2016).

The two government schools in the present study are located within one kilometre of one another in a neighbourhood of West Delhi and are under the responsibility of the South Municipal Corporation of Delhi (SMCD). The schools had recently undergone a number of changes in order to minimise barriers to entry for disadvantaged students within the community. In the past (as recently as 2008), both MCD schools in the present study were comprised of a series of prefabricated structures or ‘tin sheds’ (Principal Sir, MCD School 1, Boys’ Shift). The large, permanent, concrete, L-shaped
structures that now constitute the two schools reflects efforts by the MCD to improve school facilities. The MCD had also worked to ensure that minimum standards for infrastructure (toilets, library, walls), equipment (tables, chairs, desks) and resources (teaching materials, books, magazines, sports equipment) had been met in recent years (Principal Interview, MCD School 2).

Figure 3.1 MCD School 1, West Delhi

Figure 3.2 MCD School 2, West Delhi

Alongside new facilities, the MCD had adopted a wide range of policies and practices directed at improving enrolment, attendance and retention. To alleviate the financial burden on school communities, both schools provided free textbooks, midday meals
and stationery free of charge to all children and the majority of children received free uniform (Principal Ma’am, MCD School 2). Scholarships were also available to parents who had a girl studying in school and for children on the basis of academic or sporting merit (MCD website, 2017). The Delhi Ladli Scheme provides a ₹5,000 (£55.35) for girls on admission to grades I, VI and IX providing that annual family income is less than ₹100,000 (£1100). In response to the large numbers of parents leaving MCD schools for low-fee, English-medium private schools, the department of education has implemented a trial of English medium of instruction in over 500 schools (MCD Website, 2017). Both MCD schools 1 and 2 had recently started one English medium section in each class/year. Participants in the present study were from the English medium section of Class V. Despite being in the English Medium Section of Class V, teachers continued to teach in Hindi because they felt that students were not able to understand English (Reflective Journal, September, 2015). Despite these efforts to, MCD Schools have experienced a decline in the number of student enrolments over the last few years. Between academic years 2013-14 and 2015-16, enrolment dropped 6% from 869,540 to 818,707 (Praja, 2016). At the same time, enrolment in private schools increased (Kingdon, 2017).

**MCD School 1: Split Shift Elementary School, Non-sarvodaya**

MCD school 1 is a lower primary school catering for classes I-V. The school day is split in to two ‘shifts’. In the morning the single sex girls’ shift operates, from 8am until 12.30pm, and only girls come to school (Principal Sir, Interview, MCD School 1 Girls’ Shift). During the afternoon, from 1pm until 5.30pm, the school operates a single-sex boy shift where only boys come to school (Principal Sir, Interview, MCD School 1 Boys’ Shift). The school ran from Monday through to Saturday (Research Journal, September, 2015). In government records, MCD school 1 was registered as a girls’ school and there was no record of the boys’ shift (DISE, 2016). Staff in the school could not explain why the boys’ school did not appear to exist in government records.

In academic year 2015-2016, the girls’ shift of the school had 3-4 sections/classes per year group for classes I-V (Principal Sir Interview, MCD School 1 Boys’ Shift). There were approximately 20 teachers the vast majority of whom were female (DISE, 2016; Research Journal, October, 2015). There were over 700 girls in the school with approximately 15% of the total school population from Muslim communities, and 4%
from SC/ST communities (DISE, 2016). In the boys’ shift of the school there were also 3-4 sections per year group for classes I-V and a total of 16 teachers (including the principal) all of whom were male (Research Journal, October, 2016. There were over 500 boys in the school but a breakdown of the school community by background was not available.

**MCD School 2**

MCD school 2 is a co-educational lower primary school catering for classes I-V. The school operates Monday to Saturday from 8am until 12.30pm (Principal Ma’am, Interview, MCD School 2). In the 2015-2016 academic year there was one pre-primary class and 2-4 classes/sections per year group for classes 1-5 (DISE, 2016). There were approximately 15 teachers in total all of whom were female (DISE, 2016). There were over 500 children in the school, three fifths of whom were boys (DISE, 2016). Almost a third of all students were from minority/disadvantaged communities with approximately 25% of the total student body coming from Muslim families and approximately 5% from SC families and OBC communities (DISE, 2016).

In both of these MCD schools, a number of students had migrated with their families during their lifetime as their parents searched for better work opportunities and a better education for their children in Delhi (Parent FGD MCD School 2). Others had been born in Delhi after their parents had migrated. Most families in MCD schools 1 and 2 were considered as ‘migrants’ from Bihar or Uttar Pradesh by teachers in the school (See Chapter 5). Children and teachers described how families within the MCD school communities tended to live in small, one or two room accommodation with the rest of their family with access to only basic facilities (several students had no running water in the home). Most parents in MCD school communities had either not attended or not completed formal schooling, women especially had very limited experience of school (Parent FGD, MCD School 1 Girls Shift). These parents tended to work in low-paid, insecure jobs with mothers working as maids and fathers as rickshaw pullers, painters, factory workers, sweepers or tailors. Teachers characterised MCD school communities as being predominantly comprised of the ‘poor’ or ‘workers’ while most parents described themselves as ‘poor’. Within the community a small number of families were better off, had better paid jobs and had started to engage in aspects of middle class lifestyles. These ‘aspirer’, ‘neo-middle class’ families had certain
consumer goods (computers, scooters) and were working towards more substantial investments (cars etc.) (Teacher FGD, MCD School 1 Girls' Shift; Principal Interview, MCD School 2).

Private Schools

In recent years, enrolment at the elementary stage of education in Delhi private schools has almost reached parity with government schools. Private-aided institutions are privately managed but receive funding through maintenance grants from the government/local body/public authority. These schools are obliged to follow government regulations regarding all aspects of school management and school practices e.g. school fees, teacher recruitment, the curriculum etc. Private unaided schools are privately managed, autonomous and financially independent of the state. Private unaided schools are managed by a range of different actors and encompass a wide range of fee structures (Srivastava, 2007b). Private unaided schools are either recognised or unrecognised by the government. Recognised schools must conform to the regulations of the board with which it is registered. Some unrecognised schools (especially Low-Fee Private schools) have been associated with corrupt practices to circumvent official norms and give their students the same benefits as those in recognised schools (Srivastava, 2007b). The private school in this study, which I have given named “Inspire English School” is a private unaided, recognised school.

Figure 3.3 IES Private School
Inspire English School (IES) is a Kindergarten to Class XII (K-XII/12), English medium private school located in the same suburb of West Delhi as the two MCD schools in the study. Inspire English School was founded in the early 1980s by the current Chairman of the Inspire Education Trust- and Director of Inspire English School- R. Adhitya (Inspire English School Website, 2016). Since the opening of the school, R. Aditya’s Inspire Education Trust has opened a play-school, two K-XII schools and a higher education college in the North of India. R. Adhitya’s son, S. Adhitya, is a Vice-principal at Inspire English School in Delhi and R. Adhitya’s other two sons work as principals in two different K-XII schools in the group. According to the Vice-Principal of the school, it is common practice for private schools to establish one school, and if that is doing well, then expand to 2, 3 or 4 schools (Vice-Principal (Administration), Interview, IES).

IES runs Monday to Saturday, 8am until 2pm as a single shift, co-educational school. In the 2015-2016 academic year, there were over 1,800 students enrolled in the school with approximately 1200 boys and 650 girls (DISE, 2016). In total there were 72 teachers in the school, with 67 female teachers and 5 male teachers (DISE, 2016). Of the 5 male teachers in the school, 2 were in leadership positions (the Director and Vice-Principal) and the other 3 taught upper secondary students. All teachers in the primary section of the school were female- as was the Principal and second Vice-principal. In the primary section (classes I-V) there were approximately 590 students with 360 boys and 230 girls and in Class V there were approximately 105 students with 65 boys and 40 girls. In the primary section of the school 1/5 of students (approximately 115) were registered as being from disadvantaged backgrounds (SC/ST/OBC). There were no Muslim students registered in either the primary or secondary section of the school.

Despite having SC/ST/OBC students in the school registered, no students had received incentives or financial support (DISE, 2016). When I asked why there were no students from economically weaker sections (EWS), the vice-principal explained that that the school was only obliged to enrol students from economically weaker sections (EWS) who lived within a 1 kilometre radius of the school (Vice-Principal Interview, IES). Given that the school was located in a ‘nice’ (upper middle class) neighbourhood there was no obligation to do so. IES was described by the Vice-
Principal as a ‘middle segment player’ that appealed to middle class families (Vice-principal Interview, IES). The annual school fee of approximately 32,000 INR (for class V-the price increased as students progressed through the school) placed the school towards the lower end of the ‘mid-level’ private school spectrum in Delhi where the average school fee at the secondary level is Rs 40,000 to Rs 150,000 (school fees increase as students move through the school system).

At Inspire English School (IES), I was told that students were from ‘middle class’ or ‘middle segment’ families who were who ‘are not really rich… but…can afford to provide various facilities for their children’ (Vice-Principal, IES). Students and families also described themselves as middle class, often being quite specific about their class location- ‘Out of 100%, 98% is rich, 50% are okay and I think our family is at least 48%’ (Focus Group Discussion 1, IES; Focus Group Discussion 2, IES). Students in these families generally lived in apartments and had their own rooms- or shared a room with their siblings. These families also engaged in aspects of middle class consumer culture (entertainment, eating out, shopping, private schooling) and there was also an international element to their lifestyles. Children told me about their visits to Western restaurants, trips to the cinema to watch ‘Hollywood’ movies and the host of Western cartoons and documentaries that they watched on satellite TV. Despite their similarities, families at Inspire English school would best be described as predominantly new middle class with a small number of established middle class families. The majority of parents were ‘new middle class’ in the sense that they had lived very modest lives as children and they had not inherited significant social, cultural and economic capital. Although ‘middle class’, and engaged in elements of ‘middle class’ lifestyles these families continued to live modest lives. However, a minority of parents could be described as more established middle class families, they worked in professional roles (teaching in government secondary schools) or managerial roles in corporate companies.

3.3 Fieldwork: Negotiating Access, Ethical Issues

During the first stage of my research, I defined the limits of the study and developed a range of contacts in Delhi who could assist me in undertaking my research. To achieve this, during the first year of my PhD studies, I went to Delhi and undertook an internship
at UNESCO for four months (see Appendix 4- ‘Research Timeline’ for more details). Through my internship with UNESCO, I was able to gain an insight into the way that global development organisations working in the field of education prioritised gender. At the time of my internship, UNESCO had made gender equality one of its two global priorities and it had been prioritised in the overarching strategic framework of the organisation. However, this focus continued to emphasise the importance of empowering girls through access to education- overlooking the structural causes of gender inequality.

During this stage of my research, I also developed my research focus, familiarised myself with the local context, built relationships with local universities and NGOs and attended the seminars, meetings and conferences of UN and other development organisations. I was introduced to a Delhi based NGO (EHD)- working in the field of education and health- who agreed to help me negotiate access to schools in India. My experience at UNESCO, and the advice I received from EHD, underlined the significant impact that widening inequality and a burgeoning private sector were having on the education system in Delhi. This led to the decision to include both MCD government schools (for students from disadvantaged or ‘economically weaker sections’) and a private school (for students from a middle class background) in the present study.

In the second stage of my research, I returned to Delhi- having obtained a research visa- to make final preparations for my fieldwork in schools. Through the NGO, I was introduced to school leadership at a private school that marketed itself to ‘middle class’ families called Inspire English School and two Municipal Corporation of Delhi government schools. One MCD school was a co-ed primary school and the other MCD primary school operated on a ‘shift’ basis- with girls in the morning and boys in the afternoon. My decision to include MCD schools was based upon the fact that these- predominantly Hindi medium schools- are the main form of government schooling at the primary level in Delhi.

My desire to ensure that students were fully informed about the research process and to build partnerships with participants lead me to seek a research partner who was fluent in Hindi to work alongside. Following the second phase of my research, having negotiated access to schools, I was introduced to Padma; a female, middle-aged, Hindu, qualified teacher. Padma had taught for several years but having moved to
Delhi in recent years had worked in schools in a voluntary capacity. During phase two of the research, I worked with Padma (and to a lesser extent the NGO) to finalise and adapt my research tools and documents. In devising my research activities, Padma advised me to avoid asking direct questions about colonialism, caste, religion or gender because these were sensitive issues that may cause discomfort. Padma and worked together to translate the informed consent documents, research activities and information letters for schools and participants from English into Hindi. We then finalised our research schedule and each week we met to discuss the activities for the week ahead.

During fieldwork in schools, Padma and I went to the two MCD government schools together because students spoke Hindi but could not converse in English. Padma’s fluency in Hindi meant that we worked together to undertake all activities with students and parents in the MCD schools. In the MCD schools, Padma also came to interviews with members of staff, some of whom preferred to speak in Hindi or both Hindi and English. At Inspire English School, the private school in the study, students spoke English and I undertook most research activities in this school alone. Padma came to the school only for two parent focus group discussions where we spoke with parents predominantly in Hindi, using only some English. Members of staff at IES opted to undertake interviews in English and so I undertook these interviews alone.

**Ethical Issues**

In this section I highlight the major ethical issues faced in undertaking research in these schools. Before moving on to describe these issues it is important to note that prior to fieldwork, I obtained ethical approval (see appendix 1) from the University of Exeter, College of Social Sciences and International Studies (CSSIS) Ethics Committee in June, 2015.

**Consent**

During initial meetings with school principals we discussed what participants would be consenting to and considered the suitability of research activities. In the MCD schools, teachers were uncomfortable being interviewed independently and requested that they we instead undertake a group discussion. Teachers said that they were happy to complete reflective journals independently. For students, we undertook an initial introductory session in the classroom where we introduce ourselves and the project to
all students in the class. Following these introductory sessions, letters (translated into Hindi) were sent out to all participants containing information about the project and a page where participants could give their consent to participate. In MCD schools, where some parents were unable to read, we met with parents after school and read the letters to individuals or small groups. Throughout this process, I emphasised the right for participants to withdraw at any stage during the research and the importance of confidentiality and anonymity. I obtained informed consent for all participants in the study including teachers, students and parents. Given the age of students in the study (generally 9-10 years old), I asked students that were interested in participating to obtain informed consent from their parents.

**Data Storage and Security**

All research transcripts were stored on a password protected hard drive. I transcribed all audio recordings that were in English and Latish-a translator- transcribed the data from Hindi audio recordings to English. Latish signed a non-disclosure agreement affirming that he would keep the data confidential and not inform anyone except for me about the content of audio recordings (See Appendix 3). All transcriptions were shared between Latish and myself through a shared, password-protected, Microsoft OneDrive folder. Once the transcriptions were completed the folder and files were deleted.

**Confidentiality and Anonymity**

I have changed the names of the schools in the study to maintain confidentiality and the responses of all participants have been anonymised. Pseudonyms were used to protect the data of all teachers, parents and students throughout the research process and this has been maintained throughout this thesis. At the start of the research project, I invited students to select a pseudonym of choice and these names were used for student interviews, group discussions and data. Interestingly, two students at IES private school selected ‘western’ names- Bloom and Michael- as their pseudonyms. Other students tended to choose names that aligned with their religion, with Hindu students selecting Hindu names and Muslim students selecting Muslim names. Students said little more than they ‘liked’ particular names by way of explanation. I assigned teachers pseudonyms in accordance with their position within
the school. Parent’s names were allocated on the basis of their child’s name, for example, “Arjun’s mother”.

**Sensitive Topics**

In order to explore the construction of gendered and classed identities and the role that global and local forces play in this process, it was important to explore issues of “gender”, “class”, “caste” and “colonialism”. To do so we decided not to ask direct questions about these issues because I felt that directly asking questions about “gender” and “class” would lead to only “surface level” discussions about these issues. Asking questions about identity can essentialise and depoliticise the cultural identities of participants (Allen, 2007; Ashcraft & Allen, 2003; Orbe & Allen, 2008) and lead to superficial discussions that do not provide a meaningful account of participants’ perspectives. Given the research aims to develop a complex understanding of how identities terms that might essentialise and inhibit discussions were avoided.

Furthermore, my research partner’s advice suggested that we only ask a limited number of questions about elements of each participant’s background/demographic and avoid asking too many direct questions using the terms “gender”, “caste” and “colonialism”- because these topics might cause discomfort or offence. In most cases, issues of class and gender arose in our general discussions of students and schooling and we then followed up with additional questions. However, when participants did not raise the issue, we asked questions like “Is it easier to grow up as a boy or a girl in Delhi?” or “are there any differences between boys and girls in school?” (See Appendix 5 for more details). To ensure that participants were comfortable answering these questions, all interviews took place in private and we assured participants that their disclosures would be confidential.

**Ethical Behaviour**

In the present study, I followed the major principles of ethical conduct in relation to participants, including doing no harm, maintaining privacy and confidentiality, protecting anonymity, informed consent and appropriate research interactions. As guidelines the principles were useful in providing a reminder of the areas that I needed to focus on during fieldwork; however, they did not provide me with explicit guidance on how to deal with the ethical dilemmas that I faced in the field. I was particularly concerned about how to deal with issues of unethical behavior as they arose in the
Within each of the three schools, students claimed that teachers frequently used physical punishment as a means to maintain “discipline” in the classroom and punish bad behaviour. Under the Right to Education Act (2009), Corporal punishment by teachers has been banned in India. Paragraph 1 of Article 17 of the Act provides that ‘No child will be subjected to physical punishment or mental harassment’ (RTE Act, 2009) and violations of the ban can lead to imprisonment (Morrow & Singh, 2014).

Teachers and principals in each of the schools claimed that they did not use violence in the classroom—although several suggested that the ban on physical punishment led to bad behavior among students and a loss of control for teachers. Given my ethical obligation to maintain the privacy and confidentiality of participants and do no harm, I was concerned that I would be breaking our agreement if I reported these accusations. Furthermore, I had not seen any actual evidence teachers using violence against children myself. I had, however, witnessed a few incidents that made me think that what students were saying was true. During a lesson that I was observing at IES, the boy who was sat next to me was doing his homework instead of listening to the teacher. Spotting this misdemeanor, the teacher grabbed the book from under the student, held it aloft and shouted, “this is the naughtiest boy in the class”. As she stepped towards him and moved to place the book on the table, he winced as if anticipating a blow (Research Journal, September, 2015).

Given our concerns about these issues we decided to raise the issue of corporal punishment with the principal in each of the schools without saying that students had informed us that it was taking place. In each case, the principal claimed that teachers no longer used corporal punishment and that it was no longer legal to do so. Ultimately, we decided not to take the issue any further because we prioritised the students’ safety and were concerned that there might be reprisals and did not want to break our confidentiality agreements with students.

Photography

Within the participatory approach to the present study, student participants were overwhelmingly in favour of using photography to share and communicate their experiences. Although principals and teachers in each of the schools agreed to allow students to take photographs around the school, the presence of cameras was a cause for consternation among staff members, especially in MCD schools. In one of
the MCD schools, teachers raised concerns that photographs might find their way into the ‘local newspapers’ or that images might be misinterpreted and cause problems for them (Research Journal, October, 2015). Furthermore, students themselves wanted to have control over their photos and some students did not want certain photos to be shared with other students- for fear of being teased- or their teachers- for fear of being told off (Research Journal, October, 2015). Given my ethical obligations to maintain the confidentiality of participants, I assured participants that their photographs would not be made publically available and that they would only be used by students and myself.

The decision not to include photographs was based upon my desire to respect students’ wishes and place their needs first. This aligned with the ethics of care approach to the research project which emphasized the importance of caring, showing compassion and acting in ways that benefitted those that were the focus of the research (Edwards & Mauthner, 2002). Apparent in much feminist and participatory research, this ethical approach has been used by a number of scholars who have used visual research methods (Harper, 1998; Pink, 2003, 2006, 2007; Rose, 2007). In drawing upon an ethics of care, I aimed to develop collaborative, trusting relationships by ensuring that I respected students’ wishes and- as far as possible- protected their interests during and after research in the field. The decision not publish students’ images in this thesis was predicated upon an ethics of care and the recognition that even if students did give consent, they could never know the purposes to which the image may be put to use (Rose, 2007).

3.4 An Ethnographic Approach

I adopt an ethnographic approach to this study in order to immerse myself within the research context and develop a detailed understanding of each school community. Ethnographic research is generally understood as a research approach that is based on ‘direct observations’, research participation and immersion in people’s daily lives. Atkinson et al (2001, p. 4-5) describe ethnography as:

the first-hand experience and exploration of a particular social or cultural setting on the basis of (though not exclusively by) participant observation, Observation and participation (according to circumstance and the analytic
Through participation and observation over a period of time, ethnography entails the study of the beliefs, social interactions, and behaviours of small societies (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011; Reeves, Kuper and Hodges, 2008) Adopting this approach, I aim to establish both a deep understanding of how participants view the social world (and their place in it) and account for the complexity of day to day life and the school experience within these communities. Emphasising the ‘quality of people’s experiences’ and their shared meanings of social life, I attempted to ‘give voice’ to people’s lives. Given the mass proliferation of quantitative data about schooling- associated with global/national development targets/indicicators (Barrett and Sorensson, 2015; Unterhalter, 2013)- this approach was deemed particularly important as it provided an opportunity to move beyond school inputs and outputs in order to focus on school processes, the school experience and what actually goes on in schools (Barrett and Sorensson, 2015).

Time spent in the field is of great importance in ethnographic research and longer periods of time spent in the field can help the researcher broaden their perspective and understand participants’ lives from different angles (Boyle, 1994). In an attempt to penetrate various ‘layers of reality’ (Wolcott, 1995) and determine both the depth and complexity of social relations/structures, I spent four months in the three school communities. This enabled me to spend time getting to know participants and consider the patterns, logics and complications of everyday life as lived and experienced by school communities. In doing so, I considered “how and why events widely separated in time and space seem to re-enact the same patterns... [how] emergent phenomena unique to every level of organization [develop] in a complex dynamical system” (Lemke, 2000, p.274), and how signs and meanings were transformed across extended periods of time.

Rather than viewing this approach as simply another qualititative method, such as observations or interviews, I understood ethnography as a means to develop a much more all-encompassing and demanding way of knowing- an attempt to explore what Fassin calls the space “where true life and real lives meet” (Fassin in Joshi, 2014). The deeply immersive nature of ethnography facilitates generation of “thick descriptions” that provide detailed knowledge of how people feel, think, imagine and
perceive their world (Geertz, 1973). I developed my account with the use of Denzin’s (1989, p. 33) four features of “thick description”, including the following: (1) It gives the context of an act; (2) it states the intentions and meanings that organize the actions; (3) it traces the evolution and development of the act; (4) it presents the action as a text that can be interpreted. To develop these “thick descriptions”, I used multiple methods, including observations, photography, drama, interviews and focus groups in order to generate different data about the participants lives (Pink, 2006).

Given the ubiquity of images in our everyday lives, Pink (2006) claims that they are inextricably tied up with our daily life, personal identities, narratives, lifestyles, cultures and societies. Visual methods were particularly important to the present study as they enabled me to develop different data on the students’ lives and generate sociological insight through visual descriptions of what was really being ‘said’ (Banks, 2001). Given that I could not speak Hindi, photographs enabled me to record the thick descriptions of participants and and their socio-cultural context through their own voices based on their understandings of their world (Pink, 2006)— something that was complemented by their (translated) verbal descriptions, my observations and other research methods.

Ethnography places the researcher self at the centre of the analysis. Ortner (2006, p. 42) claims that it attempts “to understand another life world using the self—as much of it as possible—as the instrument of knowing”. Recognising that my background and position affected all aspects of the research process (Malterud, 2001, p. 483-484), I systematically attended to the context of knowledge construction through the use of reflexivity (see section 3.4 The role of the Ethnographer). Reflexivity enabled me to account for the conditional and partial nature of knowledge claims while questioning how my social position(s) influenced these claims (Lichterman, 2015). Following Bourdieu, I used reflexivity to identify the doxa (commonsense assumptions) induced by power relations which distort the researcher’s ability to demystify domination (Bourdieu and Waquant, 1992). At the same time, I used reflexivity to consider how my position as a white, western male situated me in certain identity positions within social-structural hierarchies and narrowed my view. By considering the social positions that emerged through communications between researcher and researched, I was able to explore not only my own bias but also how I identified other people’s meanings in the field (Lichterman, 2015).
Ethnographies of schooling (and elsewhere) have enabled children to be recognised as credible research participants, worthy of study in their own right (James, 2001). Ethnographies have been used to explore the construction of masculinities and femininities in schooling; however, there is nothing about ethnography as a practice that makes it inherently compatible to the study of gender or education (Allan, 2009). Ethnography has been criticised by post-structuralists for being predicated on modernist notions of progress and enlightenment, truth and reality (Gille & O’Riain, 2002).

My ethnographic approach acknowledges that the experiences and identities that I reveal are an effect of discourse and therefore it is only possible to summon partial truths and fictions. Given the importance of hegemonic discourses to the present study, I pursue an understanding of experience not as imbedded with inherent meaning but as being constituted and given meaning through discourse (Weedon, 1999). De Lauretis (1984, p. 159) suggests that experience is ‘produced… by one’s subjective engagement in the practices, discourses and institutions that lend significance (value, meaning and affect) to the events of the world’. As such I explore the discursively created experiences of young girls and boys and the way in which they come to occupy the respective categories of ‘girl’, ‘boy’, ‘working class’ and ‘middle class’ (Skeggs, 1997). Rather than an essential object of study, identity will be explored in terms of its discursive formations in each in school and the way in which these are shaped by connections at the local, national and global level (Massey, 1990). Through this approach, I attempt to connect ‘different formations of knowledge in the periphery with each other’ and with knowledge from the global North (Connell, 2007, p. 213).

Moreover, I adopted an ethnographic approach to my research, with an awareness of the checkered history of ethnography, which includes western ethnographies of “primitive” cultures and colonial ethnologies of major western empires (Davis, 1999). A number of scholars have shown how ethnography and anthropology were tied to to the colonial project (Fabian, 2001; Jack and Westwood, 2009; Prasad, 2003). Yanow (2009) claims that rather than developing within anthropology, ethnography actually developed as colonial administrators sought to better understand and control the people within their jurisdiction.

Early ethnographies were informed by the realist assumptions of the scientific method, where the ethnographer was positioned as an objective observer whose scientific gaze
could be turned upon the (often colonised) other as an object of research in order to extract “neutral” observations and “accurate” representations (Yanow, 2009). Little consideration was give to the role of the researcher, the relationship between the researcher, the researched and knowledge production. In India, colonial ethnographies (Anderson, 1913; Crooke, 1921; Risley, 1915) and photographic collections (Watson and Kaye, 1868-75), classified, categorised and mapped the people under study, and led to an “‘ordering of difference' on the basis of caste, ethnicity, region, race and religion” (Dudley Jenkins, 2003). In order to account for the perspective of the researcher and the relationship between the researcher and the researched in knowledge production, I draw on critical ethnography- informed by post-colonial theory- in order to

Critical Ethnography

As this study contextualises school communities’ experiences of education in Delhi, it was essential that I draw on critical ethnography (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011; Atkinson and Hammersely, 1994) in an effort to provide practical solutions to the problems that emerge from the study. In adopting this approach, I am critical of pervasive (neoliberal) definitions of “human freedom and well-being” that are based on “western” understandings of individual, national and global development (Hickel, 2014). Throughout my research I have eschewed notions of cultural supremacy in which western nations and citizens (like myself) are said to have achieved a better, more developed way of seeing and being. In recognition of the violent imposition of British supremacy during the colonial era, the ongoing ‘civilising missions’ of the North in educating the South- and, at the same time, the oversimplification or romanticisation of categories such as the oppressor/oppressed- I have sought to build partnerships and connections with participants in Delhi and focus on understanding participants’ experiences (Connell, 2007).

In this respect, feminist ethnography with its “commitment to paying attention to marginality and power differentials… not only gender, but also… class, nation, sexuality, and other areas of difference” (Davis and Craven, 2016, p. 11) informs my ethnographic approach. In doing so, I aim to challenge “marginalisation and injustice” whilst producing “scholarship… that may contribute to movement building and/or be in the service of organizations, people, communities, and issues we study” (Davis and
In practice, this has also meant drawing on postcolonial theory to inform my ethnography. By undertaking ethnographic fieldwork with participants, I have experienced the everyday school situations that students, teachers and parents face in order to explore the performative enactments of social and cultural production.

The participatory approach to research in this study, emphasises the co-constructed, dialogic nature of ethnographic research. In an effort to hear the voices of students within local school communities and to move beyond global/universal conceptions of gender, education and development, I focused upon the narratives of participants within these schools. This meant listening to to students’ everyday experiences of schooling. Sudhir Kakar (1989, p. 1) argues that the twentieth-century, “West has wrenched philosophy, history, and other human concerns out of integrated narrative structures to form the discourse of isolated social sciences”. He suggests that in India, “the preferred medium of instruction and transmission of psychological, metaphysical, and social thought… continues to be the story” (1989, p. 1). In listening to participants’ accounts, I attend to the rich narratives of their lives, including both, “the stories they hear” and “the stories they tell” (Kakar, 1989, p.2). In doing so, I aim to explore the complexities of participants stories and de-center dominant discourses of global and national development. Rather than viewing my account as neutral, I recognise that as a white, western male, my interpretations of participants' narratives and the research site were informed by my positionality (Andreotti, 2006; Spivak, 1988).

**The role of the ethnographer – reflexivity and negotiating my positioning in the research**

Given the legacy of colonialism and ongoing neocolonial relations, research subjects in postcolonial contexts are- to varying degrees- considered to be vulnerable (Shamim & Quereshi, 2013). Patriarchal structures alongside colonial/neocolonial systems make women in postcolonial settings particularly disadvantaged (Spivak, 1988). Research in postcolonial settings like India, especially by western researchers (with the physical and historical embodiments of colonialism), has the power to challenge or reproduce inequalities. However, neglecting and ignoring postcolonial contexts also reflects the privileged position of western researchers who- as beneficiaries of colonialism and neocolonialism- can overlook the consequences for the global South. This ensures that privileged positions are reproduced and the unequal nature of global
power relations and oppressive structures will remain unchallenged by those in the Global North. My decision to undertake research in this context, reflects a commitment to taking responsibility and to speaking with others in order to avoid “a retreat into a narcissistic yuppie lifestyle in which a privileged person takes no responsibility ...” (Alcoff, 1992, p. 17). I tentatively justify my research on the basis that I attempted to challenge systems of domination and - throughout my research – I committed to considering my own influence and positionality while ensuring that my representations of participants aligned with their own understanding of their identities and their emancipatory objectives.

In an attempt to reduce power inequalities between myself and participants, reflexivity was an important tool enabling me to reflect on how I was implicated in the research. Through reflexivity- including a fieldwork journal- I aimed to acknowledge the positions of power I inhabit as a (white, western, male) researcher, to take responsibility and be accountable for my actions. In doing so, I viewed ‘reflexivity as a practice and process, as a matter of resources and positioning; not a property of the self’ (Skeggs, 2001). This approach entailed moving beyond notions of a static, unified self able to focus on making important elements of the research process transparent. Thus, reflexivity was used to complement my research while ensuring that the research, as opposed to my internal world, remained the main focus of my attention.

Given the context of my research, I aimed to unlearn privilege by retracing my prejudices and learning habits. Furthermore, I committed to a research approach in which I would not view myself as better or fitter and would resist any desire to correct, teach and colonise (Andreotti, 2006). In practice, this meant rejecting “a single story of progress, development and human evolution that ascribes differentiated value to cultures/countries that are perceived to be ‘behind’ in history and time and cultures/countries perceived to be ‘ahead”’ (Andreotti, 2006). Rather than viewing my research in terms of finding solutions, seeking progress and a desire for betterment, I adopted a participatory approach in order to understand participants’ perspectives and explore the school communities on their own terms- rather than for “First World” purposes (Spivak, 1988). This meant seeking -and foregrounding- the stories of participants and valuing these over and above “theory” whilst considering how my interpretations were shaped by my own favourable historical and geographic position and my identity as a white, western man. By examining the “socially and historically
constructed scripts of identity and institutions”, and reflexively examining my position within this, I was able to gain an insight into how relationships between myself and participants and between participants themselves were mediated by “knowledge, identity and cognitive understandings” (Andreotti, 2006). Accepting that all knowledge is partial and incomplete, constructed in our contexts, cultures and experiences, I engaged with my own and other perspectives in an effort to “think otherwise” (Andreotti, 2006).

To achieve this, I focused on listening seriously and respectfully to local voices in Delhi while critically engaging with the individual perspectives presented- rather than assuming that the 'oppressed' had spoken. In doing so, I followed Spivak’s (1990) suggestion that:

...the question ‘Who should speak?’ is less crucial than ‘Who will listen?’ (...) the real demand is that, when I speak from that position, I should be listened to seriously: not with that kind of benevolent imperialism, really, which simply says that because that I happen to be an Indian or whatever... A hundred years ago it was impossible for me to speak, for the precise reason that it makes it only too possible for me to speak in certain circles now (Spivak, 1990 p. 59-60 in Andreotti, 2006).

In order to avoid listening with a “kind of benevolent imperialism”, I committed to listening seriously to participants’ perspectives and being open to different perspectives and ways of being. In connecting my research to participants’ everyday lives, I considered not only what students had to say but also what they were unable to say (Back, 2007). This meant staying in touch with the “stuff and flow of everyday life”, resisting the temptation to romanticise students’ lives while also treating each of their accounts with respect (Back, 2007).

During my research, my commitment to listening was not always straightforward. Prior to my research, on trips to India, I felt under pressure to justify my presence in India by engaging in elaborate explanations in an attempt to avoid being perceived as an ill-informed ‘westerner’ with good or bad intentions. I was sensitive to how people in India would perceive my research and I initially took what I perceived as negative reactions quite badly- feeling out of place and out of depth. At that time, I could not identify exactly why I felt the way that I did and I focused on sticking to my research aim- to
listen more and talk less. This had a positive effect but the awkwardness and out of place feeling returned from time to time.

Marcus’ Story

It was some months later, during my visit to Delhi for fieldwork, that I was able to gain some insight into these experiences and feelings. During a visit to the West Delhi NGO that was helping me gain access to the schools in my study, I was introduced to a German post-graduate student called Marcus who was interning there. Perhaps, because we were both western, the NGO director suggested that we have lunch together. During lunch, we came to talk about our experiences of living in Delhi and travelling around India. Marcus told me about a time that he had attempted to board a train from a station in Delhi but had been confronted by a guard who looked at his ticket and told him that his train had been cancelled. The guard then escorted Marcus off to the ticket office around the corner to buy another ticket. Having reached the ticket office- and having spent some time explaining his situation and exploring alternative options- Marcus became aware that rather than a ticket office he appeared to have been sent to a travel agency. At this point, suspecting that he had been duped, Marcus ran back to the station but by this time he had missed his train. Relaying his frustration with this experience to me, Marcus talked about other times that he had been ‘ripped off’ by auto-rickshaw wallas or market wallas and that this had been a particularly frustrating part of his experience in Delhi. He summarised his frustration by saying, ‘I am here trying to help you, I get that we in the West have screwed you over but I know that, and I am on your side. Why do you want to fuck ME over?’ (Research Journal, September 2015).

Reflecting on Marcus’ story, I recognise that I too shared Marcus’ sense of uncertainty about being a ‘foreigner’/ ‘westerner’ and the preconceptions that often accompanied that. While I had expected not to know what was appropriate custom, what constituted polite conversation, what was and wasn’t appropriate in certain contexts, I had been less prepared for the assumptions that accompanied my positioning as a white, British, male. When judgements were made about me based on this position, I shared Marcus’ sense of frustration. While sympathetic to Marcus’ experience- clearly being duped is wrong- it struck me as poignant that the source of Marcus’ frustration was not that he had been duped but that he had been *miserstood*.
Overtime, it dawned upon me that it was this same sense of wanting to be understood, to be appreciated as a person with the 'right’ intentions, as someone who was open, reflexive and interested in local perspectives that had led me to feel a sense of anxiety when it seemed that I had been perceived or treated as otherwise. Marcus’ story and my own experience, drew my attention to the nature of privilege and- in my case (and possibly Marcus’)- the fact that proceeding through life unchallenged was something that we were both accustomed to. Negative experiences were taken personally and were perceived as unjust given our ‘benevolent’ intentions. This highlighted to me that as white, western, male, the expectation that one will be understood- and treated with the dignity one ‘deserves’- means that anxiety, frustration or anger are not far away when this is called into question.

Moreover, this experience suggested to me that despite having an awareness of colonialism’s “civilizing mission” (Spivak, 1999), on some level, notions of benevolence underpinned my own efforts to justify my research in India. My own preoccupation with being perceived as a person with the right intentions, perhaps reflected a desire to be viewed as someone who was making a positive contribution and “helping” in some way. This suggests that especially in the early stages, when feeling out of place, I drew on discourses of benevolence to justify my research and was- as Spivak suggests, “entangled in benevolent first-world appropriation and reinscription of the Third World as an Other” (1988, p. 289).

Furthermore, both Marcus and myself appeared to want to distance ourselves from the “West” and avoid our personal associations with it. Quoting Spivak, Kapoor (2008, p.45) argues that when a privileged Westerner “pretends it has no geo-political determinations it does the opposite of concealing itself: it privileges itself”. I came to recognise that I was comfortable criticising colonialism as a historical event- and criticising the “West” for its development efforts- but less sure about how to explain my role or personal association with all of this. To address this, I started to view my identity- as a white, western, male in identity- in terms of the person I was designated to be by a system of classification and control (Connell, p. 174).

Realising this, I approached my fieldwork with the determination not to hide from colonialism or even to “get it out in the open” but to accept that colonialism had to be something that was dwelt upon, acknowledged and while perhaps not being all my fault, had certainly afforded me numerous privileges. During my field work, colonialism
was most frequently regarded by participants as something that had happened in the past and that was no longer relevant to contemporary India. One group of teachers suggested that this was particularly the case given that India’s power was waxing as the UK’s was waning (Research Journal, November 2015). However, on other occasions, my presence and my association with colonialism was directly questioned. After a parent group discussion at IES, one parent said to my research partner in Hindi, “why is he coming here from Britain asking all of these questions given that the British tried to ruin our country?”. Padma reluctantly translated what had been said and I responded by explaining that I acknowledge that colonialism was completely wrong and that I was attempting to understand the ongoing relevance of colonial history and the colonial relationship as part of my analysis. Padma relayed my response and the parent walked off without saying anything. Some moments later he returned, shook my hand and asked to take a selfie with me which he then posted on Facebook. While I did not take this to mean that I had found the solution to my predicament, I was encouraged that by addressing colonialism head on and by being open to my own entanglement with it, I was able to recognize that how I approached my interactions might reinforce or oppose, reveal or conceal colonial history and neo-colonialism.

**Men Doing Gender**

As a male undertaking research into gender, it is important to acknowledge the absence of women’s voices and the distortion of their lives and experiences in social science research (Stanley & Wise, 1990). Feminist research into gender issues has historically been carried out by women and there has been a long standing debate about whether men can undertake research of this nature (Allan, 2012). This is based upon the suggestion that men cannot experience the world in the way that women do given that we have no awareness of what it means to go through life as a woman (Schact & Ewing, 1997; Berliner & Fallen, 2008). Other scholars suggest that the ability to understand and explain social worlds is not a sex-linked trait (Pease, 2000 in Fawcett & Hearn, 2004).

In my research, I have drawn on feminist theory and research in order to develop an awareness of the nature and history of women’s oppression- and the role of men in that oppression. Following Brandes (2008, p.151) I recognise that "you cannot study men with out taking account of women, and vice versa." The relational approach to my
research has ensured that I consider the patterned relationships between men and women and the way in which this structures inequality (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2006). In my research I view feminism as a “site for a discourse that acknowledges the connection between feminist concerns and issues of race, class and sexual orientation” (Breeze, 2007, p. 60). The intersectional approach used in the present study, seeks to advance feminist values and principles. Accepting that we are all rooted in structures and relations of power, I focused on listening to women (and other socially disadvantaged groups) rather than speaking for them. This approach has enabled me to consider how as a man I am afforded certain privileges and the way in I perform particular masculinities can maintain or challenge the gender order. The participatory approach to my present study foregrounded collaboration and participant voice.

Given my commitment to social justice issues, throughout my research I attempted to challenge rather than reinstate this hegemony and inequality. Accepting Kapoor’s suggestion that we do not know our vested interests in the global imaginary, I engaged reflexively with my research experiences while following Andreotti’s (2015) suggestion to remain ‘vigilant’ and ‘compassionate’. An important part of this process was reflecting on my positionality and considering how I could position myself in different ways- whilst being attentive to the ethics involved in “fitting in”.

**The ‘places and spaces’ of ethnography: studying the global and local**

By viewing the three different school sites as different contexts of study, the voices of those who work, live and experience the nuances of gender and class on a local basis can be heard: their realities explored. Knowledge about the specific set of gender and class relations found at these local levels (the micro politics of gender and class) can provide a basis for developing new understanding of how gendered identities are constructed and the role that global and local forces play (Fennell & Arnott, 2008). Given the importance of global narratives/discourses to this thesis, it is important to recognise that the importance of location or ‘bounded cases’ for ethnography has changed in the context of globalisation (Gille, 2001, Gille & O’Riain, 2002).

Given that local sites extend across multiple places and spatial scales, a number of perspectives have emerged to replace traditional ethnographic place-based sites. These include, locations within networks and flows, locations within transnational
social formations or at the borders of places where difference is produced (Appadurai, Castells, 1997; Urry, 2000). All of these theories posit that ‘globalization breaks the one on one mapping of the local onto the social’ (Gille & O’Riain, 2002). To explore this ‘global social’ in the present study, I draw on Massey’s (1994) conception of locality/place, based upon four principles:

1. Places are not static;
2. Places are not constituted by boundaries that enable a simple counter-position to the outside;
3. A place does not have a homogenous identity;
4. The mixture of local and wider social relations gives a place its distinct character.

Because place is historically produced in interaction with a variety of external connections, distinctive patterns of inequality internal to the locality are produced (Massey, 1994). This new sense of place emphasises not only the borders of a particular locality but also the broader, external connections that constitute it. Brenner’s ‘politics of scale’ (2001, 2004) involves the negotiation of the hierarchy and legitimacy of different scales of social action. Within the current period of globalization, tensions have emerged as power and social interaction has been relocated from the national to the global and as the hierarchies of spatial scales have been destabilised. This has lead to ruptures in national social constructions but also new opportunities for different configurations of global, local, national and transnational relations (Brenner, 2001).

In Chapter 2, I demonstrated how this plays out in the literature by highlighting the transnational flows and connections have transformed educational structures and systems (privatisation and a reduce role for the state), and at the same time fuelled aspirations, expectations and demand (through (global) media/connectivity). Broader social and economic forces such as the shifting configurations of capitalism and the advance of globalising forces, including new forms of (neoliberal/entrepreneurial) citizenship and the rising importance of education play an important role in shaping identities and imaginations (Kenway and Koh, 2015). At the same time, scholars have
shown that rather than being bypassed by global forces, national governments play a central role in shaping notions of citizenship and identity. In India, this has led to new forms of citizenship that aim to balance ‘Indian’ (‘tradition’) and global (‘cosmopolitan’/‘western’) identities (Radhakrishnan, 2011; Gilbertson, 2014; Srivastava, 2015). To attend to these changes, I adopted a complex understanding of place, consisting of multiple levels of analysis that are deeply entangled.

In practice this meant, considering how the geography of social relations are changing in the context of school communities (Massey, 1994). Each school community can be understood as a “constellation” of the economic, political and social relations, “each full of power and internal structures of domination and subordination”, that meet and weave together at a particular locus. Rather than viewing each school community as having clear demarcated boundaries, I viewed these schools as “moments in networks of social relations and understandings… where a larger proportion of those relations, experiences and understandings are constructed on a far greater scale than what we happen to define for that moment as the place itself” (Massey, 1994). This meant adopting an “extroverted” sense of place, and carefully examining “its links with the wider world which integrates… the global and the local” (Massey, 1994). By locating the study within local school communities, and spending extensive periods in each school, I was able to explore the character and range of place-making projects within these locations.

A Participatory Approach to Ethnographic Research

Accepting that meaning is contextually structured and in order to value the knowledge of participants, I adopted a participatory orientation to my research. By working in partnership with participants in the research process, I attempted to account for traditional research power relations and bring about a joint understanding of the role that global and local forces play in maintaining inequalities and constructing identities (McIntyre, 2008). Given that children were the focus of this study, my research design emphasised participation and encouraged students to have some choice over the methods of research and involving students in analytical decisions and representations of their experiences. Despite the emphasis on participation, I had to plan the research in advance both before the young people were involved and during the research process. Furthermore, during the research, I found that students in all of
the schools were not used to working independently and struggled to engage with some of the more open-ended planned research activities. This meant that I had to alter my approach and provide more structure to the activities, where necessary. This was a constant process of negotiation that differed between and within schools.

While some researchers have suggested that adult directed research is “participation by proxy” (Pole et al, 1999), others suggest that there are many ways in which children can participate in research (Hart, 1999). As I have suggested, not all children are able or wish to participate in research projects and it was therefore important that I did not impose my own (western) ideals of child-centred activities on to participants (Miller, 2002). While semi-structured activities were more suited to the research context, I attempted to make room for students to have the freedom and flexibility to influence the research project (Sinclair, 2006). Multi-method ethnographies, involving ‘child-friendly’ activities- photography, drama, creative writing- are considered to be an important way to involve children in research (Derbyshire et al, 2005). Derbyshire et al (2005, p.423) suggest that this approach to ‘research with children demands flexibility’ and the ability to ‘go with the flow’ (p. 421)’ While not all children may find such activities ‘fun’ or ‘empowering’, this approach allows a more complex, multi-dimensional view of social life. In the following section, I describe the research methods used to apply my methodological framework.

Research Methods

Ethnography has long been associated with immersion in research sites and ethnographic researchers gather data by participating in the daily life of people in the study (Deegan, 2001, Derbyshire et al, 2005). The ethnographic approach to research in the present study drew on a range of methods to address the research questions and aims, including participant observation, interviews, focus group discussions, visual methods and document analysis.

Participant Observation

During my research, participant observation was an important method. In the first eight weeks of the study, I spent 1-2 days each week in each class, observing students in classroom activities and during break times. In doing so, I aimed to take an active role by working alongside students during lessons and spending lunch time talking with them. This meant focusing on “deportment, work habits and other personal
characteristics” (Entwistle, Alexander et al, 2007, p. 128) while considering the meaning that participants attributed to particular kinds of behaviour (Delamont and Hamilton, 1989, p. 37). Participant observation involved not only gaining access to the field and building report with participants but also producing a written account of what was observed through field notes. To ensure that my field notes were written contemporaneously with the events and experiences they described, I wrote my field notes at the end of each day, once I had arrived at home (Emerson, Fretz and Shaw, 2001).

Acknowledging the selective nature of field notes (Atkinson & Hammersely, 1994) and considering that “observation is always interpreted through the researcher’s interpretive frames”, I made the effort in my field notes to distinguish between observed behavior, participants’ interpretations of behavior and my own personal assumptions. This meant recording what I observed and having a separate section where I recorded my own actions, emotions, questions and reflections (Lofland & Lofland, 1995). This was not an attempt to be objective but to help me to reflect upon my own biases, prejudice and privileged position and to consider how my understanding of the research developed over time (Lofland & Lofland, 1995).

During my time in the three different schools, I tried- as far as possible- to fit into each research setting. Although, my presence was quite obvious within each of the research settings, I aimed to avoid formality and so adopted simple, casual dress- a plain t-shirt and plain, loose trousers- during fieldwork. At the same time, I attempted to engage in a “muted masculinity” (Ortiz, 2004) that would challenge hegemonic masculinity. To achieve, this I attempt to avoid being seen as an authority figure and openly acknowledged my lack of knowledge in many areas. I also made an effort to speak with greater clarity following comments that my accent was difficult to understand. Despite these efforts, rather than having a fixed role in each school, I appeared to occupy different positions throughout the research.

Throughout the project, and especially during interviews or group discussions, I found that students tended view me as Western (generally British but also American or Australian), a researcher and/or a teacher. However, there were also suggestions that I was an inspector or a friend and one principal even questioned whether I was really a journalist. This demonstrates that rather than being fixed in set roles, my identity was performatively constituted and entailed multiple selves during the research process.
Rather than being “inert objects available for the free play of the ethnographer’s desire” participants were “actively interpreting and trying to make meaning of the ethnographer” (Kondo, p. 17).

**Building Rapport and Reducing Inequalities in the Research Relationship**

Rapport is viewed as an essential element of the research relationship (Hey, 2000) and entails building trust and ‘getting on’ with people. Through rapport, researchers can gain access to observe aspects of social life and the maintenance of this ‘social trust’ is at the heart of participatory ethnography. In my research, I wanted to maintain ‘friendly’, ‘open’ relationships students- and teachers in the study in order to explore the students’ experiences of the school. During fieldwork, I found that my notions of ‘equal relationships’ did not align with hierarchical nature of adult-child relationships in Delhi. While I sought to avoid an authoritative role and I endeavoured to work in partnership with students, students were used to strictly hierarchical student-teacher relationships and a learning environment characterised by rote learning practices.

My effort to maintain open, equal relationships often made students uncomfortable and uncertain. Students often requested to have more guidance and more structure in research activities. On one occasion, during a rather stilted group discussion, I inquired as to why the students seemed so reserved. After a long pause and awkward silence, one boy- sounding exasperated- remarked that we were ‘asking questions but not giving the answers’. In the context of a highly structured learning environment characterised by rote-learning practices, students often felt like ‘fish out of water’ being asked open-ended questions and being asked to voice their own opinions. As the research progressed our relationships developed and we were given more insight into students’ lives in school and at home. During interviews with just myself (and in MCD schools my research partner), students were more comfortable opening up about their lives and several students explicitly stated that they could share with us experiences that they were uncomfortable sharing with the rest of the group- for fear of being teased (Research Journal, October, 2015). My research partner and I built close, positive, open relationships with students, that to my mind were akin to friendships. However, these friendships were clearly marked by age hierarchies and all of the students in all of the schools referred to me as ‘sir’ or ‘Ben sir’ - rather than ‘Ben’ as I had requested-throughout the research process.
These incidents demonstrate that relationships were revolved around the research and bound by the timescale and nature of the research project (Birch and Miller, 2002). Furthermore, these relationships were never free from relations of power and age, and meant that I was unable to transcend ‘adult’ characteristics. Efforts to do so appeared to leave some teachers bemused and/or concerned that I was humiliating myself. During one introduction to a group of students, I explained that I had been having Hindi lessons but that I was a beginner and still in the very early stages of learning the language. One student suggested that to ‘help’ (test me!) with my learning they could give me some words to write on the board in Hindi. Having agreed, I duly made a mistake and some students started giggling. Untroubled by this, I continued and made another apparently glaring mistake- much to the amusement of the whole class (Research Journal, September, 2015). At this point, the class teacher stepped in- from the side of the class- and brought the activity to a close by taking the chalk out of my hand and nudging me out of the way. She proceeded to rub out the words that I had written on the board and told me that we had to stop because the students were ‘not showing (me) respect’.

These incidents illustrate the challenge of building rapport/relationships in the context of schools especially given the need to balance relationships with both teachers and children (Russell, 2005). I found that teachers held me in esteem because of the fact that a white, westerner undertaking a PhD in education and appeared to initially position me as someone to be respected. My efforts to challenge this role were often interpreted as a sign of weakness. My dress and appearance was also in contrast to the business attire of the other male teachers in the school. In the hierarchical environment of schools, this had a range of effects.

With the class V teacher at IES, our early encounters were limited and constrained; however, as the research progressed she told me that having seen how I interacted with students- and with her- she suggested that she could be more open and transparent (Class V Ma’am Interview, IES). For other teachers, especially in MCD school 1 my presence appeared to shift from being someone to be wary of to someone who could- to an extent- be brushed off. For example, during an observation in one lesson, the teacher stopped after ten minutes and asked if he could leave to go on a tea break (Research Journal, October, 2015). With students in each of the schools, initial cautiousness quickly gave way to enthusiasm and interest as we started our
activities with games and activities that the children themselves wanted to undertake. However, when it came to sharing their ideas and talking about their experiences, some students really struggled and had to be carefully supported (in ways that perhaps reflected more traditional student teacher relationships). This meant that the way in which I was positioned throughout the research was influenced by hierarchical and status norms within each school community. As a white, western male researcher who failed to take align with an authoritative role, I was sometimes met with suspicion or viewed as weak. While this approach enabled me to build positive relationships, especially with students, with small number of teachers it appeared to entrench my outsider status.

**Interviews**

Interviews were used to elicit the perceptions, attitudes and experiences of students in the schools. Each semi-structured interview/FGD lasted on average between 40 minutes and one hour and was conducted in private in the place of the participant’s choosing. In the government schools, most interviews took place in Hindi, in the private school interviews took place in English. In the MCD schools, Teachers’ requested to be interviewed as a group and principals were interviewed individually. At IES, the Class V teacher and the principal were interview individually.

All interviews were audio-recorded using a Sony voice recorder. Participants were informed that they did not have to answer a question if they chose not to and that they could request a break or end the interview at any time. Each participant was provided with a consent form in either Hindi or English depending on their first language and were informed that they may withdraw from the study at any point. I openly explained the purpose of the study and provide comprehensive answers to any questions of clarity.

I used semi-structured interviews (the “gold standard” (Silverman, 2004) of qualitative research) that enabled me to ask open-ended questions in attempt to maintain the breadth of potential answers from participants (Gubrium & Holstein, 1994). This type of interview aims to develop a detailed understanding of the topic in question from the participant’s perspective. The initial questions and interview guide were developed with the support of the gatekeeper and the research partner. The experience and findings of the pilot interview were used to modify and enhance the original interview
questions. Once the final questions were complete, a final interview guide was created in order to introduce the research to participants, build rapport, and explore the constructions of gender and class in Delhi primary school communities. Guides for student participants (Appendix 5) were structured around an introduction, background questions, home life, education and global awareness. For teachers (Appendix 5), guides were structured around an introduction, background, perspectives on education, teaching and learning processes and students’ futures/changes through time.

At the end of each interview, either myself or my research partner summarised the discussion and participants were given the opportunity to comment on, question or clarify anything that had been said. While the use of certain prompts enabled me to direct participants to the topic of interest and gather a more complete set of responses (Creswell, 2003), based on the flow of the interview, I asked range of additional questions to establish a situated understanding of each participant’s perspective (Saunders et al., 2003).

**Visual Methods: Photography**

Visual images have long been central to the construction of social life (Holiday, 2000). Objects are often considered to have connotative or personal meanings (and stories/narratives) which draw on autobiography and memory. Displays of identity are primarily visual and by arranging both cultural products (clothes, books, avatars, online profiles etc.) and our physical bodies in particular ways we choose what to ‘put on display for others’ (Holliiday, 2000). While sociologists have long recognised the importance of visual displays, the ever-increasing proliferation of media materials in young people’s lives mean that these have become even more integral to the construction of social worlds and identities (Niesyto, 2000; Buckingham and Bragg, 2003). According to Niesyto (2000), this ensures that media products- especially visual images- are essential to the study of young people’s experiences and identities:

*In view of media’s increasing influence on everyday communication, I put forward the following thesis: If somebody – in nowadays media society – wants to learn something about youth’s ideas, feelings, and their ways of experiencing the world, he or she should give them a chance to express themselves also by means of their own self-made media products… (Niesyto, 2000)*
Over the last three decades, visual methods have become increasingly popular in studies of identity formation and have come to play a meaningful role in education research (Allan, 2009, 2015; Mitchell, 2008, 2011). Photography, including photographic diaries, photo voice and photo-elicitation have been used to develop rich data- or ‘thick description’ about children’s’ everyday lives (Allan, 2009, Allan & Tinkler, 2015; Mitchell, 2008, 2011). This approach has enabled children to explore how they think about, understand and reflect on their own identities (Allan & Tinkler, 2015). Social research typically requires participants to produce instant descriptions of their experiences in language. By using photographic methods, children in this study were able to engage in a reflective process leading to data that was the result of thoughtful reflection.

During our introduction of the research to Class V children in the schools in this study, we asked them to suggest the type of activities that they would be interested in pursuing, including photography, drawing, drama, story telling and writing. Across the three schools, students overwhelmingly favoured photography and said that they would like to take photos about their lives and school experiences. We discussed what we could do with this images and students said that they would be most comfortable with a photo album that reflected their school- and broader life- experiences. In doing so, I aimed to explore boys’ and girls’ personal worlds and their visual displays of identity.

During the first two (of eight) club sessions, we introduced students to the ideas of visualisation by sharing photographs from the photographer Raghubir Singh (Appendix 6). We discussed what ‘we could learn’ from the photos and shared different ideas/interpretations about what the photographer was trying to represent. We discussed how photographers take a number of photos and then select the image that best a story about a person or a place. We also discussed notions of representation and whether the people in the photo would want to be seen in this way alongside issues of consent and the importance of asking people before taking a photograph of them. Digital cameras were selected for activities because they offered the opportunity for students to instantly review and reflect upon their images on screen. In these first two club sessions, we worked with students to talk through how cameras operated and allowed students time to take photos their school experience.
After the two introductory sessions, the next sessions were focused on giving students choice and allowing them independence to decide how they would like to work. In all schools, students wanted to spend their time taking photographs and so we weighted activities to enable them as much time as possible to do this. At the same time, we encouraged students to reflect on the photos that they had taken and discuss the different parts of their life that they represented. At the end of session 3, students volunteered to share their photos with a friend and tell them why they had taken a particular photo. Volunteers then presented photos of their choice to the whole group and we invited students to comment on what they thought the photo was about before the photographer gave their own explanation. To help children develop their visual account of their experiences, we discussed and identified the key areas of children’s lives. In each school students identified similar categories, including:

- Learning
- Discipline/the way of life
- My future
- Teachers
- Family
- Friends and Hobbies/interests

Students reflected on the photos that they had taken and edited their selection in accordance with the key themes (outlined above). We provided students with a planner to help them note down between 2 and 4 photos that would represent each theme. This number of photos was chosen to keep the project manageable and so that we would not end up with too many photos; however, we did permit students to take more photos but then encouraged them to keep editing and deleting photos so that they only kept those that best reflected their experience. Students were then given time to take additional photos. Between sessions 4 and 5, we sat down and had informal conversations with students individually about the photos that they had recorded. Through these discussions it became clear that children were finding some themes more problematic than others. In response, we used session 5 to explore challenging themes (discipline, my future) through drama and discussion.
For each key area, students created role plays that told us a story about their experiences. In MCD schools, my research partner Padma, talked me through each role play and I wrote notes that I later used to write up in my research journal. At IES, I noted down students’ role plays after the session. Following these role plays we encouraged students to consider how they could use photographs to represent their experience. The 6th session was used for students to finish taking their photos and in sessions 7 and 8 students compiled their photographs into an album. The students’ albums were then used in recorded interviews to help them elaborate on their experiences of schooling. In our final visit to schools, Padma and I met with students, teachers and principals and summarised the early findings from our research.

This approach to the study of identity construction enabled me to access the personal worlds and experiences of children in the school (Holliday, 2000; Niesyto, 2000). This method was particularly effective in allowing students to explore their school experiences and personal relationships because students were able to think about plan and capture their own experiences. At the same time, the process of capturing, reflecting upon and describing images, provided an insight into those aspects of the school experience that students found it easy to talk about and represent and those aspects that were more challenging. By discussing their photographs with students and asking them why they had taken particular photos we were able to support the whole group or individual students to consider how they might develop accounts of their experience. When students were unwilling or unable to develop their accounts or talk about particular aspects of experience, it provided a useful point for analysis and reflection for both me and the participants.

The participatory process of the students’ club, with photography and its related activities, provided an opportunity to explore meaning beyond language barriers. Students were able to share ideas and communicate with me despite my inability to speak Hindi. Furthermore, whether the students’ photographs appeared to complement or contradict their oral accounts provided an important point for discussion. Most importantly, by having a self-constructed, tangible object to reflect upon students were able refine their own understanding of their experience. Students revisited earlier representations of their lives and experiences and considered how they might represent their experience differently. In our interviews, students’ photographs served to anchor our conversations in something personal and enabled
both myself and students to initiate or develop particular topics of interest. The presentation of students photographs and the manner in which they decorated their photo albums also become essential to the meanings conveyed in students oral and visual accounts (Edge and Bayliss, 2004).

The combination of drama, photography and other activities enabled students the opportunity ‘play’ with their identities and led me to explore various forms of cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1984). In particular, I came to see how students viewed education and the importance of family, testing, performance, hard work and discipline to their understanding of schooling.

3.5 Data Analysis – Utilising a Narrative Framework

In order to analyse the data gathered through fieldwork, I adopted an analytical framework based upon narrative analysis. Traditionally, interviews have been viewed as ‘a pipeline to the interiors of interviewees or the exteriors of social reality’ (Alvesson, 2003, p. 30) where researchers can capture ‘truths’ or precise data. Narrative inquiry involves the study of experience as a story and is primarily a means to think about experience (Clandinin et al, 2006). While there are a diverse range of approaches to narrative analysis (Watson, 2007), I draw on the social constructionist notion that narratives are always part of the constitution of the social, cultural and political world (Bruner, 2002). From this perspective, narratives are generated and told from the range of “possible” lives and worlds available to us, thereby becoming “variants of the culture’s canonical forms” (Bruner, 2004, p. 694). Rather than viewing narratives as a transparent window into people’s lives, in line with my relational theoretical approach, I consider them to be an on-going, relational, identity-forming and constitutive part of participants’ realities (Bruner, 2002).

A narrative analytical framework, has enabled me to explore the memorable knowledge that brings together layers of understandings about a person, their culture and how they have created change in their life. Through narratives participants shared the changing meaning of events and the values, beliefs and experiences that guided these interpretations. By adopting this framework, I considered the complex patterns and descriptions of identity construction and reconstruction, and evidence of global and local discourses that impact on a person’s knowledge creation.
Drawing on a variety of data sources, I focused my attention on the different stories told in different school settings and in-school contexts using the narrative framework of big and -more importantly- small stories (Bell, 2009). In doing so, I gained insight into different but connected regions of experience and explore different facets of the data (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996). Historically, ‘big stories’ that authentically represent and reconstruct lives as lived and experienced have dominated narrative analysis. Big stories typically involve participant retrospection on life episodes or on their lives as a whole in order to produce a life story that includes the overarching plots used to make sense of life experience and shape identity. Big stories have been criticised for overlooking the ongoing and interactional process of identity construction and for attempting to capture a ‘truth’ or ‘whole’ (Bamberg, 2006).

In response, scholars have focused on ‘small stories’, that is, snippets of everyday talk that occur in everyday scenarios and represent narratives in context (Georgakopoulou, 2006). Scholarship on small stories encourages us to focus on how people tell their stories and the performative work (the constitution of the subject, including the researcher) that narratives do in the context of interviews/research (Riach et al, 2016). Following the ‘small story’ approach, I view narratives ‘as constructive means that are functional in the creation of characters in space and time’ and as being used by people to create (and maintain) a sense of who they are. The stories told during the research process are based upon both what is asked in an interview and what the participant judges as relevant. As storytellers, participants ‘manage the aspects of their selves and lives that are revealed within the context of the research encounter’ (Boddy, 2014, p. 22). Beyond spoken and written narratives, narrative methods have sought to understand personal and grand narratives through stories that emerge in visual forms and everyday objects as well as the processes in which narratives are constructed (De Fina & Georgakopolou, 2015; Riessman, 2008; Ryan, 2004). In the present study, I focus on the interrelations between verbal, visual and interactional narratives. By using both verbal and visual narratives, I take different ‘angle(s) of vision’ to capture the specificity of social phenomena while illuminating the relationship between the general and the particular (Knowles & Sweetman, 2004). This meant looking at the stories that students told and considering how these related to the stories that they expressed through their photograph albums.
By giving consideration to what is ‘askable’ and ‘tellable’ in the research process, especially in relation to gender, I have gained an understanding of what is acceptable in local and national cultures. In my approach to narrative analysis, I recognise that ‘small’ stories take place within broader narrative contexts, including ‘canonical narratives’ which outline normative cultural expectations. Paying attention to the ways in which cultural narratives are represented within stories can provide “insight into the ways in which narrators use culture in doing narratives” (Phoenix, 2013, p.75). In the present study, the emphasis on the role that local and global forces play in identity construction ensures that I focus on how (situated) narratives function as a form of sense-making in relation to external issues and events and provide links between macro and micro contexts (Edwards, 1997; Schiffrin, 2006). I approached my research with an understanding that the positionings and worldviews adopted in narrations reflected aspects of the wider socio-cultural settings within which the speakers were located and from which the narratives were derived (Georgakopoulou, 2007, 2014; De Fina, 2008; Ryan, 2008; Souto-Manning, 2014).

Narrative analysis of the data generated through the research process, enabled me to unravel the hidden flows and relations of power circulating among students, teachers and parents through the construction of their identities (Watson, 2012). In particular, I considered how participants narratively construct the other and through this construction ‘establish claims’ for their own identities (Watson, 2012, p.471). Given the emphasis on different scales in this thesis, I attend to political narratives, including the ‘stories people tell about how the world works how they explain the engines of political change, and the role they see themselves, and those who they regard as being part of their group, as playing in this ongoing struggle’ (Andrews, 2007, p. 8). Political narratives can refer to both ‘stories which are told, untold, lived, dreamed or imagined by individuals, and a ‘larger cluster of national stories within which individuals position themselves’. By examining the relationship between ‘macro and micro narratives’ or ‘the stories of individuals and the stories of the communities in which they live’ political narratives can be revealed (Andrews, 2014).

In Chapter 2, I demonstrated how global development narratives- drawing on (neoliberal) notions of ‘immutable ‘economic realities’”- advance western notions of development in India. I also highlighted how new national narratives- informed by both neoliberalism and Hindu nationalism- had gained prominence following economic
liberalisation. I undertook my analysis with consideration for the important role that national narratives play in shaping national identity and in enabling people to establish ‘what it means to be from (a particular) place’ and whether this leads to feelings of ‘belonging and/or alienation’ (Andrews, 2014). By examining both big and small stories with a focus on the micro and macro narratives of gender and education, I explored the social role that stories play in the construction of identity.

**Analysis**

As outlined previously, this research drew on multiple data sources generated through the use of multiple methods as part of the ethnographic design. While specific examples/extracts of data from these multiple sources are not always included in the findings chapters that follow, this does not mean that they were not used to help generate the analysis or that they did not aid the conclusions drawn. Indeed, written extracts have mainly been utilised in these chapters owing to the centrality of the interview method and also some of the ethical issues relating to methods (e.g. anonymity and photos).

During fieldwork, initial forms of analytic thinking emerged as I read through and wrote my field notes. Throughout the research process, I continually reflected upon the interviews, field and journal notes as the study proceeded. In developing my approach to narrative analysis, I drew from Chase’s (2005) range of analytic lenses used by narrative researchers. Chase’s five analytical lenses are:

1. Narratives as a vehicle for the uniqueness of human actions;
2. Narratives as verbal action;
3. Narratives as enabled and constrained by social resources and circumstances;
4. Narratives as socially situated interactive performances;
5. Narrative researchers as narrators themselves.

I framed my analytical approach by drawing on Chase’s second lens to consider how the thoughts, feelings, experiences and behaviors described in participants’ narratives related to the construction of their gendered and classed identities. In addition, I drew on Chase’s third lens to consider the way in which students’ narratives (and identities)
were shaped by social resources and circumstances. Instead of seeking a “grand narrative”, I aimed to consider how narratives were produced within specific social, cultural and historical context from many different perspectives.

Rather than having a linear approach to narrative analysis, the process was a complex process of analysis and writing up as I explored “the underlying sociocultural meanings of texts” (Lupton, 1999, p. 455). Having uploaded all transcripts, field notes and photographs to NVIVO, I went through each source and highlighted paragraphs/extracts/images that related to the research questions- focusing on the construction of gendered and classed identities in relation to the school experience. On the one hand, this approach meant that I ended up with a large number of themes-and fragmented narratives- that were too numerous and disjointed, on the other hand, this approach helped me to further familiarise myself with the data and identify key quotes that brought together different narratives and issues around the research questions. Having established a number of extracts relating to the themes of gender and class, I developed sub-themes and further refined the data through a focus on the key themes that students had identified as being important to their life experience: learning, discipline, future, teachers, family and friends/hobbies. Looking at students’, teachers’ and parents’ narratives in relation to these different themes enabled me to see consider how participants positioned themselves in each field and consider the dominant discourses that were evident across the schools.

Through re-reading, reflection and further sorting of the data, initial themes and narratives were refined over time. This process was a creative process involving thinking with the data and thinking about it in different ways. This process was supported by exploring how participants within and between schools converged and diverged in their accounts and life experiences. The data was replete with extracts regarding social class, and participants tended to converge in their expectations of the role that education would play in the future lives of children. Drawing on the research literature, I considered how my data supported or contracted prior findings regarding the importance of aspirational (Raco, 2009) and entrepreneurial citizenship (Gooptu, 2014; Sancho, 2014) and the role that education has to play in these configurations of society. In doing so, I found that several major themes (and their associated sub-themes) connected around the notion of aspirationalism, entrepreneurialism and citizenship in education. This enabled me to establish a framework for Chapter 4 of
this thesis, ‘Education and Aspirations Among Students in two Government Schools and a Private School in Delhi’.

The remaining two findings chapters (5 & 6) were structured around the prevalence in the data of perceived differences between government and private schools. Indeed, students’, teachers’ and parents’ accounts and my own experiences suggested that there were marked differences between the ways in which classed and gendered identities were constructed in each of these contexts. Relating the themes regarding the experiences of participants in the school to the research questions- the construction of gendered and classed identities- and to the findings regarding aspirational/entrepreneurial citizenship enabled me to create a framework for Chapters 5 and 6- how students were constructing their identities in the present in two government schools (Chapter 5) and one private school (Chapter 6).

In each of the findings chapters, extracts were selected on the basis that they effectively represented a participant’s/participants’ perspective(s), provided evidence for a particular theme and/or illustrated an analytical point. In the findings chapters, this approach ensured that I made a concerted effort to balance a comprehensive analysis of dominant narratives of gender and class with verbatim quotes that reflected participants’ perspectives and experiences. In doing so, I was able to continually develop and refine the questions I asked of the data considering what was included and excluded and the ambivalence, contradictions and differences as well as similarities and linkages in the data in order to re-work the participants’ narratives.

Students’ photo albums represented their own perspectives on the school experience and were used to develop their oral accounts in interviews and group discussions. Students also permitted me to take photos of their completed albums and use these to support my analysis. These albums became an important part of the analysis, especially when images appeared to represent a number of different themes. These representations were useful in helping me to think about the connections, relationships and contradictions that were apparent within different themes and within overarching narratives of class and gender. While students’ photographs and voices were foregrounded through the research process, ultimately, I am the author of this thesis and my analysis and interpretations have played the defining role in analysis and representation. In doing so, I have committed myself to representing the voices of participants (especially children) in the study.
In this chapter, I have outlined the methodological framework and research methods used to explore how students construct gendered and classed identities in Delhi primary schools. Through the use of these methods, I attempted to listen to what participants in the three school communities had to say. In the following three chapters, I present my analysis of how students constructed their identities and the role that global and local forces played in this process. Given that ideas of “becoming” dominated the data and appeared to play a crucial role in guiding students’ constructions of identity, Chapter 4 analyses students’ aspirations for the future and the role that education plays in these aspirations. Chapters 5 and 6 are twinned chapters, focused upon how students in different school communities are constructing their identities in the present. While both chapters focus on the internationalisation/globalization of the school experience, Chapter 5 addresses MCD government school communities in which identity constructions were more revolved around concerns of the local and becoming global. Chapter 6 considers a private school community in Delhi (IES) in which student construction of identity were more revolved around global concerns.
Chapter 4 Education and Aspirations Among Students in two Government Schools and a Private School in Delhi

4.1 Introduction

Hopes about India’s future are often pinned to its massive youth population which comprises 51.1% of India’s population, and over 500 million individuals (Aiyar & Mody, 2013). In a global survey of public attitudes about the economy, Indian’s expressed a greater sense of optimism about the future than all other countries surveyed, with 76% claiming that their children will grow up to be financially better off than their parents (Pew, 2017). This sense of optimism is tied to India’s high rates of economic growth and a popular mainstream media and political narrative in which the future of the nation is said to be dependent upon the extent to which this massive youth population can realise its economic potential (and become middle class citizens) (Aiyar & Mody, 2013).

The emergence of a lucrative private education industry has combined with a corporate desire to develop an educated middle-class consumer base (for future markets), to provide education with a ‘new glamour’ (Gooptu, 2014). In the post-liberalisation era, education has become a focus of the discourse of liberalisation and the Indian government has attempted to balance public and corporate interests while appealing to both through ‘mediatisation’ (Gooptu, 2014). Private media- television, advertisements, corporate campaigns and Bollywood films- play an important role in garnering support for educational reforms (Gooptu, 2014). These different forms of media have helped to sell the fantasy that new citizen-subjects can undergo transformations and change the world despite their poverty and desperation (Gooptu, 2014).

In this chapter I I explore students’ educational and career aspirations and consider how these are shaped by both global and local forces. I consider what is important to young people in the study and how they assemble their future lives and make sense of the world around them. I argue that through neoliberal globalisation, the proliferation of global media and the widespread perception of new economic opportunities, a politics of aspiration has emerged in which students develop their identities in relation
to a normative middle class identity. However, these aspirations differ among middle class and working class communities and among boys and girls. At the same time, I demonstrate the enduring role that the local- especially the family- continues to play in shaping students identities and aspirations. I attempt to show how the students’ identities are shaped by their aspirations for the future, which are in turn shaped by a tension between their obligations to their family and fantasies of middle class lifestyles.

4.2 The Educated Child

Throughout my time in Delhi, I encountered a wide range of media images conveying similar representations of childhood and schooling. In different neighbourhoods throughout the South and West of the city, numerous advertisements for tuition centres, test preparation centres, private schools and private universities covered building facades, lamp posts and billboards. The advertisement below (Figure 5.1), for a private primary school in Delhi, provides an example of how children were being represented as ‘the ideal child, the model student and the future citizen’ (Hopkins and Sriprakash, 2015, p. 3).

Figure 4.1 An Advertisement for a Private school in Delhi

In the advert, the different students are represented through their middleclassness, their childishness/innocence and their immanent adulthood. For example, although the
school is in Delhi, it includes a number of white students. The white student, presented in the foreground appears a representation of the ideal student- eager to study and content with her learning. According to Hopkins and Sriprakash (2015, p. 3), these representations work to position students within a “normative discourse of childhood” and represent the “abstracted and universalised child subject’ that is replicated ‘across social spaces’ and development discourses.

As this advertisement demonstrates, the universal child subject emerges in the context of India as middle-class, English language proficient (‘A premier English Medium School’) and highly aspirational (focused on securing ‘the best foundation for a great future’). Hopkins and Sriprakash (2015, p.4) suggest that advertisements of this nature and the values they convey help to establish Western notions of childhood as universal. Within development discourses, these conceptualisations of childhood suggest that ‘the highest possible goal (for non-western childhood is) the emulation of a kind of childhood that the West has set as a global standard’ (Nieuwenhuys, 2009, p.148). Students that do not conform to this cultural ideal are positioned as ‘others’ in need of development and transformation (Hopkins and Sriprakash, 2015, p. 4).

Despite criticisms of the universal child within childhood studies (James et al, 1998; Lee, 2001), Hopkins and Sriprakash (2015, p.10) suggest that ‘this normative discourse of childhood continues to circulate widely and informs much policy and practice in the fields of international development and development education’. Reflecting on this, Raman (unpublished) describes the ‘politics of childhood in India’ as being caused by ‘a deeper penetration of neoliberalism with its structures… processes and hegemonic ideological thrust, globalising western bourgeois conceptions of childhood which has been imbibed by the middle class and has… percolated further down to other layers of society’.

The discourse of the universal child appeared to play an important role in shaping the identities of students in the two MCD government schools and one private school (IES) in this study. Across divergent school communities, students (and often their families) drew on the discourse of the universal child subject and the normative citizen-subject to define the value and purpose of schooling. The widespread prevalence of these ideas speaks to the dominance of particular discourses about middle-class citizenship, education and childhood in Delhi. In the following section, I aim to demonstrate how
students’ aspirations for the future might be considered as shaped by their understanding of childhood as a ‘process of becoming’.

Across the three schools in the present study, students from different backgrounds shared high aspirations and a strong sense of optimism about the future. Education was viewed as something essential to the realisation of students’ future ambitions. Given dramatic increases in enrolment for marginalised groups (especially girls, the poor and historically disadvantaged groups) that have taken place alongside rapid growth in private sector schooling, it is perhaps understandable that education and schooling should lie at the centre of students’ lives in Delhi:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Partner:</th>
<th>Why do you come to school?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aisha Interview, MCD School 2</td>
<td>To become something when I grow old.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Partner:</td>
<td>What do you want to become?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aisha Interview, MCD School 2:</td>
<td>To be a Teacher.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

```
Research Partner: Why do you like coming to school?
Vichy Interview, MCD School 1 Boys’ Shift: Why do I like coming to school? Because we want to study, and we will have money and wealth, that’s why we want to come to school.
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Research Partner: You get wealth if you come to school?
Vichy Interview, MCD School 1 Boys’ Shift: We will get a big job. If we study, we will get a job and we will understand more.
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Research Partner: Why do you study?
Dinesh Interview, MCD School: To become something.
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Research Partner: When did you realize this?
Dinesh Interview, MCD School: When I was in class 2.
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Research Partner: When you were in 2nd class. Did anyone tell this to you or you realise it by yourself?
Dinesh Interview, MCD School: I realised it by myself.
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Ben: So in terms of learning what do you think is important?

Rocky Interview, IES: Most important is to remember something- it is the main role in our learning. When we learn something, it helps in our life. When we are grown up, we get a job so when we have learned we are able to do a job.

In these extracts, students explain why they come to school in the present, in terms of their desire to ‘become something’- a middle class professional- in the future. With the focus firmly on their future selves, students draw on western understandings of the normative child subject, to position themselves as both ‘immanent’ and ‘innocent’ (Hopkins and Sriprakash, 2015, p. 8). Following the mainstream (western) model of child development, students envisaged a linear trajectory in which they would move from ‘the (irrational, dependent) child’ to ‘the (rational, autonomous) adult’ (Prout, 2011). Biological and child development discourses foreground the natural development of children’s bodies and ‘constitute the child as a becoming adult’ (Hopkins and Sriprakash, 2015, p. 8).

By focusing on their individual transformations (‘becoming’), students’ emphasised their own deficit, directing their attention away from their current selves and towards the future adult citizen-subject they aimed to become. Prout (2011) argues that notions of the child as ‘becoming’ delegitimise the child’s current subjectivity and position the child as the repository of future hopes and the future of the nation. The child is constructed as a desired future middle class citizen who will save the nation (Prout, 2011). Echoing development discourses, students in the present study- from different backgrounds- drew on ideas of themselves as future (middle class) citizens and naturalised formal schooling as the producer of a ‘better tomorrow’ (Balagopalan, 2008). Throughout our research with students in each of the schools, during our discussions of photos, drama and discussions students foregrounded the importance of shiksha (education) or parhi (read/study) to their current- and future-lives. This was reflected in the way that students behaved in class in MCD schools:

*From what I have seen and heard, these students really care about their school and they have a strong desire to learn. They express a total*
This dedication to 'study' was apparent across the three schools in the study. Students dedication to study appeared to emerge as a result of a belief that hard work would enable students to realise their aspirations and a total deference to their elders-especially parents and teachers (see Section 4.3). In response to questions about their future and how they would realise their aspirations students frequently answered ‘study’ or ‘education’ (see section 4.21). In this respect, students' belief in the power of education appeared to align with global and national discourses that have sold the (neoliberal) fantasy that through education citizen-subjects can undergo transformations and change the world despite their poverty and desperation (Gooptu, 2014). Scholars have argued that such neoliberal discourses of self-making limit the discursive space in which various identities can be constructed (Renold, 2004). In these extracts, it appears that students have adopted neoliberal concepts of self-making, that privilege the “process of becoming” (Ball and Olmedo, 2012). However, the deference that students showed to their teachers (and parents)- and the fact that aspirations were often related to the best interests of the family section, 4.3.1), suggested that this was a relational sense of becoming- where obligations to the family and the nation were intertwined with neoliberal projects of individual 'becoming'. In the following section, I will explore patterns in the data to consider how definitions of success were ‘contested, strategised, adopted and subverted’ (Stahl, 2015).

4.2.1 The Educated Child: College Graduate

It was through formal schooling and university/‘college’ that students imagined gaining the cultural and educational capital to ‘become something’ (Bourdieu, 1990). Almost all students described how they would complete primary school, move in to secondary, then upper secondary school before eventually heading to college. The one exception was Dinesh, who wanted to open his ‘own shop’ once he had graduated from Class 12 (Dinesh Interview, MCD School 2). For all other students, college was viewed as the final stage of education and a necessary step prior to going to work:
In their aspirations for college level qualifications, students drew on the narrative of “learning equals earning” promoted by national and international education policies- including the MDGs and EFA (Brown, 2003; Sriprakash and Hopkins, 2015). Echoing the logics of human capital theory- and wider international debates about qualifications and skills- this narrative suggests that only by achieving educational qualifications will individuals be able to successfully participate in the labour market (Jeffrey and Harriss, 2014; Sripraksah and Hopkins, 2015). Rather than solely being the result of global influences, global educational policies have connected with India’s pre and post-colonial history and the role that education played in sustaining class privilege (Fernandes, 2006). In India, board exams in Class 12 and university entrance exams determine access to middle class professions and careers. The importance of these exams to students’ future careers has led to what Majumdar and Mooij (2011) call the ‘marks race’ where students are under intense pressure to achieve high scores in academic tests.

In MCD schools, irrespective of their individual performance or levels of learning, students viewed college as both a distinct possibility and a worthwhile pursuit. Despite their stated intention to attend college, some students in MCD schools showed little awareness of how they would make this a reality:
Research Partner: What will you study in college?
Saif Interview, MCD School 1 Boys Shift: I don’t know

Research Partner: Do you think it is easy to go to college?
Saif Interview, MCD School 1 Boys Shift: No, because it is very far and in college and there is a lot of study.

Research Partner: Is it easy to get in to college? Is it easy to get admission?
Saif Interview, MCD School 1 Boys Shift: I don’t know about admission.

Research Partner: OK so you want to be police. How do you become a policeman? Do you know?
Naufal, MCD School 1 Boys’ Shift: No.

Research Partner: What do you have to study?
Naufal, MCD School 1 Boys’ Shift: A lot.

Research Partner: Like how much, where will you go next?
Naufal, MCD School 1 Boys’ Shift: Next school

Research Partner: Next school… until which class?
Naufal, MCD School 1 Boys’ Shift: 12th

Research Partner: then?
Naufal, MCD School 1 Boys’ Shift: College

Research Partner: How many years of study will you do in college?
Naufal, MCD School 1 Boys’ Shift: … 1 or 2 years.

Saif and Naufal show an awareness of the need to go through secondary school and college in order to achieve their aspirations; however, they claim to know very little about the exact steps or processes involved in getting there. This is perhaps because
students are still very young and their parents had not participated in secondary or tertiary education. Two students in MCD schools who showed a greater awareness of the steps involved in obtaining their career choice were Rani and Aisha. Aisha knew that she would have to graduate from college, get a certificate and take an interview before getting the job of a teacher. Similarly, Rani knew that she would have to go to college and learn about engineering or mechanical engineering before becoming a pilot:

Research Partner: This is yours, you are studying in this school, and then you will go to big school, then...

Aisha Interview, MCD School 2: College

Research Partner: So what will happen because of that?

Aisha Interview, MCD School 2: (I) Will become something, from college I will get ... (a) certificate ... With which... If I want to become a teacher, I will show that first, they will ask questions from us and we will answer them and then we will get the job.

... 

Research Partner: Do you want to go to college?

Rani Interview, MCD School: Yes, Ma’am.

Research Partner: Why, what happens if you go to college? What happens if you study in college?

Rani Interview, MCD School: Ma’am, from here we study... Here, we study little of this and that and go. Ma’am, the job I want to do in the future the education for that is taught in college. Engineering, mechanical engineering how to repair machines these all of this is explained in college.

Despite knowing more than many other students, both students glossed over the potential obstacles that would inhibit their progress and instead presented a seamless path to their career of choice. Aisha acknowledged that she had not been doing well in her studies because until very recently she had not been ‘working hard’. Although she continued to struggle in school and considered herself ‘weak’ (scoring poorly in
class tests), she was convinced that she would still make it to college. Although Rani was a ‘high performer’ in school, her suggestion that you need to study ‘a little this a little that’ seemed to oversimplify the high levels of performance necessary to achieve a middle class professional occupation in India.

Although there has been a substantial increase in the number of college graduates in India, there has not been a commensurate rise in job opportunities (Jeffrey, 2010). Youth unemployment in India is high (30%) and the vast majority of graduates do not land professional middle class jobs but instead end up working in the informal sector (Jeffrey and Harriss, 2014). Aside from a small number of elite institutions, universities and colleges are often substandard and students graduate with qualifications that do not equip them for employment (Jeffrey and Harriss, 2014). It is only through exceptional levels of performance in Class 12 board exams and university entrance exams, that students are able to access they universities that will lead to their desired professions (Sancho, 2013).

Students at the Inspire English School showed greater awareness that the realisation of their aspirations would be difficult. Arjun and Bloom - two high performers at IES- suggested that the path to their future career would be very complicated:

**Research Partner:** What do you need to do to be a scientist?

**Arjun Interview, IES:** I have to study very hard and read about more things. I have to get a higher percentage for this so that I will try to do.

**Research Partner:** More percentage for what?

**Arjun Interview, IES:** When I will pass with good Marks… there is I think… I don’t know about much but I heard that in 12th class there is an option what to choose Medical or non-medical. So there is an exam and we have to get a percentage above 95.

**Research Partner:** How do you know all this?

**Arjun Interview, IES:** I remember… I don’t know but…

**Research Partner:** When the percentage is set at above 95 you think there’s a lot of competition?
Arjun Interview, IES: Yes, in big class (when we are older) it's very hard. Study is very hard so 95 is a very good mark.

Research Partner: Do the students compete against each other?

Arjun Interview, IES: Yes! If they do not get above 95 they have to take the exam again.

...

Research Partner: So, what do the students want to do?

Bloom Interview, IES: There are 37 students in our class and of 37 only few of them want to became something else and all of them want to be doctor. But it will be decided in the future because studying to become a doctor is hard.

Bloom and Arjun articulate the challenges associated with gaining a professional occupation in India. Rather than envisaging seamless progress, these students highlight the need for high levels of performance in order to succeed. Arjun demonstrates an awareness that he will have to ‘study hard… read about more things’ and ‘get a higher percentage’ because in Class 12 he needs to score in excess of ‘95%’. Appadurai (2013) argues that by using today’s norms to explore the future “more frequently and more realistically” and by sharing this “knowledge with one another more routinely than their poorer and weaker neighbours”, the privileged secure their advantage. The above extracts, indicate that knowledge of potential futures varies both within MCD schools and between MCD schools and the IES private school. At IES, students show a greater awareness of the steps necessary to achieve their future aspirations and the complications and challenges that await. These findings reflect Bourdieu’s assertion that there is a close alignment between objective probabilities and the subjective aspirations that are a central element of the habitus (Bourdieu, 1986).

However, students at IES- like those in MCD schools- still bought into the dream that through knowledge and education they had potentially limitless opportunities- if only they worked hard enough to ‘learn’ (more). Golu succinctly expressed the general sense of belief in the transformational potential of education that I found across the schools:
Golu Interview, IES: Sir, If we have the thinking to be a great man and an honest man and a learning man... So, we can do that- if we have The thinking or Imagination

Ben: Okay. So, if you imagine to be a great man then...

Golu Interview, IES: if we imagine... if we have the target of that. Then we have to do that only

Ben: And how do you become that person

Golu Interview, IES: So we have to study and learn from others and learn more things out of the books

Although Golu’s extract is perhaps an extreme example, a belief in the transformative power of ‘study’ was apparent across the primary schools in this study. These findings align with Sancho’s (2015, 2017) research- in secondary schools- demonstrating how a middle-class culture of education articulates hegemonic experiences, aspirations, and trajectories. While these hegemonic aspirations and trajectories were said to be unobtainable for many students, there was a general sense that these aspirations should be maintained- and were desirable. During one of my meetings with Professor Z. at NUEPA (who was supporting me with my fieldwork), I mentioned that I found that students in the schools had very high- apparently unrealistic- expectations about the opportunities that schooling (and university/college) would open up for them in the future. When, I suggested that this seemed unfair- akin to Berlant’s (2011) ‘cruel optimism’- the Professor looked concerned and responded by advising me to, ‘let the children have their dreams’ (Research Journal, October, 2015).

4.2.2 The Educated Child: The Importance of English

In the MCD government schools, students in the study were in the ‘English-medium section’ of the year group and at the Inspire English school, the whole school undertook their studies in English. Between MCD government schools and the IES, there were marked differences in the levels of English language fluency. While the students in the study at IES, could all hold conversations in English and studied the curriculum mainly in English, students in the MCD schools were unable to hold basic conversations in English- despite the curriculum being in English. The low levels of English language fluency in MCD schools were apparent not only in students’ inability
to hold conversations in English- and their ongoing requests that we teach them how to speak English (Research Journal, October, 2015)- but also in their day to day lessons. In each MCD school, lessons were undertaken in Hindi and English language versions of the textbooks were often substituted for Hindi versions. Even English lessons were undertaken in Hindi and were heavily revolved around copying from the board:

In the English lesson today, the boys (in MCD school 1) had been given the task of copying answers to questions that had been written on the board in to their books. As one boy went through the previous pages of his book I asked if I could see and noted that many of the previous pieces of work had taken a similar structure. When Vi asked students what particular English words and sentences that students had written meant in Hindi, students were unable to answer. The act of copying information from the board was commonplace. This was to my knowledge the main activity in the school. In the English lesson, the teacher spoke in Hindi but used some English words. Given how little they could speak English I wondered how they found copying all of this information in English down. It seemed to me to be a futile task. (Research Journal, September, 2015)

Students in MCD schools, acknowledged themselves that they often did not understand the meaning of English words- even if they could read them:

Research Partner: In English. Are you able to read it?
Kavita Interview, MCD School 1 Girls Shift: Yes ma’am.

Do you understand what is written?
Kavita Interview, MCD School 1 Girls Shift: No ma’am, I don’t understand some words.
The teacher makes one of read a single paragraph, then explains it to us.

Eshal Interview, MCD School 1 Girls’ Shift: She makes one student stand, he speaks and we repeat after him.

Research Partner: Ok .Then after that?
Eshal Interview, MCD School 1 Girls’ Shift: Then ma’am explains the English lessons, the Hindi lessons we understand ourselves.
In these extracts, students in MCD schools describe how they are able to read English words but have little understanding of the meaning of what has been said and require the teacher to tell them in Hindi. In contrast, at IES, many students were fluent in English, classes were generally undertaken in English—although the teacher would sometimes speak in Hindi— and a school rule was in place forbidding students from speaking any language except English while in school. For different reasons, English was a key element of students’ aspirations to become ‘educated’ in each of the three schools.

In MCD schools, a number of students and parents equated learning English improved employment opportunities and increased earnings:

**Research Partner:** Do you think is it important to learn English?
**Pankaj Interview, MCD school 1 Boys' Shift:** Yes.
**Research Partner:** Why?
**Pankaj Interview, MCD school 1 Boys' Shift:** Because it is very important to know English.
**Research Partner:** Why is it important to know English?
**Pankaj Interview, MCD school 1 Boys' Shift:** So that we talk to others.

**Research Partner:** So which one (subject) is most important?
**Manisha Interview, MCD School 1 Girls’ Shift:** English
**Research Partner:** Who told you that English is most important?
**Manisha Interview, MCD School 1 Girls’ Shift:** My friends say that study English.
**Research Partner:** Study English… What are the benefits of studying English? Those who know English what advantage do they have?
**Manisha interview, MCD School 1 Girls’ Shift:** They can do anything in English.
**Research Partner:** What?
**Manisha Interview, MCD School 1 Girls’ Shift:** They can get job.
…

Research Partner: …if your child learns English very well then do you think that he can get good job?

Pankaj’s Mother, Parent  FGD 1, MCD school 1  Boys’ Shift: They can earn more and get more opportunities or he/she can do work anywhere in any field. Like, if they want to job on medical shop there the prescription is also in English so there is no chance for Hindi?

…

Sonali’s Mother, Parent  FGD 1, MCD School 1  Boys’ Shift: Yes. We have problem to get promotion due to (a lack of) English.

While Pankaj seems to be uncertain exactly how English benefits him beyond being able to talk to others, Manisha imagines that by learning English students will be able to ‘do anything’. Pankaj’s mother suggests that by learning English, children will be able to work ‘anywhere in any field’. Through these extracts the perceived rewards of learning English appear to be either vague or overstated. However, exaggerated the claims may be, English has long been associated with better pay and employment opportunities in India (Fernandes, 2006; Ganguly-Scrase and Scrase, 2009). In the colonial and post-colonial era, proficiency in English was essential for professional success, and appointments in the colonial administration could only be obtained by those with the cultural capital- English language and professional qualifications- necessary for government posts (Nambissan, 2014; Ganguly-Scrase and Scrase, 2009, p.132). In recent years, new opportunities in the global labour market (international trade and outsourcing) have consolidated the importance of English language skills across class groups (Fernandes, 2006).

For students at IES, English was also considered as very important to students’ futures. While English was perceived to be important to future employment the emphasis was also placed on the role that English played in study:

Ben: Tell me about the most important subject in school, what is the most important subject?

Sneeha Interview, IES: English
Sneeha viewed English as the most important subject because it was only through English that she could learn other subjects. Nikhal’s mother also felt that by learning proper English students could study for themselves and engage in computing and technology. The notion that English was the language of learning was supported by the Vice-principal at IES who claimed that learning English at this young age (Class V) was essential because ‘80%’ of higher education was undertaken in English (Vice-Principal IES). English medium schooling was introduced during the colonial era when English medium universities and private schools- modelled on the tradition of British public schools- came to define a ‘good’ education (Nambissan, 2014). Although the Vice-principal acknowledged efforts had been made to implement Hindi medium courses at the tertiary level, he maintained that the bulk of study after high school in India was in English:

The Vice-principal suggests that English is a means to participate in the dominant knowledge systems that would eventually lead to employment opportunities (Fernandes, 2006). Research in India, indicates that knowledge of the English language provides financial rewards for workers (Azam, Chin, & Prakash, 2013).
However, whereas in the past, all workers, across education groups reaped the benefits of English language learning, it is now only the more educated among young workers who benefit- those with lower levels of education receive little or no benefit (Azam, Chin, & Prakash, 2013). By aspiring to learn English as a means to enhance opportunities for their present and future study, members of the school community at IES appear to show an awareness that English alone will not lead to economic reward but that it facilitates access to educational opportunities (that can lead to upward mobility).

Aside from study and employment, students viewed English as being important to their lives in other ways. In MCD school 2, Rani said that she wanted to learn to speak English because she felt it would enable her to communicate with people when she travelled overseas or when overseas visitors came to India:

**Research Partner:** Do you like English?

**Rani Interview, MCD School 2:** Yes, Ma’am.

**Research Partner:** Why?

**Rani Interview, MCD School 2:** Ma’am, it’s good to write in that, English is also spoken in many countries that’s why we can go anywhere and study like if we study it, we can speak anywhere, we can go anywhere.

Rani viewed English not as her language but as an ‘international language’ that is spoken overseas and that would facilitate communication for her when she travels. During our discussion with parents in MCD school 2, they made similar claims:

**Ankur’s Mother, Parent FGD, MCD school 2:** Yes. Because English operates as a universal language so it’s easy to communicate when we go outside the country.
For these members of the MCD school communities, English was viewed as a means to participate in globalisation and be a part of global society. Despite their desire to speak English, it tended to be viewed as something that was ‘foreign’- useful for certain jobs, travel and interaction with ‘foreign’ visitors but not part of their everyday lives.

Rather than viewing English as a ‘foreign’ language- as students in MCD schools did- some students at IES felt that English had become the most important language in India. Bloom, a student at IES, claimed that there had now been a generational change in India in which English had become important and Hindi less so:

**Ben:** So do you not like Hindi so much now?

**Bloom, Student FGD 1, IES:** In our generation Hindi is not so important English is important?

**Ben:** Why is that?

**Bloom, Student FGD 1, IES:** Because if someone don’t know English they make fun of them… and in schools also and in higher jobs they speak English only.

**Ben:** So if people can’t speak English people tease them?

**Bloom, Student FGD 1, IES:** They don’t tease them they just laugh on them make their fun that he or she doesn’t know English can’t speak English

**Ben:** What do you think of that?

**Bloom, Student FGD 1, IES:** I think that if somebody don’t know English so he or she must know about it or they must ask from their parents or their cousin brother sister or their friends.

Despite the fact that, Hindi was the first language of most members of the community, Bloom insisted that those that did not speak English must learn it. According to Bloom, those that failed to learn English were destined to be marginalised. During a group discussion with students at IES, they presented Hindi as rather archaic and unnecessarily complicated in comparison to English:
Ben: So do you like government schools?
All: No!

Michael, Student FGD 1, Because they teach Science in Hindi
IES:
Roshni, Student FGD 1, Not just Science, Maths also.
IES:
Michael, Student FGD 1, (says some scientific terms in Hindi)
IES:
All Students: Laughing

Golu, Student FGD 1, The government schools also...
IES:
Ben: What are you laughing at? Tell me I don’t understand?

Michael, Student FGD 1, See there are three laws of Newton. I know the last one. Every action has an opposite reaction. In Hindi they say, (says the last law in Hindi)!
IES:
All: Laughing

Nikhil, Student FGD 1, Pure Hindi. Pure Hindi.
IES:
Ben: Why is that funny?
Bloom, Student FGD 1, Hindi is very hard, very hard.
IES:
All: Yes

Michael, Student FGD 1, Hindi Hard
IES:
All: (talking over each other)
Bloom, Student FGD 1, In Hindi we say matra and in English we say…
IES:
Michael, Student FGD 1, Just letters there are no Matras.
IES:
Bloom, Student FGD 1, Because of these in Hindi it is tough.
IES:
Sneeha, Student FGD 1, and if we don’t put one dot…
IES:
All: Hahaha.

Nikhil, Student FGD 1, The sentence is wrong.
IES:
In these extracts, students present the English language versions of (mathematical and scientific) words as the proper/correct versions. Michael’s mockery of Hindi vocabulary and the amusement that students derived from it suggests that students found something odd - or even slightly ridiculous- about the use of ‘proper Hindi’. In their criticisms of Hindi, students in some ways echo colonial discourses within which English was positioned as the language of learning- and knowledge of Western scientific and literary canons was equated with ‘civilised’ status (Luke et al, 2011). Students differentiate between the ‘pure’ Hindi of their Hindi classes and the everyday Hindi that they use with friends and families. However, their criticisms mark ‘pure’ Hindi as an irrelevance and English emerges as a language is naturalised and considered relevant and contemporary. Hindi is viewed as being relevant to vernacular government schools- and lower class students- whereas English is viewed as the language of the students in the middle class and private schools. During a parent group discussion at IES, several parents made similar claims, suggesting that they were not able to fully engage in their middle class lifestyles because they did not know English. These parents complained that in airports and public places they were often excluded:

**Nikhil’s Mother, Parent FGD 2, IES:** Whenever we take children to some good places, they speak English and we can’t. Children many times also tell the meaning of a thing. So along with them we also sometimes try to understand.

For these families at IES, an inability to speak English presented problems in their daily lives- problems that they anticipated would be overcome if their children were to learn English. Their inability to do so left them cut off from certain ‘good places’ and unable to socialise with the people that frequented them. This concerns along with Bloom’s descriptions of students being ‘laughed at’ for not being able to speak English, meant that among these ‘middle class’ families, knowledge of the English language was considered to be essential to their current lifestyles. Since colonial rule, English has long been associated with upper-middle class status (Fernandes, 2006). At IES, English is viewed as an essential form of cultural capital that ‘can be
transformed into social and economic capital’ (Fernandes, 2006, p.69). Fernandez (2006, p. 69) argues that English language is not a ‘transparent medium for the expression of a predefined class identity’ but instead ‘the distinctiveness of the middle class identity is constituted by language’.

Two teachers in MCD school 1, suggested that pressures to get ahead, to realise aspirations drove the study of English language and at the same time led to the stratification of society along language lines:

**Class IV Ma’am, FGD, MCD School 1 Girls Shift:**

It’s optional like, they have Punjabi also but they want to learn English because of the rat race. They should learn English, the Official Language, but only after a certain level of brain development has taken place. Then you can see that the results will be better.

**Ben:**

Where’s the pressure to learning English coming from? Is that coming from primary schools or parents or government or everybody?

**Class IV Ma’am, FGD, MCD School 1 Girls Shift:**

Government, the private schools, everybody. The teaching of English should be made from the upper primary stages. Everything, the whole scenario, even the private schools should not be allowed to teach it. So that all the children will be at par with everybody and they can learn in their own language where they are more comfortable. So there’s a big divide between the curriculum and objectives of the private schools and the government schools which should not be there.

In this extract, the teachers suggest that the desire for English language was now ubiquitous. They suggest that the ‘curriculum and objectives’ of the private sector have driven the prevalence of English language learning and that this has intensified pressure on young people to learn English. Between MCD schools and the Inspire English School, there are marked differences both in the reasons that students aspire to speak English and in their present ability to do so. Students at the IES were already fluent in English or were well on their way to being fluent. In contrast students in MCD schools were unable to speak even very basic sentences in English. Tollefson (2000, p. 9) argues that for those who ‘already speak English… the economic value of the
language translates directly into greater opportunities in education, business and employment’. In contrast for students that have to learn English, and ‘who do not have access to high-quality English language education, the spread of English presents a formidable obstacle to education, employment and other activities requiring English proficiency’ (Tollefson, 2000, p. 9). As the ubiquity of aspirations for English in the present study suggests, the centrality of English to upward mobility in India ensures that aspirations and hopes for a better future are always caught up with the English language (Ramanathan, 2005).

4.2.3 The Educated Child

In their aspirations to ‘become something’, students converged around universal notions of the college graduate, English speaking ‘educated child’ (Hopkins & Sriprakash, 2015). It was by obtaining middle class cultural capital (especially English language and test scores) that students imagined transforming their circumstances and fulfilling their aspirations. Students’ aspirations echoed global and national (neoliberal) discourses of ‘aspiration’ that have foregrounded the imperative of investing in human capital in order to achieve increased social mobility (Raco, 2009)-see section 4.3. Students aspirations emphasised the power of individual achievement and attitude and argued that responsibility for future outcomes was with the individual and the extent to which they could ‘think’ or imagine their future and then work hard for it. These discourses of aspiration appeared to narrow students possible imagined futures and in terms college education and English language learning. In the case of IES, this led students to prioritise English as the contemporary, cosmopolitan language and position Hindi as archaic or outdated. While students’ aspirations reflected the individual, active, self-reliant ‘enterprising self’ of neoliberalism (Gooptu, 2014; Sancho, 2016), they also expressed a commitment to collective ‘doings and beings’, especially in relation to the family (Watts and Bridge, 2006). These findings at the primary/elementary school level build on previous studies that demonstrate how college graduates (Jeffrey, Jeffrey & Jeffrey, 2008) and secondary students (Sancho, 2015) conform in their aspirations for education and view it as a key means to middle class lifestyles.

While students across schools conformed in their aspirations, there were marked differences in their understanding of why they wanted to achieve these imagined
futures. This can be understood through the concept of habitus in which the middle class students are more attuned to the field of education and aware of the challenges that they will face in their pursuit of educational and cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 65). Despite viewing ‘college’ as essential to their future, some students in MCD schools either knew very little about secondary or higher education or had unrealistic expectations about their future progress through the education system. Similarly, despite low-levels of English proficiency, students in MCD schools prioritised learning English but had more distance from the language and expressed a limited understanding of why it was important.

It is possible to interpret these aspirations as mere fantasies, with little relation to students’ future realities. Berlant’s theory of “cruel optimism” highlights how we often form injurious attachments to fantasies of the good life that are never likely to materialise (Berlant, 2011). Yet, given the number of substandard institutions available at the tertiary level in India, it is possible that students would have easy access to college in the future but that the qualifications that they obtained would not necessarily result in them achieving their desired professions (Harriss and Jeffrey, 2014). Similarly, the fact that within MCD school communities a small number of students had parents who had migrated for work overseas (to Persian Gulf countries such as the UAE), meant that it was not unrealistic to imagine that students would travel overseas and need to speak English if they followed suit in the future.

While some students’ aspirations for future success through education could be characterised as ‘fantasies’, they would be best described as “vague hopes” in that they embodied, “a loosely-stated goal or set of goals, largely untethered from current activities and decision-making” (Reeves, 2014). This was exemplified by students like Aisha and Rani- who showed greater knowledge of the higher education system (and what it would take to fulfil their future aspirations) - but made rather vague statements about what was necessary for future success (‘a little of this, a little of that’). It was around this point- the extent to which students’ current lives and activities connected with their future goals- that students in MCD schools and the private school, IES differed.

At the IES, students had a clearer view of secondary and college education and the obstacles that potentially lay in their path. This greater awareness- of the highly competitive nature of the school field- meant that students were how their present
actions affected future outcomes and they were already engaged in activities to realise their aspirations. Appadurai (2013) suggests that culture should be viewed as future orientated given that the privileged manage to secure greater benefits through their enhanced capacity to navigate the future. They have a sense of control over their future, see it beginning here and now, and constructed in accordance with their aspirations (Appadurai, 2013).

In their research of post-16 aspirations of boys in Australia, Kenway and Hickey-Moody (2011) show how all students employed “strategies” to envisage their post-school lives yet only the middle class students had the “aerial vision” that allowed them to navigate the school system successfully. They argue that ‘strategies’ are a tool of the powerful whereas ‘tactics are the ‘art of the weak’ (Kenway & Hickey-Moody, 2011). ‘Similarly, here, I found that students’ at IES adopted strategies which would enable them to grasp temporally available opportunity whereas students in MCD schools invested in hope or at best adopted ‘tactics’. Yet, the fact that students at IES were engaged in strategies- revolved around learning English and achieving high levels of academic performance- was no guarantee of their future success. Sancho (2015) and Gilbertson (2016) have both found that within the upper-middle class field of schooling in urban India ‘exposure’ or ‘open-mindedness’ (to other/cosmopolitan cultural knowledge) is a key form of capital. The upper middle classes tend to mock the lower middle classes for their obsession with ‘book learning’ and test scores. Even though middle class students at IES have adopted strategies to secure their future aspirations, for most students these are unlikely to be enough in a highly stratified and highly competitive educational field.

4.3 Normative Middle Class Subjects: The Politics of Aspiration

In their high levels of aspiration for university qualifications/English language, and their perception that education is central to ‘becoming’, students’ incorporate their aspirations in to a ‘social imaginary of neoliberal globalisation. A social imaginary is ‘a way of thinking shared in a society by ordinary people, the common understandings that make everyday practice possible, giving them sense and legitimacy’ (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010, p. 34). In the neoliberal imaginary, high aspirations are connected with self-capitalisation which is thought to result from rational market behaviour, including
a commitment to education in order to improve employment prospects (Sellar, 2013). In Section 2.2, I described how economic liberalisation, India’s emergence as a knowledge society and the rise of human capital theory, has seen the growth of enterprise culture in India (Gooptu, 2014; Sancho, 2015). Gooptu (2013, p. 7) argues that India is now ‘imagined as a nation of individual enterprising people’. The establishment of a market ethic in India has enabled the logics of enterprise to permeate forms of human conduct (Gooptu, 2014).

In their focus on ‘becoming’ through education, students’ aspirations reflected neoliberal discourses that viewed individual success as the result of how extensively individuals invested in themselves (Becker, 2006, p. 292). In order for the market rationality of neoliberalism to succeed, individuals needed to act with an entrepreneurial competitive logic of self-maximisation in all contexts. As a result, aspiration has now become an important site of contemporary governmentally and social policy has increasingly focused on ‘aspirational citizens’ who take responsibility for improving themselves, their communities and, ultimately, their nation (Foucault, 2000; Raco, 2009).

In contrast to the welfare state ‘politics of expectation’ and its emphasis on state-sponsored redistribution, the politics of aspiration assumes that the potential of consumer-citizens is a means to economic productivity and social mobility. Raco (2009) argues that this is a form of ‘existential politics’ in which ‘dominant social values are defined and institutionalised’. Policies orientated towards aspiration divide society into those who aspire appropriately and those who do not while at the same time determining a limited number of desires as ‘aspirational’ (Sellers, 2013). In the neoliberal imaginary, aspirations to pursue self-maximisation through education and subsequent advancement through labour market opportunities are deemed to be self-evidently ‘high’ (Sellers, 2013).

Students appeared to subscribe to notions of aspirational citizenship - where students take responsibility for their own development (and state goals) - and they articulated this not only through their own high levels of aspirations but the intense criticism that they directed at students who did not work hard or ‘study’ in school:
Research Partner: If they’re not studying in school, what happens to these students?

Rani Interview, MCD School 2: Ma’am, when they grow up then they will have difficulty in working and they will not be able to read. If someone sends letter, they will make other’s read, and they will not be able to read.

Research Partner: And what work will they do? People who don’t study what work do they do?

Rani Interview, MCD School 2: Ma’am, they do mopping for others in the bigger houses, some are farmers, Ma’am like these many things.

…

Research Partner: Do you know what will happen to these students (that don’t work hard), what will they do?

Aisha Interview, MCD School 2: Mam, they will not be able to do anything.

Research Partner: How will they earn money?

Aisha Interview, MCD School 2: Mam they work like sweeping, cleaning… picking the litter and they take money for that.

Ben: Do you think will happen to Students that don’t study?

Rocky Interview, IES: In future, they get the bad things.

Ben: what?

Rocky Interview, IES: like garbage collector

Ben: Okay…

Rocky Interview, IES: If they don't study and always play and they always say bad words.

Ben: What about the others?

Rocky Interview, IES: The one who studies and works hard he will make engineer or astronaut or teacher.

Within narratives of aspirational citizenship, those who do not act in ways that demonstrate their commitment to the pursuit of aspirations are perceived to lack the information required to appreciate the benefits of self-capitalising behaviour, or, more simplistically, to be lazy and recalcitrant citizen-consumers who are destined for
miserable futures (Sellars, 2013). These students’ claim that a failure to engage with education and study hard would lead to a life of ‘bad things’. ‘Cleaning’, ‘sweeping’ and ‘picking litter’ were deemed to be characteristic of inferior work and symptomatic of a failure to become ‘educated’. Despite the fact that the parents of children in MCD schools undertook some of these jobs, students suggested that they were shameful jobs reserved only for those that couldn’t anything else. Furthermore, these students suggest that it is the bad behaviour of students that leads them to a ‘bad future’. Rather than being a structural or socioeconomic issue, students view poverty as something that is the responsibility of the subject. This reflects neoliberal notions of meritocracy where success is dependent upon the hard work and talent of the individual. While this simplistic account of poverty may be due to the students’ age, it also appeared to be a result of normative notions of (middle class) citizenship- as discussed in Chapter 5.

Scholars have shown how these constructions of the ‘poor child’ serve to locate individuals outside of normative citizen-subjecthood and ensure that he/she is positioned ‘as a governable subject in need of reform’ (Sriprakash, 2015, p. 153). The aspirational forms of citizenship drawn upon by students appear to define the ideal “human” self in accordance with a ‘urban, bourgeois, class-specific worldview’. The data suggests that students’ imagined themselves as a middle class normative citizen-subject in the making. This led students to be critical of livelihoods that they considered to be ‘inferior’ even if- in the case of students in MCD schools- that included the livelihoods of their own/their peers’ parents. In doing so, students in MCD schools made their own past and present realities inferior (Balagopalan, 2008, p.281). For students in the study, the transition from childhood to adulthood was frequently said to culminate in the realisation of normative citizen subjecthood- the acquisition of middle class professions and lifestyles. In the following section, I highlight how students’ aspirations to ‘become’ the normative citizen-subject were shaped by social, economic and cultural factors.

4.3.1 Normative Middle Class Subjects: Middle Class Professions & Lifestyles

Despite their different backgrounds, students converged around the notion that ‘becoming something’ meant obtaining a middle class professional career. One group
of students in an MCD government school explained that the ultimate aim of ‘becoming’ through employment was at the centre of their lives and everything that was important to them depended upon it:

Research Partner: What is the most important thing in life?
Aisha, FGD 1, MCD School 2: Study.
Research Partner: What else?
Dinesh, Aisha, MCD School 2: Family.
Research Partner: Family and what?
Dinesh, FGD 1, MCD School 2: Family, study, job, home, money and car. We get all this by job only.

In this extract, students express a both a relational and an individual notion of becoming, prioritizing both family and study as they aspire for job in which they can ‘get’ all of these things. Aligning with research in the UK, students in the study aspired for professional occupations, including becoming a teacher, doctor, scientist or police person (St Clair et al, 2013; Archer et al, 2013). During the colonial and post-independence era, professional occupations (doctors, teachers and engineers) provided a means to gain entry to the Indian middle class (Fernandes, 2006). Graduates of the colonial and post-independence system of education came to occupy ‘strategic positions in the economy and state machine’ as well as the best professional positions (Nambissan, 2013). As a result, middle-class professional occupations (doctor, engineer, lawyer) have long been sought after as they are perceived to be a means to achieve upward mobility (Fernandes, 2006).

Table 4.1: Class V students’ career aspirations by school and gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MCD Schools (Boys)</th>
<th>MCD Schools (Girls)</th>
<th>Private School (IES) Boys</th>
<th>Private School (IES) Girls</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Police (3)</td>
<td>Teacher (7)</td>
<td>Scientist (3)</td>
<td>Doctor (3)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Soldier (3)</td>
<td>Unsure (3)</td>
<td>Engineer (1)</td>
<td>Teacher (1)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Doctor (2)</td>
<td>Doctor (1)</td>
<td>Soldier (1)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pilot (2)</td>
<td>Pilot (1)</td>
<td>Teacher (1)</td>
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Table 4.1 illustrates the classed and gendered nature of aspirations among students in the two MCD schools and the Inspire English School. Gender has been found to structure career aspirations for young people where girls aspire for feminised occupations and boys more traditionally masculine occupations (Furlong and Biggart, 1999). It is difficult to make generalisations given the small number of students in the study- especially the number of girls and boys at IES. Rather than viewing these choices as representative of other students in the school, career aspirations reflected the particular careers that students in the study aspired for. Girls tended to aspire to two main careers- teaching and being a doctor- both of which are associated with caring and helping. Recent research in the UK in to women’s educational aspirations has found that they are higher than men’s (Reynolds and Burge 2008), and that their aspirations have increased and diversified, albeit while still be directed towards stereotypically feminine jobs (Francis 2002; Shu and Marini 1998, 2008). Interestingly, girls in government schools tended to aspire to the more accessible lower middle class job of teaching whereas girls in the private school were more interested in middle or upper middle class professions (doctor). Boys across the schools aspired for traditionally male dominated jobs such as law enforcement, the military, science and engineering. Boys in government schools tended to aspire for more accessible middle class jobs- including the police and the military- whereas boys in the Inspire English School tended to pursue upper middle class professions in science or engineering.

Whereas students in MCD schools tended to aspire for only one profession, several students at IES often had a back up profession that they would follow if their dream profession didn’t materialise (Archer et al. 2010; Brown 2011; Allen and Hollingworth 2013). For example, Bloom aspired to become a doctor but realised that it was very hard and had made plans to become a teacher if it didn’t work out. Similarly, Rocky wanted to be a cricket player or join the army or become a businessman. In each school, a number of students’ expressed their future career aspirations in relation to

<table>
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<th>MCD Schools (Boys)</th>
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<th>Private School (IES) Boys</th>
<th>Private School (IES) Girls</th>
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<tr>
<td>Business Owner (1)</td>
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<td>Unsure (4)</td>
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a strong sense of loyalty, indebtedness and obligation to their family. This was apparent in students’ pledges to earn money for their parents:

Ben: Why do you think studies are important?
Roshni Interview, IES: When I grow up I will keep my own house and own my duties and keep my mother and father in my house. I will work in an office and earn money and I will give my mother and father half of it…
Ben: So you will give half of your money to your parents?
Roshni Interview IES: Yes. I will become a doctor and do that.

…

Research Partner: Once you are old enough to earn money on what will you spend your money on?
Sumit, MCD school 1 Boys’ Shift: My first salary I will give it to my father
Research Partner: You will give to your father? what else will you do?

Sumit, MCD school 1 Boys’ Shift: Ma’am I will buy something’s,
Research Partner: For whom?
Sumit, MCD school 1 Boys’ Shift: Will buy things for home for mother.
…
Research Partner: Do you want to do something for your mother?

Mohan, MCD School 2: Ma’am, I want to keep her happy, earn money and feed her by earning..

…
Research Partner: What do your parents want you to do?
Satish, FGD 2, MCD School 1 Boys’ Shift: they teach us so that when we grow old, we can fulfil all their desires.
Research Partner: so that you…?
Satish, FGD 2, MCD School 1 Boys’ Shift: Fulfil their desires.
The group of boys in the MCD school, perhaps with a hint of resentment, constructed themselves as future subjects who would fulfil their parents’ wishes, ambitions and ‘desires’. For other students, their obligations to their family entailed giving their parents their ‘first salary’, ‘half’ of their income and ensuring that they had a place to stay. While neoliberal individualism, fosters individual initiative, individual effort and individual aspiration, here I find that students are driven by wider concerns about their family (Davies, 2015). This suggests that- for some students-individual aspirations are driven by a sense of duty and obligation to their family. Within the neoliberal meritocracy, young people are positioned as being free to decide where they want their talents and hard work to take them (Baars, 2017). However, the data seemed to suggest that in reality, for these students, ‘high aspirations’ entailed the pursuit of a limited number of middle class professional occupations that in many cases would be of future benefit to their family (Hopkins & Sriprakash, 2015; Baars, 2017)

4.3.2 Normative Middle Class Subjects: Gendered Lifestyles, Consumption and Family Obligations

Alongside middle class professions, students also expressed aspirations for consumption-orientated middle-class lifestyles. Across the schools, students equated study with employment and wealth. For some students, this led to the anticipation of the lifestyles associated with wealthy urban Indians such as those used in advertising/marketing campaigns for modern, luxury housing and a range of consumer goods (Jeffrey, 2010, p.8). By expressing these tastes and preferences the students adopted the ‘cultural standards… associated with liberalisation and the opening of the Indian market to the global economy’ (Fernandes, 2000, p.3). A number of students anticipated being able to buying consumer goods in the future:

Dinesh Interview, MCD School 2: ma’am, this is when I will be big I will buy a car.
Research Partner: which car will you buy?
Dinesh Interview, MCD School 2: BMW.
Research Partner: Have you seen it?
Dinesh Interview, MCD School 2: Yes ma’am.
Research Partner: Where?
Dinesh Interview, MCD School 2: I have seen them on the roads. They have an opening top.
Research Partner: Why do you want only a BMW?
Dinesh Interview, MCD School 2: Because they are very powerful.

Ben: What about the car why did you take a picture of the car?
Arjun Interview, IES: It is my ambition to get a big car. A new car.
Ben: Why do you want a new car?
Arjun Interview, IES: Stylish...

Nikhil Interview, IES: I want I will buy a car. A BMW.
Ben: Why?
Nikhil Interview, IES: It is very good and it has the touch screen things It has the mobile also.
Ben: Where have you seen a BMW?
Nikhil Interview, IES: In television ad. It costs 50 Lakh.

These boys in both MCD school 2 and IES, aspire for (western) cars because of the status associated with owning such a car. For these boys a car appeals for different reasons- for Dinesh it is the power of the car, for Arjun it is the thought of looking ‘stylish’ and for Nikhil it is the price tag and technology that appeals. The boys are united in their desire to acquire something that will say something about who they are, that will enhance their status and identity. For similar reasons, Dinesh also wanted to have ‘servants’ work in his house when he was older and Rocky wanted a big house:

Research Partner: Then, how do you know that there are servants to work in house?
Dinesh Interview, MCD School 2: I have seen on television.
Research Partner: Or your mother told you?

Dinesh Interview, MCD School 2: No, I have seen on television.

... Rocky Interview, Inspire English School: I want a big house. When I'm having money I will buy a big house.
Ben: Why do you want to Big House?

Rocky Interview, Inspire English School: I like it it's our shaan (Pride). It looks nice that someone is living in a big house he is having money.
Research Partner: Is it good when people have money?

Rocky Interview, Inspire English School: Yes.

By obtaining big houses and flashy Western cars, these boys imagined developing the symbolic and cultural capital conveyed in media images of the Indian (and global) middle class (Fernandes, 2011). Expressing these tastes and preferences the students adopted the ‘cultural standards... associated with liberalisation and the opening of the Indian market to the global economy’ (Fernandes, 2000, p.3). While it was mostly a number of boys who expressed a desire for individualistic consumer goods and cosmopolitan lifestyles such as cars, nice clothes, holidays and ‘servants’, Bloom and Sneeha- two girls in the private school (IES)- were passionate about fashion and wanted to be ‘just like Barbie’ (Bloom Interview, IES; Sneeha Interview, IES). The data demonstrates that for Dinesh, Gopal and Bloom, television played an important role in directing their aspirations. Global media systems convey a broad set of ideas about how societies and their institutions are best organised and governed, and how human sociality is and should be constituted (Gooptu, 2014; Lewis and Martin, 2015). Drawing on neoliberal discourses, advertising and televisual media convey a form of possessive individualism through the promotion of middle class consumer lifestyles (Gooptu, 2014). From a neoliberal perspective, market values and metrics can be applied to every sphere of life and human relations are constructed
largely economic terms. For these students, consumption-based lifestyles played an important role in shaping their identities and aspirations. However, rather than engaging with the rampant individualism associated with neoliberalism in the context of the UK (Fuchs, 2016), students’ aspirations were also typically focused on providing and caring for their families:

Research Partner: When you get good money, what will happen?
Kambi Interview, MCD School 2: With that we will get a nice house, nice car, wear nice clothes, will keep our Parents in a nice house, we will buy everything nice.

Kambi’s individualistic aspirations for a cosmopolitan, middle-class lifestyle are expressed alongside a more collective desire to ‘keep’ his ‘parents in a nice house’. As this suggests, the pursuit of consumer goods and middle-class lifestyles came alongside aspirations relating to the family. Especially for girls in MCD schools, the data seemed to suggest that their aspirations were less individualistic and also directed towards family obligations. Archana in MCD school 1, hoped only for a small house in the future that would be able her to live comfortably with her family:

Research Partner: So you said it was important to have a good house?
Archana Interview, MCD School 1 Girls’ Shift: Yes
Research Partner: A big house? Or a small house?
Archana Interview, MCD School 1 Girls’ Shift: That will do.
Research Partner: Or should it be beautiful house?
Archana Interview, MCD School 1 Girls’ Shift: A small house will do.
Research Partner: Who will live in that house?
Archana Interview, MCD School 1 Girls’ Shift: My family.
Research Partner: Who all are there in the family?
Archana Interview, MCD School 1 Girls’ Shift:
Archana Interview, MCD School 1 Girls’ Shift:

Archana’s modest aspirations, are in marked contrast to the desires expressed by some boys in each school and some girls in the IES (private school). Although Aisha— and other girls from one of the MCD schools— had aspirations for ‘a very big house’, like Archana, she wanted a house in which she could ‘live properly’ with her family. Her frustration with her current living conditions in small, two-room accommodation meant that she wanted something much bigger:

Research Partner: House… what kind of house do you live in now?
Aisha Interview, MCD School 2: Mam rented
Research Partner: Is it small?
Aisha Interview, MCD School 2: Yes
Research Partner: What kind of house do you want when you grow up?
Aisha Interview, MCD School 2: A very big house
Research Partner: What kind?
Aisha Interview, MCD School 2: Mam it should have 4 buildings, I should be able to live properly, there should be playing area for the kids, also for study, like (the house) where they teach you tuition… like that.

In both cases, students’ aspirations appear to be driven by a desire to improve their material circumstances. Archana’s desire for a ‘small’ house that will enable her family to live together suggests that she is only interested in a bigger house for functional purposes. Similarly, Aisha wants a house in which she can ‘live properly’ rather than
show off to others. These extracts suggest that while students converge around a desire for middle class lifestyles, there are differences in the way that students do so. While boys appear to express individualistic consumption based aspirations-alongside aspirations for the ‘good’ of the family- girls’ aspirations appear to be more closely aligned with the best interests of the family. This differed between middle class and working class girls, where middle class girls were more likely to express and engage in individualistic consumption practices. Chatterjee (1990) argues that the connection between women and family, and men and individualism emerged during the colonial era. Nationalism constructed the so-called private, domestic sphere as the ‘interior’ of the nation. By engaging in the public sphere of colonial society men compromised traditional values and practices. It was therefore the duty of women to maintain tradition and religion by passing on ‘Indian’ values, practices and traditions within the domestic sphere (Chatterjee, 1990). This domestic sphere was the cultural/spiritual essence of the nation existed and which had to be protected by all means from the external Western impurities. Through this process, a distinction evolved between the domestic and public sphere with women associated with the former and men the latter (Chatterjee, 1990).

Following global and national efforts to promote gender equality - including the MDGs- and the proliferation of new (consumer) citizen identities, girls in the study were engaged in new opportunities (schooling) and the construction of new identities. However, the data seemed to suggest that, in MCD schools, girls’ aspirations for future lifestyles remained tightly focused on the collective interests of the family, whereas boys- across all schools- and some girls at the IES appeared to have greater freedom to engage in individual consumer-based aspirations and identities.

Students’ classed and gendered identities appeared to be shaped by global cultural and educational discourses (framed by neoliberalism) that promote individualism over collectivism and markets over the state (Appadurai, 1996; Unterhalter, 2007). However, the data also demonstrates that local ‘traditions’ and ‘norms’ play a central role in determining the way in which these discourses are taken up. A number of scholars have explored the tension between individualism and collectivism following economic liberalisation in India (Radhakrishnan, 2011; Oza, 2012; Gooptu, 2014; Gilbertson, 2013). These scholars have suggested that individuals are expected to balance cosmopolitanism and modernity with familial and community obligations
(Donner, 2008; Oza, 2012). Women in particular, have faced increased pressure to exist and move between two cultural worlds- taking on the responsibility of being modern without neglecting the traditional (Radhakrishnan, 2011; Oza, 2012; Gilbertsons, 2013). Gilbertson (2016) suggests that among different lower class groups, women are under greater pressure to conform to notions of respectability- whereas higher status groups have greater freedom to engage in cosmopolitan culture/lifestyles. This can help to explain the gendered differences that students’ expressed in their aspirations for middle class professions and lifestyles.

4.3.3 Normative Middle Class Subjects: Gendered Futures

In a focus group discussion with parents in MCD school 2, echoing the ‘boy turn’ (Epstein et al, 1998; Francis, 2006; Jones & Myhill, 2004), they claimed that girls were now doing better than boys in school:

**Pooja’s Mother, FGD 1, MCD School 2:** Nowadays girls are more successful than boys

**Research Partner:** Do you think that a girl child has to gain the same knowledge as boys?

**Pooja’s Mother, FGD 1, MCD School 2:** We think girls are studying more than boys and girls also have an interest to learn more. Boys do not have much interest to gain knowledge- he is focused on other things not on his study. Suppose if anyone comes with a proposal of marriage and they ask- what about your boys education? we say (he studied until) 10th (class)... and what about your girl’s (education) and we said 12th or 14th... nowadays boys have an education like 5,6,7,8(Class) but girls have studied no less than 12th class.

The binarisation of boys and girls in the MDGs has been highlighted as problematic given that it reduces ‘girls’ and ‘boys’ simple categories of difference and over looks intersections with other inequalities (Schofield, 2004; Connell, 2010). Parents’ suggestions that girls were now doing better reflects global development discourses of ‘can-do’ in which girls are positioned as uniquely capable of changing the community and nation (Khoja-Moolji, 2015). In this sense, gender identity is linked to academic
achievement (Jones and Myhill, 2004). The parents’ suggestion that girls are generally more successful than boys is supported by the latest results in Class 12 CBSE exams, the national education board for secondary and senior secondary education, in which girls out performed boys (88.60 % to 81.10 % respectively). However, as the extract suggests, education for girls and boys in MCD schools was directly correlated with future concerns about marriage. Research has shown that rising levels of education for girls is posing a problem for Indian families because Indian men typically marry women that are less - not more- educated than themselves. This means that girls’ families have to pay a higher dowry for a more educated partner (Borah, 2008). This issue looks set to continue into the future given that by 2050, over one fourth (26 percent) of all women aged 20-39 are projected to complete tertiary education compared to 23 percent of men in those ages (Samir et al 2010). In MCD schools, marital norms and concerns about dowry appeared to lead to a fundamental divide in the way that parents understood education for boys and girls.

Although a girls’ education was aspired for, it was done so with recognition that at some point in the future she would leave the family home and join her husband’s family. As a result, some parents suggested that boys were educated for their future economic role whereas girls were educated so that they could cope with and perform their domestic duties more effectively:

Aarti’s Mother, FGD 1, MCD School 2:

but now educating a girl is equally important. They will be doing household (work) all their lives but at present their education is a priority. (Our) Son will definitely study but it is important that the girl is educated. She has to go to another family after marriage and with education she will not be dependent on others for her needs and can support herself. It is more important to give education to girls.

For this parent, in MCD school 2, girls needed to be educated because they would leave their own family to join their in-laws and they needed to be independent and self-sufficient. Being self-sufficient did not mean going out in to the world and looking for work but meant being able to read and write and contend with the challenges of an unknown household. The parent’s suggestion that the son would ‘definitely study but
it is important that the girl is educated’ implies a sense of inevitability about boy’s schooling and whereas a girl’s education remains uncertain. For a group of mother’s in MCD schools, the failure of their own parents to ensure that they were educated was a source of ongoing frustration:

Research Partner: So when you were young what was the reason that you did not study?

Pankaj’s Mother, FGD 1, MCD School 1 Boy’s Shift: How could we study when our elders did not pay attention to it?

Research Partner: That’s what I am saying that no-one in your family cared that a girl should be educated?

Vikram’s Mother, FGD 1, MCD School 1 Boys Shift: Earlier it was like this only. Now even those who do not have money for food, they also want their child to get educated.

Saif’s Mother, FGD 1, MCD School 1 Boys Shift: They did not give any importance to girls education

Research Partner: …They did not think it was important?

Saif’s Mother, FGD 1, MCD School 1 Boys Shift: The way they thought was wrong.

For these mothers the sense of dependency and disadvantage that they felt in their own lives- due to a lack of education- impacted upon their desire for girls to be educated. Their own experiences and suffering seemed to lead them to want a better future for girls were they would not have to rely on others and could cope with the demands of modern life on their own. This entailed a particular concern that girls should be literate, given the challenges that illiteracy had posed to these mothers:

Research Partner: …What all problems do you face?
There are a lot of problems. Like even to catch a bus I am not able to read the bus number and then if I have to read something, someone else helps me to read out… like this… So, many other problems.

Parents in these schools wanted their children to gain independence and to be able to confidently navigate their future lives - take buses, read information, engage with others- in a way that they themselves had been unable to. Education, then, was essential to survival in the modern world:

Their future will not be dark. If they are educated, they can go anywhere and survive and its true for both boys and girls. Earlier, people just cared about food but now there is more emphasis on education.

In MCD schools, the emphasis on survival and independence appeared to have special relevance to girls who- as the parents suggest- have historically been marginalised from education and society. These extracts reflect dramatic changes to Indian society where in a generation it had become the norm for girls to go to school. Parents suggest that in the past there was no need- or no understanding of the need- for them to have the educational and cultural capital that was now deemed essential for girls. Parents now viewed education as a means for girls to gain the cultural capital necessary for both survival in urban India and upward mobility (through marriage). For many families, marriage norms mean that education (of girls) was now an essential form of cultural capital that would enable a ‘good’ marriage.

In MCD schools, there were two parents, who diverged from this norm and instead had aspirations for their daughters to have successful careers. In Chapter 5, I discuss these aspirations in more detail. Parents in MCD schools who wanted their children to have middle class careers and lifestyles, had received formal schooling themselves and where engaged in better paid work. In Chapter 5, I discuss these ‘neo-middle’ class families in more detail.
4.4 Aspirations and a Sense of Place

4.4.1 Rural and Urban Mobility

Across the schools, students living in Delhi had family members living in different locations around the country and the globe. Many families in MCD schools had migrated from rural areas in search of work and better opportunities in education. Some of these families had moved very recently whereas others had been living in Delhi for decades. It was common for students in MCD schools to return home to visit family in their village or to maintain close contact with their family there. Close family ties and support networks were- for some students- important features of their villages that appeared preferable to them in comparison to the scale and isolation that they felt in the metropolis of Delhi (Forest and Kearns, 2001). Mohan, a boy from MCD School 2, planned to return to the village when he was older because he envisaged being able to buy land and fulfil his obligations to his family:

**Research Partner:** When you grow up where do you want to stay, in village or in city?

**Mohan Interview, MCD School 2:** In village.

**Research Partner:** In village, why?

**Mohan Interview, MCD School 2:** In village, if I have my land, I will make house and stay there only.

**Research Partner:** Why don’t you want to stay in Delhi?

**Mohan Interview, MCD School 2:** Ma’am, if I stay in Delhi then my brother will say go to village when you grow up that’s why I want to go to village.

**Research Partner:** No, but why you don’t want to stay?

**Mohan Interview, MCD School 2:** Ma’am, because I don’t like here.

**Research Partner:** Why?

**Mohan interview, MCD School 2:** Because Ma’am, here water comes but not in proper manner.

**Research Partner:** Um... hmm and...
Mohan disliked Delhi because his family had difficulty getting water and his mother had to go far to get to work. Mohan recognised that there were better work opportunities in the city but he still felt a strong tie to the village that he was born in. For Mohan’s family, life in the city had become a challenge after his father had passed away. After a discussion with his parents Mohan’s mother came and spoke to us about the challenges that the family now faced:

Mohan’s mother came to us at the end of the discussion and explained that she was having a very difficult time. Her husband and his brother had both passed away and she was now living on her own with her son and in laws. She had to take care of all of them and this was a lot of work for her. She was deeply worried about her future. Padma went with her to the office to see if there was anything they could do for her. (Research Journal, November, 2015)

Research into internal migration in India, highlights the way in which through rural to urban migration people are able to escape hierarchical rural relationships (Roy, 2016). However, often migrants do not develop the social and economic opportunities outside of their localities and they remain reliant on their village. Roy has described this as “‘immobile mobility’: individuals are mobile but their households remain immobile” (Roy, 2016). For Mohan, Delhi was a place where he struggled whereas the village was a place of joy and community:
Mohan Interview, MCD School 2: In Delhi, Ma’am, I don’t feel good, I feel like to go to village, (not clear) even I have friends there so many, I feel joyous playing with them.

Research Partner: And what is the difference between village and city?

Mohan Interview, MCD School 2: Ma’am, in village like mummy, grandmother and grandfather stay so they take care of us and in Delhi when mummy goes to work, no one will be there to take care that’s why Ma’am I enjoy in village only.

…

Research Partner: Are the people of village and the people of Delhi the same or different?

Mohan Interview, MCD School 2: Different.

Research Partner: In what way?

Mohan Interview, MCD School 2: (In Delhi) Some speak in village language and some speak in Delhi language.

Research Partner: Okay, and in Bihar?

Mohan Interview, MCD School 2: In Bihar, everyone listens to what all others say.

Not only does Mohan have the social support- family and friends- in the village but he feels that it is a different, more democratic place in which ‘everyone listens to what…others say’. Through these extracts, Mohan’s capitals appear to be more suited to the village where he can be himself and avoid the stress and isolation he finds in Delhi. Many students in the research maintained a strong bond with their ‘village’ and some suggested that they also preferred living in the village to living in Delhi:

Zainab Interview, MCD School 1 Girls’ Shift: Yes

Research Partner: Where do you like most there or here?

Zainab Interview, MCD School 1 Girls’ Shift: There

Research Partner: Why?
Zainab Interview, MCD School 1 Girls’ Shift: I like most that place because there are mountains around I can play well there because where I live now there is no one who will play with me.

Research Partner: There is no place or people to play?

Zainab Interview, MCD School 1 Girls’ Shift: No. I live on 3rd floor so it’s not easy to go to play.

Research Partner: You liked the village more or you like here in Delhi more?

Rani Interview, MCD School 2: I liked there more, ma’am. Many trees and other good things were there, but study was not good so I don’t like…

Research Partner: Then, would you like to stay there more or you want to stay here?

Rani Interview, MCD School 2: I want to stay here, Ma’am.

Research Partner: Why?

Rani Interview, MCD School 2: Because there were no schools there, if there were any schools, they were very far.

Research Partner: Okay.

Rani Interview, MCD School 2: And here Ma’am, there are many schools.

Research Partner: And? One is school and what else is good here?

Rani Interview, MCD School 2: Ma’am, the other thing is there is no water at all.

Research Partner: Oh, okay.

Rani Interview, MCD School 2: And here we have water.

These two girls in MCD schools, Rani and Eshal, preferred living in the village to life in Delhi because of the rural environment and space that they found there. As Zainab demonstrates, the urban environment of Delhi is associated with confinement, and the village with freedom to play outside. This was especially a problem for girls. During a discussion at one of the MCD schools, students told us that boys generally went to the
market or shops to get things for their parents while girls tended to stay inside and help out around the home:

The girls told us that they were left to do all of the chores and that their brothers just sat around the house doing nothing. But the boys said that they would always be sent out of the house to get things for their parents while girls got to stay in at home. The students started to get quite animated about who had to do more at home. In response to Dinesh’s claim that boys did more at home, Aisha shouted ‘Who prepares all of the subzi, the roti…?’ Dinesh responded that he also had a lot to do. (Research Journal, October, 2015)

Scholars have argued that gender roles are more strictly enforced on girls than boys in Delhi (Basu et al, 2017). The data seemed to suggest that girls were more likely to be restricted in their movements than boys. However, spatial location played an important role in determining the domestic duties and gender roles of boys and girls. In the village, girls said that they were given more freedom to play outside, but in the city their movements were more confined- possibly due to concerns about safety.

Despite missing the village, Rani did not want to return and preferred to stay in the city in the future where she felt that she had better opportunities for education and easier access to essential facilities (water). While Rani, Mohan and Zainab maintained positive associations with their rural place of origin, other students in MCD schools were more critical in their assessments of village life:

**Research Partner:** What is the difference between Delhi and the village?
**Kambi, FGD 1, MCD School 2:** In the village we have a house made up of mud, the level of studies is bad, there are fights for water, the temperature is also more and we don’t have anything.

**Research Partner:** Then what we have here in Delhi?
**Dinesh, FGD 1, MCD School 2:** Here we have facility about everything. We have fans here and we have everything we need and we need not to bother about anything.

**Mahali, FGD 1, MCD School 2:** I love to live here.
These students preferred life in the city because ‘there was no problem’ and they had ‘everything they needed’. The facilities and infrastructure in the city meant that daily life was much easier and students didn’t have to ‘bother about anything. Although still connected to their village, these students were happy with their life in the city and they viewed the village negatively in comparison. A group of parents in MCD school 1, shared the sense that the city represented a place of opportunity in comparison to the village:

Pankaj’s mother, FGD 1, MCD School 1 Boys’ Shift:
We were born and brought up in Bihar. When we came to the city then we realised that things were changing.

Saif’s mother, FGD 1, MCD School 1, Boy’s shift:
Yes, they were leading a better life, we felt that.

The ‘better life’ available in the city was contrasted to the limited opportunities of the past/village. While parents acknowledged that they continued to face problems in their own lives, they felt that- in terms of their children’s future- these changes had only been for the better. Growing up in Delhi, their children were said to live in a good environment and have opportunities for a good education:

Saif’s mother, FGD 1, MCD School 1 Boy’s shift:
There is still a lot of difference in the atmosphere between a city and a village. In a city, they will live in a better environment and they will get better education. When they go back to their village, then at least everyone will praise them that living in Delhi he has got educated.

An education in Delhi was not only said to be better in quality but it was also said to provide the individual with a form of cultural capital that would ensure the respect of
their family members and members of their village community. Delhi was viewed as a place of abundance and opportunity—especially for education—whereas the village was considered to have a less positive ‘atmosphere’. Through these extracts, students and parents in MCD schools maintained a focus on the practical or social properties of Delhi and ‘the village’. Scholars have shown working class groups tend to have a more ‘grounded’ notion of locations and they make judgements based upon the ‘character of its people and its social relations, and by the practical benefits that it did or did not offer’ (Szerszynski and Urry, 2006). Szerszynski and Urry (2006) draw on Infold (2000, p. 227) to describe how such an interpretation results from being ‘‘wayfinders’ who move around ‘within’ a world, rather than (middle class) ‘map-readers’ moving across a surface as imagined from above’.

At the IES, students also maintained ties to the village, but they were more focused on urban life in Delhi and/or the opportunities that awaited overseas—either for work, to visit family or to travel for a holiday. Roshni and Bloom’s fathers were working in the UK and they both had ambitions to travel to London in order to see what it was like:

Ben: What does he say about London?

Roshni Interview, IES: He says that this a nice place and if I will be bigger he will give me… he will call me on London (take me to London)

Ben: Do you want to go?

Roshni Interview, IES: Yes.

Ben: Why?

Roshni Interview, IES: Because I want to see the place that my father says it is nice. I want to see how is it.

... 

Ben: In the future, would you rather live in London or Delhi?

Roshni Interview, IES: London.

... 

Ben: What does your father say about London?
**Bloom Interview, IES:** My father always says that it is a very cold place and there are snowflakes there. He takes photos of the snowflakes there and sends it to me. He has also taken photos of the car and of one deer.

**Ben:** Do you want to go and see him?

**Bloom Interview, IES:** I would like to go there. I would like to go to see where does my father work and to see Big Ben and so many places.

Bloom and Roshni demonstrate that imaginative engagement with their close relatives helps to determine their aspirations to travel (and live) overseas. The access that these girls have to the outside world, through their conversations and exchanges - especially of images - with their fathers, appears to stimulate their desire to be mobile. This suggests that ‘virtual travel’ plays an important role in shaping students aspirations for global mobility (Szerszynski and Urry, 2006). While two students in MCD schools, had family members overseas, one of them (Rani) was unaware of the exact country that her uncle was living in and the other (Archana) knew her father was in Saudi Arabia and spoke to him regularly she did not wish to go there (Research Journal, November, 2015).

Scholars have shown how the mediation of global cities is associated with their ‘iconic’ status (Sassen, 1991). Bloom’s desire to see ‘Big Ben’ illustrates the way in which she imagines London as a global city with its symbolically significant locations and easily recognisable landmarks (Sassen, 1991). When other students at IES talked about why they liked Delhi as a city they invoked similar descriptions, often referring to the visual, iconic properties of the place, abstracted from the people who lived there:

**Ben:** What do you like about Delhi?

**Arjun Interview, IES:** It is a good place many monuments are there good things to do here and there many things.

...  

**Ben:** Why do you like Delhi?
Micheal Interview, IES: Because it is too Big City and the capital of India. I have visited many places of Deli & many I have still not visited.

... 

Ben: Why do you like Delhi?

Rocky Interview, IES: Because there are some nice places.

Ben: Like where?

Rocky Interview, IES: Like Saturday Market, Pacific Mall and Park I like and there are big, big trees.

These visual representations of the city were in marked contrast to the more practical representations made by working class/poor students in the MCD schools. Research examining ways of talking about places has shown that middle class and working class groups tend to talk about places in different ways (Szerszynski and Urry, 2006). The students at IES, appear to describe Delhi - and London - from the perspective of a ‘map-reader’, viewing the cities from afar (Szerszynski and Urry, 2006). This ‘language of abstract, visual landscape character’ is the ‘language of mobility’ and ‘is itself an expression of an abstracted way of being’ (Szerszynski and Urry, 2006).

While working class students and parents described the city and village in terms of their practical affordances- ‘known through use’- middle class students apprehended different localities in terms of a ‘cartographic and professional vision of landscape’, where cities were known through being ‘looked at’ and ‘conceived in terms of objects, locations and characteristics’ (Szerszynski and Urry, 2006). This ‘visual economy’ of place suggests that places are to be looked at rather than used. Such ‘landscape talk’ is an expression of the lifeworld of mobile groups and according to Buzard (1993, p.27) represents ‘a time when one stops belonging to a culture and can only tour it’. Through these expressions, students appear to adopt the language of cosmopolitan citizenship where they have the desire to travel to and experience different locations.

Alongside this ‘tourists’ view of place, several students extended their aspirations beyond the desire for a trip to Western countries and expressed a wish to live, study and work overseas. Micheal and Arjun’s future ambitions were bound up with the desire to move overseas and live in the USA in order to go to ‘the NASA university of Science’:
Ben: Are there any places you would like to visit?
Arjun Interview, IES: In India?
Ben: Anywhere.
Arjun Interview, IES: America, Nasa University of Science.
Ben: Why do you want to go to America?
Arjun Interview, IES: For the NASA University of Science, to be a scientist.
Ben: Why do you want to go to that place particularly?
Arjun Interview, IES: Because I understand that it's a very famous place
Ben: Why is it so famous?
Arjun Interview, IES: because many scientists have passed and retired and their name is in the newspaper.
Ben: Is it a good place to study
Arjun Interview, IES: Yesss.
Ben: Why?

Arjun and Michael appear to view a Western university degree as the ‘ultimate’ capital ‘necessary for global mobility’ and success (Ong, 1999, p.90). For these two students, the acquisition of a ‘Western education’ is part of a ‘self-fashioning’ process in which ‘education’ is a means to acquire the cultural and embodied traits necessary for professional success in the global labour market (Mitchell, 1997). These ‘outwardly mobile’ students’ express elements of Ong’s flexible citizenship by aligning themselves with ‘market conditions’ and envisioning a future in which they live overseas. Michael said that he had first expressed the idea of becoming a scientist and living overseas when he was five after he had developed an interest in the ‘Discovery Channel’:

Michael Interview, IES: I want to be just a scientist or astronaut and nothing else.
Ben: Did you always want to do that? Was it something you were born with you think? Or was it something that you learnt to like?

Michael Interview, IES: First, I wanted to be in different occupations but now these are my favourite

Ben: Do you think that you were always meant to do that job or do you think that is something that you found out about and then wanted to do it?

Michael Interview, IES: I first found out about these and then I wanted to be this from when I was 5.

Ben: Where did you find out about it?

Michael Interview, IES: First when I was young I just watched cartoons. So, one day, I just click the shows and there were animals and this was Discovery. So then, from that day, I wanted to be in the discovery type of things

Michael’s desire to become a scientist/astronaut at NASA had clearly been shaped by the global media and specifically his interest in the Discovery channel and the ‘Discovery type of things’. Michael explained that he was the first student to express an interest in science and space- when he was five and other students- especially boys- had soon followed suit (Michael Interview, IES). He was the ‘expert’ and other students described sitting around at lunch with him and talking about space and science. This reiterates the important role that satellite television has played in promoting middle class lifestyles and in shaping aspirations in India (Gooptu, 2014; Lewis and Martin, 2015). However, for Michael, it was important to maintain a balance between his family home in Delhi and his future life in the USA:

Ben: Will you live with your mom and dad when you’re older or will you live on your own?

Michael Interview, IES: With mom and dad

Ben: Will they come to the states with you? If you go to America they’ll come with you to America?

Michael Interview, IES: Yes

Ben: So do you always Want to live with your mum and dad?

Michael Interview, IES: Yes
Ben: and what about brother?

Michael Interview, IES: Yes, I want to live with him also… And I want that if we are there… if possible we can stay here also.

Ben: You want to stay in Delhi as well?

Michael Interview, IES: Yes

For Michael, his family ties play an important role in his aspirations for global mobility. His desire to live with his parents has led him to consider how he might live overseas while maintaining a close bond with his family. Michael and Arjun’s extracts illustrate the way in which aspirations are embedded within family and local contexts and governed by broader social and economic issues. For these two students, an education overseas was the means to better economic opportunities but their desire to obtain these opportunities had to be balanced with family obligations.

In different ways, students from MCD schools and IES balanced their individual aspirations with their commitment to their family and particular locations. For MCD school students, the local village, where either they or their father was born, played an ongoing role in their lives and helped to shape their aspirations. Students tended to compare their ‘village’ with Delhi to describe where they preferred to live now and where they hoped to live in the future. For students at IES, connections with family members overseas and an engagement with global media shaped their aspirations for global mobility. Students at IES maintained a privileged view in which they viewed their potential opportunities and future possibilities on a global scale (Forbes and Lingard, 2015). These global ambitions were complicated by a strong sense of obligation to their family.

Discussion

In this chapter, I have explored young people’s aspirations and understanding of education in Delhi. I have highlighted the way in which students converge around their understanding of childhood, education and their aspirations for future citizen-subjecthood. Education was widely viewed as essential to future life and students imagined middle class lifestyles and professions awaited the suitably educated. The repositioning of India as a ‘knowledge society’ has helped to drive the connection
between education and national success and it is now widely held that education is the route to individual and societal development and prosperity (Khoja-Moolji, 2015; Narayanaswamy, 2017). The students’ understanding of education appeared to be shaped by neoliberal narratives of development (Connell and Dados, 2012). Students drew on these narratives to position education as the means to achieve economic success and material well-being for themselves and their family. State and non-state actors working in international/national/community development all play a role in sustaining the status of education (as a means of empowerment/mobility) and thus facilitating this consent (Khoja-Moolji, 2015).

Through education, especially participation in Higher Education and the learning of English language, working class and middle class students imagined securing upward social – and indeed economic – mobility, and that this will result in ‘becoming middle class’ by virtue of status, employment type and lifestyle (Lehmann, 2009; Reay, 2012, 2013). In addition, such participation was said to enable students to develop the cultural, social and symbolic capital that would lead to cultural mobility (Bourdieu, 1986). Archer and Leathwood (2003, p 176) sum up the implications of this conceptualisation in the UK arguing that:

*dominant government discourses have framed working-class participation in higher education as a way of achieving ‘change’; that is, for working-class participants to change themselves and the national and/or local population by becoming more educated, skilled, affluent, socially mobile, ‘civilised’ and (implicitly) middle class.*

The data indicated that families in the study had internalised western forms of social and cultural capital. Students in MCD schools and the IES that failed to invest sufficiently in their education were said to be destined for a future in which they were ‘poor’, failed subjects who were unable to do anything with their lives (Sriprakash, 2015 in Hopkins & Sriprakash, 2015). Lawler (2000, p.126) notes that efforts to address the ‘problem of working class people’ have focused on trying to ‘make them more like their middle-class counterparts’ rather than address the causes of inequality. Reay (2012) also recognises that ‘education policy… focuses remorselessly on social mobility and raising working-class ambitions in the narrow sense of becoming middle class’. In their desire to ‘become something’ students aimed to become middle class rather than become educated. The aspirational culture that I found across the schools
reflected research in the UK showing that emphasis has been placed on the individual to secure their own success while structural issues remain overlooked (Reay, 2013). Reay (2012: 594) suggests that the concepts of mobility and aspiration are used like ‘an ideological whip’ to attack those who do not engage in education. From this perspective, participation in education is understood as a means to escape the ‘deficit’ and ‘lack’ of aspiration associated with working class/poor culture in India (Francis and Hey, 2009; Perry and Francis, 2010)

Widespread aspirations for education can be understood in relation to a global policy emphasis on girls’ education, the education of the poor/disadvantage and aspiration as symbols of progress in the neoliberal era (Gill 2008; McRobbie 2007; Pomerantz, Raby and Stefanik, 2013). Feminist scholars have questioned the discourse of the “global girl” and economically empowered woman. Skeggs (2004) argues that social mobility and individuality are “resources” that are distributed unevenly and some groups—especially working-class women—must remain fixed so that others can move (Massey 1994). At the same time, women and girls play a key symbolic role in the global economy: “Upward mobility becomes a central trope of class/ification, where women and the qualities ascribed to femininity have a central place” (Walkerdine 2003, p. 242). The high aspiration expressed by working class girls in MCD schools were highly unlikely to be realised given their parents insistence that their future life would be tied to the domestic sphere.

Feminist scholars have contested gendered tropes of upward mobility by engaging with Bourdieu (1984, p. 65). Bourdieu (1984, 65) sees aspiration as grounded in class habitus; it is a “realistic relation to what is possible, founded on and therefore limited by power.” Aspirations are never unconstrained, passive reflections of elite lifestyles: they develop within specific social locations, and emerge from the interplay of desire and objective possibilities (McNay, 2003, p. 146). The subtle differences between the more individualistic aspirations of boys and the collective aspirations of many working class girls could be said to reflect the notion that aspirations for the future often express the conflicts and constraints of the present (Frye 2012; St Clair and Benjamin 2011). Several parents of working class girls expressed expectations that their daughter’s future would lie in the domestic sphere whereas their sons would entail finding work. Working class girls’ identities appeared to be shaped more by discourses of tradition- and family obligation- than discourses of cosmopolitanism- and individualistic
consumer lifestyles. The girls' aspirations reflected a tension between these discourses where they aspired for an education and for future careers and lifestyles but they did so in a way that was almost always directed towards the family. Working class boys described a future in which they would earn for their parents and at the same time expressed aspirations for individualistic consumer lifestyles. These boys negotiated competing discourses of cosmopolitanism on the one hand and respectability (family obligation and tradition) on the other. To achieve this, boys located themselves as both at the service of the family while also having their own distinct individualistic aspirations.

Middle class boys and girls also appeared to attempt to balance these competing discourses. These students already engaged in elements of individual consumer lifestyles through their consumption of global media and global culture (Barbie, discovery, western movies etc.). While these students expressed a strong sense of obligation to their families, they viewed their future role in relation to their actions in the present. This meant that the future was still relatively open for many of these students and their future was more contingent upon how they performed in school rather than by pre-defined social roles. For all of the students, across the schools, there appears to be a tension between their collective and individual aspirations and identities. Working class girls' identities appear to be shaped by an emphasis on the collective over the individual whereas for others it was a case of finding room for individual identities within a collective identity. As suggested in Chapter 2, Paramasivam and Nair-Venugopal (2012) argue that within Indian collectivism, individualism is part of the collective identity. This means that rather than seeing the two as in tension, individualism is permitted within the collective but it is always in subordination to the collective. Furthermore, the extent to which students can embrace an individual identity appears to be shaped by class and gender.

The patriarchal social structure, appears to have a greater impact on the aspirations of working class girls who, despite high occupational aspirations, appear to be uncertain as to whether they will be permitted to work after marriage or not. As parents in MCD schools explain, life changes after marriage play a greater role in girl’s aspirations than boy’s (Shu and Marini, 2008). Working class girls in particular had to balance the reality of patriarchal family life and future possibilities for work in the knowledge economy (Vijayakumar, 2013). This demonstrates how neoliberal
narratives of individualism and self-improvement celebrate upwardly mobile, non-elite young women even as they entrench those women’s outsider status and are impossible to achieve (McRobbie 2007; Skeggs 2004; Walkerdine, 2003). Middle class students on the other hand are unsure as to whether their aspirations will be realised given the intensely competitive education system- and labour market. As McNay (2003, 145), suggests habitus evolves and is shaped over time as “power relations shape and deform the experience of hope.” In this context, middle class students’ aspirations are flexible in that they balance their dreams of work in the knowledge economy with recognition for the fact that they will face intense competition in their attempts to realise their ambitions.

Despite these concerns, girls (and some boys) in the study reflect the dramatic change that has taken place in education within a generation. Parents from families who had little experience of schooling now insisted that going to school was now the norm for both boys and girls. This suggests that in this context the symbolic resources of a dominant ideology of women’s empowerment and aspiration- promulgated in both national and global discourses- can help young people cope with a patriarchal social structure. As the girls’ mothers suggest, they can ‘be on their own’, ‘survive’ and not be ‘dependent on others for… (their) needs and can support herself’.

For young people in the study, place also mattered. For some students staying in place or returning to their parent’s village was a priority. While education was important, obligations to family (or the village in the case of Mohan) mattered more. In the case of Mohan, his close attachment to place appeared to result from his capitals being aligned with the village. Furthermore, he expressed a strong desire to be close to the comfort and safety of his extended family and in a place where everyone ‘listened’. For Mohan, the city appeared to be a harsh and ruthless place where he found himself ‘a fish out of water’. In MCD Schools, students’ experiences of the city were compared favourably or unfavourably with life in the village and this shaped their future aspirations. For some students, the city was a place of hope and opportunity for others it was a place of hardship and others still preferred life in the village but felt that by gaining an education in Delhi they would be better placed in the future. This meant that while all students aspired for middle class futures, some were confined to a class-based immobility exemplified by what Allen and Hollingworth (2013: 514) describe as the ‘stickiness of place’.
Some students in MCD schools tended to view places through their lived experiences of them whereas others also adopted a view of other places - especially overseas - as places to be looked at rather than used. In this way, students described places in terms of both their practical qualities - the knowledge they had accumulated through use of them - and an interest in touring other cultures. Students at IES, tended to place more emphasis on the visual economy of places - discussing sights that they would like to go to and places that they would like to ‘tour’. The strong attachments that middle class students felt to their family constrained their desire to tour other cultures. The fact that many students at IES had favoured Western TV shows appeared to play an important role in shaping their aspirations for global mobility and for particular professions and lifestyles. Allen and Hollingworth (2013: 513) have considered the relationship that place has in shaping young people’s habitus, where their dispositions are shaped by ‘localised sets of material, social and imagined relations [which] are central in producing young people’s sense of place in the world and their possibilities of mobility’. Alongside cosmpolitanism, tradition/family and geographical place was an important factor in shaping students’ aspirations.

Berlant (2011) claims that by recognising and understanding the various impasses we face we can create alternative conditions for living otherwise. Students at IES showed a greater awareness of the challenges involved in obtaining a middle class lifestyle and profession and they were - even at this young age - already taking concrete actions to realise their aspirations. Some students in MCD schools, had more modest aspirations in terms of future careers; however, they were less aware of potential challenges that they would face in the future.

In this chapter I have explored how aspirations are formed in relation to a set of promises about the future. Objects of our desire constitute ‘a cluster of promises we want something or someone to make to us and make possible for us’ (Berlant, 2011, p.23). These promises have an affective effect and also operate at the level of conscious intentions. This ensures that they are central to the production of identities. For students in these schools, multiple contradictory promises revolve around education as an object of desire. This had different implications for individual sense of self and students’ relations with others. Berlin advises us that attachment to these promises can give rise to ‘cruel optimism’, ‘when something you desire is actually an obstacle to your flourishing’ (Berlant, 2011, p.1):
What’s cruel about these attachments, and not merely inconvenient or tragic, is that the subjects who have x in their lives might not well endure the loss of their object/scene of desire, even though its presence threatens their well-being, because whatever the content of the attachment is, the continuity of the form of it provides something of the continuity of the subject’s sense of what it means to keep on living on and to look forward to being in the world. (Berlant, 2011, p. 24)

Contrary to concerns about the ‘poverty of desire’ (Chapter 2), I found that students made investments in education because of the promise of a ‘good life’. It was study and the promise of a brighter future that sustained students in the day to day efforts—often in mundane and routine task (Berlant, 2011). Market-competitive aspirations were at times placed in conflict with students’ obligations to their family or their attachment to place- objects that sustain their sense of identity and meaning.

Scholars have also shown that the relationship between educational attainment and global labour markets are changing and the ‘neoliberal opportunity bargain’ may now be creating objects of desire that sustain people in hopeful anticipation while undermining their socio-economic position (Brown et al 2010). These scholars have suggested that human capital and global knowledge economy rationales are increasingly floored. In India, the recent expansion of the middle class, rapid infrastructure development and consistent levels of economic growth have led Indian’s to be optimistic about the future (Pew, 2017). However, this optimism must be considered in light of research demonstrating that 30% of Indian’s between the age of 15-29 are not in employment, education or training (OECD, 2017).

In the following chapters, I continue to examine how the school experience at both government MCD schools and IES. I question how global national and school based policies and practices shape and assemble young people’s identities and how this aligns and conflicts with young people’s own efforts to assemble their lives. I detail how in these different schools, students construct gendered and classed identities in a climate of optimism and high aspirations.
Chapter 5: The Construction of Classed and Gendered Identities in the Present: Self-Responsibilisation in MCD School Communities

5.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the efforts made by MCD government schools to shape young people’s futures and considers how the MCD schools in the study have responded to global educational policies that have foregrounded education and aspiration as symbols of progress in the neoliberal era (Gill, 2008; McRobbie, 2007). I explore how these policy discourses have been taken up in MCD government schools and how these policies are used to direct the school experience and identities of young students. I argue that the challenges that teachers face in working with students from disadvantaged backgrounds means that, rather than creating aspirational citizens who are able to compete in a neoliberal and global labour market, MCD schools focus on students becoming responsibilised subjects who are expected to be self-regulating, rational and enterprising individuals who pursue their own and the nation’s interests through skill development and rational choices (Rose, 1999). I argue that the backgrounds of students in the community play an important role in determining whether they are considered to be suitably aspirational and that this evaluation in turn determines the educational experience of students in MCD schools. This chapter builds on the previous chapter, in which I argued that young people directed their lives in accordance with notions of the universal childhood and the normative citizen subject, to question how school-based efforts to shape young people’s identities align- or conflict- with students’ own aspirations and identities.

In the previous chapter, I argued that notions of a normative child/adult identity interacted with students own local circumstances and lives to determine their aspirations for the future. In this chapter, I argue that students’ obligations to their family and their families’ rural histories are often considered as problematic and detrimental to government school’s efforts to raise the aspirations of and provide opportunities to their students. I suggest that when students struggle to respond to the schools’ efforts to promote a middle class education and lifestyle, they are considered to be ‘uneducable’. This leads to a focus away from the school curriculum and in its place an emphasis on moral education emerges. The focus on moral education in turn
leads to gendered practices which contribute towards the construction of dominant masculinities and femininities.

Through this chapter, I consider how these schools contend with national education policies that have simultaneously raised expectations for mobility while bifurcating the education system into a state system for the most disadvantaged in society and a private school system for everyone else (Jeffrey, 2010; Sriprakash, 2015). India has a long history of education policies aimed at addressing the inequalities faced by socially and economically disadvantaged groups. In recent years, the government passed the Right to Education Act (2009) guaranteeing that education is free and compulsory for children between the ages of 6 and 14 years old. As part of the RTE, the government mandated that 25% of private school places should be subsidised or waived for children from poor communities (GoI, 2009). Gooptu (2013) has suggested that in doing so, the government is relying on the conscience of the rich to provide for the poor—whether as an act of charity or as a form of investment.

In recent years, education policies for the poor have come to focus on the gifted and ‘deserving’ students who through high levels of performance are able to attract subsidies and incentives that guarantee their access to fee-paying schools that are beyond the reach of the poorest students (Gooptu, 2013). Gooptu (2013) claims that the Victorian notion of the ‘deserving poor’ is seeing a revival in government policies such as these, where sufficiently enterprising and gifted individuals are able to convince the rich to provide for them. In a culture of aspirational citizenship, poverty is understood as an individual disability which can be overcome by determination rather than as a structural issue (Raco, 2009; Gooptu, 2014). Despite guaranteeing a good-quality education, the state appears to be shifting its responsibilities onto “developed individuals, groups, corporates, motivated students and heroic teachers” (Gooptu, 2014). The increase in PPPs advocated by GOI through the National Knowledge Commission and planning documents, indicates a policy shift towards partial privatization of the education system (Srivastava, 2010; Gooptu, 2014).

By increasing involvement of the private sector in education, the state has signalled a move away from the social democratic ideal of equal provision for all (Lall, 2010 in Mitra, 2010). Within its new and evolving role, the state appears to be facilitating marketisation and at the same time working to reduce educational disadvantage through policies and programmes aimed at addressing the needs of poorer social
groups (Lall, 2010 in Mitra, 2010). This has led to a “layered” state, with no clearly demarcated boundaries that has taken on a steering role in educational provision for the middle class but increased its involvement (rowing) at other levels (Lall, 2010). At the same time, as I have shown in Chapter 2, (neoliberal) government policies have emphasised the role of the family- and individual- by emphasizing the importance of family responsibility for achieving state goals. This process has led to social stratification in which the most disadvantaged students attend government funded schools which come to offer only ‘cooling out’ functions and ghettoisation for the poorer sections of the population. This leads to the reproduction of social and economic inequalities (Chopra and Jeffery, 2005; Sancho, 2012).

5.2 MCD Government Schools in Delhi: Increasing Access

In Delhi, global and national efforts to ensure that disadvantaged students have access to education have placed pressure on MCD government schools, typically catering for ‘the most disadvantaged students’ (Ohara, 2013) to facilitate access for hard to reach students in the community (MCD Website, 2016). This has led to a focus enrolment, participation and retention in education to ensure that hard to reach children are going to school. Efforts to improve the quality of MCD schools have largely focused on infrastructure development and the provision of scholarships and incentives to attract students to school (Section 3.3). In recent years, in response to parental demand, schools have introduced an English medium section into one class in each year group in MCD schools (MCD School Website, 2016). In English medium sections, students undertake all lessons- except Hindi- in English. As mentioned in Chapter 3, many parents in MCD schools had migrated from rural communities either before or after the birth of their children. Parents said that they came to Delhi in search of better work and education opportunities. In MCD schools, a number of teachers’ and principals’ felt that government policies and efforts to raise awareness and enhance facilities had led to a generational change in which education was widely aspired for:

**Research Partner:** How is life different for children today compared to when we were children?
Principal Interview, MCD School 1 Boys’ Shift:

Education awareness was not that much in old times, now it is more. Every parent wishes that their child go to school and study and learn something, this thinking is also there. Earlier, this much awareness was not there. From today, if we see 40 years or 45 years before, then education awareness and the facility was also not there.

Research Partner: Facilities was not there…

Principal, MCD School 1 Boys’ Shift: Facilities was not there. In today’s time, facilities are also provided more by the Government and they are doing awareness also more.

Research Partner: Why there is awareness suddenly? Since the last 20 year…

Principal, MCD School 1 Boys’ Shift: Awareness also came _____ that you are seeing the world, and how far other people are reaching.

…

Class III Sir, MCD School 1 Boys Shift:

Every parent is becoming aware. At least they try to send them even the if circumstances are totally different. They are not able to reach the level of education, but at least they try their best…

…

Research Partner: Has the girls’ education awareness increased?

Principal, MCD School 1: Has increased, certainly ____. If this remains like this then… At least here it has increased. What will happen in the rural belt in future, I can’t say about that because in Delhi all parents are teaching their girls the same as their boys.

Research Partner: Means now there is nothing like that that girls should not go to school?

Principal, MCD School 1: Surely, at least in Delhi it's not there.

The principal in MCD school 1 (Boys’ shift), suggests that alongside government efforts to raise awareness, people had started seeing the world’- presumably through the globalisation of media- and ‘how far other people are reaching’ and this had helped to raise awareness about the importance of education. According to the principal of
the girls’ shift in MCD school 1, this was also said to be true for girls and in Delhi parents conformed in their aspirations for education. In recent years, global and national educational policies have positioned formal schooling as a means to address inequality and drive the development of individuals, communities and the nation (Khoja-Moolji, 2015). These policies have been shaped by a development discourse that positions girls and the ‘poor’ as uniquely threatened by poverty and disease while at the same time ‘embodying the potential to resolve these very issues’ through education (Koffman & Gill, 2013, p.86; Hayhurst, 2011, p.532; Khoja-Moolji, 2015). This neoliberal discourse- associated with the knowledge society- transfers responsibility for success in education from the state and into the hands of the individual (Reay, 2013). Different staff members described how this discourse had been employed by the government- in national interventions like Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao (Save Girl Child, Educate Girl Child) (2014)- to convince parents to send their children to school:

**NGO Support Teacher, Female, MCD School 2:** Our government has made this happen. They have made surveys from time to time, they have given slogans like ‘save the girl child, teach the girl child’, and today a mother who washes utensils in somebody’s house, or the father who is a rickshaw puller or a vegetable seller, they feel that the job that they are doing, their children shouldn’t do that. So, they try to educate their children.

From this perspective, the government was said to have played an important role in raising aspirations for education and even ‘poor’ families were now investing in education with aim of escaping poverty and disadvantage. As demonstrated in Chapter 4, students equated education with a brighter future and the transformation of their circumstances. Among students, parents and teachers, the general perception was that education would enable students to ‘become something’ and without it students would remain in deficit (Hopkins & Sriprakash, 2015). The Principal of MCD School 2, suggested that an urban education in Delhi was exactly what the children in the school community needed, given their rural origins:
Research Partner: Mam do you think that every children needs education?

Principal, MCD School 2: It’s not only needed but most essential, in today’s time when their parents are so poor; if they don’t get any education, they will remain poor. Many have come from Bihar, many have come from out of the state to Delhi with the intention that if they come to Delhi they would learn something and be something. Many have made themselves the citizens of Delhi. So they think that their children should get some education. They don’t expect much at least they feel that their children should study till class 5th or 8th.

The Principal’s suggestion that education was ‘most essential’ and that through education parents hoped their children ‘would learn something and be something’ rather than doing ‘the job(s) that they (their parents) are doing’. Underpinning these ideas about the power of education were narratives of abundance and opportunity. Drawing on narratives of India’s middle class and the development of the nation, children were said to be growing up in a era of great opportunity:

Research Partner: For today’s children has life become easier or harder?

Principal, MCD School 2: Easier, as they have many facilities and with little hard work they can achieve a lot.

... 

Principal, MCD School 1 Boys’ Shift: Children from rural belt now are becoming an engineer and going to America and settling there, so why is this there? This is because of education.

Research Partner: Sir, all children have now started coming to school, so do you believe that their future will now improve?

Principal, MCD School 1 Boys’ Shift: Yes, certainly. Only education is that thing, key that can erase the darkness, poverty, sorrow, and greed. When students will gain the understanding and mature then only they can differentiate between the good and the bad.
The emergence of neoliberal economics and the ‘knowledge economy’ in India has meant that knowledge is considered increasingly important to individual and national economic development (Stromquist and Monkman, 2000, p.7; Gooptu, 2014). By claiming that with ‘a little hard work they can achieve a lot’ and that ‘children from the rural belt are… going to America’, the two principals suggest that new opportunities to become educated are available and that access to education offers students the potential to transform their circumstances. Beyond economic development, education also appeared to be directed at enabling students to ‘mature’ and undergo moral development in order to decide for themselves what was ‘good’ and ‘bad’. The Principal of MCD school 1 boys’ shift, constructs education as a (moral) force of good that can erase ‘darkness, poverty, sorrow and greed’.

5.2.1 MCD Schools: Changing Demographics

The growth of the private sector in Delhi was said to have had important consequences for MCD schools. Although heightened awareness meant that more and more families were sending their children to school, MCD teachers and principals claimed that the demographics of the school communities had undergone significant changes over recent years. The bulk of the student body was now said to be comprised of children from disadvantaged backgrounds (Teacher Interview, MCD School 1 GS). Whereas in the past, children from all backgrounds came to MCD schools, now only ‘low category’ students were said to come. The major factor driving this change was the emergence of private schools:
Class III Maam, MCD School 2: Obviously it is effect. All the cream of students goes to private school. Here only those students are there who are either poor, or they have no support for studies from their family. The first generation of learner come here only. Like those whose parents are not qualified. They put their children here. As a private school they have to prepare their children and then send there. And also their children need daily look out that they have to study this. They have to help them in doing their homework. There before goes to school children know alphabets, poems and colour. So these are helpful to the teacher. They learn and go there as it is in their atmosphere.

Principal, MCD school 2: This is because earlier where I used to teach the students who studied there were good children. Cream of the students used to go there. Here only the lower category of students comes.

Research Partner: Were those students from same or better academic background?

Principal, MCD school 2: Yeah they came from better academic background, medium family children.

Research Partner: Were their parents educated?

Principal, MCD school 2: Yes, their parents were also educated. They paid some attention towards the children. Those students used to study at home. They used to take tuitions. They used to study well at the school also. That is why it was justified that they should get scholarship. But the students who come here, they are very lower category students. They come from poor family background.

With the growth of private schools, MCD schools were said to have changed from a mixed school body, to one that was dominated by ‘poor’, ‘low-category’ children. The ‘low category’ status of students in these school was described as being the result of different intersecting factors- all relating to their family background- including poverty, religion, minority status (SC/ST), rural origin and a lack of parental education (‘first generation learners’). The ‘cream of the students’- the very best (middle class) students- were said to have left the school for the private schools. The effect was that
now only families that offered no support for their children were said to engage in MCD schools. Teachers suggested that even poorer parents who were ‘able to earn a little’ would send their children to private school given the chance:

Anita’s Mother, FGD 1, MCD school 1 Girls’ Shift: Government institutions have to work or where will these students go. But private schools will also increase. There are parents here also who if are able to earn little more money, take their students from here and admit them in private school. They know the difference that my child won’t be able to grow here that much which he can grow in private school.

MCD schools were now said to be places where children were not ‘able to grow’ as much as they could in private schools. This extract suggests that it is only those families inhibited by financial constraints that continue to send their children to MCD schools. Indeed, a number of students in the MCD school communities had previously been enrolled in private schools but had left because of ‘financial difficulties’ and because parents felt their children were placed under ‘too much pressure’ to study (Parent Group Discussion, MCD school 1 GS; Parent Group Discussion, MCD school 1 BS). One mother described how she had to spend hours every evening helping her child complete homework that was too difficult for her child to understand:

Class V Maam, MCD School 2: in starting days I admitted to my child in a private school… but because she was not ready to go to school she forced me to sit with her for 3 to 4 hrs (each day). She was not ready to learn so we shifted her school from there to here (MCD School) because maybe there is a better environment or syllabus (here) than in the other (private) schools

This suggests that it is not only the fee but also the test-intensive culture of private schooling- which requires intensive parental support- that puts parents off. These extracts demonstrate the highly stratified nature of the primary school system in Delhi. Transformations to the school community, and the social distance between teachers
and students (and their families) played an important role in defining the school experience in MCD schools.

In school MCD School 1 Girls’ Shift, 16% of the school community were registered as minorities (SC/ST or Muslim) and in school 2 the figure was around 30% (SC/ST or Muslim) (School Report Cards Website, 2016). Information for the boys’ shift of MCD school 1 was not available and I could find no record that the school existed within official documentation. There was some debate between staff about the extent to which children in MCD schools were from minority backgrounds. The principal in MCD school 2 was adamant that many of the children in the school were from SC or ST backgrounds but that because they had migrated from villages they were not certified as such- in order to claim government support, minority groups must have government certificates (Principal Interview, MCD School 2). This meant that the official school records outlined above did not accurately capture the nature of disadvantage within the school community.

Children at the bottom of the economic hierarchy in India are more likely to come from communities that have been historically disadvantaged due to their caste, religion and ethnicity. These interlocking historical inequalities- in addition to gender- lead to a variety of experiences in education. For the majority of staff across both private and government schools, it was not historical disadvantages (caste, gender, religion) that were the major cause of community disadvantage. The subject of historical disadvantage was - among different staff- somewhat of a taboo (Jodhka, 2015). When the subject of caste or gender arose, there was sometimes a degree of awkwardness or embarrassment and my research partner advised me against asking any questions related to caste because it was not something that people talked about (Research Journal, October, 2015). Rather that focusing on social inequalities, school staff insisted that the school communities themselves presented the major challenge to the education system and led to difficulties and ultimately dysfunction.

5.3 Othering the MCD School Community: Problem Parents

Rather than with reference to historical/structural inequalities, there was a tendency for staff to focus on parents in the school community when explaining the issues that teachers faced in trying to educate students in government schools. School staff in all
schools described members of government school communities in three main ways: poor, rural migrants that were uneducated. The children that attended government/MCD schools in Delhi were described as recent migrants themselves or as the children of migrants from rural areas in Uttar Pradesh or Bihar:

**Principal, MCD School 1**

**Girls’ Shift:**

Their original native place is in the villages, rural belt, but their parents moved from their rural belt to Delhi this year or before 2 years or 3 years.

**Ben:**

Sure, sure.

**Principal, MCD School 1**

**Girls’ Shift:**

Now the children are… the background is rural of their parents, but they are born in the Delhi.

**Ben:**

So, what does that mean, the background is rural, how does that affect their…

**Principal, MCD School 1**

**Girls’ Shift:**

Effect is that their parents are not educated.

**Ben:**

Okay.

**Principal, MCD School 1**

**Girls’ Shift:**

Their parents are uneducated persons, they have small livelihoods, they do small jobs

**…**

**Principal, MCD School 2:**

Mostly they are from Bihar from past 10-12 years

**Research Partner:**

Why do they come from Bihar

**Principal, MCD School 2:**

As there is no work or income there.

**Research Partner:**

Mam, any places other than Bihar? Do they come from Uttar Pradesh?

**Principal, MCD School 2:**

Yes, Uttar Pradesh is backward and they also come from places closer to Delhi like Meerut etc. those are also backward areas.

**…**

**Research Partner:**

Ma’am, given the strength of the school, would you say most of the students are migrants?

**Class IV Maam, MCD School 1 Girls Shift:**

50-60 percent.

**Class II Maam, MCD School 1 Girls Shift:**

All of them are migrants. It’s just that some of them started staying here.
As these extracts demonstrate the allegedly rural origin of members of the community led to certain stereotypes and ‘othering’ of members of the school community (Mishra, 2016). These families were said to have rural origins and so be ‘low class’, uneducated and ‘backward’. GOI uses the term “backward castes” to describe groups that have been historically disadvantaged in society (GoI, 2016). In this context, this term is used in opposition to those that are “advanced” and scholars have shown that it often indicates a deficit of cleanliness (physical and symbolic), literacy and cultural, economic and political power (Judge, 2013). Although many parents in the school community had in fact been to school, they had not completed formal schooling and they also described themselves as ‘uneducated’ (Parent Interview, MCD school 1 BS). School staff felt that their rural origins and their failure to obtain an education meant that parents could not find well paid work, provide for their family or offer ‘proper guidance’ to their children.

Recent research illustrates that the rural-urban divide in education and employment in India has in fact narrowed in the post-liberalisation era (Hnatkovska et al, 2013). In contrast, inequality between the urban rich and the urban poor in Delhi has expanded over recent years (Hnatkovska et al, 2013). Poor, rural migrants to Delhi, often find themselves in insecure work and without the family support network that they have in the villages (Roy, 2016). Rather than recognising these structural issues, school staff connected the ‘low category’ status of families within the school community to a number of attributes and behaviours that were said to lead to challenges in school.

Teachers in MCD schools differentiated between families in the community that were worthy of government support and those that were not. As a result, members of the school community were constructed as the “deserving” and “undeserving poor” (Elwood, Lawson and Nowak, 2014):
It’s a normal distribution curve. One will be the brighter section, naturally, the parents are more modern. Everything is favourable. They are not the 1st generation learners, they are the 2nd generation learners. The economic strata is better, they take tuitions and somebody will be teaching them at home. The child gets good hygiene, they are well dressed and they are motivated at home and they know what the importance of education is. They do not take leave.

…

… There is a difference between the children. Someone whose parents have a good shop or are running businesses like a shop for dry cleaning, or a sweet shop… and those who work in factories, they can do better for their children, and they can send their children to private tuitions, they can take better care of their children, their children are in Pratibha school and those children, whose parents work as domestic help, there is a difference. Those children, whose mothers work as domestic help, whose fathers are Rickshaw pullers, in their homes.

So most of the students in your school are…

The students in my school have fathers work as rickshaw pullers, mothers are working as domestic help, fathers drink alcohol at home…

Through these extracts, the deserving poor parents are aligned with the normative (middle class) citizen subject (see Chapter 4), who is educated, self-sufficient, responsible, entrepreneurial and hygienic, whereas the undeserving poor families fail to live up to this ideal (Lawler 2005, Allen 2008). These teachers also highlight the importance of parental involvement in the child’s education, parental teaching at home and private tuition. By pathologising working class parents in the community, these staff move beyond the notion that ‘class relations are… economic relations’ to demonstrate that they are also ‘relations of superiority/inferiority, normality/abnormality, judgment/shame’ (Lawler, 1999, p. 4, cited in Tyler and Bennett 2009, p. 3).
5.3.1 Othering the MCD School Community: Constructing Class Based Boundaries

The construction of classed boundaries took place along the lines of aesthetic (clothing and appearance), performative (behaviour and performance), and moral (regarding values) dimensions (Sayer, 2005). By defining the undeserving poor in opposition to themselves, the middle class teachers were able to highlight aspects of their identity that defines ‘their group’s’ characteristics (e.g. middle class taste intelligence and refinement) while denying these characteristics to the working class Other (Holt and Griffin, 2005, p. 248). The underserving poor were defined by their lack of personal hygiene and appearance (aesthetic); their unruly, careless and violent behaviour and their lack of respect and disengagement with education (moral).

5.3.2 Othering the MCD School Community: Aesthetic

In their descriptions of members of MCD school communities, teachers and principals in the two MCD schools often highlighted bad personal hygiene and poor presentation as characteristic of the undeserving poor:

**Class IV Maam, MCD School 1 Girls Shift:**

Hygiene is there, it’s one of the biggest hurdles. Because they are not supposed to take a bath in the morning or brush their teeth or even wash their hands before eating. Even if the mother is around, they’ll not be bothered about all these things. If they are supposed to feed the child, they will feed the child and go for work. They have younger kids to tend to...

**Principal, MCD School 1 Boys Shift:**

Mother also works in houses so both of them go. So they get up in morning and come to school on their own. They are not worried about whether they are ready or not. Even many times they come without taking bath so we have to face that also.

...
Class V Maam, MCD School 2: We at our home make our children wake up while their parents leave the house before while they are asleep. So their older brother and sister makes them wake up somehow and then they come to school like that only. They even don’t wash their face.

These extracts reflect a general sense among teachers that children in the community were often poorly dressed and unhygienic. Concerns about ‘dirtiness’ or uncleanliness may be connected to issues of caste and religious purity (Sriprakash, 2012). Historically, Hindu upper castes have been associated with cleanliness which symbolises status and advanced spirituality. Class distinctions were maintained through the prohibition of touching or association between castes due to a fear that the dirty may contaminate the clean castes (Ger & Yenicioglu, 2004). While teachers used class-based language to describe children in the community (‘lower category’, ‘poor persons’), they did not directly address issues of caste. However, discourses of cleanliness can be understood as having social significance beyond a concern with hygiene (Gurney, 2017). Teachers suggested that hygiene issues arose because of the parents- especially mothers- were ‘not… bothered’ about such ‘things’.

5.3.3 Othering the MCD School Community: Bad Behaviour

While presentation and hygiene were important points of reference for middle class teachers and principals, concerns about the behaviour of families and students within the community were also prevalent. Families were said to live in one room all together and children were ‘exposed’ to their parent’s sexual and abusive behaviour. Drugs and alcoholism were said to be problems that plagued the school community and increased the volatility of their home lives. Families were said to have had too many children and this led to neglect. Through this and other behaviour- spending any money that is left over at the end of the day- an image of the undeserving poor as both reckless, criminal and dangerous was constructed. Vincent et al (2010, p. 127) suggest that ‘perceptions of working-class attitudes, values and behaviour have long been at the heart of the traditional division of the working classes into ‘rough’ and ‘respectable’.
The behaviour of parents in the MCD school communities was often understood in gendered terms. Fathers were thought to be the main cause of problems in the home, family and community. A family’s ‘low category’ status was also most commonly associated with the father’s failure to get an education and find well paid work. They were also frequently described as violent drunks who beat their wives and wasted the family’s money:

Principal, MCD School 2: But 50% are in very poor conditions. Those whose fathers are drunkard, what can their mothers do on their own?

Research Partner: Yes, the mother also doesn’t have money…

Principal, MCD School 2: The mother is short of money. She is disturbed having many children. The family atmosphere is disturbed

Research Partner: The families where the mother is a housemaid, the father may earn some money but he is a drunkard. So he spends all the money, then how much can a woman do? And she has so many children. So they don’t get proper food and other things.

Principal, MCD School 2: Then nobody interferes in their family either. Their neighbours also because they are all afraid. Because everyone wants to come out of this situation and go ahead. And those who behave like that, nobody wants to get near them. Even their children are…. There are many children here like that, whose parents are like that. Even other children avoid these children. They say that his mother will come and fight; his father will come and fight.

Class IV Maam, MCD School 1 Girls Shift:: And then after 6 O’clock or 7 O’clock everyday, they drink and beat their wives and then the next morning the kids comes and tells us that there had been a fight at home. At times, the kids won’t come to school because their parents fought.

Class V Sir, MCD School 1 Boys Shift: They don’t have proper place to stay either they live… (in) huts so because of that their routine life is disturbed. So they could not behave normally.
Research supports the teachers’ suggestion that factors such as alcoholism (and drugs) fuel domestic violence (Leonard & Blane, 1992; Rao, 1997 and Bhatt, 1998). Domestic violence in India remains a critical issue, with 40% of married women experiencing domestic violence in their lifetime, and 30% in the last year alone (Kalokhe et al, 2017). Feminist scholars have shown that masculinity and domestic violence are closely interlinked (Duvvury and Nayak, 2002 and Hamberger et al., 1997). Men raised in patriarchal families— that encourage traditional gender roles— are more likely to abuse their intimate partners (Malamuth et al., 1995; Martin et al, 2002). Low levels of education and poverty are also said to increase the likelihood of domestic violence (Gerstein, 2000). The violence that existed in some working class families in the school community contributed towards stereotypical constructions of ‘working class’ masculinities as violent and dangerous. This reflects global media and NGO discourses, emerging in the wake of high profile incidences of violence against women, that have tended to classify working class Indian masculinity as pathological in what Goswami (2014) calls ‘hetero-imperial masculinity’. In MCD schools, rather than considering the social nature of these problems, there was a tendency to view problems in the family as being the result of a working class pathology. Given their pathology, these parents- and their children- were avoided by others in the community.

Mothers in undeserving poor families were often represented simplistically as being innocent but passive and burdened by the poor decisions of the head of the household (the father). Research in the UK has shown how working class mothers are ridiculed for having ‘weak’ morals. Mothers tended to be presented as the weak, helpless victims of the home environment (Tyler, 2008). While teachers were more sympathetic towards mothers- than they were fathers- they suggested that because they went to work they were neglecting their duties as a mother. Their employment obligations were said to mean that they were often absent from home- their rightful place as a mother (Donner, 2008):

**Research Partner:** What is the family atmosphere of these children whose fathers are rickshaw pullers, mothers are housemaids?
Principals, MCD School 2: Out of 10 such families only 4 are good.

Research Partner: You are not able to teach them anything?

Principals, MCD School 2: No. they don’t have time. They get up in one room in the morning they go for work. They make their tiffins or they might not even do that. And some parents are alcoholics. They don’t take any care of the children. Mothers also go to work in the morning and they don’t care for their children. They earn for their children, they want their children to become educated, but they don’t take any care of their children.

Scholars have shown that the middle class family is a site for physical and ideological reproduction through parenting practices (Donner, 2016). In this extract, the principal highlights the expectations that parents (mothers) would ‘make their tiffins’ but ‘might not even do that’. Her suggestion that parents ‘don’t take any care of the children’ is followed by a focus on mothers who ‘also go to work’ and ‘don’t care for their children’. This indicates that school staff ‘subscribe to middle class norms of ‘modern motherhood’ in which women proudly withdraw from work to take care of their children (Donner, 2016). Teachers and principals in MCD schools relayed middle class constructions of motherhood within which mothers were expected to take on the dominant role in ‘shaping’ children- a role that is only realisable in certain families (where economic circumstances allow) (Donner, 2016):

Class II Ma'am, MCD School 1 Girls’ Shift: And then there’s security that makes a lot of difference. For instance, when I send my child to school I take care of everything; he has to study and everything.

In this extract, Class II Ma’am describes how she ensured that everything was prepared for her child (unlike mother’s in the school community). Several teachers
suggested that teaching was viewed as an ideal job for a mother because it wasn’t full time and enabled them to live up to their family responsibilities:

**Class IV Maam, MCD School 1 Girls’ Shift:**  
*I used to work in an office. I like all that file work. It was a Full time job. But my mother wanted me to do teaching… she thinks that for women, a full time job is not good so you should go on teaching.*

This extract demonstrates the pressures that women are under to pursue particular careers that will enable them to maintain their responsibilities within the family. Research has show that for the middle-classes in India, parenting is one of the many practices that differentiate themselves from the poor and the upper class (Donner, 2009).

Although teachers expressed some concern for mothers and children in the school community, there was a strong moral undertone to their explanations of the families behaviour. In defining the undeserving poor through their violence, bad behaviour and carelessness the middle class are favourably positioned as having the ‘right taste’ and aptitude for education. An important element of this is responsibilisation (Rose, 1996). The failure of the undeserving poor in the community to enact ‘normative selfhood’ is their own pathology and- even when they want their children to be educated- this behaviour ensures that the failure of their children to realise their future is their own doing (Allen, 2008).

**5.3.4 Othering the MCD School Community: Middle Class Morality**

The reckless, disturbed home life of the undeserving poor was said to be compounded by the fact that parents were not interested in education. Some staff acknowledged that this disinterest was a result of the challenges that parents faced trying to ensure that the family could survive; yet, for others, parents simply didn’t value- or care enough about- their children or their child’s education:
All they want is security… (they say to us) “You take care of them, thrash them, you manage them, do whatever you want to do”. It’s not important for the parents that their children learn and become progressive. It’s not important for them.

I don’t get any problem but they are not able to concentrate much. If many students are unable to come then, it’s because of the parents’ carelessness many times. We have a little problem to interact with them. Even after calling they don’t come many times.

Here atmosphere is good, studies are good, government has given many facilities, teachers are also good, they are doing quite well only If the parents look after their children more then there will be pressure on the children. It is not for our benefit, they are their children. The students will feel the pressure, even the teachers, staffs will be under pressure and the children will have a better future. This is what I want.

And over the period of time most of the children, I don’t know, uhh they are not serious, their parents are not serious, they don’t have any backup and uh since I have come from South Delhi; those children are much more serious than these people who don’t have their parents at home when they go home who will guide them with instructions like-you can’t just play, you’ll also have to study. So, gradually uh they are not serious. And it’s only us who are serious.

Staff doubted the sincerity of parents and the extent to which they “really” wanted their child to be educated. These extracts contain a number of moral judgements in which the working-class Other is positioned as being disinterested in their child’s education, being too casual/careless and failing to provide adequate guidance. These moral evaluations do the work of justifying the quality of the school experience in these MCD schools and locating the blame for any issues in the schools with the school...
community. The school ‘facilities’ and ‘teaching staff’ are ‘good’ and ‘serious’ but the school community ‘are not serious’ about education.

Some teachers in MCD schools suggested that rather than wanting to send their children to school, a number of parents were purely motivated by the financial support they received from the government (in the form of scholarships/payments for sending disadvantaged students/girls to school):

**Class III Maam, MCD School 2:** Yes, it is positive. Every parent is becoming aware. At least they try to send them even the circumstances are totally different. They are not able to reach the level of education, but at least they try their best. But still there are some parents who are coming here from the village, their basic motto is to earn money. They bring their children so that they could make money out of them.

**Class IV Maam, MCD School 1 Girls Shift:** [crosstalk] very knowledgeable about their rights but they don’t want to study because they get readymade food from the Government. All the policies favour them and they don’t have to study or toil for their livelihood so they don’t want to toil.

From this perspective, the undeserving poor were said to be very knowledgeable about their rights (but not much else) and were abusing the welfare and support that they received from the government. Despite being earlier criticised for being absent from their children’s lives because they are at work, here government policies and provisions were said to be discouraging the undeserving poor from working hard or ‘toil(ing)’ for their livelihood and their child’s education:
Class II Maam, MCD School 1 Girls Shift: We have made a class who is waiting for others to change for them. We are not creating individuals who are self-sustained and can bring changes for themselves. We are creating a class which is simply sitting down with their mouths wide open, waiting for someone to feed them. We are creating those individuals. This is the biggest evil that politics has brought upon our society... Why can they not toil for themselves?

Research Partner: Are you saying that, ultimately, the government supporting poor people isn’t really empowering?

Class IV Maam, MCD School 1 Girls Shift: Unless you make a person learn to earn his own livelihood, how are you empowering him? Providing money is not empowering. It’s simply creating beggars. To remove begging is by empowering them to get jobs not by giving them money. The politicians are doing that. This is what the government wants to do. So that people are always dependent on them. This is how they are creating a class.

According to this teacher, individuals are responsible for their own success and structural constraints are irrelevant. This reflects recent (neoliberal) policy shifts in India (Chapter 2) that locate responsibility for the education of children with the individual and the family. Drawing on neoliberal discourses of individualised responsibility, teachers in the school rely on a particular model of the (individualised) self as enterprising, reflexive, autonomous and self-regulating. The failure to enact this ‘normative selfhood’ is said to be the result of individual pathology (Lawler 2005, Allen 2008). Reflecting neoliberal discourses relating to the ‘underclass’ or welfare ‘dependency’- similar to those that have led to the personal typology of the ‘chav’ in the UK (Sveinsson, 2009)- teachers describe parents in the school community as ‘beggars’ and ‘backward’ individuals who have been ‘created’ by government overindulgence. Disgust plays an important role in the production and maintenance of these class distinctions (Lawler, 2005; Elias, 2000).

In the context of educational polices that have shifted responsibility onto the family (Maithreyi & Sripakhash, 2018), teachers and principals in MCD schools, hailed the family as the formative site through which competent personhood is cultivated. It was said to be the parents’ (especially a mother’s) duty to ensure that children were able
to capitalise on schooling- and the new economic opportunities that were available (Donner, 2018). Welfare state principles of need and mutual obligation were deemed to be detrimental to families in the community who instead simply needed to take responsibility for their obligations as parents. Rather than understanding the challenges that students faced in school and inequality/poverty that they faced in terms of historical disadvantage, it was in relation to perceptions of bad parenting- especially of poor families- that these issues were understood. Over and above all other issues, poor parenting, came to be understood as the cause of poor living standards and poor prospects (Gillies 2014).

5.4 Narratives of Childhood: The Pathologisation of Childhood

In their accounts of the community- especially the undeserving poor- teachers tended to normalise poverty and suggest that the cultural deficits of the community had been passed down the generations. This pathologisation of poverty was accompanied by a biologisation that positioned destructive parent practices as damaging to children’s growth and development (Gillies, Edwards & Horsley, 2017). Drawing on developmental psychology discourses, teachers suggested that children were ‘maturing’ before their time:

Class II Maam, MCD School 1 Girls Shift: They are like sponges imbibing everything without segregating what's good for them and what's bad. And this harms them in many manners.

Class IV Maam, MCD School 1 Girls Shift: They become more matured by learning from their environment also

The living conditions and absence of guidance from undeserving poor parents meant that students were ‘imbibing’ their bad behaviour and habits. Given their young age, students were said to be unable to distinguish between what is good and bad and would ‘implement’ violent, destructive and sexual behaviour that they had seen at home (Teacher FGD, MCD School 2). Western Feminist scholars have critiqued this developmental perspective of childhood for its bio-essentialist underpinnings that locate the early years of life in terms of ‘maturational stages’ that require certain forms
of care and attention (Prout, 2011; Ribbens MCarthy and Edwards, 2011, p. 21 & p. 143). Within the psychology of childhood normative notions of childhood and child development have led to the creation of ‘abnormal’, ‘deviant’ and deficit child behaviours/ childhoods (Rose, 1999, p.146). This male and ‘Western’ perspective of childhood has also been challenged for producing pathologisation discourses in the context of India (Balagopalan, 2008; Sriprakash, 2015).

In MCD schools, teachers employed notions of a normative/universal child subject and a deficient, poor child (as discussed in Chapter 4) to describe how children were impacted by their home environment:

**Class IV Maam, MCD School 2:**
Children from small family come here so they have their mind set like that. They live in one room where all people are sleeping together parents and children both. Whatever they look, they set their mentality according to it. If a child of 8 or 9 year is taking drugs, it’s just because the children older than him is taking. Sexually also whatever they see there, are implementing it here. The children of age 6 and 7 are doing such things we can’t tell. All these problems we are facing.

...  

**Class II Maam, MCD School 1 Girls Shift:**
They become more matured by learning form their environment also.

**Class IV Maam, MCD School 1 Girls Shift:**
You can say pre-mature. They have one room houses and they witness everything, everyday. So, they get matured before time. They enter their pubic ages before time. The hormonal changes we witness in them comes to the kids from private schools much later. The emotional trauma is there for all of them. I have seen them start their menstruation cycle before time, sometimes as early as standard 3. Which does not happen very often. This happens because they go through all these mental trauma everyday. And I can say that we are able to teach them in spite of all this. At the end of it; we are like Mothers to them.

Teachers echo the concerns raised in media discourses that ‘children’ are in danger of going through puberty early. Since puberty is viewed as signalling the end of
childhood, early puberty is equated with the loss of childhood (Postman, 1994). In this case, teachers in the Girls’ Shift of MCD school 1 linked this loss with moral concerns about precocious ‘sexualisation’ (Roberts, 2013). Posner (2006, p. 320) suggests that the ‘underlying the agenda’ of most research and debate regarding the causes and consequences of early puberty is a drive to control and limit adolescent girls’ sexuality.

While girls in MCD Schools are depicted as passive victims of their home environment, boys are viewed as actively replicating the drug abuse and sexual behavior that they have learnt from their parents. In these extracts, childhood is pathologised in ways that are gendered with girls being ‘sexualised’ too early and boys adopting abusive and sexually inappropriate behavior at a young age. These perspectives echo neo-colonial and neo-imperial discourses that position Indian (working class) men as degenerate and women as oppressed and victimised (Durham, 2014).

Alongside the damaging effects of their lives at home, childhoods were said to be under threat from cultural changes that had taken place over the last few decades. Scholars have shown that debates over what constitutes ‘Indian’ as opposed to ‘Western’ culture have intensified in post-liberalisation, globalised India (Fernandes, 2006; Oza, 2012; Lewis and Martin, 2015). The rise of a consumer culture has been accompanied by changes to the structure of the family and new spaces and technologies presenting ‘Western’ modernity (Iyer, 2017). Some school teachers felt that changes to ‘society’ (especially the family) and media exposure had contributed towards the death of childhood (Posner, 2006, p.320):

**Research Partner:** Why is it then that before children were more respectful and obedient and now that is less likely?

**Class IV Maam, MCD School 1 Girls Shift:** Because there was a continuous process of learning from their elders. There was no media or books to learn from. We were constantly learning from our elders...

**Class II Maam, MCD School 1 Girls Shift:** There were joint families and the society hadn’t changed so much, the knowledge explosion wasn’t so much and the media exposure was not there. So, all these things have mattered.

**Research Partner:** Have they mattered in only the negative way or has it mattered in a positively way also?
Class II Maam, MCD School 1 Girls Shift: Positive is also there, anything cannot be without a positive or a negative aspect. But the negatives have been more. For instance, you tend to give knowledge to a 4-5 year old kid and he’s left to himself to explore. So, that’s very dangerous, you cannot let a child put his hand onto a fire and let him learn that way. That’s a hard way to learn.

... 

NGO Teacher 1, MCD school 2: Change has come we say that the atmosphere has deteriorated. Because of over exposures to tv, video etc children have come to forget their childhood and they become matured at a young age. Compared to us today’s children even a very small child he knows everything, he maintains a mobile. We didn’t have mobile in our childhood, so we didn’t do it or we didn’t have a computer so we couldn’t do it but we were very innocent. Even when we had become 15, 16 years of age we hardly knew anything. We were very simple. Today’s children know everything. Girls today are very smart. We used to hesitate to ask for something we used to feel shy. But today’s girls and boys feel very free to talk to each other. Their childhood has ended. When we were small we spent our time playing. So you are saying that because of technology and distractions the innocence has ended. That childlike innocence is not there.

The teachers’ describe how Indian modernity has been negatively impacted by the influence of Westernisation and globalised media. Rather than learning at a steady pace from their parents, children had more freedom to find things out for themselves and were at risk of discovering unsuitable western/cosmopolitan information that would damage them. These pernicious (cosmopolitan), external influences were said to take children away from their authentic (traditional/‘Indian’) culture and towards questionable moral behaviour. Recent Western feminist debates about the ‘end of childhood’ have engaged with concerns about the ‘tweenie’ (a child of 8 to 14 years old) and ‘the secularisation of children’s identities and the commodification of their cultures’ (Harris, 2009, p. 213). Just as the teachers in MCD school 1 focus on the early menstruation of girls, the NGO teacher suggests that this generational change has gendered implications. The NGO teacher is troubled by the new found confidence
of girls- ‘we used to hesitate to ask for something we used to feel shy’- and by the ease with which boys and girls interact. This illustrates the gendered nature of these concerns about the loss of innocence and the end of childhood, and the way in which Indian morality/respectability is defined- in this instance- in opposition to the excesses of cosmopolitanism.

Through their concerns about the loss of childhood, teachers constitute children as ‘at risk’ (Balagopalan, 2008; Hopkins, 2015). Children in MCD schools are ‘framed in terms of a new moral discourse of saving childhoods’ where children are located in the ‘spaces of bourgeois childhood’ (Balagopalan, 2008, p. 268). Scholars have shown narratives of ‘child saving’ have been employed to justify interventions aimed at developing ‘children’s physical, mental and moral well-being’ (Beck, 1978; Cunningham, 1991; Hopkins & Sriprakash, 2015). Child-saving emerges in response to concerns about the structure of the family and the proper socialisation of children (Beck, 1978). Drawing on these narratives, teachers in MCD schools describe how in the absence of sufficient guidance at home they are like ‘mothers’ or ‘parents’ who try to ‘save’ children from their troubled home lives. Gillies suggests that parenting ‘remains the formative and largely uncontested medium through which the state is actively seeking to shape self-regulating, neo-liberal subjects’. This neoliberal paternalism emerges from the emphasis on the family in human capital production and the importance of parenting proficiency to this process.

5.4.1 Child Saving in MCD Schools

The perceived deficiency of families in the community meant that teachers felt that many students were only capable of low levels of achievement. Levels of academic learning in MCD schools are low and there is widespread concern about the quality of education in MCD schools (Mahajan and Goyal 2005; Juneja 2011). The principal of MCD school 2 explained that only ‘5 or 6 students’ in the whole school were capable of getting a scholarship for academic achievement (over 55% in exams) whereas in the past- in a different school- 5 or 6 children per class were doing so (Principal, MCD School 2). In MCD school 1 the Girls Shift, a teacher suggested that a minority of students were ‘bright’ and that the majority were going to struggle in the future:
Research Partner: What do you think is the future of these students?

Class IV Maam, MCD School 1 Girls Shift: I feel there only be these 10-12 percent bright kids. The rest are here just to pass their time, they might somehow get their certificates but I don’t think it’s going to be of much help with their careers.

Research Partner: What do you think they will be doing in the future?

Class II Maam, MCD School 1 Girls Shift: What their parents have been doing, may be a level ahead but that’s about it. I don’t think they’ll go very far in life. They’ll probably end up selling at Dominos or being a Bus Conductor, that’s not satisfying. We put in so much of time and effort and this is the kind of return we get. Just as we have constraints; judging from outside, I’m sure the senior secondary also has its own set of problems. So I do not see these kids going too far in their lives. I can’t expect them to become an IAS Officer or a Doctor. A rare few might, but not the rest.

Teachers felt that the challenge of working with MCD school communities had been exacerbated by policies that had meant that students graduated to the next class irrespective of performance (no detention policy) (Teacher FGD, MCD School 2; Teacher FGD MCD School 1 Girls’ Shift). The introduction of English language medium classes in each year group were also said to prevent students from learning since all subjects were undertaken in a language that they did not understand. Teachers also felt that their efforts were undermined by changes to the school textbooks, incorporating a child-centric, activity-based approach to learning, that had ‘diluted’ the students’ studies and been very light on subject content (Teacher FGD, MCD School 2; Teacher FGD MCD School 1 Girls’ Shift). Additional non-teaching activities, such as conducting surveys in the local community, completing registration forms for students and other administrative duties were also cited as a burden.

To address both the shortcomings of the community and government policies that caused problems in school, teachers had adapted and altered the curriculum to suit the perceived needs of students in MCD schools:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class II Maam, MCD School 1 Girls Shift:</th>
<th>Our Principal is very flexible so that is a very big positive point for us. He doesn’t rush us.</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Research Partner:</td>
<td>When you say “he’s flexible” do you mean he gives the teacher more trust…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class II Maam, MCD School 1 Girls Shift:</td>
<td>Full independence to do whatever we feel like. That’s a very big point for us because in other schools you are supposed to adhere to the syllabus and in 30 minutes you cannot clear a concept most of the times. Every child is at a different pace of study so you cannot force it down.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Partner:</td>
<td>In case you are not able to complete the syllabus given the different pace at which children picks up the concepts; will it create some kind of a problem?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class II Maam, MCD School 1 Girls Shift:</td>
<td>No, there’s no problem because I am my own master for that matter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class II Maam, MCD School 1 Girls Shift:</td>
<td>We are supposed to do that, but then…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class IV Maam, MCD School 1 Girls Shift:</td>
<td>We keep in mind that we have to do it but it’s not necessary that we have to do it.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

While teachers still worked to the curriculum, this greater level of flexibility led to a range of similar changes across the different MCD schools. In each school, national curriculum activities had been reduced to only one or two subject lessons per day. The perception that students needed ‘all round development’ meant that teachers focused instead on other activities including ‘drawing’, ‘playing sport’ or ‘play’ during the remainder of the school day. Despite these changes, teachers still felt that students struggled:

| Class II Maam, MCD School 1 Girls Shift: | We train them to do their rough work and their fair work and also to keep their writing clean but every time they go on a holiday they are back to square one. They forget everything that we have taught and trained them with and they are back to being as good as what they used to be back in standard one. |
Teachers’ frustrations with the perceived inability of students to learn or be ‘trained’ appeared to lead to the frequent use of a rigid, rote-based lessons. According to students, lessons were often revolved around memorisation and students would copy questions and the answers off of the board and in to their notebooks:

Research Partner: What do you get from the book?
Saif, MCD School 1 Boys Shift: The book we get lot of knowledge
Research Partner: What do you have in the book?
Saif, MCD School 1 Boys Shift: Madam in the book we have a poem and we have to read it we have to memorise it.

Research Partner: What do you like about lessons?
Rohit, MCD School 1 Boys’ Shift: Doing questions and answers.
Research Partner: Doing question answers?
Rohit, MCD School 1 Boys’ Shift: We can remember it better when we do question answers
Research Partner: After you have read the chapter in class what do you do?
Sonali, MCD School 1 Girls Shift: Then she gives us work, and then we answer questions and write the answers on the blackboard then we note down in our books

Research Partner: What do you do to study?
Simran, MCD School 1 Girls Shift: Ma’am, they check our work and then read the book and make us memorise it. …
Research Partner: What you study?
Focus Group Discussion, MCD School 2:

Research Partner: How do you study that? Like you do a reading, question, answers or learn? What do you most?
Focus Group Discussion, MCD School 2: We do question answers and then learning. We are learning (memorising the questions and answers) the most.
The practice of ‘questions answers’ and a rote-based approach to academic learning in some lessons meant that interactions between students and teachers were sometimes limited during lessons. Sometimes students would undertake question answers in one subject for the whole day:

*I was not able to start the new topic because all the students were slow in writing the question answers from the black-board in their copies. They took the whole day to copy it from the blackboard* (Teacher Diary, Class IV Ma’am, MCD School 1 GS)

Despite relaxing the curriculum and giving students simple tasks, teachers felt that many students were simply not capable or not willing to learn. While teachers noted that students were able to contribute to discussions about their day to day lives (Teacher Diary, Class IV Ma’am, MCD School 1 GS), they struggled with the ‘basics’ of mathematics, reading and writing (Teacher Diary, Class IV Ma’am, MCD School 1 GS) and were said to receive no support from home (see section 5.33). This appeared to have led to a situation where teachers structured lessons around rote-based activities- like copying from the board- or left students to play given their inability to engage with formal curriculum. Two teachers in MCD school 1- Class IV Maam and Class II Maam, explained that teachers in the school were the ‘cream’-the best teachers- in Delhi but they were dealing with the worst students:

| Ben: | When you said ‘cream’ do you mean the best teachers? |
| Class IV Maam, MCD School 1 Girls Shift: | The best teachers. |
| Ben: | Why is that the best teachers are in government schools? |
| Class IV Maam, MCD School 1 Girls Shift: | Since you go through a Written Test, a Merit and 2 Interviews. After all these screening you are left with just the cream. So the cream is there but the cream is not utilised properly. How much can you compare the students of government schools with those of private schools? Not even 1%. Why? |
| Ben: | The level is not there. |
| Class IV Maam, MCD School 1 Girls Shift: | In private schools, the level is (good) there? |
These teachers suggest that their skills are not put to good use in MCD schools and that they would be better able to ‘utilise’ their skills by working with students in the private sector who were far more capable. Students in MCD schools were viewed as having very little academic potential and so teachers were essentially wasting their talents. Sriprakash (2015) uses Bernstein’s (2000) notion of pedagogic recontextualisation to argue that ‘pedagogic discourses are produced by bringing social practices and struggles into relation with instructional codes (how knowledge is selected, sequenced, paced and evaluated)’. Pedagogic discourse operates as a recontextualising principle ‘which selectively appropriates, relocates, refocuses and relates other discourses to constitute its own order’ (Bernstein, 2000, p.33 in Sriprakash, 2015). Influenced by the perceived deficits of the community and the perception that many students in the community were ‘uneducable’ moral development played an important role in the pedagogic discourse within these MCD schools.

5.4.2 Teaching Middle class Morals in MCD Schools

Across the schools, teachers described moral development as being a pressing issue:

- **Principal, MCD school 1**
  - **Boys Shift:**
  - Moral education should be widespread. Children should also be asked talk about moral education. It should be accommodated at the time of prayer so that all students should know about it. Before we were only telling individual students about it. Now we call all of them together and tell them during prayer.

- **Research Partner:**
- Mam, what is the most important thing to learn in school? What is the most essential thing for them to learn?

- **Principal, MCD school 2:**
- Firstly, moral values.
... 

**Research Partner:** So, when you say Moral Education and you don’t do it now, do you not teach it now because you have other subjects? 

**Class II Ma’am, MCD School 1 Girls Shift:** We are doing it but in our own manner. We should be given proper books, time and resources. We have time constraints and teachers are bound to other duties.

**Class IV Ma’am, MCD School 1 Girls Shift:** And there should also be scope. Some material, like a book, which they should have by their side so that they can refer to it to learn what happens when this happens. They only learn from their own experience and whatever we can teach them. Their parents don’t teach them anything.

...

**Class V Sir, MCD School 1 Boys Shift:** For them manners is very important as they live at such place where they learn bad habits in their atmosphere. They also learn those things. Like there is abusing and many other bad habits which they adopt. So first of all they should be told about bad habit and manners so that they could be aware of it. They should be given such education that they can save themselves from that atmosphere.

To ‘save’ students from the atmosphere of their home lives, teachers imparted moral lessons that were directed at addressing the perceived deficits of the community-appearance, behaviour and morality. Students were said to be learning bad habits that needed to be corrected through moral development. Some teachers suggested establishing moral development as a curriculum subject- with books and resources-given how pressing the issue was (Research Journal, December, 2015). One teacher in the School, Class II ma’am in MCD School 1, was studying for PhD in education with the title, “Impact of Moral Education For The Children In Government School”. Although many students in the school could not achieve appropriate levels of academic learning, teachers engaged in these moral activities to ensure that (rural, ‘backward’) students could learn to behave in a manner conducive to the urban environment of Delhi. Given rapid transformations that were taking place in the city, teachers indicated that it was imperative that people learned to become responsible for themselves and for the city that they lived in:
Class III Sir, MCD School 1 Boys Shift: but it is not possible if government alone is doing that (making the city better). Government alone cannot do all the things. If they make a park here which is more beautiful than Singapore but if people don't maintain it and make it bad, then it cannot happen. If the people remain aware and they understand their responsibility then everything can be upgraded. What can the government can do alone? Every person should be aware.

In his desire to ‘upgrade’ Delhi, the teacher draws on neoliberal discourses of aspirational/entrepreneurial citizenship to highlight the need for individuals to work take responsibility for the achievement of state goals. In doing so, he appears to suggest that the reason that India is not like Singapore is not due to a lack of investment- or mass poverty- but because of a lack of awareness among ‘people’ about how to take care of the city. Teachers’ desire to ensure that students were morally responsiblised led to ongoing guidance and instruction about how students should behave. The start of the day during assembly- and prayers- was a particularly important time. Each morning the day started with a (Hindu) prayer and ‘the pledge’ where students pledged their allegiance to India. Through moral education, teachers appeared to be focused on ensuring that student behavior was aligned with normative (hindu) middle class notions of citizenship:

Principal, MCD School 2: Yes, firstly in the morning when I come in the prayer ground, I tell these children what they should do first thing in the morning. I teach them that first thing to do in the morning is to touch the feet of parents, take their blessings. They need moral education. Then I have to tell them that if your parents are not helping you, when they don’t have the time, then you do it yourself. E.g. if your uniform is soiled then when you go home and take it off. If it is to be washed then you put some soap in water and put the dress in that. After sometime wash it yourself.
Research Partner: That means if the mother is not available to do the work then do it yourself...

Principal, MCD School 2: Yes, I tell them to do their own work. For studies, I say that don’t see the TV for long. When you are going home from school don’t destroy anybody’s property. Don’t pick flowers or leaves. Don’t ask for water from anybody. Go to your home then have it. Sometimes children push each other, they get hurt. So they should not do that. They should not play dangerous games. They should not climb walls. These small things we have to teach them.

Through these extracts the principal describes her instructions for students to learn ‘Indian’ values - such as respect for elders- and the need for students to become individually responsibilised for their own hygiene, appearance and behavior. Similar lessons were evident across the schools and they appeared to play an important role in shaping students’ identities:

Zainab Interview, MCD School 1 Girls’ Shift Girls Shift: We should plan properly. We should be clean we should live together ...we should not fight and we should respect elders.

Archana, MCD School 1 Girls Shift: We need to respect our elders. We don’t have to fight and we should not scatter the litter all over.

Dinesh, MCD School 2: We should not litter around and should keep place clean.

Research partner: How do you become a good boy, who is called a good boy?

Vikram, MCD School 1 Boys Shift: The one who is clean… we should be good, we should not fight, and we should not throw garbage

Aisha, MCD School 2: Mam throw garbage in garbage bin…Mam, he should listen to me, and he should not fight with others, talk politely with others....

For both boys and girls across the different MCD schools, moral lessons impressed upon them the need to be clean, respect elders and get on with others/avoiding fights.
Through these extracts, students appear to be guided by teachers into middle class projects of self-making (Allen, 2008). Teachers (and students) in the school expressed a sense that it was ‘a moral imperative’ for students to show that they were ‘working on their own development’ and ‘establishing value in their own subjectivity’.

5.4.3 A Hindu Moral Framework

Religion played a important role in the efforts of school staff to regulate the behaviour of students in MCD schools. In each school, assembly took place each morning and the national flag was raised in the school. At that time the principal of each MCD school led students in a Hindu prayer. All school staff in the school were Hindu and in both schools, pictures of Hindu religious figures were hung in various places around the school building. Staff claimed to be establishing a particular form of religious pluralism within the school by discouraging students from differentiating between festivals/events as ‘Hindu’ or ‘Muslim’. Staff said that they wanted students to instead to celebrate all festivals together and live in harmony:

**Class IV Maam, MCD School 1 Girls Shift:** When they talk about festivals they differentiate them by calling a Hindu festival or a Muslim festival and I found it shocking. So I teach them that we should all celebrate all the festival together and in harmony. But if you observe, you’ll see that these discriminations have been injected into their head by their parents. We see that the Muslim students from the 5th standard avoid joining hands in prayer during the assembly, they will avoid the assembly altogether.

The idea of harmony and unity was something that appeared to be important to moral education within the school. Maam suggests that Muslim students have had ideas ‘injected into their head’ that leads them to have ‘discriminations’ against others. In particular the students no longer want to join in the daily Hindu prayers. The idea of students bonding tougher and living in harmony appeared to be a regular theme in MCD schools. One teacher described a moral lesson in which she had taught students the importance of students being in ‘union’ together:
I discussed about a story which gives us a moral: Union is strength. Through this story, I tried to say to them (students) if we live together like a bundle of sticks then no outsiders can come and take advantage of your disunity. (Teacher Diary, Class III Maam MCD School 2).

The particular understanding of religious pluralism in MCD schools, appeared to be one in which students from other religions would join in the everyday Hindu practices of the school community. Staff were particularly troubled by the signs of disobedience from (Muslim) students who refused to engage in prayers and or use language associated with Hinduism. It was this ‘indoctrination’ of Muslim children that most ‘shocked’ staff in the school:

Class II Maam, MCD School 1 Girls Shift: They (Muslim students) will not utter the word “Bhagwan” (the concept of abstract god for Hindus) because they are in doctrine from home that they are not supposed to do that.

Class IV Maam, MCD School 1 Girls Shift: This is how they have been influenced at home. But after they’ve come to school they’ve seen that that’s not how things are supposed to be like. They’ve started respecting festivals from other religions and they have changed now. But when they’d come initially, they were very resistant as though it was a very scary thing for them.

Given the ‘resistance’ of Muslim students to engage in Hindu practices, school staff had made efforts to correct the behaviour of students so that they were tolerant of other faiths (Hinduism). To this effect, staff were said to have had positive results:

Research Partner: When you teach them, does it make a difference?

Class IV Maam, MCD School 1 Girls Shift: Yes, it makes a difference.

Class II Maam, MCD School 1 Girls Shift: In class they are fine.

Class IV Maam, MCD School 1 Girls Shift: And, at that point of time, they don’t even listen to their parents. In fact, they go home and tell their parents that that’s not how it’s supposed to be.
Staff felt that religious identities had become a big issue in ‘Delhi and other big cities’ because religion had been politicised. Compared to their childhood- when they ‘didn't even know what a Muslim was or a Christian was’- these issues were now ‘prominent’. There was a sense that these had become an issue because religious minorities were given ‘special’ treatment in India (MCD School 2, Principal Interview). While research illustrates that religious minorities (especially Muslims) are socially disadvantaged in India, staff felt that children should not be given benefits on the basis of religion:

**Class II Maam, MCD School 1 Girls Shift:** I feel one more reason behind this is the way minorities are given special facilities. Every day we have count the number of Muslims and Sikhs and ask them to come forward with their forms (for special benefits). Why do we separate them on the basis of religion?

Through these discussions and the religious practices in the schools (staff were Hindu and Hindu prayers were undertaken each day during assembly), it became clear that Hinduism operated as the religious backdrop to MCD schools. At the same time, staff expressed disapproval of overt displays of religion and felt that religion when politically motivated was divisive:

**Class II Maam, MCD School 1 Girls Shift:** Unless we do that, we will not get the feeling of oneness, the divide will be there that we are Indians. We are Indians but then we are a part of the global. We are humans first, aren’t we? Once that feeling comes, all the fights will slowly start subsiding. We have created divided so much that unless ISS raises a flag we are Muslims, RSS raises a flag-we are Hindu. Why should we do that? Why should we limit people to this? They have to broaden their boundaries.

Given their concerns about Hindu nationalist organisations such as the RSS, staff in the school fostered a more modest, ‘diluted’ form of Hinduism in the schools in which, Hindu practices were maintained but downplayed:
A child suggested that we celebrate Laxmi Puja. I said why do we have to do a Puja? Pujas are done by the elders. We will only make Rangoli and only do things that kids are supposed to do. Why will we offer any prayers, we’ve already done that in school in the morning.

Research Partner: So you diluted the situation this way?

Class IV Maam, MCD School 1 Girls Shift: That’s right.

Students in MCD schools were expected to conform to this child-friendly form of Hinduism. For staff in the MCD schools, this form of Hinduism was not viewed as a religion as such, instead it was simply equated Indian culture. Staff engaged in Hindu prayers and ceremonies while at the same time viewing the school as pluralistic. Although staff were quick to discourage overt displays of religious behaviour—especially those that went against the soft Hinduism implemented in the school— they found in Hindu prayers and religious festivals opportunities to reinforce the moral values that they expected students to adopt. It was in this way that teacher’s interpretations of Hinduism came to provide the foundation for morality and values in the school. Moral education at IES appears to be shaped by notions of the normative Hindu, middle class citizen subject.

5.5 Gendered Narratives of Childhood In MCD schools

5.5.1 A Constrained ‘Can do’ Femininity

In MCD schools, teachers responded to questions about gender inequality in the Indian education by suggesting that girls were now doing better than boys in school (Jones and Myhill, 2004). Rather than being disadvantaged, some teachers suggested that girls were now ‘studying more’ than boys, to have ‘better learning power’ and to be ‘more sincere’ in their studies:

Ben: Are some girls prevented from coming to school?

Principal, MCD School 1 Girls Shift: No, nothing like that is there. Here girls are studying more (than boys).
Ben: Okay…

Principal, MCD School 1 Girls Shift: Here girls are studying more. If a family has 2 or 3 children, girls are there then their girl is studying more than their boy, she is taking more education. …

Research Partner: Madam, both girls and boys study here. Is there any difference because of the gender?

Principal, MCD School 1 Girls Shift: There are. Girls have better learning power. Some boys are sincere, but girls are more sincere. Boys are naughty. Girls can sit at one place, but you cannot make the boys sit for long.

…

Class V Maam, MCD School 2: Girls are more interested in studies. They do their work most sincerely.
Research Partner: The boys don’t do their work?

Class IV Maam, MCD School 2: They do their work very fast.
Research Partner: They do their work?

Class IV Maam, MCD School 2: Yes, they do, but they do it very fast.
Research Partner: They are always in a hurry to do the work.

Class IV Maam, MCD School 2: They are in a hurry.
Research Partner: So when work is given to girls, they will make effort to do it?

Class V Maam, MCD School 2: They will do less work and then will talk and then again do little of it. Like this they do. While boys just finish it off in one stroke and then do all things.

In these extracts, teachers attribute the success of girls to the fact that they were able to control their bodies, were more sincere in their efforts and more diligent than boys. These suggestions mirror findings elsewhere that a compliant femininity and rebellious masculinity are often employed to describe behavioural differences between boys and girls in school (Sharma, 2014 in Thapan, 2014). Teacher’s suggestions positioned girls as ideal students who had the right characteristics to succeed in school. These narratives of girls’ success are consistent with the notion of ‘can do’ girls in critical girlhood studies (Harris, 2004). Scholars have argued that ‘in a time of dramatic social, cultural and political transition, young women are being constructed as a vanguard of
new subjectivity’ (Harris, 2004, p.1 in Allan and Charles, 2014). Neoliberal
globalisation is associated with the emergence of a ‘Can do’ femininity, the ideal
e neoliberal subject who is able to take on individual responsibility for social change
(Ringrose, 2013).

The perception of this ‘can do femininity’ was also apparent among a small number of
parents in MCD schools. One parent in MCD school 1 (Girls’ shift) relayed narratives
of the ‘can do’ femininity through a description of the opportunities that were now open
to girls in the school:

Parent FGD, Anita’s
Father, MCD School 1
Girls’ Shift:
Yes they already have lots of scope if they
complete their graduate degree they can do
further studies and do the job like in BPO.
 Mostly young people want to do the job in
BPO. For BPO required degree and fluency or
they can do any technical field but we are not
able to afford medical education or professional
courses like IIT, Engineering because these
courses are very costly. We want they do
Government job on the basis of graduation and
technical work, They can learn or teach to
children because education is mandatory

For Anita’s father, his daughter’s future entailed going to university to complete her
graduate degree following which she would have the option of post-graduate studies,
finding work in business process outsourcing (BPO) or taking a government job.
Anita’s father recognised that her future options would be limited by his financial
circumstances- meaning that she couldn’t apply for the high status professional
courses- but he envisaged her pursuing higher education and employment. The
background of Anita’s family appeared to play an important role in determining the
future that they envisaged for her. Her father was educated to Class 12 and her family
lived a lifestyle that could be described as aspiring middle class- they lived in an
apartment, had the latest mod cons (pen drive LCD) and were planning to ‘buy a car’.
Another student that clearly expressed a ‘can do’ femininity was Rani in MCD school
2. Rani felt that she had her parents support to study until she wanted and pursue the
career of her choice. She was confident in her own ability and had a strong sense of
purpose:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Research Partner:</strong></th>
<th>What do you parents want you to become? Do they tell you that they would like you to become this or that?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rani Interview, MCD School 2:</strong></td>
<td>Ma’am, they tell I’ll let you study till you want to study and what you want to become I’ll support you to become that.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rani Interview, MCD School 2:</strong></td>
<td>No, Ma’am, I want to become pilot.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Research Partner:</strong></td>
<td>When you thought that you’ll become pilot, from what age?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rani Interview, MCD School 2:</strong></td>
<td>Ma’am, since the time I was very small.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Research Partner:</strong></td>
<td>Oh, since she was…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rani Interview, MCD School 2:</strong></td>
<td>Ma’am, when my aunt went to Ladakh, she went from there. Then I was thinking… she told she went by airplane there then I told I will definitely sit in airplane means I will definitely fly the plane.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Rani’s ‘can do’ approach to life is made clear through her reaction to hearing about her aunts trip on a plane. Her response is an insistence that she will not only go on a plane one day but that she will ‘fly the plane’. Rani’s ‘can do’ identity again appears to be sustained by a combination of supportive family and by the fact that her wider family circle are engaging in middle class lifestyles- her aunt has flown to Ladakh and her uncle works overseas in the UAE. Rani was also academically successful in school and was pursuing a scholarship for secondary school.

While these two extracts demonstrate the way in which class and gender intersect (alongside other factors) to expand the possible opportunities for girls in MCD schools through a ‘can do’ femininity, other dominant narratives were more inhibiting for girls. Despite their presence in MCD schools, girls were said to be under more restrictions from their family and society. As demonstrated in Chapter 4, many parents in MCD schools said that they sent their girls to school not to prepare them for the future world of work or employment but to ensure that they were able to cope with life in with their in-laws’ family. A number of teachers in MCD school felt that the success of girls was not a result of some new found freedom but instead resulted from the constraints that
they were placed under. The pressures that girls faced in the family home, the restrictions on their movements and the awareness about they had about their future life outside of the home were all said to contribute to the responsibilisation of girls:

Ben: Why is that, why is that the boys are...

Principal, MCD School 1 Girls have in their mind that they have to go to a different house and the quality of sensitivity is more in them. I'm telling you for all girls who are studying, they are more sensitive than boys and the only reason for this is _____ there is a tradition that girls have to go a different house after marriage _____ so they are very sensitive.

Research Partner: So, they have to go to a different house so what's the difference, ____?

Principal, MCD School 1 You are not understanding? Here we have an idiom that if you educate a girl then she manages two houses, one house where she is staying, the other one where she will be going, so both houses...

Research Partner: Okay… why do girls put in so much effort?

Principal, MCD School 1 One thing is they are sincere, the other is in our Indian tradition or Hindu _____ mostly it is believee that house’s work… … girls are made to work at home. So the skill of doing everything by hand is achieved by girls. Even in studies, it’s the same, they get better.

Research Partner: So they get a sense of responsibility?

Principal, MCD School 1 Sense of responsibility gets developed in them.

Research Partner: True fact.

Principal, MCD School 1 The biggest thing is this, she gets self-realised from the very beginning.

Research Partner: Why are girls more sincere?

Principal, MCD School 2: Girls are a little better. In India girls are kept under pressure from the very beginning. They are told that when you go to school or when you come home you are supposed to come straight back. You are to come home, stay there and do the household jobs. They are not supposed to go out. They might see the TV or do other works.
Research Partner: Sometimes they don’t even get the time to see the TV.

Principal, MCD School 2: But anyway it is tried that the girls are… They are kept under responsibilities so that when they grow older they can take more responsibilities.

According to these principals, girls are more ‘sensitive’ and/or ‘sincere’ because their behaviour is closely monitored from a young age and they know that they will go to a ‘different house after marriage’. Sensitivity or sincerity in this context appears to refer to the obedience or servility of girls. Both principals argue that gender is socially constituted through cultural traditions and the pressures that girls are placed under from a very young age. However, the restrictions placed on girls are not viewed as problematic but instead are said to lead girls to become better students (child subjects) and future mothers, capable of empowering/educating her extended family- ‘managing two households’. The result is that girls are ‘self-realised’/ responsibilised from an early age.

Responsibility is evident in neoliberal approaches to education where the onus is on the individual to maximise the opportunities provided by the school (Ringrose, 2007). Walkerdine (2003) has suggested that the ideal neoliberal pupil is associated with both masculine and feminine characteristics (Walkerdine, 2003). In a western context, “reflection”, “caring”, “diligence”, “responsibility” and “introspection” are associated with femininity, “industriousness”, “self-confidence”, “self-reliance” and “assertiveness” are associated with masculinity (Walkerdine 2003). In the context of Delhi MCD schools, the school experience has been shaped by neoliberal notions of responsibility but these appear to have manifested in different ways in this context. For teachers in MCD schools, ‘responsibility’, ‘self-reliance’, ‘industriousness’ and ‘diligence’- masculine and feminine traits in a western context- are all associated with femininity. Girls in MCD schools were viewed as being more suited to schooling than boys because they ‘choose’ to apply themselves to their work, were more motivated, more obedient and easier to teach than boys (Younger et al, 1999). Given that low levels of performance were expected many students in the school, girls were more aligned with teachers’ moral expectations of teachers that students should become self-sufficient, responsible future citizens.
In MCD school’s girls did not appear to be the autonomous, independent subject of neoliberalism but were instead bound by their obligations to the family. Within this narrative, rather than challenging the patriarchal structures that constrain their lives, girls are positioned as benefiting from it. This constrained femininity balances domestic duties with school work; ensures that girls are largely confined to the home and engages in schooling with a firm eye on the future- in which a girl would get married and embark on a life of domesticity. During discussions about why girls were doing better than boys, one teacher suggested that the more restrictions girls were under, the better they tended to study in school:

**NGO Teacher 2, MCD School 2:** I think that people who are stopped from doing any activity are more interested in it. As they don’t give so much exposure to the girls in the field of studies so they are better at it.

This teacher suggested that because girls’ lives were highly regulated, they wanted to make the most of the few opportunities that they had. This also suggests that for students to be considered good students in the MCD school system they have to be highly inhibited and docile. Given the teachers concerns about the damaging effects that media and modernity could have on student’s childhoods, restrictions were viewed as positive- even if they were highly gendered. Constraints on girls were also viewed as necessary given changes to society that had made Delhi more dangerous for girls:

**Research Partner:** What do you think about Delhi? Is it a safe or unsafe place for your children to grow up?

**Zainab’s Mother, Parent, MCD School 1 Girls’ Shift:** No it is unsafe. The same thing (an attack) happened here in our locality with a girl.

**Research Partner:** So you think that more protection needs to be given to our girls? So earlier it was not like this?

**Zainab’s Mother, MCD School 1 Girls’ Shift:** Newer days it’s worse.

**Research Partner:** Was it less earlier? You said that you faced eve teasing..
Zainab’s Mother, MCD School 1 Girls’ Shift: No not me. Earlier not much but newer days a lot. Newer days the internet is easily available so because of it many negative things come in human mind.

... Research Partner: Then do you go to play?

Anita, MCD School 2: Sometimes, not very regularly because place where I live is not a good place, so I go to my grandmother place.

Research Partner: Where you live is not a good place? Why?

Anita, MCD School 2: Because people who live there are Bihari’s, they make lots of noise.

Research Partner: OK, what you feel unsafe?

Anita, MCD School 2: Yes, its not safe.

Zainab’s mother in MCD school 1 suggests that media technology and the introduction of the internet have corrupted people’s minds and created an unsafe environment for girls. She claims- like many participants- that external (western) influences had led to the moral corruption of society and increased violence against women. Archana voices a different narrative that locates blame for increases in crime with migrants who have moved to the city from more disadvantaged states like Bihar. In doing so she echoes concerns raised politicians and the media in Delhi that MCD schools that rural migrants were responsible for dangerous and violent behaviour. Given the number of high profile cases of violence against women it is perhaps unsurprising that these concerns were raised; however, these concerns are also related to efforts to control female sexuality (Iyer, 2017).

The restrictions placed on girls were acknowledged by students in MCD school 2 who explained that boys and girls were different because girls were scared of their parents whereas boys were not. Although this led girls and boys to have different ways of thinking, they were said to be the same in terms of their opportunities for studies:

Research Partner: Why are boys and girls different?

Aisha, MCD School 2: They are different as boys can abuse while girls cannot. They are scared of parents while boys don’t care.
Research Partner: Why they are different?
Dinesh, MCD School 2: We have different thinking.
Research Partner: Are they the same in some things?
Dinesh, MCD School 2: In studies. Previously they don’t let girls study. Even they kill girls and don’t let them live.

Through this extracts we can see that although girls and boys are viewed as behaving in different ways and thinking in different ways, girls are now considered to have the same opportunities in education as boys. Students are aware of a history in which girls were more likely to be unwanted by their family and even ‘killed’. In India, levels of girls’ and women’s enrolment in all levels of education is rising but female infant ratio has simultaneously dropped, with gender-discriminatory views being a force behind sex-selective abortion and gender-discriminatory child-rearing practices (Patel, 2007). In this sense girls and boys were ‘the same’ in terms of their entitlements to study but different in every other way. Students associated these differences with the likely futures that lay ahead:

Dinesh, MCD School 2: When a girl will marry, she will go while we will take money…
Research Partner Deepak says it again, what is the difference?
Dinesh, MCD School 2: When a girl is married, she has to give bribe as we ask. While we take the money and still live in the same house.
Research Partner: When the girls are married, parents have to give money. When boys are married, they remain in their house and they get money… Archana what were you telling?
Aisha, MCD School 2: When the girls are married, they go to another house while the boy remains with their parents.
Research Partner: girls have to go to someone else house with some other family while boys live with their parents…
Aisha, MCD School 2: … In some families boys are loved more than girls. Murmuring continues.

Dinesh simplifies the matrimonial norms in India down to ‘she will go while we will take money’. Through his explanation he describes how boys will stay with the family and
receive money while girls will have to leave and give money/ a ‘bribe’. The interactions concludes with the suggestions that in some families boys are loved more than girls. Through these explanations, marriage appears to provide boys with a sense of privilege and entitlement whereas girls are positioned as being more likely to be vulnerable, unwanted and destined to leave the family. Derné (1995, p. 16) states that the Indian men he studied believed that Hindu practices of arranged marriage, joint families, and restricting women’s movements outside the house “help maintain male privilege by making women docile, obedient servants in their husbands’ families”. One teacher explained that a cultural preference for boys meant that they were ‘spoilt’ and too loved and cared for whereas girls were controlled and given few options:

**NGO Support Teacher 1, MCD School 2:** In our country boys are given a lot of importance boys, boys and boys! Because of this over indulgence they are spoilt. They are always given things even before they need them, loving and caring them more than what is good, and girls are controlled more than it’s required… And the girls know that they have no option. They won’t be allowed outside, they won’t be allowed to go anywhere alone, so when they have to stay at home they study more. Boys have many options, they can go out with friends and have fun. Girls are given instructions and boys are given options.

According this teacher, girls are more constrained subjects, restricted in their movements and unable to engage in unsupervised experiences outside of the home. The teacher’s suggestion that ‘girls are given instructions while boys are given options’ suggests that despite new opportunities in education and despite being more responsible subjects, girls continue to face more restrictions. These findings reflect other scholarship demonstrating that notions of the ‘right’ amount of freedom comprise the dominant femininity in India’s middle class (Radhakrishnan 2011, p. 79; Gilbertson, 2014). Here I find that notions of the ‘good girl’ among teachers and students in schools for working class communities are based upon a notion of expanding opportunities in education (and employment) while at the same time viewing restraints and the protection of girls as both necessary and desirable (Radhakrishnan 2011, p. 79; Gilbertson, 2014, p. 169).
5.5.2 Narratives of Masculinity: The ‘Naughty Boy’ Masculinity

In comparison to girls, some teachers positioned boys as being more ‘naughty’, less sincere, more disruptive and careless. Some teachers viewed the boys behaviour as an innate part of being a boy; however, others- as mentioned above- viewed it as part of a societal preference for boys over girls. Students often engaged in essentialist narratives to associate boys with bad behaviour and violence:

Research Partner: You would prefer not to study with boys. Why is that?
Archana, MCD School 1 Girls’ Shift: I have brothers at home so I tolerate them at home. I don’t want to tolerate them here.

Research Partner: What is the problem in studying together?
Archana, MCD School 1 Girls’ Shift: Boys pays less attention to studies and they play more.

Research Partner: Are all the students in your class able to concentrate in studies?
Rani Interview, MCD School 2: No, Ma’am. Boys students cannot concentrate in studies.

Research Partner: What do they keep doing in class?
Rani Interview, MCD School 2: Ma’am, in class they all keep fighting, steal something of someone, they do something wrong to someone.

Research Partner: Ahh?
Rani Interview, MCD School 2: Yes, Ma’am. Ma’am, without asking they go out and they break all things and keep fighting…

Research Partner: So, girls are there in them or boys and girls are there?
Rani Interview, MCD School 2: Only boys are there (do this).

Research Partner: Who does this type of wrestling in class?
Kambi, MCD School 2: Friends… We all do it…
Research Partner: Boys? Boys mostly or are girls doing it as much as boys?
Kambi, MCD School 2: No not girls.
Research Partner: And why do the girls not do it?
Kambi, MCD School 2: Girls, they keep it to their work, boys they play, fight but girls study …

These students suggest that boys fail to show the appropriate respect to teachers - walking out of class and playing- and often fight among one another. While girls also said that they had fights with other girls or boys in the school, they said that violence among boys was more commonplace and that boys tended to be more aggressive.

In the girls’ shift of MCD school 1 there were said to be only a small number of ‘bad students’ who ‘hit’ others. While some girls said that they would like to study with boys, others preferred to study with only girls because the viewed boys as violent and aggressive:

Zainab Interview, MCD School 1 Girls' Shift
Girls’ Shift: Boys are rowdy don’t listen. Boys don’t do anything that they are asked. In my last school I was asked to supervise boys by the teacher but they don’t listen.

Simran, MCD School 1 Girls' Shift: Study in separate schools. Boys study in school boys fight. Boys fight so I don’t like being around them… boys are aggressive and violent. Boys in mornings causing trouble- a lot of trouble. Fighting.

In MCD school 2, students sometimes interacted in an aggressive manner, especially during play time.

_I was surprised by the way that students roughly handled one another. At lunch time there was a lot of dragging and pushing around… A number of boys were wrestling and rolling round on the ground on the upstairs balcony. One girl viciously slapped another and a number of others held their hands up threatening to slap others._ (Research Journal, October, 2015)
Research Partner: Are there any quarrels in school?
Kambi, MCD School 2: Quarrels, on small things quarrels happen, someone curses then he hits him, and he hits him back...
Research Partner: Who quarrels?
Kambi, MCD School 2: Friends they quarrel.

... 
Research Partner: Why so they sit apart, boys on one side, girls on other side?
Aisha, MCD School 2: Because mam if boys will sit, somebody will say he has hit me, she will say she is hitting me.
Research Partner: What are they fighting about?
Aisha, MCD School 2: Mam like he is sitting here, Dinesh, Mam he hits me and I hit him, that is why, Mam (teacher) make us sit apart.
Research Partner: Boys do it or girls do it?
Aisha, MCD School 2: Mam boys do it in the beginning.

As this extract suggests both boys and girls engaged in violent acts in MCD schools; however, violence was said to be more common among boys. Violence between boys was often perceived as resulting from outright aggression ‘if anything happens they beat us’ or from a loss of face or pride- ‘he was abusing me so I beat him’ (Deephan, MCD School 2). The use of violence among girls was said to be limited to a small number of girls who used the threat of violence to maintain good behaviour among students- taking on a teaching role and chastising those who were not behaving properly in class. Girls also said that they fought with boys in self-defence or because they had wronged in some way- hitting them, taking their seat or interrupting their game.

In MCD school 1 Boys’ shift, incidents of wrestling or fighting were commonplace- especially during break time when students were left largely unsupervised by male teachers who sat in a group to talk and drink tea. During long, unsupervised breaks, students often were left to play by themselves and there was little consideration for their well being:
Today, we were undertaking some photography activities with individual students in our research group. Over a period of about half an hour, the noise outside of the classroom- screams, shouts and banging- rose to a point where it could no longer be ignored. Opening the door to the classroom, we stepped out onto the first floor balcony and into a scene of chaos. All along the balcony students were running backwards and forwards in and out of classrooms, three boys were wrestling with each other on the floor in front of us and through the doorway of a nearby classroom we could see a boy with a large metal pole (table leg) in his hands that he was repeatedly raising up above his head and bringing back down with force on to the table top. (Research Journal, November 2016)

In this school the chaotic nature of break times meant that acts of aggression and violence were commonplace. One boy explained that games during lunch had gotten out of hand and one boy had been hit on the head with a stick and had ‘fractured his head’. He said that play at lunch time sometimes got ‘out of hand’:

Rohit, MCD School 1 Boys’ Shift: We play spinning tops and Gilli Danda and sometimes things get out of hand. Once a boy broke a car’s windshield and a bunch of other stuff.

Violence and aggression were routinised in the boys’ shift of MCD school 1 (Renold, 2002). The school playground and building (during lunchtime) constitute a ‘battlefield’ where boys become ‘little warriors’ through fighting and physical violence (Jordan, 1995). Through wrestling and games that had physical violence as the dominant narrative, tough masculinities were produced and sustained (Francis, 1998; Skelton, 2001).

The prevalence of violence among boys- and some girls- in MCD schools can be understood in terms of the normalised forms of male violence that are embedded in and mediated through hegemonic values and structure the way that boys perform masculinity (Connell, 2005). Raewyn Connell’s concept of hegemonic masculinity has been used to explain the association between masculinity and violence (Connell, 1995). Hegemonic masculinity is ‘the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees the dominant position of men and the subordination of women’ (Connell,
Hegemonic masculinity is both an individual and a collective project that entails common sense notions of breadwinning and manhood (Connell, 1995). It is internally and hierarchically differentiated, exclusive and violent (Connell, 1990; Connell, 1995).

An important element of ‘hegemonic masculinity’ is men’s capacity to dominate others through violence. While women (and girls) also commit violence, the privilege associated with masculinity is linked with its power to dominate whereas femininity is thought to be subjected to violence. Violence by girls in the school can be understood as girls taking part in masculine privilege. Although many boys in MCD schools were not violent, hegemonic masculinity only needs some boys to perform it to retain its cultural significance (See Section 3.2). Violence in Indian society has been interpreted as evidence for a crisis of masculinity (Kapur, 2012).

5.5.3 Narratives of Masculinity: Heroic Masculinity

For some boys in MCD schools, alignment with hegemonic masculinity was pursued through a ‘man of action’, ‘heroic’ identity (Reay, 2002; Iyer, 2017). Reay’s research into the gendered cultures of primary school boys and girls demonstrates how violence is not only permitted but demanded through discourses of heroic masculinity where students protected themselves or others. One group of students explicitly related the boys’ violence to their attempts to be a hero:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Partner</th>
<th>what about boys?</th>
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<tr>
<td>Aisha, MCD school 2</td>
<td>They try to be a hero. They all try to be</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus Group</td>
<td>Heropanti. They also beat each other.</td>
</tr>
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<td>Discussion:</td>
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</table>

Heropanti is a Bollywood movie involving a lead man who is tough, hard-muscled and forced to use violence after one of his friends elopes with a girl without asking the permission of her father. During the movie women are constantly threatened by violence and Heropanti beats people up in defense of his friends and his love interest. Scholars have argued that the muscled bodies of Bollywood stars are a physical embodiment of India’s success in the present era (Banerjee, 2017, p. 28). The
muscularity of these stars expresses the ‘optimism’ and ‘masculinised strength of a new global India’ (Banerjee, 2017, p. 28). While discourses of masculinity are produced at a number of sites, transformations in the Indian media landscape over the past two decades (see, for example, Athique 2012) constitute the most significant context for the transmission, circulation, and reception of local and global masculine identities (Srivastava, 2015). With the extraordinary expansion in the number and forms of news, commercial and online media—and the concomitant rise of new technologies of communication—representations of masculinities find both local and global anchoring. Students drew on these discourses of dominant masculinity to construct their own identities.

While the dominant masculinity in Bollywood movies- and other media- combines the ability to fight with heterosexual romance (Iyer, 2017), students did not express any romantic interest at this age. However, the desire to protect- or to be protected by boys- was expressed by a number of students:

**Research Partner:** Would you like to go to a girls school or a mixed school?

**Eshal, MCD School 1 Girls’ Shift:** I like going to school with boys… If a girl gets in to trouble then the boy will protect her. Boys are stronger than girls…

**Research Partner:** What was it like being with boys in your last school?

**Eshal, MCD School 1 Girls’ Shift:** In the private school, boys were always making a lot of noise. Girls were studying in class- boys were more disruptive.

Despite finding boys disruptive, Eshel says that she prefers going to school with boys because they will protect her. High profile media cases of violence against women and girls in India have revealed anxieties about women’s presence in public space- outside of their traditional role in the domestic sphere (Dasgupta, 2014; Gilbertson, 2014). Scholars have shown that women’s use of public space in Delhi is legitimate only when they have a purpose to leave the home- work, school or domestic-related duties- and only at certain hours of the day (Viswanath & Mehrotra, 2007). The patriarchal nature of public space ensures that the male body is the normative, whereas the female body is constantly seen as “out of place”. This ensures that the presence of women in the
public sphere is seen as a transgression that causes anxiety (Ranade, 2007). Despite girls being viewed as more successful in schools, the female body continued to be viewed as ‘out of place’.

The notion that girls needed extra protection from men was also expressed by staff members. The principal of the girls’ shift in MCD school 1 explained that he came to school early and waited around after school for children to leave, specifically because it was a girls’ school and they needed to be protected from any ‘mishappenings or anything like this’ (Principal Interview, MCD School 1 Girls’ Shift). Rather than seeing themselves exclusively as protectors of girls, some boys in MCD schools viewed themselves as current or future protectors of ‘everyone’ or the ‘nation’:

Research Partner: Why do you want to become a soldier?
Satish, MCD School 1, Boys’ Shift: To help everyone in Delhi.
Research Partner: and in Delhi Ok?
Satish, MCD School 1, Boys’ Shift: There should not be any problems
Research Partner: What is the actual work of the soldier?
Satish, MCD School 1, Boys’ Shift: To help people to help everyone

Research Partner: First tell why you wanna be a police?
Rohit, MCD School 1, Boys’ Shift: I want to help everybody
Research Partner: Anymore reasons?
Rohit, MCD School 1 Boys’ shift: Help people protect our country.

Kambi, MCD School 1: I want to for my country…
Research Partner: Tell truthfully, what you want to be.
Kambi, MCD School 1: Me I will become Military.
Research Partner: Why? why do you want to join the Military?
Kambi, MCD School 1: Because if any terrorist spreads terror in our country, we will stop him.
The desire for these boys to protect their country can be linked to the connection between the nation state and hegemonic masculinity (Banerjee, 2005). Nationalism is based on the idea of a nation or a people, and it usually locates an “other” who is used to reinforce ties uniting the nation. From this perspective, the formation of a Hindu identity relies on a ‘threatening other’ often based on stereotypes of Muslims (Shani, 2007, p. 9). These students draw on narratives of a gendered, Hindu nationalism—much like other nationalism worldwide—in which an awakened masculine nation protects the feminine (‘mother India’) land (Nagel, 1998; Pettman, 1996). The ideology of hegemonic nationalism complements the ideology of hegemonic masculinity because the former is about protecting the motherland and the latter about protecting women. In the above extracts, both boys and girls suggest that men are protectors and women are to be protected. This appeared to be a dominant model for the construction of masculinities and femininities in MCD schools. Nagel (1998) suggests that the, “‘microculture’ of masculinity in everyday life articulates very well with the demands of nationalism, particularly its militaristic side and terms like honour, patriotism, cowardice, bravery and duty are hard to distinguish as either nationalistic or masculinist, since they seem so thoroughly tied both to the nation and to manliness’.

Working class boys appeared to align themselves with these ‘demands’ through their desire to protect and their aspirations for patriotic careers that will enable them to express their bravery and sense of duty. The perception of threats to the nation and to Indian citizens appear to play an important role in directing the boys’ desire to ‘protect’. An emphasis on physical discipline and strong, virile Hindu men emerged in nationalist responses to racist colonial discourses that positioned Hindu men as weak, effeminate and incapable of self-governance—others such as Indian Sikhs were represented as ‘martial races’ (Roy & Hammers, 2014; Srivastava, 2015). A ‘self-image of effeneness’ was widely accepted among nineteenth century Indian (Hindu) intelligentsia and often attributed to the ‘emasculaion’ that followed the long history of Muslim rule (Srivastava, 2015). Responses to colonial threats to manhood appeared
to invoke the traditional tropes of hegemonic western masculinity such as an emphasis on physical fitness and strength; however, while many nationalist leaders embraced the aggressive, competitive masculine culture among the English, others challenged these notions of manhood (Roy & Hammers, 2014). Srivastava argues that in the present context, the combination of ‘longstanding power structures and relations of deference, with newer political political economies of neoliberalism’ has led to the re-emergence of a strong masculinity as associated with the current Prime minister in what Srivastava calls ‘Modi masculinity’. This masculinity is characterised as strong and forceful in contrast to ‘effeminate' Indian men who are ‘unable to strike hard at both external enemies (Pakistan and China, say) and internal threats (‘Muslim terrorists’, most obviously)’. It was these nationalist notions of strength, protection and external threats that appeared to play a dominant role in shaping the identities of these working class boys. To my surprise this was something that appeared to be widely approved of:

*During an introductory session today, Vi was asking the boys what they wanted to do when they were older. She was particular animated- and excited- by one boy’s response and appeared to be heaping praise upon him. He beamed in response. When I asked her what he wanted to do she said that he wanted to join the army and that she was ‘really happy to hear this’. ‘I am so pleased’ she said. I didn’t feel the same way. (Research Journal, September, 2015)*

For some students in MCD schools the protective, hero masculinity was embodied by class monitors. These were one or two students selected by teachers to take care of the class in their absence. Monitors often attempted to regulate the behaviour of other students in the class:

**Research Partner:** When teachers not present and someone's fighting can anyone stop them?

Rohit, MCD School 1 Boys' Shift: I can't stop them alone even if they listen to me

**Research Partner:** Do you need some help?

Rohit, MCD School 1 Boys' Shift: Me and Bauliullah

**Research Partner:** When were you two were monitors who made you monitor?
Rohit, MCD School 1 Boys' Shift: In Class 2, the principal made us monitors.
Research Partner: Is he a good monitor?
Rohit, MCD School 1 Boys' Shift: Yes.
Research Partner: How?
Rohit, MCD School 1 Boys' Shift: He helps everybody that's why sir loves him.

Research Partner: What do you do as a monitor?
Naufal, MCD School 1 Boys' Shift: Take care of the class.
Research Partner: Like what?
Naufal, MCD School 1 Boys' Shift: Making sure nobody fights.
Research Partner: and?
Naufal, MCD School 1 Boys' Shift: Checking everyone's homework, who did and who didn't.
Research Partner: Do you like being a monitor?
Naufal, MCD School 1 Boys' Shift: Yes.
Interviewer: Why?
Naufal, MCD School 1 Boys' Shift: Because we can talk to sir anytime.
Research Partner: Does everybody fear the Monitor?
Naufal, MCD School 1 Boys' Shift: We shouldn't scare anybody.
Research Partner: So why do you like it?
Naufal, MCD School 1 Boys' Shift: The monitor prevents fights.

While Rohit had been a monitor in previous years, Naufal was the present monitor of the class. Both boys were taller- and more assertive- than many other students in the class. They suggest that as a class monitor they enjoy a closer relationship with the teacher and are permitted- unlike the rest of the class- to talk to ‘sir’ at anytime. Although they say that they shouldn’t scare anyone and were expected to break up fights, they appeared to have the authority to physically punish other students:
Rohit, MCD School 1 Boys’ Shift: These three boys they keep hitting everyone
Research Partner: For what reason do they do that?
Rohit, MCD School 1 Boys’ Shift: Ma’am it could be for any reason, they say you come here and if we don’t go they keep hitting.
Research Partner: Do you tell you the monitor?
Rohit, MCD School 1 Boys’ Shift: Yes.
Research Partner: So, what does the monitor do?
Rohit, MCD School 1 Boys’ Shift: The monitor sometimes hits them.
Research Partner: Can the Monitor hit them?
Rohit, MCD School 1 Boys’ Shift: Yes.

Through these extracts it is clear that boys were not only more likely to use violence against other students in the school but that the use of violence through ‘monitors’ was permitted. Students drew on the notion of a ‘hero’ masculinity to justify the use of violence to maintain order or protect students in the class. The hero identity aligned with hegemonic masculinity by legitimising- and glorifying- the use of violence for these young boys.

5.5.4 Narratives of Masculinity: ‘Buillies’ and ‘Quiet’ Boys

There was a tendency for boys to differentiate between heroes- boys who used violence to protect, keep order or in self-defense- and bullies or ‘mad men’ who hit others or fought for no reason:

Research Partner: Are there any students that you don't like?
Naufal, MCD School 1 Boys’ Shift: Four boys who don't study and are always fighting.
... 
Research Partner: Do you dislike some students?
Rohit, MCD School 1 Boys’ Shift: Yeah Sanjay he bullies everybody, he’s tall. I could hit him back but he tells on me, so I mind my own business
The bully identity was ascribed to boys who were aggressive to others for no good reason. These boys were perceived to be out of control with their violence and so were avoided by other students in the school. These extracts highlight not only the excessive violence in schools and the fear caused by violence but also the way in which violence is normalised as a response to the aggression of the ‘bullies’. Invoking the hero identity, Rohit suggests that he could ‘hit’ Sanjay back for bulling others but he is worried he will ‘tell’ on him. While Rohit views himself as a ‘hero’, Sumit views him as a ‘bully’. This suggests that the hero identity operates as a means to normalise masculine violence by locating it as virtuous and opposed to the ‘bully’ or ‘mad man’. These discourses support hegemonic masculinity in the school and normalised gender hierarchies of power (Ringrose & Renold, 2010).

Alongside these dominant narratives associated with hegemonic masculinity, there were a large number of boys in MCD schools who opposed the violence associated with hegemonic masculinities and sought to negotiate schooling by withdrawing from interactions with their classmates. This appeared to be a significant portion of boys in MCD schools. In both MCD school 1 and 2, these boys criticised the violent behavior of other boys in the class and aligned themselves with a ‘quiet boy’ identity:
Sarwan, MCD School 1 Boys Shift: **Quiet**

Research Partner: Do you prefer quiet people over outgoing people?

Sarwan, MCD School 1 Boys Shift: (I prefer those) who quietly study.

Research Partner: So if someone new joins the school, do you feel like having a friendship with him?

Sumit, MCF School 1 Boys Shift: Yes

Research Partner: Why?

Sumit, MCD School 1 Boys Shift: Ma'am it's because he is good he is a boy, he won't be mischievous he will be with us.

Research Partner: Since he is new…

Sumit, MCD School 1 Boys Shift: He won't be mischievous.

Research Partner: And the rest of the class, the other people that are there, how are they?

Mohan, MCD School 2: Many also fight a lot

Research Partner: Okay, some people are there who fight a lot?

Mohan, MCD School 2: Yes, Ma'am.

Research Partner: Okay, how many are they?

Mohan, MCD School 2: Kambi is there, what’s his name, Dinesh, Ma'am, I don't know the others names.

Research Partner: Are the other students afraid of those who fight?

Mohan, MCD School 2: Yes, Ma’am.

Research Partner: Why do they fear? They are only two and you all are so many?

Mohan, MCD School 2: Ma'am, we are five, they have so many friends who (not clear).

Research Partner: Why are you afraid of them?

Mohan, MCD School 2: Ma’am, if we make friends with them and if anything happens they beat us that's why (...) we don’t make friends.
These 'quiet' boys expressed a desire for friendships with boys who were not violent, who were 'good boys'. These students expressed caution regarding their interactions with others and were most comfortable when playing with other 'quiet boys' during play time. While these “quiet boys” defined themselves against the ‘heroes’ and ‘bullies’ as non-violent and non-aggressive, silence and withdrawal was something that all of the boys—especially in MCD school 1—engaged in from time to time. During our research, it was particularly difficult to illicit the ideas of working class boys in these schools and engage them in research activities. They were reluctant to speak for fear of giving the wrong answer and were self-conscious and afraid of looking foolish in front of their peers. The fear and insecurity of the 'quiet boys' was something that many boys in the study appeared to share—although they were reluctant to show it. Physical violence in the schools was something that heroes and bullies inflicted upon other students in the school—and that teachers were said to inflict upon students, especially boys. The prevalence of physical violence appeared to inhibit opportunities for verbal communication.

While some ‘quiet boys’, undermined the hegemonic masculinity by wanting to study with girls so that they could be in a different (less violent) school environment, others like Mohan, maintained that it was wrong to play with girls:

**Research Partner:** Do you prefer it like this where girls have the morning shift and boys come at 12:30 pm or where they all study together?

**Sarwan, MCD School 1 Boys Shift:** Morning.

**Research Partner:** Do you want to study with girls?

**Sarwan, MCD School 1 Boys Shift:** Yes.

**Research Partner:** Why?

**Sarwan, MCD School 1 Boys Shift:** Everybody beats me in here.

**Research Partner:** Why you shouldn’t be friends with them?

**Mohan, MCD School 2:** Ma’am, (we) should not play with girls.
Research Partner: Who said this to you?
Mohan, MCD School 2: Ma’am, my friends said.
Research Partner: Okay, what do they think like why shouldn’t they play with girls
Mohan, MCD School 2: Because Ma’am, if we play then there will be a fight.
Research Partner: There will be fight or is there anything else?
Mohan, MCD School 2: Ma’am, nothing else is there.
Research Partner: You feel odd playing with them?
Mohan, MCD School 2: Yes, Ma’am.
Research Partner: What do those people say about girls?
Mohan, MCD School 2: They say that they are very bad.
Research Partner: They are bad.
Mohan, MCD School 2: Yes, Ma’am.
Research Partner: Okay, tell us why are girls bad?
Mohan, MCD School 2: Ma’am, I don’t know. Friends know about this, friends say like this.
Research Partner: Why you don’t like them? There will be some reason that’s why you don’t like?
Mohan, MCD School 2: Ma’am, playing with girls is regarded as bad thing. Even staying with (sitting next to) them is bad thing.

Through this extract, Mohan illustrates that even quiet boys who are themselves oppressed by the violent hegemonic masculinity in the school may enact a subordinate masculinity that sustains it. By distancing himself from girls and viewing them as ‘bad’ Mohan- and his friends- legitimise hegemonic masculinity and sustain ideas that promote the dominance of men/boys and the subordination of women. The distinction between girls and boys appears to be important to mohan’s identity- as does the distinction between ‘quiet boys’ and the others. Despite Mohan’s criticism of most of the boys in the school- and his desire to avoid them- he retains a sense of being a boy by viewing girls as ‘bad’ and avoiding playing or even sitting next to them. In this way, Mohan and his friends appear to be complicit in the current ‘gender order’ (Connell, 2005) even as they suffer its consequences.
5.6 Maintaining Order in MCD Schools: Discipline

Not only was violence normalised in the two MCD schools where boys were present (especially the boys only school) but disciplinary practices contributed towards this norm. Although, I did not see any teachers or principals acting aggressively towards students in the school, students claimed that teachers used corporal punishment as a means to discipline them. According to student accounts, the use of corporal punishment appeared to vary between the different schools. In the girls shift of MCD school 1, girls said that in general corporal punishment was not used in school:

Research Partner: So in the private school they used to hit you, does that happen here?
Anita, MCD school 1 Girls’ Shift: Here, we are not beaten but we are made to stand on chair or put hands up. The teacher screams if we are not doing work.

... 

Research Partner: If a student doesn’t listen to them, what do they do? Child look here. What happened?
Anita, MCD school 1 Girls’ Shift: She scolds us.
Research Partner: She scolds and give punishments also? Ok. What type of punishment?
Anita, MCD school 1 Girls’ Shift: We have to write in English from unit 1 to 10.
Research Partner: In English from unit 1 to 10 what you need to do?
Anita, MCD school 1 Girls’ Shift: We have to write unit 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8.

These students describe how the teacher ‘scolds’ and gives out different forms of punishment to students but does not ‘hit’ them. One student, Kavita, suggested that the teacher did ‘hit’ students but only the ‘bad’ ones. Several students in this school felt that corporal punishment was necessary in order for students in the school to behave (Archana, MCD School 1, Girls Shift).
In MCD school 2, the co-educational school, students described how boys tended to be the subject of corporal punishment whereas girls were less likely to experience physical punishment:

Research Partner: Tell us about your teacher?
Archana, MCD School 1 Girls' Shift: Mam she is also a good Mam. Mam with anybody... she does not hit anyone.
...
Research Partner: How is your teacher? Why do you like her, or if you don't like her then why is that?
Eshal, MCD School 1 Girls' Shift: I like her.
Research Partner: Why?
Eshal, MCD School 1 Girls' Shift: She doesn't beat me and I like her.
Research Partner: Does any other teacher beats you?
Eshal, MCD School 1 Girls' Shift: No
Research Partner: Before has any other teacher beaten you?
Eshal, MCD School 1 Girls' Shift: Once I was beaten
Research Partner: When?
Eshal, MCD School 1 Girls' Shift: When I was in 4th standard.
...
Rani Interview, MCD School 2: No, Ma'am. Boys students cannot concentrate in studies.
Research Partner: What do they keep doing in class?
Rani Interview, MCD School 2: Ma'am, in class they all keep fighting, steal something of someone, they do something wrong to someone.
Research Partner: At that time, what do they keep doing, don't they concentrate?
Rani Interview, MCD School 2: Ma'am, they keep talking. Ma'am, then Ma'am beats them.
...
Research Partner: Which teacher you like the most?
Deephan, MCD School 2: Anita ma'am.
Research Partner: Why?
Deephan, MCD School 2: Because she is our ma’am, and she teaches us well.
Research Partner: Anything else?
Deephan, MCD School 2: she makes us understand. If we don’t do work, still she makes us understand and also beat us.
Research Partner: If you don’t work, then?
Deephan, MCD School 2: She beat us.
Research Partner: But still you like her?
Deephan, MCD School 2: Yes, ma’am.
Research Partner: why?
Deephan, MCD School 2: Because she is good.

While the girls describe liking their teacher because she doesn’t beat, Deephan says that he likes her despite- or because of- the fact that she ‘beats’ them. Rani suggests that boys in the class get beaten because of their bad behaviour. Students claimed that teachers did physically punish girls but incidents were said to be fewer than they were for boys and boys appeared to be more likely to be physically punished than girls. In the boys’ shift of MCD school 1, boys described physical punishment as being commonplace:

Research Partner: When the students hit others what does the teacher do?
Rohit, MCD School 1 Boys’ Shift: Ma’am sometimes the teacher gives the punishment by making them to sit like a cock and then hits them.

Research Partner: Who do you like most here I mean teacher, who is your favourite teacher
Sarwan, MCD School 1 Boys’ Shift: A.J sir.
Research Partner: A.J sir, sir why do you like him?
Sarwan, MCD School 1 Boys’ Shift: He doesn’t beat much.
Research Partner: Why you don't like any other teachers?
Satish, MCD School 1 Boys’ Shift: They hit a lot.

Research Partner: Do you dislike any teachers?
Sarwan, MCD School 1 Boys' Shift: Deepak sir.
Research Partner: Deepak sir, what does he do?
Sarwan, MCD School 1 Boys' Shift: He beats us with a stick.

Research Partner: What if you ask them to stop bothering you? if they don't listen to your words…
Satish, MCD School 1 Boys' Shift: We should complain to the teacher and…
Research Partner: What does the teacher do?
Satish, MCD School 1 Boys' Shift: The teacher hits them.

In MCD school 1 Boys’ shift, physical punishment against boys was described as a part of daily school life. A.J. sir was liked by several different students because he was ‘soft’ and didn’t ‘beat much’. In contrast, Sarwan dislikes Deepak Sir because he hits students ‘with a stick’.

This physical violence against boys in MCD schools took place in the context of school values, policies and curricular knowledge aimed at providing disadvantaged students with access to schooling and ensuring that they received moral development to become responsibilised citizens. Violence against boys was a part of the socialisation process in MCD schools. In this context the social order was is imposed on the bodies of individuals (Proctor, 2015). Family structures in India subordinate women and children and they are expected to be obedient to those above them. Since ‘hierarchies are highly contextual, locally determined, ideological devices for the maintenance of arbitrary power’, they must be ‘maintained and everyone must follow the rules’ (Proctor, 2015). In the MCD schools, violence appeared to be used as a means to maintain hierarchies and to ‘socialise women and children into male-dominated prescribed modes of behaviour’ (Proctor, 2015).
The gendered use of physical punishment in the schools can be read in relation to teachers’ descriptions of boys as naughty, wayward and irresponsible and girls as responsible and obedient (Jeffrey, 2010, p. 471). The result is that girls are not punished or surveilled in the same way as boys (Procter, 2015). A number of studies show that boys are more likely to be punished than girls and receive harsher treatment (Ferguson, 2000; Lopez, 2003; Mills, 2001). In a context where obedience and observance of the rules of behaviour are viewed as signs of respect, a lack of obedience or rule breaking are considered to be signs of disrespect and disruption of the social order (Procter, 2015). Teachers use of violence in this context served to reproduce power structures and ‘impose the legitimacy of the dominant culture on the members of the dominated groups or classes… to make them internalise… disciplines and censorships which best serve the material and symbolic interests of the dominant groups or classes’ (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977, p. 41 in Procter, 2015). One teacher explained how government policies banning the use of corporal punishment in schools were detrimental to student development because it meant that they were no longer receiving the proper guidance. She suggested that private schools ‘openly’ maintained physical punishment because it was good for children:

**Class II Ma’am, MCD School 1 Girls Shift:**

Most of them in schools such as St. Francis and others, they are not allowed to hit a child because they have to maintain the (government) standards? Don’t they? But children are openly being punished (in those schools) because a certain kind of discipline is important for a child… You have to reign in and give her direction only then will a child blossom. It’s very natural, otherwise they’ll become like weeds growing everywhere. The child needs to be cultivated like we would cultivate plants but we are not doing that. We are letting the child grow just like that without any direction. That is what’s happening in this system. It’s wrong. But we not supposed to say that, we have to be part of the system and say ‘yes boss’ all the time.

In this context, the use of violence against children appeared to be driven by the social gap between teachers and students (Vasavi, 2003; Procter, 2015). Teachers
described themselves as middle class and were critical of many working class parents in the community- viewing them as badly behaved and immoral. The notion that many students were from undeserving poor background and were incapable of academic work resulted in an emphasis on moral development and a need to ‘cultivate’ children before they became ‘weeds’. Boys especially were viewed as being at risk given that some were ‘roaming the streets’, ‘taking drugs’ and engaging in sexually inappropriate behaviour (Teacher FGD, MCD school 2). The certainty that teachers know what is best for these students- and should have the right to force students to ‘blossom’ (align with middle class moral standards)- appears to contribute towards the use of corporal punishment in these schools. This teacher also highlights the unquestioning obedience that teachers are expected to show and their complete lack of autonomy in the classroom. Kumar (1991) argues that within colonial society, teaching was a low paying, low status job revolved around a prescriptive rote-based syllabus. The teacher’s role was simply to keep order in the classroom. This teacher suggests that they are still ‘powerless subordinates’ in the classroom who have to obediently follow government policies (Kumar, 1991).

5.7 Instilling Morality: Teachers and Corporal Punishment

There also appeared to be gendered differences in the way that teachers understood their relationships with students in these schools. Several female teachers said that they had a strong bond with students and felt a strong sense of responsibility for them:

**Class III Ma’am, MCD School 2:**

If all of us (teachers) will go to private school, then who will take care of these students? We are so much attached to them that we are not taking a promotion. We are given promotion in government only, but we are not taking it. We are attached to small children more. I am so much attached that it feels like they are my responsibility.

Female teachers in MCD schools often understood care to be fundamental to their identities as gendered beings and they viewed their teaching role as being orientated toward the care of children (James, 2010). Drawing on discourses of motherhood,
teachers sometimes described themselves as mothers to the children in the schools (Proctor, 2015) - ‘And I can say that we are able to teach them in spite of all this. At the end of it; we are like mothers to them’ (Class II Ma’am, MCD School 1 Girls Shift). In her study of corporal punishment in Delhi secondary schools, Proctor finds that Teachers justify their alignment with hegemonic masculinity by employing the discourse of ‘motherly love’. Boys in MCD school 2 also understood their female teachers’ use of violence as being a last resort- used only if their teacher was ‘very angry’.

Although a social distance between students and teachers was observed in all of the schools, in MCD school 1 Boys’ Shift the distance appeared to be wider. Male teachers frequently took breaks during the school day and left students in class unsupervised. During one observation, 20 minutes in to the school day, the class V sir- at MCD School 1 Boys’ Shift - stopped the lesson and asked us if he could leave because his colleagues were going for a break. An NGO teacher who worked in both the boys’ and girls’ shift of MCD school 1, suggested that conditions in the boys’ shift were worse because it was an all male staff:

**NGO Support Teacher, MCD school 1:**

In the afternoon (boys’) shift there are all gents and it is there that some of them do work by interest and some don’t. They are like it is a job and money is coming. Some of the teachers do other work alongside teaching. That means that sometimes they have to go to the bank so they are filling a receipt over here. There are also some teachers who run their own private schools (tuition centres). So if they have any work there, they go in between here and there.

The need for male staff in MCD schools to take on additional employment can be understood as a consequence of the low pay associated with primary teaching and the pressure for Indian men to earn- as breadwinners in the family (Kumar, 1990). Concerns about the feminisation of teaching in India- especially in urban areas- have been attributed to the desire for men to seek better paid work and with the notion that teaching is ‘women’s work’. Care and education are viewed in many societies as primarily a woman’s responsibility and such stereotypical assumptions have gendered
consequences with regard to who teaches young children. As mentioned in Chapter 3, MCD school 2 (co-ed) was an all female staff including the principal and MCD school 1 (Girls’ shift) was all female except for the principal and two ‘senior teachers’, MCD school 1 (Boys’ shift) was all male.

The NGO teacher suggested that the male teaching staff did not take the principal seriously and because they were all ‘gents’ the principal could not control them (NGO Teacher, MCD School 1). While the NGO teacher claimed that 4-5 (out of 16) male teachers were ‘good’, her experiences with the majority of male staff members led her to conclude that if she was in charge she would ‘only appoint women for teaching’ (NGO Teacher, MCD School 1). This contradicts, male role model theory which suggests that male teachers improve boys’ schooling because male teachers are able to offer boys learning experiences that align with their interests as males (Carrington and McPhee, 2008; Chan, 2011). Rather expressing a bond or close attachment to students- like the female teachers ‘motherly love’- male teachers tended to describe their role in a more functional manner:

**Class V Sir, MCD School 1:**

So in this way I got the platform of teaching. I was having interest also. It gives pleasure after teaching students and also it is an ideal work. In it we educate the student and prepare them for society. It is a job in which we get lot of respect...

The importance of respect to male teachers and the need to maintain order in the school- while often being absent from class- appeared to sustain a strict disciplinary environment within the school. According to students, this led to the regular use of violence. Students claimed that in some cases, the teacher would not use violence himself but instead instruct a monitor to punish children for him (Naufal, MCD School 1 Boys’ Shift). Some students expressed anger or frustration about violence in the school environment:

**Research Partner:**

Would you prefer to study like this where girls have morning shift and boys come at 12:30 pm or would you prefer to all study together?
Sarwan, MCD School 1
Boys' Shift: In the morning.
Research Partner: Do you want to study with girls?

Sarwan, MCD School 1
Boys' Shift: Yes.
Research Partner: Why?
Sarwan, MCD School 1
Boys' Shift: Everybody beats me in here!

For Sarwan, violence in the school meant that he intensely disliked to school and wanted to leave. Throughout our research in MCD schools, we found students in MCD school 1- and especially the boys shift- the most challenging to engage with. In contrast to the confidence with which boys in MCD school 2 interacted with us (and their teachers), boys in MCD school 1 were very quiet and reserved both during class time and during research activities. Outside of the chaotic, raucous break times, boys in this school were subdued and docile. During our research activities, these boys were the hardest to interact with, they frequently froze up and struggled to speak, act or play games- independently or with one another. On one occasion we asked the boys why they found it hard to contribute to a discussion, and one boy, Pankaj replied, ‘you are asking us all of the questions but you are not giving us any of the answers’.

The sense that these students were not used to or permitted to act independently was also apparent when students asked me to teach them a game and we settled on the idea of wink murder- something that we had already done successfully in the other MCD schools with both boys and girls. The boys appeared to be excited about playing the game but they were unable to interact together and most could not work out how to apply the rules of the game. After a number of failed attempts, we opted to play something else. Although ‘wink murder’ is clearly culturally specific, in the girls’ shift of MCD school 1 and in MCD school 2 students had learnt how to play the game without any difficulty. The rigid, disciplinary nature of the school environment appeared to stifle the expression of boys in the school. Boys in the school did not appear to be used to interacting with one another or in a group situation and they struggled to comprehend the rules of the game despite really wanting to play. The inability of most of the boys in this context to apply the rules of the game suggested that not only were they not used to being asked to act independently but they were actively punished for doing
so. Sarwan’s concern to leave the school because ‘everybody beats me in here’ appeared to reflect the fact that violence was a common means of control among both teachers and students in the boys’ shift of MCD school 1.

Discussion

In this chapter, I have highlighted global and national educational policies and reforms to address social mobility and disadvantage in the education system. I have demonstrated how these policies have brought about changes to the MCD school system and led to class-based changes within the school community. Teachers view these changes to the school community in a negative light, suggesting that the ‘cream’ or ‘good’ students and families have largely deserted the school, leaving ‘poor’ or ‘troubled’ families.

Concerns about issues within the school community have encouraged teachers to focus on students becoming particular types of ‘responsible’ citizens. The perception that many students were not able to engage with the formal curriculum led to a focus on ensuring that students were able to develop the appearance, behaviour and moralities of the middle class. The habitus of students in MCD schools interacts with others in their peer group, global media, nationalist ideology and familial norms and structures to make the process of becoming a responsibilised, moral citizen more problematic for some students, especially boys.

I argue that students are expected to reassemble their lives in accordance with middle class norms. Familial norms, nationalist ideology and moral concerns in MCD schools play an important role in shaping the way in which girls and boys construct their identities. The perceived obedience and servility of girls in the home is viewed as being beneficial to their schooling and they are considered to be more successful than boys. Some girls subscribe to a ‘can do’ identity in which they embrace the new opportunities available to them; however, they continue to be under heavy restrictions due to their domestic role and concerns about safety in the public sphere. Girls’ futures are largely understood in terms of their domestic role within the family.

Boys are viewed as ‘naughty’ and ‘disruptive’ in MCD schools. They are deemed to be wayward, irresponsible and given too many freedoms. Responding to perceived threats to citizenship and the nation, boys take on a heroic identity in which they are able to save the nation and its citizens. This entails protecting others, especially
women and girls, from terrorists or criminals. This identity legitimises the use of violence in order to maintain order and protect others. While controlled use of violence is considered heroic and desirable (by both some boys and some girls), excessive violence is associated with a ‘bully’ identity which is aggressive for no reason.

When students fail to abide by the moral standards of teachers in the school, they claim that ‘scolding’ and sometimes corporal punishment is used. The use of corporal punishment in the school is gendered in more than one way. First, boys appear to be subjected to corporal punishment more than girls- their wayward masculinity is deemed to need correcting. Secondly, female teachers and male teachers understand their roles differently. Female teachers claim that they have a close bond with students and are like mothers to them-justifying discipline as an example of necessary motherly love. Male teachers are said to be under pressure to maintain two jobs and appear to use corporal punishment as a means to maintain absolute respect and authority. Central to teachers’ use of punishment in schools is an attempt to ensure that student take responsibility for themselves in a way that their parents are deemed not to.

In these two MCD schools, students were constructing their identities in the context of a rapidly changing school system that had recently been expanded to include those that had previously been marginalised from the school system. The entry of new students whose parents had no or limited levels of education, the desertion of middle class students/families from the school community and the prevalence of aspirational rhetoric about the purpose of education- and the future of India- appeared to combine to exacerbate teachers’ frustrations about the impossibility of working with the majority of students these communities. This meant that students were constructing their identities in the context of a school experience orientated towards ensuring that they became moral, self-responsibilised citizens. However, rather than simply being the archetypal neo-liberal citizen, teachers attempted to orientate students sense of morality toward middle class, Hindu norms.

In the following chapter, I examine how IES- the private school in the study- influences young people. I question how the privatisation and practices in a private school for the middle class shapes and assembles young people and how this aligns and conflicts with young people’s own efforts to assemble their lives. I detail how in a climate of optimism and high aspirations, students are under intense pressure to perform while they negotiate local and global identities.
Chapter 6 The Construction of Gendered and Classed Identities in the Present: Balancing Global and Local Obligations

This chapter examines the efforts made by a ‘middle segment’ private school in Delhi- Inspire English School- to shape young people’s futures and considers how the school has responded to global educational policies that have foregrounded educational quality, achievement and aspiration as symbols of progress in the neoliberal era (Gill, 2008; McRobbie, 2007). I explore how these policy discourses have been taken up in Inspire English School and how students construct their identities in this context. I argue that the school is under intense pressure to create self-regulating, rational and enterprising individuals who are able to compete in a neoliberal and global labour market. In this context this leads to an emphasis on English language learning and high levels of achievement in school tests. These responsibilised subjects are expected to pursue their own and the nation’s economic interests through skill development and rational choices (Rose, 1999). At the same time, students were under pressure to limit or balance their engagement with global/cosmopolitan/western culture and adhere to notions of Indian ‘culture and heritage’ that appeared to be influenced by Hindu nationalist notions of Indianness (Sancho, 2015). This form of identity has been driven by the emergence of a “new” middle class in India who play a symbolic role as representatives of a global India and proponents of global nationalism (Fernandes, 2006; Gilbertson, 2014). However, rather purely subscribing to neoliberal subjectivity, the positioning of the Indian middle class as both global and Indian ensures that the middle class students are under pressure to find ways to be ‘appropriately Indian’ (Donner and De Neve, 2011; Radhakrishnan, 2011).

6.1 Competing in the Market place: School Branding

Since first opening in 1989, Inspire English School (IES) has aimed to ensure that students develop academic excellence and English language proficiency alongside a strong set of ‘values and morals’ that would help students contribute to (Indian) society (IES School Website, 2016). The school worked to impart an education that would enable a ‘full life for all’ by ‘diving into’ the social, cultural, moral, physical spiritual and intellectual’ areas of life (Principal IES Website, edited for confidentiality purposes).
This meant that although the school was renowned for high levels of academic performance, ‘the basic goodness' of students was given ‘prime importance’ through the teaching of values that would help them ‘to live their life fully’ (Principal IES Website, 2016, edited for confidentiality purposes).

From the outset, the school has maintained a vision that the school will provide a ‘modern, quality education' based upon ‘ancient culture, heritage and ethics' (IES Website, 2016, edited for confidentiality purposes). The school’s social commitment to ‘cultural and spiritual development’ aimed to install ‘respect' for ‘human values’ in order to ‘resurrect' values that were threatened by a ‘waste land of value' (IES Website, 2016). This commitment to balancing modernity with tradition and spirituality/culture with intellectual/scientific development while ‘resurrect(ing)’ ancient values reflects Hindu nationalist efforts to promote a Hindu identity and nation (Hindutva). Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) schools (Vidhya Bharati) are based around Hindu nationalist values and principles and have for some time promoted a Hindu-centric vision of a shared past based (Sancho, 2015). This values-based education was a nationalist project aimed at developing Indian subjects who were ‘active citizens of society’ (IES Website, 2016).

6.1.1 IES: Modernising Schooling for the Global Economy

According to school leadership at IES, as India ‘developed' and emerged as a growing presence on the world stage, the education system had to keep apace with global changes. Schools in India were now (in 2015) said to be keeping a breast of ‘global change(s)’ and implementing new policies and practices to ensure that the nation continued to move ‘ahead':

**Ben:** What has caused that change in policy?
Vice-Principal Administration, IES: It is the global change as India is also moving ahead and India is changing from a type of developing Nation to a developed Nation. When our leaders and their educationists are seeing what is happening around the world, we are also trying to inculcate those habits in our school and because of those... overall, especially because of technology now, it is very easy to see what is happening in US or UK somehow those changes are now affecting India.

Blending cosmopolitanism and modernisation theory, the school principal suggested that Indian policy makers had borrowed policies from more ‘developed’ countries- including the US and the UK- and implemented those in India to ensure that the nation remained on the path to ‘development’. In recent years, private schools for the middle classes in India have promoted internationalised policies and practices- especially through technology- and adopted notions such as global citizenship (Sancho, 2015). These efforts to internationalise private schooling in India and keep apace with the latest ‘trends’ have been viewed as an attempt to develop the school ‘brand’ (Sancho, 2015). According to the Vice-principal, this meant the school aimed to move beyond the examination orientated, rote-based (‘bookish’) learning of the past to embrace the latest ‘trend(s)’:

Vice-Principal Administration, IES: The main change in the last 5/7 years... The trend has already changed; the things have changed. Earlier in India in Delhi this system of Education was much more with the book (…) we’re like bookworms. We were very good with the books but now that things have changed especially in the private schools the students are much more focused with other activities. Now, we have got many creative students they are doing really well... They're good with the drawing or some other kind of thing they're doing well and that... and students are doing well with the sports... the trend has already changed.

Within the school, these efforts to move away from ‘bookish’ learning had led to alterations to the school curriculum, pedagogy and assessment. These pedagogical
and curricular changes were said to incorporate a global outlook and ensure that students were prepared for the global economy (Fuller and Narasimhan, 2006). The curriculum had been broadened beyond the core subjects (maths, science, English, Hindi, Social Science and Environmental Science) to include music, art and computer classes. At the same time, the school had developed a comprehensive co-curricular (extra-curricular) curriculum including literature, art, sports, music, National Cadet Corps and community development. These changes appeared to be influenced by wider discourses of creativity and “all round development”. Technology had also come to play an important role in schooling at IES.

To ‘modernise’ the curriculum and pedagogy within the school, IES aimed to transition from a ‘chalk and talk’ approach to learning to a ‘techno-based methodology’- in which the use of technology was at the centre of an ‘activity-based’ pedagogy within the school (Vice-Principal Interview, IES; IES website). To achieve this, smart boards or LCD televisions were installed in every class room in the school and a number ‘labs’ (English, Maths and Science) had been added over recent years. The school had also brought in software from two major providers with the aim of making ‘the process of teaching and learning simpler’ by ‘transforming the regular content into a new learning everyday by incorporating technology in curriculum with real-life examples. With our modern and advanced fun learning approach, we try to bring back the joy of learning for students’ (NIIT website, 2017). Within the school, technology was often viewed as a means to enhance learning. Through the introduction of “labs” (computer laboratories) in the school, “cutting edge” technology was said to be enabling students to learn difficult subjects like maths:

**Vice-Principal Administration, IES:** Then, with the subject like… maths is a tough subject so for teaching math nowadays in Delhi we have got a math lab concept also. So, they are being taken to the lab they are shown the 3D objects three dimensional teaching is being done.

**Ben:** Is that inside or outside of the school?
Vice-Principal Administration, IES: For us it is in the school only. Many schools don't have that also. It depends from school to school.

In the lab students were able to take part in three dimensional teaching. This was something that said to be unique to a school like IES that had the facilities that many other schools lacked.

National policies to introduce new methods of assessment and transition away from a system of high stakes testing had also led to new assessment practices within the school. The ‘No Detention’ provision in the RTE Act (2009) mandated that schools must introduce holistic, formative assessments and no longer detain students in a year group if they failed to pass an end of year test. As a result, the school had implemented a program of Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation (CCE) whereby students were graded according to formative assessments (as well as summative tests) and student achievement was understood beyond the purely scholastic (Nawani, 2013).

The emphasis on global skills was evident in the school’s policy of employing English as the medium of instruction for the entire curriculum (except for Hindi lessons). At IES, students were banned from speaking Hindi in school and were expected to hold all conversations in English. Given that English was ‘the most common language spoken around the world’, the school had also taken the step of implementing an English lab to help students learn the ‘correct’ accent:

Vice-Principal Administration, IES: English lab has also come up because nowadays English is the most common language spoken around the world so student needs to get versed and student needs to learn that accent also. So, we started that process of English lab in our school but last year we were facing some problems with the vendor that we hired. So, I think now next year we'll be doing that and that lab has got a headphone and mic system where the first software narrates some story or some other kind of thing and then after that narration and all the Mic is being used for the student to repeat that and then the software analyses if yes your accent was up to mark or not so that kind of thing.
In post-colonial India, speaking English has been a mark of social distinction and language and accent have been a means to achieve upward mobility (Sonntag, 2009). In recent years, although English has remained an aspirational language for all, criticism against those who attempt to distinguish themselves on the basis of the cultural capital associated with English (and a certain accent) has intensified (Baym and Jones, 2013).

The international approach to learning at IES had been influenced by international organisations. In 2015, the school was working towards the British Council’s International Schools Award (ISA). The ISA is ‘globally recognised accreditation’ aimed at ‘introducing international education into the school curriculum’ and ‘embedding it within’ the ‘school’s culture’ (British Council, 2017). Sancho (2015, p. 89) suggests that the ISA offers private schools ‘a focal point, institutional anchoring and a source of legitimacy’ with regard to their ‘international’ status. To gain accreditation, IES had to work with international partners and undertake a range of projects that show an awareness for other cultures and countries. Activities had to be embedded in the curriculum and were supposed to include ‘knowledge and respect for other countries and cultures’; ‘knowledge of global issues’ and ‘cross-cultural communication skills (including but not limited to language learning)’ (British Council, 2017).

In the school’s efforts to obtain the ISA, a range of ‘ISA projects’ were undertaken. These focused on international issues/events including water pollution in Egypt, Bangladesh, India and London; reducing the carbon footprint; knowledge about Chinese, Singaporean and Italian cuisine; a showcase of dance forms from UK, Brazil, Egypt and India; making students aware of religion- its origin and expansion and role in making peace- in different countries and the International Day of the Girl Child- an event to ‘highlight the problems of the girl child and the need to empower them’ (IES Website, 2015).

6.2 The Pressures of Private Schooling in the Global Knowledge Economy

The particular process of ‘modernisation’ at IES was influenced by the need to tailor schooling to the demands of the global economy. In order to survive in a competitive market place, private schools compete to equip students with the knowledge and skills
necessary for success in the global labour market (Sancho, 2015). Private schools in Delhi have had to contend with an ‘international’ culture of schooling that has emerged in Indian metropolitan cities and towns over the last two decades (Kumar, 2008; Gilbertson, 2017). In the last ten years, private schools have emerged offering elaborate, extensive and exclusive facilities that are “identical to those offered by five-star hotels, and management practices in the two are similar” (Kumar, 2008; Rizvi, 2014; Gilbertson, 2017). In Delhi, these schools market themselves on the basis that they offer ‘international standards of education’ (including the IB or Cambridge IGCSE) that are recognised overseas and will facilitate the global mobility of students in the school (Kumar, 2008; Sancho, 2015). Alongside ‘modern’ facilities, including air conditioned class rooms, sports facilities and the latest technology (Kumar, 2008), these ‘corporate international schools’ promise to equip students with the cosmopolitan cultural capital necessary for success in a globalised world (Rizvi, 2014; Gilbertson, 2017).

Following the opening of Inspire English School, the director of the school has since opened an ‘International’ school and -in recent years- a ‘World’ school in other parts of North India (Research Journal, September, 2015). The internationalisation of IES and of the other schools in the Inspire group appeared to reflect concerns that the school should market itself effectively to its ‘target market’. At IES, education was viewed as a field that had the goals, practices and motivations of the private sector (Gunter et al. 2014). The Vice-principal- responsible for the non-academic, administrative aspects of school management- brought to his present role knowledge and experience from his previous work in the corporate sector and an MBA from a British university. When describing the school community, the Vice-Principal employed the language of business/economics/finance (target markets, segments, players, investments and returns) to position the school as a market ‘player’:
Vice-Principal Administration, IES: My school caters for middle segment families those who are not really rich but yes they can afford the fees and they can afford to provide various facilities for their children. I mean we are not a budget school, we are a middle segment player, parents are able to pay our fees also and in terms of returning them whatever the best possible that the school can return.

The principal was keen to distinguish IES from budget schools that have a reputation for poor quality and dubious teaching practices (Srivastava, 2010). For the Vice-principal, it was the families that attended the school that defined the school experience. Unlike the ‘poor’ backgrounds of parents in MCD schools (and low-fee private schools), these parents are described as being self-sufficient, entrepreneurial and economically secure- ‘able to pay…fees’ and ‘provide various facilities for their children’. Importing the language and assumptions of business, the Vice-principal suggests that learning at IES was commodity in which parents invested fees and the school’s role was to offer the ‘best possible… return(s)’ (Oplatka, 2002; Oplatka, Hemsley-Brown & Foskett, 2002; Gurney, 2017). Parents at IES were described as being in secure well paid jobs- owning small businesses or working in India’s private sector:

Ben: So, in terms of jobs, what kind of jobs do they do?
Vice-Principal Administration, IES: We have got people with businesses those who are running smaller shops with an annual income of 5-7 lakh rupees (5,400 GBP-7500 GBP) annually and we have got people involved with the corporate jobs also with an annual salary of around 7-8 Lakh… (7500 GBP- 8,600 GBP) and we have got exceptional cases where we have got really good students also from very

Despite their differences, the incomes of all parents in the IES community were well in excess of the average income in Delhi (3 lakh INR or 3234 GBP) (Directorate of Economics and Statistics, 2016). The transactional nature of the relationship between the school and parents in the community- characterised by the vice-principal as
‘investment and returns’- appeared to lead students from ‘very upper-segment’ families to be perceived as better (‘really good’) than students from lower income families in the school community. Alongside secure economic backgrounds, parents in the community were said to be ‘educated’:

Ben:  
Most of the parents of students in your class have they been to school or…

Class V Ma’am, Interview, IES:  
They are educated but maybe they have done their education from Hindi medium.

Ben:  
So, they can’t speak English but they have been to school?

Class V Ma’am, Interview, IES:  
Yes, but basics they know.

While parents were ‘educated’, the teacher suggested that ‘maybe’ parents had studied at a Hindi medium school. Given the follow up statement that parents knew the ‘basics’, it appeared that a Hindi medium education was considered to be inferior to an English medium education. Debates about the status attached to the English language in India. Research has shown that there is a sense of ‘inferiority’ associated with vernacular medium of instruction that leads many parents to send their children to English-medium schools (Jha, 1979; Berns, 2013). Since British colonial rule, English has been considered as the language of education and has been associated with upward social mobility (Fernandes, 2006).

The school worked to maintain the ‘educated’, middle-class nature of the school community. The location of the school ensured that ‘lower category’ groups could be excluded. Legislation obliging schools to enrol 25% of their student body from ‘Economically Weaker Sections’ (EWS) applied to IES but the school’s location in a ‘nice community’ meant that the school did not have EWS students enrolled (Vice-Principal, Inspire English School). Schools are only obliged to enrol students within a 1 km radius of the school, and the school’s location- in a middle class neighbourhood- meant that it remained largely unaffected (Vice-Principal, Inspire English School).

For parents, the middle-class background of the school community also played an important role in determining IES as the parents’ school of choice. Parents suggested
that the school fee remained prohibitive for ‘lower-category’ groups and ensured the student body remained middle class:

**Research Partner:** So, generally fee is the main reason that decide where you send your child for school?

**Michael’s Mother, Parent FGD 1, IES:** Yes, it is a factor. We have to think about it. Mostly, the students coming here are from a middle class family.

... 

**Research Partner:** Is there any free school that you could send your child to?

**Itshant’s Father, Parent FGD 2, IES:** Government schools. Central school is also there... In it the fee is 500-700 INR. Here, where my child is studying, I am paying fee 2700 INR (per month). And at Central School... for 5th class it is 500 INR fee per quarter (three months).

**Research Partner:** What is the quality of central school?

**Itshant’s Father, Parent FGD 2, IES:** Good. The child who wants to study can study anywhere. In private school there are also naughty students.

... 

**Research Partner:** So, Central School has good reputation?

**Nikhil’s Mother, Parent FGD 2, IES:** ...as compared to the fee (here), we see it is good. As we are middle class but the one who come below us (goes to that school).

**Research Partner:** Lower middle class?

**Nikhil’s Mother, Parent FGD 2, IES:** Yes. So, we think that the circle of our child will not be good and so we avoid such schools.

**Research Partner:** What about other parents? Are you of the same opinion?

**All Parents, Parent FGD 2, IES:** Yes.

Even where schooling was perceived to be as good and less expensive, parents opted for IES because they wanted to avoid the 'lower category' children in government or
less expensive private schools. These parents appeared to view the school fee at IES as a guarantee that the school community would remain ‘middle class’ and that it would prevent lower middle-class groups- ‘the one who come below us’- from accessing the school. It was not necessarily the behaviour of students that was the issue but the family background and status. This suggests that parents view the fee of the school as a means to maintain boundaries around their particular ‘segment’ of the middle class.

For parents at IES, the othering of ‘lower category’ students in government schools appeared to play an important role in distinguishing themselves as middle class. For these parents, free, government schooling was not an option given the ‘bad atmosphere’ created by poor/‘low category’ students:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Partner:</th>
<th>How are government school? Would any of you send your child there?</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Roshni’s Mother, Parent</td>
<td>No, the atmosphere in there is very bad.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FGD 1, IES:</td>
<td>The atmosphere there (in government schools) is not good and the students of all category</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

By othering ‘lower category’ students and government school communities, parents in the school constructed themselves as middle class citizens. The free provision of (government) schooling was associated with the non-selective inclusion of ‘all category’ of students (especially ‘low category’) and was clearly something to be avoided. Through these extracts, parents construct themselves as educational consumers who evaluate and select schools according to their needs. This entails a particular concern to avoid poor students.

One parent told me that her older son had been on a trip where he had had to share accommodation with ‘lower category’ students and he had called her asking to come home because they had ‘bad habits’ and used ‘dirty language’ (Research Journal, November 2015). While lower-middle class families were to be avoided, poor and working-class families in government schools were considered reckless and dangerous. Nikhil reflected the negative perception of government school students at
IES - and also apparent among teachers in MCD schools - in his assertion that government students were badly behaved because they fought and ‘did not bath’:

Ben: And you were talking about government students do you think that they are disciplined?
Nikhil Interview, IES: Sir, no.
Ben: Why not?
Nikhil Interview, IES: There is no discipline in government schools
Ben: Why do you say that?
Nikhil Interview, IES: because the students in the government school do not behave properly. They do not respect and care for the things.
Ben: Why do you think they don't behave properly?
Nikhil Interview, IES: Err… … … … … … … (long silence)
So, Central School has good reputation?
Nikhil's Mother, Parent FGD 2, IES: …as compared to the fee (here), we see it is good. As we are middle class but the one who come below us (goes to that school).
Ben: How do you know the students in government schools don’t behave properly?
Nikhil Interview, IES: Because they fight
Ben: Why do you think that they don't behave the same as you do?
Nikhil Interview, IES: Because… (in) government school, the students are very bad because their face… they do not bath… and do not come in the proper uniform.
Ben: How do you know that?
Nikhil Interview, IES: Because when I see the government school students his face was very black and very dirty.
Although Nikhil (and most of the students at IES) had never been to government school, he suggests that students in those schools are very badly behaved. From Nikhil’s experiences of seeing government students he views them as violent and unkempt, coming to school in the wrong uniform and ‘dirty’. Nikhil’s perception of students in the school is particularly shaped by his impression that government school students have ‘very black and very dirty’ faces. For this serves as evidence for their immorality. Pinto (2013) suggests that for Hindu children, Upper caste means ‘clean’ which means ‘good’ whereas lower caste means ‘dirty’ which means ‘bad’. This demonstrates the interconnection between caste and class. Other students at IES expressed similar ideas and many viewed ‘lower category’ students in government schools as badly behaved and violent:

Ben: If your parents said to you I am sending you to a government school, what would you say?
Bloom, FGD 1, IES: I would say...that I don’t want to go... you can take my admission in the hostel but I will not go to the government school
Ben: Why?
Nikhil, FGD 1, IES: The students of this school are very talkative and naughty too!
Bloom, FGD 1, IES: Nupur: Yes!

Ben: Have you been to a government school? How do you know what they are like?
All, FGD 1, IES: All talking at once (very excited)

Ben: Why?
Roshni, FGD 1, IES: I have seen them they are fighting...
Golu, FGD 1, IES: Yes, badly!
Bloom, FGD 1, IES: And sir, they are hurt badly!
Nikhil, FGD 1, IES: Yes!
Roshni, FGD 1, IES: Like animals!
Nikhil Interview, IES: Because... (in) government school, the students are very bad because their face... they do not bath... and do not come in the proper uniform.

Ben: How do you know that?

Nikhil Interview, IES: Because when I see the government school students his face was very black and very dirty.

Through their criticism of ‘poor’ or ‘low category’ students in government schools, students and parents create distinctions along classed lines around behaviour and morality. Just as teachers appeared to pathologise working class families in MCD schools (Section 5.3 & 5.4), members of the IES school community did the same to demonstrate how economic relations were ‘relations of superiority/inferiority, normality/abnormality, judgment/shame’ (Lawler, 1999, p. 4, cited in Tyler and Bennett 2009, p. 3). One student claims to have seen students fighting ‘...like animals’. These perceptions were based on seeing children from government schools as they made their way home from school or from stories that their family or friends had told them. Sneeha- who had actually been to a government school- told others in a group interview that the schools were ‘not that bad’ but this comment was ignored. By characterising the student body of government schools as inferior, students, parents and teachers at IES legitimise private schools- and school choice- as the only option for a respectable (middle class) individual.

These extracts suggest that by enacting school choice, parents are able to construct and enact the identity of the respectable middle class citizen. School choice for parents at IES relies on symbolic boundaries and group solidarities that distinguish the middle class from those below. Rather than school choice being a rational, impersonal act, here choice is deeply personal. In a context where the institutional barriers to schooling have been softened, one of the reasons middle class parents engaged in school choice to protect their children from ‘invasions from below’ (Murphy, 1988; Ball and Vincent, 2001). This competitive climate of school choice had important implications for IES.

The competitive nature of the school market in Delhi, meant that IES needed to be responsive to market discipline and had to adopt an enterprising approach by
anticipating and satisfying the expectations of parents- as education consumers (Angus, 2013). Within neoliberal systems of school choice, enterprising schools are those that engage in impression management to signal their ‘distinctiveness’ and worth in comparison with other schools (Maguire et al. 2011). At IES, efforts to modernise or ‘internationalise’ the school curriculum appear to have been influenced by the ‘international’ turn in India where prestigious school’s have sought to align their school experience with the demands of the global labour market (Sancho, 2015, p. 94). However, in practice, the ‘international’ turn at IES did not appear to have to have had a significant impact on the school’s practices.

While elite schools cater for students seeking a ‘global’ future, the everyday practices at IES suggested that the school experience remained focused on ensuring that students were prepared for a local future within the Indian education system- this meant focusing on high levels of academic performance in class tests and English language learning. Rather than being a result of new or global changes, a test intensive culture of schooling and English language medium of instruction were both founded in the colonial system of education in India (Fernandes, 2006; Nambissan, 2013). The ongoing emphasis on these older practices mean that rather than being integrated into the curriculum, global learning was implemented through the odd celebration of international days and in efforts to enable students to learn about other cultures. Although the vice-principal suggested that English was the most commonly ‘spoken language in the world’, within the school English was understood as a means to access higher education and professional employment in India. The vice-principal explained that English was necessary because ‘physics, chemistry, math’ were all taught in English and at university ‘80%’ of courses were English medium - (after Class XII) ‘they (courses) will be only in English after 12th… it is a problem everything is in English’ (Vice-principal (Administration) Interview, IES). When I suggested to the Class V teacher that English was sometimes viewed as a ‘global language’, she replied ‘but we do not connect it to the global’ (Class V Ma’am, Interview IES).

Alongside English, an important marker of the school’s ‘distinctiveness’ had long been high levels of performance in the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) Class X and Class XII exams. To access highly prized, professional degree courses or middle-class employment, students in India must obtain excellent marks in the Class XII board exams and university ‘entrance exams’. This ensures that schools are
sought out on the basis that they can adequately prepare students for these exams. Parents at IES told me that an important reason for choosing the school was that it had a ‘good name’ (reputation) and that children in their neighbourhood who had attended the school had gone on to pursue professional degrees (Parent Focus Group Discussion 2, IES).

The vice-principal described how the need to ‘show’ that the school was ‘doing well’ meant that the school was driven to get ‘better and better results’. This was said to be something that was unique to private schools:

**Vice-Principal Administration, IES:** No, hierarchy is the same, everything is the same. The same level works with the private school, the same concept works for the government schools also… but it's all about private schools… They want to show yes we are doing well and they want to make better and better results but in government schools some how they don't need to... They also want to make sure there's better results but they don't.

Reflecting neoliberal economic and political thinking (Angus and Brown, 1997), the vice-principal suggests that market arrangements are preferable to government regulation and intervention. Echoing advocates of school choice, the Vice-principal suggests that this need to survive and compete is what distinguishes private schools from government schools and leads them to be more efficient (Dixon, 2012; Tooley, 2010). Given that IES was operating in this competitive market place it needed to demonstrate consistently high levels of performance in order to ‘survive’:

**Vice-Principal Administration, IES:** …although the (school) Society is running a school but the Society also needs revenue to be generated for soft and smooth execution of the school so for that the school needs to perform well to survive in the Market.

The importance of academic results in Indian schools has led to what Manjumdar and Mooij (2011) have called the ‘marks race’ where ‘the prevailing educational ethos is
such that value addition through education is measured mostly in economic terms of marks and test scores’. The growth of the private sector over the last twenty years has intensified competition between schools. According to the class V teacher, students were now growing up in an era characterised by competition in which the failure to do well in Class XII exams would be catastrophic:

Ben: How important is it that children finish Class 12?
Class V maam, IES: Very important because everything is based on that only. If you are not serious in class 12, there is nothing after that.
Ben: So, if your daughter didn't finish Class 12 what would you do?
Class V maam, IES: She has to work very, very hard because now everywhere the competition is there wherever you will go. So, if the competition is there, that means you have something in you. If you are not completing 12th class even, you will not get a good job. Here in India especially…

According to the class teacher, the current generation of students were growing up in an intensely competitive environment, where competition was everywhere- ‘wherever you will go’. This meant that students had to work ‘very, very hard’ or face a bleak future. The pressure on this generation of students and the need for them to be monitored was something that one parent at IES suggested was not apparent during their childhood but that was essential now:

Roshni’s Mother, Focus Group Discussion, IES: (in the past) Parents never had to see what their children were doing. If he is studious then he will become something or else he will not do anything. But now if parents don’t look after their child so much we don’t know where they will go.

Through these extracts, the parents, Vice-principal and Class V teacher describe living in an intensely competitive society in which competition is a major characteristic of human relations. In Chapter 2, I highlighted research showing that neoliberal government policies have shifted responsibility for schooling from the state and on to
families in India (Maiyitree and Sriprakash, 2018). In these extracts, we can see how it is the perception that society has changed, that there is intense competition everywhere, that leads parents, teachers and the vice-principal at IES to intensify parenting practices and closely monitor their children- and their performance. Given the investments that parents make in their children, school staff and parents make certain demands on children as a result (Walkerdine, 1993, Balagopalan, 2008). The perception that children were growing up in an intensely competitive society led parents and teachers to adopt particular strategies and to legitimise a test-intensive culture of schooling at IES in which every effort had to be made to ensure success. Without an education, students would be left with ‘nothing’ and securing a ‘good job’ would be impossible.

The need for academic success led to a rejection of policies that aimed at transforming the rote-based, exam orientated system of schooling at IES. Although CCE (formative assessment practices) had been implemented, they were deemed unsuitable to the ‘Indian scenario’. CCE was viewed as a ‘global’ policy that was incompatible to the ‘Indian’ system of schooling:

**Vice-Principal Administration, IES:** When we write an exam externally you need to study also you need to work hard and somehow the Indian policy makers thought why not to adopt a system that is followed in different countries where no mark is to be allotted or grade is to be given based upon various activities. So the CBSE decided to change but as a vice-principal I feel that the system is not working perfect and we are facing some kinds of problems. Students are now much more relaxed because India is having a very densely populated country and in Delhi the population is very high so if the competition is not there in Indian scenario there is some problem. The students are finding that okay there is no exam so they are least bothered with the education system.

Rather than internationalising the school experience, certain global policies- like CCE- were deemed to dilute the education system in India. Criticisms of the CCE were widespread in India and the CBSE has since replaced the use of formative
assessment and reinstated a ‘uniform system of assessment, examination and report card’ for students in classes 6-9 (India Today, 2017). The Vice-principal’s concerns about CCE revolve around the fact that it was said to make students disinterested- ‘least bothered’ about ‘the education system’. According to the Vice-principal, the pressure derived from the examinations and tests is necessary in a ‘densely populated country’ like India because it sustains competition - without which there is ‘some problem’. The emphasis on competition for exam results, played a key role in shaping the school experience at IES.

Staff at IES were under pressure to demonstrate that students were on track and achieving throughout their school experience. To ensure that the school (and individual students) remained competitive and ‘effective’, and to show parents that they were getting value for money, a rigorous system of monitoring, assessment and accountability had been implemented to the school. Drawing on business-derived concepts of measurement, comparison and evaluation, this system enabled the school to audit students and teachers so that they could be held against quantifiable standards of ‘success’ (Ball, 2003).

6.2.1 Audit Culture and Auditable Subjects

The ‘audit culture’ (Ball, 2003) I felt I witnessed at IES school, appeared to have been shaped by international best practices in good governance and accountability. In 2007, the school gained the ISO 9001:2000, a certification which aims to ensure that companies adopt quality management systems, with a focus on ‘product realisation’ and ‘measurement, analysis and improvement’ (ISO Website, 2016). The certifying body- the International Standards Organisation- promotes ‘worldwide proprietary, industrial and commercial standards’ to encourage fair competition in a free market (ISO, 2015).

From Kindergarten through to Class XII, students undertook high-stakes end of unit and terminal (end of term) exams in core subjects. The results of each class was then passed on to management for them to review and analyse the performance of each class (Vice-principal Interview, IES). The system of measurement within the school meant that scientific, observable knowledge- aligned with an economist model of evaluation- was privileged over other forms of knowledge (Harris-White, 2013). The
school day was heavily weighted towards core curriculum subjects, with English, Maths, Hindi and Science forming the bulk of the curriculum. To ensure that opportunities for knowledge development were maximised, a rigid timetable was in place with three forty minute lessons before lunch and three after. With the exception of once weekly lessons in Physical Training, Music, Art and Computers, students spent their entire time in the classroom, even eating their lunch and taking their lunch break in class. Only during the once weekly PT period did children go outside of the school building and play outside:

Ben: What is school like in class 5. Do you have time to play?
Michael, Golu, Roshni and Bloom, IES: No!
Golu, IES: Never ever!
Michael, IES: We get tired!

Although, students said that some lessons involved drama or practical activities, the bulk of activities were said to revolve around the textbook. In most lessons, students said that teachers would read through a chapter in the textbook with students whilst stopping occasionally to ask questions. Students described how the teacher would write both the questions and the answers on the board and students would then copy them down in to their books and revise them for homework- in preparation for an upcoming test. This meant that, according to students, it was the teacher’s role to present information and their role to ‘learn’ or ‘remember’ it:

Ben: So for Learning what do you think is most important?
ROCKY, IES: Most important is to remember something it is the main role in our learning. We learn something it helps in our life when we are grown up we get a job so when we learned we were able to do a job.
Ben: Are some people better at learning than others?
Bloom, IES: Yes, I think because some people can remember one thing more than the other.
Ben: Some people forget things... So do you think remembering is important to learning?
Bloom, IES: Yes

... 

Ben: So you copy from the board in to your class book and then you go home and copy from your class book into the notebook
Sneeha, IES: Yes
Ben: So how many times do you copy?
Sneeha, IES: 3 times...
Ben: Is it important that you copy?
Sneeha, IES: It is important to copy if we will not copy how will we learn?

... 

Ben: The right answer... so, you have to memorise sections of the textbook to know the right answer.
Bloom, IES: Yes, but in some... yes
Ben: Go on...
Bloom, IES: But sometimes the children can't make their own answer so they will write the answer which mam has given.
Ben: What do you do?
Bloom, IES: Write the answer which mam has given (giggles)

... 

Ben: In school, what do you have to do to learn? what kinds of things?
Michael, IES: Nothing special. I just repeat the line again and again in my mind and it can be learned

According to these students, learning at IES revolved around revising information from the textbook or remembering answers that the teachers had written on the board for them (Kumar, 1990). Under pressure to stay ahead in the examination ‘rat race’, the curriculum was narrowed and teachers appeared to adopt ritualistic and rote based approaches to learning (Manjumdar and Mooij, 2011). Rather than moving away from “bookish” (rote-based) learning- as suggested by the vice-principal- these extracts
suggest that these practices central to the school experience. Scholars have shown how the pressure to perform leads schools engage in ‘rote-based learning’ practices and ‘parrot training’ (Manjumdar and Mooij, 2011). This approach to education can be traced back to the colonial era when the British administration instilled a highly bureaucratic system of education which gave little authority to the teacher and was revolved around rote-based practices and memorisation of the textbook (Kumar, 1990). In terms of academic knowledge, this rote-based approach to teaching and learning positioned the child as an empty vessel or blank slate, ‘first carved out, then refilled by curriculum standards, practices, and policies’ (Sonu and Benson, 2016).

6.2.2 Relational Neoliberal Subjects

To motivate students to achieve the highest levels of performance in Class X and Class XII CBSE board exams, all students at IES were graded and ranked in accordance with their performance in class tests- the most important of which were the ‘terminals’ (end of term assessments). In these tests, percentages in each of the six core curriculum subjects (English, Maths, Environmental Science, Hindi, Social Studies and General Knowledge) were calculated alongside an average for each student’s overall performance in all subjects. Students were then given their individual results and the ‘positions’ of the top ten performing students were announced to the class. Students referred to this system of ranking and achievement as ‘positions’. The top ten performing students in each class served as an example of excellence to the rest of the class and the top three were often rewarded with prizes. While the students outside of the ‘top ten’ were not formally ranked, students in Class V knew the rough ‘position’ of every student in the class. When talking about learning in the school, students regularly referred to the positions and percentages that other students had obtained to describe themselves or other students of note in the class:

Nikhail, IES: The best Students are Roshni, Rocky, Y****, Bloom and me.
Ben: The best? You are among the best how do you know?
Nikhail, IES: Because my position is in top 4 or top 5
Ben: So those people you just said, tell me their position.

Nikhail, IES: First position is Michael 2nd of Rocky 3rd of Y*** 4th of Roshni 5th of me 6th of A*** 7th Bloom 8th P**** 9th of D**** and 10th of S****

…

Ben: When you get a position is it all of your subjects marked together?

Nikhail, IES: Yes the calculation of all of the marks together and the percentage of who has got the highest

Ben: What did you get then?

Nikhail, IES: out of 100 I got 95… 95 Percent.

Ben: And the person in first place what did they get?

Nikhail, IES: 97%

By ranking student performance and awarding positions, students were encouraged to live a performative, entrepreneurial and calculable existence in which they organised themselves in response to test results and evaluations (Ball, 2003). By internalising external norms of assessment, students were able to track their self-improvement (Foucault, 1991). This external and internal subjectification appeared to lead students to conduct themselves in relation to the norms (framework of testing) through which they were governed (Foucault, 1991). The system of audit in the school and especially the use of ‘positions’ operated as a political technology of the self-a means for individuals to actively regulate their own conduct (). Within Foucault’s notion of governmentality, the conduct of conduct or ‘action upon an action’ is a key theme. The audit culture in the school can be viewed as a ‘tactic’ employed to arrange ‘things so that this or that end may be achieved through a certain number of means’ (Foucault, 2007, p. 99).

Winning - Achievement

The school had long encouraged students to compete and to achieve the highest levels of performance through its culture of ‘winning’. Reflecting the emphasis on winning, cabinets stuffed full of trophies lined the walls of both the Director’s and the Principal’s office. The Principal said that students were encouraged to to enter as
many competitions as possible and ‘if they agree, we push the children to win’ (Research Journal, September 2015). In the day to day school experience ‘winning’ was most commonly achieved through student performance in academic subject and students were rewarded for outstanding achievement through trophies, certificates and cash prizes:

Ben: What do you want to achieve in your schooling?
Arjun, IES: Sir prizes,
Rocky, IES: Trophies
Arjun and Rocky, IES: Scholarships, medals
Arjun, IES: Sir, first position.
Ben: Does everyone want to get first position? Why?
Sneeha, IES: Because it is the best position
Ben: Does it feel…
Arjun, IES: Feels good!
Ben: It feels good?
All (Sneeha, Arjun, Rocky, Itshant): Yes
Ben: Why would it feel good?
Arjun, IES: Sir many of the students… If we get the highest marks we get the trophy

Within Class V students drew on the competitive, winning culture of the school to develop their identities in relation to notions of winning and losing (Bloom Interview, IES). ‘Winners’ were students that were capable of achieving positions in class and who ‘won’ on regular occasions- demonstrating their ability to ‘do something’. Those who failed to win competitions or achieve positions- were said to be ‘losers’ that were incapable of ‘doing anything’:
Bloom, IES: Loser cannot do anything and they don’t win. The others are the winners. The winners are those who win anything and the others are those who don’t win…

‘Doing something’ in the context of the classroom meant achieving the highest levels of performance. ‘Winners’ were those with agency whose self-actualisation was evidenced through their list of achievements. The most respected and revered student in the class was Michael who had finished in first place for the last three years. By obtaining a ‘position’ among the best performing students in class, ‘winning’ students became ‘triumphant selves’ - mini-celebrities in the classroom that were talked about, sought out for advice and respected by others (Ball, 2003; Wilkins, 2012). These students were deemed to be on track to achieving the credentials necessary for future success (Nairn & Higgins, 2007). These ‘winners’ sought to maximise their potential and only the best grades (A and A+) were good enough:

Ben: But when you say a good result what does that mean
Michael, IES: There is a paper and mam has written A+
Nikhail, IES: Report card report card
Ben: What grade do you have to get?

Michael, Bloom, Nikhail, A+ and A.
Golu, IES: Never B!
Ben: If you get B what happens?

Golu, IES: I don’t get A only A+
Michael, IES: I have never got the B + I have got the A and A+.
Nikhail, IES: I have got the B one time… in Maths

Golu, IES: ooooooo!
Michael, IES: Mats not Maths
Golu, IES: In first class I got B

Bloom, IES: I have never got any B… in fifth class
Golu, IES: In Hindi because my writing is very bad.
Ben: So if you got a B would you be upset?
Michael, IES: The bad children who get beat they will have B's

‘Winning’ students describe themselves as achieving high levels of performance in the (quantitative) measures of success that ‘counted’. High performers monitored their own and one another’s performance to drive up the acceptable levels of performance so that only the highest grades would do. The audit culture and the use of positions in the school can be viewed as a form of neoliberal governmentality (Foucault, 1991) that enables neoliberal responsibilisation:

... autonomous, self-determined and self-sustaining subjects whose moral quality is based on the fact that they rationally assess the costs and benefits of a certain act as opposed to other alternative acts. As the choice of options for action is, or so the neo-liberal notion of rationality would have it, the expression of free will on the basis of a self-determined decision, the consequences of the action are borne by the subject alone, who is also solely responsible for them. (Lemke in Shamir, 2008, pp. 7–8)

These students can be viewed as neoliberal subjects who actively craft their identity in relation to ‘positions’ (measures of success). Self-enhancement and the realisation of a winning identity entailed intensive work on the self and ensured that students had to add ‘value’ (Apple, 2001; Ball, 2003; Francis, Skelton and Read, 2010; Rose 1999). This expectation is perhaps unsurprising given that schools are expected to reinvent themselves and demonstrate ‘value addedness’ (Meadmore and Meadmore, 2004, p.375).

While students at IES were clearly under pressure to provide evidence that they were ‘making an enterprise’ of themselves (Apple, 2001, p. 420), they were reluctant to present their achievements as being the result of self-determined decisions or individual free choice. During one of our club sessions, I asked students to create a role play about discipline. In one of the plays, a boy had coaxed his tutor into doing all of his work for him while he sat and watched cartoons. When it came around to exam time, the student didn’t know any of the answers and he failed the test. His parents received his grades and were most disappointed at his performance. The boy in the play was so upset that he had let down his parents that he studied hard, retook the
test and gained both excellent marks and the appreciation of his parents (Research Journal, November, 2015). At the end of the role play, I sought to understand what the role play told us about learning:

*I asked students who had the biggest impact on their learning. From my (Western) interpretation of the role play it seemed that the child’s change in attitude had brought about improved results- I had concluded that students were emphasising the individual agency of the child in education. However, students adopted a completely different perspective, for them, it was the negative reaction of the parents and the child’s loyalty and commitment to the family that had ensured that he had made the most of his education. Students said that it was the family (parents) that had brought about this change and not the child himself. When I then asked students to list the people that were most important to their learning, they listed- in order of importance- parents, family, friends and finally themselves. I questioned how friends were more important than students, since it was they who were actually ‘doing’ the learning. One student then changed her mind and said that actually they were more important than their friends because without their own hard work they would not learn anything. The other students agreed; however, there was no room for maneuver with regard to parents and teachers. (Research Journal, November, 2015)*

For students at IES, teachers and parents were viewed as more important to their learning than themselves. This suggested that although students were self-responsibilised through the audit culture in the school, they did not view their success to be a result of free choice. During a group discussion with students, I asked students how they would describe themselves, at the time, I was surprised by what I viewed as vague responses:

- **Ben**: How would you describe yourself?
- **Golu, IES**: Same as Bloom and Roshni… When I was angry I don’t talk to anyone
- **Bloom, IES**: When I am angry I shout.
- **Ben, IES**: What do other people say about you? What kind of a person do they think you are?
- **Bloom, IES**: Some think we are good some think that we are bad
- **Golu, IES**: Some think that we are unkind
It appeared to me that students weren’t used to answering- and did not know how to answer- questions about themselves. Students clearly did have some notions of individual identity in terms of their likes and dislikes but they were reluctant- or unable- to say much about what they were like as an individual. They could describe the things that they did, likes/dislikes, their experiences and other people in their lives but asking in who they were my question jarred and was met with rather stilted, incomplete responses like those above. These answers didn’t align with what I understood to be the autonomous, self-determined subject of neoliberalism. In a discussion with another group of students at IES, students similarly were not used to answering such a question and one student went further to suggest that it was inappropriate to talk about one’s self:

**Ben:** How would you describe yourself to someone else…I am…

**Rocky, IES:** Rocky

**Arjun, IES:** A good boy

**Ben:** What else?

**Arjun, IES:** (unclear, speaks in Hindi)

**Ben:** What does that mean?

**Arjun, IES:** Talking good things about our self

**Ben:** You don’t think it is good. You should or shouldn’t do it?

**Arjun, IES:** You shouldn’t talk too much about yourself- good things- like I am like this you can’t do that.

Arjun suggests that it is not only saying good things about yourself that is unacceptable but that simply talking about ‘what you are like’ is undesirable. This demonstrates that as well as understanding the neoliberal-prescribed individualising processes, it is also important to examine the ‘complexities and inconsistencies that exist in school contexts’ (Allan and Charles, 2014). Allan and Charles (2014) argue that beyond a focus on ‘neoliberal times’ scholars need to undertake historical explorations in order to identity the ‘traditional discursive patterns’ that work as “‘guides’ rather than absolute ‘determinants’ of the contemporary practice”. Neoliberal modernisation does not erase local cultural practices but enables neoliberalism to function in an Indian
context (Nonini, 2008). It seemed to me that for middle class students at IES, neoliberal individualisation was functioning in the context of a relational sense of identity that discouraged the cultivation of individualism. Although talking about identity can be complex and abstract, within this context, it seemed that different notions of what identity is and how it is formed existed.

**Shaping Individual and Relational Identities at IES**

Research undertaken by scholars in the global North has suggested that “Hindu’s experienced self is structured more around we, ours, and us than around I, mine or me. There is a preference to belong to a collective and to undermine autonomy, initiative, and individualism” (Sinha 1982, p. 153). However, as suggested in Chapter 2, western research into Indian collectivism has tended to homogenise Indians (and other Asians) as being motivated by collective- rather than individual- interests (Dumont, 1970; Hofstede, 1984, 2001). In Chapter 2, I drew on Paramasivam and Nair-Venugopal’s (2012) suggestion that an Indian Hindu collective identity is not wholly collectivist but a mixture of individualism and collectivism:

‘While collective individualism depicts the collective Indian identity, individuality commingles with and is inseparable from an Indian’s sense of collective identity’ (Paramasivam and Nair-Venugopal, 2012 in Nair-Venugopal, 2012, p.159).

Scholars have argued that this conception of identity is a result of Hindu ontologies in India (Nair-venugopal, 2012; Sinha, 1982). Although different schools of Hinduism hold dissimilar ontologies, one dominant ontology posits that everything - animate and inanimate- constitutes an ordered and interconnected whole that is an expression of a Supreme Being (Brahman). A belief in this ‘ultimate supreme reality’ (‘the realisation of the absolute truth’) is coupled with a belief in the importance of seeking it. Each soul (aatman) seeks to reveal this truth and reach the ‘pinnacle of consciousness where man and god are one’ (Paramasivam and Nair-Venugopal, 2012 in Nair-Venugopal, 2012, p.159). In Hinduism, the path to achieving ‘Brahman or God-realisation’ is asceticism - ‘an austere life of abstinence of the body, mind and speech from worldly pleasures (Paramasivam and Nair-Venugopal, 2012 in Nair-Venugopal, 2012, p.159).

At IES, this Hindu ontology had long been at the core of the school’s identity. The school emblem was based upon the ‘Om’ symbol which (in Hinduism) refers to Atman
(soul, self) and Brahman (ultimate reality, entirety of the universe). Within the school, the ‘Om’ symbol was said to denote ‘purity’, ‘sanctity’ and act ‘a source of inspirational energy’ (IES School Website, October, 2016). Accompanying the school emblem was the school motto, ‘Honest Labor Pays’ (IES School Website, October, 2016). The principal explained that beyond summarising the school ethos, the motto had clear spiritual and religious connotations:

**Vice-Principal Administration, IES:** (the school motto)... means that you work honestly and at some point if not on short notice but and long-term also you will be rewarded and paid by God in one manner or another manner.

The suggestion that students should work ‘sincerely’ and ‘honestly’ irrespective of the short-term results, aligns with notions of Seva or Karmayoga; the Hindu ethic that it is one’s duty and imperative to work for the good of society (and god) without consideration for the fruits of their labour (Goptu, 2014). Notions of seva provide “a critical religious framing in the performance of civic virtue” (Zavos, 2012 in Mitra, 2012, p. 174). At IES, the school emblem and motto suggested that students have historically been constructing their identities in relation to nationalist discourses that position them as a selfless (ascetic) individuals working for the good of the (Hindu) nation. ‘Honest Labour Pays’ reminded students to focus on their individual actions- staying ‘honest in all spheres of life’ and ‘abstain(ing)’ from the ‘negative’ influences around them (IES School website, 2016).

This form of ‘spiritual citizenship’ was first articulated by the Hindu monk, Swami Vivekananda, who played a major role in the nationalist movement against the British colonialists (Roy & Hammers, 2014). In his nation making project, “national self-determination, social reform and spiritual awakening were all linked” (Van der Veer, 2001, p. 47). Vivekananda is credited with transforming the ‘Hindu discourse on asceticism, devotion and worship into the nationalist idiom of ‘service to the nation for both men and women’ (Van der Veer, 1999). The expectation that students would be self-less and devoted to the nation was reflected in the school’s authoritarian disciplinary practices. Within the school, students were well drilled in the school rules and routines, and they were expected to act as part of a group that complies
immediately with commands (Bourdieu, 1988). Students described being habituated into obeying teachers through rigid bodily discipline within the classroom:

**Rocky, IES:** Discipline is we have to maintain discipline forever in our life and our future and our past we have to remain quiet (…) Main thing in discipline is stay quiet we have to stay quiet if we do not stay quiet the mam will give us punishment and we do not like and we lost our position and our class.

...  

**Arjun, IES:** Quietly means not disturbing others Discipline means rules follow We have to follow the rules that are in the school.

...  

**Ben:** And why do you think they are disciplined?

**Itshant, IES:** Sir, because they always listen to the teacher and they work good in the studies and they don’t misbehave in the class.

During lessons, students were expected to remain seated at their desk and sit in silence until asked to do otherwise. Students were only permitted to speak when invited to by the teacher. Much like MCD schools, when addressed by their teacher, students stood up at their desk to address the teacher and they would remain standing until they were told to sit. Students were expected to provide instant, correct answers to questions and to address teachers in a ‘high voice’.

Each day, the school day started with a performance of self-less, bodily discipline in the national interest, something that I noted in my fieldwork journal at the time:

*Students marched in line into the large foyer for assembly and organised themselves into a formation similar to that of a military parade. At the front of the foyer, on either side of the teacher/school leader who was leading the assembly, National Cadet Corps students (dressed in military style uniforms) stood facing the audience.*

Although assemblies covered a variety of topics, each entailed making the national pledge (where students swore an oath of allegiance to India), a Hindu prayer and the singing of number of ‘national songs’ (Michael Interview, IES). At the end of the assembly, students marched to class for the start of the day. Bourdieu (1988, p. 161)
argues that “bodily discipline is the instrument par excellence of all forms of ‘domestication’”. Through these displays and practices, students were encouraged to think of the school community and the nation. While this ascetic approach to personal development in the service of the nation was part of the school’s history and had been apparent since its inception, the emphasis on ‘hard work’- and the association between hard work and individual success/failure- had intensified in recent years (see section 6.2).

During my time at the school, I came across numerous inspirational slogans inciting students to work hard. One example, located on a wall display in the Vice-principal’s office, read, ‘Hard Work is the Medicine to the Disease Called Failure’ (Research Journal, October 2015). The notion that failure was a ‘disease’ that needed to be cured aligned with the central tenets of a neoliberal meritocracy; that effort and talent are the only determinants of success (Harvey, 2005, p.2). Staff members, including the Director, the Principal and the Vice-principal, impressed upon me that the school aimed to “teach students to win and teach them to work hard” (Research Journal, September 2015). This indicated to me that neoliberal discourses reinforced the school’s historical focus on hard work while bringing about a subtle shift away from self-less service for the national good to self-interested service for the national good.

A number of scholars have shown how the post-colonial state with its centralised regime of planning- including a focus on industrial production and the need to curb consumerist activities in the interest of ‘nation building’- has been transformed over the last few decades (Fernandes, 2006; Gupta, 1998; Roy, 2007; Srivastava, 2018). Following economic liberalisation and the shift away from a state managed economy-relationships between the state, citizens and private capital have been reformulated leading to the growth of consumer cultures and the normalisation of self-making (Fernandes, 2006; Srivastava, 2018).

While assemblies were a clear demonstration of self-less commitment to the national cause, they had also become opportunities for school leadership to guide students in projects of self-making (Rose, 1999). Students described how the Principal encouraged them to set individual goals for themselves and strive to achieve them through hard work and self-discipline:
Michael, IES: She is our principal ma’am. She always teaches us that we should do proper and we should respect to others and that we should study hard so that what we want we can be in future... She is the most important teacher in our school and she always tells us in the morning which students are students getting their prizes and she gives speeches to tell us what we should do in life to be a good man.

Ben: What kind of things (does the principal) say that you should do?

Michael, IES: We should focus towards our goal. What we want we should do it and never to teach others....

Ben: What does the principal teach you?

Golu, IES: Sir, if we have the thinking to be a great man and an honest man and a learning man so we can do that if we have the thinking or imagination.

Ben: Okay, so if you imagine to be a great man then...

Golu, IES: If we imagine, if we have the target of that then we have to do that only.

For these students, individual, self-making projects were central to their identity. The combination of self-less and self-making projects in the school appeared to result from the meeting of a historical emphasis on religious/spiritual obligations and national service and newer discourses of neoliberal self-making and responsibility. Scholars have argued that the emphasis on personal identity and individual agency in the post-liberalisation era has led personal spiritual power to become central to national and cultural identity in India (Gooptu, 2014, 2015; Nanda, 2009). At IES, spirituality appeared to consolidate the norms and values of competitive business and enterprise (Carrette and King, 2005). Gooptu (2013, p 87) suggests that the use of new spirituality in Indian business legitimises the pursuit of profit and the ‘primacy of market capitalism’ yet seeks to ‘temper them with spiritually- informed ethical and moral values’. At IES, students were encouraged to become competitive, self-responsibilised, self-directed (neoliberal) individuals; however, they were expected to do so in accordance with ‘traditional’ Indian morals and values. Itshant’s father expressed a concern that students should learn about Indian heritage and culture:
Ben: What are the challenges in front of your children?
Itshant’s Father, IES: In school the student should be taught about our old time and make them aware of our heritage and culture...

Ong highlights the development of “civilisational discourse” in South East Asia, where governments have conflated Islamic or Confucianist ideals with regional distinctiveness to fashion an “Asian Renaissance” in response to the West. These civilisational discourses serve to reinforce neoliberalism within global capitalism (Fernandes and Heller, 2011; Ong, 1999; Zavos, 2013). In India, a similar discourse has gained prominence in recent years (Zavos, 2013). Contemporary political, cultural and religious interpretations of India are based upon notions of the Vedic civilisation as deeply sophisticated and spiritual (Zavos, 2013). The Hindutva movement typically defines ‘Indian’ as Hindu, Hinduism as the ‘core of Indian nationhood’ (Froerer, 2007, p. 1033-34) and draws on a conservative conceptualisation of Indian culture and gender relations. Promulgated by the Rashatriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and the current ruling party, the Bharat Janata Party (BJP), this civilisational discourse appears to have emerged from nineteenth century reformist approaches to Hinduism (Zavos, 2013). A number of scholars have suggested that this discourse enables the middle class to distinguish themselves from the ‘vulgarity’ of the poor and the overly westernised lifestyles of elites (Gilbertson, 2017; Radhakrishnan, 2011; Srivastava, 2015)

6.2.3 Educating Students to ‘Match’ Global culture with Indian Tradition

During my research, concerns were raised about the damaging effects of ‘Western’ or ‘worldwide’ values and ideas on India culture and morality (Gilbertson, 2017; Jeffrey, 2005; Radhakrishnan, 2011). At IES, ‘technology’ (computers, social media) and global policies were said to have brought with them ‘western’ or ‘worldwide’ cultural practices that posed a threat to Indian culture and society (Sancho, 2015; Banerjee, 2017):
Vice-Principal Administration, IES: It’s with the technology, with the social media with the computers it is also with the nuclear family. It’s all about the behaviour also sometimes we say in European countries there is no responsibility of parents so that kind of modernisation is also coming to India.

... 

Vice-Principal Administration, IES: Plus, now because of the modernization and the modern nuclear families, students don't get the love and affection so sometimes teachers need to focus on that area also the student is it from family they need to focus on that.

These concerns about the impact of western culture reflect those expressed by teachers in the government MCD schools (Chapter 5). Through these extracts the vice-principal appears to show concerns about the impact that (neoliberal) globalisation has on Indian culture, especially the Indian family. Scholars have suggested that economic liberalisation and neoliberal discourses of consumption have shifted the emphasis from the ‘national’ family to the nuclear one and translated nationalist solidarity to (middle class) solidarity (Baviskar and Ray, 2011; Srivastava, 2018; Upadhya, 2008).

During a meeting early on in my research project, the vice-principal of the school compared life in India with his experience in the ‘west’, where he had spent a year studying for his MBA at a UK university. He viewed science and technology as ‘Western’ deemed these to be beneficial to India; however, he felt that, in the West, an absence of values and a focus on individualism had led to promiscuity- as evidenced by ‘high levels of teenage pregnancy’- and the ‘breakdown’ of the family unit (due to divorce and marital affairs) (Reflective Journal, September, 2015). He suggested that in “in other (western) countries the emphasis is on spending money on self- going out at the weekend- is there” (Reflective Journal, September 2015). In contrast, the vice-principal argued that Indians’ were totally committed to their family and put their family over and above all else. He explained that “for Indians’ culture is in our blood and we work hard for our family and to support our family” (Reflective Journal, September 2015).

Scholars have claimed that during the colonial era, Indian nationalists created a distinction between the (Western) “material sphere of power” which was external to
The individual- as a space for men- and an internal (Hindu) “spiritual sphere of moral value”- as the place of women (Chaterjee, 1990; Alter, 1994). Drawing on similar distinctions, Swami Vivekananda employed “somewhat dubious stereotypes such as ‘India’ and ‘West’, ‘manliness’ and ‘unmanliness’, spiritual superiority’ and ‘material greatness’” to assert India’s (Hindu) spiritual greatness in contrast to the material advancement of the west (Roy and Hammers, 2014). He believed that Western and Indian culture could inform each other and collaborate rather than antagonise: India could guide the West spiritually while learning about science, technology, politics etc. from the West (Roy and Hammers, 2014). The need for students to experience moral learning and Indian (Hindu) values was said to have intensified in recent years following economic liberalisation and the increase of global flows in India:

Ben: I was asking you if that has changed since you were a child. Do you think the need for moral education has increased?

Vice-Principal Administration, IES: Now the need has increased. Earlier the need was very less nowadays but nowadays need has increased plus the scenario has also change so if I talk about because of the social media and the technology now the bad things are also coming from various countries to India it's not that only good things are coming but the bad things are also coming so if the students are not morally taught then they cannot survive in this scenario.

... 

(Vice-Principal Academics, IES website, 2016- extract edited for confidentially purposes). The world around us has been transformed. It is important that the school understands how the world has changed. The deterioration of children’s moral values is a cause for great concern. In response, we are committed to imparting a values-based education that will ensure that students are prepared for the challenges they will face in life.

The emphasis on the need for ‘Indian’ values has been voiced by nationalist organisations (Sancho, 2015). While RSS schools have for some time embraced an understanding of ‘Indian’ culture as essentially Hindu, purportedly secular institutions have also integrated these conceptions in recent years (Benei, 2000; Qureshi and Osella, 2013; Sancho, 2015). The growing popularity of a Hindu nationalist vision of
India is reflected in the 2014 election victory for the BJP, a political party that has pursued a (soft) Hindu nationalist agenda and effected the ‘banalisation’ of Hindu nationalism in Indian society at large (Corbridge et al. 2012, p. 177-196).

Amid these concerns about the impact of globalisation on Indian culture, citizenship at IES aimed to reconcile global consumer lifestyles with a ‘deep sense of belonging to the Indian nation’ (Donner, 2017; Gilbertson, 2017, p. 11; Radhakrishnan, 2011; Srivastava, 2014, 2017). Scholars have shown how the Indian middle class have attempted to reconcile ‘global’ and ‘Indian’ practices and identities through the production of an ‘appropriately Indian’ identity- one that delicately balances the ‘global’ and the ‘Indian’ (Radhakrishnan, 2011; Gilbertson, 2014; Srivastava, 2014, 2017). Radhakrishnan (2011, p. 49) argues that this new, rationalised version of “Indianess” is compatible with globalisation and has ‘hinge(d) upon a notion of the (implicitly Hindu) Indian family’. The superiority of national culture is affirmed through core cultural discourse revolved around the Indian family and its values - with an emphasis on gendered roles and identities (Radhakrishnan, 2011, p. 50). The Vice-Principal described how the school attempted to guide students in to forging such an identity. At IES were encouraged to construct an identity that ‘balanced’ or ‘matched’ ‘worldwide culture’ with the ‘ancestral heritage of the Indian system’:

**Vice-Principal Administration, IES:** We are trying to maintain a balance but when new things come in it is really hard to maintain a balance. So, we are in the phase where all the younger generation is much more attracted by the western or European culture or ‘worldwide culture’ but our ancestral heritage of Indian system is also making them, ‘NO! Do this thing! Do this thing!’. So, now in the current scenario it's a kind of sandwich the younger generation is like they're getting influence from other countries, they're getting influence from Indian society and now the time is there when they are trying to match these things.

Since its inception, IES had attempted emphasise hard work, discipline and nationalism. In recent years, although the school had taken and international ‘turn’ these core values had remained of primary importance. Recent concerns about the ‘deterioration of children’s moral values’ meant that moral and values education had
become a pressing concern and a new approach to citizenship was said to be needed. Shaped by the interaction between traditional practices and neoliberalism, emerging forms of citizenship were evident in the shift to self-interested ‘hard work’ and service to the nation, and in the efforts to self-responsibilise students through raising aspirations and the audit culture.

Scholars have highlighted the importance of two dominant moral discourses in India: (Indian) ‘respectability’ and (global) ‘cosmopolitanism’ (Radhakrishnan, 2011; Gilbertson, 2017). It is argued that these discourses enable the middle class to make claims to status in India (Radhakrishnan, 2011; Gilbertson, 2017). The moral discourse of respectability or decency is “defined by the moderation of its middleness and understood as distinctly ‘Indian’” (Gilbertson, 2017, p.162). The moral system of cosmopolitanism foregrounds a “global mindset” that involves “openness to change, a reflexive critique of unthinking submission to the norms of decency, a transcendence of parochial ties, and skills in maneuvering deftly between diverse social contexts” (Gilbertson, 2017, p.162).

I argue that new forms of citizenship address this tension for the Indian middle class students at IES. Rather than the two being in tension, Hindu cosmopolitanism reworks western cosmopolitanism(s)- with its “global mindset(s)”- to align them with a Hindu ontology. Projects of self-development and self-responsibilisation associated with new spirituality are undertaken within the confines of a Hindu ontology, value system and notion of respectability. This ensures that the individual is morally obligated to the community/nation/religion and at the same time self-responsibilised (especially for failure). Future successes are attributed to the individual’s effort and talents and more importantly, to God. The Vice-principal’s interpretation of the school motto- “work honestly and at some point if not on short notice but and long-term also you will be rewarded and paid by God”- appeared particularly pertinent for middle class students whose future aspirations were contingent upon success in a highly competitive, outcome based system of education where only a minority of students would realise their ambitions.
6.3 Gendered Identities at IES: A Masculinist Culture of Schooling

At IES, there appeared to be what Whitehead calls “the masculinist paradigm at the heart of education” (Whitehead, 2002, p. 51). The school’s audit culture and emphasis on hard work, winning and discipline reflect a “cultural logic that posits masculinism, encapsulated in competition, outcome, achievement, work ethic and performativity as both the purpose and defining feature of education” (Whitehead, 2002, p. 51). The notions of self-interested service for the nation- that framed the school’s citizenship efforts- appeared to be a reworking of Swami Vivekananda’s conceptions of Hinduism.

Roy and Hammers (2014) argue that in Vivekananda’s nation-building project, he foregrounded a Hindu masculinity in response to Western colonial stereotypes of Hindu effeminacy. This Hindu masculinity combined elements of Western manhood (physical strength, power, assertiveness and discipline) with the Hindu value of spiritualism (rejecting physical pleasure, emphasising spirit, upholding masculinity/virility). Although this approach played a central role in the nationalist movement, this project of re-masculinisation entailed “negative constructions of femininity and the rhetorical confinement of women to the role of mothers” (Roy & Hammers, 2014). Roy and Hammers (2014) argue that within the traditional gender norms of the day, “Vivekananda’s rhetoric… relied on… elevating the masculine while devaluing the feminine”. This meant that in regard to gender equality, “his rhetoric is arguably inconsistent and perhaps flawed” (Roy and Hammers, 2014).

The form of citizenship advanced at IES was often gendered, and nation-building rhetoric in the school foregrounded the role of men. The school motto- “Honest labour pays”- was followed by the statement ‘an honest man is the noblest work of god’ (IES School Website, October, 2016). This was accompanied by other slogans or inspirational statements that were gendered, including “we have tried to awaken inner strength of each child and enable him to be a good human being”; “(help students to learn) the greatest lesson of all: ‘The Art of Being Himself’” and “Behind every successful man there is a woman” (Fieldwork Journal, October, 2015; IES Website, 2016). In school assemblies, the Principal guided students on how to become ‘a successful man’ and an “honest man” (Golu, Interview, IES). Although this did not explicitly appear to “devalue” the feminine, it did appear to foreground the masculine and silence the feminine. Within IES- much like MCD schools- the male body was the
normative leading the female body to be seen as ‘out of place’ (Ranade, 2007). These school texts and slogans can be understood as seeking “to produce recognition rather than repudiation” (Allan and Charles, 2014). Allan and Charles (2014) draw on Althusser’s notion of interpellation- as taken up by cultural theorists (Butler, 1997; McRobbie, 2009)- to explain “the work that these school texts are doing”. They argue that “school-produced…texts work to ‘hail’ and construct” a normative middle class identity. In the case of IES, these texts appear to be constructing the normative IES student as a middle class, boy.

6.31 Narratives of Masculinity: The Scholar Masculinity

Within class V many students drew on the narrative of a ‘scholar’ masculinity, in which boys excelled in school and were dedicated to their studies. A small group of high performing boys, Arjun, Michael and Golu appeared to be most successful in performing this identity and were widely admired by other students in the class. In class, the scholar masculinity was aligned with the rules of the school and opposed to the bad behaviour of students in the class:

**Michael, IES:** Sometimes it will happen that one class will make noise. Our class make noise. If they make noise, I sit and read the book because I don’t want to have punishment.

... 

**Ben:** Do you follow all the rules? Why?

**Arjun, IES:** Yes, because if there is no rules, some will say he is a mannerless boy so nobody would like him or he will get a punishment also.

In class, prominent ‘scholars’ sat in the front row of the classroom, right in front of where the where teachers typically stood to teach lessons. During my observations, these students regularly engaged with the teacher and were frequently called upon to answer questions or offer explanations. These students appeared very keen to demonstrate their obedience and commitment. They achieved this by following instructions with gusto, nodding attentively as the teacher spoke and responding enthusiastically to the teacher’s cues. Within the narrative of the scholar masculinity,
proper behaviour entailed showing appropriate respect to elders and behaving in a ‘gentlemanly’ manner:

**Bloom, IES:**  
(... ) Now they are being naughty.

**Michael, IES:**  
Excuse me. We are not being naughty.

**Golu, IES:**  
Yes, we are very gentlemen.

...  

**Ben:**  
Let's have a look at the next one. Tell me about this photo, what is this?

**Michael, IES:**  
This is about I was touching foot of my grandfather. In this photo because this is about proper behavior. For proper behavior, school teachers tell us that we should respect our elders so that's why I took this.

...  

**Golu, IES:**  
Good manners that we are reading in school that we are discipline. If there was high class teacher. Take the example of principal mam. There was principal mam and we are talking in Hindi and err doing talking and err errr........
Talk to her in a high voice and we have to show good interest good also.

Scholars were careful to show their elders that they respected them through acts of deference. This entailed displaying ‘proper behaviour’ such as touching feet and being enthusiastic and courteous in conversation with adults- especially ‘high class’ adults. Beyond good behaviour, the scholar masculinity was associated with a total commitment to ‘study’ and a thirst for knowledge- scholars were said to ‘love to study’ (Sneeha, Interview, IES). Scholars were viewed as the epitome of academic excellence and achieved the highest levels of performance in class:

**Ben:**  
What are these boys (in the photo) like?

**Rocky, IES:**  
They are good students.

**Ben:**  
How do you know they're good students?
Rocky, IES: Michael is a good student because he always comes first and Golu and Yanchi.
Ben: How do you know they are good?
Rocky, IES: Because they are studying hard and they get position.

Michael, IES: In exams, I get 1st. I got 97% in the exams. and when I got 1st I was very happy. My mother was even more happy. Before I was only 2nd and 3rd. I wanted to be 1st.

As well behaved, high achieving students, the scholars were positioned as self-reliant agents who can take responsibility and take care of themselves (Rose, 1999). Scholars viewed themselves as being responsible for their future success or failure. Two scholars, Michael and Golu described how, following pressure from their parents, they had become self-responsibilised (Rose, 1999; Walkerdine, 2003):

Michael, IES: First, I was not good in studies. My father does not want me to be like him so he taught me.
Ben: What did he teach you?
Michael, IES: He scolded me.
Ben: He scolded you?
Michael, IES: Yes… When I would not write the ABC when I was small…
Ben: When you were young did you not want to Study? Did you want to play and things like that?
Michael, IES: When I was small I wanted to do both things but more I wanted to play
Ben: And what about now?
Michael, IES: Now basically… There are interesting books so I would like to read them (…)

Ben: Who is this (pointing to picture)?
Golu, IES: She is my mother. She is very important in my studies because when I was a child I don't know nothing. I didn't like reading books- only playing- and when I was invited I was going more to play and I was coming back late at night. This is very scary to me because in the village there were many friends and they come to school also. When we finished school we came outside and we only wanted to play and I didn't want to go home. My mom always teaches me how to speak English and how to make handwriting and all of these things.

Through these extracts the narrative of the scholar masculinity is contrasted with an immature, irresponsible childish identity that is focused on play and disinterested in study. These boys describe their early childhood as being deficient and demonstrate how they have ‘grown up’ to become responsible and focused on their studies. To achieve success and maintain high levels of performance the narrative of the scholar masculinity entailed ongoing and intensive work on the self (Rose, 1999; Ball, 2013). To achieve their goals, the scholars engaged in activities outside of school beyond the already heavy schedule of homework (set by the teacher) and after school tuition:

Ben: At the beginning of each class you go up class 4 class 5 do they give you a different text book.
Michael, IES: Yes.
Ben: And then what happens you start at the beginning?
Michael, IES: When I got it, I just look at them at home.
Ben: You read them all at home?
Michael, IES: (Yes) Because it is new I want to read that what is in it What type of stories are there.
... Ben: So every day you trying to remember what you studied in school?
Arjun, IES: Every day. It is more easier. If there is no test, today we have done some work so I should revise it It will be easier for test or exam

Their commitment to study extended outside of school and into their general interests and hobbies. Outside of formal learning activities, such as lessons and homework, the
scholars’ interests remained focused on knowledge development, especially science. The scholars professed a passion for science and both Michael and Arjun both wanted to become scientists or astronauts when they were older. To do this they planned to attend the ‘NASA university of Science’ when they were older an institution that they considered to be at the forefront of science and technology- and where they could acquire the cultural capital to become astronauts. As a result of the highly selective and competitive system of higher education and concerns about market demands, science tends to be viewed as the ‘best’ subject in India (Gautam, 2015). In the UK, Archer et al (2014) have shown how scientific forms of cultural and social capital can command a high symbolic and exchange value- something that also appears to be the case in this context.

Michael was the first in the class to express his interest in science, committing to himself to a future career in science having watched the discovery channel at a young age. The scholars all watched the Discovery channel and often spent their free time with other students discussing space or some of the latest science facts they had discovered:

Ben: You said they were your good friends. What kinds of things do you like to do?
Michael, IES: Basically, all my friends are interested in reading the science books more than story books.
Ben: They like the science books
Michael, IES: Yes
Ben: So do you talk a lot about science?
Michael, IES: Yes.
Ben: What kinds of things do you talk about?
Michael, IES: Like, if there is a fact about science or animal fact like you can do that… so that
Ben: Interesting, so do you have any friends that don’t like Science?
Michael, IES: … Basically, no.

Golu and Arjun had other interests but for Michael science was his sole passion and he acknowledged that he found it difficult to be friends with students that didn’t share this interest. His fascination with science spread beyond the scholars and among other
students in the class. Following his lead, many other students had declared that they too wanted to be astronauts or scientists. One lunch time, I observed a large group of around 10 boys sat together talking about the Galaxies and the ‘Milky Way’. Michael was leading the conversation and sharing his knowledge with other students who were listening attentively. For these students’ scientific knowledge was to be treasured and venerated above all other forms of knowledge. Scholars have shown how certain forms of masculinity in India have foregrounded being scientific over bodily representations or aggressive behaviour (Srivastava, 2013). This science-based masculinity has historically been associated with the middle class and has been advanced through prominent public schools in India (Srivastava, 2013). In the post-colonial era, science and the project of Indian modernity have been closely interlinked (Srivastava 2007, Prakash 1999). Srivastava highlights the gendered nature of post-colonial citizenship projects, and the importance of science to this process:

The project of the transformation of the native to the citizen was, of course, a gendered one and science and reason played a particularly important role in defining the contours of modern subjectivity in India. The national heroes of post-colonial modernity were typically, men [...] (Srivastava, 2013 in Dasgupta & Golkusing, 2013, p. 27)

Negative colonial representations of native masculinity, have meant that the male scientist represent the ‘true pinnacle’ of national success (Roy, 2015). The scholars appear to draw on this post-colonial discourse of scientific masculinity in shaping their identities.

While the scholars liked sport, especially cricket, they rejected, what might be regarded as traditional hyper-masculine identities, and expressed disapproval at the use of physical violence. While Michael and Arjun professed to not being physically strong, Golu was viewed as being strong and ‘good at sport’. In the future, Golu wanted to be a soldier so that he could protect India from ‘strangers’ (from Pakistan). Despite this ambition, Golu remained opposed to violence and he admired those who he thought were pursuing peace:

Golu, IES: Sir, it is very bad to damage another country for their properties.
Ben: So what do you think about Modi Ji?
Golu, IES: I think that he is a good man and an honest man and he talked to Barrack Obama and the presidents of other countries. He told them that we have to live in peace don't war. So I love that voice also.

Although the scholars expressed a dislike for Pakistan, they wanted to see a peaceful solution to the conflict and Arjun felt that the two countries were in the process of ‘becoming… friends’. Rather than the macho forms of nationalism and masculinity outlined in Chapter 5, these students appeared to draw on a disciplined masculinity that does not eschew violence but does not celebrate it either. Whereas Hindu nationalist masculinities are associated with the hyper-masculine displays and the ‘irresponsible deployment of physical strength and martial power’, the Scholars draw on a ‘spiritual masculinity’, informed by Swami Vivekananda’s rhetoric of masculinity, that rejects the use of ‘indiscriminate physical violence and attempts to tap into a higher form of power grounded in spiritualism’ (Roy and Hammers, 2014).

Unlike research in the UK showing that ‘boffins’ are ‘pariahs’ (Skelton, 2004; Francis et al, 2010), or that high achieving popular boys try to hide their achievement (Skelton, Francis and Read, 2010) the highly academic, boffin identities performed by the scholars earned them the respect and admiration of their peers. Students in the class frequently cited the scholars as the best students in class and they were widely revered. Lower performing boys in the class, spoke glowingly of the scholar’s knowledge, performance and dedication to ‘study’:

Ben: What are they like?
Rocky, IES: They are like good students
Ben: How do you know they're good students?
Rocky, IES: Michael is a good student he always comes first and Rocky and Yancheep
Ben: Why are they good? How do you know they are good?
Rocky, IES: Because they are studying hard and they get positions
...
Ben: Which students have a good discipline?
Itshant, IES: Michael, Arjun, Anand
Ben: What do they do to be disciplined?
Itshant, IES In the arrangement period. When Mam doesn't come and the other teacher comes he always does his homework or whatever.

Students in the class consulted the scholars for advice on how they could emulate their performance. The scholars were the most popular boys in the class and many students sought to model themselves on the scholar identity- positioning themselves as hard working, aspirational (seeking the highest levels of performance), disciplined and interested in science.

The scholars had a complicated relationship with girls in the class. During our discussions the scholars were quick to condemn students who expressed what they viewed as sexist or restrictive attitudes. On one occasion, Nikhil laughed at Roshni when she said that she liked football and the scholars and Bloom were quick to defend her:

Ben: Why did you find that funny?
Michael, IES: Because he does not ever seen the girls playing the football.
Nikhail, IES: Yeeeesss.
Bloom, IES: (trying to interject) Me and my friends also play football and basketball.
Michael, IES: (laughing) He doesn’t know that the girls also go to the cricket in the stadium.
...
Ben: Can girls play football also?
Bloom, IES: Yes! I also play.
Golu, IES: Those games that boys play girls also play
Michael, IES: Yes.

In their assertion of a ‘can-do’ narrative of girlhood Golu and Michael assert that girls can do the same activities as boys and that efforts to restrict girls are both ignorant
and unacceptable. Resisting constraints placed on gender or normative femininities these boys argue that girls have equal rights to boys. Here, the pursuit of academic achievement appears to have led the scholars to align themselves with forms of masculinity that are opposed to a hyper-masculine identity (Jeffrey and Jeffrey, 2008; Iyer, 2017). However, the scholars were also scathing of what they viewed as ‘girly’ and frivolous pursuits. They mocked girls for having interests that were ‘childish’ and ‘girly’. In our group discussions, scholars would often answer for girls making jokes at their expense:

Sneeha, IES: I like to read story books or Barbie and to play…
Arjun, IES: Cinderella
Sneeha, IES: I like to play badminton…
Arjun, IES: and Barbie dolls!
Arjun and Itshant, IES: hehehe

... 
Arjun, IES: I just know that all the girls like (puts on a high pitched, sarcastic voice) ‘Barbie, Cinderella yeh meri hai. This is mine I will become like this’.
Bloom, IES: What kind of reading books do you like?
Golu, IES: like the fairytales
(boys laugh)
Michael, IES: She like the princess also
Bloom, IES: As you have seen, the image of my story book so I like reading like them.
Michael, IES: Like story of what?
Bloom, IES: Like Winn Pickett, Tracy Beaker… They are not all princess stories...
Michael, IES: Like Thumbelina..
Golu, IES: Thumbelina, yes.

(Golu and Michael chuckle)
These extracts demonstrate how the scholars mocked girls for their supposedly ‘girly’ interests. Scholars have shown how the ‘girly’ discourse encapsulates ‘limited and limiting’ notions of femininity (Brown, 1998). They appear to view girly interests as being in opposition to their ‘serious’ hobbies (science, sport). Given the similarities- in terms of hard work and achievement- between themselves and the girls they were mocking- the scholars appeared to draw on notions of a girly femininity to differentiate themselves from high achieving girls and assert their own (serious) scholarly identity. This aligns with research into a ‘geek’ or ‘nerd’ masculinity in which ‘nerds’ emphasise their own unique masculinity while distancing themselves from women (Kendall, 1999; Zekany and Cerwonka, 2011). While the hero masculinity was hegemonic in the context of MCD schools, at IES it was the scholarly form of masculinity that dominated. For middle class students at IES, it is knowledge and technical expertise that is valorised over and above physical embodiment. The Scholar masculinity was constructed in opposition to a violent, aggressive masculinity and in opposition to the “frivolous” interests of girls.

6.3.2 Narratives of Masculinity: The ‘Dirty Fellow’ Masculinity

In opposition to the scholar masculinity students and teachers described a bad boy or ‘dirty fellow’ masculinity who broke the school rules and continually disrupted the class. This performance of masculinity incorporated ‘laddish’ behaviour and that conflicted with school expectations of academic application, uniformity and achievement (Francis, 2009). ‘Bad boys’ were said to consistently challenge institutional rules and structures going against the strict culture of hard work, high aspirations and academic performance in the school:

**Sneha, IES:** Some students in my class study are very naughty and they don’t study in class… Boys. They run in the class and mam has told them to go to 5<sup>th</sup> C. And have to stay there but they don’t want to stay there. They came today and mam said I am giving you last chance to stay here.
Michael, IES: Mostly some boys make the noise. One or two girls only sometimes they make the noise. The boys make a lot of noise. Lots of boys making the noise. Because they just don’t want to study and do whatever they want in the school also. Sometimes they get punishments also because in our class they are so loud that the voice reaches ground floor also. They running in the class or shouting. Sometimes they also run

...  
Ben: and what about the other students?
Itshant, IES: They always fight and they always say they always say Bad words to others and the others always say the bad words back.
Ben: Who says this?
Itshant, IES: Samaj, Deephan, Noni…
Ben: Mostly boys?
Itshant, IES: Yes

The bad boy masculinity was associated with bad behaviour in class- shouting out, playing, and disturbing others (Michael Interview, IES; Sneeha Interview, IES). While there were only said to be a small number of bad boys in the class, Michael suggests that it is something that lots of boys are capable of. ‘Bad boys’ were described as rude, reckless and disrespectful. Students and the class teacher, Jyoti ma’am, described one boy, Dheephan, as the epitome of this ‘bad boy’ masculinity:

Fieldwork Jounral, October 2015: During the English lesson today, the Class V teacher discovered that Dheephan- who I happened to be sitting next to- had been doing his homework instead of class work. In response she snatched his book away from him and shouted to me that he was ‘the naughtiest boy in the whole class’.

During my observations in the classroom- and according to student accounts- Dheephan would regularly disrupt lessons by making bird or animal noises, shouting
out or pinching/poking other students while the teacher was talking. When the teacher left class, he would often chase other students around the class or start shouting. Dheephan and Samaj, were the most prominent among a number of students that were identified as ‘bad’. Boys that played with them were also said to be at risk of behaving like them.

Within the narrative of the ‘bad boy’ masculinity bad behaviour and recklessness were associated with low levels of academic performance. Students described how the ‘bad boys’ in the class were ‘bad’ and ‘weak’, meaning that they behaved badly and were ‘weak’ in their studies (Itshant, IES):

| Itshant, IES: | Sir this is the last boy (last place in the class exams). |
| Ben: | And what are these boys like? |
| Itshant, IES: | Sir they are a group. They are weak. |
| Ben: | What do they do? |
| Itshant, IES: | In the class they always talk about like whatever (...) |
| Ben: | The students that don’t do well why don’t they do well? |
| Itshant, IES: | They don’t study and they say the bad words. |
| Ben: | The students that don’t want to study, how many students is that? |
| Sneeha, IES: | Four or five |
| Ben: | Four or five and why do they not like to study? |
| Sneeha, IES: | They don’t like to study and some teachers scold them ‘why are you not studying?’ In paper they get don’t get any marks sometimes they get zero in the test. |

Descriptions of the “bad boys”- in terms of low levels of academic performance and bad behaviour- aligned with students’ class-based descriptions of working class students in government schools. By making distinctions between themselves and the ‘bad boys’, students at IES were able to make claims ‘to authority and presume the inferiority of others’ (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, p. 10). Drawing on Foucault’s techniques of power, Martino (2000) develops the concept of the heteronormative to demonstrate that a particular form of masculinity is defined and policed enabling the
inclusion of boys who align with it and the exclusion of those that do not. The Othering of ‘bad boys’ reflects the self-regulatory aspect of the habitus and the creation of a ‘shared habitus’ among students in class Va. Both middle class boys and girls were united in eschewing behavior that they viewed as being similar to that of working class students. In this way students draw on what Goswami (2014) class ‘heteroimperial masculinity’ a frame that casts working-class Indian masculinity as innately pathological compared to dominant (western) gender norms (Durham, 2015)’

The pathologisation of the bad boys and their behaviour, led students at IES to express an intense dislike and even hatred for ‘bad boys’ and some students suggested that harsh discipline, including ‘beatings’ were the only way they would learn (Sneeha, IES; Golu, IES). Students considered the ‘bad’ boy masculinity to be a threat to the pursuit and realisation of a high achieving, rule compliant identity and as a result they were shunned by others in class. The class teacher, Jyoti ma’am had instructed students to avoid playing/socialising with these boys because mixing with them was said to have a detrimental effect on student behaviour and performance:

Ben: and what about the other boys in the photo?
Michael, IES: These are not my friends
Ben: Why not?
Michael, IES: Because I don't like them... haha....and teacher also says that don't make this type of friends..That they are greedy (…) They shout in the class so teacher says don't make these kinds of friends or you will be like that only.
Ben: Does she say that to everybody or just to you
Michael, IES: To everybody

In contrast to the scholar masculinity that was associated with self-responsibilisation, self-restraint and success, the bad boys were selfish, badly behaved and destined for failure. According to the class teacher, boys were in need of much more guidance than girls and they were much less capable of dealing with their personal problems:
Class V maam, IES: The moral kind of things like how they should behave and how should they deal with their parents, deal with their teachers, brothers, sisters (...) I'm having the first period in my class so most of the time goes on resolving their... conflicts or the things they're having in the class (they say) 'he has done this he has done this'... Everything goes on in their minds so I keep on sorting out the boys’ things. This I keep on giving lectures this should not be done this way it should be done this way sometimes with harsh words sometimes with... soft… ones… so it happens.

This perspective aligns with the findings of the previous chapter (Chapter 5) where girls were viewed as ‘good’ students because they were self-responsibiliised from an early age and boys were viewed as more wayward. According to the Class V teacher, the boys required- and received- much more guidance on how to behave and act appropriately. The first lesson of the day had been reserved for resolving students’ personal problems but most of this time was taken up by the boys- the girls were assumed to not require such guidance. This ‘boys will be boys’ narrative also aligns with research in the UK regarding boys’ underachievement (Epstein et al, 1998). The sense that boys were innately the way that they were meant that they were both more likely to be physically punished for wrong doing but also more likely to be left to their own devices. I noted the extra leeway that boys were afforded during a lunchtime discussion with the Class V teacher at IES:

In front of where we were seated, a group of boys were play fighting with each other. They appeared to be taking it in turns to punch each other in the groin. Several times during our conversation, the teacher broke off mid-sentence to yell at the boys, ‘what are you doing?’ and shout ironically “very good boys, very good”. All the while, the boys simply carried on with their game. It seemed to me that this was something the girls would not even dream of doing. (Research Journal, November 2015)

Narratives of the bad boy masculinity appeared to both legitimise the use of physical violence against boys and also legitimise a broader range of behaviour for boys.
6.4 Narratives of Femininity

6.4.1 Can-do Girls

Among senior staff at IES, gender did not appear to be viewed as an issue that was relevant to the students’ school experience. The Vice-Principal appeared reluctant to engage in discussions about gender, when I asked whether gender was an issue or whether there were any particular issues with boys or girls in the school, he responded by saying ‘that is not an issue’ (Reflective Journal, October 2015) and that boys and girls were ‘both doing well’ (Vice-principal Administration, Interview, IES). Teachers and students on the other hand described a generational change in which women and girls no longer faced the discrimination of the past. The class V teacher, Jyoti mam, suggested that girls were now treated equally to boys:

Ben: Is it a boy or a girl thing?

Class V maam, IES: Nowadays, it is not much about Boys or girls
Yeah, here it was there... In my time it was there.
Ben: What do you mean ‘it was there’?

Class V maam, IES: A boy was more important than the girls. as I talk about my grandmother she used to compare us with the brother as she used to give more things to the brothers But before it was there now I am having my own boy and girl I cannot discriminate between two.

Students in Class Va described similar changes to society that had meant that girls now had the same opportunities and rights as boys. Whereas in the past- and in some places in the present- girls were said to have been restricted, nowadays most students felt that girls and boys had equal opportunities:

Ben: We talked a bit about being a boy and being a
girl. Is it different for boys and girls growing up
in Delhi?

Bloom, IES: Same

Michael and Golu, IES: Same
Roshni, IES: I also think same
Ben: Nikhail, What do you think?
Golu, IES: He doesn’t know the questions, he was sleeping.
Ben: Do boys and girls have similar or different experiences?
Nikhail, IES: Different
All (Golu, Bloom, Michael): Similar!
Nikhail, IES: Similar.
Bloom, IES: Before, they were different but now they are similar.
Ben: Explain…
Golu and Bloom, IES: Talking over one another- ‘because before’ ‘because before’.
Bloom, IES: Can I say please!
Golu, IES: Because…
Bloom, IES: Silence! Because before we were not getting the equal opportunities and now we are having.
...
Golu, IES: Earlier times woman has to working at home and household chores and man goes out... but nowadays
Bloom, IES: Excuse me… Have I said these? Have I said these two sentences? No nah!
Michael, IES: In the villages.
Golu, IES: because nowadays generation has becoming smart so the boys and girls is getting equal opportunities in the field of work and…

In this extract, students describe changes that have meant that girls were now able to do the same things as boys. Narratives regarding the success of middle class women in India have established a ‘new femininity’ which has expanded opportunities for women and enabled them to engage in work, public space and the labour market in ways that were previously impossible (Radhakrishnan, 2011). Students described how in the past the woman had to work at home and do ‘household chores’ while the ‘man was supposed to go outside of the home’ (Chatterjee, 1990). However, in recent years the current ‘generation’ was said to have become educated and this meant that boys
and girls now had equal opportunities in the field of work and education. As seen in section 2.3 and 6.4, this ‘can-do’ narrative of femininity positions girl power as assertive and individualised power (Koffman & Gill, 2013; Ringrose, 2013).

A number of feminists have highlighted the discursive effects of the ‘successful girl’ discourse and its influence of contemporary understandings of gender equality (Ringrose, 2013; Arnot et al., 1999). In Western countries, girls have been said to be benefiting ‘too much’ from the feminisation of education while boys are suffering. This has moved analysis of gender inequality from a feminist analysis of patriarchal power relationships to ‘postfeminist educational terrain’ that reinterprets ‘gender gaps’ and sexism to focus on the need to help boys meet the achievements of girls in school (Ringrose, 2013, p. 8). In the context of IES (and the MCD schools), the perception that girls and boys had equal opportunities in school and work meant that gender inequality was seen as a thing of the past.

Some girls in the class, especially Bloom- and often Sneeha, were keen to assert that they- and other girls- could now do whatever they wanted and that they did not have conform to ‘traditional’ perspectives on a woman/girls place. Bloom pursued notions of ‘girl power’ by arguing for gender equality and insisting that girls in the school had the same opportunities and rights as boys. Drawing on a ‘can-do’ femininity, Bloom was keen to confront any restrictions placed on girls and emphasise that they could have the same interests and do the same things as boys could:

**Ben:** What do they say?

**Bloom, IES:** They say that girls can’t do anything they can just do their household chores. They don’t know what is action this this this….  

**Ben:** What do you mean can’t ‘do action’?

**Bloom, IES:** Action, action is something that is …. Fight… action movies which we say.  

**Ben:** What do you think about that?

**Bloom, IES:** I think it is brilliant because I also like action movies and I watch action movies.

The boys’ suggestion that girls ‘can’t do action’, perhaps reflects the male dominance of action roles in Indian media/Bollywood cinema. According to Bloom, the boys argue
that action is something that boys do and therefore girls are incapable of action- and are more suited to the home. In response, Bloom asserts that she is just as interested in ‘action’ and fighting as boys are. Bloom’s insistence that girls could do the same things as boys also extended to sport:

Ben: Do you have any hobbies?

Roshni, Inspire English School: Yes. Playing badminton, playing football…

Nikhil, Inspire English School: Football? (Giggling)

Golu, Inspire English School: Yes, girls also play. Why not?

Bloom, Inspire English School: You never know! You think that only boys can do!

Bloom and Golu are quick to question Nikhil’s suggestion that football is not for girls. They both appear to support a can do femininity in which girls are able to do the same things as boys. As well as engaging in activities that were historically deemed suitable only for boys (football and action movies), can-do girls used the audit culture in the school to establish themselves as equal to boys. By obtaining positions, “can-do” girls were able to establish themselves as achievers who were able to perform as well as boys. Bloom viewed herself as a winner and and she listed her achievements as evidence for this status:

Bloom, IES: I have won first position three times and second was the rest time. In second class I won… in the writing. And in first class it was about who can speak English very clearly. And in fourth class I went in science competition and science quiz and… I don’t remember.

... Bloom, IES: Our group is having four girls.

Ben: What are you like…

Bloom, IES: We all?? … … Just that we all get position in every class…

Ben: What do you mean?

Bloom, IES: Positions
By drawing upon the neoliberal, audit culture in the school, Bloom was able to stake the claim that her and her friends were intelligent, high-achieving (can-do) girls. Bloom views herself and her friends as people of significance who are worthy of having a voice and a say in the school given their achievements.

Alongside the assertion that girls in India were as smart and able as boys, the can-do femininity was evident in some girls’ career aspirations and imagined futures—futures that were marked by independence and self-sufficiency (Iyer, 2017). Pande & Malhotra (2006) found that a preference for boys in India is related to social, economic and religious factors—especially the fact that boys are expected to provide financial and emotional care for their parents. However, girls at IES had started to envisage a different future and Roshni told me that in the future, she would provide for her parents herself:

Roshni appeared to inverse ‘traditional’ gender roles by aspiring to take on what had traditionally been viewed as a male role. Similarly, Bloom’s parents did not appear to be inhibited by the fact that she was a girl and she told me that in the future they hoped she would become either ‘the president’ or an ‘ICO of a bank’ (Bloom Interview, IES).

In her own future aspiration to become a doctor, Bloom envisaged a more (gender) equal future in which the male dominance of the medical profession would come to be challenged:
Ben: Do you think that will change in the future?
Bloom, IES: Yes I think so.
Ben: What will happen (in the future)?
Bloom, IES: I think that (…) there will be so many girl doctors.

Bloom, Roshni and Bloom’s parents imagine a bright future in which opportunities for girls increase and they are able to live and work independently. These aspirations coincide with the emergence of the ‘new’ middle class in India where working women are symbolic of a ‘global nation’ rather than a ‘traditional one’ (Radhakrishnan, 2009, p.197). Bloom and Roshni’s future expectations appear to have been influenced by media narratives in which educated working women are presented as representatives of a globalised India (Gilbertson, 2014; Radhakrishna, 2009; Oza, 2012).

Feminist scholars have argued that in the global development discourse, ‘the girl’ is expected to be an ideal neoliberal subject- ‘empowered, agentic and entrepreneurial’ (Gonick et al, 2009; Koggman, Orgad and Gill, 2015). Within this discourse, promoted by global organisations and goals (MDGs) girls are encouraged to to embrace ‘activity concentrated in education and employment so as to ensure the participation in the production of successful femininity, sexuality and eventually maternity’ (McRobbie 2009,90). Bloom- who was by far the most confident and assertive girl in the class- appeared to draw on this post-feminist discourse in her passion for ‘Western’ cultural products that emphasised an individualised femininity. Bloom was keen to share with me her collection of Tracey Beaker books and Barbie dolls- most of which had been brought back to India by her father who was working in the UK. She said that she wanted to be like her idol, Barbie:

Ben: Would you like to be like Barbie?
Bloom, IES: Yes
Ben: Why would you like to be like her?
Bloom, IES: Because she is a very famous person she is very honest to each one, she wins everything… that’s the reason.
Bloom’s description of Barbie- and her desire to be like her- appear to reflect what she perceived to be the qualities of a successful woman- celebrity and winning while at the same time being very honest. At IES, the competitive nature of the school environment valorises ‘winners’ and demands that students focus on winning and competition whilst engaging in ‘honest’ hard work. This indicates that the competitive culture associated with neoliberalism- is transmitted through global media- and connects with local experiences and practices (Banerjee, 2017). At the same time, Bloom (and Sneeha) admired Barbie for her superficial qualities- her appearance, ‘designer clothes’ and make up:

Ben: What is Barbie like?
Bloom, IES: Barbie likes fashion.
Ben: What kind of fashion?
Bloom, IES: Like shoes accessories. Jewels clothing.

... 
Ben: Do you like fashion?
Bloom, IES: Yes.
Ben: What kind of fashion do you like?
Bloom, IES: Make up, accessories, designer clothes, just like Barbie.

...
Ben: What do girls do?
Rocky, IES: They do a lot of make up
Sneeha, IES: They dress up very much
Ben: Why?
Sneeha, IES: To look beautiful

Following economic liberalisation, the superficial qualities of Indian women have been foregrounded through international beauty pageants. Indian women have been viewed as not only beautiful but also intelligent and fluent in English further aligning themselves with global standards (Radhakrishnan, 2011). Apparently liberated from tradition, Indian women emerged as the ‘embodiment of “global” beauty’ able to
adhere to global standards of beauty and sophistication whilst maintaining an “Indian” quality by adhering to nationalist norms and values (Radhakrishnan, 2011).

Bloom and Sneeha appear to draw on a post-feminist ('can-do') narrative that emphasises “femininity as a bodily property; the growing imperative for women to (hetero) sexually self-objectify; women’s disciplinary consumption of fashion and beauty; and an insistent casting of women’s actions as freely chosen, knowing and self-pleasing” (Gill, 2008). As a ‘can-do’ or ‘top girl’ Bloom appears to define success in accordance with neoliberal notions of individualisation, consumerism, entrepreneurial identity, ambitious careers and displays of consumer lifestyle (Harris, 2004; McRobbie, 2009; Allan and Charles, 2014). Harris (2004) and McRobbie (2009) suggest that this notion of girlhood is both raced and classed- white, middle class girls are held as the ideal. Bloom and Sneeha’s obsession with Barbie perhaps reflects this.

However, Bloom prioritised gender inequality in India as one of the most important things in her life. For Bloom, this alongside family- was more important than her other interests:

| Ben: | Bloom, what is important to you? |
| Bloom, IES: | My family and the equality of girls that girls should have the equality just like boys. Because in India girls do not have equal equality just like boys. |

Although Bloom had also stated that boys and girls had the same opportunities in India, here she appears to suggest that girls and boys were not treated equally. Bloom’s commitment to gender equality was evident in her willingness to seek out and address discriminatory remarks or negative attitudes/behaviour towards women and girls. During discussions, and in our club sessions, Bloom would stand up to several boys single handedly and address any perceived transgressions. Bloom would also insist on being heard during conversations and she would interject during moments when boys attempted to dominate the conversation or speak for her:

| Ben: | What does a typical lesson in school look like? |
In every lesson we have to find the moral of the story and we have to…

Excuse me, Golu, I was speaking… You can ask from him first.

This suggests that Bloom's 'can-do' femininity is informed by far more than post-feminist narratives and a turn to autonomous consumption and individual agency (Harris, 2004). Global and national policies directed at gender equality could have played a role here alongside the often-underestimated role that Indian feminist movements have played in foregrounding gender equality in India (Chauduri, 2012).

6.4.2 'Weak' Girls

In contrast to the 'can-do' femininity, students also drew on other narratives relating to femininity that presented women as weak and vulnerable (Harris, 2004; McRobbie, 2009; Iyer, 2017). Students described knowing that gender inequality was an issue because they regularly heard stories in the news reporting extreme violence against women. Through these news stories, students learned about cases of women being attacked, abused and even murdered:

How do you know that (gender equality is an issue in India)

Because the news is coming everyday.

Saying what?

That sometimes there is a murder of a girl

Sometimes they said that acid was thrown on a girl doctor.

I will tell a very bad story. At least three girls were murdered in the ground but the last was saved by the police.

Is this something that everyone knows about?

Only three or four child doesn’t know but the whole world knows this.

How do you know?

By the news
Ben: What do you think about this?

Golu, IES: This is very bad

Graphic, violent media stories served as evidence to students that gender inequality was still a major issue in India. The issues raised by students align with concerns raised by feminists about increasing violence against women in India, including dowry harassment, domestic violence, rape, female foeticide and more recently acid throwing (Ghadially, 2007). Michael recognised that violence against girls in India was an issue of global interest- something that the ‘whole world knows’ about (Durham, 2015). Incidents of violence and rape against women and girls in India are often circulated in global news media. The 2012 rape and murder of Jyoti Singh in Delhi received global attention, leading to debates in India about the need for greater freedom vs greater protection, and concerns about the (western) presentation of sexual violence as an ‘Indian’ problem (Durham, 2015; Krishnan, 2015)

Beyond the violence and aggression against girls highlighted in news stories, students described a range of different ways in which girls were vulnerable in India; from infanticide and abandonment, to more everyday forms of discrimination such as familial disapproval and rudeness:

Golu, IES: Some parents want a boy first.

All: Yes!

Golu, IES: That the mother is pregnant so the other family and the grandparents want a boy- not a girl- then there was a girl so they (are) rude from the girl.

All: Yes

Micheal, IES: In some villages, whenever there is a girl child, they just make them die.

... 

Nikhail, IES: Sometimes, if parent has girl he will take to the orphanage.

Through these examples, and the recognition that ‘some parents want boys first’, students expressed the belief that parental bias underpinned gender inequality in
India. This is supported by scholarship showing that families in India tend to favour boys over girls (Ramachandran, 2002; Tilak 2002; Pande & Mahotra, 2006). Students did not appear to view this as an issue that applied to them in their lives but instead was something that happened elsewhere in India, especially- according to Michael- in the villages. This suggests that students’ gender discrimination was thought to be determined by class and location.

A number of scholars have shown how within global development campaigns, girls appear either as heroines with extraordinary potential or as victims of a patriarchal culture- in need of liberation through at the assistance of those in the global north (Cobbett, 2014; Dogra, 2011; Koffman and Gill, 2013). While students presented girls as vulnerable, they suggested that religious mythology was helping to increase the acceptance of girls:

Ben: Do you think that it is changing?
Golu, IES: Yes, some people believe in it or not.
Bloom, IES: Some people whenever there is a girl child they became happy that there is a goddess in our house.
Ben: What do you mean goddess?
Golu, IES: Sometimes the girls are the gods because they have… sometimes when a girl came in the house they would be very happy because the girls are Lakshmi.
Golu, Bloom, Michael, Roshni: The goddess Lakshmi!
Ben: And what about boys?
Micheal, IES: Everyone wants boys…
Bloom, IES: Everyone likes boys but I DON’T!

While highlighting improvements, students described the contingent nature of a girls’ existence in some families. ‘Some people’ had started to express more appreciation for girls in society but everyone wanted boys. Whereas a girl’s presence was potentially contentious, boys were viewed as universally desired and in need of no justification (Kumar, 2013). The desirability of girls in the home was to have been enhanced through their association with the goddess Lakshmi. Within Hinduism,
Lakshmi is the embodiment of wealth and beauty and the generous and giving wife of lord Vishnu. In popular culture, Lakshmi personifies prosperity and happiness. Food and festive celebrations signify her presence and Lakshmi ‘is a model girl, ideal wife or benevolent mother’ (Mahalakshmi, 2009, p.4). Scholars have shown how the invocation of goddesses and Hindu mythology has been used at different times to both empower and inhibit women (Stanley, 1990; Ray, 1992). Representations of female divinities have helped to shape the boundaries of acceptable femininity (Stanley, 1990). The worship of goddesses can be an important source of power and inspiration for Hindu women (Stanley, 1990); however, the public perception of Indian women and goddesses, often leads to a polarisation where women are considered either “a victim or heroine, witch or goddess, housewife or prime minister” (Ray, 1992, p.2).

Within the intensely competitive school environment, students drew on narratives of a weak, vulnerable femininity in their comparisons of boys’ and girls’ physical abilities. Girls described how students- especially ‘naughty boys’ in the class- teased them for ‘not knowing’ what ‘action’ was (Bloom Interview, IES). Within the class ‘action’ was strength, the ability to fight and be physical- as seen in action movies- and this was said to be something that girls could not do. The girls perceived inability to ‘do action’, led the ‘naughty’ boys in the class to tell girls that they should do ‘household chores’ (Bloom Interview, IES). This demonstrates how boys drew upon the vulnerable girl narrative to make claims of superiority over girls and suggest that they were better suited to the home environment.

During a discussion about sport on television, students highlighted what they viewed as a “weak” femininity. Scholars have shown how competitive sport has enabled the production and expression of gender to be challenged and yet at the same time it still remains a social institution where the binarisation of gender is most apparent (Burke 2004). Despite the increasing participation of women in sport in India, it was generally viewed as a man/boy’s domain:

**Michael, IES:** but more the boys plays the cricket because it is like… for years…

**Nikhail, IES:** Cricket and Hockey

**Michael, IES:** It is very odd that the girl comes to play because only sometimes the girls match starts.

Nikhail, IES: Yes

Bloom, Inspire English School: Girls and boys are … they both challenge each other (to a game of cricket) that who can win.

Michael, IES: No, no, no… It is like that one year, every year the England versus India and always they are boys and only sometimes it happens that there is a girls league and they play.

Ben: So when you watch it on TV it is mostly men that are playing?

Golu, IES: Men or boys.

Ben: Why do you think that is then?

Michael, IES: Because most people think that the girls are…weak (quietly).

Bloom, IES: (or) Losers.

Michael, IES: Ya.

Through this discussion of professional sport, students connect the societal disinterest in women’s sports with the perceived (in)ability of women and the interest in men’s sports with the perceived strength/ability of men. Identifying the narrative of weak femininity as dominant, Michael and Bloom suggest that most people think that girls are ‘weak’ or ‘losers’. Through the domain of sport, students invoked both the ‘can do’ and ‘vulnerable’ femininity to explain girls’ participation in sport: while women can now play any sport that they like, they do so while being positioned as weak and inferior to men. Within Class Va, the narrative of vulnerable femininity encompassed the academic performance of girls in the class. Much like the bad boy masculinity, this vulnerable femininity was associated with low levels of academic performance; however, this narrative explained poor performance in terms of the quiet and withdrawn nature of girls in the class:

Itshant, IES: They always laugh at the stupid activities. When students fall down they will laugh at them.

Ben: Who will?

Itshant, IES: Weak students. The group of bad boys and the girls also.

...
Ben: Tell me about the other groups in the class.
Bloom, IES: One group is only having two girls
Ben: What are they like?
Bloom, IES: They are not good at studies too much.
...
Golu, IES: Some of the girls are intelligent but some do not speak and they don’t have any friends or a good friend. In every class they work quietly and don’t talk.

Specifically, within the high-pressure, rote-based learning environment of IES, lower achieving boys drew on the narrative of a weak, vulnerable femininity to position girls as academically inferior to boys. Girls were said to be unable to ‘remember anything’, ‘don’t have (a) brain’ and are without a ‘mind’:

Ben: So do you think boys and girls can’t study together.
Bloom, IES: No. They can study together but its their matter some say that boys are so naughty. Some say that girls can’t remember anything.
Ben: Who says that?
Bloom, IES: Boys of our class who are not good at studies too much
...
Rocky, IES: ... In 1, 2, 3… in ten positions only 2 girls are there only. 5 girls were there and 5 boys were there. But now 2 girls and 8 boys. Mam has said that girls have to work hard. All the boys saying ‘girls- loser, loser, loser’.
...
Rocky, IES: Then onwards (after the test results) we don’t want to talk to the girls. Mam has not told. Boys have made we don’t talk to girls. Whenever they talk they tease. They are mental, they don’t have mind. There is no brain nah. You don’t have brain.

According to Rocky, recent test results served as evidence for the girls’ inferiority and had enabled ‘the boys’ to criticise ‘the girls’ for their supposed failings. Indicating that
he feels girls are irrational and lacking in intelligence, Rocky claims that girls’ do not have a ‘mind’, are ‘mental’ and have ‘no brain’. Low performing boys in the class appeared to be prominent proponents of the ‘weak girl’ femininity- and especially the notion that they were intellectually inferior- perhaps in order to assuage their own feelings of failure:

Ben: Are you Friends with all of the students?
Rocky, IES: Yes
Interviewer: Everyone?
Rocky, IES: If without girl… Because they are jealous.
Interviewer: Of what?
Rocky, IES: Of all the students
Interviewer: What do they say?
Rocky, IES: They will say - puts on a silly accent - ‘boys are the loser’.
Interviewer: Who says that?
Rocky, IES: Bloom, K****, C****, R***. All the girls.
Interviewer: Why do they say those things?
Rocky, IES: because they are jealous, always.
Interviewer: What are they jealous of?
Rocky, IES: … boys we are so smart.

Rocky claims to avoid girls because they were all jealous of the intelligence of boys and their natural superiority. Although Rocky was not a high-achiever himself, he presented himself as calm and rational in opposition to the jealousy of girls who cannot cope with the success of boys. The characterisation of girls as jealous and ‘bitchy’ has been identified by research in the UK (Pratt-Adams and George, 2005).

Girls in the school- especially Bloom and Sneeha- also sustained narratives of feminine weakness by arguing that girls were ‘jealous’ and incapable of ‘true friendship’- unlike boys. Bloom argued that girls were all jealous of each other:
Ben: What about the boy groups what are they like?
Bloom, IES: What are they like? They have a true friendship with each other.
Ben: They what?
Bloom, IES: They have a friendship which cannot be end. They are not jealous of each other.
Bloom, IES: Is it only the girl groups that are jealous of each other?
Ben: Yes
Bloom, IES: Why are the boy groups not jealous of each other?
... 
Ben: Why are the boy groups not jealous…
Bloom, IES: Why not? I don’t know because it is there matter if they are not jealous of each other. But girls, we are jealous of each other.

Bloom claims that boys’ friendships are a strong and genuine in contrast to relationships between girls that are characterised by jealousy (Martino, 2006). Bloom described how previous friendships had fallen apart because other girls in the class were jealous of her and her friends for their high levels of achievement in school:

Ben: Why did you stop being friends with those girls?
Bloom, IES: Because in 4th class we were friends but now when we came in fifth class they are jealous that she is better at study than me. This type of jealous.

By arguing that girls were no longer friends with her because they were jealous of her achievements, Bloom positions draws on narratives of a weak femininity that positions girls as weak and desperate.

Discussion

Influenced by the ‘international’ turn in India where prestigious school’s have sought to align their school experience with the demands of the global labour market, IES had engaged in branding practices associated with internationalism (Sancho, 2015, p. 94).
However, the everyday practices at IES demonstrate that the school experience remained focused on ensuring that students were prepared for a local future within the Indian education system and economy. Cultural anxieties about globalisation and increased competition led to an emphasis on preparing students for competitive exams and determined how Indian values and cosmopolitanism were understood in this context.

The return to Indian values and moral education at IES reflected the primacy of respectability and the tentative engagement with elements of western cosmopolitan lifestyles/practices- many of which were deemed unsuitable to India. According to Olmedo (2014, p. 583), ‘responsibility and duty are two key aspects in the new moral agency brought in by neoliberalism. A commitment to hard work, high levels of achievement, high aspirations and self-discipline were all forms of cultural capital that distinguished the middle class students at IES from poor or working class students. The Othering of working class students, enabled IES students to demonstrate their attachment to a normative, middle class identity associated with hard work, discipline and academic achievement. The emphasis on Indian values at IES demonstrates how respectability (Indian values of hard work, service to the nation and discipline) was recognised as a more legitimate form of cultural capital than (western) cosmopolitanism in the middle class field of IES (Gilbertson, 2017).

Gender narratives constructed within institutional and peer cultures at IES had contradictory implications for both boys and girls. The scholar masculinity appeared to be the dominant form of masculinity at IES (Connell, 2000). Unlike the hero masculinity found in government MCD schools, the scholar did not seek to assert his authority through violence- scholars were scathing of ‘bad boys’ for their reckless, abusive and violent behaviour. Instead, the scholars sought to demonstrate their dominance over peers through high levels of academic performance, a dedication to their studies and an obsequiousness to authority figures in the school. Intense competition in education and the need to obtain the highest levels of performance meant that the scholar masculinity was associated with an obsession with study. Much like the boffin identity in the UK, scholars were dedicated to knowledge development- especially in relation to science and general knowledge (Francis et al, 2010; Archer et al, 2014). These findings align with other research in India suggesting that the pursuit of academic success and a focus on education can provide a means for men to align themselves
with a more modern masculinity (Iyer, 2016; Jeffrey, Jeffrey and Jeffrey, 2008). Scholars were supportive of can-do narratives of girlhood and argued that girls should be able to have the same opportunities as boys. However, at the same time, the scholars drew on a narrative of ‘weak’ girlhood in which girls were physically less able than boys and had frivolous interests. As result, scholars both supported equal opportunities for girls and encouraged other boys to do the same while - at the same time - struggling to interact with girls on equal terms.

The narrative of the ‘bad boy’ masculinity aligned with narratives of working class masculinities described in MCD schools in chapter 5. Bad boys were disobedient, disruptive in class, aggressive and associated with low levels of academic performance. Unable to obtain the cultural capital associated with high levels of performance, the ‘bad boys’ disobedience and aggression can be understood as a ‘strategic consolidation of men’s social power’ (Rogers, 2008). The bad boy masculinity was enacted by demonstrating a resistance to power and authority (Courtenay, 2000; Pollack, 1998). By disregarding the rules and opposing domination, bad boys demonstrated a disdain for academics and enacted masculine toughness - something most boys in the school were reluctant to do (Ferguson, 2001; Mac an Ghaill, 1994). Bad boys appeared to maintain their masculine privilege through the criticism of girls and assertions of male superiority. Unable to realise the scholar masculinity, the ‘bad boys’ abused girls and resorted to sexist language and stereotypes in order to consolidate their social power over girls in the school. This aligns with Rogers (2008) research among South Indian college students, that found that changes in women’s economic power result in sexual harassment as a reaction to the perceived devaluing of men’s social status. In turn, most students in Class V at IES associated the ‘bad boys’ with lower class behaviour that was unacceptable for those in the middle classes. Students argued that physical violence was the only means to control the bad boys.

Narratives of can-do girlhood posited that girls now had the same opportunities as boys and that gender inequality was a thing of the past. Can-do girls could do the same things that boys could do and could achieve just as much in school. Can do girls were associated with winning and popularity. This narrative enabled girls to envisage a future in which they would gain an education, work in professional employment and provide for their family. The can-do narrative of femininity was often associated
consumer goods and beauty, reflecting a post-feminist discourse “femininity as a bodily property” and a focus on the “consumption of fashion and beauty” (Ringrose, 2013). However, the can-do narrative enabled girls to confront sexist or restrictive attitudes against women and demand that women have equal rights to men. This appears to have been influenced by celebration of middle class women as the new icons of India.

Narratives of a can-do femininity were undermined by an association between femininity and weakness. Girls- especially working class or poor girls- were said to be at risk of violence and abuse, and girls were said to be less welcomed in the family- and society- than boys. The perception that boys were universally liked- and girls were not- contributed to the perception that girls continued to be in the shadow of boys- girls were the “losers” and boys the “winners”. This was also reflected in the area of sport and the notion that girls did not have the same capabilities as boys. Low achieving boys in particular were keen to present girls as inherently less capable than boys. While high achieving, scholars, often defended the rights of women and interacted with girls on equal terms, they also asserted their own superiority- speaking for (and over) girls and mocking them for their frivolous interests. Both girls and boys were critical of other girls because they felt that they were jealous of their academic achievements and success.

At IES, the internationalisation of the school experience appeared to play a dominant role in how students were constructing their identities. Through interactions with International organisations- ISO and the British Council- the school had made efforts to alter its management structure and curriculum practices. The installation of technology into the classroom was another element of internationalisation within the school. However, rather than transforming the curriculum or pedagogy, the school experience remained focused upon older routines and practices. In fact, the introduction of international policies and practices had been accompanied by a growing emphasis on the importance of a religious, national identity.

In theory, Internationalism is a process for the education of “global citizens” who are able to cope in a world that is multicultural, environmentally vulnerable and interdependent (OECD, 2004). Noddings (2005) suggests that the promotion of ‘intercultural understanding’ and ‘an international outlook’ among students, is important in order to respond to the diverse and increasingly complex nature of the
global environment. However, in the context of IES, this approach was inversed: the school experience was about grounding students in a religious nationalist cultural identity so that they could engage with the global. In this context, it appeared that internationalisation came hand in hand with the consolidation of national identity.
Chapter 7 Conclusion

In this chapter, I bring together the different chapters of this thesis in order to draw a final conclusion. I highlight the importance of religion in the construction of students’ identities and the way in which this enabled students to balance the global. Drawing on a new citizenship program that was implemented at IES, I show students were encouraged to self-responsibilise once they were grounded in a national and religious identity. I show how this had important implications for the way in which gendered and classed identities were constructed. The chapter concludes with my claims for originality in this theses and suggestions for future research.

7.1 Nationalist Notions of Self-hood and Neoliberal Self-Responsibilisation

Throughout my research, I was struck by the centrality of family to individual and national identity. During access negotiations, while working with an NGO to gain access to the schools, I worked with a woman named Prithi who told me that she had heard that westerners often got divorced or separated from their partners but that for her ‘no matter how bad things got’ she would stay married as it was ‘not an option to leave’ (Research Journal, August, 2015). She went on to explain say ‘we Indians are full of heart and the culture is in our blood’ (Research Journal, August, 2015). During my first meeting with the vice-principal at IES, he said something similar: “For Indian’s culture is in our blood and we work hard for (our) family and to support our family”. In different schools, I heard from students about the importance of family to national and individual identity; one boy told me that “my mother is my god” while students consistently talked about the importance of schooling and their future careers in terms of their family’s future.

The relational nature of this identity- foregrounding others above a sense of individual/autonomous selfhood- was central to the construction of students’ identities and to the questions posed in this thesis. While students were encouraged to have their own individual interests, aspirations, hobbies and preferences, they constructed their identities not from an individualistic perspective of self-fulfilment but from a sense of obligation to their family and the nation. While students remained obliged to their family and the nation, responsibility for success or failure in schooling appeared to be
being increasingly located at the individual/family level of responsibility. In government MCD schools, I found that teachers viewed the ‘troubled’ and ‘backward’ nature of the school community as being incompatible with academic learning. Students and their families were said to need to change, to become more ‘responsible’, in order to engage effectively with schooling. At IES, middle class students underwent intensive testing, engaged in rote-based learning practices and had hectic out of school schedules in order to ensure that they were achieving optimal levels of performance. When students were deemed not to be making suitable progress, their parents were called in and told that improvement needed to be made or children would face being held back.

While I could see different themes of aspiration, family, nationhood, responsibility, religion (Hinduism) and self-hood emerging, it wasn’t until I came revisited the ‘Awakened Citizen Program’ during the analysis phase of my research that the different threads of this thesis were drawn together. The Awakened Citizen Program, provides a clear framework for citizenship that incorporated all of these different identity processes and it is for this reason that I have chosen to describe it in this final chapter. While the Awakened Citizenship Program does not summarise my entire thesis, it does provide a coherent framework for bring together dominant themes. I start this chapter by describing the Awakened Citizen Program before describing how this overarching framework of citizenship shaped the classed and gendered identities of children in two MCD government and one private school.

7.2 The Awakened Citizens Program

I came across the Awakened Citizen Program at IES where the program had been implemented as part of the school’s efforts to maintain ‘Indian’ values while embracing international and global technologies and changes. The Awakened Citizens Program is a three year values-based citizenship program for Classes VII-IX developed by the Ramakrishna mission- a Hindu organisation and ascetic order, initially founded by Swami Vivekenanda with the aim of making ascetics available for the national cause (Awakened Citizen Program Website, 2017). Although initiated in Delhi, the program has been implemented in 40 regions of India, covering 3500 schools and training more 10,500 teachers (ACP Website, 2017).
7.2.1 Middle Class Moral Discourses in Education

The Awakened Citizen Program was premised on filling the (moral) void that ‘modern education’ had left in its failure to adequately equip citizens (men) with the moral education necessary to enable India to live up to illustrious past:

Modern education and training have failed to produce men and leaders of character and integrity who can make India attain its past glory. Not only in India, but worldwide, there is a cry for going back to basic values. In order to produce enlightened citizens, we conduct Value Education Programs on Human Resources Development, Self-Development, Leadership and Personality Development etc. for students and teachers of educational institutions. These are based on time-tested Indian wisdom. (ACP Website, 2017).

Echoing Hindu nationalist discourses of national rejuvenation, the Awakened Citizens Program posits that the way to ‘produce men and leaders who can make India attain its past glory’ is through the teaching of ‘Indian’ (read Hindu) values. To achieve this, the ACP is a values based education program based upon neoliberal conceptions of self-responsibilised, entrepreneurial citizenship. The neoliberal emphasis on self-development and self-responsibilisation is presented as being ‘based on time tested Indian wisdom’. Fernandes & Heller (2006) argue that efforts to return India to its former glory (Hindutva) can be seen as an act of unification and purification. Through “othering” and new imaginaries of a shared civilisation with core cultural values, the diverse fractions of the middle class are united in:

“an immediate adherence, at the deepest level of the habitus, to the tastes and distastes, sympathies and aversions, fantasies and phobias which, more than declared opinions, forge the unconscious unity of a class.” (Fernandes and Heller, 2006)

As a nationalistic, Hindu, middle class citizenship project, the ACP also appears to be gendered in that it foregrounds the role of men in the nation building project, elevating the masculine while overlooking the feminine.
Middle Class Notions of Citizenship: Neoliberal Responsibilisation

While the program claimed to be ‘secular in its approach’ (ACP website, 2017), it appeared to draw upon Hindu conceptions of selfhood, positing the ‘intrinsic oneness and equality among all human beings’ and the ‘infinite potential’ of the individual. This seemed to refer to (Hindu) notions of an ‘ultimate supreme reality’ and individual souls or Atmans:

*Each one of us, carries within, an infinite source of power, strength and goodness. This power and strength can be felt, every time we say “I can”. This infinite power gets manifested as various possibilities. The more we consciously develop or manifest these possibilities, the more faith we develop in ourselves. The Awakened Citizen Program is designed to help discover and manifest the infinite power within each one of us. (ACP Website, 2017)*

While there appears to be a clear Hindu foundation to this citizenship framework, this does not appear to be acknowledged on the ACP website. In 1995, the Ramakrishnan Mission- the creators of the ACP- lost their battle in the supreme court to be legally recognized as a non-Hindu, minority organization, with the court ruling that it was in fact a Hindu religious organization. Much like New Age movements in the West and various other forms of spirituality, the ‘new spirituality’ evident in the ACP relies on the reworking of traditional concepts. Vivekananda’s Hindu conceptions of self-actualisation- based around ‘personal ascetism, self-abnegation and world-renunciation’- are reconfigured to foreground ‘self-development, self-fulfilment and self-empowerment’ (Gooptu, 2014). ‘Awakened Citizens’ are those that are on the path to higher consciousness not through abstinence but through self-actualisation and self-work.

The Program’s ‘Human Possibilities Framework’ provides a means for students to explore ‘the infinite possibilities within’. Possibilities were classified into two categories:

- **Universal Possibilities**: ‘These are open to each one of us irrespective of religion, caste, age, gender, education, family background. E.g. Being Heroic, Seeking Perfection, Expanding Yourself’.
• **Unique Possibilities**: ‘These can be developed based on our talents, interests, environment and self-effort. The Unique Possibilities have been further classified into Knowledge Possibilities and Physical possibilities. E.g. Playing games and sports, adapting to the environment I live in, developing solutions to complex social challenges, Working with Collective Intelligence’.

By emphasizing individual possibilities and completely overlooking structural inequalities, the program foregrounds individual responsibility and ignores the actual causes of inequality and immobility. To discover the ‘infinite power within’, the program draws on practices associated with psychology and psychotherapy including personality development and positive thinking techniques that have been shown to be instrumental in shaping the neoliberal self (Martin and McLellan, 2013). The core lessons in the program were all directed towards personal development, self-mastery and self-responsibilisation (ACP Website, 2017):

- Human Excellence
- Peace Education
- Personality Development
- Value Education
- Self-development
- Leadership
- Developing Powers of Mind: confidence, discrimination, concentration, will, etc.
- Value & Health Education: Harmful effects of Tobacco, Prevention of TB
- Awareness of potential & how to maximise it
- Time Management & Harmonizing Values, Beliefs, Desires, Goals, Thoughts.

Rather than allowing students to freely explore their ‘infinite potential’, the program draws on neoliberal notions of ‘freedom and responsibility’ to help students arrive at preconceived ‘traditional’ (middle class) ‘Indian’ outcomes. The values in the program remain revolved around a nationalist discourse, but the program eschews a ‘traditional’ didactic approach for a child-centred ‘Freedom & Responsibility’ approach to teaching and learning that enables students to ‘discover’ values.
Using this (neo-liberal) approach, students are self-responsibilised in to adopting certain values that are aligned with the programs Hindu ontology. This approach to citizenship resembles ‘active compliance’ (Kennelly and Llewellyn, 2011) rather than a more participatory or justice orientated ‘type’ of citizenship (Johnson & Morris, 2010). Through these activities the program appears to aim to arrive at a ‘type’ of (neo-liberal) citizen that performs ‘safe’ and compliant acts of citizenship. Awakened citizens are self-responsibilised citizens that can develop their ‘infinite potential’ while avoiding ‘risky’ behaviour and enhancing themselves at minimal cost to the state (Rose, 1999; Raco, 2012).

Within the program, the self-regulated, ‘awakened citizen’ is valorised through its connection to both universal consciousness and Indian (Hindu) religious, cultural and spiritual traditions. While awakened citizens are said to have become more individualised on the one hand, they are simultaneously said to have found new forms of cooperation and community responsibility on the other (Gooptu, 2015). This approach, where individual efforts are directed towards personal goals and development that in turn require thinking beyond the self has been identified in Hindu transnational movements (Van der Veer, 2004; Zavos, 2013). To explain this, scholars have highlighted the ‘relational aspects of subjectification’ to describe ‘relational subjectivism’ where the subject is focused on interdependence rather than

It was this conception of self-hood- neoliberal individualized responsibility in the interest of the family, the nation and god- that permeated students’ experiences of schooling and was at the heart of identity construction in both the MCD government schools and the middle class private school, IES, in this study. The ACP demonstrates how ‘traditional discursive patterns’ are drawn upon and reworked to enable neoliberalism to function in the Indian context (Nonini, 2008). As Allan and Charles (2014) suggest, rather than being entirely new these discourses have:

‘been configured slightly differently in this neoliberal era; having taken on a new luminosity, occupying a spectacular space and forming a proliferation of interpellations that are hard… to refuse’ (Allan and Charles, 2014)

While neoliberalism mutates and is mutating and is incomplete in its ability to shape the citizenry (Weber, 2009, p.52).

7.3 Hindu Cosmopolitanism

The Awakened Citizens Program demonstrates how the Ramakrishna Mission- a transnational religious organisation- is “creatively developing new religious understandings of their predicament, entailing an encounter with the multiplicity of Others and with global conditions on their own terms” (van der Veer, 2004, p. 16). Contemporary theories of cosmopolitanism need to take more account of the historical development of this idea in the contexts of colonialism (Van der Veer, 2002). Acknowledging these “historical entanglements” allows for the possibility of “alternative cosmopolitanisms” to those that are “framed by post-Enlightenment vision of secular engagement” (Zavos, 2013). The Awakened Citizen Program is a cosmopolitanism that is articulated in a framework of traditionalism; however, “this traditionalism requires immense ideological work that transforms previous discursive practices substantially” (Van der Veer, 2004, p. 12).

In the nineteenth century, the emergence of a discourse of Indian spirituality was an anti-colonialist cosmopolitan project (van der Veer, 2002, p. 176). Swami Vivekananda
presented what he viewed as the essence of Hinduism- a tolerant, rational and universal religion that ‘encompassed the other “less ancient” religious traditions” (Zavos, 2012 in Mitra, 2012, p. 174). This conceptualisation has been central to modern formations of “cosmopolitan Hinduism” like the ACP (Zavos, 2012 in Mitra, 2012, p. 174). The ACP legitimises student engagement in other world views (cosmopolitanism) providing that citizens are initially rooted in certain (Hindu) spiritual premises and non-negotiable positions. In other words, the ACP situates students in ‘Indian tradition’ and a Hindu worldview before allowing students the ‘freedom and responsibility’ to make their own choices.

A number of studies have highlighted how a tension between (Hindu) national and cosmopolitan identities has been central to the formation of a middle class identity/middleclassness (Fernandes and Hellar, 2011; Gilbertson, 2016; Radhakrishnan, 2011). As highlighted in Chapter 6, contemporary middleclassness continues to be defined through an interaction between a tradition and modernity and the burden to produce an ‘appropriately Indian’ identity (Radhakrishnan, 2011; Gilbertson, 2016). The ACP provides a framework for and a reflection of the normative (Hindu, middle class) discourses of citizenship that I found in two MCD schools and the private school, IES. Drawing on Bourdieu’s concept of field, it is possible to think of MCD schools as a working class field and IES a middle class ‘field. Within these contexts, different emphasis was placed on cosmopolitanism and respectability. At IES, moral education was deemed necessary in order to help students find a suitable balance between respectability and cosmopolitanism- given that students were thought to be caught between global and national influences. In MCD schools, it was a discourse of respectability that dominated and students were said to need a moral education in order to learn how to take care of themselves, to become ‘responsibilised citizens’- rather than depending on the state like their parents had. The need for moral learning at IES was connected to wider public concerns about the impact of westernization on ‘traditional’ Indian values (Radhakrishnan, 2011; Gilbertson, 2017) while moral learning in the MCD schools appeared to relate to concerns about the second democratic upsurge (new opportunities for previously marginalised social groups) and the “plebianization of culture, space and politics”, Fernandes and Heller, 2011).
Rather than viewing tradition/respectability and modernity/cosmopolitanism in a binary, it is important to consider the ambivalent, contradictory and partial nature of social change. In both the ACP and participants’ accounts, local and global, India and the West, modern and traditional, were not ‘given dichotomic ‘entities’ with fixed meanings, but were rather, fluid, constantly evolving and dialogically shaping each other’ (Favero, 2005, p. 4). The ACP allows for the ‘fuzzy’ boundaries between respectability and cosmopolitanism, viewing them not as inherently opposed- or closely aligned (Gilbertson, 2016). Gilbertson (2016, p. 166) argues that it is best to conceive of ‘tradition and modernity, respectability and cosmopolitanism’ as ‘a body of loosely associated reference points inconsistently employed in practices of class and gender distinction’. In different fields, respectability and cosmopolitanism took on particular significance as students constructed their classed and gendered identities. In MCD schools, students’ families were thought to be immoral and were cast in deficit to normative notions of citizenship- as reflected in the ACP. This meant that teachers focused on grounding students with the morals necessary to be as self-responsible as possible. At IES, the emphasis was on ensuring that students did not become too independent or too cosmopolitan, students were expected to balance Indian respectability with global/cosmopolitanism. The emphasis was placed on instilling Indian values given the perception that pernicious global influences were corrupting students.

7.4 The Construction of Gendered Identities in Delhi Primary Schools: Narratives of Femininity

Discourses of citizenship found in the three schools and encapsulated in the ACP, are inherently gendered, foregrounding the role of men at the expense of women. The Hindu ontology of the ACP was heavily influenced by Swami Vivekananda’s conceptions of Hinduism. In Chapter 6, I highlighted Roy and Hammers’ (2014) suggestion that Vivekananda’s brand of nationalism responded to western colonial stereotypes of Hindu effeminacy by combing western notions manhood with Hindu notions spiritualism. This re-masculisation project drew on ‘negative constructions of femininity’ and led to the ‘rhetorical confinement of women to the role of mothers’ (Hammers, 2014). Despite claims that access to education was offering girls the same
opportunities as boys, this led to an elevation of the masculine and the devaluing of
the feminine. While contemporary middleclassness continues to be defined in
accordance with the interaction between tradition and modernity, the burden to
produce an ‘appropriately Indian’ identity has disproportionately fallen on women
(Fernandes, 2006; Gilbertson, 2016; Sancho, 2013).

Through my research in the three schools, I demonstrated how long standing
associations between femininity, the domestic sphere and national culture interacted
with global discourses of ‘can-do’ femininity to play a central role in the construction of
girls’ identities. In MCD schools, the apparent success of girls- in comparison to boys-
was used as evidence for a new era in which ‘can-do’ girls had the same opportunities
as boys. However, at the same time, the foundation for this success was said to be
found in the ‘traditional Indian’ roles that women and girls had played. Girls were said
to be ‘self-responsibilised’ from a young age- meaning that girls had learnt to be
obedient and subservient- as a result of restrictions on their movement and
expectations within the home. The docility and subservience of girls was viewed as
something to be celebrated rather than challenged. One teacher in MCD school 2
explained to me that ‘people who are stopped from doing any activity are more
interested in it. As they don’t give so much exposure to the girls in the field of studies
so they are more good at it’ (Class III Ma’am, Teacher FGD, MCD School 2). This
suggests that the subordination of working class girls in MCD schools is- in a twist of
logic- viewed as actually being good for them because it heightens their interest in
education.

While working class girls in MCD schools shared high aspirations, their aspirations
were often directed towards the best interests of their family. This was in spite of the
fact that their futures continued to defined by matrimonial norms. Marriage norms
appeared to provide boys with a sense of privilege and entitlement whereas girls were
positioned as vulnerable, unwanted and destined to leave the family (see Chapter 5).
In these schools, a working class girls position within the family home was often viewed
as temporary and highly constrained. Several mothers in MCD schools, viewed their
daughter’s education as a means to prepare them for the demands of domestic life in
the home- to equip them with the skills (that they had missed out on) that would enable
them to survive in another family’s home- and in an urban environment like Delhi. For
these mothers, a domestic future- not work- awaited their daughters after school. The
criticism that working mothers in MCD schools encountered for neglecting their maternal responsibilities perhaps underscored the notion that work would not enable their daughters to elevate their social standing - but marriage would. Other parents expressed greater aspirations for their daughters and had already laid out a clear career path for them. This enabled some girls to draw on ‘can-do’ femininity and imagine an unconstrained future in which they could do as they pleased. Rani suggested that her parents would let her decide what she wanted to do with her future and she had ambitions to travel and become a pilot. Yet among these working class school communities, the status of all girls continued to be defined by domestic duties, marital norms and an overarching emphasis on the ‘right amount of freedom’. As one teacher summarised, ‘girls are given instructions while boys are given options’. Thus while, there was a general perception that girls now had an array of new opportunities - or infinite possibilities (within the ACP’s framework of citizenship) - their futures continued to be shaped by their association with a traditional role in the domestic sphere.

Middle class girls at IES were said to be on equal terms with boys and to now have the same opportunities as boys. Students described how girls had been liberated from a history of discrimination, in which girls were tied to the domestic sphere and were unable to ‘have equality’ with boys. On this basis, some middle class girls drew on a ‘can-do’ femininity to position themselves as just as smart and as capable as boys. The neoliberal audit culture in the school both sustained and undermined girls claims to be as capable as boys. While high performing girls could distinguish themselves as successful - and receive support for these claims from high achieving boys - the greater number of boys in the ‘top 10’ performing students in the class, led to claims that girls were not as ‘smart’ as boys. Reflecting media narratives in which educated working women are presented as representatives of a globalised India, girls in the school had high aspirations and envisaged a cosmopolitan future in which they could invert traditional gender roles by taking care of their parents independently.

The girls ‘can do’ femininities appeared - in some cases - to be shaped by cosmopolitan post-feminist narratives of individualised femininity. Bloom and Sneha were particularly fond of Barbie and Western cultural products and they admired her for her ‘honesty’, ‘popularity’, ‘celebrity’ and ‘success’ as well as her ‘beauty’ and ‘style’. This meant that girls at IES constructed their identities in relation to a ‘can-do’ femininity
that was defined in terms of individualisation, consumerism, entrepreneurial identity ambitious careers and displays of consumer lifestyle. Yet, beyond this, girls in the school, in different ways expressed a strong commitment to being on equal terms as boys- and staked claims for agency. For Roshni, this meant having her own house in which she could take care of her parents whereas for Bloom (and to some extent Sneha), this meant doggedly pursuing equal opportunities in day to day school life by calling out slights against girls and challenging sexist or oppressive attitudes. Bloom also showed a good deal of awareness about the privileged status that boys had in society- and at IES- and when the topic arose she expressed her dissatisfaction with the status quo- ‘everybody likes boys… but I don’t!’.

The perceived greater desirability of boys- and the relative undesirability of girls- in the family/society, and a history of violence and discrimination against girls, meant that boys were elevated in comparison to girls and viewed as the norm- and girls the exception. While students acknowledged that parents in India wanted boys ahead of girls, they viewed this parental bias as being something that pertained to (rural) working class- rather than middle class- families. The masculinist culture in the school emphasised ‘traditional’, nationalistic gendered visions of the future in which students would become ‘great’ or ‘honest’ men. This ensured that girls were never fully able to realise the masculine notions of citizenship prevalent in the school- and evident in the ACP. In this context, narratives of a ‘weak femininity’ permitted middle class girls the same opportunities (to participate in school or sport) as men whilst insisting that they did so from a position of inferiority. Low-performing boys overtly drew on this narrative as a claim to masculine (intelligent, strong, able) status, while high performing boys both contested and advanced this narrative- to strategically assert their status as both open-minded and superior (to girls and low-performing boys). Similarly, high performing girls both contested and advanced the weak girls narrative, especially in their efforts to understand their relationships with other girls.

7.5 The Construction of Gendered Identities in Delhi Primary Schools: Narratives of Masculinity

Working class boys in MCD schools were often pathologised by teachers in MCD schools and were said to be reckless and irresponsible. While girls were viewed as
passive victims of their parents in MCD schools, boys were regularly seen as products of the family- replicating their parents immoral and irresponsible behavior. A lack of ‘Indian’ moral values in the community and pernicious western/cosmopolitan influences were said to have left boys free to ‘roam’ and in some cases engage in drugs and sexual activity. Boys in MCD schools were judged to be in deficit in relation to normative notions of citizenship found in the ACP. In response, many working class boys appeared to be subjected to violence in the schools. Violence was part of the boys’ day to day school experience. Connell’s hegemonic masculinity was useful in revealing the normalised forms of (male) violence- embedded in hegemonic values- that structured the way that boys performed masculinity in MCD schools. Hegemonic masculinity was an individual and collective project that entailed common sense notions of manhood (Connell, 1995). In both MCD schools- and especially the boys only shift of MCD school 1- boys attempted to dominate others through violence.

Some working class boys in the school, constructed their identities in alignment with hegemonic masculinity by drawing on a narrative of the ‘man of action’ or ‘heroic’ masculinity. Influenced by the interaction between cosmopolitanism and tradition, this form of masculinity appeared to draw on the hard-muscled stars of Bollywood movies-who demonstrated India’s arrival on the global stage. For these boys, physical displays of strength and the ability to fight were important. Within this narrative, boys were protectors of both women and/or the nation and this justified their use of violence ‘when necessary’. This was something that was supported by some girls in MCD schools, like Eshal who ‘like(d)’ the thought of ‘going to school with boys’ because ‘boy(s) will protect her’.

This narrative appeared to be shaped by (Hindu) nationalist discourses in which an awakened masculine nation protects the feminine (‘mother India’) and leads the nation to glory (Banerjee, 2003). For some students, class monitors epitomised this hero masculinity in that they stepped in to break up fights, protected boys in the school and maintained order in the classroom. For other boys, class monitors were far from heroic and they instead drew on narratives of a ‘bully’ masculinity to describe the behaviour of class monitors and other boys in the school. Bullies were said to use violence indiscriminately and without good reason moving beyond the boundaries of decency. Outside of these two violent masculinities was the narrative of the ‘quiet boy’
masculinity. Quiet boys avoided confrontation, were withdrawn and tried to avoid any trouble.

Rather than consistently enacting one of these masculinities, boys appeared to draw on different narratives at different times: during class most boys enacted a quiet boy masculinity whereas during lunch it was the bully and hero that dominated. Boys in MCD schools generally had rather vague aspirations and were unsure of how they could meet their ambitions.

Middle class boys at IES had a privileged status in a masculinist school culture that foregrounded competition and winning. While the feminine was not explicitly devalued, it was the masculine that was continually foregrounded and elevated through school assemblies and inspirational messages, as exemplified in the school motto- ‘an honest man is the noblest work of god’. Reflecting the gendered nation-building rhetoric of the ACP, middle class boys at IES constructed their identities in a context where boys were viewed as universally accepted and preferred. The hegemonic masculinity in this context was a scholar masculinity that while respecting physical strength, emphasised disciplined behaviour, spiritual power and intelligence. Scholars were said to be highly disciplined, showing total dedication to their studies and obtaining high levels of academic performance. Scholars took pride in being self-responsibilised and demonstrated their maturity by engaging in out school, study related activities beyond a heavy schedule of homework and tuition. Scholars drew on cosmopolitan discourses of western science and technology and Indian discourses of a scientific-based masculinity to foreground the importance of science to their identity. Scholars drew on cosmopolitan discourses to criticise efforts to inhibit girls’ opportunities but at the same time they criticised girls for their frivolous, girly interests.

In contrast to the hegemonic scholar masculinity, the ‘bad boy’ or ‘dirty fellow’ was viewed as irresponsible and out of control. Bad boys were associated with low levels of performance and were said to need physical punishment in order to be controlled. Drawing on discourses of respectability, the bad boys were Othered by students in the class and likened to pathological working class masculinities.
7.6 The Construction of Classed Identities in Delhi Primary Schools

7.6.1 Education in MCD Government Schools: Working Class Families and Middle Class School Culture

It was in accordance with the central tenets of the ACP- neoliberal self-responsibilisation- that moral concerns were raised in both MCD school communities and IES. If only students could take responsibility for themselves, their learning and their sense of morality, then they would have a bright future. By viewing working class families as inherently ‘flawed’ and ‘lacking’, children from MCD school communities were largely presented as being incapable of acquiring the cultural and educational capital necessary for progress in the education system. Teachers, parents and students, viewed working class participation in education as a means to achieve personal, local and national change (Archer and Leathwood, 2003, p. 176); however, the meaning and purpose of education appeared to differ between parents and students- who wanted to acquire the credentials and skills to become self-sufficient and find gainful employment- and teachers who saw it as a means for working class poor students to change themselves by ‘becoming more educated, skilled, affluent, socially mobile, ‘civilised’ and (implicitly) middle class’ (Archer and Leatherwood, 2003, p. 176).

Rather than addressing inequality, the primary concern to the ‘problem(s)’ of working class people’ was ‘mak(ing) them more like their middle-class counterparts’ (Lawler, 2000, p. 126). Drawing on government policy discourses that have located the family as responsible for children’s education, working class underachievement in school was primarily understood by teachers as a ‘cultural problem’. If parents could only learn to take responsibility for themselves and their family and show an interest in their child’s education then they would do better educationally (Thomas and Quinn, 2007). This deficit perspective, implicitly endorsed the value of middle class forms of culture and knowledge (Reay, 2001)- something that was made explicit through a growing emphasis on moral education in MCD schools. This reflects a wider trend of individual or family reponsibilisation in education policy where the emphasis is on the extent to which the family aspires and not the structural constraints that families are weighed down by (Reay, 2013).
In this context, the framing of disadvantaged groups as morally corrupt or lacking in aspiration, enables government provision of educational capital (free government scholarships and educational provision) to be viewed as a ‘gift’ (Luke, 2008). When students and their families did not conform to teachers (middle class) expectations, they were viewed to be ‘taking’ or ‘begging’ and not offering anything in return. In these terms, education is constructed as a means for families to escape the ‘deficit’ of working class culture and students and families are expected to demonstrate their commitment to this. In this way, teachers in the school can be viewed as ‘fish in water’ who possess the requisite capitals never to have questioned their own participation in the field (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, p. 127). In highlighting these issues, it is not my intention to ‘blame’ the teachers- who deliver educational policy- for class-based inequalities; however, it is important to hold responsible, ‘unconscious or unintended behavior, actions or attitudes that contribute to oppression’ (Young, 1990, p, 135).

An optimistic reading of working class engagement in MCD schools would highlight how participation in education might permit ‘moments of disalignment and tension between habitus and field… that might give rise to social change’ (McNay, 2001, p. 146). By participating in schooling, working class families may be exposed to ideas or contexts outside their normal realm of experience that would enable them to avoid reproducing social disadvantage. However, widespread aspirations among working class students were not matched by educational opportunities. Rather than being heated up, working class students were predominantly ‘cooled down’ through play-based activities and a dramatic reduction of the curriculum timetable. Rather than a drive towards literacy, mathematics or other core curriculum areas, there was an overwhelming emphasis on moral education so that students could live up to middle class cultural expectations.

Parents of students in MCD schools seemed unaware of their child’s predicament. They expressed a strong sense of trust in the school system and deferred to their child’s teachers ‘better’ judgement. Many parents were relieved to have left the intensely competitive low-fee private sector which they felt had placed unnecessary burden on both themselves and their children. While working class students expressed a great deal of faith in education as a type of ‘means-end instrumental rationality’ (Reay, 2012) that would lead to professional employment and middle class lifestyles, there was evidence that students were becoming aware of their predicament. As
Bourdieu suggests Habitus is a ‘realistic relation to what is possible, founded on and therefore limited by power’. In constantly anticipating the future, some working class students appeared to be oscillating ‘between fantasy and surrender’. Those that were struggling to achieve academically, like Aisha in MCD school 2, blamed themselves for their lack of achievement and insisted that by studying harder, they could realise their aspirations and obtain academic success. Others like Chotu, had already started to supplement their middle class aspirations, with alternative options such as an ambition for low income office work in the village. The teachers’ emphasis on moral concerns and on ensuring that children were ‘ready’ to study, appeared to draw attention away from the teaching and learning of the core curriculum subjects that students were desperate to learn.

In Chapter 6, I demonstrated that unlike MCD schools, where the timetable had been relaxed in order to allow children to succeed, students at IES had a highly structured school experience that was heavily results focused. The location of IES within a highly competitive school market ensured that the school was under significant pressure to ensure that students gained the cultural and educational capital perceived to be necessary for future success. The IES school experience reflected the wider middle class culture of schooling found in Delhi- and other areas of India- in being highly aspirational, performance obsessed and English language medium of instruction. The importance of maintaining the school’s reputation (through exam results) meant that the school had been influenced by international practices in audit and assessment, and had adopted a rigorous system of testing in order to evaluate and rank student performance. The school’s practices were revolved around a neoliberal emphasis on ‘winning’ and ‘working hard’, and this led many students to engage in intensive competition and self-work in order maximise their performance.

Parents selected IES on the basis that it had a good reputation and would enable them to distance their children from ‘those below’- including poor/working class students in government schools and lower middle class children in government/private schools. To ensure that parents received returns on their ‘investments’, the school day was heavily orientated around rote-based learning and academic activities that would lead to high levels of performance. Students were expected to only speak in English and to spend their evenings revising lessons from the school day. While middle class students were encouraged to become self-responsibilised they were expected to do so
in accordance with an Indian (Hindu) sense of morality. This appropriately Indian, middle class identity distanced students from the pathology of the working classes and enabled students to have limited engagement with cosmopolitan/global culture. While the school’s recent cosmopolitan/international turn had led to certification by the British Council, it had- since its origin- emphasised a (Hindu) nationalist vision of citizenship that foregrounded the importance of the family, the nation and god. This meant that students were encouraged to pursue individual academic excellence and engage in self-work not for themselves but for the wider causes of family, nation and god. It was this balancing or ‘matching’ of a ‘western’, individualistic identity and a ‘collective’, ‘Indian’ identity that the school sought resolve through moral education.

Middle class students at IES were both highly aspirational and dedicated to achieving their aspirations. Students evaluated the progress towards their aspirations in terms of the grades and ‘positions’ that were part and parcel of the school’s audit culture. This led students to engage in intensive self-work in order to enhance their performance. While students had clear aspirations and were motivated by the prestige associated with academic performance, this was something that was played down within the school- the expectation being that students should work very hard with no expectation of reward. This ascetic approach to learning was aligned with the form of citizenship found in the ACP in that it emphasised self-work not for personal gain but for the greater good.

This approach to citizenship seems particularly relevant in a context where despite passing through an intense and competitive school system, large numbers of youth remain unemployed. Students in the school were aware of how difficult it would be to realise their ambitions and several expressed anxieties about their current and future financial circumstances. Michael suggested that his family’s position ‘just below’ the middle class meant that financial precarity was part and parcel of everyday life and he was worried that this would continue long in to the future. Given the insecurity of many families, discourses of ‘Indian tradition’ appeared to discourage students from thinking too much about themselves and their own position and instead recognise that if ‘you work honestly and at some point- if not on short notice but and long-term also- you will be rewarded and paid by God in one manner or another…’. The promise of one day being rewarded encouraged middle class students to strive whilst at the same time offering no definitive outcomes or ‘returns’ for individual endeavour.
Among this section of the middle class in Delhi, the focus on grounding students ‘Indian’ values- especially hard work and asceticism- reflected a rather conservative and cautious approach to cosmopolitan culture/influences. It also reflected the school’s emphasis on ensuring that students get ahead in an educational culture characterised by an obsession with performance in academic tests. In her study of Hyderabad’s middle classes, Gilbertson finds that this emphasis on respectability over cosmopolitanism and the belief that through ever high grades students will obtain middle class careers and lifestyles is typical of a lower middle class approach to education. Beyond marks, Gilbertson has shown that schools catering for the upper-middle classes focus on ‘exposure’ and ‘openness’ viewing this as necessary for students to engage in global cosmopolitan culture and labour. For students and their families at IES, the hectic study schedules and total dedication to academic achievement a total commitment to educational capitals; however, in the context of growing inequality and an intensely competitive labour market, it is questionable whether this effort and these capitals alone will enable students (and families) to realise their aspirations.

7.7 Originality, Significance and Future Research

In this thesis, I emphasise the fluidity of femininities and masculinities to consider girls’ and boys’ engagement in different gender practices in private and government school communities. This plural reframing of femininities and masculinities aligns with Connell and Messerschmidt’s (2005) suggestion that ‘global institutions pressure regional and local gender orders… regional gender orders provide cultural materials adopted or reworked in global arenas and provide models of masculinity that may be important in local gender dynamics’. This approach accounts for the way way in which gendered identities are constructed at local (face to face interaction of families, organisations and immediate communities), regional (nation-state) and global (international arenas, including geopolitics and transnational business/media) levels (Beasley, 2008; Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005).

While this study aimed at the outset to explore the construction of gendered identities, I have demonstrated the importance of social class in the construction of gendered identities. The decision to include class as a central to the analysis was predicated
upon the prevalence in the data of references to class including notions of middle class childhood, aspirations for middle class lifestyles, associations between school choice and social class, and fundamental differences between the school experience in the government and private schools in the study. This demonstrated to me the importance of intersectionality and the fact that these social identity categories are never easily viewed individually and need to be considered alongside one another to make sense.

Through my analysis I have demonstrated how gender and class intersect to shape the aspirations and identities of students in three Delhi primary schools. The shift in emphasis to both social class and gender, enabled me to consider the dominant role that social class played in determining the school ethos and in turn shaping how gendered identities were constructed, legitimised and contested. In recognition for the emphasis on both neoliberal responsibilisation and traditional values in these schools, it is important that future research consider the new configurations of class and gender- alongside other social identities- that are emerging. Efforts to understand how social identities are being constructed in schools should attend to the import role that contemporary notions of citizenship are playing in framing contemporary approaches to education, development and equality- and their gendered and classed implications.

In highlighting the importance of aspirations, I claim that global aspirations were constructed within the framework of cosmopolitan Hinduism that, rather than being framed by “secular engagement”, was articulated within a framework of traditionalism. Drawing on anti-colonial, Hindu notions of cosmopolitanism, this approach views Hinduism as a universal religion that encompasses other less ancient religious traditions to situate students in “Indian” tradition and a Hindu worldview. Student engagement in other world views (cosmopolitanism) was permitted providing that citizens were initially rooted in certain (Hindu) spiritual premises and non-negotiable positions. The prevalence of moral concerns at both MCD schools and at IES appeared to stem from an overriding concern with ensuring that students’ identities were constructed within this framework.

**Policy Implications**

Jones and Killick (2007) claim that there are two main rationales for internationalisation: values based and pragmatic. Within these three primary schools,
in the context of the widespread promotion of education through national and global agendas, internationalisation was understood in pragmatic terms as means to ensure that students had the skills and qualities (English language, credentials) necessary for living and working in globalised world (Jones and Killick, 2007). The widespread belief - fuelled by global policies/agendas aimed at facilitating access to education- that simply by participating in education one’s opportunities would be dramatically improved was so strong that It was difficult to question. When I asked a university professor whether students’ aspirations were realistic (Chapter 4), his response that I should “let the children have their dreams” indicated that there was something cruel about questioning the power of education and the plausibility of students’ ambitions.

In these school communities, it appeared that global and national policy efforts to promote education as a means to achieve social and economic equality through school access had resulted in widespread aspirations for education and an almost unquestionable faith in the power of schooling- irrespective of its actual content and processes. Within the current pre-eminent global education agenda of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), education- particularly access to education- continues to be positioned as central to efforts to bring about social and gender equality. Despite an avowed emphasis on quality, the SDG education goal continues to emphasise the importance of access and participation and considers educational quality predominantly in terms of learning outcomes. These international efforts rest upon the assumption that individual access and individual achievement are ultimately indications of individual empowerment. These global policy and media discourses appeared to play an important role in shaping students’ aspirations for the future and their expectations of schooling.

However, as I have demonstrated in this thesis, it was relational identities that were prioritized over notions of individual self-hood in these schools. Global efforts to address gender and class inequality fail to account for the relational nature of identities in countries such as India. I have demonstrated that school staff were actively engaged in a values-based internationalisation that aimed to root students in Indian values so that they could legitimately engage with global culture and the global economy. Social justice, ethics and a sustainable future could only be achieved through individual efforts that were directed towards the good of the family, the nation and God. While increased access to schooling was in many cases considered a welcome
development, schooling was not (as in western/global efforts) primarily viewed as a sight for individual emancipation and social equality. Instead, schooling was construed as a site for students to learn about the skills that would enable them access to the global economy, while ensuring that they remained committed to ‘Indian’ values. In this sense, rather than intercultural understanding, internationalisation in this context led to efforts to reinstate a national, religious, cultural identity.

In this context, global policy efforts to bring about economic and gender equality through education have been reconfigured and reworked. The implicit emphasis in global policies on individual liberation through the abstraction of the self from social relationships has been both accepted at one level and rejected at another. Students were expected to embrace new (neo-liberal) forms of self-hood (self-responsibilisation and self-empowerment) while simultaneously embracing social entanglements and obligations. This demonstrates how a religious nationalist identity has been reworked in education to encompass the tenets of neoliberalism. In this thesis, I find that neoliberalism does not dissolve “all forms of social solidarity” in favor of “individualism, private property, personal responsibility, and family values” (Harvey, 2007, p. 23); instead, these schools aimed to ensure that the neoliberal subject was firmly focused on collective (family, the nation and God) over individual good. Drawing on neoliberal notions of meritocracy, Hindu conceptualisations of “personal ascetism, self-abnegation and world-renunciation” are reworked towards “self-development, self-fulfilment and self-empowerment” (Gooptu, 2014). Students’ aspirations, hard work and self-responsibilisation are positioned as a duty and an important part of a rich (Hindu) heritage and history. The primary purpose of hard work and asceticism is in the service of the family, the nation and god; however, in doing so, students can anticipate that at some point they will be rewarded (by god). Rather than the introduction of a dystopic neoliberal order, in the context of these schools, neoliberalism appears to be dependent on and enabled by new forms of utopia (Muehlebach, 2011) in which education has an instrumental role.

In order to effectively facilitate improvements in education, global policies/agendas must account for and acknowledge the importance of relational identities and relational notions of agency, whilst confronting reductive, nationalistic conceptions of citizenship, culture and society that serve to legitimize social inequality. Rather than emphasising the liberation of the individual, global efforts and policies need to be sensitive to the
importance of relational identity - especially the emotional and identity-based dimensions- and address these through a relational approach to agency which acknowledges that we position ourselves in relation to others and define ourselves in accordance with these perceived relations. Global policies focused on bringing about equality through education need to focus on how relations between individuals or groups- and the degrees of affiliation and autonomy- within these relationships shape the possibilities available to different individuals/groups.

Global goals and policies should emphasise the importance of relationships and encourage relationships that are marked by respect, concern and dignity. Beyond focusing on the same treatment, equality of opportunity or even identical outcomes, a relational approach to social justice focuses on the nature of the relationships in and through which selves are brought into existence. Beyond universal conceptions of social justice, this approach entails addressing injustices in concrete terms as they are manifested in different contexts. This means considering how global, national and local institutions and policies can facilitate the relationships- in different contexts- that are necessary to enable human flourishing.

In these school communities in Delhi, I have demonstrated the powerful role that dominant forms of Hindu cosmopolitanism played in the construction of gendered and classed identities. In government MCD schools, the near realization of universal primary enrolment (UPE) was correlated with the deterioration of the student body. Working class students and especially their families were viewed as being in deficit to the normative, educated, self-responsibilised, Hindu citizen. The perception that many students were “first generation learners” and therefore incapable of learning (primarily evaluated through achievement in school tests) led to an emphasis on a (Hindu) moral education that aimed to ensure that students took responsibility for themselves. Girls in particular were viewed as being good students given that they had been responsibilised from a young age; in contrast, boys were viewed as having too much freedom and as a result being reckless and irresponsible. Irrespective of their gender, teachers did not expect the majority of students in this school to gain even lower-middle class employment, let alone realise the middle class aspirations of some students. This suggests that despite gaining access to school, the fact that students were unable to engage in schooling I the expected manner meant that gender and economic inequalities were in many ways legitimized in MCD schools.
At IES, parents and their families were viewed as being responsible and able to provide for their children. In a highly competitive school market characterised by a “marks race” (Majumdar & Mooij, 2011) this meant that the school had to ensure that families were given returns on their investment—primarily in the form of test results. Although students were said to be learning the skills necessary for the global labour market, many global/international policies were viewed by management in the school as inappropriate for the Indian context. This meant that internationalisation of the curriculum largely entailed the implementation of computer “labs” and smart boards, the addition of “creative” subjects and occasional international days rather than any substantial change. Instead, the school’s practices continued to revolve around older, rote-based learning practices to ensure high levels of performance in academic tests.

Students at IES were expected to adopt an “Indian” perspective that foregrounded the family, the nation and god over individualistic (“western”) desires and aspirations. In this context the middle class, Hindu boy was the normative school child who belonged in school—girls were somewhat out of place. Boys constructed their identities in a context where the highly academic “scholar” masculinity and its opposite the reckless, lower-class/caste “dirty fellow” were prevalent. Girls identities were constructed in the context of “can do” and “vulnerable” femininities. Despite a dedication to hard work and academic excellence, the rigid emphasis on Hindu cosmopolitanism, meant that these students were unlikely to develop the soft skills—associated with western cosmopolitanisms— which are necessary for success in the global labour market.

Policy makers need to take into account the implications that policies emphasizing school choice and family responsibilisation have on childrens’ lives in schools. On the one hand, attention needs to be paid to how- in government MCD schools—these policies appear to have shifted attention away from the learning demands of families in the school community (for language, mathematic, scientific and social science learning) and towards an emphasis on moral development (in accordance with middle class norms). On the other, policy makers need to consider the pressure that family responsibilisation and school choice places on individuals and their families—especially in the context of a highly competitive middle class culture of schooling. An initial response could be to develop policies emphasizing that the state is primarily responsible for ensuring that disadvantage groups can engage in a quality education.
This thesis has started the story of how gendered and classed identities are constructed in Delhi primary schools and as such represents a possible starting point for future explorations. Future work could explore in more detail how Hindu cosmopolitanism is being introduced through structured curricular programs like the Awakened Citizenship Program and the implications this has for learning and equality. By exploring the implementation of such a framework in different schools, including the lessons of the curriculum in process, it would be possible to gain an insight into how traditional discursive patterns are being configured differently in the neoliberal era. It would appear to be particularly important to consider the experience of the “Muslim” Other in the context of this purportedly secular approach to citizenship.

Further studies could also focus in more detail the relationship between global and local understandings of quality in education. In particular, the way in which a global emphasis on quantitative measures of quality in education interacts with the tradition of high-stakes testing in India to define policy makers’, school officials and teachers’ understandings of learning, success and failure in different schools- and the classed and gendered effects of this.
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Appendices

Appendix 1: Ethical approval

CERTIFICATE OF ETHICAL APPROVAL

Title of Project: The Local Effects of Global Changes in Education: A Study of Delhi Primary School Communities

Researcher(s) name: Benjamin Arnold

Supervisor(s): Dr Alexandra Allan
Dr Fran Martin

This project has been approved for the period

From: 08/08/2014
To: 01/03/2016

Ethics Committee approval reference: D/15/16/03

Signature: ___________________________ Date......27/07/2015......
(Chair, Graduate School of Education Ethics Committee)
Appendix 2: Information Sheets and Informed Consent
2 (a) Student Consent Form

The Local Effects of Global Changes in Education: A Study of Delhi Primary School Communities

Mr Ben Arnold  
University of Exeter PhD Project Funded by the ESRC- Education and Social Research Council, UK

Purpose:
Your child is invited to participate in a research study designed to examine local and global ideas about education and how they shape the school experiences of girls and boys in Delhi. Globalisation has caused a number of changes to education systems across the world and this has resulted in a massive increase in the number of children now attending school. Education is now viewed as a solution to many of the social, economic and environmental challenges that we face and the public demand for education is higher than ever before. This has put pressure on governments to provide schooling for all children, and led to an increase in the number of private education providers. Competition between state and private schools and different national education systems has also increased. In light of these changes, I am interested in understanding your community’s ideas about schooling and education, including the ways in which boys and girls experience school in Delhi.

Procedures:
All activities will take place in school and will involve a maximum of 3 hours participation per week for 10 weeks. Activities will be organised by the researcher (Mr Ben Arnold) and his research partner (Ms Shikha Hundal). Participation in this study will involve your child undertaking activities (e.g. stories, drama, photography) with other students, and taking part in a maximum of 2 interviews and 2 group discussions regarding their experiences in school. Your child’s involvement will be carefully scheduled to ensure that it does not interfere with their education.

Risks and Benefits:
We will be very sensitive to your child’s needs and we will take care to ensure that questions asked are not sensitive or too difficult for your child to answer. All data collected will be treated confidentially except in circumstances where it is considered to put the participant at risk by not disclosing information. In this study your child will benefit from learning new techniques (photography, drama and story-telling), and sharing their knowledge and ideas with others through games and activities. Your child will also contribute to our knowledge of school experiences in Delhi and this will enable us to help shape future educational practices.

Confidentiality:
All of your child’s responses will be anonymised- meaning that your child will be asked to choose a name to represent their data confidentially (also known as a pseudonym). Only the researchers involved in this study will have access to any information that could identify participants. When we publish any results from this study we will do so in a way that does not identify participants unless they specifically choose to be identified. Data will be shared with my research supervisors as part of the ongoing project work, but will be anonymised and securely handled.
Voluntary Participation:
Your child's participation in this study is voluntary. You child is free to decline to participate, to end his/her participation at any time for any reason, or to refuse to answer any individual question. Refusing to participate will not affect your child’s relationship with the school.

Questions:
If you have any questions about this study, you may contact the researcher, Mr Ben Arnold (8800128817  ba242@exeter.ac.uk) or his supervisors Dr Alexandra Allan a.j.allan@exeter.ac.uk or Dr Fran Martin Fran.Martin@exeter.ac.uk

Agreement to Participate:
I have read the above information, have had the opportunity to have any questions about this study answered and agree for my child to participate in this study.

_________________________________________  ________________________________
(printed name)                           (date)

_________________________________________
(signature)
2 (b) Teacher Consent Form

The Local Effects of Global Changes in Education: A Study of Delhi Primary School Communities

*Globalisation and Education in New Delhi*

*Mr Ben Arnold*

*University of Exeter, UK and ESRC- Education and Social Research Council, UK*

**Purpose:**
You are invited to participate in a research study designed to *examine local and global ideas about education and how they shape the school experience in Delhi.* Globalisation has caused a number of changes to education systems across the world and this has resulted in a massive increase in the number of children now attending school. Education is now viewed as a solution to many of the social, economic and environmental challenges that we face and the public demand for education is higher than ever before. This has put pressure on governments to provide schooling for all children, and led to an increase in the number of private education providers. Competition between state and private schools and different national education systems has also increased. In light of these changes, I am interested in understanding your community’s ideas about schooling and education, including the ways in which boys and girls experience school in Delhi.

**Procedures:**
Participation in this study will involve *keeping a diary for a period of two weeks, and taking part in a maximum of 2 interviews and 2 group interviews regarding your experiences of teaching.* We will work with you to schedule your involvement so that it does not interfere with your personal time and teaching duties.

**Risks and Benefits:**
We will not ask questions of a sensitive nature, questions will relate to your experiences as a teacher and you are free to answer as you wish. All data collected will be treated confidentially except in circumstances where it is considered to put the participant at risk by not disclosing information. We would really appreciate your input as a practicing teacher to help us understand your experiences of schooling in Delhi. Your responses will contribute to our knowledge of school experiences in Delhi and this will enable us to help shape future educational practices.

**Confidentiality:**
All of your responses will be *anonymised-meaning that you will be asked to choose a name to represent your data confidentially (also known as a pseudonym).* Only the researchers involved in this study will have access to any information that could identify you. When we publish any results from this study we will do so in a way that does not identify you unless you specifically choose to be identified. Data will be shared with my research supervisors as part of the ongoing project work, but will be anonymised and securely handled.

**Voluntary Participation:**
Your participation in this study is voluntary. You are free to decline to participate, to end your participation at any time for any reason, or to refuse to answer any individual question.
Refusing to participate will not affect your relationship with the researcher, the school or the wider community.

Questions:
If you have any questions about this study, you may contact the researcher, Mr Ben Arnold (8800128817 ba242@exeter.ac.uk) or his supervisors Dr Alexandra Allan a.j.allan@exeter.ac.uk and Dr Fran Martin Fran.Martin@exeter.ac.uk

Agreement to Participate:
I have read the above information, have had the opportunity to have any questions about this study answered and agree to participate in this study.

_________________________  __________________
(printed name)             (date)

_________________________
(signature)
2 (c) Parent Consent Form

The Local Effects of Global Changes in Education: A Study of Delhi Primary School Communities

Mr Ben Arnold
University of Exeter PhD Project Funded by the ESRC- Education and Social Research Council, UK

Purpose:
You are invited to participate in a research study designed to examine local and global ideas about education and how they shape the school experiences of girls and boys in Delhi. Globalisation has caused changes to education systems across the world and this has resulted in a massive increase in the number of children attending school. Education is now viewed as a solution to many of the social, economic and environmental challenges that we face and the public demand for education is higher than ever before. This has put pressure on governments to provide schooling for all children, and led to an increase in the number of private education providers. Competition between state and private schools and different national education systems has also increased. In light of these changes, I am interested in understanding your community’s ideas about schooling and education, including the ways in which boys and girls experience school in Delhi.

Procedures:
Participation in this study will involve your participation in a maximum of 2 interviews and 2 group discussions regarding your child’s experiences in education. All interviews/discussions will take place in school and will last for approximately 30-45 minutes each. Your involvement will be scheduled according to your wishes to ensure that it does not interfere with your work/home life.

Risks and Benefits:
We will not ask questions of a sensitive nature. Questions will relate to your experiences as a parent and your child’s experiences in education. All data collected will be treated confidentially except in circumstances where it is considered to put the participant at risk by not disclosing information. We hope to learn from your experiences as parent and your thoughts about education. Your contribution will develop our knowledge of school experiences in Delhi and this will enable us to help shape future educational practices.

Confidentiality:
All of your responses will be anonymised—meaning that you will be asked to choose a name to represent your data confidentially (also known as a pseudonym). Only the researchers involved in this study will have access to any information that could identify participants. When we publish any results from this study we will do so in a way that does not identify participants unless they specifically choose to be identified. Data will be shared with my research supervisors as part of the ongoing project work, but will be anonymised and sensitively handled.

Voluntary Participation:
Your participation in this study is voluntary. You are free to decline to participate, to end your participation at any time for any reason, or to refuse to answer any individual question. Refusing to participate will not affect your relationship with the school.

Questions:
If you have any questions about this study, you may contact the researcher, Mr Ben Arnold (8800128817 ba242@exeter.ac.uk) or his supervisors Dr Alexandra Allen a.j.allen@exeter.ac.uk and Dr Fran Martin Fran.Martin@exeter.ac.uk

Agreement to Participate:
I have read the above information, have had the opportunity to have any questions about this study answered and agree to participate in this study.

(printed name) ___________________________ (date) ___________________________

(signature) ___________________________
2(d) Student Consent Form (HINDI)

एक शोध परियोजना में भाग लेने के लिए सहमति - छात्रों के लिए अभिभावकीय अनुमोदन

नई दिल्ली में वैद्यकरण और शिक्षा

मि. बेन अनाम्ड

एक्सेटर विश्वविद्यालय, ब्रिटेन और ईएसआरसी- शिक्षा और सामाजिक अनुसंधान परिषद, ब्रिटेन

उद्देश्य:

शिक्षा के बारे में स्थानीय और वैदिक अभिप्रयाय और वे दिल्ली में लड़कियों और लड़कों के स्कूल के अनुभव को कैसे आकार देते हैं। इसकी जांच के लिए बनाए गये एक शोध अध्ययन में भाग लेने हेतु आपके बच्चे को आमंत्रित किया जाता है। इसकी जांच के लिए बनाए गये एक शोध अध्ययन में भाग लेने हेतु आप को आमंत्रित किया जाता है। वैद्यकरण की वजह से दुनिया भर में शिक्षा प्रणाली में कई परिवर्तन हुए हैं और इसके परिणामस्वरूप अब स्कूल जाने वाले बच्चों की संख्या में भारी वृद्धि हुई है। अब शिक्षा को उन सामाजिक, आर्थिक और पर्यावरणीय चुनौतियों में से कई के लिए एक समाधान के रूप में देखा जाता है जिनका हम सामना कर रहे हैं और शिक्षा के लिए लोगों की मांग पहले से कहीं अधिक बढ़ गई है। इससे स्कूली शिक्षा प्रदान करने हेतु सरकार पर दबाव पड़ा है और निजी शिक्षा प्रदाताओं की संख्या में वृद्धि हुई है। इन परिवर्तनों के चलते, मेरी स्कूली शिक्षा और तालिम के साथ ही लड़के और लड़कियां दिल्ली में स्कूल का किस तरह अनुभव करते हैं इस बारे में आपके विचारों को समझने में दिलचस्पी है।

प्रक्रिया:

इस अध्ययन में भाग लेने से आपके बच्चे को समाज में दो बार (कहानियां, नाटक, फोटोग्राफी) गतिविधियों में शामिल होना पड़ेगा। और स्कूल में अपने अनुभवों के बारे में अधिकतम 2 साक्षात्कार और 2 फोकस ग्रुप डिस्क्वेशन में भाग लेना होगा। इससे उनकी शिक्षा में बाधा न पड़ने यह सुनिश्चित करने के लिए आपके बच्चे की भागीदारी को ध्यान से लिखी रखे किया जाएगा।

जोखिम और लाभ:

हम आपके बच्छों की जरूरतों के प्रति बहुत संवेदनशील रहेंगे और हम इस वात का ध्यान रखेंगे कि आपके बच्चे से पूछे जाने वाले प्रश्न जवाब दे पाने में बहुत मुश्किल न हो। जहां जानकारी का खुलासा नहीं करने से भाग लेने वाले को जोखिम हो सकता है ऐसा माना जाता है ऐसी प्रतिस्थापितयों को छोड़कर एकत्र किया गया सभी डेटा गोपनीय रखा जाएगा। इस
अध्ययन में आपके बच्चे को नई तकनीकों (फोटोग्राफी, नाटक और कहानियाँ) को सीखने और खेल तथा गतिविधियों के माध्यम से दूसरों के साथ अपने जान और विचारों को साझा करने से लाभ होगा। आपका बच्चा दिल्ली में खेल के अनुभवों के बारे में हमारे जान में भी योगदान देगा और इससे भविष्य में शैक्षिक प्रथाओं को आकार देने में हमें मदद मिलेगी।

गोपनीयता:
आपके बच्चे की सभी प्रतिक्रियाओं को गूंगा रखा जाएगा-जिसका अर्थ है कि आपके बच्चे को अपने डेटा का गोपनीय तौर पर प्रतिलिपि करने के लिए एक नाम चयन करने के लिए कहा जाएगा (एक उपनाम के रूप में भी जाना जाता है)। केवल इस अध्ययन में शामिल शोधकर्ताओं को ही प्रतिभागियों की पहचान की जा सकने वाली ऐसी किसी भी जानकारी तक पहुँच होगी। जब हम इस अध्ययन से कोई भी परिणाम प्रकाशित करेंगे तब हम उसे इस तरह से करेंगे कि जिससे प्रतिभागियों की पहचान न हो जब तक कि उन्होंने विशेष रूप से अपनी पहचान जाहिर करना चुना न हो। चल रहे प्रोजेक्ट के काम के हिस्से के रूप में डेटा को मेरे अनुसंधान पर्यवेक्षकों के साथ साझा किया जाएगा, लेकिन गूंगा रखा जाएगा और संवेदनशीलता से संभाला जाएगा।

स्वीच्छिक भागीदारी:
इस अध्ययन में आपके बच्चे की भागीदारी स्वीच्छिक है। आपका बच्चा भाग लेना अस्वीकार करने के लिए, किसी भी कारण से किसी भी समय अपनी भागीदारी को समाप्त करने, या किसी भी विशेष सावधान जानकारी का जवाब देने से मना करने के लिए स्वतंत्र है। भाग लेने में इनकार करने से खेल के साथ आपके बच्चे का रिश्ता प्रभावित नहीं होगा।

सवाल:
अगर आपके इस अध्ययन के बारे में कोई भी सवाल है, तो आप शोधकर्ता, मि. बेन अर्नाउड (8800128817 ba242@exeter.ac.uk) या उनके पर्यवेक्षक डॉ. एलेन एलेन a.j.allen@exeter.ac.uk से संपर्क कर सकते हैं।

भाग लेने के लिए कारार:
मैंने उपरोक्त जानकारी पढ़ी है, इस अध्ययन के बारे में किसी भी प्रश्न का जवाब देने और इस अध्ययन में मेरे बच्चे के भाग लेने हेतु में सहमत हूँ।

(नाम) ____________________ (तारीख) ____________________
(स्थानांतर)
2 (e) Teacher Consent Form (HINDI)

एक शोध परियोजना में भाग लेने के लिए सहमति-शिल्पक

लंदन दिल्ली में वैष्णवरण और शिक्षा

मित्र वेब्लाइट
एक्सेटर विश्वविद्यालय, ब्रिटेन और ईएसआरसी- शिक्षा और सामाजिक अनुसंधान परिषद, ब्रिटेन

उद्देश्य:
शिक्षा के बारे में स्थानीय और वैश्विक अभिप्राय और वे दिल्ली में स्कूल के अनुभव को कैसे आकर देते हैं इसकी जांच के लिए बनाए गये एक शोध अध्ययन में भाग लेने हेतु आप को आमंत्रित किया जाता है। इसकी जांच के लिए बनाए गये एक शोध अध्ययन में भाग लेने हेतु आप को आमंत्रित किया जाता है। वैष्णवरण की वजह से दुनिया भर में शिक्षा प्रणाली में कई परिवर्तन हुए हैं और इसके परिणामस्वरूप अब स्कूल जाने वाले बच्चों की संख्या में भारी वृद्धि हुई है। अब शिक्षा को उन सामाजिक, आर्थिक और पर्यावरणीय चुनौतियों में से कई के लिए एक समाधान के रूप में देखा जाता है जिनका हम समझा कर रहे हैं और शिक्षा के लिए लोगों की मांग पहले से कहीं अधिक बढ़ गई है। इससे स्कूली शिक्षा प्रदान करने हेतु सरकार पर दबाव पड़ा है और निजी शिक्षा प्रदाताओं की संख्या में वृद्धि हुई है। इन परिवर्तनों के चलते, मेरी स्कूली शिक्षा और तालिम के साथ ही लड़के और लड़कियां दिल्ली में स्कूल का किस तरह अनुभव करते हैं इस बारे में आपके विचारों को समझने में दिलचस्पी है।

प्रक्रिया:
इस अध्ययन में भाग लेने पर आपको एक डायरी रिकॉर्ड करनी पड़ेगी, और अध्ययन के आपके अनुभवों के बारे में अधिकतम 2 साक्षात्कार और 2 फोकस ग्रुप डिस्कसन में भाग लेना होगा। हम आपके साथ जितना आपकी भाग लेने का समय निर्धारित करेंगे ताकि वह आपके शिक्षा कर्तव्यों में बाधा न बने।

जोखिम और लाभ:
हम किसी संदेहशील प्रकृति वाले प्रश्न नहीं पूछेगे, प्रश्न एक शिक्षक के रूप में आपके अनुभवों से संबंधित होंगे। जहां जानकारी का खुलासा नहीं करते से भाग लेने वाले को जोखिम हो सकता है ऐसा माना जाता हो ऐसी परिस्थितियों की छोटकाएं एक रोड चित्र गया सभी डेटा गोपनीय रखा जाएगा। इस अध्ययन में अपने सिखाने और सीखने के अनुभवों को दर्शाने से आपको लाभ होगा। अप दिल्ली में स्कूल के अनुभवों के बारे में हमारे ज्ञान में भी योगदान देंगे और इससे भविष्य में शैक्षिक प्रारंभों को आकर देने में हमें मदद मिलेगी।
गोपनीयता:
आपकी सभी प्रतिक्रियाओं को गुप्त रखा जाएगा-जिसका अर्थ है कि आपको अपने डेटा का गोपनीय तौर पर प्रतिनिधित्व करने के लिए एक नाम चयन करने के लिए कहा जाएगा (एक उपनाम के रूप में भी जाना जाता है)। केवल इस अध्ययन में शामिल शोधकर्ताओं को ही आपकी पहचान की जा सकती वाली ऐसी किसी भी जानकारी तक पहुँच होगी। जब हम इस अध्ययन से कोई भी परिणाम प्रकाशित करेंगे तब हम उसे इस तरह से करेंगे कि जिससे आपकी पहचान न हो जब तक कि आपने विशेष रूप से अपनी पहचान जाहिर करना चुना न हो। चल रहे प्रोजेक्ट के काम के हिस्से के रूप में डेटा को मेरे अनुसंधान पर्यवेक्षकों के साथ साझा किया जाएगा, लेकिन गुप्त रखा जाएगा और संवेदनशीलता से संभाला जाएगा।

स्वीच्छक भागीदारी:
इस अध्ययन में आपकी भागीदारी स्वीच्छक है। आप भाग लेना अत्याश्चिक्क करने के लिए, किसी भी कारण से किसी भी समय अपनी भागीदारी को समाप्त करने, या किसी भी विशिष्ट सवाल का जवाब देने से मना करने के लिए स्वतंत्र हैं। भाग लेने में इनकार करने से स्कूल या ट्यापक समुदाय के साथ आपका रिश्ता प्रभावित नहीं होगा।

सवाल:
अगर आपके इस अध्ययन के बारे में कोई भी सवाल है, तो आप शोधकर्ता, मि. बेन अल्लांड (8800128817 ba242@exeter.ac.uk) या उनके पर्यवेक्षक डॉ. एलेन एलेन a.j.allen@exeter.ac.uk से संपर्क कर सकते हैं।

भाग लेने के लिए करार:
मैंने उपरोक्त जानकारी पढ़ी है, इस अध्ययन के बारे में किसी भी प्रश्न का जवाब देने और इस अध्ययन में भाग लेने हेतु मैं सहमत हूं।

_________________________________________  ___________________________
(नाम)                                      (तारीख)
_________________________________________
(हस्ताक्षर)
2 (f) Parent Consent Form (HINDI)

दिल्ली में शिक्षा और तालिम में अनुसंधान

भी. बेन अल्योल्ट
एक्सेटर विश्वविद्यालय, ब्रिटेन और ईएसआरसी- शिक्षा और सामाजिक अनुसंधान परिषद, ब्रिटेन

उद्देश्यः
शिक्षा के बारे में स्थानीय और वैश्विक आत्मक्षण और वे दिल्ली में लड़कियों और लड़कों के स्कूल के अनुभव को कैसे आकार देते हैं इसकी जांच के लिए बनाए गये एक शोध अध्ययन में भाग लेने हेतु आप को आमंत्रित किया जाता है। वैश्विकता की वजह से दुनिया भर में शिक्षा प्रणाली में कई परिवर्तन हुए हैं और इसके परिणामस्वरूप अब स्कूल जाने वाले बच्चों की संख्या में भारी वृद्धि हुई है। अब शिक्षा को उन सामाजिक, आर्थिक और पर्यावरणीय चुनौतियों में से कई के लिए एक समाधान के रूप में देखा जाता है जिनका हम सामना कर रहे हैं और शिक्षा के लिए लोगों की मांग पहले से कहीं अधिक बढ़ गई है। इससे स्कूली शिक्षा प्रदान करने हेतु सरकार पर दबाव पड़ा और निजी शिक्षा प्रदाताओं की संख्या में वृद्धि हुई है। इन परिवर्तनों के चलते, मेरी स्कूली शिक्षा और तालिम के साथ ही लड़के और लड़किया दिल्ली में स्कूल का किस तरह अनुभव करते हैं इस बारे में आपके विचारों को समझने में दिलचस्पी है।

प्रक्रियाः
इस अध्ययन में भाग लेने से आपको शिक्षा में आपके बच्चे के अनुभवों के बारे में अधिकतम 2 साक्षात्कार और 2 गुप्त डिस्क्वेशन में भाग लेना होगा। सभी साक्षात्कार चर्चाएँ स्कूल में होगी और प्रत्येक लगभग 30-45 मिनट तक चलेंगी। आपका भाग लेना आपके काम/घर के जीवन में बाधा न पहुंचाए यह सुनिश्चित करने के लिए आपकी इच्छा के अनुसार निर्धारित किया जाएगा।

जोखिम और लाभः
हम किसी संवेदनशील प्रकृति वाले प्रश्न नहीं पूछेगे। प्रश्न एक माता पिता के रूप में आपके अनुभवों और शिक्षा में आपके बच्चे के अनुभवों से संबंधित हों। जहां जानकारी का खुलासा नहीं करने से भाग लेने वाले को जोखिम हो सकता है ऐसा माना जाता हो ऐसी परिस्थितियों को छोड़कर एकत्र किया गया सभी डेटा गौरवान्वित रखा जाएगा। माता पिता के रूप में आपके अनुभवों और शिक्षा के बारे में आपके विचारों से हम सीखने की उम्मीद रखते हैं। आपका योगदान दिल्ली में स्कूल के अनुभवों के बारे में हमारे ज्ञान में वृद्धि करेगा और इससे भविष्य में शैक्षिक प्रश्नों को आकार देने में हमें मदद मिलेगी।
गोपनीयता:
आपकी सभी प्रतिक्रियाओं को गुप्त रखा जाएगा-जिसका अर्थ है कि आपको अपने डेटा का गोपनीय तौर पर प्रतिनिधित्व करने के लिए एक नाम चयन करने के लिए कहा जाएगा (एक उपनाम के रूप में भी जाना जाता है). केवल इस अध्ययन में शामिल शोधकर्ताओं को ही प्रतिभागियों की पहचान की जा सकती वाली ऐसी किसी भी जानकारी तक पहुंच होगी. जब हम इस अध्ययन से कोई भी परिणाम प्रकाशित करेंगे तब हम उसे इस तरह से करेंगे कि जिससे प्रतिभागियों की पहचान न हो जब तक कि उन्होंने विशेष रूप से अपनी पहचान जाहिर करना चुना न हो। चल रहे प्रोजेक्ट के काम के हिस्से के रूप में डेटा को मेरे अनुसंधान पर्यवेक्षकों के साथ साझा किया जाएगा, लेकिन गुप्त रखा जाएगा और संवेदनशीलता से संभाला जाएगा।

स्वैच्छिक भागीदारी:
इस अध्ययन में आपकी भागीदारी स्वैच्छिक है। आप भाग लेना अस्वीकार करने के लिए, किसी भी कारण से किसी भी समय अपनी भागीदारी को समाप्त करने, या किसी भी विशिष्ट सवाल का जवाब देने से मना करने के लिए स्वतंत्र हैं। भाग लेने में इनकार करने से स्कूल के साथ आपका रिश्ता प्रभावित नहीं होगा।

सवाल:
अगर आपके इस अध्ययन के बारे में कोई भी सवाल हैं, तो आप शोधकर्ता, मि. बेन आर्नॉल्ड
(8800128817 ba242@exeter.ac.uk) या उनके पर्यवेक्षकों डॉ. एलेक्जेंड्रा एलेन
a.j.allen@exeter.ac.uk और डॉ. एलन मार्टिन

भाग लेने के लिए कारारः
मैंने उपरोक्त जानकारी पढ़ी है, इस अध्ययन के बारे में किसी भी प्रश्न का जवाब देने और इस अध्ययन में भाग लेने हेतु मैं सहमत हूँ।

(नाम)  (तारीख)

(हस्ताक्षर)
Appendix 3: Transcription Agreement

NON DISCLOSURE AGREEMENT

In connection with a proposed business relationship, Mr Ben Arnold ("Discloser") has disclosed or may disclose to you business information, technical information and/or ideas ("Proprietary Information").

In consideration of any disclosure and any negotiations concerning the proposed business relationship, you agree as follows:

1. You will hold in confidence and not possess or use (except to evaluate within the services of transcription) or disclose any Proprietary Information except information you can document that
   (a) is in the public domain through no fault of yours,
   (b) was properly known to you, without restriction, prior to disclosure by Company, or
   (c) was properly disclosed to you by another person without restriction, and you will not reverse engineer or attempt to derive the composition or underlying information, structure or ideas of any Proprietary Information.

   The foregoing does not grant you a license in or to any of the Proprietary Information.

2. If you decide not to proceed with the proposed business relationship or if asked by Company, you will promptly return all Proprietary Information and all copies, extracts and other objects or items in which it may be contained or embodied.

3. You will promptly notify Company of any unauthorized release of Proprietary Information.

4. You understand that this statement does not obligate Company to disclose any information or negotiate or enter into any agreement or relationship.

5. You acknowledge and agree that due to the unique nature of the Proprietary Information, any breach of this agreement would cause irreparable harm to Company for which damages are not an adequate remedy and that Company shall therefore be entitled to equitable relief in addition to all other remedies available at law.

6. The terms of this Agreement will remain in effect with respect to any particular Proprietary Information until you can document that it falls into one of the exceptions stated in Paragraph 1 above.

7. [This Agreement is governed by the internal laws of the State of and may be modified or waived only in writing. If any provision is found to be unenforceable, such provision will be limited or deleted to the minimum extent necessary so that the remaining terms remain in full force and effect. The prevailing party in any dispute or legal action regarding the subject matter of this Agreement shall be entitled to recover attorneys' fees and costs.]

Acknowledged and agreed on 27th April, 2016:
Name: Latish K. (Signature)
By:
### Appendix 4: Fieldwork Timeline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fieldwork</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stage One: Initial Planning</strong></td>
<td>October 2014 - March 2015</td>
<td><strong>Internship at UNESCO Head Office Delhi, India</strong>&lt;br&gt;Developing research focus&lt;br&gt;Undertaking literature review and policy analysis&lt;br&gt;Building relationships and seeking advice for schools&lt;br&gt;Introduction to NGO who would support with negotiating access&lt;br&gt;Introduction to university (NUEPA) and academics who would support with research progress&lt;br&gt;Initial plans and schedule for Fieldwork</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stage Two: Finalising Plans</strong></td>
<td>July 2015 - August 2015</td>
<td><strong>Fieldwork Preparation, Delhi</strong>&lt;br&gt;Hindi language training&lt;br&gt;Finalising access to schools&lt;br&gt;Ongoing guidance from NUEPA&lt;br&gt;School, curriculum, policy documents&lt;br&gt;Finalising research tools&lt;br&gt;Finalising Research Schedule</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stage Three: Data Collection</strong></td>
<td>August 2015- December 2015</td>
<td><strong>Fieldwork, Delhi</strong>&lt;br&gt;Observations.&lt;br&gt;Research ‘club’ with students during the school day&lt;br&gt;Interview and Focus Group Discussions with students.&lt;br&gt;Interviews with Principals.&lt;br&gt;Focus Group Discussions with teachers and parents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stage Four: Data validation, sharing preliminary findings and participant feedback</strong></td>
<td>December 2015</td>
<td><strong>Research Summary and Validation, Delhi</strong>&lt;br&gt;Final session with students to discuss albums and experiences.&lt;br&gt;Discussing with students their experiences and our interpretation of their experiences.&lt;br&gt;Gifts for students.&lt;br&gt;Summary meetings to discuss our interpretations of teachers’ and principals’ experiences and share preliminary research findings with principals and teachers.&lt;br&gt;Cakes and food for school staff.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 5: Interview Guides

5(a) Student Interview Guide

Semi-Structured Interview Guide for Students

Select questions as appropriate
Re-phrase questions as appropriate

Introduction

- Project Summary
- Confidentiality
- Tape recorder and process
- Questions

Opening questions:

- Tell me about yourself- name, age, family, siblings and the neighbourhood you live in.
- What do you do in your time outside of school? Likes/Dislikes
- Do you have any hobbies?
  - What are they?
  - Why do you like them?
- Do you watch television, films or videos?
  - What movies/cartoons do you like and why?
- Do you like to read any books, magazines or comics?
- What games do you like to play?
  - Do you play with others or do you prefer to play on your own?
- Who are you friends with?
- What are your friends like?
- What do you do together?
- Do you ever get together with your friends outside of school?
- How would you describe yourself to someone else?
- What things are important to you?
  - Why?
- How do you think other people view you?
  - Why?
  - How do you know?
- Is there anyone that you admire or would like to be?
  - Who and why?
School
• Can you describe your school to me?
  o What is it like?
  o Is it like other schools in this area?
  o What other types of primary schools are available in this area?
  o What are they like?
  o Why?
• Why do you go to school?
  o What do you want to from your schooling?
  o Can you do this here?
• Do some children go to school for different reasons?
• Do you like going to school?
  o Why?
  o Why not?

Learning/Study
• What does a typical lesson in your school look like?
• What do you do in most lessons?
• What does the teacher do?
• What kinds of activities do you like doing in school?
  o Why?
• What are your favourite subjects in school?
  o Least favourite?
  o Why?
• What does it mean to do well in your learning in your school? How do you do this?

Discipline
• How does a ‘good’ student behave in school?
  o What are the qualities of a good student?
  o Are all students good in school?
• What does it mean to be disciplined?
• Is it important to be disciplined? Why?

Future
• Will all of the students in this school go to the same school next year?  
  o After that?
• What do you want from your future?  
  o How will you be able to do that?  
  o Why do you want those things?
• What will your life be like when you finish school? What will you do?  
• Where will you live when you are older? Why?

**Teachers**

• Who are the different teachers in your school?  
• What do they do?  
• Do you like your teacher? Do you like all of the teachers in your school?

**Family**

• Tell me about your family…  
• Are your parents from Delhi?  
• Do you help around the house?  
  o Who? What kind? Why?  
• Does anyone at home help you with your learning?  
• Do you help anyone at home to learn?  
• After school, do you go to private tuition? Is private tuition an important part of your education?  
  o Why?  
  o Why not?
• What do your family think about school?  
  o Who?  
  o Why?  
  o What do your parents want you to do in the future?

**Global and Local Factors**

• How would you describe what it is like to grow up in Delhi?  
• What is life like in your parents’ village/place of birth? Do you like to go there?
• What do you know about other places/countries in the world?  
  o What are they like?  
• What do you know about children/people in other parts of the world?  
• Do you know anything about other parts of the world?  
  o What are they like?  
  o What do children do in those places?
Gender (Ask if not already addressed through other questions)

- Are you friends with boys and girls in the school?
- Are there different types of boys/girls?
  - What types?
  - Is there any pressure to be a certain type of boys/girl?
- Do you think that girls and boys are similar or different?
  - Can girls and boys do the same sort of things?
  - What?
  - Why?
- Is it easier to grow up as a boy or a girl in Delhi?
  - Why?

Summarise student’s answers and invite student to make additional comments. What were the most important things discussed today? Why?
5(b) Teacher Interview Guide

Semi-Structured Interview Guide for Teachers

Select questions as appropriate
Re-phrase questions as appropriate

Introduction
- Project Summary
- Confidentiality
- Tape recorder and process
- Questions

Opening questions:
- Could you each tell me a bit about yourselves- name, number of years in Delhi, time elsewhere.
- How did you become a teacher/get in to teaching?

Education- Type of education and purpose
- Can you tell me about your experience as a teacher? How long have you been in this school? What class do you teach? How do you find teaching in this school?
- Have you worked elsewhere? What were the other schools like?
- What are your views on education? Do you think it is important that all children go to school? Why/Why not? In Delhi, what are the main challenges in primary education?
- What do you feel is important for a child to learn in school? What would you prioritise? Can they do this here? Where is the best place for them to do this?
- Outside of formal lessons (Hindi, English, Maths) what kinds of things do you talk to the students about? Issues? Concerns?
• What kind of community/students does this school cater for? What are the strengths of that community? What are the challenges within that community? How does that affect your teaching?

• What do you like about working in this school? Anything that you don’t like?

• What was school like when you were growing up? How has school/education changed over time?

• What do you/would you want from your own child’s education?

**Education- Processes**

• What kinds of things do the children do in school each day? How are these activities selected? Why?

• How does teaching subjects through the medium of English affect the children’s achievement? Advantages? Disadvantages? Solutions?

• What do you think about private tuition? Help or hindrance?

• How do you know whether the students are achieving or not? Do the students sit tests? What are the advantages/disadvantages?

• Are you under pressure to reach certain targets/percentages for the students? Are these reasonable? Challenges to reaching these targets?

• Are there any gender issues in the school? How much is behavior/learning affected by gender?

**Education Outcomes and Opportunities**

• What do you think the future holds for these child? What do you think they will achieve? Will they finish their schooling (to class 12)? Why?

• Will some students face more challenges than others? Why?
• Are students’ future opportunities affected by gender?
• How important is it that these children finish their education? Why/why not? Alternatives?

• Is life for these children different to life when you were growing up? How? in what ways?

• What is it like for a boy/girl to grow up in Delhi?

• How has Delhi/India changed? What has caused these changes? What will change in the future?

• How has education/schooling changed in recent years? How will education change in the future?

• Are their any external/international influences affecting life/schooling in Delhi?

Summarise Discussion
What were the most important issues discussed today? Why?
Appendix 6: Extract of Analysed Data

6(a) Extract from Interview with the Vice Principal at IES

In terms of girls and boys are there any differences in in terms of achievement or behavior?

Vice Principal (Administration), IES:

... No, no, no. Both are doing well

Ben:

How has Delhi changed in the last 20 years?

Vice Principal (Administration), IES:

Delhi has changed a lot... Now we are much more responsible for ourselves, we have learned a lot of things and now that he is trying to make a balance between the Indian values and the modern commitments... ... I call it as modernization when the growth of social media and technology is there things are coming and we all are making a proper balance so development is there, individual mentality has changed, people are working with some kind of social responsibility also people are working for community and everyone is here to learn more and more so that we can get a success in our life

Ben:

When you say modernization do you mean technological developments and that sort of thing?

Vice Principal (Administration), IES:

It's with the technology, with the social media with the computers is also with the nuclear family it's all about the behavior also sometimes we say in European countries there is no responsibility of parents so that kind of modernisation is also coming to India

Ben: