

MOTHERS ACROSS BORDERS: A TRANSNATIONAL ANALYSIS OF
PARENTING BETWEEN INDIAN MOTHERS IN EDISON AND
KOLKATA

by

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DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

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Title: Mothers Across Borders: A Transnational Analysis of Parenting Between Indian Mothers in Edison and Kolkata.

This dissertation addresses the central question- How are parenting methodologies across the sending and receiving nations shaped by larger macro forces embedded in economy and labor market forces? In order to answer this key question this project analyzes interviews with 59 middle-class mothers in Edison, New Jersey and Kolkata, India. This project contributes to the larger scope of immigration and transnational studies while placing them at the cross section of globalization of economy, labor market and education.

The first chapter examines extensively the schooling systems in Edison and Kolkata and the ways it shapes parenting methods in these two locations. The key argument in this chapter focuses on the influence of the education system upon mothers in Edison and Kolkata and the ways they maneuver the schools. In the subsequent chapters I compare and contrast between support groups and community networks that help mothers in Edison and Kolkata navigate everyday child rearing challenges. The

central puzzle that these chapters solve is: why immigrant mothers in an individualistic society resort to community and on the contrary mothers in Kolkata that belong to a more traditional society resort to commercial parenting schools instead of extended family to support everyday child rearing? The primary reason is embedded in the globalization of the labor market and economy. The immigrant mothers in Edison, who immigrated to the US as spouses of elite professionals in a globalized economy were confronted with the challenges of parenting in a foreign country. They resorted to community support to help them negotiate everyday parenting challenges. On the other hand in Kolkata the rapid changes in the field of employment and education had forced mothers to resort to commercial agencies for parenting support. Finally the dissertation concludes by returning to the central research questions and briefly states the central findings along with raising avenues for future research.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

It was a hot and humid summer afternoon in Kolkata and we had all gathered for an extended family lunch. The air conditioner was perhaps running throughout the day and thank god it was! We were at the eleventh floor at a multistoried building in South Kolkata, the home of Aunt Tani. I dreaded looking outside the window, it made me feel closer to the scorching sun! It was a relatively small party of fifteen people and we were all sitting in the very cozy drawing room. “Lunch is served, why don’t we all move ourselves to the dining hall?” said the hostess of the party.

We had all gathered to meet with a relative’s daughter (Madhu) and her two sons who had come to Kolkata from New Jersey for the summer break. Madhu was 36 years old, married to a Bengali man who worked as an investment banker in Manhattan. Madhu and her husband moved to New Jersey about seven years ago and their sons were born there. Madhu had a full time job as a high school teacher in Kolkata before she moved to the United States. She always had the reputation of an intelligent, smart and hardworking kid within the family circle.

The dining table was laid out with fancy food items; there was fish, meat, pilau, vegetables and a couple of desserts. We seated ourselves around the dining table, so did Madhu and her two sons. As we were having the tasty lunch Aunt Tani asked Madhu, “So, how is life in the US?”

Aunt Tani was our relative and we were quite close when we were growing up in Kolkata. She lives in Kolkata and retired recently from a government job.

Madhu: Good! But I miss home and Kolkata quite a lot! But I am busy most of the day, so I guess I don't have that much time to be homesick...(smiles).

Aunt Tani: Yeah! So have you joined any work, because you just said you were busy, so I just thought you know...you might go for a job?

Madhu: Umm, No! I haven't joined any work. (pause) Actually I don't think I have enough time to work outside home. My boys are small and umm... they need me and I want to be there for them all the time. Parenting is a full time job you know, especially bringing up children in a different country.

Aunt Tani: Oh! Really? How difficult can parenting be, we also brought up kids and had a job. I think you should work you know! You are so talented and bright it's a real waste I feel!

Madhu smirked at Aunt Tani's remarks and did not say much the whole time during the lunch, clearly displaying her dissatisfaction and discomfort to the previous conversation while the others enjoyed their meal. It occurred to me that there were several things that were going wrong in this above conversation. Firstly, there was the inherent assumption that reproductive labor is not valuable and therefore cannot be considered real work. Secondly Aunt Tani derived a sense of entitlement from her ability to be a parent as well as work outside home and suggests Madhu is deficient to not pursue her career. Thirdly Madhu experiences a sense of discomfort when asked about employment. Finally and most importantly she did not find ways of describing the difficulties of being an

immigrant mother in a foreign country. The anxiety of child rearing in a completely different culture was a part of the everyday ordeal for immigrant mothers like Madhu.

Madhu's family pursued upward mobility by moving to New Jersey, where she single-handedly looked after her children and did not have any employment. Madhu's story as an immigrant to the United States was not limited to her role as a mother. On the contrary she and many other women like her were forbidden legal employment in the USA by virtue of their Visa status. Madhu's fate was sealed once the decision to emigrate was made. There were fewer employment opportunities for immigrant mothers and wives like Madhu once they landed in the US. When I started chatting with Madhu after lunch I figured that there were many other women who had left their careers in India to accompany their husbands to the US. These women too pursued careers in India but upon arrival in the U.S. were barred from legal employment. In other words women like Madhu experienced downward mobility when they migrated to the US and their husbands on the other hand gained upward mobility. On the one hand she benefits from a higher standard of living from her husband's economic and financial growth and success, on the other hand she gives up autonomy, independent access to wages, among other things.

When Madhu and women like her, who are middle-class, urban and college educated decide to emigrate to the U.S. with their husbands they perhaps did not fully realize they would be giving up their own careers. These decisions tended to be driven by the husband's career opportunities, underscoring the disproportionate weight placed on their careers. Madhu and women like her mostly came to the US on H4 (Dependent) Visa. These educated women who at one point of time had successful careers in India are by virtue of their current Visa status not allowed to obtain legal employment in the USA,

unless they (read husbands) receive a Green Card. These immigrant women who are married to workers granted temporary residence in order to work (through the H1B Visa program) are typically elite male professionals from India, moving to the US to work for an American firm. The immigration policies do not allow these women to obtain legal employment in the United States, until their spouse receives the Green card (which typically takes about eight to nine years to get). According to the US Labor Bureau the total number of H4 Visas issued for the fiscal year 2015 was 124,484. These many women who accompany their husbands to the US had successful careers back in India, but now by virtue of their Visa status are tied to their home, looking after children and the household.

Parenting anxieties were not just a daily part of the lives of immigrant mothers in Edison, New Jersey, where Madhu lived. On the other hand mothers in the sending country too experienced challenges in the realm of parenting. One of my respondents in Kolkata pointed out that parenting has become extremely challenging in India mostly because of the aggressive and fierce education system. The post 1990 neo-liberal India witnessed a sea change in the consumer taste in the nation. Foreign brands started making their way into local markets along with the increasing influence of the western media, Hollywood in particular. The discussion on neoliberalization in India has not only turned attention to the shifting dynamics in the market spaces but also within the domestic spaces. It manifested itself in changing dating practices and also with the growth of the middle-class the rise in the nuclearization of families in urban India (Fernandes, 2006). Not enough attention is spent on the changing education system as a result of neoliberalization and its eventual effect on the parenting strategies. The shifting

landscape in the education system in urban India with its heightened competition had its roots embedded in neoliberalization. The job markets in India had become globalized and the standards of evaluation was not only raised but also altered. This gradual shift toward a more globalized job market and higher education system in India had not only led to the redesigning of the schooling system but also in parenting styles.

Therefore in this project I argue that at the bedrock of the immense challenges in parenting in both the sending and destination countries lie in the globalized economy and labor market. The rampant immigration of Indian elite professional workers to the US has risen post 1990s. They are mostly engineers and bankers on H1B Visas and their spouses are the ones on H4 Visa. Indian companies like Wipro, Infosys are collaborating with American firms and sending workers on transatlantic projects. The Information Technology (IT) in India is mainly comprised of two major components, they are, the IT services and the Business Process Outsourcing (BPOs) (Radhakrishnan, 2011). The Indian economy underwent economic reforms in 1991, leading to a new era of globalization and international economic integration. Economic growth of over 6% annually was seen during 1993-2002. The economic reforms were driven in part by significant the Internet usage in the country. The administration under Prime Minister Vajpayee (1998-2004), placed the development of Information Technology among its top five priorities— formed the Indian National Task Force on Information Technology and Software Development (Wolcott and Goodman, 2003). According to National Association of Software and Services Companies (NASSCOM) the IT sector aggregated revenues of US\$147 billion in 2015, with export revenue standing at US\$99 billion and domestic revenue at US\$48 billion, growing by over 13%. The IT sector has also led to

massive employment generation in India. The industry continues to be a net employment generator — expected to add 230,000 jobs in fiscal year 2012, thus directly employing about 2.8 million people and indirectly employing 8.9 million, making it a dominant player in the global outsourcing sector.

One of the major outcomes of this close-knit world economy that hardly gets noticed is an emerging parenting crisis among immigrant communities. The parenting crisis that results in a sense of alienation in the destination country and distance from sending country has its roots embedded in the rapid movement of workers across countries resulting in a global labor force. On the other hand in India the neoliberalization and globalization of the economy had resulted in changes in the overall job market in the country. Jobs have become globalized and in order to make workers befitting those jobs the education system also taken a turn. The shift in schools and education were needless to mention a challenge for mothers who tried to live up with their children's competitive future and parenting revolution.

A Tale of Two Cities, and Two Crises:

Solidarity networks/communities: Edison and Kolkata

I define parenting crisis as the challenges that mothers in particular in particular encounter because of the sudden change in the immediate socio-cultural or socio-economic environment that creates a shift in child rearing paradigm from their current understanding and practices. Parents seek to reproduce their class status among children but each city posed obstacles to this goal. Why in order to avert these crises did Kolkata mothers turned to an individualistic and commercial solution, while Indian mothers in Edison turned to a tradition and collective solution? One would believe that in an

individualistic society like the US parents orient their child rearing strategies based on individualistic goals. However in the US context I saw in my research that mothers depended upon communal support groups and interpersonal solidarity to figure out parenting strategies. On the other hand in Kolkata where one might assume that mothers seek help from grandparents and relatives, the contrary was witnessed in my research. Mothers depended upon commercial groups that trained the former the parameters of parenting. Along with the constraints of employment these immigrant women experience their biggest life challenge in the sphere of parenting. I find in my project that these immigrant women use enclave parenting as a way to manage their position in the U.S. They embrace parenting as a collective act which gives them access to a community of similarly situated women and helps them find a way to participate in the public sphere of their new home. In the process they carve out a *reproductive enclave*. I define a *reproductive enclave* as a strong community or network of immigrant women on similar who live within geographic proximity, collectively decipher U.S. educational and parenting practices and support each other to perform reproductive labor on a day-to-day basis. The reproductive labor mostly range from navigating the new system of parenting and schooling in a foreign country to babysitting for each other.

One of the major crises among the immigrant mothers was conflict of culture. Culture in this context refers to the acquisition of mother tongue, comprehensive understanding of Indian rituals, festivals and customs. They were suffering from the constant crisis that their children were growing up in a foreign culture, internalizing American values but were distant from their Indian roots and heritage. Ritu pointed out, “They speak in an American accent, believe in everything that is American, but they are

Indian too and I hardly see that in them!” Ritu’s anxiety was well established and pronounced in the hearts of all immigrant mothers in Edison, New Jersey. They wanted their children to learn Indianness too along with American values. Therefore the crisis in parenting was distance of their children from Indian roots and heritage.

In Kolkata on the other hand, the changing schooling system had created anxiety among middle-class mothers. Admission to reputed private schools in Kolkata has become increasingly competitive and challenging over the years. The private schools in Kolkata were always a marker of upward social mobility and in the recent days the entry-level admissions had become increasingly selective. The school admission committee not only interviews children but also their parents, especially the mothers, because the mothers are interviewed extensively and grilled vigorously by the private schools during the entry-level admission of the children. The middle-class mothers of Kolkata find themselves at a complete loss amidst the rapidly shifting landscape of education system. One of the mothers rightly pointed out that they grew up in better times, when competition was not this high and life was simpler.

Unlike the mothers in Edison, Kolkata mothers turned to a commercial solution to maneuver the schooling system and changing landscape of parenting: they paid to learn how to best navigate the schooling system by attending commercial parenting agencies. In exchange for a fee, these agencies coached mothers strategies for cracking the entry-level admission tests at the private schools. They held mock interviews and trained mothers to face the admission fears and anxieties. The middle-class mothers expressed their satisfaction from the service provided by these agencies. One of the mothers who used the services from one of these agencies mentioned that she was far more capable of

handling the stream of questioning during the interviews for her child's admission. In Kolkata therefore the parenting crisis was embedded in the changing structure of schools and education. This project therefore challenges the common notion that in the highly commercialized and individualistic US society, collective solutions prevail whereas in what is taken to be more "traditional" India commercial solutions to education prevail.

Having identified the two prominent parenting crises in Edison and Kolkata my project will explore three very key questions. Firstly what are the specific reasons for mothers to experience contrasting parenting crises in the sending and receiving countries? Secondly what are the specific strategies that mothers come up with to overcome the crisis? Finally what does this reveal about middle-class parenting in a global era?

Models of parenting: Edison and Kolkata

The immigrant Indian mothers actively engaged to keep their children grounded in Indian values. However as much as they tried to preserve Indianness they tended to follow the tenets of American middle-class parenting, which Lareau (2003) refers to as the concerted cultivation model. Lareau defines concerted cultivation as a form of American middle-class parenting where parents send their kids to a host of extracurricular structured activities ranging from taekwondo to soccer. Along with these activities the parents also oriented their coaching toward promoting critical thinking and analytical understanding among their children. The model of parenting under the paradigm of concerted cultivation was grounded on negotiation with children as opposed to instructions. For the middle-class parents in Lareau's analysis children were mostly treated as projects that had to be developed and cultivated over a period of time, with effort and diligence. Lareau's ethnographic work also compares parenting between

middle-class and working class families. The working class families on the other hand adopt a model of parenting which she calls the natural growth model. Working-class parents who follow the natural growth model on the other hand issue directives to their children rather than negotiations, encourage the following and trusting of people in authority positions, and do not structure their children's daily activities, but rather let the children play on their own.

The Indian immigrant mothers in Edison were embracing tenets of Lareau's concerted cultivation, by sending their children to various structured extracurricular activities. The mothers mostly chaperoned them from soccer classes to baby ballets and ensured that they excelled in them. However the mothers, also in their quest to keep Indianness alive among their children, sent them to Hindi speaking class or Indian classical music classes. There were plenty of such classes in Edison and the mothers took adequate advantage of them. Thus they had culturally shaped concerted cultivation wherein they not only send their children to soccer classes but also to learn Indian ethnic dance forms. The community in the form of the *reproductive enclave* stepped up to support the daily undertakings of orienting children into Indian values and culture. The enclave celebrated Indian festivals, coached the kids to perform in them and orchestrated events that kept the spirit of their homeland alive in the community. They preserved Indian culture but used an American structure, in the form of concerted cultivation to do so. So that learning to be Indian stood along side the class cultivation courses like piano, soccer etc. Indianness ironically got assimilated into the American structure of parenting in the mold of concerted cultivation.

In Kolkata on the other hand because of the changing academic and parenting structure the mothers sought help from commercial agencies popularly called, “mom-schooling” agencies. These commercial enterprises not only coached mothers to crack the entry-level interviews to gain admission for their children into reputed schools. They also trained mothers aspects of liberal parenting. Elements of liberal parenting were new to Kolkata mothers. Liberal parenting adopted a model of using negotiation instead of directives and generates critical thinking than mere obedience. Therefore liberal parenting approach had tremendous amounts of similarity with Lareau’s concerted cultivation. Thus along with training mothers to gain access to reputed schools, these commercial agencies had also taken up the active role of educating mothers ideals of western parenting.

In the Kolkata model as much as the mothers tried to embrace elements of liberal parenting they could not adapt every aspect of Lareau’s model. Kolkata was still struggling with a dramatic rise in academic competitiveness among children from a very early age and were unable to adapt the model of structured extra curricular activities. Children in Kolkata did not spend much time in soccer classes, or take piano lessons as a way to gain individuality and learn skills beyond academics. These were not central to the middle class reproduction strategies of parents in Kolkata. Thus I extend Lareau’s theory of concerted cultivation to include middle-class parenting practices among middle class immigrants in the U.S., as well as middle-class communities in other countries.

Laying out a reproductive field and mothers as “converters” of capital: Edison and Kolkata

In this dissertation I analyze Bourdieu’s theory of field with reference to my transnational parenting strategies. The origin of the concept of field was in the theories of Newton and Einstein where they used it to analyze forces of gravity, electricity or magnetism. The theory of field has also been adopted in humanities and social sciences and Bourdieu is one of the pioneers. For Bourdieu, field denote arenas of production, circulation, and appropriation and exchange of goods, services, knowledge, or status, and the competitive positions held by actors in their struggle to accumulate, exchange, and monopolize different kinds of capital. Fields may be thought of as structured spaces that organize around specific types of capitals or combinations of capital. In fields actors strategize and struggle over the unequal distribution of valued capitals and over the definitions of what are the most valued capitals. Like a magnetic field, the effects of social fields on behavior can be far-reaching and not always apparent to actors. A field perspective stands in sharp contrast to broad consensual views of social life even though actors within a field share common assumptions about the worth of the struggle and the rules by which it is to be carried out. The concept of field stands as an alternative analytical tool to institutions, organizations, markets, individuals, and groups though all of these can be key components of fields.

In his analysis of field Bourdieu tended to theorize generic fields, as places in which certain kinds of social, cultural and symbolic capitals were valued. He did not discuss a reproductive field. In my research I use the concept of field to analyze the reproductive field that mothers actively create in Edison and Kolkata. In Edison the reproductive field’s main function was to adopt American parenting strategies by

embracing tenets of Lareau's concerted cultivation; selective representation of Indian culture through celebration of India festivals and coaching Indian culture to children and therefore maintain their desire for cultural maintenance. The mothers in Edison with the help of the reproductive enclave helped in the creation and sustenance of the reproductive field. The immigrant mothers in Edison were acting as *converters* of capital. They were converting the cultural capital and economic capital possessed by the family across generations and national boundaries into a new form of cultural capital, valued in the host society. Bourdieu in his analysis on conversion of capital never identified the role of mothers as agents or converters of capital. On the other hand in my project I identify the role of mothers as active agents in the process of conversion. This conversion is a specific kind of labor that parents perform, especially those interested in the class mobility of their children.

In Kolkata too the mothers created their very specific and unique reproductive field. The middle-class mothers in Kolkata were also acting as converters of capital, converting economic capital to cultural capital as they maintained and sustained the reproductive field. The mothers also did not perform the conversion of capital alone, on the contrary the commercial mom-schooling agencies supported the conversion. In Edison the lack of a commercial agency led to immigrant women unifying their support in the form of an informal networks to support the conversion. On the other hand in Kolkata the mothers resorted to commercial agencies for support and conversion strategies. Some of the major features of the reproductive field in Kolkata was to cope with the competitive private school admissions and also the rapidly Americanized job market. The shifting economic landscape and the neoliberalization of the economy and

education system created the reproductive field in Kolkata. Mothers who were suffering from an ongoing parenting crisis responded to the field by adopting commercial solutions. Mothers who recalibrated their parenting methodologies aspired their children would get good jobs and travel abroad for higher education. These women with the support of the mom-schooling agencies wanted to transfer this cultural capital to their children that would allow the latter to gain upward mobility not in terms of just economic class but also social status. Therefore in both the locations the mothers played an active part in transforming their reproductive labor to perform within the reproductive field where the agents (mothers) acted as converters of capital.

Methodology

Sampling, coding and memos

I used the snowball sampling method for this project. I gained access into the field in Edison through my sister who used to live there. Although I gained preliminary access through my sister I gradually received information about the other respondents from them. Gaining access to the other respondents was not that difficult because of the close-knit Indian community in Edison. The playground, which was an interesting place for participant observation, was often the place where I was introduced to my other respondents. Similarly in Kolkata as well I followed the snowball sampling method, where one of my contacts led to other contacts for my research. In Kolkata I initially started building my network through the mom-schooling agencies and gradually spread the network by connecting with friends and acquaintances of mothers who visited the agency. In this way snowball sampling helped me gain access to respondents who shared

similar socio-economic status, social positionality and desires for cultural maintenance and class reproduction.

I used the method of open coding for my data. The open codes I generated resulted in some important themes that helped consolidate the argument on reproductive enclave and its relation to “culturally shaped” concerted cultivation. In a grounded theory approach the one this research follows, the practice of open coding helped me develop new themes and trap the ideas that emerged from the codes. I followed up coding of the data with extensive memos. They helped me organize important themes and thereby categorize the data under those larger themes that gave voice to my respondents’ stories. Some of the memos that allowed me to develop sound arguments for comparative transnational study were “commercial parenting agency versus reproductive enclave”, “liberal parenting versus authoritarian parenting” to name a few.

In-depth face-to-face interviews

This transnational project was conducted in Edison and Kolkata where I conducted a total of 59 interviews; 30 in Edison and 29 in Kolkata. These interviews were mostly in-depth face-to-face, however some of the follow up interviews were conducted over Skype and telephone. I spent about six months conducting my interviews in Edison and seven months in Kolkata. I conducted the interviews mostly in the homes of these middle-class mothers in both the locations. Since a majority of these women I spoke to were unemployed, the home was the perfect location to conduct the interviews. The interviews in Edison and Kolkata were mostly conducted in English along with extensive use of Bengali.

The interviews lasted usually for an hour and a half and sometimes more when we got carried away discussing the everyday chores and struggles of parenting. The interviews with mothers in Edison started with our shared experiences as an immigrant in a foreign country. As an international student I often bonded with my Edison respondents in an instant, because of our shared experiences of negotiating with homesickness and cold depressing winters far away from home. The conversation then gradually took a turn towards a more nuanced understanding of the respondent's challenges of being a parent as well as a dependent with limited rights. During these occasions I tried to gain a better understanding of the challenges that they face as a parent along with the paths they adopt to negotiate and maneuver those challenges. I asked them about the specific strategies they incorporated in their everyday routine to overcome the parenting hurdles. What were the new things they learned, incorporated or discarded in their everyday child-rearing menu? How did the reproductive enclave support their mission toward preserving Indianness within the community as well as ensure that children were part of the mainstream American culture as well?

The interviews in Kolkata were also conducted mostly in the homes of my respondents. These interview period ranged between two hours to two and a half hours, with most lasting for about an hour and a half. Conversation with Kolkata mothers mostly started by discussing the academic pressure that their children undergo. I asked them how schooling and parenting have changed from their times. Most of the mothers I interviewed in Kolkata lived in a nuclear family; the traditional joint family set up is gradually disintegrating in the city. However my respondents maintained their contact with their parents and in-laws and they often visited each other. The questions that I

asked were more geared toward understanding the shifting model of parenting in the city that culminated from the rapid alterations in the education system. Along with the mothers in Kolkata I also examined a commercial parenting agency (popularly known as “mom-schooling” agency) called M Consultancy. I mainly interviewed Payel, the proprietor of the agency along with the other staff at the place. During these interviews I asked Payel about her central and specific goals for the agency. I asked follow up questions by interrogating her about the ways by which she planned to attain her goals for the agency and the ways by which she evaluates the success of the agency. I also probed her a little about her motivation and experiences that led her start a business that targeted middle-class mothers. With reference to the mothers participation at the mom-schooling agencies I asked the mothers some of the major reasons why they were motivated to seek help from a mom-schooling agency. Coupled with this question I asked them why did they wish to select M Consultancy in particular. During these interview sessions I tried to find out whether the support they were receiving from the agency was beneficial.

Participant observation

Along with in-depth face-to-face interview I also performed extensive participant observation in both Edison and Kolkata. In Edison my identity as an immigrant allowed me to merge and mingle into the community. Participant observation was key in this project because it allowed me to take a closer look into the intimate social and personal spaces within and beyond the household in Edison. During participant observation I tried to be a fly on the wall and observe the mothers performing their daily chores in their house. I would grab a cup of *chai*, seat myself on their couch and carry out mundane everyday conversation as they performed their household errands, needless to mention

parenting was a major component of the everyday errand. Along with observing mothers in their household spaces I also took an active part in the cultural celebrations and events that took place in the community with the support of the reproductive enclave. The main trends that I wanted to trace were not only the degree of participation from the children but also the patterns of involvement from the mothers in the reproductive enclave. I wanted to target the tensions, anxieties and expectations related to immigrant parenting that the mothers often hid during our interviews but became apparent in a group setting. I also visited three public elementary schools and two back to school events. These events allowed me to understand the various aspects of the American schooling system, especially the evaluation and testing patterns that was not only new to me but was also unfamiliar to my respondents. In addition, I engaged in some conversations with the schoolteachers and principals, who gave me an overview of their academic goals for their students.

I conducted extensive participant observation in Kolkata as well. My identity as an Indian and a Bengali allowed me to gather respondents and be one of their own. They were not threatened by my presence; in fact they were extremely candid and shared their stories of struggle and demands of parenting. I spent many hours not just at the homes of my respondents watching them perform their daily life, but also at the M Consultancy, the commercial parenting agency I studied. I attended the sessions, which lasted for about an hour and fifteen minutes to gain an idea about the content of the material that was being taught in the classes as well as the curriculum. I took detailed notes during these sessions bearing in mind the larger questions relating to the changing paradigm of parenting and education on the subcontinent. I would often follow the mothers after their

sessions to coffee shops and restaurants where they would get together to chat about the course materials given out at the agency and discuss the larger hurdles in the path of child rearing in a competitive globalized economy. There would be four to five mothers in these coffee shop gatherings and I observed them for about an hour or so. Along with my frequent visits to the mom-schooling agency I also visited about four private schools in the city. These were some of the very well reputed schools in the city that has set the standards of evaluation especially at the admission level quite high. During my visits to the schools I spoke with three or four schoolteachers at length to ensure that I knew the mission and goals of the schools as well. The main goal during these conversations with the schoolteachers was to learn about the larger academic goals, expectations from the students and their parents and how the larger goals corroborated with the neoliberal globalized economy of the country.

Operationalizing middle-class

This project investigates the shifting principles of middle-class parenting and middle-class expectations. According to the US Census middle-class as a category is often very hard to define. However, the Pew Research Center claims that middle-class as a category can be calculated between the income and expectations/aspirations of the household, typically savings for a college education for their children, occasional vacations, house ownership and so on. Therefore Pew Research Center claims that an annual income that can approximately meet those expectations range between \$50,000 to \$150,000. In my research the annual family income was in between that range and met the parameters laid out by the Pew Research Center. Although my respondents were not house owners however they aspired to buy a house in the future.

In India too the definition of a middle-class has changed over time, but the main change took place after the 1990s neoliberalization. Post 1990 middle-class was defined as managerial class, working in non-government sectors, consuming foreign brands, taking occasional vacations and in general aspiring upward class and social mobility. I stuck to that definition while I recruited participants for my project. The Indian census (2010) on the other hand defines Indian middle-class as those whose monthly income range between 25,000 Indian rupees to 90,000 Indian rupees. In the case of my Kolkata respondents their income was in the above-mentioned range. Some of the other indicators of these respondents middle-class affiliation were, they not only carried expensive phones but also had chauffer driven cars that they availed when they came for their sessions at M Consultancy (Fernandes, 2006).

Why New Jersey and Kolkata?

New Jersey has approximately 295,000 Indians approximately (US Census, 2010) and Edison in particular has a significant proportion of Indian immigrants and also married women who are legally forbidden from employment by the immigration policies. These women are legal dependents of their male spouses who come as elite professionals to USA. These educated women who had prior careers in India are forced to stay at home and mostly engage in reproductive labor. Parenting emerged as the primary focus of their lives and also a crisis developed surrounding child rearing, because of the distance from their own country. The culturally motivated concerted cultivation was practiced within the residential ethnic enclave that worked like a reproductive enclave. These immigrant mothers shared knowledge about parenting and supported each other in navigating child rearing practices in a foreign land. The unique feature of this ethnic enclave was that it

was driven by reproductive labor and not financial profit unlike the ethnic enclaves across USA. Hence the ethnic enclave of Indian immigrant women provides a unique site to study the nature of reproductive labor practiced within the enclave.

In this transnational project as I compare the parenting practices across the sending and destination countries, Kolkata was the second field site. I chose Kolkata initially for some key reasons. Firstly many of my respondents in Edison had migrated from Kolkata. Hence it became a strategic place to analyze and compare parenting strategies between the emigrating and immigrating cities. Secondly Kolkata which is the capital of the state of West Bengal, has a population of 4.5 million residents making it the third most populous metropolitan cities in India after Mumbai and Delhi, hence it is representative of what a multicultural city looks like. Kolkata as a research site allowed me to compare and contrast the parenting styles observed in Edison. As mentioned before during my interviews, the immigrant mothers in New Jersey were constantly comparing the US education system with the Indian education system and they preferred the US education system than the Indian one. Hence a comparative model in the research allowed me to understand the similarities and differences between the US and Indian education system. Most importantly this comparative study helped me analyze ways through which the schooling system shapes the parenting methodologies. The southern part of Kolkata where I mostly conducted my research has some good private English medium schools. The children who attend these schools belong to middle-class families. Thus the class affiliation is also similar to the Indian immigrants in New Jersey. Therefore it became the opportune space for me to conduct my participant observations at length. However, when I first decided to research Kolkata and examine parenting

methods there, I was under the presumption that I would discover a more traditional model of parenting where intergenerational support and familial assistance prevailed. When I reached my research site, I was taken aback to discover trends contrary to my expectations. I discovered that parenting was commercialized and assisted by mom-schooling agencies. Therefore my agenda to find similar patterns of parenting between Edison and Kolkata guided me in a different direction where I discovered more dissimilarities than similarities.

Chapter overviews

Chapter II of this dissertation will examine the limitations of the existing literature in the field of sociology of globalization, education, family and immigration. Most of the literature on families has focused on the role of middle-class American women performing either the second shift or performing unpaid reproductive labor. None of them have examined and compared trans-nationally the scope of parenting between middle-class mothers in sending and receiving countries. Hence this research will examine the parenting strategies adopted by middle-class mothers in Edison and Kolkata to ensure an overall middle-class success. The immigration literature has also focused extensively on working class immigrants and immigration patterns. Not enough focus is given to middle-class immigration and immigrants. This dissertation by laying an overview of the history of American immigration patterns will examine the middle-class patterns of immigration and middle-class immigrants. The importance of studying middle-class immigration in the US I identify is their extensive participation in the global economy and how that eventually shapes parenting methodologies. The missing piece of analysis on middle-class immigration, especially mothers is important to bring into focus because

it not only brings forth the challenges of modern day parenting in a globalized world, but also has connections with the rapid economic globalization and globally integrated labor market. This research will also focus on the role of various active agents that facilitate middle-class parenting, whether it is communities or paid agencies or extended family. One of the major forms in Edison is the reproductive ethnic enclave. In the larger scope of discussion on ethnic enclaves the focus is always on the commercial side of the enclaves. Seldom have they discussed on the unpaid reproductive labor performed by women within the ethnic enclaves. This research will examine the role of reproductive enclaves comprising of middle-class mothers that mutually support reproductive labor. In this chapter I also trace the gaps in the literature on globalization of education since the schooling system and education in both locations play a crucial role in shaping the parenting techniques for mothers. The major contribution of this project toward a better understanding on globalization of education will enlighten the influence of western model especially American standards of education in the global south and the lack of adaptability in the schools in global north countries toward immigrant children. The discussion on globalization of education will emanate from the discussion on globalization and neoliberalization particularly in India. Studies have delved in depth on the effects of globalization on Indian media, markets and consumer tastes. However, not enough attention has been rendered upon the effects of globalization on intimate family practices like parenting. In this chapter I will lay out the gaps in light of my current research.

The third chapter of this dissertation comparatively analyzes the schooling system in Edison and Kolkata. The central question that I answer in this chapter is what are the

specific ways in which the schooling system shapes the parenting challenges and the methods mothers embrace to overcome these challenges? How does the schooling system include or exclude the mothers? How does this affect the relationship between the mothers and their children? In this empirical chapter I closely look into the schooling system in the two locations. In Edison the respondents mostly sent their children to public schools on the other hand in Kolkata the children mostly went to reputed private schools. Here I analyze the school curriculum, testing methods and evaluation system that are practiced. The discussion on globalization of education discuss aspects of influence of western education in the global south, however, they don't shed enough light on the role of mothers in the education system. In this chapter I focus extensively on the role of mothers in the schooling system in the two locations and set up the discussion on the conversion of capital where mothers in Edison and Kolkata act as *converters* of capital. Some of the highlights in this comparative chapter are that schools in Edison encouraged a lot of creativity and analytical thinking and did not demand active participation from the mothers. On the contrary they wanted the mothers to be just distant guides. In Kolkata a different picture was seen. The schools along with making shifts to an American style of testing and evaluation also promoted fierce competition among students. The mothers were expected to be part of the daily testing, projects and schoolwork of their children. In order to ensure that their children excelled in the daily schoolwork and stood among the top 1% of the class the mothers worked hard. Thus private schooling system ensured that mothers actively participated in the regular schoolwork and daily school projects and tests.

The fourth chapter analyzes in close quarters the reproductive enclave in Edison, New Jersey. The central question that this chapter will answer are what are the core parenting crisis that immigrant women in Edison experience and what are the specific ways by which they aim to overcome those crises? In this chapter I analyze through my data that comprises of interviews and participant observations in Edison, the role of the community, in other words, “the reproductive enclave” in order to support everyday parenting. The immigrant Indian mothers were suffering from the crisis of bringing up children in a foreign country where the local culture and manners were vastly different from their country of origin. I discover in this community mothers got together to form a solidarity network, which I call a reproductive enclave to fight this parenting issue. I analyze using Bourdieu’s theory of conversion of capital that the mothers were acting as *converters* of capital within the enclave, converting their existing cultural and economic capital into a new form of cultural capital that is transferred to their children. This conversion is not a single-handed project on the contrary is a collaborative effort by the members of the reproductive enclave. The new form of cultural capital is a combination of both Indian values and American values that the children gain, because the mothers as much as they orient their children toward Indian culture, they don’t want their children to be alienated from American culture. Adopting elements of Lareau’s concerted cultivation and the ardent spirit of Indian mothers to retain their Indian heritage, results in the formation of a new culture within the enclave. Within the larger scope of this project this chapter eventually traces the links that micro level community supported parenting has with the larger system of globally interconnected labor force. The movement of workers from their country of origin to their destination country has evoked discussions on

assimilation and cultural intermixing, but not so much on how shifts take place within domestic spaces and affect mothering choices and methodologies.

In the fifth chapter, the lens shifts to Kolkata where I analyze parenting practices with particular reference to the commercial parenting agencies, popularly known as mom-schooling agencies. I answer the central question of why there is an emerging parenting crisis in neoliberal urban India, with a specific focus on Kolkata? What are the ways by which commercial agencies resolve the crisis? How does the shift in the parenting paradigm in Kolkata relate to the changing economic and cultural shift happening in India as a whole? Finally how this model of parenting seen in Kolkata differs or share similarities with those in Edison? I argue that the parenting revolution that Kolkata and urban India is experiencing at this point has its roots embedded not only in the shifting schooling system but also in the neoliberalization/globalization of the economy. The fierce job market and altered academic expectations has also led to the emergence of commercial parenting agencies that coach mothers aspects of parenting. This new form of parenting is referred to as the liberal model of parenting and it shares a lot of similarities with Lareau's concerted cultivation. Hence here I analyze that Americanization of the economy and education has also led to the subsequent Americanization of parenting methodologies. This empirical chapter ties the central questions and arguments with the interviews and participant observations I conducted in Kolkata. Through my field notes I analyze this particular mom-schooling agency called M Consultancy. I observed the functioning, curriculum, policies and goals of the agency and interviewed the staff and proprietor of the agency to gain a better understanding of the organization. To follow my finding with further evidence I spoke at length with the

mothers who attended the agency to express their satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the school and how they negotiated with the material and information supplied by M Consultancy. In Kolkata quite similar to Edison, I discovered that mothers were also acting as *converters* of capital. However, in Kolkata too they were not doing it alone but the commercial agencies were supporting the conversion. The mothers with the help of the agency were converting the economic capital into a specific cultural capital that would ensure success for their children in a globalized Indian job market. In both Edison and Kolkata the middle-class mothers were shaping a reproductive field where they maneuvered the academic and parenting challenges through solidarity networks and commercial agencies.

In this project I want to analytically reevaluate positions of mothers like Madhu and make their voices heard. Immigrant mothers like Madhu and also mothers in the sending country get tabooed and ridiculed for performing the mundane task of mothering. Mothers like Madhu in their own country and abroad receive constant unwanted criticism not only on their mothering skills but also their frequent state of financial dependence. The globalization of the labor market and economy led to the emergence of two specific parenting crises in Edison and Kolkata that has led to the formation of the reproductive fields. In Edison the crisis was authentic reproduction of Indian culture and in Kolkata the crisis was of reproduction of social class. In Edison there was a community level parenting with the help of the reproductive enclave. Contrary to popular ideas and imagination parenting in USA within this specific community was not individualistic. On the other hand in Kolkata where the popular notion of parenting is that of

intergenerational support and solidarity, it is supported by commercial parenting agencies in the form of mom-schools. In Edison my project will demonstrate that the reproductive field was geared toward the preservation of Indian culture and heritage and the Indian mothers claim expertise in their knowledge of Indian values. In Kolkata on the other hand the reproductive field is geared towards the reorientation of Americanized job markets and education system. Kolkata mothers who were unaware of the recent changes had to gain knowledge on the new paradigms of parenting and education from commercial agencies.

CHAPTER II

ANALYZING GLOBALIZATION, EDUCATION AND IMMIGRATION IN THE CONTEXT OF PARENTING

In my current project I contextualize the multifarious ramifications of globalization in the areas of global employment and immigrant labor and draw its connections with intimate family practices like parenting. It needs to be pointed out that private individual acts of parenting within the household is hugely shaped and influenced by larger macro forces like globalization of the labor market and challenges in the education system as well. In this chapter I delineate the importance of globalization in the context of my transnational project where I critically examine it as one of the central causes that results in the emergence of two specific parenting practices in Edison and Kolkata. I expand the understanding of globalization into specific domains like the labor market, immigration and education and cultivate the existing literature in these domains to solve the central puzzle of why mothers with similar socio-economic and cultural capital resort to unique and separate ways toward child-rearing?

Globalization and its Multifarious Effects

Globalization and the US labor market

In this section I analyze the trends of immigrant labor, especially from India. The populations that I studied in Edison, New Jersey were spouses of elite professionals who were mostly from the Information Technology and Banking industry. These professionals were typically on a temporary Visa, called the H1B Visa and their spouses were on H4 Visa that did not grant them legal employment in the US. These women were full time mothers and struggled with the challenges of parenting in a foreign country. Therefore in

the following section I examine the flow of immigration into the US in the recent decade and analyze the ways they influence lives especially domestic practices like parenting among immigrant communities in the US.

In the US the Indian population has surged since the 1990s to become the second-largest immigrant group in the country after Mexicans and ahead of those born in China, the Philippines, and Vietnam (The Migration Policy Institute, 2015). The 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act, which removed origin-country quotas and created employment-based immigration channels, as well as subsequent legislation emphasizing highly skilled immigration, provided an entry pathway for a growing number of professionals and students from India. The Immigration Act of 1990, which further refined temporary skilled worker categories and increased the number of permanent work-based visas, contributed to a rapid increase in the size of the Indian-born population. In contrast to the initial wave, the majority of post-1965 arrivals from India were young, well-educated middle class urban dwellers, with strong English language skills.

The highly skilled professionals who come to the US are issued H1-B (work/employment) Visas. The US H1-B Visa that allows American companies to hire/employ foreign professionals in high skilled specialty occupations, mainly in the areas of mathematics, engineering, science, architecture and so on. Today, Indian citizens are the top recipients of temporary high-skilled worker H-1B visas, accounting for 70 percent of the 316,000 H-1B petitions (initial and continuing employment) approved by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) in fiscal year (FY) 2014. Therefore in the past fifteen years there has been a huge increase of Indian immigration into the US,

especially in the fields of Information Technology and banking and finance. Khadria (2001) refers to this above-mentioned movement of workers from the global south to the global north as the “migration of knowledge workers”. Scholars have previously referred to this phenomenon as “brain-drain” and used it as a way to distinguish service, farm and factory workers from knowledge workers, the former being the unskilled or semi-skilled worker and the latter being the skilled worker (Tucker, 1960).

In the above-mentioned trend toward the migration of knowledge workers from countries of the global south to the global north, especially of IT professionals who are carriers of capital it needs to be pointed out that the migration is highly gendered. In my research on immigrant Indian mothers who are spouses of these IT professionals on H1-B Visa, I witnessed that most of these professionals were men. Some of the recent reports reveal that the US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) have refused to release the gender data on H1B Visa. Telle Whitney, CEO of the Anita Borg Institute that advocates the rights of women in technology claims that the anecdotal experience is that most H1B Visa holders are men. It is not surprising because tracing the literature on gender and labor it can be identified those professions like medicine; engineering and law are overwhelmingly masculine domains. On the other hand secretaries, nurses and schoolteachers are mostly women (Williams, 1991; Kanter, 1993; Budig and England 2001; Charles and Grusky, 2004).

The above-mentioned mobility of immigrant workers from India to the US has resulted in the discussion on the movement of knowledge capital across nations and its deep-rooted allegiance to globalization. Singh (2004) borrows Harvey’s (1989) term to define globalization as a “time-space compression”, and “global consciousness”. There

are three analytical directions to the “time-space consciousness”. Firstly it refers to the shrinking of space in terms of the time taken to travel from one place to another, in other words the globe has shrunk through rapid transportation system and the Internet.

Secondly it points to the increasing connectivity across places, or the extension of social relations across distance. The third direction refers to the “simultaneous presence and absence of people in specific locales”. In other words it means that ideas or expertise of people who do not necessarily reside in those areas is gradually replacing local contexts.

Globalization can be further understood in the context of my project as a form of transnationalism especially with reference to the unevenness of globalization. Global flows in the form of trade, immigration and movement of ideas are more concentrated across some regions than others. Hirst and Thompson (1992) point out that globalization is still very much defined as the movement of trade between the developed nations of the world, the decision making power being concentrated in the hands of the powerful nations of the global north. Transnationalism is often argued as the manifestation of cultural and economic domination of one nation over another. In my research too the Kolkata mothers were striving to achieve transnationalism for their children that would shape their future successfully in a neoliberal academic and job market. They used transnationalism to realize upward mobility aspirations for children. Appadurai (1998) on the other hand contradicts by arguing on a micro level that transnationalism affects individual identities deeply. He identifies the experiences of globalization over the last couple of decades on people’s lives and the ways it has affected the social relations globally. Appadurai’s conceptualization of transnationalism is quite pertinent and essential to evaluate the positionality and experiences of migrants, especially the highly

skilled elite professionals who travel around the world. These professionals and their families not only adapt to the culture of the destination country but also bring with them elements of their roots and their heritage into the destination country. Thus the arguments that shape the definition of transnationalism as an outcome of globalization claim that along with the economic and cultural domination of one nation over another, it also intrinsically shapes the lives of people and affect social relations globally.

Indian Globalization and growth of the Americanized middle-class in India

In the following section I will examine the importance of analyzing the history of Indian globalization and the growth of the global/Americanized middle-class in India. In the context of my research the importance of understanding the growth of middle-class in India that was contingent upon the neoliberalization of the nation, is to trace its connection with the emergence of unique parenting techniques in the country. Here I categorically demonstrate the deep-rooted connections between a neoliberal India and its subsequent influence upon newly emerging parenting methodologies. The aftermath of rising consumerism in India as a manifestation of neoliberalization also affected and shaped intimate family practices like parenting.

Much of the debate presented above pertains to the influence of globalization on the labor market in the global north. The focus on globalization and consumption patterns in the global south has not received enough attention. In the Indian context the effects of globalization was significant in the form of neoliberalization, which began in the 1990. Neoliberalism as defined by Harvey (2005) is “a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by

strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade. The role of the state is to create and preserve an institutional framework appropriate to such practices. The state has to guarantee, for example, the quality and integrity of money. It must also set up those military, defense, police, and legal structures and functions required to secure private property rights and to guarantee, by force if need be, the proper functioning of markets.” Thus according to Harvey neoliberalism is build and sustained by the tenets of market economy. Therefore the nation/society that embraces the tenets of neoliberalism also functions on the requirements of the market. Individual choices, preferences, lifestyle are overwhelmingly dominated by the demands of the market. Indian society too has experienced the effects of neoliberalism and the Indian middle-class aspirations gradually established its roots on consumerism.

The growth and sustenance of neoliberalism is contingent on the expansion of cities. In that context Sassen (1991) in her analysis of “global cities” points out cities like New York, Tokyo, London and Mumbai have become social spaces that experience the flow of information and capital. Cities are major nodes in the interconnected systems of information and money, and the wealth that they capture is intimately related to the specialized businesses that facilitate those flows-financial institutions, consulting firms, accounting firms, law firms, and media organizations. In fact deregulation and privatization has resulted in the movement of capital across borders and these “global cities” become the hotspot of material interactions. These cities along with being the hotbed of cosmopolitanism have also become the IT hubs. Large American and other multinational companies collaborate with the Indian IT companies located in some of the

major Indian metropolitan cities that have become the hotbed of finance and foreign collaboration.

Adopting Sassen's conceptualization of the global cities it needs to be pointed out that mega cities in India too have started to participate in the global interconnectedness and movement of capital (both material and cultural). Kolkata is definitely one of them along with Mumbai, Bangalore and New Delhi. The wave of economic neo-liberalization that hit the nation during the 1990s played an active role in making these cities the central spaces where movement of information and capital took place. The cities became the centers of the multinational corporations and privatized firms. Cities like Kolkata were not only experiencing a rise in consumer tastes in terms of buying branded commodities but also consuming media and television that was not confined to Indian languages but had major influences of the west, mostly the United States.

There have been significant changes in the economic and social landscape of Kolkata and various other metropolitan cities in India after the economic liberalization of 1990. Dr. Manmohan Singh's (the Finance Minister during that time) policy of economic liberalization opened up Indian markets to foreign brands and along with significant economic changes in the country this economic liberalization led to emergence of a distinct consumerist culture. The economic reforms of 1990 also led to the rise of the new middle-class in India (Bhatia, 1994; Banerjee, 2002; Chandra, 2004; Fernandes, 2006; Donner, 2008). According to Fernandes (2006) the spread of multinational corporations led to the rising wage levels of the managerial staff that were the middle-class of India. The emerging middle-class were looking for significant lifestyle changes that was contingent on their newly acquired buying power. Cars, cellphones, washing machines,

color televisions and so on became markers of upward social mobility and the emerging middle-class were adopting every means to acquire them and make a significant shift in their lifestyle patterns.

Few scholars consider the impact of these cultural forms and economic changes on the culture of parenting. Indeed in the swirl of global flows of culture and immigration, parenting seems quite left out of the picture. Yet, parents of children in the “cosmopolitan world” are struggling to keep up and bridge the capacities and forms of knowledge their children will need with their own background and educational experiences. In Indian families this burden tends to fall on women. The respondents in my research from Kolkata who were still adopting the legacy of the economic reforms of the 90s bore testimony to how those reforms affected parenting methods too. The middle-class mothers in my study and their children were not only consuming the international brands in the age of economic neo-liberalization but at the same time adopted the western ideals of success in their lives. The current wave of globalization and Americanization were guiding the ways parents thought about the future and career prospects for their children. Mothers in Kolkata had skyrocketing expectations for their children. They aspired to send their children abroad for higher education and jobs. Along with sending their children abroad they also had plans to prepare them for a competitive Indian job market that required critical thinking ability and analytical skills. Thus the mothers were mindful of their children’s economic success both in India and abroad and the parameters of success were same in both the locations because of the effects of globalization. Hence along with the larger and more conspicuous effects of neoliberalization in urban India, in

my research I identify the effects of neoliberalization on parenting methods and techniques.

Globalization of education

In this section I analyze the effects of globalization on education in both the US and India. In the light of my current research I will analyze the broader discussion on the globalization of education in the two specific categories. Firstly, the influence of educational globalization in the context of global north, especially the US and secondly, in the context of the global south, specifically India. The discourse on the globalization of education in the global north focuses on how education can be improved to include immigrant children. On the other hand, the discussion shifts gear in the global south context to focus on the challenges schools face to adjust to the changing demands of education propelled by the demands of a globalized economy. Schools are not only knowledge producers but at the same time generate cultural and social capital. What is largely missing from the discourse on globalization of education is the role of parents, especially mothers as converters of capital. In my research I not only examine the role of mothers as converters of capital but also how the education system is a major catalyst of conversion between the sending and destination country. The migration of Indian immigrants to the US in my case demonstrated the increased rate of immigration because of India's participation in the global trade. The movement of migrants brings into focus not only the parenting challenges experienced by the immigrants but also their challenges within the new education system. In India too the education system is undergoing rapid transformation; a major reason being the influence of globalization. Hence in my research I transnationally examine the various arguments in the context of globalization of

education to not only evaluate the role of Americanization on Indian education but also the role of mothers who actively participate in Americanization by acting as converters of capital. Within this comparative framework where I analyze the effects of globalization of education in the US and Indian context I demonstrate the effects of a challenging education system that eventually shapes two unique parenting methodologies in both the countries.

Globalization has led to national societies become more interconnected with each other and also aware of each other's presence. This interconnectedness between nations on economic, political, social and cultural levels has generated global models of change and national tendencies to become isomorphic with these models and the directions they emphasize. One of the key paths toward isomorphism is solidarity in the field of education. Education is considered by scholars as the desirable tool to attain global excellence, justice and equality (Chabbott and Ramirez 2000; Darling-Hammond 2010).

To analyze the first segment on the discussion on globalization and education and its impact upon the global north country, especially the immigrating nation it is important to focus on the experiences of migrant population and their educational experiences in the host country (Curl, 2007; Sussmuth, 2007). The key point that needs attention in this topic is, most schools in the host country do not promote intercultural sensitivity and consciousness, contrary to the primary goal in the globalization of education. Unlike the schools and universities in India that promote a global consciousness through collaboration with western universities and changing curriculums, the schools in the global north, especially in the case of my research the US schools do not promote cross cultural sensitivity and awareness. Scholars have proposed several ways by which in the

current globalized world that is experiencing an increased pace in the movement of migrants across the globe, education can be conducive and accessible for migrant children.

Sussmuth (2007) argues that critical thinking abilities are hard to develop among children in schools if there is lack of intercultural awareness. Cognitive skills and critical thinking according to Sussmuth is intrinsically linked with a better understanding of what people from other cultures might think. Curl (2007) also suggests that schools should bring in the cultural and social capital of immigrant children by making student mentors as role models in schools. In this way the immigrant children will not be forced to assimilate on the contrary they will feel more welcome in the host society. Thus in the current climate of globalized education and globalized labor force it is important for schools to foster an environment of mutual awareness and intercultural sensitivity. In spite of the theoretical approach toward creating a collaborative environment for immigrant children as they struggle in a foreign academic setting, the schools in Edison that I studied did not foster an environment to promote solidarity. The sole responsibility to acquaint children into the schooling laid on the shoulders of their immigrant mothers, who were unfamiliar with the system, themselves. The globalization of the labor market has resulted in the rapid influx of migrant population in places like Edison. However the immigrant mothers were unfamiliar with the new system of education that resulted in unique parenting styles. In my research I found that they formed a support network in the form of an enclave to share concerns and develop strategies to negotiate with the new form of education in the US.

Within the discourse on globalization of education there is inadequate focus on the influence of the US education system on the countries of the global south, more specifically the Indian subcontinent. Focus on the Indian subcontinent, especially Indian education system is important because of the country's active participation in the global economy. Developing countries in the current era of globalization have experienced challenges in the education sector to be at par with the global standards. These challenges include building education in a manner that responds well to the changing requirements of the globalized job market, the need to train students to be competent at those jobs and improving the scope for higher education in the country (Hugonnier, 2007). Globalization of the world economy has often been synonymous with the Americanization of the global economy. Similarly, globalization of education too implies the Americanization of the education system. In India the education system, especially the private schooling system is becoming heavily influenced by the globalized or Americanized system of education. In the recent times after the neoliberalization of the Indian economy there have been extensive collaborations at the level of higher education between foreign universities and Indian universities (Banad and Talawar, 2011). Numerous study abroad and research programs have been established that has led to the adoption of a more global approach in education both at the primary and higher education level.

In my research I shed light upon the influence of the changing terrain in the education system in Indian and its subsequent influence upon parenting methodologies. The changes in the schooling system that is a response to the increasing neoliberalization and globalization of the Indian economy, has also shaped unique parenting strategies. I discover that mothers in Kolkata resorted to commercial solutions to guide them in the

path of embracing a more global parenthood. The commercial parenting agencies popularly called the “mom-schooling” agencies, coach mothers to adjust with the rapid changes in the domain of schooling as well as educate mothers the practices of globalized in other words a more American way toward child-rearing. Thus in both Edison and Kolkata the challenges that mothers encounter to negotiate in either a new form of education setting or a changing education space results in different parenting techniques. In Edison they resort to community support and in Kolkata mothers resort to commercial solutions.

Bourdieu’s conceptualization of capital and mothers as converters of capital

In this section I analyze Bourdieu’s concept of conversion of capital and the ways I use it as a theoretical framework to evaluate the mothering practices embraced by mothers in Edison and Kolkata. Bourdieu illustrates the ways conversion of capital takes place from one form to another, but neglects the role of converters who act as drivers in the conversion process and are mostly women. Pertinently, I argue that mothers in both locations act as converters of capital. In my research, immigrant mothers in Edison were converting their existing economic capital to a new form of cultural capital, which they transferred to their children to ensure the latter’s success in the US academic and non-academic setting. The immigrant mothers not only coached their children in American mainstream culture—which they had to learn themselves—but also educated their children in Indian heritage and values. In Kolkata on the other hand, the middle-class mothers converted economic capital into a new form of cultural capital. The mothers

invested in commercial mom-schooling agencies and gained a new form of cultural capital to coach their children into paths that guaranteed success in a globalized economy.

Previously scholars have emphasized on the mother's role to help socialize the children and make them acceptable citizens in society (Ruddick, 1980). However largely missing from this body of literature is the role of mothers as the converters of capital. Vasquez (2010) delves into motherhood in her analysis of immigrant Chicana mothers who acted as "mediators" of knowledge between the host society and their children in the US, but inadequate attention is paid on the role of mothers who invest in actively converting capital as they pursue their aspirations for the next generation. By understanding the multiplicity of capitals in this project we can better understand the different strategies mothers use to ensure the class success of their children.

Bourdieu (1986) defines cultural capital to be existent in three states, one the *embodied* in the form of "log-lasting dispositions of the mind and the body"; two the *objectified* state in the form of books, instruments or in other words "cultural goods"; and three the *institutionalized* state in the form of "educational qualifications". Economic capital on the other hand is the economic resources like money, assets and properties that one owns. Bourdieu further complicates the concept of capital by claiming that one form of capital can be converted to the other. He claims that economic capital is at the root of all other forms of capital and also mentions the conversion involves extensive labor-time. Bourdieu in his discussion on conversion of capital from one form to another, states, "...the best measure of cultural capital is undoubtedly the amount of time devoted to acquiring it, this is because the transformation of economic capital into cultural capital presupposes an expenditure of time that is made possible by the possession of economic

capital.” Using Bourdieu’s paradigm on conversion of capital in my research I claim that mothers in Edison and Kolkata who already have access to economic capital gain the time to convert into cultural capital that is transferred to their children and help in the maintenance of class status. In Edison the acquired capital allow children to restore Indianness within the community and in Kolkata it allows the children to gain access to a globalized academic and job market.

Lareau and cultivation of capital

In my research I find Lareau’s analysis on American middle-class parenting extremely relevant to analyze child-rearing methodologies in Edison and Kolkata. In fact middle-class mothers in Edison and Kolkata were using concerted cultivation as a key tool to convert economic capital into cultural capital. Lareau’s analysis of concerted cultivation that she uses to define American middle-class parenting strategy is a way of turning children into critical and analytical thinkers through a model of parenting that involves negotiation and discussion. Concerted cultivation also employs sending kids to various structured extra curricular classes like soccer, swimming and music to name a few. By being a part of these structured extra curricular activities kids learn to interact with others, negotiate with real life challenges and develop individualistic thinking. Therefore Lareau’s understanding of concerted cultivation is also a way of accumulating cultural capital of the kid. Mothers in both Edison and Kolkata adopted Lareau’s concerted cultivation as a key apparatus to convert economic capital to new forms of cultural capital, which was then transferred to their children.

In Edison, the immigrant mothers were actively practicing tenets of concerted cultivation as a way to convert capital. The mothers adopted elements of concerted

cultivation but molded it into ways that allowed their children to become part of mainstream American culture as well as orient them into Indian culture. For example they sent their children to structured extra curricular classes like ballet and cello alongside sending them to Hindi speaking classes. Thus the mothers who were acting as converters of capital adopted certain specific elements of concerted cultivation and shaped it to transfer a new form of cultural capital to their children, which was an amalgamation of both American mainstream culture as well as Indianness.

In Kolkata on the other hand, middle-class mothers were also embracing pieces of concerted cultivation in the form of liberal parenting strategies. With the changes in the education system and India's increasing participation in the global economy, the emerging challenge for mothers was to train children to become adept global workers. One of the key ways to stimulate the development of a global worker was to adopt tenets of western parenting model or in other words Lareau's concerted cultivation. Kolkata mothers in my research with the support of the commercial parenting agencies converted economic capital into new forms of cultural capital that promoted critical thinking abilities and analytical skills in children to make them proficient workers in a globalized economy.

Immigration and families in the US

The discussion on immigrant families in the US has been one of the primary areas of research in the sociology of immigration studies. These studies tend to focus on adaptation patterns of the second generation and the how the first generation parents pave the path toward the assimilation. In the following sections I will point out the gaps in the existing literature on immigration and families and highlight how they seldom focus on

specific parenting techniques. In my study these parenting methodologies among immigrant mothers in Edison are unique because they adopt Lareau's concerted cultivation model and customize it to best instill Indian values in their children. By examining a host of literature in immigration studies ranging from class issues, ethnic enclaves, assimilation to inter-family relations I point out that in my research mothers efficiently create a new parenting culture by incorporating both American middle-class values and Indianness.

Class and immigration

The literature on immigration and immigrant families has focused significantly on class (Hondogneau-Sotelo, 1994; Parrenas, 2003; Hondogneau-Sotelo, 2007; Parrenas, 2011; Strum and Tarantolo, 2003) and issues related to upward and downward mobility following the model of segmented assimilation (Portes and Zhou, 1993; Zhou, 1997; Zhou, 1997; Waldinger and Feliciano, 2004; Alba and Victor, 2003; Farley and Richard, 2002). As far as the discussion of immigration and class is concerned much attention has been given to working class immigration and less on middle class immigration (Hondogneau-Sotelo, 1994; Parrenas, 2003; Hondogneau-Sotelo, 2007). The discussion of working class immigration has also analyzed the gendered patterns of migration. For example, Hondogneau-Sotelo (1994) in her analysis of undocumented female immigrants from Mexico pointed out that these women experience freedom from their past traditional lives. These working class immigrant women experience financial independence through migration. Issues of class and immigration are similarly linked in the discussion on immigrant care workers in the United States (Aranda, 2003; Mattingly, 2001; Ehrenreich and Hochschild, 2004; Glenn; 2010). Glenn (2010) claims one of the main reasons behind

immigration of care workers and nannies are because middle and upper middle-class women are increasingly participating in the workforce leading to a “care-deficit” at home. This deficit is being taken care of by working class immigrant women who work as paid care workers and nannies. This body of work reveals that inadequate attention is rendered upon middle-class immigrant women who individually experience downward economic mobility by virtue of immigration policies. In my research I focus on middle-class mothers and their daily challenges on parenting front in the sending and receiving nations. My project highlights the importance of rendering attention to middle-class particularly because of their active participation in the global economy. The middle-class Indian mothers in Edison were spouses of elite professionals who had migrated to the US because of their active involvement in a global economy. Similarly the middle-class mothers in Kolkata were actively training children to participate in a rapidly globalized Indian economy. Therefore the participation of the middle-class in the global economy is often not highlighted in the above-mentioned body of works, which I delineate in my research.

Families and assimilation patterns

One of the topics that have received increasing attention in the sociology of immigration studies is the immigrant family, a setting in which immigrants and their children live out a good part of their lives and often develop their most meaningful relationships. Immigrant families are a significant, and growing, proportion of all families in the United States, now that the foreign-born together with the U.S.-born second generation constitute more than a fifth of the nation’s population (Foner and Dreby, 2011). In 2007, 22% of all children in the United States under 18 lived in immigrant

families, an increase from 13% in 1990 (Mather 2009). Since the early years of the new (post-1960s) immigration to the United States, sociologists have analyzed a range of topics related to the family. These include how family networks stimulate and facilitate immigration, the role of family ties and networks in helping immigrants get jobs and housing, and how families develop strategies for survival and assist immigrants in the process of adjustment and advancement (Foner 1997; Clark et al. 2009). In recent years, there has been a growing interest in the nature of intergenerational relationships in immigrant families, especially between immigrant parents and their children, many of whom were born and largely raised in the United States.

Immigration scholars that have paid attention on families have extensively discussed assimilation patterns amongst second-generation immigrants. One of the most discussed theories is the segmented assimilation theory. Portes and Bach (1993) bring into use the theory of segmented assimilation to evaluate the diverse trajectories immigrants follow to adapt to the host society and culture. These trajectories are characterized by what the authors call “modes of incorporation” where factors such as available resources, receiving population or co-ethnic population, and racialization (and the association of positive or negative characteristics with the immigrant group) determine the inclusion pathways. Segmented assimilation therefore debunks the thesis that immigrant assimilation into the host society follows a linear path. Thus Zhou (1997) reiterates, “This segmented assimilation thesis recognizes the fact that today’s immigrants are received in various segments of American society ranging from affluent middle-class suburbs to impoverished inner-city ghettos. Such contextual differences mean that paths to social mobility may lead to upward as well as downward outcomes. In

the case of those who start from the very bottom, of course, the outcome is not so much assimilating downward as staying where they are” (p, 75).

The segmented assimilation theory’s extensive focus on the second generation does not shed enough light on the role of the first generation immigrant parents. In my research I examine the role of immigrant parents, mothers in particular who lay the ground and framework for the assimilation of their children into the host society. However in my study the Edison mothers adopted an American middle-class style of parenting akin to Lareau’s concerted cultivation along with blending elements of Indian culture and heritage in their child rearing strategies. Therefore these immigrant mothers paved the way for their children by following the first and second routes in the segmented assimilation model. They wanted their children to become a well-adjusted component in the American mainstream society as well as retain their Indian values and culture. The immigrant mothers derived their support from the Indian immigrant community of mothers in Edison and mustered collective strategies for child rearing in a foreign country. Therefore using segmented assimilation theory I argue that the first generation Indian immigrant mothers combined the first and second routes in order to blend with the American mainstream society. The mothers diligently with the support of their immediate community ensure that their children succeed in academics and non-academic pursuits as well as retain their Indian values and heritage.

Ethnic Enclaves and Reproductive Labor in Edison

Portes and Bach (1985) theorize the enclave as an aggregation of "firms of any size which are owned and managed by members of an identifiable cultural or national

minority." Hence the definition of an ethnic enclave also conveys that these enclaves are mostly driven by economic motives, with most businesses within the enclave being run by families and their informal networks of relatives. Gender based discrimination within the ethnic enclaves is a prominent theme in this body of scholarly work. (Gilbertson 1992; Light and Gold 2000; Loo and Ong 1987; Pessar 1984; Zhou and Logan 1989). It has been pointed out in the literature that immigrant women often experience a lot of difficulties entering the labor market in the US (Boyd, 1989; Rajiman and Semyonov, 1997). Some scholars like Rajiman and Semyonov (1997) have argued that immigrant women from Asia and Africa, find it difficult in the US, particularly because of their gender, because they belong to less developed parts of the world and also because they are new immigrants. As Banerjee (2013) points out these immigrant women who have less human capital in terms of proficiency in English and little education, find employment in low-paying employment in ethnic enclaves. Some authors (Portes, 1987; Portes and Manning, 1987; Portes and Sensenbrenner, 1993) in that context claim that ethnic enclaves provide an avenue to give employment to the immigrant minorities, while some (Gilbertson, 1995; Sanders and Nee, 1987; Zhou, 2004) claim that these immigrant minorities are never really given an opportunity to participate in the mainstream economy.

On the topic of women's subordinate position in the ethnic enclaves Gilbertson (1992) explores that Dominican and Colombian women are treated unequally in Hispanic owned firms when compared with their male counterparts in the ethnic enclaves in New York City. She points out that enclave employment provides women with very low wages, minimal benefits, and few opportunities for advancement than their male

counterparts in the enclave. Bao's (2001) study on Chinatown sweatshops also indicates that jobs in the sweatshops are sex-segregated, meaning the high-paying jobs are given to men and the low-paying jobs are given to women. These sweatshops are present within the ethnic enclaves, as they become an easy place to access cheap labor (Banerjee, 2013). Therefore women in these enclaves do not receive measurable returns to their human capital (Zhou and Logan 1989).

The discussion on ethnic enclaves not only focuses on gender discrimination but also the importance of familial network in successful business operation (Borjas 2000; Chiswick 2005; Light and Gold 2000; Xie and Gough 2011). For example Light and Gold (2000) in their discussion of ethnic enclaves discover that most of the ethnic literature focused on the participation of men in the development of the ethnic economies. However recent studies have examined women's participation in the development of the ethnic economies. As far as the role of families is concerned in the ethnic economies, families blur, "the distinction between production and consumption, employer and worker, exploitation and self-interest, and public and private that underlie contemporary models of economic life" (Light and Gold 2000). Thus the literature on ethnic enclaves explain that along with exploiting women's labor ethnic families reject individualist, cost-benefit economic behavior, and family workers bear the burden of difficult, sometimes exploitative, economic conditions that would not be tolerated by unrelated employees. What is primarily missing from the scope of the ethnic enclave literature is focus on unpaid reproductive labor performed by mothers within enclaves. In my research I focus on middle-class Indian immigrant mothers who cluster their lives in these enclaves in the US suburbia and collaborate to perform reproductive labor. This

labor is unpaid and is an outcome of challenging/unfamiliar parenting practices in a foreign country. They derive support from each other and together they form what I refer to as the “reproductive enclave”. The mothers that were converting capital in Edison were therefore not doing it all by themselves, rather the community in the form of the “reproductive enclave” was supporting the conversion.

Conclusion

In this chapter I highlight the existing gaps in literature especially within the scope of the current dissertation. I lay out the discussion on globalization and its effects upon the labor market, education and growth of middle-class in India. The discussion on globalization often tends to ignore its role in influencing intimate family practices like parenting. Through close analysis of the globalization literature I delineate the ways it shapes the labor market through immigration, education and neoliberalization and eventually influences family practices like parenting.

In this chapter I also focus on the immigration literature that seldom pays attention on the middle-class immigrants. I highlight in my current research the importance of studying middle-class immigration because of their active participation in the global economy. The immigration literature has rendered a lot of attention upon the assimilation patterns that are followed by immigrant families, however what is largely missing from the scope of this literature is the discussion on specific parenting methods that are adopted by mothers. In this dissertation I argue that immigrant mothers use Lareau’s middle-class parenting strategy in the form of concerted cultivation to promote Indianness within the community as well as instill American values in their children.

CHAPTER III

SCHOOLS ACROSS BORDERS: MOTHER'S PARTICIPATION AND CHALLENGES WITHIN THE EDUCATION SYSTEM IN KOLKATA AND EDISON

The changing face of Indian schooling system in the recent days has cast a long lasting impact on the parenting techniques adopted by mothers in Kolkata. In this chapter I will focus on the schooling system in Kolkata, India and Edison, New Jersey. On examining the schooling system transnationally I will compare and contrast the schooling system in these two locations. In this chapter I analyze the reasons for mothers with similar education, cultural and class background to adopt different reproductive strategies and the ways in which these strategies respond to different parenting crisis in different reproductive fields. I argue that at the root of the parenting crisis and dissimilar parenting strategies between Indian mothers in Edison and Kolkata is a response to the education and schooling system. In Edison the schooling system that is unfamiliar to the Indian immigrant mothers shape their parenting anxiety and ultimately influence the choices they undertake toward child rearing. In Kolkata on the other hand the rapid changes in the schooling system and the trend toward Neoliberalization/Americanization has led to mothering anxiety and challenges. Therefore in this chapter I argue that at the heart of middle-class parenting emerges a reproductive field and the conversion of capital lies within the education system.

The immigrant mothers in Edison were suffering from a parenting crisis where they felt that their children were substantially distanced from their Indian roots. Their parenting crisis was also elicited by being forced to adapt to a new schooling system that

was utterly unfamiliar to them. Needless to mention these women struggled to maneuver the new education system on an everyday basis. However they were not alone in the struggle, the reproductive enclave, in the form of a supportive network/community helped them maneuver the new system. On the other hand in Indian mothers in Kolkata adopted parenting strategies that bore a direct correlation with the changing socio-cultural demands influenced by neoliberalism. The Kolkata mothers were adopting tenets of American middle-class parenting and were remodeling their child rearing methods based on negotiation and promoting critical thinking. The shift towards the American middle-class ways of parenting was also contingent on the changing demands of the schooling system. The Kolkata mothers quite like their counterparts in Edison lacked the knowledge to negotiate with a schooling system that they were not acquainted with.

In both Edison and Kolkata the schooling system results in the formation of two specific yet different reproductive fields. In Edison the public schooling system, which the children attended, was a new space for the mothers. The immigrant Indian mothers were not educated in the US academic system, hence maneuvering the new education system for their children was challenging for them. The reproductive enclave in this case operated as a community that supported mothers learn the schooling system and discover ways that allowed them to interact with the institution. The adjustment to the American middle-class way of life and the American style of schooling with the support of the reproductive enclave helped in the formation of the reproductive field in Edison.

In Kolkata on the other hand there was also the formation and commercialization of a unique reproductive field that was different from the one present in Edison. The reproductive field in Kolkata was formed as a way to cope with the changing structure of

Indian private schooling as well as the need to adopt tenets of American middle-class parenting. The middle class mothers' struggle towards child rearing was supported by several mom-schooling agencies that had emerged in order to guide mothers toward the path of adopting American middle-class parenting as well as adjusting to the changes in the Indian academic system.

Adopting Bourdieu's framework of conversion of capital I argue that the mothers act as converters of capital, yet they adopt different strategies of conversion. In Edison the mothers convert their existing cultural capital, which is their quiver of knowledge from India, into this new form of cultural capital that is an amalgamation of both Indianness and American middle-class values. The Edison mothers also convert economic capital to the new cultural capital. The economic capital that is gained by their spouses buys them the time to convert into a new form of cultural capital. The conversion of capital for the immigrants mothers included learning not only the American middle-class methods of parenting but also acquainting themselves to the new schooling system.

As Prama pointed out,

We know Math and English, we can teach them to our children. But what about social sciences and American history, we don't know them. We have to learn it ourselves and then teach it to our children. Also when I first came here I had no clue how the schools work. I mean the curriculum, the texts, I knew nothing! (sic) So it was really hard! But one gets a hang of things gradually. It is a matter of time.

Hence in this above case we see that Prama and the other mothers were constantly struggling to accustom themselves with the American system of schooling, which was new to them. This adjustment was a major aspect of the conversion of capital. These immigrant mothers already knew subjects like Math and English, however they did not know every aspect of Social Science that was taught in the schools. Hence these women

modified their existing knowledge on some of the subjects and learnt from scratch the others in a way that could be taught to their children.

In Kolkata too the middle-class mothers were acting as converters of capital. The effects of globalization and neoliberalism had affected intimate spaces within the household, parenting being one of them. The Kolkata mothers were unaware of the changing character of parenting. Along with the changes in the parenting strategies there were also changes in the schooling system in Kolkata. The admission process in the reputed private schools of the city had grown quite competitive over the years. The principal of SP school mentioned in our conversations, “Since the past 15 years that I have been a principal in this school the admission procedures have changed a lot. Now we are more cognizant of the larger needs of the industry and world of employment. We make sure that kids get the holistic training at school and at home, hence the higher standards of admission too.” Admission into these reputed private schools is not only a mark of social status for middle-class urban families but also ensures success in the rapidly Americanized job market in India. Therefore this changing character of parenting had its roots embedded in the larger forces of neoliberalism and Americanization. Mitu for example told me, “I have heard from some of my relatives whose kids are in college that when these MNCs come for placement and hiring their style of interviewing is completely different. For example my cousin told me about an American firm that came to interview her daughter and they had given her a set of problem that she had to solve right there and verbally discuss each step analytically to the interviewer. It does not matter if she got the

right answer they were just testing her analytical skills.” These shifts in the education system and job market led to increasing anxiety among middle-class mothers of Kolkata.

The discussion on the globalization of education documents the changing standards of education in the global south especially its trend toward globalization. Globalization has affected the education system through the shifting needs of the labor market. In the above example, Mitu’s description of the job interview hints at the key requirements of the globalized labor market in India. What is important to note is that the education system coach students to embrace the challenges and demands of the global job market; students are trained to use their analytical skills, withstand pressure and crack these job interviews, and the training begins at a very early age. Needless to mention the nations in the global south are experiencing challenges to adjust with these changes on the education front. This body of literature extensively examines the role of schools as generators of human capital that will benefit the global capitalist economy. However they fail to look into the role of mothers as converters of capital. The schooling system in both Edison and Kolkata shape the choices middle-class mothers make towards child rearing and ensuring academic as well as economic success for their children. Therefore in this chapter I will compare and contrast the schooling system in both the locations and trace its influence on the parenting methods that are adopted by the middle-class mothers. In Edison the immigrant mothers were struggling with the new education system and they were gradually learning the tenets of schooling with the support of the reproductive enclave. In Kolkata on the other hand, the middle-class mothers found themselves

adjusting to the changing school curriculums and the mom-schooling agencies helped the mothers learn the changes. Hence they adopted a market solution to a market problem.

Schools and mothering challenges

In this section I will analyze the challenges posed by the schooling system upon the mothers in Kolkata and Edison. The challenges were unique and distinct in the two locations and here I will analyze them separately to delineate the mother's role in the overall education of their children. In Kolkata I identified two unique challenges that the schooling system posed on the mothers, they were: a) Competitive admission into Kolkata private schools and b) Student evaluation in schools. In Edison on the other hand, I identified three distinct specific issues that immigrant mothers confronted on a regular basis, which were: a) Classroom participation; b) Hands on learning and c) Critical thinking.

Kolkata

“My God, have you seen the school curriculum? It's crazy! So competitive, so different from our times! I mean getting your kid in these schools is already so difficult and then keeping up with these tests, homeworks...ugghhh I am going mad! You want your child to do well right, good colleges, good jobs, go abroad...I tell you we grew up in better times!” said Paro.

Paro was a Kolkata resident since her birth and the mother of a four year old. Paro was seriously concerned about the state of schooling in Kolkata and she found herself helpless in the face of rapid changes in the education system. Paro along with many of the other Kolkata mothers complained that in spite of being

socialized in the Indian education system they were incompetent to maneuver the recent changes in school curriculum and administration.

The rapid changes in the education system had resulted in a very distinct parenting crisis among Kolkata mothers. They were unaccustomed with the recent changes and were perpetually anxious to figure out if they were able to provide necessary guidance to their children. The mothers also had high expectations for their children's future. They wanted their children to not only get into good private schools and do well in them but at the same time to have good jobs and go abroad.

Pawla, mother of a five-year-old girl, said,

You cannot be a mediocre student in this age! You have to be the best! You have to come first in class and get good grades and know what you want to do in life early on. In any case whatever you want your children to become, it has to be decided ahead of time. I mean what else can give you the greatest pleasure other than witnessing your child's success, I guess!

Pawla's expectations for her child address the larger narrative of parenting crisis and anxiety among Kolkata mothers. The other mothers in Kolkata I interviewed shared anxieties similar to Pawla. There was an embedded pressure among these women to ensure that children were not "mediocre" and excelled in school as well as in professional spheres. Success in these private schools increased the children's chances to excel in a higher academic setting and the competitive job market. Hence the mothers in Kolkata wanted to ensure that their children were not only in the right track towards having a successful career but also ahead of their peers.

The post neoliberal India since the 1990s has witnessed a sea change in the face of economic and cultural globalization. The entry of multinational corporations mainly American, has led to the recent changes in the terrain of the job market and education. The central focus of the private schools is to train students for a competitive and globalized employment sector. The schooling system has become competitive over the years and mothers reported that the schools hold more tests over the academic year and these tests have gotten more intense since their own times. Ms. Gupta, Math teacher of DP School reported that parents are extremely invested and anxious at the same time regarding the increasing competition in schools. She said, “We also have a ranking system in our school and also in various other schools in the city I guess, where we rank students in classes based on their academic performance. So, this increases tension and competition among children and especially mothers...whose child will come first like that you know (smiles)!”

The constant pressure of academic success that the mothers and their children undertook in Kolkata had its roots embedded in the changing education system in the city as well as the in the country as a whole. I will examine the changes in the schooling system in Kolkata that has led to the parental anxiety. I will analyze the admission process, performance evaluation systems and the curriculum in the private schools in Kolkata and mother’s involvement in the above-mentioned processes.

COMPETITIVE ADMISSION INTO KOLKATA PRIVATE SCHOOLS

The admission in private schools in Kolkata and across the country predominantly operates in a three-tier system. Firstly the child is interviewed and asked some very basic questions. These questions include, recognition of color, shapes, letters, numbers, objects and so on. The minimum age of the children is usually four years old and mostly the parents don't accompany them into the rooms where the interview takes place with the schoolteachers and principal. These interviews usually test the child's confidence and their ability to face strangers and answer questions without inhibition. In the next tier the fathers are interviewed. They are asked questions that predominantly concern their profession, income and the kind of service they practice. They are asked the number of hours in the week they are available in the lives of their children, in case they were in touring services. Lastly the mothers were interviewed. This process was the most rigorous. For instance Medha pointed out, "I was asked, so tell us what you know about ADHD? How would you know if your child has ADHD? I mean I had no clue how to answer these questions! How could they even expect that we know all of these, huh?" Mothers like Medha are confused and often do not know what the right kind of response is. Hence the mothers in most cases are unable to answer these questions and their lack of knowledge in many cases jeopardizes the admission process of their children. However this three-tier system of evaluation in most cases determines the entry of children into these reputed private schools. Therefore mothers are the ones whose performance largely determines the admission of their children into the schools.

During my interview sessions with one of the school principals in Kolkata, I brought up the question of why mothers in particular are grilled rigorously during these interviews and not the fathers. Mrs. Ghosh, the principal said,

We feel that mothers in most cases spend more time with their children, it does not matter if the mother is employed or not. They are the ones who teach values to their children, take care of their daily needs and are just around most of the time. So, we think it makes more sense to ask more questions to the mother. There might be cases where this does not happen but I am talking about the most common trend.

Hence from Mrs. Ghosh's account it becomes clear that the schools have a specific rationale for interviewing the mothers instead of the fathers. In most of the cases it's observed that mothers are more involved in the everyday activities and socialization of the children. Thus within this traditional framework of parenting where mothers take charge instead of the fathers the schools tend to acknowledge that trend and eventually question mothers extensively during interviews to learn more about the children.

There are several other aspects of evaluation of the parents by the school administration within the broader framework of the three-tier interrogation system. Some of the other major questions that parents, mothers in particular are asked are: on their general expectations of how they wish their children to grow up. They are asked what kind of future they envision for their children, particularly in terms of the child's academic career. Along with such broader questions parents are asked a range of specific questions as well. For example they are asked how often do they read books to their children. In that context, Sumita said, "So I was asked by this principal, whether I have introduced some good books to my kid. You know they wanted to know if I read classics, Aesop's

Fables to my child. Thankfully I ensured that my kid was in touch with these stuffs. So I told the principal that I did!” From this example it was evident that the school administration not only wanted to learn about the child’s knowledge about books but also the mother’s involvement in that process.

The above description makes it evident that mothers are interrogated by the school administration in a way that helped them understand whether the parents were involved in the path of holistic development of their children. In these brief one on one-interview sessions, the mothers were expected to present not only their existing knowledge about various issues related to childcare but also a vision and future plan for their children. Mothers have to be prepared to answer such questions and they eventually determine the admission of their children in these schools. If the mothers are able to participate in these discussions with the school administration their children will be considered fit for the school. Thus the parental crisis that I highlighted at the beginning as explained by Paro, was contingent on the specific parameters of evaluation laid out by the private schools in the city. These parameters included not only an evaluation of the child but also a thorough evaluation of their mothers. The evaluation process in the private schools not only examined the academic potential of the child but also took into account the holistic socialization that the child underwent in their mother’s guidance. The mothers in this context were also adjusting to the changing demands of the private schooling system and tried their best to fit into the competitive market based model of education that determined their children’s future.

STUDENT EVALUATION IN SCHOOLS

The struggle for the parents does not stop once the child is admitted to a reputed private school. New sets of challenges emerge in parenting once the child is admitted in these schools. The evaluation and testing methods employed by the schools are demanding and the standards of achievement are set high. Mita said,

I stayed up all night to make this project for Erisha's science class. How can they expect a seven year old to make a 3D solar system! It is absolutely ridiculous! It is worth 10 percent of her grade, so she has to get those points. The teachers also want top quality projects, so it's not like I can let Erisha make whatever she can! If she doesn't live up to those standards she will lose those points. Well I can't let that happen. So I end up doing most of her projects. I mean what is the use of giving these tasks when they know the mothers will end up making them for their children (chuckles).

Mita explained the high standards that are set to evaluate children in these private schools. The parents strive to ensure that their children do well in the classes, by investing their time and energy towards the success of their kid's day-to-day class assignments, Erisha's science project being one such example.

To further describe the testing methods employed in the private schools, Amrita, mother of a seven and a half year old said,

Arshi was told that she had to prepare a five minutes power point presentation for her English class on use of adverbs and adjectives. She was so tensed about the presentation. I stayed up with her and helped her organize the slides and what not. She did well in the presentation, but she was so scared and nervous, poor thing.

I: So, do you think these presentations help the kids or don't help them at all?

Amrita: Well, I am not really sure you know. I mean of course they get confidence and all of that. But they get so tensed and the atmosphere in the class Arshi tells me is not very friendly. Teachers praise the ones who do well, the ones who don't do that well are hardly encouraged. So I have to ensure that my kid is absolutely prepared for these presentations, so that

her teachers praise her. I mean I don't want her to be all nervous and shaky in front of her friends too. I feel like they can reduce the pressure a bit, and these kinds of presentations can start maybe when these kids get a little older. Its good maybe for the long run, because they get all smart and confident, but I feel it is a little bit early. Also don't you think the teachers should be supportive of all the children, encourage them and help them grow, instead of just praising the ones who are good?

The above accounts of Mita and Amrita reveal in greater depths the evaluation systems that are prevalent in the private schools of Kolkata. These schools have testing system that according to the mothers are not appropriate evaluation tools for children. In the case of Erisha, Mita's daughter, who was tested on her 3D solar system model, we see that the school pays a lot of attention on the degree of perfection that the project displays. Schoolteachers as discussed by Amrita rarely encourage anything short of perfection. According to the mothers the teachers are rarely engaged to promote creativity among children, instead they focus on high levels of performance. Mothers like Mita complained that even though children are pushed towards such standards of excellence and perfection, they are often not age appropriate and the pressure to excel begins at a very early age. The mothers are left without an option and therefore actively get involved to ensure that their children are ahead in the competition.

The mothers in their descriptions also pointed out that the testing systems in schools have become more challenging and competitive in the recent day. They complained that it was simpler during their times, when they were in schools. The evaluation system for their children was not only competitive but also very unfamiliar to them. For example they said that their children had a system of worksheets in schools for all subjects. The worksheet system was unknown to the

mothers because they never had them when they were in school. There were classroom worksheets that would be done in class and there were home worksheets that were to be done at home. The middle-class mothers explained that this system of learning was new and was never part of their curriculum when they were in schools. Needless to mention they found it challenging to adjust with the new system of evaluation and learning.

During my interview sessions with Mrs. Pal (elementary school teacher at a reputed private school in Kolkata) I asked her the validity of such evaluation techniques. Mrs. Pal said,

Well firstly it is school policy you know. I mean we have to just implement whatever instructions we get from the administration. If you ask my personal opinion I would say that kids have to be trained in this model, where they are just not tested on written exams but also on their ability to speak fluent English and carry on a conversation in it. It is also important for them to stand up in front of an audience and speak. I mean it is better to train them now because when they go out in the real world for jobs they have to be able to speak confidently in front of a bunch of strangers. So I think in the current competitive academic climate they need to be trained early on. Nowadays forget about jobs even to get into the top colleges kids have to go through these group discussions and interviews. So you see they have to know how to face an audience and answer questions under pressure.

Mrs. Pal's description of the school's testing system testifies that the distinct forms of evaluation that are implemented by schools serve a larger purpose. The bigger goal is to train the children to be adept in a competitive higher academic setting and job market. The current requirements of the job market in India demand candidates to display high levels of competency, English proficiency and communication skills being some of the important parameters that are taken into account. Confidence emerges as the new cultural capital in the new academic

setting. This confidence much like the arguments against human capital theory are catered to fulfill the standards of the western capitalist and corporate setting. The arguments against the human capital theory state that its standards are evaluated based on western ideals of performance and capitalist requirements (Bowles and Gintis, 1975; Folbre, 1994). Similarly confidence is a new form of cultural capital that becomes the key to success in a rapidly Americanized Indian economy and global labor market. Thus the private schools in Kolkata strive to cater to the current needs of Indian job market and the higher education. The training begins at a very early stage where children are pushed into the system of critical evaluation and competition as a way to prepare them for the future.

The Kolkata job market has also changed in the recent decade. With the IT boom there has been emergence and growth of several multinational companies. The education system in turn caters to the shaping of students for prospective jobs in these multinational companies and Indian companies that are establishing foreign collaborations. Along with prepping students for the changing Kolkata job market they also tend to prepare students for higher education that has become very competitive and difficult over the years.

Some of the mothers in Kolkata also agreed with Mrs. Pal's perception of instilling pressure early on in the curriculum for children. Barnali who was a mother of an eleven-year-old boy said,

I mean look at the increase in population, increase in schools, so there obviously will be more competition! I mean what do you do about that? You have to prepare your child for the race, right? You can't change the system can you, so it is better that you deal with it and make sure that your kids also learn to deal with it fast! What else can be done (asks in an obvious way)?

Thus some of these mothers believed that the pressure induced by these private schools was the only answer to deal with the fiercely competitive and rapidly changing job and academic market. Needless to mention they struggled to adjust with the altering expectations of the schools, however some of them felt that children would do well in the real world if they got used to the pressure now. Hence we see that there was a range of opinion expressed by Kolkata mothers with regard to the overall reorientation of education in the city. A large section of them felt that the children were undertaking a lot of stress that crippled their imagination and ability to think critically. The children according to these mothers were forced to follow a strict set of rules as laid out by the schools. Some of the other mothers like Barnali argued that there were no other options to ensure the success of their children in a vying climate. In spite of the difference in opinion they concurred with regard to the increasing competition in schools and the changing academic structure. These mothers stated that they were also not well acquainted and acquainted with the modifications in the education system and hence it was a challenge for them to coach their children in a system that they were unfamiliar with.

Edison

Prama pointed out that it was difficult for her to teach her child social science and American history although she was able to teach Math and English because she knew the subjects. The main reason for Prama's lack of knowledge on social science and American history was because she never attended U.S. schools in the US. Prama's story was no different from the other immigrant mothers I interviewed in Edison. Prama was an

architect in Kolkata and migrated with her husband, who was a software engineer in Midtown Manhattan. Prama's account on her son's schooling indicates that immigrant mothers like her, face challenges to coach their children for schools in the US. These immigrant mothers who have been mostly socialized in India have little knowledge of American schooling. Thus part of their challenge is to learn the subjects themselves along with teaching it to their children to ensure that they do well in school. Adapting to the new schooling system is an integral component of the parenting crisis that mothers in Edison experience along with Indianizing their children.

Mothers in Edison felt in some ways alienated from the schooling system in the US. The immigrant mothers were striving to cope with the new education system and did not know the strategies since it was completely new to them. In the following sections I will analyze the evaluation patterns in Edison public schools that resulted in a distinct parenting crisis among immigrant mothers. Their crisis was embedded in the foreign schooling system that had very different standards and expectations. The literature on globalization of education sheds some light on the role of immigrant parents in the education system of the host country. Scholars in this field have analyzed that parents often grappling with the new system and the education system does not have enough resources to incorporate the culture of immigrants within the education system.

Immigrants from non-English speaking countries in particular experience the difficulties of coping with instructions and curriculum in a predominantly English speaking host country (Blackledge, 1999). In my research in spite of the mothers being well versed in English these women were unaccustomed to the new schooling system and that resulted in a serious parenting crisis. Along with the lack of knowledge of the schooling system

the Indian mothers also feared that the education system was to a certain extent over bearing on their children and pushed them away from their Indian roots and culture. The mothers were situated at the cross roads of orienting their children into Indian culture at the same keep them aligned with mainstream American culture.

CLASSROOM PARTICIPATION

It was early September when Woodbrook Elementary, one of the public elementary schools in Edison had their back to school night event. The mothers who had gathered for the event were mostly Indian immigrants who resided in Edison. The back to school night event started with the principal of the school delivering a “welcome’ speech to all the parents and introducing the team of teachers. After the preliminary round of introductions the parents were guided to the respective classrooms of their children. The walls of the second grade classroom were adorned with art works of children and had charts that contained several fun facts about animals, interesting places in the world and plants. We seated ourselves in the desks as Mrs. Pinkowsky, the second grade teacher organized her presentation.

The presentation of the second grade teacher mainly comprised an overview of the evaluation methods and the ways by which parents are expected to guide their children in the course of their regular school works and assignments. Mrs. Pinkowsky said,

It may so happen that your child received As in all their assignments, however the final grade might be an A-. You might be wondering why is that? Well, over the past years as a teacher I have seen that some kids are comfortable with written assignments and some do well in verbal tests. Hence here we try to incorporate both methods of testing to acknowledge the diverse learning styles among children. So, if your child ends up

getting an A- instead of an A in spite of receiving all As throughout the year, it is because it reflects an overall grade that includes classroom participation along with written tests. If the child has not participated at all in class that will affect their final grade.

Along with elaborating the core tenets of evaluation Mrs. Pinkowsky also went over the academic schedule for the whole year, the ways subjects will be taught in the class and various other housekeeping issues.

The second grade teacher's presentation revealed that children were exposed to a multilayered method of evaluation. They were tested both on their verbal communication skills and written proficiency. Verbal communication skills were encouraged and evaluated through a system of classroom participation. Children were encouraged to speak up in class and were graded on their performance in those instances of classroom participation. The mothers were particularly unaware of the system of evaluation based on classroom participation. This is because they said they had never been evaluated in their schools through a process of classroom participation. One of the mothers, Madhu said to Ritu, "So, how do we prepare them to speak up in class. Chiku (Madhu's son) is so shy, how do you think I should train him to speak in class?" Ritu responded by saying, "Me too, okay are you free this Thursday? Let me come over to your place and think this through." They both agreed to a mutually convenient time. Therefore mothers like Madhu and Ritu were alien to the idea of classroom verbal participation determining overall grades for their children.

Unlike the private schools in Kolkata, immigrant mothers in Edison sent their children to public schools that did not require the rigorous interviewing of mothers. Thus mothers found themselves distant and alienated from the school

affairs. On a follow up interview, Madhu mentioned that she often met with Ritu and others to work out strategies to overcome their children's introvert habits. On being asked what were the specific methods they discussed to ensure the success of their children in a classroom setting, Madhu said, "we usually discuss generally what can be done on an everyday basis. For example Ritu told me that whenever I take Chiku to visit the doctor it is a good idea to let him explain his problems. In this way he will be able to articulate his problems in front of a stranger and come out of his shell. I guess these are some of the ways that will help him become more extrovert at the cost of not forcing him too much." Hence mothers like Ritu and Madhu participated in the new schooling system by deriving support from each other's ideas and implementing them on a daily basis.

In Edison children were encouraged to speak up in class and express their thoughts. On the other hand in Kolkata schools there was no provision for classroom participation except presentations. In fact classroom participation of the spontaneous sort found in the U.S. classroom, was not incorporated within the curriculum. The evaluation system in the private schools of Kolkata did not take classroom participation into account while calculating the overall grade for the student. However they did have a system of evaluating children on structured classroom presentations. The children were graded on their ability to confidently present in front of an audience, answer questions and also the quality of the material presented. The larger goal was to prepare students to speak confidently in front of an audience and a way to improve their public speaking skills. Therefore

the classes in Kolkata schools were more lectures oriented as opposed to classes in Edison schools, which were more oriented around discussion and interaction.

HANDS ON LEARNING

One of the major mottos of elementary schools like Woodbrook and others was to uphold the ideal of hands on learning for their students. They aim to promote a learning environment that cultivates creativity among children. According to the principal of Woodbrook Elementary the school ensures that the children “remember what they learn in school for life” and hands on experiments and projects are the perfect means to that end. Students are graded not on their artistic skills or degree of perfection rather on their ability to demonstrate innovative and critical thinking. During the in-class presentation Mrs. Pinkowsky also pointed out that parents should provide “guidance only” to their children for the projects and allow them to develop ideas and execute them on their own.

The parents along with appreciating the hands on learning method were also struggling to cope with this new method of testing. My conversation with Kajal, who was a mother of an eight-year-old girl, revealed some of the anxieties that immigrant mothers experienced.

I: So, can you tell me something about the projects that your child has to do for school?

Kajal: Yeah, I mean it is pretty cool you can say. So the other day in science class they were learning chemical and physical changes right. So, the kids were told to perform an experiment that displayed chemical change.

I: You mean at school, they had to do the experiment?

Kajal: Yeah, yeah! I mean they like have to know what they have to do and take the materials to school and do it in class.

I: Wow! That is fun right!

Kajal: Yes! So I suggested that she could sour milk and make it into cheese. We practiced it a few times at home together and then she did it in school and it turned out fine. Teacher appreciated it and she was happy. I guess these kinds of projects are fun mostly and they learn. Also at times it is a learning experience for us as parents because we are also like, wow this is also a great way of teaching kids, right! So we are also learning these new ways of teaching not just science but other subjects too to kids. I think they learn better. But this also means that we have to work hard and think of creative ways (smiles), you know like think of a chemical change that she can do in class all by herself.

Kajal like most of the other mothers in Edison, were learning this new style of discovering ways to ensure that their children were engaging in innovative thinking. They also mentioned that it was a better way of learning for their children because it promoted creativity and did not focus on rote learning. Sampurna (mother of a seven year old boy) said, “There is no unnecessary pressure on the kids here (meaning in the US). I mean it also puts us in a tricky situation because we have never seen this kind of learning...I mean we wish we did! But I think this is better for the kids. So whatever is good for the child is good for us.” Sampurna’s comment indicated that in spite of experiencing challenges in terms of learning this new approach towards school assessment they appreciated the style of education and considered it beneficial for the creative growth of their children. They often mentioned that the schooling system in India was far more competitive, theoretical and exam oriented. They preferred the US system of schooling than the Indian even though they experienced challenges adjusting with the new system in the US.

The Kolkata schools promoted a higher standard especially when it came to class projects. As some of the mothers in Kolkata indicated that the school wanted the projects to be extremely well made and perfect. This resulted in mothers staying up late in the night and working on their children's projects to make them impeccable. As one of the mothers in Kolkata also pointed out that since these projects are graded and determine the final grade the parents have to ensure that they are done well and meet the standards set by the teacher. On the other hand in Woodbrook elementary and several other schools in Edison I saw that the parents were asked to minimally intervene with their child's projects. In this way the schools wanted to stimulate the creative capacities of the students.

Immigrant mother's participation in the school system and schoolwork was not simply to align their children and themselves with the mainstream education system. But there were also some mothers who participated critically in the system and did not want their children to assimilate completely into the mainstream education culture of the host society. These mothers in Edison felt that their children were inadequately challenged. They mentioned that the US schooling system did not promote a sense of competition among children and made them unprepared for real life challenges. Param for example said, "I feel like they spoon feed the children a lot and kind of mollycoddle them. I mean being supportive and all of that is fine but you got to make the kids tough as well. They have to learn it early on that life is not a bed of roses!" According to Param, the school system did not push the intellectual boundaries of their children and prepare them to undertake higher academic and job pressure for the future. Param

and a couple of the other mothers believed that the Indian schooling system was better in this regard. This is because according to them the Indian schools stimulated the intellectual faculties of children and coached them for the fierce job market at a very early age.

Mothers like Param also mentioned that the curriculum in Indian schools were more advanced than their US counterparts, especially the science and math curriculum. For example, Neetu said, “You know when I go to India I make sure that I bring back K C Nag’s (famous mathematician who has published books for school mathematics) math books. They are so much more advanced than the ones Shomu (Neetu’s nine year old son) does here. K C Nag’s fourth grade books are way more advanced than the ones he practices now. I think it will help him in the long run and make him better in Math.” Neetu felt that that her child was not motivated and challenged in the US schooling system. Hence she bought books from India to not only increase the proficiency of her son but also ensure that he was ahead from the rest of his peers.

From the above cases we see that immigrant Indian mothers had diverse participation models and opinions regarding the current schooling system in Edison. Majority of the mothers like Kajal and Sampurna supported the US system of education and felt that the creative process involved in schools was an appropriate path towards learning. A few others like Param believed those creative routes towards learning were not enough, because it did not coach children for serious competition for the future. In spite of the diversity in opinion about their children’s education in the US, these immigrant mothers concurred

unanimously that it was challenging for the mothers to learn the new system and accustom themselves to it.

CRITICAL THINKING

The US schooling unlike the Kolkata schooling system did not demand direct and hands on cooperation from mothers. Mothers were expected to be more like spectators and not instructors for their children especially when it came to schoolwork. During one such event the school representatives emphasized the role of mothers along with delineating the school's primary educational goal to promote critical thinking. During one of our conversations Sudha pointed out that critical thinking was promoted in various other creative ways. For example, Sudha said, "They had discussed the disappearance of the ship Mary Celeste and the various theories that surround the event in their reading and writing class. They were asked to do a write up on their own theory about the disappearance or they could agree or disagree with any of the theories discussed in class and provide their reasons. I mean that is pretty good right! They learn to develop reasoning skills!" So Sudha's description of this particular exercise was a way to facilitate critical and creative thinking among children. They not only learn to analytically argue in favor or against a case but also use their imagination to develop a sound theory. Sudha also pointed out that the parents were asked by teachers to not provide any creative input on behalf of their children. The children were expected to produce original ideas and argue on their own. Sudha said that the mothers were told in the beginning of the school year and during parent

teacher conferences that we were not expected to provide any creative input in their children's projects. Thus children were trained to think independently without their parent's guidance.

The schools claimed that the evaluation techniques that were used also ensured that children were challenged adequately and pushed to think critically and express analytically. Ms. Shah, a fourth grade teacher pointed out that she had included a lot more technology in her classroom teaching in a positive way. The technology according to her facilitated the growth of critical thinking. For example she has created a blog for her class, where she asks her students to read a book for a specific week and write a post stating their response to a few questions about the book. These responses are not just mere gist of the book, but should be thoughtful reflections. Ms. Shah said, "I try to keep them (the blogs) quite open ended, for example they are just not about thoughtful responses on books and movies but I also for example ask them to write on how they spent their winter break." The children were also allowed to interact with their peers through the blog posts by agreeing or disagreeing with each other. Ms. Shah said that she evaluates the responses based on their analytical and creative potential.

The immigrant mothers felt that their children were developing critical thinking capabilities because of the innovative learning techniques that were used in schools. However they always felt that they had to spend a greater amount of time not only familiarizing themselves with the new learning model but also worked hard to not interfere directly with their children's school assignments. As Ritu clarified, "It is hard to not give instructions to your kid. I mean you have to guide them but kind of in an indirect

manner. Not too intrusive, not too aloof...it is hard!” These mothers pointed out that it was a challenge to get used to this new method of testing and learning in schools.

In Kolkata schools the recent changes in the academic structure had resulted in a heightened competition among the children. The students were not only struggling to be at the top 1% of the class with excellent grades but also be ahead of their peers. One of the preliminary changes as pointed out before was a gradual yet steady shift towards training in analytical thinking instead of rote learning. For example as mentioned before they had made shifts from rigid in class examinations to a system of assessing children’s in-class or take home worksheets. Some of the mothers in Kolkata said that the schools have tried to eliminate textbooks and incorporated worksheets in elementary classes. They also mentioned that the worksheets often test the analytical skills of children instead of just writing answers out of memory. However the model of in-class exams were not eliminated at large and students were expected to do well in those. Thus like the schools in Edison the schools in Kolkata were making a shift towards incorporating the tenets of critical thinking through the model of worksheets. However the mothers were expected to diligently invest themselves as the children and the education system embark upon the path toward changing curriculum and testing. The mothers work hard to ensure their children excel in schools and are able to fit into the new model of schooling.

Solidarity/support networks among mothers to adjust with the schooling system:

Mom-schools versus reproductive enclave

M Consultancy was the mom-schooling agency that I studied in Kolkata. There are several others that have emerged in the face of Kolkata as well as several other metropolitan cities in India in the recent times. The mom-schools train about 50 moms in a year on an average. These mom-schooling agencies have emerged in the urban locations of the country as a way of coaching mothers toward cracking the entry-level admission for their children in various private schools. Along with coaching mothers to get their children admitted to various reputed schools the mom-schooling agencies also educate mothers the tenets of liberal parenting.

M Consultancy in particular coach mothers over a period of eight weeks and train them in various ways to crack the entry-level admission in various private schools in the city. Jhilli, a client of M Consultancy said,

This agency really saved me! Otherwise how would I be able to get my daughter admitted to GDB school (a reputed private school in South Kolkata)? They (refers to the M Consultancy) gave me all the necessary guidance and materials that helped me learn practically everything about the admission process. So yeah, I mean I am not sure what I would have done without their support. I mean I am willing to pay anything out of my pocket to get this kind of help (pause) at the end of the day you want your kid to be in a good school right?

Jhilli's account exemplifies the struggle that middle-class mothers experience when it comes to admitting their children into reputed schools in Kolkata. The increasing competition in order to gain entry into prestigious schools has compelled middle-class mothers to secure help from professional sources, mom-schooling agencies being one of them. Mothers like Jhilli who have no prior

experience of the rigorous interview process of mothers by the private schools are left with the option of seeking help from these parenting agencies.

The mom-schools have acquired a lead role in the process of facilitating school admissions in Kolkata. The mothers in my research corroborated that these agencies are well researched and ensure that mothers get the best resources available in order to prep themselves for the admission interviews. Payel, the owner of M Consultancy said, “It is crazy these days because every school is raising their bars and parents, especially mothers have to live up to those standards if they want their children to get into good schools. We here try our best to support these mothers who are already working very hard to make sure that they give the best to their children. In fact that is why I started this business because I saw anxious mothers losing their good night’s sleep over school admissions. It was then I thought could probably help them out.” Therefore as Payel mentioned the increasing competition for admission to reputed schools has definitely led to entrepreneurial projects such as mom schooling and contributed to their increasing popularity.

These agencies too are incorporating innovative styles to coach anxious mothers in Kolkata for the admission level interviews with schools. As Swati, the Public Relations consultant of M Consultancy mentioned, “We try and arrange mock interviews in the class. These mock interviews help mothers practice before the real show and they gain some confidence in the process. Then we arrange for sessions where mothers can ask all sorts of questions about the admission process in private schools. These are usually interactive sessions and for mothers it is like hands on experience. We are working really hard and our business is doing very well (smiles).” Swati’s explanation proves that these

commercialized parenting agencies are striving to look into the needs of their customers and ensure that the mothers gain all the necessary support. Needless to mention they are introducing innovative training techniques to keep themselves afloat in an increasingly competitive market.

Unlike Kolkata mothers the Edison mothers had a different reaction to the new schooling system. They consolidated their support in the form of a reproductive enclave or a network of immigrant mothers in close geographic proximity who came together to support each other in not only every aspect of reproductive labor but also with the foreign education system and overcome their challenges. The immigrant mothers through their mutual support helped each other navigate the education system.

The mothers said that they helped each other in the process of acquainting themselves to the new learning methods that promoted innovative critical thinking. In other words the reproductive enclave supported this collective understanding of the schooling system. The reproductive enclave comprised of immigrant Indian mothers in Edison who mutually shared every aspect of reproductive labor. One of the significant aspects of reproductive labor was to ensure that their children were doing well academically in school. The immigrant mothers sought assistance and support to acquaint themselves with the academic framework within the reproductive enclave. Ritu mentioned that it would be difficult for her to maneuver the schooling system if she did not get the support from her friends in the community. They shared similar challenges with regard to childrearing in a foreign country and these similarities brought them together as a

supportive community. Madhu said, “Whenever I am not following anything on the school curriculum and my son is unable to answer my questions, I usually call my friends and find out from them. It’s not like they know it all, but we talk it out together and figure it out eventually! I mean it is not like rocket science or something, but it is also not a piece of cake...(smiles)!” As Madhu pointed out these immigrant mothers worked hard to ensure that they were in a position to coach their children and be at par with the school’s course of study.

Thus on the one hand the mom-schools in Kolkata were commercial solutions that mothers opted in order to face the challenges of a changing education system. The mom-schools coached mothers to tackle the difficulties of the entrance level examination of private schools in Kolkata. They held mock interviews and addressed in detail the challenges of the new schooling system in the city. The schools in Kolkata demanded a more direct interaction from the mothers in particular and the commercial mothering agencies prepped women ways to stay involved directly into the system. On the other hand in Edison, the immigrant mothers reacted quite differently to the schooling system. They resorted to mutual support through their informal networks in the form of reproductive enclave. These women sent their children to public schools in Edison that did not demand direct involvement from mothers. The schools in Edison encouraged mothers to be silent yet vigilant observers in the daily schoolwork of their children. The immigrant mothers who were alien to this new system of schooling did not know the correct path to maintain distance from the daily

schoolwork of their children at the same time ensure the children's success in school.

Mother's relation with children as a response to new schooling system:

Kolkata v/s Edison

The changes in schooling system also affected relation between the mother and their children. The system of schooling prompts different styles of interaction with kids. One the major causes of concern is the increasing stress among children due to the pressure of the schooling system and to excel in academics with good grades. Mothers complained of being in a dual fix that forced them to maintain pressure on their children, so that kids do well in schools. On the other hand they were anxious about the mental health of their children. According to the Health Ministry of India, there have been more than 16,000 student suicide cases between the age group of 15 to 29 years in the past four years. One of the major reasons for student suicide is failure in school examination and tests. Thus the academic pressure in India has been one of the major concerns among parents.

Reshmi, mother of a five-year-old boy pointed out, "I am always worried if I am putting too much pressure on him or am I suppose to be too distant. But I feel that it is important to be vigilant of what he is doing, because I am scared that he might get depressed or has a nervous breakdown to be a part of this rat race!" I asked Reshmi further what she exactly did to ensure that her child remained stress free. She said, "I try my best to chat with him like a friend and less like a parent, to find out what is going on in his mind. At the same time it is also important to ensure that he is following school work and doing well at it."

Mothers in Kolkata echoed Reshmi's sentiments about child rearing and their changing relationship with their children in the current academic climate. They mentioned that compared to their parents they are more involved in the daily activities and life of their children. Maitri, one of my respondents stated, "The pressure during our times wasn't this much so our mothers could afford to relax. But now with the changes in education mothers have to be more involved, not just in the studies aspect of our kids lives but also in every aspect." The drastic shift in education and the overall employment market has increased the need for mothers to take a leading supervisory role in the daily life of their children. On being asked if being helicopter parents has affected the relationship between them and their children, some of them said that it can lead to increased bonds with their children, some mentioned that it increases tension between them. However they claimed that it was beneficial to be a pro-active parent, because in that way the kid's needs became clearer to the mothers and they could act accordingly.

In Edison on the other hand, I observed that immigrant mothers were struggling with the foreign education system and the new standards of schooling and education. The schools in Edison encouraged parents to maintain a distance from the regular school activities of their children. The mothers who were themselves adjusting to the changes in the education system did not know the exact ways of maintaining distance. The mothers were constantly under the crisis of socializing children in a foreign culture and they tried their best to instill Indian values in them.

Shobhanaa for example mentioned, “It’s often difficult to maintain distance from my kid’s schools. I mean the teachers are very accessible and all that, but they don’t want us to help our kids directly in home works. I feel like often my kids try to prove to us that they know more than we do. For example my daughter told me the other day when I tried to explain a math solution to her, that the way I teach is not correct because that is not how they do it in school. She told me, Mommy you don’t know how to do Math! Imagine, I have a degree in Physics (smiles)! Mothers like Shobhanaa felt that the schooling system and their lack of acquaintance with the schooling system was creating distance between them and their children. Mothers constantly complained that since academic training was different from their children’s the kids often assumed that their mothers did not have adequate knowledge.

Thus unlike Kolkata the mothers in Edison who felt the need to be hands-on involved in their kid’s school life were unable to do so because of their limited knowledge of the education system. The Kolkata mothers on the other hand were compelled to be intrinsically involved in their children’s schoolwork through the admission interviews for private schools. The increasing stress of academics in India also compelled the mothers to remain closely involved in the regular schoolwork of their children. The Edison mothers felt distant from their children’s school and also from their children’s lives because of a foreign education system. Thus the different schooling system in the two locations prompted diverse relationship patterns between mother and child.

Mothers as converters of capital and creating a reproductive field: Response to the new schooling system:

Kolkata and Edison

The middle-class mothers in Kolkata were acting as converters of capital. These mothers were not converting capital all by themselves but the mom-schooling agencies supported the conversion. Thus attending the mom-schools was part of their conversion strategy. The mothers in Kolkata convert the economic capital into this new form of cultural capital that allows children to gain admission into the reputed private schools in the city. Along with admission the new cultural capital also ensures success in the rapidly globalized job and academic market in India. This new cultural capital that was generated by the mothers also helped the children survive the pressures of the changing curriculum in schools. As Bourdieu points out in his discussion of conversions between different types of capital, that all types of capital can be derived from economic capital through varying efforts of transformation. In this case we can identify that the mom-schooling agencies in exchange for a fee, provide service in the form of knowledge and coach the mothers to acquire the cultural capital that helps them get their children admitted in reputed schools. Therefore these mom-schools support the conversion of capital by helping convert the economic capital to a distinct cultural capital that comprised of knowledge about the admission process in schools and their overall curriculum.

I argue that the conversion of capital that is a collaborative enterprise of the mothers and the mom-schooling agencies in Kolkata takes place within the

reproductive field and also contributes to the latter's functioning and sustenance. I define a reproductive field as a structured space comprised of mothers who aim to reproduce cultural capital through reproductive labor. I use Bourdieu's idea of field to conceptualize the reproductive field. Bourdieu defines a field as a structured space with its own laws of functioning and its own relations of force. Its structure, at any given moment, is determined by the relations between the positions agents occupy in the field. A field is a dynamic concept in that a change in agents' positions necessarily entails a change in the field's structure. The emergence of the reproductive field in Kolkata is an outcome of the crisis in parenting that is contingent on the changing schooling system and also the larger economic structure.

Similar to the Kolkata mothers the immigrant mothers in Edison were also acting as converters of capital. However unlike the commercialized formal mom-schooling agencies that supported conversion of capital in Kolkata, the reproductive enclave in the form of an informal group helped the mothers in Edison convert capital. Through mutual assistance these mothers gained a new form of educational capital that they transferred to their children.

The conversion of capital with the support of the reproductive enclave resulted in the formation and sustenance of the reproductive field in Edison. Within the reproductive field the members of the field or in other words the mothers were acting as converters of capital. The immigrant mothers not only learnt the new subjects taught in school but also the curriculum in a way that could be transferred to their children. The mothers believed that this educational

capital that was transferred to their children would guarantee academic success of their kids. Through collaborative support from the members of the reproductive enclave these mothers learnt the methods of conversion.

Conclusion

In this chapter I compared and contrasted the schooling system in the two locations and examined the ways it led to a distinct parenting crisis. This crisis prompted the development of two specific yet different reproductive fields. The mothers within the reproductive fields in Edison and Kolkata played a crucial role in the functioning and sustenance of the fields. I argue that these mothers act as converters of capital and they do not convert by themselves. The reproductive enclave comprised of immigrant Indian mothers supports the conversion of capital in Edison and in Kolkata it is supported by commercialized mom-schooling agencies. These two support groups helped mothers cope and adjust with the new and changing schooling system in their unique and separate ways.

In this chapter I compared the models of testing, curriculum and most importantly related it to the mothers' involvement in schools in the two locations. On comparing between the two locations it can be seen that the Kolkata schools are rapidly changing into a model where they are promoting in-class presentations, worksheet evaluations and public speaking skills. However all of this is happening within a highly competitive atmosphere for the larger goal of gaining admission into higher academic institutions and also getting jobs. In the Edison schools we saw that the curriculum was structured to promote critical thinking and hands on learning. The mothers in both the places were striving to ensure that their children were doing well in the schools. The immigrant

mothers in Edison were completely alien to the schooling system because they never went to US schools. On the other hand the Kolkata mothers found themselves stranded amidst a sea change that was taking place in the city schools, quite different from their own times.

The emerging parenting crisis in both Kolkata and Edison that had its roots in the schooling system to a certain degree was an outcome of the globalization of the economy and the labor market. In Kolkata the economic globalization of the country had resulted in the changing systems of education and schooling. The increasing competition to get into good colleges and get good jobs had led to schools implementing higher standards of evaluation and testing. This change in schooling was something mothers were not accustomed to and therefore had produced a distinct parenting crisis. In Edison on the other hand because of the rapidly globalized workforce there was an increase in the influx of elite immigrant professionals as IT engineers, bankers along with their spouses. These spouses who are mostly involved in reproductive labor found it challenging to cope with a new system of education, a system that they had never been a part of. Hence in both the cases we see that the globalization of the labor market and the economy had eventually led to specific parenting problems in the sending and destination countries.

The discussion on the globalization of education seldom paid attention on the role of mothers in the evolving education system. In this chapter I traced the ways mothers reacted differently to the varied schools structures in Edison and Kolkata. The focus on gender and education often sheds light on educating underprivileged mothers so that they

are able to transfer knowledge to their children. However, they tend to ignore the barriers that educated mothers experience within a changing or new academic setting. Immigrant mothers in the receiving countries strive to cope with a foreign education system and be actively involved in the lives of their children, at the same time instill traditional values in them. On the other hand mothers in the sending countries try to cope with a more globalized school setup that demands active participation from mothers. The mothers in the two locations resort to collaborative support networks to work through their struggles. In Edison the mothers ramp up their support in the form of a supportive community, the reproductive enclave and in Kolkata they derive support from commercial mom-schooling agencies. The schooling system act as a strong catalyst for mothers to shape their parenting methods in both the sending and receiving countries in very unique and specific ways.

CHAPTER IV

WHY DOESN'T MY KID SPEAK IN BENGALI? ANALYSIS OF A REPRODUCTIVE ENCLAVE IN EDISON, NEW JERSEY.

Edison (Middlesex County) often referred to as “Little India,” in New Jersey is the home of a substantial Indian immigrant population. The US Census Bureau 2010 estimates that 28.3% of the population in Edison is Asian Indians. This population tends to be concentrated in neighborhoods of northern Jersey, with lots of ethnic business like Indian groceries, Indian owned salons, restaurants, boutiques and jewelry stores. Within this residential enclave immigrant Indian mothers who are forbidden legal employment (they are H4, Dependent Visa holders) come together to support each other in the path of child upbringing. They not only engage in celebrating Indian festivals by training kids for these festivities, but they also support each other in adapting to an American mode of child development. How did they manage their new status as full-time mothers in a new country? How did they decipher the new expectations of American parenting found in the schools their children attended? How did they ensure their children did not lose touch with the family’s culture of origin?

In this chapter I discuss this twofold crisis of parenting, immigrant women encountered, embodied first in their transition from professional salary-earners to full time mothers, facing a new cultural landscape in which to parent and second in concerns about ensuring their children retain some connection to India. I argue that this crisis was resolved through the creation of a reproductive enclave. I define a reproductive enclave as the network of Indian middle-class mothers who live in close geographic proximity and mutually support each other to perform reproductive labor and share mutual concerns

of negotiating life in a foreign country. Within the enclave mothers learned American middle-class styles of parenting involving Lareau's concerted cultivation which they used to ensure their children's success in the US educational institutions as well as to secure cultural ties to India. Thus I extend the theory of concerted cultivation to understand how it is adapted by immigrant mothers collectively to ensure not only the economic success of their children but to form strong cultural ties to India and at the same time, preserve their own cultural and parental authority. Below I discuss mothers collective organizing as an enclave that optimizes the conversion of the family's economic capital into their children's cultural capital, thus ensuring the class success and mobility to their children. By using the term enclave I highlight the role of cooperative and invisible reproductive labor in the immigration process.

I will examine the various ways the "reproductive enclave" supports parenting and performs very distinct functions. Some of these functions include, sharing strategies of training children in Indian values within the realm of individual household and rendering support to maneuver the school system that is foreign to the immigrant mothers. The reproductive enclave in turn helps in the formation of a unique "reproductive field" in Edison. I define this "reproductive field" a structured space comprised of mothers who aim to reproduce cultural capital through reproductive labor. Bourdieu defines a field as a structured space with its own laws of functioning and its own relations of force. At any given moment, the structure of the field is determined by the relations between the positions agents occupy in the field. A field is a dynamic concept in that a change in agents' positions necessarily entails a change in the field's structure. I use Bourdieu's analysis of field to conceptualize the reproductive field in

Edison. This reproductive field in Edison therefore comprises of the immigrant mother's interaction with each other to grapple collectively through the parenting challenges in a foreign country. The reproductive labor techniques that these mothers come up with through mutual collaboration help in the sustenance and functioning of the reproductive field.

I employ Bourdieu's theory of conversion of capital in this chapter to analyze the reproductive labor that is shaped within the reproductive field in Edison. I argue that the immigrant mothers operate as "converters" of capital within the reproductive field. Bourdieu in his discussion of conversions between different types of capital recognizes that all types of capital can be derived from economic capital through varying efforts of transformation. The immigrant mothers in the reproductive field convert the existing cultural capital, which is their knowledge from India into a new cultural capital, which is an amalgamation of both Indianness as well as American values. The mothers claim their expertise in the Indian values, however the American values are unknown to them. Hence the reproductive enclave in turn helps in the conversion of capital by supporting each other in the path of maneuvering the American cultural framework as well as instilling Indian values in children. The converted capital that is an amalgamation of Indian values and American culture, shaped through collaboration by the reproductive enclave is eventually transferred to their children.

In my study I found that the Indian mothers in Edison's ethnic enclave was not profit centered but it did pivot on labor: mothers were performing unpaid reproductive labor within the enclave, which thereby results in the formation of the reproductive enclave. Hence a close look at the social lives of immigrant mothers in Edison reveals

their mutual bond and the ways by which they practice reproductive labor collectively. The members in the reproductive enclave collaborated to help each other in the path of performing reproductive labor. Thus I point out that mothers in the ethnic enclave in Edison was not performing commercial profit making enterprises, on the contrary they were engaging in reproductive labor at the community level within the enclave.

Professional salary earners to full time mothers: Negotiating a new culture and new parenting struggles

Jaya's everyday schedule started with waking up at 6 in the morning, getting her five year old son ready for kindergarten, bathing him, preparing his lunch box and dropping him off to the bus stand and sometimes to the school. Her rest of the day revolves around doing the groceries, preparing the lunch for the family and cleaning the house. Jaya like every other immigrant mother in Edison, moved from India a few years ago to accompany her husband who worked at an IT firm in New York City. She worked for five years at a reputed media house in India before she immigrated to the US. Jaya mentioned, "I do miss my job a lot! I mean I like it here, but I wish I were able to work here. Of course I did not have Avi (her son) in India, so maybe things would have been different there, but here I don't even have a chance at working. That is frustrating! I enjoy being a mom, but I wish I could go out and work too."

In this section I will analyze the shifting landscape in the lives of mothers who were once full time employees but now are stay at home moms. I highlight not just the frustration of these women tied by immigration laws that does not allow them access to

employment but also the struggles they experience in the terrain of mothering in a new culture and society.

In the course of describing their lives in the US, Ritu and a couple of the other participants pointed out the challenges they face as a parent in raising their children in a new country. The predominant reason was their lack of experience with U.S. parenting practices. Sudha, mother of two children said that parenting was an “overwhelming” experience for her; the other mothers too echoed a similar experience. During one such conversation I asked Sudha, “Do you feel you wouldn’t be overwhelmed if you were in India? How is it different here?” Sudha said, “In India you know everything. I mean it is your country, you know how things work, and you have grown up there. But here everything is new, it is so hard to learn and then pass it on to our children. I don’t know what classes to send my children and what is really good for them.” Here Sudha expressed her anxiety and lack of familiarity with the US society and parenting requirements. The immigrant mothers felt that the parenting experience will be less stressful if they were in India because of their familiarity with the land and the anxiety automatically increased in the US.

The Indian mothers mentioned that it was a difficult task to bring up children in the United States. The difficulties were in several areas, for example different educational methods, modes of discipline, child socialization strategies, etc. The mothers of Edison pointed out that their lack of early socialization in the US increased their challenges of being a knowledgeable parent in a foreign country. They were constantly experiencing the crisis to ensure that their parenting was at par with the American mainstream social standards.

Jaya along with the other immigrant mothers echoed similar frustration of being away from their country and recalibrating their lives within the four walls of house and submerging in full time childcare. What was even more challenging for the mothers was to bring up children in a foreign culture. The demands and expectations were different and mothers were confronted with the challenge of learning and embracing this new rulebook of parenting. In the course of adjusting to the new model of parenting the immigrant mothers adopted tenets of Lareau's (2003) concerted cultivation. Concerted cultivation refers to a technique of middle-class parenting, in which the children engage in various structured and organized extracurricular activities, which parents hope will develop their children as critical and innovative thinkers. Lareau's account of concerted cultivation draws a class distinction between middle-class and working-class parenting. Unlike the middle class concerted cultivation, the working class style of parenting, termed natural growth model, is geared to ensure that children remain obedient to authority figures instead of challenging and questioning them. Under the natural growth paradigm working-class parents encourage children to follow directives. These parents do not engage their children in various structured extracurricular activities; instead they play on their own. Contrarily the middle-class parents in Lareau's research were geared toward providing their children structured extracurricular activities. Along with sending children for structured activities parents also ensured their kids turned out to be critical thinkers, were able to question authority and not be obedient to directives.

Raji, a mother of a boy and a girl pointed out that she spends most of the day driving around taking her kids from one class to another. She said her children are enrolled in soccer, swimming classes and her daughter recently joined piano lessons. Raji

pointed out that she is constantly busy not only doing household chores but at the same time making sure her kids make it to these above mentioned classes on time and are abreast with their expectations. She says:

The weekdays are particularly busy! Rishu (Raji's daughter) recently joined this piano class...I think a month ago and umm it's good and we wanted her to join this class because she said she wanted to learn piano. In fact she is good at it as well! But you know with all the other classes she is taking it is getting very hectic for me! I have to like take her and Sam (Raji's son) to all these classes and I am like okay, this is getting too much! Weekends are also not free most of the times, because they have their soccer classes. At times I lose track of which class is when, because it feels like there are so many (laughs)! But here in the US every child is doing so many things at the same time, so I feel like my kids should also do them. The kids also seem to enjoy it so it's fine, I guess!

Raji's story reveals the responsibilities mothers have to shoulder in order to help their children engage in various extra curricular activities. These immigrant mothers are learning to become parents that take their children to extracurricular classes and therefore practice parenting in patterns akin to Lareau's middle-class respondents.

The immigrant mothers in Edison were not maneuvering the challenges all by themselves. The reproductive enclave in the form of a solidarity network and community helps in the practice of everyday parenting. The reproductive enclave provided a space for mothers to come together and share their parenting experiences, concerns and knowledge. For instance, Bhramra, who is the mother of an eight year old, mentioned,

It's often helpful to have friends whose kids go to the same classes as my children... I get to know what else can be done on my part, like whether I should put them in some other class or try out something else for them, you know what I mean right? Also some children who are slightly older and were in those classes before, their moms are obviously more knowledgeable than me...so it helps when I talk to them.

Bhramra's account reiterates that women within the reproductive enclave share and give away information about better classes and their experiences in those classes. In this way

they make sure that they are not only provide childcare and share their parenting experiences.

On the topic of sharing information about extracurricular classes among the member of the reproductive enclave, Suchi emphasized that she had changed the art class that her daughter went to after consulting with her friends in the neighborhood. She said, “My daughter was going to this Sunshine art class. She went for a few weeks and then Rachna and Sandhya (Indian immigrant mothers in the reproductive enclave) suggested that Dorothy’s art class was better. So we decided to switch. My daughter likes it at Dorothy’s art class.” Hence Suchi’s account revealed that neither did the mothers share information with each other but were also influenced by the suggestions made by their friends in the reproductive enclave. These suggestions made by members of the reproductive enclave deeply shaped the parenting strategies adopted by immigrant mothers of Edison.

From the above examples it is evident that mothers in the reproductive enclave support each other as they struggle through parenting children in a new society. They emulate Lareau’s model of concerted cultivation by putting kids in various extracurricular activities and making them critical thinkers at the same time. The reproductive enclave supports this project. In Lareau’s study concerted cultivation was not a community endeavor, rather an individual project for parents. On the contrary in Edison the reproductive enclave comprising of Indian immigrant mothers supported each other in the path of concerted cultivation. Members of the reproductive enclave share information about better soccer or music classes with each other. They also help each other discuss children’s difficulties in school. These difficulties mainly include

brainstorming ideas of dealing with a new curriculum and school syllabi. The mothers mentioned that since they were not educated in the American schooling system they had very little knowledge of maneuvering the system. Hence the reproductive enclave helped them to deal with a new schooling system. Along with maneuvering a new schooling system, mothers also navigated through parenting difficulties in a foreign country. Mothers in the reproductive enclave for example shared strategies of negotiating with children in case they threw tantrums. They would gather in the playground or meet once a week to discuss such parenting strategies.

Concerted cultivation among the Indian immigrant communities was also accompanied by certain imminent conflict. The conflict was between the new model of parenting that mothers embraced and the previous notions of parenting that they carried with them from India. For example Shobhanaa was one such mother who exclaimed the conflict in immigrant parenting. Shobhanaa said,

You know Yashi (Shobhanaa's seven year old daughter) is constantly arguing with me. She never stops until she proves herself right. I think this is the culture of this place (she means US). I have heard my friend's kids do the same! I mean we never did that to our parents, we always accepted whatever they told us, even when we did not like it...right? I don't know why they go on arguing. But what to do, I have also got used to the fact that I have to convince her, instead of forcing her (smiles)!

Mothers like Shobhanaa were constantly struggling between these two worlds of parenting. The immigrant mothers were completely foreign to the new patterns of parenting in the host country. However to ensure the success of their children in the US mainstream society they embraced concerted cultivation. As much as they adopt concerted cultivation, the immigrant mothers' parenting also incorporates elements of the natural growth model. The natural growth model

with its use of directives become pronounced especially when mothers are instructing children to adopt elements of Indian culture. For instance during my interviews some of the mothers were forcing their children to speak in their mother tongue in spite of their children's reluctance. Hence parenting within the reproductive enclave in Edison was a combination of both concerted cultivation and the natural growth model. Concerted cultivation was used to guide the children into mainstream American culture and the natural growth model was the apparatus to keep children grounded in Indian culture.

The immigrant mothers in Edison along with the support of the reproductive enclave were reproducing culture through their parenting strategies. The reproduction of this culture was an amalgamation of both Indian and American values. As much as the mothers were embracing concerted cultivation as a means to achieve social and academic success for their children they were also adhering to the natural growth model as a way to teach children Indian values and heritage. The natural growth model was similar to the upbringing of the immigrant mothers in India. Hence as the mothers tried to incorporate their baggage of Indian child rearing techniques it would result in an obvious conflict between the parents and their children, quite similar to what Shobhanaa pointed out above. The mothers continued to maintain the balance between the two systems of parenting and the reproductive enclave supported them through this process.

The reproductive enclave also worked as family in the hours of crisis for Edison mothers. As immigrant mothers were charting out their lives in a foreign space, far away

from home and family the members in the enclave stepped up to fill up the void. They shared childcare responsibilities as well as helped each other perform everyday chores. For example, Divya, mother of a five year old and started going to work after she received her EAD (Employment Authorization Document, which is a work permit) left her daughter in the house of her friend and neighbor, Nita. This arrangement saved her money and relieved her of the uncertainties involved in enrolling her daughter in a formal day care. In a similar context, Shobhanaa explains,

I leave my son at times at my friend's place and I am relieved that he is at a safe place...a known place and also it is not possible to take him out with me all the time, especially when the weather is bad outside or when I have heavy grocery to do. My friends (who are mostly women in H4 Visa) are so helpful, loving and umm... you know caring! I never feel away from home (smiles)!

It is just not about helping each other out by sharing childcare but also becoming or behaving like a single family when it comes to issues related to illness and distress.

Melissa mentioned,

My son was one and a half years old then and was terribly sick; he had to be hospitalized and I was constantly running back and forth from home and hospital, you know. It was like a mess...but my friends, Madhu, Ritu and others made food and I did not have to look after stuffs in the kitchen. They even took care of my two young daughters. It's a blessing to have such good friends...really!

Therefore the reproductive enclave that comprised of immigrant mothers who were tied with immigration laws supported each other in negotiating every aspect of life in a foreign country. The enclave helped the mothers figure out the uncharted territory of life, culture and parenting in a different space and helped resolve the everyday crisis.

Crisis of “Indianness”: Mothers negotiate to train their kids

The immigrant mothers in Edison were not only dealing with unemployment and mothering in a foreign country but parenting came along with its multifaceted concerns. One of the primary concerns was their children’s distance from Indian roots and culture. In the following sections I will highlight the major cultural crisis that mothers encountered in their everyday path of parenting, which were firstly their kid’s lack of familiarity with their mother tongue, and secondly their children’s lack of understanding of various aspects of Indian culture. I will thereafter analyze the ways by which the reproductive enclave stepped up to resolve the above-indicated crises and examine the ways concerted cultivation was employed tactically to foster Indianness among children.

Crisis of mother tongue

“Sweetheart, please speak in Bengali”, said Ritu to her younger daughter as the four year old asked Ritu to grab a packet of Cheetos from the top shelf of the pantry. The four year old felt shy and amused at the same time to repeat her request in Bengali; I could see it in her eyes. Ritu persisted and the little girl finally lisped a few words in Bengali. The tenses were not in place; nevertheless she made her way to the Cheetos!

Creasing her brow, Ritu, lamented, “I try my best to train them to speak in Bengali all the time. But I don’t know why they always refuse to speak! You know at times I fear that she will never learn Bengali or anything that is Bengali. I mean it’s tough to raise a child here...seriously!”

Ritu was living in Edison for about seven years and had two children who were born in the U.S., the older one in New York City and the younger in Edison, New Jersey. Ritu claimed that the move to Jersey was necessary because New York was too expensive

and the city was too crowded to bring up a child. Ritu used to work in an NGO back in Kolkata before she got married and migrated to the US. She earned her Masters from a reputable University in Kolkata and claimed she was at the top 5% of her class. Ritu's husband Amit, too was a bright student. He completed his engineering and management from top institutes in India and was currently employed in a software firm in New York City. Amit was a H1B Visa holder and Ritu was on Dependent (H4) Visa and was not allowed to legally work in the US because of her Visa status.

Mothers like Ritu shared a common concern about children's lack of proficiency in their mother tongue. Children mostly spoke in English in school with friends and also back home with family. The immigrant mothers in Edison used several tricks to make their children speak in the vernacular. For example Gita would give her son an extra hour to play on the X-Box every week if he spoke continuously in Marathi (Indian regional language) at home with family members. The concern therefore was not just about their children's command over the vernacular, but was symptomatic of a larger set of problems. The mothers clarified that the lack of proficiency in the mother tongue was directly related to their children's ignorance of the Indian culture as a whole. "Distancing themselves from the mother tongue would result upon distancing themselves from their own roots," justified one of the mothers. Thus these mothers desperately wanted their children to learn Indian values and culture and speaking in one's mother tongue was the first step to attain that goal.

The concerned mothers shared their anxieties of child rearing within the reproductive enclave. During some of the casual weekend social gatherings mothers got together to discuss some of the crisis especially of children not speaking in their parent's

mother tongue. In one such social gathering Ranja, (mother of a four year old boy) told the other mothers,

Well, I am going to India for the summer break next week, so I could bring some books for your kids. I could bring the Varnaparichay (guide book to Bengali letters) or any other Hindi books if you want to. Just let me know and I will bring it for you okay?

Therefore in this case Ranja, one of the mothers in the reproductive enclave took initiative to buy the seminal vernacular texts for children. I witnessed some of the mothers in the group took Ranja up on the offer. The mothers took vernacular training of their children quite seriously and the enclave helped them navigate the crisis of acquainting children with their mother tongue. Mothers like Ranja offered support and took the initiative of sharing resources with others in the enclave.

The reproductive enclave also deepened the crisis of mother tongue by helping mothers realize the gravity of the situation. The mothers constantly communicated with each other over the phone or met in the common playground. Some of the mothers sent their children to Hindi speaking classes and passed on the information about these classes to their fellow comrades in the enclave. Thus along with sharing concerns the reproductive enclave provided constructive solutions for mothers to negotiate with the crisis of native language proficiency that their children were experiencing.

Along with supporting the mission of coaching children towards native language proficiency there was also an atmosphere of competition among mothers. This competition encompassed comparing each other's children's ability to speak well in their parent's mother tongue. It appeared as though mothers were using the children's ability to speak in their parent's mother tongue as an indicator of successful or ideal parenting.

Madhu (mother of two boys), mentioned in a frustrated tone,

Prish (five year old daughter of Jay) is always speaking in Bengali at home. She is also so fluent. Why can't my boys speak like that? I asked Jay, like what she does to make Prish speak in Bengali, but she gives all these vague answers...like umm I don't know! How can she not know huh? How is that even possible! Too much this is!

In this case Madhu was exasperated and envious with Jay's ability to train her child to speak fluent Bengali. Madhu wanted her children to acquire an equal command over the language the way Prish had. Her frustration reached a peak when Jay, a member of the reproductive enclave was unwilling to share her pedagogy of coaching Prish to speak fluent Bengali. Thus the reproductive enclave in this case not only operates as this supportive community of mothers who help each other resolve the crisis of the mother tongue, but also as the group that generates the tension around the language acquisition.

Thus from the above cases it can be claimed that the reproductive enclave raises consciousness among mothers about their children's need to have strong command over their parent's mother tongue. This consciousness raising operates in two very distinct ways. The first kind is that of outright support, similar to what Ranja was doing in the above example. Ranja was supportive of the concerns of her friends and offered to bring resources from her India trip. The second kind of consciousness was by creating an atmosphere of competition and jealousy, similar to the tension presented between Madhu and Jay. In the second scenario, Madhu whose kids weren't fluent in Bengali was not just exasperated at Prish's fluency but was frustrated because Jay was unwilling to share her methods that resulted in the success. In this way the reproductive enclave deepened mothers' concerns about language acquisition and proficiency.

Crisis of culture

The immigrant Indian mothers were experiencing the constant crisis of divorcing their children from Indian roots. However the reproductive enclave in Edison, devised strategies to ensure that children were in constant contact with their Indian heritage. These strategies can be broadly divided into two distinct categories, which are the formalized training of culture and the informal training of culture.

FORMALIZED TRAINING OF CULTURE

Indian immigrant women in Edison, New Jersey experienced a distinct parenting crisis in which they struggled to teach the importance of Indian values while also making sure children fit well in American mainstream society. To acquaint children with Indian culture, most were sent to various classes that taught children how to speak fluently in Hindi and several other Indian languages. Some of these classes in Edison also taught children Indian classical music and dance forms.

It is important to note that training children Indian values is often done by implementing the American method of child rearing. Children are sent to various structured classes that coached them in Indian regional languages, dance and music forms. Using the paradigm of concerted cultivation examined by Lareau that includes training children in structured extracurricular activities in the context of this Indian community immigrant mothers adopted an American middle-class approach to keep children grounded in Indian values. Mothers chaperone their children to these classes and ensure that children are abreast of these class requirements, for example they keep a close

eye on whether children are practicing regularly at home and are devoting sufficient time to keep up with the lessons that are taught in these classes

The maintenance of Indian heritage was an ongoing project for the mothers. There were various ways by which that effort was manifested. Along with cultivating the vernacular proficiency of their children the Edison mothers also took an active part to teach their children elements of Indian culture. This was mostly achieved by enrolling children in various extracurricular classes that trained them in Indian classical dance, music and so on. These classes were mostly once or twice a week and the mothers ensured that their children attended one of these classes, whether it was a Hindi reading group or a classical Indian music class.

During our conversation Ritu pointed out the significance of the classes that coached children Indian culture (dance, music and Indian languages) and how they were a big source of relief for the Indian mothers.

Ritu: Well you know in this country it's so much about the extracurricular activities. I have to take Arya (the elder daughter) to swimming twice a week and then she also has her ballet and piano lessons. Oh! I recently admitted her to a Bharatnatyam (an Indian classical dance form) class. She is enjoying! Cool huh?

Me: Bharatnatyam! Really? Where is this class?

Ritu: Oh! There is this class near Oaktree road where this South Indian lady teaches dance. I heard from Usha (Ritu's next door neighbor). She sends her daughter too so I thought why not right?

Me: Wow, that's amazing! So, the other kids in the complex also go to these kinds of classes?

Ritu: Yeah! Obviously! Who would miss a chance to send our children to classes that teaches something Indian! I am sure we are lucky to have such classes around us!

As our conversation continued Ritu mentioned that she was not the only one who sends her children to Bharatnatyam classes. In fact there are several other classes that coach kids to read and write in Hindi as well as train them in various Indian classical music. Ritu and others mentioned that news of these classes is mostly spread by word of mouth and through pamphlets. Once some of the mothers are pleased with these classes they recommend them to other mothers in the neighborhood. In fact that is how Ritu learned about the dance class at Oaktree road. Thus within the neighborhood I studied in Edison Indian immigrant mothers shared information about these classes with each other. In this way mothers in the community shared parenting methods and tried their best to restore Indian culture and tradition.

It is important to note that training children Indian values is often done by implementing the American method of child rearing. Children are sent to various structured classes that coached them in Indian regional languages, dance and music forms. Using the paradigm of concerted cultivation examined by Lareau that includes training children in structured extracurricular activities in the context of this Indian community it can be argued that immigrant mothers adopted an American middle-class approach to keep children grounded in Indian values.

INFORMAL TRAINING OF CULTURE

Another way in which mothers trained children to be Indian was by celebrating various Indian festivals within the community, preferably in the common playground during the summer or the community room during winters. These celebrations included dressing up in Indian traditional outfit and sharing fancy Indian cuisines. I describe below

some of the Indian celebrations that are organized in Edison, mostly by Indian mothers and the ways through which these celebrations are a mechanism to enhance the awareness of Indian culture among their children.

For example, on one summer evening in Village Court, one of the apartment complexes in Edison, all the mothers had gathered in the community hall to celebrate a popular Indian festival. The sun had not set when the celebration started. All the mothers were dressed in traditional attire (mostly sarees and salwar kameez) and the children were also dressed in similar traditional outfits. There was plenty of food served on the wooden tables that were placed along the long stretch of windows. The food were also popular Indian snacks and I heard someone say that it was a potluck, needless to mention the mothers had prepared the food and put them together for the occasion. Right after everyone had food there was a dance performance by the kids.

The celebration started with a poetry recitation by one of the kids (four years old) in Hindi. She recited with plenty of enthusiasm. Her Hindi was not perfect but her performance was well rehearsed and she emoted every word of the poem with suitable facial expressions and body gestures. Her performance was followed by a dance performed by a group of children aged between five to seven years. They performed a Gujrati folk dance (regional dance). They wore bright colored ghagras (traditional Gujrati outfit) that added an authentic flavor to their performance. The next performance was a six-year-old boy who played a famous Hindi song on the piano. He wore a white kurta (Indian style long shirt) with jeans and even though he looked nervous his keys were in place. Some mothers in the audience hummed to the tune he played. The next performances were Bollywood (Mumbai movie industry) songs pieces by few children.

One of the mothers played the guitar to give music to their songs. The show ended with a fashion show by the children, where they wore the regional outfits for all the Indian states. It was a well-organized and well-rehearsed event. The children dispersed in the playground after the show was over. They had quickly slipped back into their jeans and skirts and got busy with their skateboards and baseballs.

As each performance ended the mothers in the audience clapped their hands in excitement. These mothers were thrilled and very proud at the same time to witness their children engage in traditional cultural performances that provided assurance that some semblance of their cultural practices and aesthetics might travel across generational boundaries. Shanti and Udita's discussion below bore testimony of the immigrant mother's pride.

Shanti: Wow, I am so happy we organized this and look at those kids, they really looked great!

Udita: Yes absolutely! I feel like I am going to cry! Oh by the way did someone video record the event? I promised by relatives in India that I will send it to them. My aunty has a hard time believing that Ankita (Udita's daughter) does Kathak (traditional Indian dance form) so well.

Shanti: Yeah yeah I think Anu must have recorded it. I totally get what you are saying. It is so hard to convince them (meaning relatives in India) that we teach our kids these things. Anyway I don't care (smiles)!

Thus from the above conversation, it can be said that the immigrant mothers held a lot of pride on not only their children's performance at these cultural events but also because it indicated that their children were successfully embracing Indianness.

One of the mothers in the audience asked me eagerly, "How do you like the performance? We spent the last few weeks doing continuous rehearsals to make sure the kids get it right... so did they? What do you think?" I nodded in

affirmation and she looked so relieved more than happy. However staging the show as a success was not the entire goal. One of the mothers, whose child presented a poem, told me that she ensures that her child does not merely learn the poem but also mentioned to me that she makes it a point to ensure that her child knows the meaning of the poem, the poet and the overall background. In this was she wanted to ensure that her child knew the roots of the poem instead of merely memorizing it. The mothers therefore sought to ensure that their children were deeply invested in Indian culture and not just performing well in the event.

In the informal training of culture I argue that mothers were attempting to gain some control over other aspects of the lives of their children. These immigrant mothers were learning American parenting methods and they were on shaky grounds in engaging in American schooling and childrearing practices. However by conveying Indian culture put them back in the drivers' seats as experts. Mothers claimed agency and regained control over their children's lives, because they felt that educating Indian culture was one of the fortes in which they had an expertise. Needless to mention the mothers attached a lot of prestige to the success of their children in these events. Success of their children in these shows meant that they were competent mothers who were able to pass down the Indian cultural elements to their kids. Their children's performance validated their parenting skills within the community and helped them maintain their status within the enclave. In the above-mentioned examples the reproductive enclave took an active part to keep children in the community grounded in Indian values and culture. Celebrating Indian festivals in the enclave was a way of practicing Indianness and keeping it alive. The immigrant mothers within the reproductive enclave not only helped each other by

babysitting for children or doing groceries but also mutually supported its members by investing substantial amount of time to organize Indian cultural programs and sharing parenting ideas and methods.

Directed Concerted Cultivation

Concerted cultivation as a form of parenting can have several manifestations in various middle-class communities, based on their immediate environment and locality. Therefore Lareau's analysis of concerted cultivation is merely a departure from working-class parenting methods. Lareau claims that American middle-class parenting is more guided by sending children to structured extra curricular classes and promoting critical thinking among them. On the other hand working-class parents train their children with directives, do not send their children to structured extra-curricular classes and train them to be obedient to authority. In the reproductive enclave I observed I found evidence of both. The Indian immigrant mothers adopted both models of negotiation and giving directives. Middle-class communities, especially the one that I studied did not adopt concerted cultivation entirely. The reproductive enclave shaped concerted cultivation culturally. Member of the reproductive enclave come together to share parenting tips at the same time maintain Indianness within the community. Some of the ways Indianness was restored was through the elaborate and frequent celebration of Indian festivals. The presence of various extracurricular classes also allowed the maintenance of Indian culture in Edison. These were for example Hindi-speaking classes, classes that taught Indian classical music and dance forms.

The mothers also trained their children to become critical thinkers. Critical thinking did not take off as this giant task but through small steps. For instance Roopa, an

immigrant mother in the reproductive enclave mentioned some of the small steps that she took to ensure that her six-year-old daughter was able to start “thinking” at an early age. Roopa would read from Aesop’s Fables to her daughter and ask her what the moral of the story was. Roopa specified, “I never tell her what the moral of the story is, I wait for her to interpret the story in her own way and explain me the moral. This is helpful because she gets to think on her own and put them in her own words too.” Thus mothers like Roopa took steps to ensure that their children were developing critical thinking faculties. This parenting technique shared similarities with Lareau’s concerted cultivation where middle-class parents used negotiation and discussion to interact with children.

Mothers in the reproductive enclave seek to cultivate both obedience and analytical thinking. In fact from my representation of the above data, I argue that mothers like Ritu practice concerted cultivation by giving directives to their children at the same time. The example of Ritu forcing her kid to speak in her mother tongue was one such example. During my fieldwork in Edison I witnessed mothers forcing their children to touch the feet of elders as a mark of respect and a common practice performed in Indian culture. In both these cases mothers were implementing the model of natural growth that Lareau argued was practiced by working-class parents. Working-class parenting involved giving directives to children, and encouraged them to obey authority figures without questioning. As much as the immigrant mothers were using directives they were also employing Lareau’s model of negotiation as a component of concerted cultivation. These immigrant mothers trained their children to be critical thinkers as a way of being included into the mainstream American middle-class society at the same time wanted their children to be aware of their Indian heritage.

Thus for these middle-class Indian mothers Lareau's class based parenting binary does not hold up that often. I refer to the above-mentioned form of parenting that is a combination of both concerted cultivation and natural growth as directed concerted cultivation. Along with putting children in various extracurricular classes as a way of making sure that they were adjusting well into the American mainstream society, the mothers within the reproductive enclave ensured that the children remain acquainted with their Indian roots. Celebrating Indian festivals, putting children in Indian language classes as a way of teaching children Indian culture almost became mandatory practice within the community. Along with sending children to the various classes that taught them aspects of Indian culture, the mothers also used directives to ensure that their children were practicing Indianness on a regular basis. In this way the parenting approach of these Indian immigrant mothers were a combination of both Lareau's concerted cultivation and natural growth model. The immigrant mothers with the support of the reproductive enclave create a new culture within the community. This new culture that is a culmination of Lareau's dual model of parenting allows mothers to acquire the lead role when it comes to transferring Indian values to their children at the same time acquire and pass on American middle-class values to their kids. Therefore to critique Lareau's concerted cultivation it can be concluded that concerted cultivation is a mere departure from working-class parenting and takes different forms in various middle-class societies in the country.

Reproductive enclave and the conversion of capital

Sarah Ruddick (1989) was the first motherhood scholar who theorized the experience of mothering as opposed to the institution of motherhood and argued that motherhood was a practice. Ruddick delineates three very specific aspects of mothering which are preservation, growth and social acceptance. Along with Ruddick's groundbreaking conceptualization of motherhood as an experience, Vasquez (2010) also examined the role of Mexican-American mothers as "carriers" of knowledge in the US society. These Chicana mothers were expected to transmit the racial and gender knowledge to their children and therefore act as "mediators" between the society and their children. In the scope of motherhood studies whether it is Ruddick's theory of mothering as an experience or Vasquez's analysis of Chicana mothers as carriers of knowledge, there is rarely any discussion on the role of immigrant mothers as converters of capital. However in my research I discovered immigrant Indian mothers acted as *converters* of capital within the reproductive enclave and transferred a distinct form of cultural capital to their children.

The immigrant mothers in Edison were not converting capital all by themselves, instead the reproductive enclave enabled the conversion of capital, which in turn maintained and sustained the reproductive field. The enclave helps mothers use their considerable cultural capital in a new cultural context, thereby allowing them to convert capital and pass it along to their kids. In my study middle-class mothers in Edison were acting as *converters* of capital within the household. Bourdieu never delves in any detail into the important role of mothers in transforming forms of capital. Mothers in my study were the ones who actively

converted existing cultural and economic capital into a new form of cultural capital within the domestic space. The conversion of capital therefore takes place within the reproductive field and also helps in the maintenance of the field.

In Edison I saw immigrant mothers by virtue of the immigration laws were unable to acquire the economic capital, which was in turn earned by their male spouses. These mothers who had access to the economic capital, converted the existing cultural and economic capital to a brand new cultural capital. The middle-class Indian mothers claimed that they had to re-socialize themselves to learn the American culture, because they were not born and brought up in the US. Hence it was their job to make sure that their children knew everything about the American culture and actively participated in it. The mothers tried their best to learn a new parenting model that ensured the success of their children in a foreign country. The conversion of capital took place in several spheres, for example education, extracurricular activities and so on. They embraced major tenets of Lareau's model of concerted cultivation. The middle-class mothers send their children for various extracurricular activities and also enabled them to become critical thinkers. Thus these mothers were shaping their parenting methods based on the American middle-class standards of child upbringing.

Conclusion

In this chapter we see the various ways the reproductive enclave plays an active role to keep the community of immigrant mothers together. Immigrant mothers in the reproductive enclave by supporting each other through the daily reproductive labor helped shape the reproductive field. The middle-class

immigrant mothers who were forbidden legal employment by virtue of their immigration status submerged their lives in reproductive labor and the upbringing of their children. However, mothers do not perform child rearing single-handedly but with the help of other immigrant mothers in the enclave. The mothers in the enclave helped each other maneuver everyday struggles, in a foreign land, that included charting out lives as a mother and embracing new parenting styles.

The Indian immigrant mothers in Edison, implemented Lareau's model of American middle-class parenting strategies in the form of concerted cultivation to coach their kids. They mostly employed concerted cultivation as a way to teach their kids not only American ways of life but also instill Indianness in them. As much as the mothers sent their children to structured extra curricular activities like soccer and guitar they were also sent to classes that taught kids Hindi and Indian dance and music forms. Immigration literature often shed light upon the crisis that immigrant parents experience of distancing their children from their cultural roots (Kibria, 1993;Dhingra, 2007). However, not enough study focuses on the role of mothers employing American middle-class strategies to promulgate Indian values in their children.

In the next chapter I shift the lens to analyze parenting techniques and goals in the sending country, namely India. In India I chose Kolkata as my research site where through intensive participant observation and face-to-face interviews I evaluated mothering practices. In the next chapter I compare and contrast the child rearing techniques between Edison and Kolkata. On comparing the parenting methods in the two locations I will analyze the ways intimate family practices like child rearing across

cultures is shaped and influenced by the globalized economy and labor market. The next chapter will help us map the changing methods of parenting within various middle-class communities and also examine closely the role of mothers in the creation and transfer of distinct forms of cultural capital.

CHAPTER V

LET'S MAKE YOU A BETTER MOM: ANALYSIS OF COMMERCIAL PARENTING IN KOLKATA

The previous chapter extensively examined the parenting crisis among immigrant mothers in Edison, New Jersey. This parenting crisis was the lack of their children's contact and awareness of Indian culture and values. In order to resolve the crisis the Indian immigrant mothers formed a community that I refer to as the "reproductive enclave". The reproductive enclave of Edison facilitated restoration of Indian culture and heritage within the community by celebrating Indian cultural events and coaching children to actively participate in them. The members of the reproductive enclave also discussed parenting strategies and techniques and collectively charted out paths to deal with child rearing in the US. The parenting strategies of the immigrant mothers within the enclave resembled Lareau's concerted cultivation. However, unlike Lareau's concerted cultivation the parenting practiced by the immigrant mothers was a community endeavor. Lareau focused on an individualistic approach and rarely explored the role of community in concerted cultivation, on the contrary the reproductive enclave played an active part to practice concerted cultivation collectively.

This chapter will compare and contrast the informal parenting training of Edison's reproductive enclave with the formalized coaching offered by mom-schooling agency, M Consultancy. This chapter will answer the central question of why middle class immigrant families in the U.S. adopt informal parenting strategies, while in Kolkata, where familial resources abound, parents turn to commercial strategies? In order to answer this question, I argue that the reason lies in the globalization of the labor market

and the economy as well the desire for upward social mobility. In Edison the globalization of the labor market has led to the immigration of elite Indian workers into the US that has led to the growing parenting crisis among immigrant communities. The immigrant communities through the formation of the “reproductive enclave” seek to informally find solutions to resolve the parenting challenges. On the other hand in Kolkata, as well as urban India, the globalization and neoliberalization of the education system has affected intimate spaces like parenting. Parents, mothers in particular are seeking help from professional agencies that coach mothers to emulate an American middle-class parenting similar to Lareau’s concerted cultivation, that in turn becomes a marker of upward social and cultural mobility. In Edison we saw that concerted cultivation was accompanied by the urge to accomplish Indianness within the community. In Kolkata too mothers adopted tenets of concerted cultivation to blend and make children competitive in a globalized academic and job market. To support my argument I examine and closely analyze a formal parenting agency (popularly referred to as “mom-schools”) called the M Consultancy that support struggling middle-class mothers in Kolkata practice everyday parenting in the mold of Lareau’s concerted cultivation and thereby prep their children to compete in an aggressive academic setting and future employment sectors.

The mom-schooling agencies in Kolkata, train mothers specific parenting strategies. The agencies often refer to these parenting solutions as liberal parenting methods. Liberal parenting incorporates the use of negotiation with children instead of directives, and operates to encourage critical thinking rather than merely to demand obedience. This model of liberal parenting coincides with Lareau’s (2003)

conceptualization of “concerted cultivation”. I argue that the adoption of an Americanized middle-class model of parenting is symptomatic of the neoliberal and global approach of Indian economy and education. India being a traditional society it is often assumed that parenting is guided by intergenerational solidarity but in my research I discover that it is performed individually and commercialized by parenting schools. Globalization of the economy has demanded that people be prepared for a different job context, which also requires a different approach to child rearing than would have been typical previously in the Indian context. Parenting needs to be tailored towards grooming kids for a global and competitive job market. Therefore, parenting has also transformed and taken up a version of concerted cultivation. However, that concerted cultivation is nonetheless different than either the white middle class American context or the Indian immigrant context in the US. I will examine through comparative analyses the ways by which concerted cultivation, an American middle-class style of parenting is differently applied and executed in two different locations, Kolkata and Edison.

Mom-schooling and parenting crisis in Kolkata:

Kolkata moms in crisis

Parenting in India has always been important in the middle-class context. However parenting styles and methodologies have changed over time and there is lot of talk to revisit the child rearing techniques already in use. Speaking about parenting styles and its importance in yesteryear Pawla, one of my Kolkata respondents pointed out, “Our mothers were concerned about our future and invested in as much as we are. But they were somehow more relaxed. We had more time to visit neighbors, relatives and enjoy childhood. Can’t say the same for our kids these days.” Shows like *The Tara Sharma*

Show engage in ways parents and mothers in particular can engage in parenting methods that will bring a “positive change”. The definition of a “positive change” as Tara Sharma, a popular Bollywood star and host of the show states is a way to nurture and nourish children in an age of excessive competition and stress. The discussion on parenting in popular media is also a reflection of the growing concerns that mothers are experiencing on a daily basis and are seeking solutions from various avenues to help resolve the crisis.

In my research I observed a similar challenge and concern that middle-class mothers in Kolkata were experiencing. The changing pattern of education and schooling in India has raised concerns for mothers who are unfamiliar with the newly emerging terrain of education. The admission into reputed private schools has become competitive and the admission process interrogates parents, especially mothers closely. Mothers are at a loss with the changes and are seeking help from various sources. Along with the admission into private schools and the changing education system the mothers are also concerned with the rising competition in the job market. India’s participation in the global economy has resulted in the globalization and neoliberalization of not only the economy but also the education and parenting styles.

The global influence on Indian education has become pronounced after the neoliberalization of the 1990s, especially with the coming in of several international school programs like the International Baccalaureate (IB), Cambridge International Examination (CIE) to name a few. According to a new report, the number of schools with IB (International Baccalaureate) has witnessed a nearly ten-fold increase during the last ten years. In 2003, there were a mere 11 schools offering the IB program. By 2013, this had gone up to 107, with Maharashtra and West Bengal leading the table with 41 schools

(Times of India, 2015). Other international school programs have become more popular as well. The study conducted by the National University of Educational Planning & Administration said that as of 2013, there were 478 international schools affiliated to three foreign boards - the Geneva-headquartered IB, Cambridge International Examination (CIE) and Edexcel, both based in the UK. These are spread across 19 Indian states, with the highest number (318 schools) affiliated to CIE, followed by IB (102) and Edexcel (58). Seventy-six schools are affiliated to both CIE and IB. The report documents that one of the primary reasons for the growth and investment of these international school programs in India is that they promote analytical and critical learning skills that become a valued and necessary capital in a globalized economy. The report also highlights that private schools affiliated to these international programs are availed by not just by the upper class families but mostly middle-class families.

The neoliberalization of education is a direct and concerted response to India's participation in the global economy and India becoming one of the largest sending nations of skilled professionals abroad. Data shows that in recent years the export of skilled workers to the US in particular has plummeted. For example, Infosys alone filed for 33, 289 Labor Condition Applications (LCA) for the fiscal year 2015, followed by other Indian IT firms like Tata Consultancy Services and Wipro. Hence these numbers alone indicate the rising trend of sending skilled professionals who are global workers to work for American, European and Japanese firms overseas. Thus the global labor market in India and abroad is systemically influencing the education sector, because the schools train and coach these future global workers. Hence a global citizen should not only get good grades and graduate from reputed schools but also bear the cultural capital of

participating successfully in a globalized and cosmopolitan economy and society. The mothers were the bearers of this new form of cultural capital that would ensure the overall success of their children in a changing job and academic market.

Preet one of my respondents explained her concerns over the changes in the overall structure of education and parenting. She said, “Nowadays you know these good colleges will have face to face interviews, like you have for a job. In these interviews they don’t ask questions straight from textbooks and just see your knowledge but they also give analytical problems right there and you are expected to solve them. So the students have to think on their feet. I mean that is tough right!” Anju echoed Preet’s concerns and pointed out that it was necessary for mothers to instill analytical thinking in children. Anju said, “If we are not teaching them how to think creatively and critically from a very young age, it will be difficult for them to cope when they grow up. Teachers at schools don’t always teach that, we have to do it at home all the time.”

Mothers like Anju and Preet were concerned that their children’s success might not be only determined by good grades but also by their critical thinking abilities. These mothers’ testimony indicated that the demands of parenting were also changing along with education. The Kolkata mothers who were compelled to negotiate with the new form of schooling and education also had to embrace new tenets on child rearing. They had little knowledge of ways to chart out and execute the new parenting strategies. This growing crisis in child rearing methods has led to the growth of commercial mom-schools in several Indian urban locations. In the following section I describe one such agency I studied that helped mothers learn the demands of this emerging form of parenting and coach them on ways these principals of child rearing can be implemented.

M Consultancy: A Mom-schooling Agency

“Mom-schooling” is the upcoming trend in Kolkata and various other cities in India (like Mumbai, Delhi, Pune and Bangalore) where middle-class mothers come and get training to parent their children. One of the major reasons for the growth of these mom-schooling agencies is to also coach mothers to prepare their children to gain admission into reputed private schools in the city. The admission to these private schools, which is also a mark of prestige and upward mobility, incorporates rigorous interviewing of parents, especially mothers. Hence these agencies coach and support mothers to gain access for their children into the schools. In fact the success rate of these agencies are generally determined by the percentage of clients who were able to get their children admitted to reputed schools in the city. However along with supporting mothers through the admission process these agencies also groom mothers to adopt a parenting style that is at par with the globalized education and job market in India.

M Consultancy the mom-schooling agency that I studied is located in the eastern part of Kolkata and was established in 2012 by Payel (the owner of the consultancy). M Consultancy has an overall enrollment of fifteen to twenty mothers per session. Their children’s age ranged between three to seven years. The Consultancy charges five thousand Indian Rupees (seventy-five US dollars approximately) for the entire course. Each session lasts for about an hour and a half and the course itself runs for two months. Classes are held four days a week and there were two batches of mothers who signed up for the eight-week course at the agency. The class structure is mostly lecture based, but also includes interactive session where mothers ask questions to Payel and the group in general. Payel said that it took her several years to consolidate the teaching materials for

her class and she started making them while she was taking her Parenting Instruction Certification course. The agency's course analyzes school admission processes and parenting strategies.

As I pointed out the course at M Consultancy is divided into eight-weeks. In the first two weeks Payel gave the mothers an overview of the admission process in various well-reputed schools in Kolkata. Week 3's content was to discuss in great details the interview process in various top schools. This week and the week after addressed the kind of questions that children and parents are asked by teachers and the school administration during admission. There were also plenty of mock interview sessions held on the fourth week of the course. In one such instance, the instructor gave a situation that mothers often are asked during the entry level admission interviews: for example they are asked what do they do when their child wants to watch cartoon or some other channel on TV while the mother is watching her own channel? The preferred answer is that the mother should teach the children the importance of other's time as much as their own time. Mimi pointed out during our chats that, even though this information might seem like common sense, mothers often stutter in front of school interviews and it is important to know the right answers as well as have plenty of practice.

Payel mostly divided the week into two parts. During the first half of the week she would ask questions to the group as a whole and mothers raised their hands to answer. In the second half mothers interacted with Payel on a one-to-one basis and honed their answers for the school interviews. On week 5 the training session took a different route when they started discussing parenting strategies. Here Payel mostly discussed positive reinforcement strategies for children. She highlighted that children can function well both

academically and socially if they are encouraged and appreciated. During the sixth week of the course Payel examined ways in which parents could be fair to their children. She mentioned that it was crucial to be able to share rationale with children, because rational arguments in turn would also allow children to develop analytical thinking skills. For example the strategies mothers can adopt when children throw tantrums or act difficult. The last week was mostly spent to go briefly over the entire course material. During the final week mothers spent time asking Payel their parenting concerns and it was in the form of an open discussion where all the mothers were encouraged to participate.

The course schedule designed by M Consultancy clearly revealed that one of the primary areas of focus was to discuss parenting methods and strategies. The first half of the course was spent discussing the admission processes in various well-reputed schools in the city. The course brainstormed several ideas and strategies that would ensure success of the mothers in the admission process. The sessions tied very smoothly the discussion on parenting methods along with school admission policies. The latter half of the course got really interesting and dynamic once they started to discuss various parenting methods and strategies that would ensure the child's overall success.

Authoritarian Parenting to Liberal Parenting

In the following section I analyze a very crucial parenting methodology and philosophy that was discussed at the mom-schooling agency, which was the central tenets of liberal parenting. One of the major goals of mom-schooling agencies is the replacement of authoritarian parenting with liberal parenting. By employing a twofold methodology on liberal parenting that included positive reinforcement and negotiation and promote critical thinking, they encouraged mothers to discard authoritarian parenting.

Liberal parenting as discussed by the agency shared strong similarities with Lareau's conceptualization of American middle-class parenting, which she calls concerted cultivation. In the following sections I highlight the specific ways within the curriculum of the agency they circulated the principles of Lareau's concerted cultivation to instill liberal parenting values among middle-class mothers.

The instructors at the M Consultancy spent a lot of time discussing the theory of authoritarian parenting as discussed by psychologist Diana Baumrind. Baumrind (1966) defined authoritarian parenting as a child rearing method where the parent establishes strict rules for the child. Failure to follow such rules usually results in punishment. Authoritarian parents fail to explain the reasoning behind these rules. If asked to explain, the parent might simply reply, "Because I said so." These parents have high demands, but are not responsive to their children. According to Baumrind, these parents "are obedience- and status-oriented, and expect their orders to be obeyed without explanation" (1995). Along with authoritarian parenting Baumrind also theorized two other forms of parenting, which were authoritative and permissive parenting. Later psychologists Macoby and Martin (1995) added a fourth category to Baumrind's existing parenting categories. The fourth category was uninvolved parenting. In the second category, which is authoritative parenting according to Baumrind, parents are responsive to their children and willing to listen to questions. When children fail to meet the expectations, these parents are more nurturing and forgiving rather than punishing. The parenting style is fairly democratic than the authoritarian parenting. In permissive parenting which is the third category they have very few demands to make of their children. These parents rarely discipline their children because they have relatively low expectations of maturity and

self-control. According to Baumrind, permissive parents "are more responsive than they are demanding. They are nontraditional and lenient, do not require mature behavior, allow considerable self-regulation, and avoid confrontation" (1995). The uninvolved parenting as conceptualized later by Macobi and Martin is characterized by few demands, low responsiveness and little communication. While these parents fulfill the child's basic needs, they are generally detached from their child's life. In extreme cases, these parents may even reject or neglect the needs of their children.

Baumrind's model of authoritarian parenting was the widely used method of parenting by most parents in Kolkata. M Consultancy along with the other mom-schooling agencies wanted to make a shift in parenting paradigm from authoritarian parenting to liberal parenting. Mothers were encouraged and coached to make a smooth transition between the already in practice authoritarian parenting to embracing liberal parenting. Liberal parenting professed a certain degree of negotiation with children along with promoting critical thinking among kids. In the context of Baumrind's three tier parenting model, liberal parenting draws elements of authoritative and permissive parenting.

The authoritarian parenting model as theorized by Baumrind was more akin to Lareau's conceptualization of working class parenting, also referred to as the natural growth model. The authoritarian model similar to the natural growth model also used obedience as a tool rather than negotiation. The authoritarian model of parenting would also utilize directives often in the form of scolding to discipline children. M Consultancy ensured that mothers were encouraged to discard the tenets of authoritarian parenting and adopt liberal parenting instead.

Positive reinforcement and negotiation

The course module at M Consultancy was structured in a way that ensured that mothers learn the specific ways to seamlessly transition from authoritarian parenting to liberal parenting. In one such class during the end of week 5 of the course they started analyzing the language that can be used to accomplish the goals of liberal child rearing. The course stressed on the importance of using positive reinforcements as a way to ensure children's success and overall development. Payel did so by passing around a document that had written on it "60 ways to say well done!" Some of the phrases written on the document were, "that's super", "spot on", "brilliant", "you're a star", "that's good thinking" to mention a few. Payel in her description mentioned that a good place to start proper parenting is by using the correct language that will make sure that children feel encouraged instead of feeling demotivated. Thus the start to good parenting was the language used to communicate with children and make them believe in themselves. In this way mothers were encouraged to keep their children motivated that would result in not only academic success but encourage the overall well being of the child.

Week 7 in M Consultancy continued discussing liberal parenting strategies. The central focus was using tools of negotiation instead of directives to interact with children. This week they discussed the methods of dealing with children's tantrums and how to be reasonable at the same time. This week was particularly interesting because the agency presented several real life situations and mothers had to enact them. This interactive session also led to discussing simple solutions that could potentially resolve the moments of crisis in everyday parenting. For example one of the situations was: what would mothers do when the child is playing with food at the dinner table and not eating the

food? One of the mothers in the class raised her hand and said, “Well I will tell my child to stop doing that and if he doesn’t then I will scold him!” The instructor at the agency nodded her head and said,

Okay, how about you go to the scolding part a little later or maybe never? Here’s what I would suggest, why don’t you talk to your kid. Like...ask them to either have their food or to leave the table. Give them options, you know. In case the child continues to play with food ask them to leave the table and come back after sometime when they are ready to eat the food.

In the above mentioned instance the instructor explained that it is important to give children the space where they can explain their actions at the same time realize the importance of eating (in this context) without resorting to any verbal confrontation.

The mothers interestingly were willing to adopt the strategies that were discussed in the sessions. Some of them described these techniques discussed at the agency as “effective”, “innovative” and “fresh”. They mostly appreciated the parenting routes that were proclaimed in the mom-school. Saumya for example, mentioned the following during our interview sessions,

I think what they say about not scolding your child makes sense. I mean it is a better way of dealing with children. When we were growing up our parents used to always scold us and there was no scope of negotiation or discussion. But I have gradually realized that I don’t want to be that kind of a parent who is always scolding and shouting at their children and force them do what we think is right. I think the more we force the more resistant and disrespectful they will get. If we are more open to listening they will share their thoughts with us and I want to be the accessible parent, not the type that they will be scared of or hate!

On a similar note Shipra said that she found this technique of parenting “effective” because not only did it reduce any potential conflict but at the same time it made her an approachable parent. She stated,

It is important to know be aware of whatever is going on in our kid’s lives. I mean nowadays they are so much exposed to materials and information on the net and stuff. As a careful parent I put in child lock and monitor

what they watch closely, but as they grow old it will get difficult to monitor them so much right! So for me, I feel that if I am friendly my kid will come and talk to me about their secrets and I can understand what is going on in their lives. I also get to be their favorite (winks and laughs)!

Mothers like Shipra and Saumya along with others were gradually embracing the liberal parenting methods to interact with their children. They substantiated their preference by explaining how the liberal model would help develop the critical thinking faculty of their children. The mothers also stated that it would make them more affable to their children and in the new age of rampant media exposure and easy access to adult materials, this method of parenting would pave path for more parent child interaction.

The agency also encouraged clients to use the negotiation model of parenting to handle child tantrums. M Consultancy pointed out children often throw tantrums as ways of getting attention or when they feel powerless. For example they are unwilling to leave the playground when their mothers call them to wrap up their game. In that case the agency said that they should be given the option of returning from the playground in ten minutes instead of returning right away. In that case when the child gets that extra time they can wrap up what they were playing, not engage in a tantrum and any potential conflict can be avoided. Thus in this instance the agency was mentoring their clients to avert a parenting crisis, that had potential for a conflict with the help of negotiation and reasoning. This would also promote, the importance of listening to the immediate needs of the child and respecting them at the same time implementing rules that the children are convinced to follow.

The above-mentioned strategies were some hands on techniques that incorporated positive reinforcement and negotiation in the parenting routine. Similar to Lareau's concerted cultivation, the tenets of liberal parenting ensured that mothers were

transitioning from delivering directives to their children to creating opportunities for conversation between the parent and child. This transition according to the agency was a crucial step to ensure the future academic as well as professional success of children. As one of the mothers at the agency pointed out, "...the competition is crazy nowadays. So along with doing well in studies we as parents also have to ensure that our kids are all-rounders. They should also talk smartly in front of people, because good scores don't always indicate how smart they are; self presentation is important and that can happen through intelligent conversations." Therefore the challenges of the current schooling as well as higher academics led to changing parenting styles.

Promote Critical Thinking

One of the major goals of the mom-schooling agencies was to ensure that mothers were able to cultivate critical thinking among children. In fact the major step to transitioning from authoritarian parenting to liberal parenting was to incorporate critical thinking in the parenting routine. Critical thinking according to M Consultancy was the first step toward holistic development of the child and also success in a competitive higher academic setting. Much like Lareau's research on concerted cultivation, where the parents were deeply invested to make their children critical thinkers, the commercial parenting agencies in Kolkata were aiming to promote a similar model. The commercial parenting agencies claimed that authoritarian parenting did not pay attention to critical thinking because parents would not challenge children to think on their own. However in liberal parenting parents were inclined to not think for their children, rather help them think for themselves.

In one such interactive session of the M Consultancy they started discussing the ways by which children can be made critical thinkers. The agency suggested that critical thinking could be promoted through a simple act of reading storybooks to children. In the discussion the instructor said,

Before you start reading a book to your child it is always a good idea to ask your child, what they think the story of the book might be. I know you all might think that is unnecessary, but this will allow the kid to use their imagination. Using imagination and learning to think by themselves are vital to critical thinking. Encourage them to think because this will only allow them to think by themselves and you don't have to think for them.

Thus in this above example we see that the agency was trying to provide some concrete pathways to access and operationalize critical thinking. Allowing the child to use their imagination to think about the story before reading it out to them was a vital step toward building the analytical faculties for the child.

The agency during a similar session provided another example that would allow the child's critical thinking to grow. Payel mentioned in our conversations that the mothers often struggled to understand how critical thinking could be achieved in the course of everyday parenting. Thus it has increasingly become the priority of the agency to focus on real life examples that will help operationalize the concept of critical thinking. In the following example M Consultancy provided an example at a regular session. The instructor pointed out another key strategy that can be used to promote critical thinking. The strategy was to create opportunities for the child to compare and contrast between real life situations or objects. For example the instructor mentioned,

Comparing and contrasting is a very interesting way of helping your child become more analytical and perceptive. Say for instance just ask them to compare between today's weather and yesterday's weather. Or ask them to

compare the shape and color of a mango to another fruit. You can basically do this with plenty of other things and there can be an endless list of object or situations. Also don't give them the answers, let them think! If they go wrong somewhere encourage them to rethink. Don't be tempted to correct their answers, let them think through their responses and correct it themselves.

In this above example the instructor was using the strategy of comparing and contrasting as a tool to help children analyze real life situations or objects. This strategy operationalized a specific way by which critical thinking can be promoted among children.

In the couple of above-mentioned examples the M Consultancy advocated some key strategies that could be used to make children critical thinkers. In both the instance the parents were advised to use multiple tools that would allow them to discard authoritarian parenting and switch to liberal parenting. Adopting liberal parenting also meant that parents had to embrace critical thinking in their parenting routine. Hence in the above mentioned examples the mothers were advised to not think for their children rather allow them to think for themselves. A liberal parenting model will allow more space for the children to explore their imagination as well as use their logical thinking to solve a problem. Hence embracing critical thinking was a significant way toward the transition from authoritarian parenting to liberal parenting.

Although much of the child rearing education propagated at the M Consultancy was appreciated and positively received by mothers, there were mild pushbacks from some of the mothers. Rai, for example stated that she even though she agreed with some of the tenets of liberal parenting, the authoritarian parenting also had some benefits. She said,

I am not sure if we (parents) should completely give away the style in which we were mostly brought up when we were kids (meaning authoritarian parenting). I mean if you are strict with your kid and force them from doing something bad, does not necessarily make you a bad parent. I feel it is important to discipline children too. I mean they obviously have an opinion and have a right to say, but they don't know what is right or wrong. It is our job to teach them that and that is hard to achieve if you become soft and negotiate all the time. So I guess what I am trying to say is, as much as you want to sort of be all-soft and understanding, it is important to be strict at the same time.

Though mothers like Rai were few in number yet there were some like her who claimed that the approach of liberal parenting was not entirely feasible. They preferred the old school approach of authoritarian parenting. However, they did not completely disregard the mantra of mom-schooling agencies. Jhum, one of the few mothers who did not agree with the entire philosophy of liberal parenting mentioned that they gained good and valuable advice on the school admission process and changing education front in Kolkata from the agency. This was in turn helpful for them to plan the admission for their children into their desirable private schools. On the subject of parenting paths, Jhum clarified,

Coming to this agency has been really eye opening for me. It is interesting to see there are so many ways by which children can be guided and handled. Whether we choose a liberal or a strict (authoritarian) approach is up to us, but it's good to be presented with options. It really makes you wonder that child rearing is not an easy job after all, it requires hard work, patience and investment, no matter what mode of parenting you choose. Therefore the orientation toward a solid approach on critical thinking was an intrinsic component of commercial parenting. The important thing to note here is that these micro changes in parenting strategies were not happening in seclusion. They were a direct response to the changes in the academic terrain that was experiencing fierce competition. Along with the alteration in the education system the mom-schooling agency was also trying to propagate a model of child rearing

that was at par with the western model of parenting. Rerouting toward the path of western parenting ideals would also shape the personality of children (future employees) to befit the globalized employment market and excel within that space.

Childrearing as a project

Lareau in her comparative study of American parenting between working class and middle-class parenting in the US, pointed out that middle-class parents in the US treated child rearing as a project. The immigrant mothers in Edison too treated child rearing as a project as they adopted tenets of concerted cultivation. They coached their children to become critical thinkers as well as educated them with elements of Indian culture. Much like their counterparts in Edison the Kolkata mothers were being trained to treat their children as projects. Some of the key aspects of treating children as projects were the specific language use in parenting; allotting specific time for coaching children to various subjects taught in school and some extra curricular activities; and learning to intervene with institutions on behalf of their children, especially the school. In the following sections I will analyze separately how mothers treated their children as projects and the measures they took to ensure their success in education and employment.

Language use

Much like Lareau's concerted cultivation the Kolkata mothers were being trained to use the language of reasoning with their children instead of directives. In the previously cited examples in this chapter we saw that the commercial parenting agencies like the M Consultancy were encouraging mothers to transition to liberal parenting and one of the main steps toward the transition was the proper use of language. The agency

advised mothers to use language of encouragement and reasoning with their children instead of directives. Mothers were encouraged to respond to their children's questions with questions, so that the children were able to think analytically for themselves before answering. Thus mothers were advised to treat their children as conversation partners and not as mere subjects who would follow instructions. The mothers too were incorporating the use of language as part of their everyday parenting schedule.

During the course of our interviews, Sammy, mother of a four-year-old girl said,

I think it is helpful to speak to your child like an adult. Not use lisps with them and have real conversations, you know. It will help them become more mature. I am constantly asking for their opinion, like for example, do you like the flavor of the ice cream. If she says no, then I ask her to answer why she does not like the flavor; you know in away I give her more scope to use correct words and explain her dislike.

Hence from Sammy's quote it can be argued that mothers in Kolkata were deeply invested to ensure that they were using the language of reasoning with their children. This in turn would enhance the critical thinking abilities of their children.

The mothers were using more words to carry on their conversations with their children rather than brief phrases in their conversation. Some of the mothers also pointed out that they would use complex English words in their conversations with their children so that their kids would learn which in turn would improve their vocabulary. In this way mothers treated their children as conversational partners and also incorporated techniques that would improve their children's vocabulary and improve their reasoning abilities.

Allotting time

The Kolkata mothers were attentive to the proper use of time in charting a daily/weekly schedule for their children. However the allotment of time differed

from Lareau's understanding of concerted cultivation among American middle-class parents. Lareau pointed out that children were put into various structured extra curricular activities and that their daily routines were busy and clearly charted out. Their daily routines were divided between soccer, ballet, swimming and a host of other engagements. The children were busy juggling between multiple activities along with school. The mothers in particular took initiative to ensure that the children were abreast with the developments in these classes and were doing well too.

In Kolkata on the other hand children were not a part of structured extra curricular activities. Following is a conversation I had with one of my respondents regarding extracurricular activities in Kolkata.

Me: So what other classes does your daughter go to?

Suparna: Other classes? What do you mean exactly?

Me: Well you know like, swimming, art, dance and classes like that. Okay, what I meant was extracurricular classes you know?

Suparna: Not really, I mean where is the time for extracurricular activities? You see the kids are so busy with school and homework and tuition, there is no time for all those kind of stuff, you know!

Me: So it's just like school, tuition and homework for them?

Suparna: My daughter goes for guitar every weekend, but it's getting too much for her. She gets very tired and does not have enough energy to do her studies. So we were thinking maybe we will stop the guitar class. But she really likes it you know and I would hate to stop that! But studies are important and what will she do with her guitar skills right?

The above conversation with Suparna made it clear that children in Kolkata and also in other urban locations in India did not have the time for structured extra curricular activities. There was excessive academic pressure in schools that did not allow children

to engage in extracurricular activities. These structured extracurricular activities like swimming, soccer and ballet was not an integral component of the daily schedule of the children.

The Kolkata mothers structured their children's schedule not around extracurricular activities but on academic development. Most of the mothers said that they devoted a lot of time toward the academic growth of their children. Reshmi, for example pointed out, "If we don't train them in subjects like Math, English and Science from an early age, how will they do well in the higher grades! If they know the basics of these subjects from an early age and are good at it then they will be able to cope well as the subjects become challenging in the future". Thus here Reshmi like several other mothers wanted their children to be academically competent from elementary school onward. The mothers charted out the entire day for their children. The children were also sent to several tutorial classes where they received additional support in their academic pursuits. In these tutorial classes children were given support in various academic subjects like English, Math, Science and Social sciences in addition to the resources given by the schools.

Mothers in Kolkata chaperoned their children to various tutorial classes unlike the middle-class respondents in Lareau's study who were driving their children to structured extracurricular classes. In Kolkata because of the changing education system and the globalization of the economy there was increasing competition. The mothers were desperate to ensure that their children turned out to be successful in the competition. Academic success was the one of the key ways by which overall success was determined.

Hence parenting in Kolkata unlike the American middle-class parenting mostly revolved around the allocation of time toward the academic success of the children.

Intervention with institutions

The commercial parenting agencies along with teaching various parenting techniques also coached mothers to interact with institutions, especially schools. The middle-class families mostly sent their children to reputed private schools and the admission to these schools were very competitive. The parenting agencies helped mothers cultivate skills to ensure that their children got admitted to these private schools. The struggle did not end once the children were admitted to these well-reputed schools. The mothers were constantly expected to keep themselves abreast with the developments in school and interact with school administration.

The mothers in my study were trained to interact with the school administration and teachers on a relatively regular basis. The parenting agencies during their in-class sessions mentioned that mothers had to be involved in every aspect of their kid's lives. One of the major aspects was interacting with schools. Regular interactions with the school were a mark of active involvement in their children's lives. It also meant that mothers were aware of the academic developments in their children's lives and this knowledge would be helpful in charting out the daily routine of their children. Thus the agency was cultivating full time moms.

Meetu one of the Kolkata mothers said, "It is very important to interact with the teachers you know. I mean in this way I know what my son is doing right in school. The teachers are not always too attentive of individual child's needs, because you know there are so many other kids. But I have to make sure that my child is taken care of". Thus

mothers like Meetu ensured that they were not just passive receptors of the school's policies on the contrary actively took part in the regular developments. On further questioning Meetu pointed out the kind of questions she would ask at a parent teacher's conference. She said, "I ask his teacher questions like, what are some good books that my child can use to say improve Math, you know when his grade is not as good as the other subjects. I also inform the class teacher if he is having trouble with some teaching tools or trouble with someone in the class and so on. I also try to discuss with the teacher his current performance not just academic but also otherwise. So these talks just help me learn more about his standing".

The above conversations with Meetu and the other mothers explained that they took an active part in the regular academic developments of their children in school. The commercial parenting agencies also encouraged parents, mothers in particular to interact closely with the schools. In the Kolkata case with the lack of structured extra curricular activities school was the only institution that mothers could interact with. Interaction with institutions was a significant part of treating children as a project. Lareau's conceptualization of concerted cultivation also mentioned the middle-class parent's constant interaction with institutions, especially the various structured extra curricular classes. The immigrant mothers in Edison too were deeply invested in the structured extra curricular activities of their children. However the Kolkata mothers presented an opposite picture. The children were hardly sent in for extracurricular activities instead they were mostly preoccupied with their academics and school. Hence even though they were adopting components of Lareau's concerted cultivation, they were leaving behind some aspects of it.

In the above description where I document the similarities and differences between the parenting model in Kolkata and Lareau's concerted cultivation, I argue that Lareau's concerted cultivation is merely a point of departure from working class parenting. Middle-class parenting can take several shapes in various forms in other communities and across countries. The Americanized parenting in Kolkata did not incorporate every aspect of concerted cultivation for example sending kids to structured extra curricular activities. On the contrary they were sending children to academic tutorials. Nevertheless it is important to point out that globalization of the labor market and economy in both Edison and Kolkata has resulted in the mammoth adoption of American middle-class parenting in the form of Lareau's concerted cultivation and the overall practice of treating children as a project.

Conversion of capital and the reproductive field in Kolkata

As discussed in previous chapters Bourdieu did not render specific focus on the role of women in the conversion of capital. In my research I found out that mothers in both locations were actively converting capital within the household. Mothers in both the locations had the time to convert as their spouses supported them. The conversion of capital in Kolkata occurs within the reproductive field that has been created by the collaborative effort of the professional parenting agencies and the middle-class mothers. The reproductive field in Kolkata is an outcome of the parenting crisis that mothers are experiencing. The parenting crisis is in turn the effect of the globalization of labor and education system in urban India. Commercial mom-schooling agencies like M Consultancy provide professional advice to struggling middle-class mothers and help them negotiate with the changing education and job market. In this way the reproductive

field in Kolkata is constructed through the joint initiative of the commercial parenting agencies and the middle-class mothers.

In Kolkata middle-class mothers were practicing various facets of concerted cultivation as described by Lareau. Since the 1990s neoliberal wave the Indian economy was exposed to globalization and the country witnessed a rampant influx of multinational corporations. Reports claim that currently there are about 5000 multinational corporations in the country, which include American, European and Japanese firms. The newly emerging free trade economy had not only globalized and neoliberalized the Indian economy but also led to the neoliberalization of media and consumption patterns. In my research I observe that the neoliberalization was not limited to economy, but also affected family practices like parenting. Therefore the middle-class mother's approach in Kolkata was influenced by the effects of globalization and the neoliberal economy to make their children competent for the global white-collar job industry as well as academia, which was transforming rapidly. The Kolkata mothers in my research were therefore converting the economic capital in the household to cultivate a specific cultural capital for their children that will allow them develop skills for their long-term future in a changing economic environment. In Kolkata, the conversion of capital in turn was facilitated by mom-schooling agencies. For example, M Consultancy one of the agencies that I studied trained middle-class mothers to be better mothers. This training involved adopting methods of negotiation with the child, constantly using positive reinforcement and cultivates critical thinking.

Similar to Edison the mothers in Kolkata were not converting capital individually. In Edison the reproductive enclave was helping support the conversion of capital. In

Kolkata too the commercialized mom-schooling agencies were helping support the conversion of capital. In Kolkata's case I argue that in a traditional society, contrary to common assumption, mothers were not resorting to help from extended family or relatives instead were seeking help from professional parenting schools. As mentioned before the neoliberalization of the labor market and education had left mothers clueless to negotiate with the changing systems. The globalization of the labor market has also affected intimate spaces like parenting. Professional mom-schooling agencies like M Consultancy have emerged to coach mothers the new parenting techniques that in turn bear striking resemblance to Lareau's middle-class parenting in the form of concerted cultivation. In exchange for economic capital the parenting agencies are helping mothers gain access to a specific cultural capital that will allow their children to gain admission into reputed private schools as well make them adept to the globalized job market and society in general.

Mothers in globalized cosmopolitan Kolkata had mixed reactions to the emergence of mom-schooling agencies in the city. On the one hand Shweta a mother of a four year old said, "It is quite funny if we look at it that we go to a coaching class where they teach us new ways of parenting. I mean my mom or grandma never went to any such school for these training. But coming here (the agency) I also realize that it is important to know these new styles of mothering. Even though I might not agree with the liberal approach they talk about I definitely got a lot of help regarding admission procedures in schools. Their materials are great!" On the other hand mothers like Proma raved about every aspect of the agency. She said, "I completely agree with the liberal parenting model that they teach here (M Consultancy). Times are changing so we have to also change

right. Jobs are more competitive, education more tough, so automatically parenting also needs to change. I am happy to pay money and learn if that is what it takes. These people here (at M Consultancy) are doing a great job and I feel if when there is so much competition around it is important to be less strict with kids, it puts less pressure on them and they can do better in life.” Some of the other mothers too echoed Prama’s sentiments. They had similar views on the changing terrain of education and parenting in global India and felt the necessity of a formalized coaching toward education and child rearing.

Reproduction of class

As I followed some of the mothers who went to a coffee shop right after their week 5 sessions at M Consultancy, I observed their discussion about child rearing. I was surprised that these mothers were already geared towards speculating career paths for their children. The major theme of the conversation around the coffee table was how to ensure that their children are doing well in schools and being smart. One of the major components of being smart was to speak fluently in English, having the perfect aptitude for Math, Science and English and being ready for a competitive white-collar job market. On the topic of speaking in English Kajal, mother of a four year old girl said, “I have already started training Keya (her daughter) to speak in English. In fact we have started speaking in English at home as well...that’s how kids will improve I feel!” Therefore speaking fluent English (as if it were one’s native language) was considered as one of the valuable assets to do well not only in schools but also in the future job market.

Mitra, mother of two boys said, “I really want Spandan to be a scientist, like my uncle and get a doctorate degree from the US or the UK. But let’s see where he goes, what he does...it’s too early I guess (smiles)!” Some of the other mothers who were part

of this discussion were also sharing their aspirations for sending their kids abroad and also thinking about the globalized job market in India. Thus some of the parameters of success for these middle-class mothers were not just the ability to speak fluently in English, but use those skills along with others to be competent for the white-collar job industry and pursue higher education abroad.

As the discussion with the mothers continued one of them pointed out the importance of personality development of their children. Sudha in this context mentioned,

I have been told that it is important to teach children to look into people's eyes when they speak. It is a mark of confidence. So, I have started training my daughter to look into people's eyes when she speaks. I mean it is important because when these kids go for job interviews they have to show confidence right. So it's good training I feel.

In this case Sudha pointed out the importance of personality development for the larger job market and academic successes. An important aspect of personality development was training children to look in the eyes while they speak. This was an important step to ensure that children would not only have a strong personality but also that the personality will help them find successful jobs for the future. Looking into eyes while speaking was also a key component of Lareau's conceptualization of concerted cultivation. Hence this kind of personality training that was meant to succeed in the Americanized Indian job market overlapped with the patterns of American middle-class parenting.

In the above examples it becomes clear that middle-class mothers in Kolkata were not only invested to get their children admitted to reputed private schools but also wanted their children to gain all the cultural capital that would make them competent for the

globalized academic and job market. The Kolkata mothers were socializing their children to acquire a specific form of cultural capital that would guarantee their success in higher education as well as in the job market. However the mothers who were new to the recent changes in the academic and job market and sought help from professional parenting agencies. These professional agencies coach mothers to adopt elements of liberal parenting among other parenting skills to ensure that they were able to transfer this cultural capital to their children.

Acquiring the above-mentioned cultural capital, for example ability to speak fluently in English, or providing the necessary academic and social training to be able to access higher education abroad was a mark of upward social mobility. In other words this upward social mobility was reproducing a certain class identity. This class identity was very similar to Lareau's conceptualization of concerted cultivation or American middle-class parenting. Mothers were engaged to make their children critical and independent thinkers.

The class reproduction among Kolkata mothers was contrary to the reproduction of culture in Edison. In Edison immigrant mothers ensured that children were grounded in Indian values, especially native language proficiency. On the contrary in Kolkata it can be seen that mothers were following a reverse trend of training children to speak in fluent English. Command over English was one of the key determinants that ensured success for their children in the competitive globalized Indian job market. Therefore the crisis in parenting that was an outcome of the changing education and economy in India led to mothers embracing a distinct form of cultural capital that had resemblances with

American middle-class model of parenting and were also indicators of upward social mobility.

Conclusion

This chapter compared and contrasted the parenting methods adopted between immigrant mothers in Edison and middle-class mothers in Kolkata. The central question that this chapter addressed was why immigrant mothers of Edison in an individualistic society depended on informal support groups and mothers in a traditional society, like Kolkata depended on commercial parenting agencies to help support parenting? To find answer to the above question it is imperative to delve into the parenting crisis that arose in the immigrant community in Edison and among the middle-class mothers in Kolkata. In Edison as I described in the previous chapter the parenting crisis was that of socializing children away from their Indian roots. On the other hand in Kolkata the changing system of economy that shaped a new form of education led to altering parenting strategies that mothers were unaware of thereby resulting in a parenting crisis. The overall parenting crisis in the two locations I argue has its deep-rooted connections with the globalization of the labor market and the economy. In Edison the migrating elite professionals in the fields of Information Technology and Finance experienced challenges in socializing children in a foreign country. On the other hand in Kolkata the influences of globalization of economy and education led to changes in intimate family space practices, parenting being one of them. Parents, mothers in particular seek to overcome the crisis that is an outcome of the globalization of the labor force and the economy; in doing so they either form a reproductive enclave like the immigrant mothers in Edison or seek help from commercial parenting agencies like the Kolkata mothers.

In this chapter I closely examined the M Consultancy, a mom-schooling agency I studied in Kolkata and analyzed the agency's function in the larger context of the parenting crisis and Americanization of the education, job market and parenting. M Consultancy coached mothers to gain access for their children into reputed private schools, which had gotten very competitive over the years. Along with training the mothers to gain admission for their children they were also training mothers to embrace a liberal parenting approach. The liberal parenting includes a method of negotiation with children along with promoting critical thinking among them. Liberal parenting in numerous ways bears a strong similarity with Lareau's model of American middle-class parenting called concerted cultivation. Therefore the commercial parenting schools encouraged mothers to adopt the tenets of liberal parenting in other words concerted cultivation. Thus to adjust with the changing system of education and demands of the newly emerging globalized job market parenting methods had to be altered.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

In the preceding chapters I examined how parenting operates in two different locations, Edison and New Jersey and how larger forces like globalization of the economy and education shape parenting. Through in-depth face-to-face interviews and extensive participant observations in both locations I examined the everyday struggles mothers experienced in the domains of schooling and child rearing. These struggles were intrinsically linked with the changes in the global economy, and its systemic effects on the education system. These findings contribute to the discourse on immigrations, families and globalization in the US and in India.

In this chapter, I will highlight the central findings of my research and also the various questions that were raised. I will also delineate avenues for future research and resolve the questions that this current project has raised but were left unanswered.

Findings

In the third chapter I presented through my data a comparison of schools in Edison and Kolkata. This comparative chapter's central finding was that schools in Edison and Kolkata played a key role in shaping the parenting practices of middle-class mothers. In Edison, the influx of Indian immigrant families, especially elite professionals from India mostly engineers and their spouses, who were forbidden legal employment because of their Visa status had resulted in a parenting crisis. Immigrant mothers were clueless of schooling and parenting in the US. Their claim was since they had not been socialized in the US it was difficult for them to maneuver the schooling system. However, they learnt to resolve the crisis by forming a reproductive enclave, where the

mothers gathered and exchanged ideas, strategies of dealing with this crisis. This network of moms made sure they learnt the evaluation system in schools, codes of social interaction with teachers and the new school curriculum. In Kolkata too the rapid changes in the education system put a lot of pressure on mothers. The entry into reputed private schools of the city was very competitive and mothers sought help from commercial parenting agencies, called “mom-schools”. These agencies coached mothers to crack the entry-level admission interviews in schools and trained them specific ways of dealing with school administration. Thus in both Edison and Kolkata the support groups in the form of a reproductive enclave and commercial parenting agency helped mothers navigate the schooling system. These support groups helped mothers convert economic capital into cultural capital that was eventually transferred to their children.

In the third and fourth chapters I compare and contrast the specific functions of the reproductive enclave and mom-schooling agencies to resolve the distinct parenting crisis in Edison and Kolkata. Mothers in Edison suffered from the crisis of bringing up their children in a foreign country away from their Indian roots. Immigrant mothers adopted Lareau’s tenets of concerted cultivation by sending kids to structured extracurricular classes like soccer and music at the same time they culturally shaped it. For instance, the kids were also sent to Hindi speaking classes. The reproductive enclave in the form of a solidarity group shared these information at the same time created an environment in which they recreates Indian culture, for example, celebrating Indian festivals and sharing strategies of keeping Indianness alive within everyday parenting. In Kolkata on the other hand the commercial parenting that I studied M Consultancy coached mothers to not only put their kids through good schools but also tenets of liberal

parenting. Elements of liberal parenting had glaring similarities with Lareau's concerted cultivation. Liberal parenting involved promoting critical thinking and implementing a framework of negotiation in everyday parenting. Middle-class mothers in both locations embraced parenting methods that made their children adept in a cosmopolitan and global work as well and social environment.

Discussion and avenues for future research

This research examines the implications of global parenting in a transnational context and extends the discussion on globalization to analyze education and shifting child rearing methodologies. Much of the previous works in the domain of immigration and families has already focused upon the struggles first generation experience to orient themselves and their children into the new society (Foner and Dreby, 2011). However, not enough attention has been paid to the specific parenting strategies mothers who are forced to abandon employment by immigration policies adopt toward child upbringing. In my research I identify transnationally how mothers implement Lareau's concerted cultivation in other words, American middle-class parenting styles into their everyday child rearing discourse. What was even more interesting was that they implemented Lareau's concerted cultivation as a tool to promote Indianness among their kids. In India too middle-class moms gave up their previous parenting methodologies to embrace a liberal parenting model, again Lareau's concerted cultivation to promote global values in their children. Scholars that have focused on the globalization of India post 1990's neoliberalization have seldom looked closely into its imminent effects upon education and parenting.

My project challenges the predominant misconception that American parenting is individualistic and Indian parenting is traditional. I found out that mothers in Edison resorted to community networks and support groups, which I call reproductive enclave to better navigate parenting in a foreign country. Lareau in her analysis of middle-class parenting laid out the premise that parenting is mostly a solitary affair with very few community interventions. In Edison on the contrary immigrant mothers sought help from each other to negotiate with the new systems instead of resolving the crisis all by themselves. In Kolkata, the mothers contrary to common conception did not resort to familial support in the course of everyday parenting, instead sought help from commercial parenting agencies. Thus Lareau's paradigm of concerted cultivation is a mere departure from working class parenting and can take multiple forms in various middle-class societies around the world.

What struck me the most during the course of this project is that mothering as a practice shared a quite a lot of similarities between the sending and receiving countries. Mothers in both the countries experienced the daily anxieties of giving their children the best at the same time they were constantly under the radar of scrutiny if they fell short of being the perfect mom. The mothers, whether they were immigrants in the USA or middle-class moms at home, treated their children as "projects". They coached them following the normative paths and wanted to ensure that they had a successful future in a competitive globalized economy. It was interesting to see how in this entire process of parenting the fathers rarely played an active role. In Edison, the mothers because of their dependent status were pushed into the four walls of their house and they confined themselves into reproductive labor. The fathers in my research hardly played any role in

the daily childcare and being an active part of the reproductive enclave. In Kolkata too the rhetoric was quite the same. There was no commercial parenting agency that coached fathers. The private schools too during their admission interviews did not grill the fathers as much as they did the mothers. Thus institutionally and systemically the fathers were left out of the equation. Some of the questions that this raises is does the global education and labor market system thrive on patriarchy and if so what are the various ways in which it displays itself in the micro-social level?

In the course of carrying out this transnational project some important questions were answered. However, some vital aspects were left unexamined. When I first started reading Lareau's *Unequal Childhood*, I was amazed at how closely it spoke to my findings in the field. On the other hand because of the large transnational scope of my project lots of questions were raised in my head that I could not answer empirically in this project. For example Lareau's project is grounded on an analysis that builds upon class inequality. In India with the growing class divide I want to explore parenting among the working class population in India and compare them with middle-class parenting methodologies that I found in my current project. In India the working class mothers who are mostly paid domestic workers experience financial independence but are still battling social evils in the form of poverty, malnutrition and patriarchy. To further the findings of this research I want to analyze the story of these women who work outside home as domestic laborers as well as manage their household and children. What are their aspirations? How do they shape parenting as they struggle to survive in an unequal society? How does the government (in the form of programs and funding) support their endeavors?

One of the other avenues that my current research has opened up is analyzing the increasing rate of student suicides in India. As I laid out in my project, students are pushed into a rat race and are compelled to participate in an aggressive academic environment where there is the constant pressure to excel. Mothers are also driven into the race and are forced to coach their children into competition. In fact mothers in Edison were also skeptical of the education system in India and preferred the American system because the latter did not give unnecessary pressure upon children. Popular media in India too have done some movies that document the pressure imposed on children at the elementary level as well as in higher education. Movies like “3 Idiots” that documents the fierce competition among students in an engineering school, where kids are forced to pursue academic fields that are not of their choice, rather those that will guarantee them quick economic success in the job market. “Tare Zameen Par” (Stars on the earth) was also another such movie that addressed learning disability like Dyslexia within the able-bodied schooling system. Although social awareness are being promoted among parents and teachers to come up with ways to reduce the academic pressure, kids are increasing being drawn to mental depression and suicidal thoughts if they fail in schools. Thus a part of my post-doctoral work will be to work closely with schools, both private and public to understand and analyze what are the ways through which the school administration handles these issues of academic anxiety and stress? I want to address this issue more closely with the parents, and ask them ways they collaborate to ensure that their children are emotionally happy and fulfilled with their academic progress. In my current research even though issues of anxiety came up, it was more of the mothers than that of the

children, hence this is one of the ways in which my current project can be taken a step forward.

Another key question that arose during my fieldwork in Kolkata particularly was the vast difference between the public and private schools. The disparity between public and private schools is quite similar in other parts of the country too. Unlike my respondents in Edison who mostly sent their children to public schools, Kolkata respondents sent their kids to private schools. The public schools in India do not receive the kind of funding and resources that typically private schools get. The private schools that are mostly English medium also guarantee an education that is at par with the global standards and will prep children to compete in a global economy. They not only teach the core disciplines but also teach effective English communication and self-presentation skills. In other words the private schools provide a distinct cultural capital that public schools in India often fail to do. My current research has explored the private schooling system in Kolkata and holding hands of my current research I wish to explore further the differences between a public and private schooling in India. Firstly what are the major categories where resources differ between public and private schools? What is the curriculum and modes of evaluation in public schools and how are they different from private schools? How do students that graduate from public schools compete in a global economy?

Then and Now

In the past few months I have had some interesting conversations with my respondents in both Edison and Kolkata. The recent changes in the US administration, has practically shaken not only the US but also other countries that have strong labor

relations with the US, India being one of them. With the increase in hate crimes in the US, the travel ban and reduction on H1B Visas, immigrants in the country are very scared. One of my respondents said, “The future has become very uncertain for us! We can’t just leave now, everything is here!” Elite professionals especially on H1B Visa are placed in an uncertain position, as their future looks bleak in a country that they once considered the “land of dreams and opportunities”. Mothers were also negotiating between the uncertainty of their husband’s jobs and the future of their children.

The Trump administration also had serious impact on Kolkata mothers. As I pointed out in my research one of the main goals of an elite private education for children was to also send them abroad for higher education and better jobs. America was needless to mention the dream destination. However that picturesque America, which was the immigrant’s dream destination has changed in the light of current events. One of my respondents said, “I am really worried about my nephew who lives in Houston, especially after the Kansas shooting! Anyone can fall prey to these hate crimes!” There is a sense of fear and anxiety prevailing among mothers who have always aspired to send their kids abroad, USA being the main destination country. India’s strong participation in the global economy and the prominent influence of west upon Indian culture has also influenced parenting goals. However some of the mothers are still hopeful as they claim the present tension in the US will not last forever and things will get better. They are hopeful that their neoliberal parenting methodologies will not go waste and that it will allow their children to have a solid future, going abroad for a higher education being a part of that.

APPENDIX A

SAMPLE RESPONDENT FAMILY STRUCTURE

Table 1: Edison respondents

Name	Years in US	Number of Children	Average age of children
Madhu	10	2	4 and a half
Ritu	9 years 2 months	2	3 and a half
Prama	11	1	6
Kajal	10	1	8
Sampurna	8	1	7
Neetu	11	1	9
Jaya	6	1	5
Raji	12	2	5 and a half
Bhramra	11	1	8
Ranja	7	1	4
Jay	9	1	5
Roopa	12	1	6
Usha	10	2	4 and a half
Shanti	9	1	4
Melissa	13	3	7 and a half
Suchi	7	1	5

Table 2: Kolkata respondents

Name	Number of children	Average age of children
Paro	1	4
Pawla	1	5
Mita	1	6 and a half
Amrita	1	7 and a half
Barnali	1	5
Reshmi	1	5
Maitri	2	3 and a half
Sammy	1	4
Rai	2	4 and a half
Shweta	1	4
Mitra	2	2 and a half
Medha	1	3
Mitu	1	5 and a half
Mimi	2	3 and a half
Anju	1	2

APPENDIX B
INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

The Interview was semi-structured. Respondents were asked to tell their stories and then follow-up questions were asked to probe the story and cover topics respondents didn't address.

Questions for respondents in Edison, New Jersey

A. Educational background, employment and marriage:

1. Tell me a little about yourself. Where did you grow up? How old are you?
2. Which college did you go in India? What was the degree you had received there? Did you enjoy the subject you had taken up in your college years? What education did you pursue after college?
3. Did you start working after you completed your education? What kind of a job was it? Was it a full time job? Did you enjoy your work?
4. When did you get married? What was your age? Was it an arranged marriage or a love marriage? Do you think it was the right time for you to get married or did it come too early in your career? Did you continue the same job post marriage (i.e before coming to the US)? Did your husband ever have a problem regarding your job or you working outside home and devoting substantial amount of work there (only applicable if you pursued the job after marriage)?
5. When did you come to the United States?

Did you move immediately to the United States of America after you got married?

If not how long did you stay in India before immigrating to the United States? What Visa are you in? How long have you been in this Visa? What is your husband's Visa status? How easy or difficult was the transition for you in terms of adjusting to this entirely new country? Can you describe?

B. Child's education and husband's employment in the US:

1. How many children do you have? How old are they?

Where were they born?

What grades are they in now?

Are you happy with the educational system in the US? Can you provide a comparative assessment of the educational system that you had been in and the new system that you are getting acquainted to? Would you prefer to educate your children in India?

Do you look after your child's homework and other academic as well as non-academic (like, swimming, music, soccer and so on) activities? OR is it a shared responsibility of you and your husband? If so what is the nature of the same?

2. Where is your husband employed? What role does he play in the concerned organization? Is he happy with his income package and position?

Does he express his satisfaction or dissatisfaction regarding the job he is in?

What are his office hours like? Are you happy with his timings? Does he get enough time to spend with kids at home and with the family?

Does your husband discuss his daily happenings at the workplace with you?

Do you socialize with your husband's colleagues' family? How often do you do that?

OR do you associate with a separate group of friends?

C. Daily routine and social life:

1. Give me an idea or description of what a typical working day in the USA is like? (A tentative timetable or schedules of all that you do since you wake up in the morning till hitting the bed in the night)

How do you think your life here in the US is different from India?

Does your husband cook during the weekends when he is at home?

What is the kind of domestic division of labor that is followed in the household between you and your husband? (for example: how the daily household activity is shared, in cases of child's sickness who takes care of him or her; you are free to state any tiny details that comes to your mind as well).

2. Do you have friends here? Tell me about them. How often do you folks hang out?

What do you do, where do you go out?

Do they live nearby? Do you visit them often?

D. Financial Decision Making:

1. Coming to financial decision-making, who takes the major financial decisions in the household? You could express your opinion with respect to several important heads, like

- a) investment in India and USA.
- b) travel and tourism.
- c) saving for old age.
- d) regular grocery expenses,
- e) deciding upon the future educational expenditure for the children,
- f) buying gadgets, or other electronic appliances for the household.

E. Green card application and future plans:

1. Has your husband applied for the Green card yet? Is he expected to get one? Have you faced the disadvantages of not working outside home or not having a pay check? If yes, could you elaborate on the disadvantages? Have you thought of changing your current Visa status by getting a job or switching to an educational course?

2. Do you feel your earning could have supported your family better or would it be an avenue to your personal freedom and economic independence?

Do you at times wish to go back to India and pursue your career there? Are you happy with your stay in the US?

Do you get enough time to pursue your hobbies?

How do you spend your free time during the day?

Have you ever experienced a sense of frustration building up because of your legally enforced dependent status? Do you feel your friends might also feel the same?

3. What are your plans for the future? Do you wish to settle in the US? Do you think it is more of your husband's discretion to decide on staying in the US or moving to India?

If you personally want to go back to India could you give me some of the reasons for the same? Do you think your husband would support you on your above-mentioned grounds?

4. Do you plan to work in the US after your husband gets the Green card? If you do not want to, could you elaborate on your reasons for the same? If you want to would you like to work as a full time employee or a part time employee? Could you elaborate your reasons for your choice?

These are semi-structured questions for respondents in Kolkata

A. Educational background, employment and marriage:

1. Tell me a little about yourself. Where did you grow up? How old are you?
2. Which college did you go to? What was the degree you had received there? Did you enjoy the subject you had taken up in your college years? What education did you pursue after college?
3. Did you start working after you completed your education?
What kind of a job was it? Was it a full time job?
Did you enjoy your work? What about now? Are you employed? What is it and do you enjoy it?
4. When did you get married? What was your age?
Was it an arranged marriage or a love marriage? Do you think it was the right time for you to get married or did it come too early in your career? Did you continue the same job post marriage? Did your husband ever have a problem regarding your job or you working outside home and devoting substantial amount of work there (only applicable if you pursued the job after marriage)?

E. Child's education, husband's employment and social life:

1. How many children do you have? How old are they?
Where were they born?
What grades are they in now?
Will you say you happy with the educational system here in India? Do you think things have changed much since you were in school? Please elaborate the nature of change.
Which school do you send your kids to? How did the admissions go?
How are the teachers like in school? Do you feel your kid is motivated?
How is the study pressure in your kid's school?

Do you look after your child's homework and other academic as well as non-academic (like, swimming, music, soccer and so on) activities? How much emphasis do you give to the non-academic activities of your child (ren)? Do you think the Indian education system is supportive of the non-academic activities?

OR is it a shared responsibility of you and your husband? If so what is the nature of the same?
2. Where is your husband employed? What role does he play in the concerned organization? Is he happy with his income package and position?
Does he express his satisfaction or dissatisfaction regarding the job he is in?

What are his office hours like? Are you happy with his timings? Does he get enough time to spend with kids at home and with the family?

Does your husband discuss his daily happenings at the workplace with you?

Do you socialize with your husband's colleagues' family? How often do you do that?

OR do you associate with a separate group of friends (maybe your own colleagues)?

How often do you socialize with your friends?

C. Daily routine:

1. Give me an idea or description of what a typical working day like? (A tentative time table or schedule of all that you do since you wake up in the morning till hitting the bed in the night)

Do you often feel overwhelmed with the household workload that you have to shoulder?

What is the kind of domestic division of labor that is followed in the household between you and your husband? (for example: how the daily household activity is shared, in cases of child's sickness who takes care of him or her; you are free to state any tiny details that comes to your mind as well).

D. Financial Decision Making:

1. Coming to financial decision-making, who takes the major financial decisions in the household? You could express your opinion with respect to several important heads, like

- a) investment in India.
- b) travel and tourism.
- c) saving for old age.
- d) regular grocery expenses,
- e) deciding upon the future educational expenditure for the children,
- f) buying gadgets, or other electronic appliances for the household.

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